



# Study Habits of Dental Students of Ahvaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences (2018)

Abdolreza Gilavand <sup>1,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Education Development Center, Ahvaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences, Ahvaz, Iran

\*Corresponding author: Department of Education Development Center, Ahvaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences, Ahvaz, Iran. Email: gilavanda@gmail.com

Received 2018 October 29; Revised 2019 May 05; Accepted 2019 May 15.

## Abstract

**Background:** Bad study habits are considered one of the main causes of students' academic failure and can have an important impact on their education and their occupational prospect.

**Objectives:** This research was conducted to investigate the study habits of dental students of Ahvaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences in southwest of Iran.

**Methods:** In this descriptive research, Palsane and Sharma study habits inventory was used to measure students' habits. Census sampling method was used and all students of general dentistry were selected. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data in SPSS version 22.

**Results:** A total of 160 students (Doctor of Dental Medicine) who had passed at least one year of studying participated in this research. Based on the results, the mean scores were as follows: budgeting time 5.1/10, physical condition 6.9/12, reading ability 8.22/16, note-taking 2.1/6, learning motivation 7.2/12, memory 4.4/8, taking examination 10.6/20, and health 2.5/6. Therefore, according to the mean scores of the inventory, the study habits of the students under study were relatively favorable and moderate, 47 out of 90.

**Conclusions:** Studying and learning styles can affect academic achievement of students, hence, differentiating successful and unsuccessful students at university. Holding training courses, lectures and workshops, designing mobile educational apps, incorporating intensive training courses of teaching effective study methods; especially through the medical education development centers of universities, can be useful in improving this process.

**Keywords:** Study Habits, Dental Students, Medical Education, Iran

## 1. Background

Bad study habits are one of the major causes of students' academic failure, and any skill that increases one's ability to study, learn, and respond is called a study skill. These skills can include motivational methods, concentration skills, time management, reading skills, memorizing, reminding and providing information (1). Acquiring study skills is often left to the students. In many schools and universities, teaching study methods and effective learning skills are not taught, and students have to choose a method through trial and error and get accustomed to it gradually (2). Failure to choose a correct study method by students not only reduces their energy and time, but also it can be one of the major causes of academic failure and even dropout, as well as a tendency to poor habits (3). It can also confuse the majority of students and negatively affect their performance in exams (4). In each educational system, students' "academic achievement" is one of the indicators of academic success. Measuring the amount of aca-

ademic achievement and the factors affecting it are among the main subjects that have attracted the attention of researchers (5). Therefore, it is necessary to identify and institutionalize effective learning and study methods in order to increase the academic achievement of the students and improve the learning status, the accuracy, speed and quality of reading and comprehension; naturally, first of all, the recognition of students' skills of and approaches to the study is essential. One of the important factors that can increase students' motivation and academic achievement is learning and study skills (2). Nowadays, teaching study skills and techniques has been recognized to be necessary in many universities for the development of their learning, so many universities in Canada and USA (California, and Virginia) address this subject at the start of the university. In Iran, teaching study skills and techniques has recently been addressed in the reform plan for medical education in some medical universities (1). In a review (late 2017), Gilavand examined the status of study habits

among Iranian students of medical sciences. After reviewing all the relevant studies, he reported students' study habits and skills as moderate in Iran University of Medical Sciences (6). Studies have shown that appropriate methods for studying and learning have a positive impact on students' academic achievement (7). Each student has a unique study style that may even be different despite having the same age, culture and religion (8, 9). Given that academic progress or failure is one of the criteria for the efficiency of the educational system, the discovery and study of variables affecting academic performance leads to better recognition and prediction of effective variables at university. Since, the study methods of the students affect their learning and educational progress, and the process plays a role in their cognitive, practical skills, and ultimately their job; therefore, we should measure them in order to correct them (10-13). Since dentistry students face a large amount of new and difficult subjects during their study, learning and memorizing of them is very difficult. Also, the bad study habit is one of the major causes of academic failure of students and can have an important impact on their academic status and career prospect.

## 2. Objectives

Our research was conducted to determine the status of study habits of dental students of Ahvaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences in Southwest of Iran.

## 3. Methods

This descriptive study was carried out in 2018 through a questionnaire and a census sampling method. Its statistical population included all students (Doctor of Dental Medicine) of Ahvaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences in southwest of Iran. Only those students who had passed at least one year were evaluated. Two questionnaires were used in this research. The first questionnaire included demographic information of students, including gender, marriage, age, academic year, being local or not, satisfaction and dissatisfaction with university and field of study (Table 1). To measure students' study habits, the 45-item standardized questionnaire of Palsane and Sharma study habits inventory (PSSHI) was used. Through 8 domains, PSSHI assesses students' study habits: budgeting time (5 items), physical condition (6 items), reading ability (8 items), note taking (3 items), learning motivation (6 items), memory (4 items), taking examination (10 items) and health (3 items). According to the questionnaire's instructions, score 2 belongs to the answer *always*, or *more often*, score 1 to *sometimes*, and zero to *rarely* or *never*;

therefore, the minimum score is zero and the maximum is 90. Higher scores indicate good study habits. The total score of the study habits was classified in three parts of adverse study habits (scores less than 30), relatively favorable (scores 31 - 60) and desirable (scores greater than 61). Its validity and reliability have been confirmed in numerous previous studies done in Iran, including those of Fereidouni Moghadam and Cheraghian (14). Accordingly, its test-retest reliability was 0.88, its internal consistency through split-half method was 0.65 and its standard dependent validity was reported as 0.74. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation and percentage) were used to analyze the data in SPSS version 22.

## 4. Results

A total of 160 dental students at Ahvaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences in Southwest of Iran, who had passed at least one year of their study participated in this research. Of these, 38.8% were male and 61.2% were female, 93.8% were single and the rest were married, 55.6% of them were local and the rest were non-local, and 31.2% were satisfied with their university. Also, 93.1% of them were satisfied with their chosen field of study. Age-wise, 9.4% of them belonged to under 20, 59.4% to 21-25, 24.4% to 26-30 and 6.8% to over 30-year age groups. Also, 1.8% of students were in the second year of study, 30.6% in the third, 28.1% in the fourth, 15.6% in the fifth, 8.8% in the sixth, 13.12% in the seventh and 1.8% in the eighth.

The average score of the budgeting time was 5.1 out of 10, the physical condition was 6.9 of 12, the reading ability was 8.22 of 16, the noting was 2.1 of 6, the learning motivation was 7.2 of 12, the memory was 4.4 of 8, the holding examinations was 10.6 of 20, and the health was 2.5 of 6. Therefore, according to the mean scores of the whole questionnaire, the study habits of the students under study were relatively favorable and moderate, 47 of 90 (Table 1).

Results of studying the views of students regarding the impact of the main variables of the research on the study habits of medical students of Ahvaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences and the severity and weakness of the options of the questionnaire (*most often*, *sometimes* and *never*); the respondents have chosen the option "*sometimes*" from among these three choices (Table 2). Accordingly, they have chosen in the area of memory "*sometimes*" (51.6%), in the budgeting time "*sometimes*" (48.7 percent), in the option of noting "*rarely* or *never*" (43.8%), in the field of health "*sometimes*" (43.8%), in the field of learning motivation "*more often*" (41.7%), in the field of physical condition "*more often*" (40.6%), in the field of reading ability "*sometimes*" (38.3%) and in the option of holding exams "*more often*" (36.3%).

**Table 1.** Mean of Components Related to Study Habits (N = 160)

Components	Score Interval	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Budgeting time	0 - 10	5.1	1.8
2. Physical status	0 - 12	6.9	2.7
3. Reading capability	0 - 16	8.2	2.2
4. Noting	0 - 6	2.1	1.4
5. Learning motivation	0 - 12	7.2	1.7
6. Memory	0 - 8	4.4	1.1
7. Holding exams	0 - 20	10.6	2.2
8. Health	0 - 6	2.5	1.4
Total	0 - 90	47	9.9

## 5. Discussion

In general, the results of this study showed that the study habits of dental students at Ahvaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences in Southwest of Iran are moderate, approximately the same as those in other medical universities in Iran. Therefore, the findings of this research are consistent with the Gilavand's review done on all studies conducted in Iran (6). Also, Abazari and Rigi reported moderate study habits of students of Zahedan University of Medical Sciences in Southeast Iran in 2011 (12). Torabi et al. evaluated the study habits of the dentistry students of Kerman University of Medical Sciences in central Iran (13). Feridouni Moghadam and Cheraghian also reported moderate study habits for nursing students of Abadan Faculty of Medical Sciences in southwest Iran in 2007 (14). Alamdar et al. reported moderate study habits for students of Rafsanjan University of Medical Sciences in Central Iran in 2015 (15). Torshizi et al. reported moderate study habits of students of Birjand University of Medical Sciences in northeast Iran in 2010 (16). Zarezadeh and Rasolabadi reported moderate study habits for students of Kurdistan University of Medical Sciences in west Iran in 2013 (17). Madmoli et al. reported moderate study habits for students of nursing, operating rooms and medical emergencies of Dezfoul University of Medical Sciences in Southwest Iran in 2015 (18). Nourian et al. reported moderate study habits for students of Zanjan University of Medical Sciences in north Iran in 2004 (19). Alimohammadi et al. reported moderate study habits for nursing students of Hamedan University of Medical Sciences in west Iran in 2018. Furthermore, a positive and significant relationship was observed between the mean score of study habits and the academic performance of the students of this university (20). Amini et al. also showed that most medical students of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences in the Center of Iran in 2013 use a deep and strategic attitude for their study (21). Aminian

and Ghomizadeh conducted a study aimed at comparing successful and unsuccessful students in terms of studying methods in Yazd University of Medical Sciences in the center of Iran in 2018. The results showed that successful students compared to unsuccessful students had better academic habits in addition to more effective methods for studying and learning (22). Studies have shown that study habits of general medical students of Ahvaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences are relatively favorable and moderate. They also reported an inverse relationship between proper study habits and test anxiety (4). Studies have shown that training proper study habits through mobile apps can be effective in learning proper study habits by students, followed by their academic achievement (3).

Among the limitations of this study, we can mention the impact of participants' psychological status on the results, which is outside the control of the researcher. Also, this research recruited only dental students of Ahvaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences in Southwest Iran, which is one of its limitations.

### 5.1. Conclusions

Studying and learning styles can affect academic achievement of students, hence, they distinguish successful and unsuccessful university students. Due to the importance of study habits in the performance and academic achievement of individuals, and since academic performance ultimately has a definite effect on the occupational and academic future of individuals, then the planning in the direction of improving the study methods and habits of students is essential. Education managers and planners can incorporate appropriate educational content in the form of workshops, create counseling centers, design mobile apps, and so forth to teach proper study methods at universities to enhance students' study habits and thus improve their performance. Students of medical sciences are faced with a large volume of courses during their study. Education and awareness of proper study skills play important roles in improving their academic performance. It is suggested that intensive courses of teaching study skills be organized at the start of the university, and counseling centers be established to answer students' questions. Also, consulting professors can be encouraged to teach study methods through holding guidance sessions for students.

### Acknowledgments

This project was funded by the National Agency for Strategic Research in Medical Education, Tehran, Iran (grant No. 960437).

**Table 2.** Students' Comments on the Effect of Research Main Effects Study Habits<sup>a</sup>

Response	Budgeting Time	Physical Status	Reading Capability	Noting	Learning Motivation	Memory	Holding Tests	Health
More times	42 (26.3)	65 (40.6)	51 (32)	23 (14.6)	67 (41.7)	47 (29.7)	58 (36.3)	34 (20.8)
Sometimes	78 (48.7)	53 (33.4)	61 (38.3)	67 (41.7)	58 (36.5)	83 (51.6)	53 (33.1)	70 (43.8)
Rarely or never	40 (25)	42 (26)	46 (28.9)	70 (43.8)	35 (21.98)	30 (18.8)	48 (30)	56 (35.4)
Undetermined	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (0.8)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0.6)	0 (0)
<b>Total</b>	160 (100)	160 (100)	160 (100)	160 (100)	160 (100)	160 (100)	160 (100)	160 (100)

<sup>a</sup>Values are expressed as No. (%).

## Footnotes

**Conflict of Interests:** There is no conflict of interest in this study.

**Ethical Considerations:** It is not declared by the authors.

**Funding/Support:** This project was funded by the National Agency for Strategic Research in Medical Education, Tehran, Iran (grant No. 960437).

## References

- Rezaie Looyeh H, Seyed Fazelpour SF, Reza Masoule S, Chehrzad MM, Kazem Nejad Leili E. The relationship between the study habits and the academic performance of medical sciences students. *J Holist Nurs Midwifery*. 2017;27(2):65-73. doi: [10.18869/acadpub.hnmj.27.2.65](https://doi.org/10.18869/acadpub.hnmj.27.2.65).
- Mahmoodzadeh A, Javadi A, Mohammadi Y. Relationship between studying approaches and academic performance in students of Birjand University of Medical Sciences. *Res Med Educ*. 2016;8(3):9-16. doi: [10.18869/acadpub.rme.8.3.9](https://doi.org/10.18869/acadpub.rme.8.3.9).
- Gilavand A. Investigating the effect of using mobile educational application of study habits on improving students' awareness concerning proper study habits. *J Res Med Dent Sci*. 2018;6(5):273-7.
- Gilavand A. Evaluation of study habits among general medical students and its relation with test anxiety in Ahvaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences, Southwest of Iran. *J Res Med Dent Sci*. 2018;6(5):240-5.
- Gilavand A, Shooriabi M. Investigating the relationship between mental health and academic achievement of dental students of Ahvaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences. *Int J Med Res Health Sci*. 2016;5(7S):328-33.
- Gilavand A. Investigating the study habits among students of Iranian medical sciences universities: A review. *Indo Am J Pharmaceut Sci*. 2017;4(12):4734-8. doi: [10.5281/zenodo.1133164](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1133164).
- Gilavand A, Fattahi Asl J, Kameli M. Investigating the effect of using the mobile educational app as appropriate method of study and learning on students' educational achievement. *Future Med Educ J*. 2019;9(1):25-9. doi: [10.22038/FMEJ.2019.36417.1239](https://doi.org/10.22038/FMEJ.2019.36417.1239).
- Gilavand A, Fatahial J. Studying effect of fasting during Ramadan on mental health of university students in Iran: A review. *J Res Med Dent Sci*. 2018;6(2):205-9.
- Paiboonsithiwong S, Kunanithaworn N, Songtrijuck N, Wongpakaran N, Wongpakaran T. Learning styles, academic achievement, and mental health problems among medical students in Thailand. *J Educ Eval Health Prof*. 2016;13:38. doi: [10.3352/jeehp.2016.13.38](https://doi.org/10.3352/jeehp.2016.13.38). [PubMed: [27804284](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27804284/)]. [PubMed Central: [PMC5121187](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/PMC5121187/)].
- Poscia A, Frisicale EM, Parente P, de Waure C, La Milia DI, Di Pietro ML. Study habits and technology use in Italian university students. *Ann Ist Super Sanita*. 2015;51(2):126-30. doi: [10.4415/ANN\\_15\\_02\\_10](https://doi.org/10.4415/ANN_15_02_10). [PubMed: [26156183](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26156183/)].
- Babaei Shirvani Z, Faramarzi M, Naderi H, Fakhri S. [Relationship between studying and learning strategies and academic performances in medical sciences students]. *Bimon Educ Strat Med Sci*. 2015;8(3):165-70. Persian.
- Abazari A, Rigi T. [Study habits and skills of students in Zahedan University of Medical Sciences, Iran]. *Health Info Manag*. 2013;9(6):848-61. Persian.
- Torabi M, Haghani J, KarimiAfshar M, Mohseni P. [Exam anxiety among dental students of Kerman University of Medical Sciences, Iran, in 2013]. *Strides Dev Med Educ*. 2015;11(4):534-41. Persian.
- Fereidouni Moghadam M, Cheraghian B. [Study habits and their relationship with academic performance among students of Abadan School of Nursing]. *Strides Dev Med Educ*. 2009;6(1):21-8. Persian.
- Alamdar H, Bakhtar M, Sheikh Fathollahi M, Rezaeian M. [A survey on the study habits in students of Rafsanjan University of Medical Sciences in 2015]. *J Rafsanjan Univ Med Sci*. 2017;16(2):155-68. Persian.
- Torshizi M, Varasteh S, Poor Rezaei Z, Fasihi R. [Study habits in students of Birjand University of Medical Sciences]. *Iran J Med Educ*. 2013;12(11):866-76. Persian.
- Zarezadeh Y, Rasolabadi M. [Students' study skills and habits and some related factors in Kurdistan University of Medical Sciences]. *J Med Educ Dev*. 2015;8(17):29-37. Persian.
- Madmoli Y, Aslani A, Ahmadi Y, Mousavi M, Mashalchi H, Niksefat M, et al. [Study habits and related factors in students of Nursing and Midwifery College of Dezfoul University of Medical Sciences in 2015]. *Iran J Nurs Res*. 2017;12(5):27-34. Persian. doi: [10.21859/ijnr-12055](https://doi.org/10.21859/ijnr-12055).
- Nourian AA, Mousavinasab N, Fahri A, Mohammadzadeh A. [Medical students' study skills and habits in Zanjan University of Medical Sciences]. *Iran J Med Educ*. 2006;6(1):101-7. Persian.
- Alimohamadi N, Dehghani M, Almasi S, Ashtarani E, Jonbakhsh F, Paymard A, et al. [Relation study between study habit and academic performance of nursing students in Hamadan]. *Pajouhan Sci J*. 2018;16(3):29-38. Persian. doi: [10.21859/psj.16.3.29](https://doi.org/10.21859/psj.16.3.29).
- Amini M, Tajamul S, Lotfi F, Karimian Z. A survey on study habits of medical students in Shiraz Medical School. *Future Med Educ J*. 2012;2(3):28-34. doi: [10.22038/fmej.2012.354](https://doi.org/10.22038/fmej.2012.354).
- Aminian A, Ghomizadeh A. [Comparing successful and unsuccessful students with respect to studying methods in Yazd Shaheed Sadoughi Medical University]. *J Med Educ Dev*. 2007;2(1):8-14. Persian.