

Study Habits and Attitudes among Higher Education Students in West Bengal in the context of Digital Era

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Abstract

In the digital era, the study habits of Higher Education Students (HESs) are undergoing significant transformations both globally and in India. The widespread availability of affordable smartphones, constant internet access and the rising of online learning platforms have reshaped students' academic practices and behaviors. This study aims to examine the study habits and learning attitudes of higher education students in West Bengal. This descriptive study was conducted on a sample of 350 higher education students studying in different colleges and universities in West Bengal. A standardized scale, the "*Test of Study Habits and Attitudes (TSHA)*" developed by Dr. C.P. Mathur, contains 60 items, was used. The study revealed that, except for gender, factors such as students' education level, locality, academic stream, marital status, medium of instruction, socio-cultural background, sibling status, and family type do not appear to have a strong influence on the study habits and attitudes of higher education students.

Keywords: Study Habits, Attitudes, College Students, Higher Education, West Bengal

Introduction

Study and habit are two different concepts in the field of education and psychology. The word 'study' means 'Application of the mind to the acquirement of knowledge' (Agarwal & Teotia, 2015) and the word 'habit' indicates the personality of an individual. In combination it is focused on personality in acquiring knowledge. "Study habits as external factors that assist the study process such as sound study routines that include how often a student engage in studying sessions, review the material, self-evaluate, rehears, explaining the material, and studying in a conducive environment" (Crede and Kuncel, 2008).

In educational psychology sometime it refers to learned behaviour rather than inborn capacities. It develops through practices and influenced by environment, motivation, discipline and personal attitude towards learning. Maintaining regularity, organizing proper study materials, proper planning, managing time, power of concentration and proper strategies are the key characteristics of study habit. Developing the skills of study habit are essential for every stage

of education. It is much more helpful for academic as well as non-academic development of the students. It is undoubtedly a part of lifelong learning.

In India, the history of study habit started its journey from ancient time and continues till date. There were no such facilities and advanced techniques for study during ancient time. There were three techniques of study habit followed by the students in ancient period like Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana. “Students had the habit to learn and memorize all the things taught in the class, and teachers also helped them in memorizing” (Goudgeri, 2022).

In the Islamic tradition, education renders a significant contribution in leading to progression and enhancement of every individual, so that he can be successful in securing his future and living an efficient life (Biswas, 2016). In modern time the study habit among the students is little different rather than the ancient and medieval period. In the era of digitization, self-directed and flexible learning is essential in every stage of learning. Skill based learning is also important in modern time. In this era of technology, the student logs into the virtual classroom at scheduled times to see lectures or participate.

Study Habit Techniques in the Digital Age

Few modern techniques of study habits which are increasing rapidly among the higher education students.

- i) **Digital Note taking:** Taking note instantly using various digital devices.
- ii) **Dual Coding:** Taking verbal note with visualization (chart, graph, diagram etc.)
- iii) **Online Study Platform:** Collaborative online study platform/ study environment.
- iv) **YouTube-based Learning:** Collective information and study materials through YouTube videos, tutorials, and lectures.
- v) **Self-explanation Technique:** Explaining the contents with self-paced and level of understanding.
- vi) **Pomodoro Technique:** Taking short break (5 minutes) for increasing the power of concentration and reducing the fatigue.
- vii) **Mind-mapping:** Creating a visual diagram of each content.

Factors Affecting Study Habits

Various factors which affect directly or indirectly to the study habits among the higher education students. Good study habits help a student in good academic achievement. **Hendricson and Kleffner (2002)** said that inappropriate study routines affect students’ learning outcomes. Various studies have shown that multiple factors influence students’ study habits, such as lack of proper time management, excessive use of social media etc (**Miranda**

et al. 2023). Students' home environment is also one of the important factors, which affect study habit to the students. Positive and good environment helps students to achieve the goal easily but in negative or forced environment reduces students' energy to their study habit.

Significance of the Study

The stage of higher education is very crucial for the students as it is the pillar of students' bright future. Another side study habits or the learning behaviours specially in the stage of higher education are most important for academic as well as non-academic development of the students. These habits help a student achieve academic excellence (**Bin, et al., 2021**). For increasing the level of self-awareness and developing the level of self-motivation study habits and attitude among the higher education students is much more essential. The poor study habits of the students affect the academic success of the students (**Laxmi & Kaur, 2017**). On basis of various previous studies, it was observed that study habits among the students have been changing since the very beginning period of the civilization. There are various types of study habits are seen in various time period of the society like ancient, medieval and modern time. In the era of digital advancement various modern techniques are now being used for the fulfilment of educational goals of the students.

Objectives of the Study

1. To determine the level of study habits and attitudes among Higher Education Students (HES) in West Bengal.
2. To find out the differences in study habits and attitudes among HES with respect to education level, gender, locality, stream, marital status and medium of instruction.
3. To examine the differences in study habits and attitudes among HES with respect to their socio-cultural background (General/OBC/SC/ST), sibling status and nature of the family.
4. To explore the concept of Study Habit in the context of digital era.

Hypotheses of the study

Keeping the above objectives in mind, the following hypotheses have been framed:

- **H₀₁**: There is no significant difference in study habits between undergraduate and postgraduate students.
- **H₀₂**: There is no significant difference in study habits between male and female students.
- **H₀₃**: There is no significant difference in study habits between rural and urban students of higher education.

- **H₀₄:** There is no significant difference in study habits between Arts, Commerce and Science students of higher education.
- **H₀₅:** There is no significant difference in study habits between single and married students of higher education.
- **H₀₆:** There is no significant difference in study habits among Bengali, Hindi and English medium students of higher education.
- **H₀₇:** There is no significant difference in study habits between General and Other Backward Classes (including SC and ST) students of higher education.
- **H₀₈:** There is no significant difference in study habits between students with siblings and those without siblings in higher education.
- **H₀₉:** There is no significant difference in study habits between students from joint families and those from nuclear families in higher education.

Methodology

Study Design, Setting and Respondents:

Higher Education Students' attitudes towards study habits were examined in this study using the Descriptive Survey Model (DSM). A sample of 350 students, including UG and PG, from different colleges and universities in West Bengal was chosen using the purposive sampling technique in order to gather pertinent data. Data collection took place between January and March 2025. Table 2 illustrates the demographic details of the students.

Study Instrument:

To explore the study habits of students in higher education, the standardized “**Test of Study Habits and Attitudes (TSHA)**” developed by Dr. C.P. Mathur was used. This test consists of 60 items categorized into nine major areas: Attitude Towards Teachers, Home Environment, Attitude Towards Education, Study Habits, Mental Conflict, Concentration, Home Assignment, Self-Confidence, and Examination (see **Table 1**). Each item requires one of three responses: ‘**Yes**’, ‘**Doubtful**’, or ‘**No**’. A high score on this test indicates well-developed study habits and positive attitudes, while a low score reflects poor study techniques (see **Table 2**).

Table 1: Item details by Major Areas

Sl. No.	Areas	No. of Items	Serial-wise Item No.	%
1.	Attitude Towards Teachers	5	2, 16, 21, 32, 39	8
2.	Home Environment	4	1, 30, 35, 46	7
3.	Attitude towards Education	3	28, 50, 53	5
4.	Study Habit	20	4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 15, 17, 19, 22, 25, 34, 38, 40, 44, 51, 52, 55, 58	33
5.	Mental Conflict	4	20, 33, 43, 45	7
6.	Concentration	9	8, 13, 18, 24, 26, 36, 41, 47, 49	15
7.	Home Assignment	4	14, 23, 42, 54	7
8.	Self Confidence	3	3, 29, 48	5
9.	Examination	8	10, 27, 31, 37, 56, 57, 59, 60	13
Total		60	Sixty	100

Source: TSHA Manual

Reliability and Validity of the Instrument

The tool has been tested its reliability and validity by administering on 200 sample. The reliability co-efficient correlation value is +0.87 (for the age group 13 to 16) and +0.89 (for the age group 16 above).

For the purpose of establishing validity, the test was validated with two tests of study habits as well with Achievement Scores on a representative sample of 200 students. The coefficients were found as under:

Sl. No.	Tests	r	N
1.	Survey of Study Habits & Attitudes in English – By C.P. Mathur	+ 0.63	200
2.	Survey of Study Habits & Attitudes (General) by A. R. Purohit	+ 0.77	200
3.	Academic Achievement Scores	+ 0.65	200

Analysis and Interpretation

The total 350 higher education students participated in this study. The demographic data (refer to Table 2) of the students reveals that a predominantly consists of undergraduate students (78.28%), with postgraduates making up a smaller portion (21.71%). The majority are female (70.85%), and a significant proportion come from rural areas (76.28%), followed by semi-urban (17.42%) and urban regions (6.28%). Most students' responses came from Arts/Humanities/Social Sciences (94.85%) stream, while minimal representation from Science (4.28%) and Commerce (0.85%) streams. Nearly all participants are unmarried (98.28%). In terms of course medium, Bengali is most common (85.71%), with some opting for English (12%) and Hindi (2.28%). The social categories of the respondents are primarily composed of Scheduled Caste (SC) with 43.71%, followed by General (33.42%), OBC (19.14%), and a

small number of ST (3.71%). The majority of respondents have siblings (91.14%) and come from joint families (51.14%), with nuclear families accounting for 48.85%.

Table 2: Demographic Data of the Respondents

Variables	Categories	n (%)
Level	UG	274 (78.28%)
	PG	76 (21.71%)
Gender	Male	102 (29.14%)
	Female	248 (70.85%)
Location	Rural	267 (76.28%)
	Urban	22 (6.28%)
	Semi-urban	61 (17.42%)
Stream	Arts/ Humanities/ Social Sciences	332 (94.85%)
	Science	15 (4.28%)
	Commerce	3 (0.85%)
Marital Status	Married	6 (1.71%)
	Unmarried	344 (98.28%)
Course Medium	Bengali	300 (85.71%)
	English	42 (12%)
	Hindi	8 (2.28%)
Category	General	117 (33.42%)
	OBC	67 (19.14%)
	SC	153 (43.71%)
	ST	13 (3.71%)
Status of Siblings	Having Siblings	319 (91.14%)
	Not Having Siblings	31 (8.85%)
Family Type	Joint Family	179 (51.14%)
	Nuclear Family	171 (48.85%)

Overall, the sample is characterized by young, unmarried, rural, female undergraduate students, primarily studying in the Arts with Bengali as the medium of instruction, and with a notable representation of the SC category.

Objective 1: To determine the level of study habits and attitudes among Higher Education Students (HES) in West Bengal.

Level of Study Habits and Attitudes among the HES:

As shown in the Table 3, a majority of the students (46%) have shown satisfactory level of study habits and attitudes, while 32.28% students with poor. However, only 7.14% students identified with good level.

Table 3: Level of Study Habits and Attitudes among Higher Education Students

Sl. No.	Level of Study Habits and Attitude	Grade	Obtained Score	No. of Students	
				No	%
1.	Excellent	A	56 and above	0	-
2.	Very Good	B	49 – 55	0	-
3.	Good	C	42 – 48	25	7.14

4.	Satisfactory	D	33 – 41	161	46
5.	Poor	E	26 – 32	113	32.28
6.	Very Poor	F	19 – 25	40	11.42
7.	Extremely Poor	G	00 – 18	11	3.14
Total				350	100

Notably, there are no students in the “Excellent” or “Very Good” level of study habits, however, only a small fraction (7.14%) achieves a “Good” rating. Furthermore, a significant percentage of students are classified as having “Very Poor” (11.42%) or “Extremely Poor” (3.14%) study habits. This result indicates that most students are performing at or below average, with minimal representation at the higher levels of achievement. The data points to a possible systemic issue in academic motivation or support, emphasizing the urgent need for targeted interventions and programs to help students improve their study habits and overall academic attitudes, especially those in the lowest performing level.

Objective 2: To find out the differences in study habits and attitudes among HES with respect to education level, gender, locality, stream, marital status and medium of instruction.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in study habits between undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Table 4: Mean Difference in Study Habits and Attitudes of HES with respect to Education level (UG and PG)

Sl. No.	Variable	N	Mean	SD	SEM	df	t-value	Remark
1.	UG	274	32.29	7.26	0.72	348	0.84	Not Significant
2.	PG	76	32.89	6.30				

Table 4 shows the mean scores between undergraduate and postgraduate students in their study habits and attitudes. The undergraduates’ students have a mean value of 32.29 with a standard deviation (SD) of 7.26, while the postgraduates have a slightly higher i.e. 32.89 with a SD of 6.30. Despite this slight difference, the calculated t-value (0.84) is much lower than the critical value of ‘t’ (1.97) at 0.05% level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is retained as the result indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in the study habits and attitudes of UG and PG students. Hence, in terms of education level, it does not appear to have a meaningful impact on the students’ study habits and attitudes in this sample.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in study habits between male and female students.

Table 5: Mean Difference in Study Habits and Attitudes of HES with respect to Gender (Male and Female)

Sl. No.	Variable	N	Mean	SD	SEM	df	t-value	Remark
1.	Male	102	29.37	8.46	0.84	348	5.11	Significant

2.	Female	248	33.67	5.97				
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Table 5 shows the mean scores of the male and female students of their study habits and attitudes. The mean value of the male students is 29.37, with SD value of 8.46, while the female students' mean value is 33.67 with SD value 5.67. However, this statistical analysis reveals that the obtained t-value (5.11) is much higher than the critical value of 't' (1.97) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) cannot be retained. Hence, it indicates that there is a significant difference between male and female students in terms of their study habits and attitudes.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in study habits between rural and urban students of higher education.

Table 6: Mean Difference in Study Habits and Attitudes of HES with respect to Locality (Rural and Urban)

Sl. No.	Variable	N	Mean	SD	SE	df	t-value	Remark
1.	Rural	267	32.41	6.81	0.90	348	0.03	Not Significant
2.	Urban	83	32.44	7.83				

Table 6 presents the comparison of study habits and attitudes between rural and urban Higher Education Students (HES). The mean scores are nearly identical, 32.41 for rural students and 32.44 for urban students. The obtained t-value (0.03) is considerably lower than the critical t-value (1.97) at the 0.05 significance level. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{03}) is retained as it is found not significant. Hence, it can be said that rural and urban HESs have similar attitude towards study habits and attitudes.

H₀₄: There is no significant difference in study habits among Arts, Commerce and Science students of higher education.

Table 7: Mean Difference in Study Habits and Attitudes of HES with respect to Stream (Arts/Humanities, Science and Commerce)

Sl. No.	Variable	N	Mean	SD	SE	df	t-value	Remark
1.	Arts/Humanities	332	32.50	7.04	2.01	348	0.51	Not Significant
2.	Science	15	31.46	7.69				
Sl. No.	Variable	N	Mean	SD	SE	df	t-value	Remark
1.	Arts/Humanities	332	32.50	7.04	3.23	348	1.39	Not Significant
2.	Commerce	3	28	5.56				
Sl. No.	Variable	N	Mean	SD	SEM	df	t-value	Remark
1.	Science	15	31.46	7.69	3.77	348	0.91	Not Significant
2.	Commerce	3	28	5.56				

Table 7 compares the mean scores of students among Arts/Humanities, Science and Commerce streams. The calculated t-value for Arts/Humanities and Science students is 0.51, which does

not exceed the critical t-value of 1.97 at the 0.05 level of significance. Hence, this difference is statistically insignificant.

When comparing the means of Arts/Humanities and Commerce students, the obtained t-value (1.39) is also below the critical t-value (1.97), indicating that this difference is not significant. Similarly, the calculated t-value (0.39) for Science and Commerce students is much lower than the critical value (1.97), again showing no significant difference.

Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_{04}), which states that there is no significant difference in study habits among Arts, Commerce, and Science students in higher education, is retained. This result indicates that students' academic streams do not significantly influence their study habits or attitudes.

H₀₅: There is no significant difference in study habits between single and married students of higher education.

Table 8: Mean Difference in Study Habits and Attitudes of HES with respect to Marital Status (Single and Married)

Sl. No.	Variable	N	Mean	SD	SE	df	t-value	Remark
1.	Single	344	32.37	7.05	3.11	348	0.89	Not Significant
2.	Married	6	35.16	7.57				

The test statistics presented in Table 8 show the comparison of the mean, standard deviation, and t-value between single and married HESs in terms of study habits and attitudes. The obtained t-value (0.89) is much lower than the critical t-value (1.97) at the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{05}) is retained, indicating that the difference is not statistically significant. The data suggest that study habits do not differ significantly based on marital status.

H₀₆: There is no significant difference in study habits among Bengali, Hindi and English medium students of higher education.

Table 9: Mean Difference in Study Habits and Attitudes of HES with respect to Medium of Instruction (Bengali, Hindi and English)

Sl. No.	Variable	N	Mean	SD	SE	df	t-value	Remark
1.	Bengali	300	32.49	6.99	1.28	348	0.14	Not Significant
2.	English	42	32.30	7.89				
Sl. No.	Variable	N	Mean	SD	SE	df	t-value	Remark
1.	Bengali	300	32.49	6.99	1.78	348	1.11	Not Significant
2.	Hindi	8	30.5	4.92				
Sl. No.	Variable	N	Mean	SD	SE	df	t-value	Remark
1.	Hindi	8	30.5	4.92	2.12	348	0.84	Not Significant
2.	English	42	32.30	7.89				

Regarding the medium of instruction (Bengali, English and Hindi), Table 9 is evident that there are no statistically significant differences in study habits and attitudes among higher education students. The calculated t-values for each group, 1.28 (for Bengali and English), 1.78 (for Bengali and Hindi) and 0.84 (for Hindi and English), are below the critical value of 't' (1.97) at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{06}) is retained in all cases, indicating that the medium of instruction does not significantly influence students' study habits and attitudes.

Objective 3: To examine the differences in study habits and attitudes among HES with respect to their socio-cultural background (General/OBC/SC/ST), sibling status and nature of the family.

H₀₇: There is no significant difference in study habits between General and Other Backward Classes (including SC and ST) students of higher education.

Table 10: Mean Difference in Study Habits and Attitudes of HES with respect to Socio-Cultural Background (General and OBC/SC/ST)

Sl. No.	Variable	N	Mean	SD	SE	df	t-value	Remark
1.	General	117	32.34	6.89	0.78	348	0.15	Not Significant
2.	OBC/SC/ST	233	32.46	7.15				

The above table (Table 10) illustrates the socio-cultural differences in the mean, standard deviation (SD), and t-value between General and OBC/SC/ST students regarding their study habits. The mean and SD for General category students are 32.34 and 6.89, respectively, while for OBC/SC/ST students, the mean and SD are 32.46 and 7.15, respectively. The calculated t-value between these two groups is 0.15, which is much less than the critical t-value of 1.97 (at the 5% significance level with 348 degrees of freedom). Since the calculated t-value is less than the critical value, the difference in mean scores is not statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{07}) which states that there is no significant difference in study habits and attitudes between General and OBC/SC/ST students, is retained. From this analysis, it can be concluded that there is no significant socio-cultural difference in study habits and attitudes between the two groups.

H₀₈: There is no significant difference in study habits between students with siblings and those without siblings in higher education.

Table 11: Mean Difference in Study Habits and Attitudes of HES with respect to Sibling Status (Having and Not Having)

Sl. No.	Variable	N	Mean	SD	SE	df	t-value	Remark
1.	Having Siblings	319	32.36	7.12	1.20	348	0.1	Not Significant
2.	Not Having Siblings	31	32.96	6.37				

Table 11 shows the comparison of study habits and attitudes between students having siblings and those not having siblings. The mean scores for the two groups are quite similar, with no statistically significant difference observed. The calculated t-value of 0.1 is substantially lower than the critical value of t (1.97) at the 0.05 significance level. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_{08}) is retained. This indicates that having siblings does not have a significant impact on students' study habits and attitudes.

H₀₉: There is no significant difference in study habits between students from joint families and those from nuclear families in higher education.

Table 12: Mean Difference in Study Habits and Attitudes of HES with respect to Family Type (Joint and Nuclear)

Sl. No.	Variable	N	Mean	SD	SE	df	t-value	Remark
1.	Joint Family	179	32.01	7.61	0.74	348	1.12	Not Significant
2.	Nuclear Family	171	32.84	6.42				

Table 12 shows that the t-value for comparing HESs from Joint Families and Nuclear Families is 1.12, which is less than the critical t-value at the 0.05 significant level. This means that the difference between the two groups is not statistically significant. So, the null hypothesis (H_{09}), which states that there is no significant difference between Joint Family and Nuclear Family students in study habits and attitudes. Therefore, it can be said that the type of family does not effect a significant impact on the study habits and attitudes of the HESs in West Bengal.

Discussion

The present study explored the study habits and attitudes of higher education students in West Bengal. Findings revealed that a moderate proportion of students have achieved a satisfactory level of study habits and attitudes. Similar trends were reported in the works of Joseph (2017), Jafari, Aghaei & Khatony (2019) and Tus (2020). It was also observed that postgraduate students exhibited slightly better study habits compared to undergraduate students. This aligns with Lalrintluangi (2018), who reported that undergraduate students generally demonstrate unsatisfactory study habits. This difference may be attributed to the fact that postgraduate students tend to be more focused and concerned about their academic performance.

The study also found a significant difference in study habits between male and female students, with females exhibiting better study habits than their male counterparts. Similar findings were

noted by Kalita and Gayary (2022), Kant et al. (2023) and Kumar (2023), who reported that female students often outperform male students in academic-related behaviors. However, Kishor (2021) presented a contrasting view, reporting no statistically significant gender differences in study habits.

Regarding locality, no significant difference was found between students from rural and urban areas in the present study. This is in contrast to the findings of Muktaawaj and Bharadwaj (2019) and Illahi and Khandai (2015), who reported that urban students possess better study habits than rural students. Muktaawaj and Bharadwaj (2019) further noted that rural students, particularly girls, often face additional responsibilities such as household chores, caregiving for younger siblings, and a lack of parental encouragement toward academics. These factors may hinder the development of effective study habits and positive attitudes, ultimately impacting classroom performance.

Conclusion

The study habits and attitudes of higher education students were explored in this study. To achieve its objectives, 350 students were selected and administered a standardized test. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that most demographic and socio-cultural factors, such as education level, locality, academic stream, marital status, medium of instruction, socio-cultural background, sibling status and family type, do not appear to have a strong influence on the study habits and attitudes of higher education students. However, the gender is the only factor which significantly influence the study habits among the students between male and female. This suggests that, apart from gender, the other factors examined are not strong determinants of how students approach their studies in the context of HESs in West Bengal. It is suggested that study habits are essential for students' overall development and therefore, teachers should encourage their students to develop such habits and attitudes. Additionally, further studies are recommended to examine students studying private institutions as well.

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