

STUDY HABITS OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AT CAFF IN FIJI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the study habits of students studying in College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF), FNU, Fiji. In the survey research 230 students were selected randomly and requested to fill the questionnaire. Out of 230 students only 200 students responded to the questionnaire which elicited students' study habits. Time put into studies, method used in studying, duration of study and contents of studies were used as the structure of reference for measuring study habits. Analysis of data showed that at CAFF for 83 (42%) students most preferred time for doing their study was at night from 9 to 1 am followed by 53(27%) from 6 am to 12 noon. 76 (38%) of the student study mostly during study break which is available just before final examination of the term while 52 (26%) study mostly during day before examination. Study also revealed that 122 (61%) students study for 1-4 hrs. for the final examination. It was clear from the study that student also watch television 46 (23%), listen music 92(46%), talk with friends 22(11%) and 40 (20%) spend time with family during the study break. Student prepared for the final examination in different methods as 104 (52%) students prepared short notes while only 58 (29%) students studied entire lecture to prepare for the final examination. There were 38 (19%) students who prepared highlighted topics or subtopics or they only prepared major points for the final examination. The difference in the study habits attributed to the facts that students do not know how to study and those that manage to study do not adopt effective study methods. There is need for undergraduate students to pay more attention to planning and organizing their study activities. Merely studying on occasions can be detrimental to the whole learning process. Students should, therefore, plan reading time tables as well as set specific goals for studying in order achieve academic success.

KEYWORDS: Undergraduate Students, Fiji National University, Study Habits

INTRODUCTION

Education is undoubtedly the greatest instrument in which man has devised for his own progress. All societies therefore have one form of education or another but; the use in which it is put varies. Over the years, the investigations of the factors that influence academic performance of students have attracted the interest and concern of teachers, counselors, psychologists, researchers and school administrators.

Successful completion of university education has always been the concern of students, parents, teachers and the government alike. To this end, most parents do their best to ensure that fees are promptly paid. Teachers work hard developing effective teaching strategies while the government ensures the provision of schools and learning facilities. The student, on the other hand, is left with the sole responsibility of studying to ensure academic success.

Kumar (2015) elaborated study habits are the regular tendencies and practices that one depicts during the process of gaining information through learning. In simple terms study habits are the habits when one study. A person with poor study habits will not be able to learn properly. It is generally believed that a student learns effective study habits in school. So college students are generally assumed to have effective study habits. But the environment of school and college are very different and need of effective study habits is even more at college level as compared to school.

Research on the correlation between study habit and students' academic performance has for long received attention from scholars and educational agencies. Study habits are learning tendencies that enable students to work privately. The term study habit can be as the students' way of study whether systematic, efficient or inefficient. Going by this definition, it literally means that good study habit produces positive academic performance. To this end, many students develop studying habits or routines that would enrich their academic pursuit. Although several factors have been associated with academic success (Nuthana and Yenagi, (2009) and Yoloje (1999) argues that successful achievement is based upon study, interpretation and application. Corroborating this view, Salami and Aremu (2006) opine that the internalization of effective study habits would be of immense benefit to both failing and passing students. It has been realized that students who possess adequate mental abilities sometimes do not perform well in their academic work either because they do not know how to study effectively or they do not use the most effective method of studying. Effective study habits are vital to student's future, not just academically but in everyday life. However, literature and observation reveal that some students may not have developed study habits necessary for academic success, thereby, leading to failure in class examinations, participation in examination malpractice and sometimes, failure to complete the university education. The general objective of this study is to ascertain the study habits of undergraduate students under CAFF in Fiji National University in Fiji. The specific objectives are to determine students study habits in relation to time management and ascertain the methods of study by students.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A study on undergraduate students' study habits by Nneji (2002) pointed out that 65% of the students studied mostly during the weekdays while 35% studies mostly during weekends. Furthermore, 29% adopted the memorization techniques, 25% summarized while only 6% used self-testing. Also, 45% preferred to study mostly in the classroom, 37% studied in their rooms, while only 15% made use of library facilities. Memorization and self-test were found to be the least used methods for knowledge assimilation. In the aspect to organizing their studies, only 8% planned their reading to cover all subjects by using the time-table. Azikiwe (1998) describes study habit as "the adopted way and manner a student plans his private readings, after classroom learning so as to attain mastery of the subject". According to her, "good study habits are good asset to learners because they (habits) assist students to attain mastery in areas of specialization and consequent excellent performance, while the opposite constitute constraints to learning and achievement leading to failure". Denga, (1982) point to poor study habits as one of the major causes of poor academic performances among Nigerian university students. Other researchers (Okonkwo, 1993; Gilmer, 1990; Fayley, 1989; Udom, 1987; Bakare, 1977; and Khan, 1975) agree that good study habits have positive effects on performance. Akinboye in Ikegbunam (1998) identified 'making of study time-table' as one of the study 'skills' for students.

Nuthana & Yenagi (2009) examined the causes of poor academic performance among university undergraduates. Some of these factors identified are intellectual ability, poor study habit, achievement motivation, lack of vocational goals, low self-concept, low socio-economic status of the family, poor family structure and so on. If for instance a child

consistently fails or performs poorly in his Research Journal in Organizational Psychology and Educational Studies examination, he presumably may develop low self-concept and may lack confidence to study or pass.

A Daily Sketch Publication on “cause and curse of poor academic performance” of university undergraduate 2006, identified and categorized factors responsible for students’ poor performance. Such factors are problem of teachers, problem of inadequate facilities in the school, problems traceable to students, problems caused by parents and the society at large and problems of government policies and low funding of educational sector (Ajila and Olutola 2007). In the same vein, Ichado (1998) also argued that the environment in which the student comes from can greatly influence his performance academically in the school. Morahan (1999) he found out that male and female tend to differ in the ways in which they study. He found out that the male student took up courses that had logic and sciences while female student were attracted to simpler courses. It is against this background the sought solution to this question: what are the determinants of undergraduate students’ study habits? Hussain (2000) study attitude refers to predispositions which students have developed towards private readings through a period of time. According to him, study attitude offers great possibilities for successful achievement in studies. In a related study Igun and Adogbeji (2007) found out that most students studied during weekends and free periods. Methods of assimilating knowledge were, however, found to be mostly summarization and self-test. Although majority of the students claimed to study in quiet places, few students were found to make use of the library. The study by Effiong, Aakege and Anthony (2012) also revealed that students use mainly summarization and self-test as methods of knowledge assimilation and did most of their studying in their rooms.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Through personal meetings with students information required to prepare questionnaire was collected from the students of CAFF. On the basis of collected information a questionnaire was prepared and was pretested. In the survey research 230 students were selected randomly and were asked to fill the questionnaire. Out of 230 students only 200 students responded to the questionnaire which elicited students’ study habits. Time put into studies, method used in studying and contents of studies were used as the frame of reference for measuring study habits.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The analysis was done by descriptive statistical tools whereas the interpretation and the discussion were based on the study objectives and the research questions. The results are presented in form of tables and figures. Table 1 shows the percentage of student (students) age, gender, education and their GPA grades. 135(67.5%) students were in the age group of 18-20 years followed by 48(24%), 12 (6%) and 5(2.5%) in the age group of 20-25 yrs., more than 26 yrs. and less than 17yrs respectively. Out of total 200 students 108 (54%) were male and remaining were female students. Out of total 200 students 93(51.5%), 50 (25%), 47 (23.5%) and 35 (17.5%) were the students of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry respectively. Grades of only 4(2%) students were more than 4.0. Grades of 91(45.5%) students and 44 (22%) students were recorded in the range of 2.1-3.0 and range of 3.1-3.9 respectively.

Table 1: Demographic Information of Students

Particulars		Frequency(n)	Percent (%)
Age (Years)	<17	5	2.5
	18-20	135	67.5
	20-25	48	24.0

	>26	12	6.0
Gender	Male	108	54.0
	Female	92	46.0
Programme name	B.Sc. Agriculture	68	34.0
	TDA Agriculture	35	17.5
	Fisheries	50	25.0
	Forestry	47	23.5
Grades (GPA)*	<2.1	61	30.5
	2.1-3.0	91	45.5
	3.1-3.9	44	22.0
	>4.0	4	2.0
*Grade Point Average			

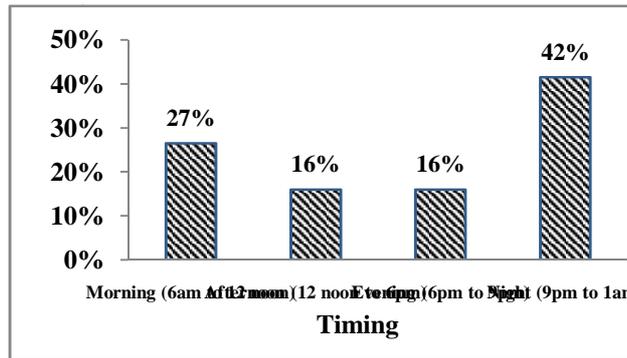


Figure 1: Students Preferred Timing for Study during Day at CAFF

At CAFF students 83 (42%) most preferred time for doing their study was at night from 9 to 12 am 53(27%) followed by 6 am to 12 noon. The habit of reading at night and for 2-4 hours has been described as favorable to intrinsic organization (Nneji, 1998) arguing that it requires determination and discipline to operate (Fig.1). Timing is an important indicator for effective studies in the universities. Both period and duration of studies are of serious considerations in the student’s ability to manage his or her time and cope with the volume of studies expected at this level.

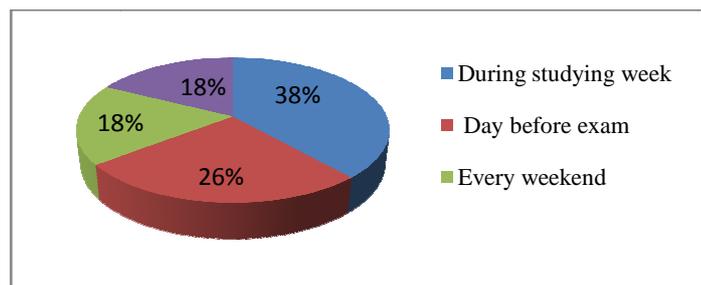


Figure 2: Students Preferred Days for Study during Term at CAFF

The results also indicated that 76 (38%) of the students study mostly during study break which is available just before final examination of the term while 52 (26%) study mostly during day before examination. There were 36 (18%) and 36 (18%) students who study every day and every weekend (Fig.2).

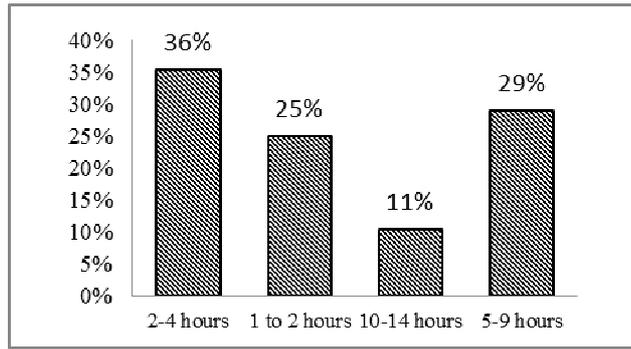


Figure: 3 Average Hours of Study by Students for Examination

Study also revealed that 122 (61%) students study for 1-4 hrs. for the final examination. There were students 58 (29%) and 22 (11%) who studied 5-9 hrs. and 10-14 hrs. respectively (Figure 3). It cleared from the study that students also watch television 46 (23%), listen music 92(46%), talk with friends 22(11%) and 40 (20%) spend time with family during the study break (Fig.4). This time is just available before the final examination and if not properly utilized affect academic performance of students. This is supported by Gardner, Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2008), participation in organized activities is positively associated with educational, civic, and to some extent, occupational success in young adulthood. Morrissey (2005) stated that there is an established connection between adolescents' extracurricular activities and educational attainment. Morrissey also noted are reduction in delinquency and less engagement in risky behaviors. These factors explain why students should balance their lives with academics and activities as participating in these well-rounded activities may impact their success in the future.

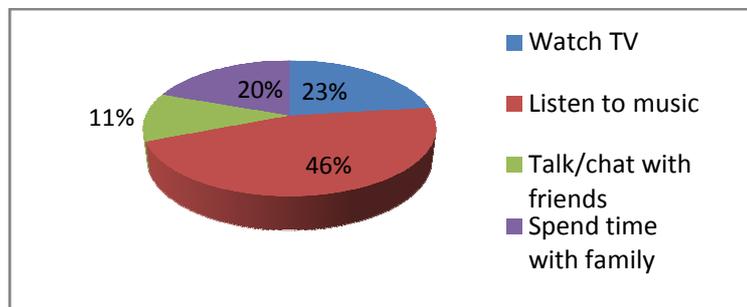


Figure 4: Students Activities during Study Break

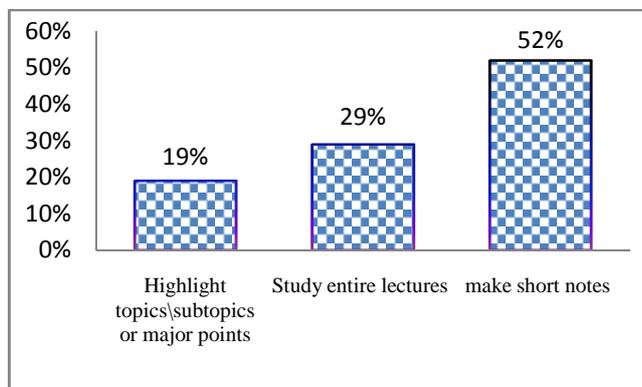


Figure 5 Methods of Study Used by Students during Study Break at CAFF

Students prepared for the final examination in different ways. 104 (52%) students prepared short notes while only 58 (29%) students studied entire lecture to prepare for the final examination. There were 38 (19%) students who prepared highlighted topics or subtopics or they only prepared major points for the final examination (Fig.5). Most students preferred to read subjects that are slated for examinations. Callahan and Clark (1977) have described reading for examinations as mechanical. It has a dead-end. It is done for immediate intents and once the intents (usually, tests or examinations) are over, such readings are forgotten and the student is once again left blank. All the readings done are therefore based on lecture notes and driven by examination or test performance rather. Considering the duration and frequency of reading, done by the students, it can be said that studies in the universities are diligently done but for examination.

CONCLUSIONS

The university environment is one that demands dedication to studies. Students must, therefore, endeavor to cultivate study habits that would ensure their academic success. Although it is the responsibility of students to work towards achieving academic success, the enabling environment should also be provided by other stake holders such as schools and the government by ensuring the provision of necessary facilities such as well-equipped libraries that can accommodate the different study habits exhibited by students. Timing is an important indicator for effective studies in the universities. Both period and duration of studies are of serious considerations in the student's ability to manage his or her time and cope with the volume of studies expected at this level. There is need for undergraduate students to pay more attention to planning and organizing their study activities. Merely studying on occasions can be detrimental to the whole learning process. Students should, therefore, plan reading time tables as well as set specific goals for studying in order to achieve academic success.

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