

Examination Preparation Strategies and Academic Achievement  
of Students at Secondary Level

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**Backdrop**

Today's Secondary school students are spending less time studying. The surveys indicate that only 34% of students spent have spent six or more hours per week outside of class on academic-related work (e.g., doing homework, studying) during their senior year in high school.

Students spending less time studying and more time on leisure activities are two trends that all schools will have to confront. Lowering academic standards by rewarding minimum effort and achievement (expecting less) is certainly a short-term strategy, but one that will have negative long-term consequences. A more productive way to handle these concerns is to conduct empirical research to determine to what extent these trends will negatively impact the academic performance of students and use the findings from these studies to improve our academic programs.

The influence that personal variables, such as motivation and ability, have on academic success is to be documented, but there is a paucity of research investigating the influence that time high school students spend on various activities such as studying outside of class and working has on their academic success.

One reason for a lack of research in this area may be the common belief among most students and academicians that more time spent studying outside of class positively influences academic performance and that more time spent working negatively influences academic performance. Another, more plausible reason for this lack of research may be the complex nature of these relationships when evaluated in the presence of other variables, such as student ability and motivation. For example, it is likely that time spent studying outside of class will have a differential impact on the academic performance of college students who vary in ability. That is, the relationship that ability has with student performance will be stronger for those students who spend more time outside of class studying than for students who spend less time studying.

### **Obstacles to the self-study**

There are many obstacles which causes diversion within the students; some of these are;

1. Age factor- The adolescent age itself is a factor, which influences in the minds of the young and does not allow them to concentrate for longer times.
2. Schools Schools generally are influencing students in school time only. It has certainly failed to insist on self-study out of school time.
3. Peer group now the peer group of the students with varied experiences of life styles negatively influences the students' self study.
4. Mobile, TV, Computer, Internet- Mobile, Android, Television, Internet etc. are the most time killing devises, which recently developed and self-sufficient to kill personallife time of an individual. These are the prime demand of the students.

### **Academic Achievement**

Along with the present trend of studentsspending less time on academic related activities, a growing number of college and university administrators are concerned that today's postsecondary students are working more hours than their counterparts were years ago (Gose, 1998). It can be reasonably assumed that working more hours per week will leave students less time for studying outside of class and that this will negatively influence their academic performance.

Although working more hours per week can be one key reason for a student to be in academic trouble, available research does not seem to support this hypothesis. Strauss and Volkwein (2002) reported that working more hours per week positively related to a student's GPA. Light (2001), who interviewed undergraduate students of all majors, found no significant relationship between paid work and grades. According to Light, "students who work a lot, a little, or not at all share a similar pattern of grades" Because empirical evidence to date has been counterintuitive, testing this hypothesis using different samples and differentmethodologies is important before generalizations can be made.

### **Examination Preparation Strategies**

In the light of achieving higher grades in the examination is a combination of the various activities that are being undertaken by the students. If we go through the answer sheets of high achievers, they do differently with the normal things which attract the evaluator and hence resulting in the higher grades. It means that, it is not only sufficient to have sufficient hours of self-study, but the presentation in the answer sheets is also matters a lot. Tidiness and the decoration of the answers presented may bring variation of about 10 to 20 percent of the grades/marks achieved.



### Objectives of the study

The present study was conducted on the following areas of the examination preparation strategy of the students

1. To study the attitude of the students about intense study of the subject content
2. To study the level of grasping about aspect of the question.
3. To study the attitude towards maintaining of the word limit given in the questions.
4. To study the decorative aspect of the answer script and answer sheet.
5. To study the effect of examination preparation strategy on the academic achievement of students.

### Hypotheses :

Following hypotheses were formulated for the study.

1. Sex and locality wise there will be no significant difference in the attitude of the students about intense study of the subject content
2. Sex and locality wise there will be no significant difference in getting the aspect of the question before attempting.
3. Sex and locality wise there will be no significant difference in maintaining the word limit of the answer of the questions.
4. Sex and locality wise there will be no significant difference in Decorative aspect of the answer script and answer sheet.
5. There will be no significant effect of examination preparation strategy on academic achievement of students.

### Sample

The study was conducted on the following sample by using purposive sampling method on 160 students appearing class X in the Belha block of Bilaspur district, Chhattisgarh. The sample frame include 80 students from rural area and 80 from urban area with sex wise equal representation of 80 boys and 80 girls.

The sample frame

School	Locality	Boys	Girls	Total
Govt. Hr. Sec. School Chakarbhata Camp	Urban	20	20	40
Govt. Hr. Sec. School Tifra	Urban	20	20	40
Govt. Hr. Sec. School Parsada	Rural	20	20	40
Govt. Hr. Sec. School Senwar	Rural	20	20	40
<b>Total</b>		<b>80</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>160</b>

**Tools Used**

1. Examination Preparation Strategy (EPS)

The study was conducted by the researcher made tool developed to study the aspects of the objectives of the study. The scale was consisted of 35 items consisting of all the four aspects of examination preparation strategy of which 24 were positive and 11 negative statements. The validity of the tool was established by the considering the advice of subject specialists and teachers.

A three point Lickert type scale was developed for the study. The minimum and maximum scores were 35 and 105.

2. Academic Achievement

For the academic achievement of the students, the percentage scores of class IX have been taken in to consideration. The maximum marks for class IX term end examination is 600, minimum pass marks is 198. The percent may vary from 100 to 33.

**Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The data were collected by the administration of the scale upon the sample and the analysis of the data was done on the basis of hypotheses drawn.

The hypothesis is based on the aspect of selective study option generally adopted by the students. In this approach, students avoid of through study of the prescribed syllabi for the class.

1. Sex and locality wise there will be no significant difference in the attitude of the students about intense study of the subject content

**Table 01**  
**Sex and locality wise Means, SDs and t-values of the attitude of the students about intense study of the subject content**

Group	N	Mean	SD	SEd.	df	t-value	Signi
Rural	80	32.37	3.66	.583	158	1.83	NS
Urban	80	31.3	3.712	.476	158	5.14	P<.01
Boys	80	30.42	2.94				
Girls	80	32.87	3.09				

From table 01 it can be seen that, locality wise, there is no significant difference in the attitude towards intense study of the subject content among the rural and urban students. ( $t=1.83$ ,  $df=158$ , NS). Girls have shown significantly higher attitude towards intense study of the subject content than the boys. ( $t=5.14$ ,  $df=158$ ,  $p<.01$ ).

2. Sex and locality wise there will be no significant difference in getting the aspect of the question before attempting.

In this part of the analysis, students were asked to how deeply they differentiate among key prefix words such as, how, what, why, when, where, compare, illustrate etc. In each case, the mode of answering may be different. Hence it is very much necessary to get the aspect of the question before attempting it.

**Table 02**  
**Sex and locality wise Means, SDs and t-values of the getting the aspect of the question before attempting.**

Group	N	Mean	SD	S.Ed.	df	t-value	Signi
Rural	80	18.37	2.4	.371	158	0.646	NS
Urban	80	18.13	2.3				
Boys	80	18.42	2.5	.387	158	1.44	NS
Girls	80	18.96	2.41				

From table 02 it can be seen that, locality wise, there is no significant difference between rural and urban students in getting the aspect of the question before attempting. ( $t=0.646$ ,  $df=158$ , NS). Similarly there is no significant difference between boys and girls in getting the aspect of the question before attempting. ( $t=1.44$ ,  $df=158$ , NS).

3. Sex and locality wise there will be no significant difference in maintaining the word limit of the answer of the questions.

In this part of the analysis, students were asked to how seriously they take the word limit that is being given in the question paper. It includes how many words per line they usually write in a line. How many lines he is going to take for a question with one hundred word limit? This insight makes them to arrange the answer of the question in required number of lines before attempting it.

**Table 03**  
**Sex and locality wise Means, SDs and t-values of the maintaining the word limit of the answer of the questions.**

Group	N	Mean	SD	S.Ed.	df	t-value	Signi
Rural	80	11.46	2.22	.312	158	0.769	NS
Urban	80	11.7	1.7				
Boys	80	11.42	2.1	.309	158	3.88	$P<.01$
Girls	80	10.22	1.8				

From table 03 it can be seen that, locality wise, there is no significant difference between rural and urban students in maintaining the word limit of the answer of the questions. ( $t=1.59$ ,  $df=158$ , NS). Boys have shown significantly higher attitude towards maintaining the word limit of the answer of the questions than girls. ( $t=3.88$ ,  $df=158$ ,  $p<.01$ ).

4. Sex and locality wise there will be no significant difference in decorative aspect of the answer script and answer sheet.

For the study of the particular factor, students were asked to respond on the decorative aspects of answer script and sheet. Whether they use different colour pens, various shapes, flow diagrams, underlining the flash points, and maintaining good hand writing without cut marks, proper maintaining the margins etc.

**Table 04**  
**Sex and locality wise Means, SDs and t-values of the factor decorative aspect of**  
**The answer script and answer sheet**

Group	N	Mean	SD	S.Ed.	df	t-value	Signi
Rural	80	18.36	2.40	.372	158	0.752	NS
Urban	80	18.08	2.31				
Boys	80	17.23	2.31	.338	158	2.63	P<.01
Girls	80	18.12	1.96				

From table 04 it can be seen that, locality wise, there is no significant difference between rural and urban students in decorative aspect of the answer script and answer sheet. ( $t=0.752$ ,  $df=158$ , NS). Girls have shown significantly higher attitude towards decorative aspect of the answer script answer sheet than boys. ( $t=2.63$ ,  $df=158$ ,  $p<.01$ ).

5. There will be no significant effect of examination preparation strategy on academic achievement of students.

In order to study the effectiveness, the data of the examination preparation strategy which is sum of all the sub factors are arranged in descending order and their corresponding academic achievement scores were grouped. The top and bottom groups of the academic achievement scores (27 percent of 160) i.e. of 43 students each were taken. Means, Sd's and t- value is computed. The summary is given in table no. 5

**Table 05**  
**Sex and locality wise Means, SDs and t-values of the academic achievement of top and**  
**bottom groups of examination preparation strategy.**

Group	N	Mean	SD	S.Ed.	df	t-value	Signi
Top	43	62.13	9.158	1.57	84	30.87	P<.01
Bottom	43	13.65	4.83				

From table 05 it can be seen that, there is a significant difference between the top and bottom groups in academic achievement depending upon their examination preparation strategy. ( $t=30.87$ ,  $df=84$ , NS).

### Major Findings

1. There is no significant difference in the attitude towards intense study of the subject content among the rural and urban students.
2. Girls have shown significantly higher attitude towards intense study of the subject content than the boys.
3. There is no significant difference between rural and urban students in getting the aspect of the question before attempting.
4. There is no significant difference between boys and girls in getting the aspect of the question before attempting.
5. There is no significant difference between rural and urban students in maintaining the word limit of the answer of the questions.
6. Boys have shown significantly higher attitude towards maintaining the word limit of the answer of the questions than girls.
7. There is no significant difference between rural and urban students in decorative aspect of the answer script and answer sheet.
8. Girls have shown significantly higher attitude towards decorative aspect of the answer script answer sheet than boys.
9. There is a significant difference between the top and bottom groups in academic achievement depending upon their examination preparation strategy.

### Educational Implications

It is now noteworthy that, not only studying the content and writing the answer is sufficient, but maintaining word limit, proper understanding of the aspect of the question, decorative aspects of the script and answer sheet also matter in higher academic achievement. Hence students, teachers, principals and parents may use these results so as to enhance the academic achievement.

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