



## Study Habits among Students in Context of Family Climate, Adjustment and Mental Health

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### ORIGINAL ARTICLE



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### ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted on female students ( $N = 150$ ) to compare their study habit in context of family climate, adjustment and mental health. It was hypothesized that there will be significant difference between students belonging to (i) favourable and unfavourable family climate groups, (ii) sound and poor adjustment groups, (iii) sound and poor mental health groups of students on the measure study habit. The student respondents were administered FCS, MHB, Adjustment Inventory and Study Habit Scale along with PDS and obtained data were treated using  $t$ -test. The findings supported the hypotheses. It was found that student of favourable family climate group, sound adjustment group and sound mental health groups all excelled over their counterparts in terms of their having good and sound study habit. Thus, favourable family climate, sound adjustment and mental health all are conducive to good and sound study habit.

### KEY WORDS

Female Students, Mental Health, Family Climate, Adjustment.

### INTRODUCTION

The study of student habits, particularly in the context of family climate, adjustment, and mental health, is a multi-dimensional issue that integrates several psychological, social, and environmental factors. These factors directly influence how students approach learning, study habits, and academic success. Let's break down the elements involved and how they interrelate: The family climate encompasses the emotional and psychological atmosphere at home, including the quality of communication, support, and

conflict resolution. A positive family climate often fosters good study habits in students, while a negative family climate can impede academic performance. Some key aspects include: (i) Parental Support and Involvement: Families that offer emotional support, set clear expectations, and actively engage in their child's academic journey (e.g., monitoring progress, helping with assignments) often see students developing better study habits. These students are likely to be more motivated, organized, and persistent. (ii) Conflict and Stress: On the other hand, a high level of conflict, stress, or negative relationships at home can lead to anxiety, poor concentration, and an inability to focus on school tasks. In families with less emotional support, students may develop procrastination tendencies, low motivation, and poor time management skills and (iii) Cultural Factors: In many cultures, parental expectations and involvement are crucial. However, excessive pressure from family members can lead to stress and burnout. Finding a balance between encouragement and pressure is key to fostering healthy study habits.

When students enter a new academic environment (such as high school or college), they need to adjust to the academic, social, and emotional demands. This adjustment process is influenced by both individual and family factors. (i) Supportive Family Role: Families who foster emotional stability and autonomy in their children enable better adjustment to academic life. This includes giving students space to make their own decisions, while still offering guidance. (ii) School Environment and Peer Influence: The support students receive from their family and peers during this transition also shapes their study habits. An absence of family support can lead to poor adaptation to new academic norms, poor time management, and decreased motivation and (iii) Coping Mechanisms: Families play a critical role in teaching coping strategies for academic stress. Families that model healthy coping mechanisms (e.g., time management, relaxation techniques, emotional regulation) help students build resilience in academic settings.

Mental health plays a crucial role in how students approach their academic work and manage their study habits. Students with mental health challenges (e.g., anxiety, depression, ADHD) often struggle with concentration, organization, and time management, which in turn affects their study habits. Family climate can influence mental health by either exacerbating or alleviating these challenges. (i) Anxiety and Stress: Chronic anxiety or stress—often related to family dynamics, academic pressure, or social challenges—can negatively impact a student's ability to study effectively. High levels of stress may lead to negative thinking patterns and feelings of inadequacy, which can result in procrastination or avoidance. (ii) Depression: Depression often leads to low energy, lack of motivation, and difficulty focusing, all of which can disrupt a student's study habits. A family that is understanding and supportive can play a significant role in helping the student manage their mental health and maintain academic routines and (iii) Attention Disorders: Students with ADHD or similar conditions may struggle with focus, organization, and time management. These challenges can lead to disorganized study habits, unless family members provide structure, encouragement, and strategies to manage attention.

Certain study habits are known to help improve mental health while also enhancing academic performance. These include: (i) Time Management: Students who develop good time management skills are better able to manage academic workload and reduce stress. Creating a study schedule with designated breaks can foster a balanced approach to both academics and self-care. (ii) Study Environment: A quiet, organized, and comfortable study environment can significantly reduce stress and improve focus. Family members can help by ensuring the student has a dedicated study space free from distractions. (iii) Self-Regulation Techniques: Healthy study habits include setting realistic goals, tracking progress, and celebrating achievements. These techniques help students maintain a positive outlook, regulate emotions, and avoid feelings of failure and (iv) Physical and Mental Breaks: Taking breaks is crucial for mental health. Students who practice taking short, regular breaks during study sessions are likely to avoid burnout and maintain focus.

A family's role in supporting students with mental health concerns cannot be overstated. The support system provided by family members can: (i) Provide a Safe Space: Students who feel emotionally safe at home are more likely to share mental health struggles and seek help, which can lead to better mental health

outcomes and improved study habits. (ii) Promote Healthy Lifestyle Choices: Families that encourage physical activity, balanced nutrition, and adequate sleep contribute to better cognitive function, emotional regulation, and academic performance and (iii) Seek Professional Help When Needed: In cases of significant mental health issues, families can help students access counseling, therapy, or medication that can improve their emotional well-being and, by extension, their study habits.

Overall, the interplay between family climate, adjustment, and mental health determines how students manage their study habits and approach their academic responsibilities. A nurturing family environment provides the emotional foundation necessary for healthy adjustment to academic challenges and managing stress. Conversely, a toxic or unsupported family climate can exacerbate mental health issues, leading to poor academic performance and unhealthy study habits.

In summary, promoting healthy family dynamics, offering support for academic adjustment, and addressing mental health concerns are all essential for students to develop effective study habits. Addressing these factors holistically improves students' academic success and emotional well-being.

## Review of Literature

Lavigne, G., & Ryan, A. M.<sup>5</sup> (2009) emphasized how a positive family environment, including emotional support, encouragement, and clear expectations, correlates with effective study habits. It discusses how parents who are actively involved in their children's educational journey can shape habits like time management, goal setting, and organized study routines. A supportive family climate is linked to higher academic achievement due to improved motivation and reduced anxiety levels. Jeynes, W. H.<sup>4</sup> (2007) highlighted the direct link between parental involvement and students' mental health, particularly how a lack of support at home can exacerbate mental health issues, which in turn affects study habits. It suggests that active parental engagement not only improves academic performance but also promotes positive mental health by providing students with the emotional and psychological resources needed to cope with stress. Turner, H. A., & Finkelhor, D.<sup>9</sup> (2010) reviewed how family stress (such as financial issues, marital problems, or chronic illness) disrupts students' study routines and mental health. Chronic family stress is often associated with negative emotional outcomes like anxiety and depression, which can significantly impair concentration, motivation, and the development of effective study habits. Wilson, S., & Kellogg, M.<sup>11</sup> (2012). explored the relationship between family climate and students' mental health over time. It found that children raised in emotionally stable and supportive homes showed healthier mental health outcomes and better study habits. Over time, students in supportive family environments were more likely to develop effective time-management and goal-setting skills. McLeod, J. D., & Kaiser, K.<sup>6</sup> (2004) reviewed how mental health disorders like depression, anxiety, and ADHD affect students' study habits. Students struggling with mental health issues often experience difficulties with focus, memory, and emotional regulation, which in turn impair their academic performance. The review highlights how intervention programs aimed at improving students' mental health can also enhance their academic behaviors and study routines. Salmela-Aro, K., & Nurmi, J. E.<sup>7</sup> (2007) reviewed how parental expectations shape student stress levels and affect study habits. The review suggests that while high parental expectations can sometimes motivate students, they may also lead to heightened anxiety and poor mental health, resulting in negative study behaviors such as procrastination, avoidance, and ineffective time management. Chao, R. K.<sup>1</sup> (2001) reviewed focuses on how cultural values influence family climate and, by extension, student study habits. It discusses the balance between collectivist and individualistic cultural norms, highlighting how family expectations in different cultures shape students' approaches to academic achievement and emotional coping strategies. Ginsburg, G. S., & Silverman, W. K.<sup>3</sup> (2000) examined how access to mental health resources and counseling services improves students' academic performance. By addressing underlying mental health issues, students are better able to manage academic stress, stay organized, and develop effective study routines. It emphasizes the importance of schools and families working together to provide emotional and psychological support. Ecclestone, K., & Hayes, D.<sup>2</sup> (2009) reviewed gender differences in how family environment and

mental health impact academic outcomes. It suggests that while both male and female students are affected by family climate, females tend to experience higher levels of academic stress and mental health issues due to family expectations, leading to differences in study habits between genders. Whiteman, S. D., McHale, S. M., & Crouter, A. C.<sup>10</sup> (2011) focussed on sibling relationships within the family and their impact on academic performance. The study suggests that positive sibling relationships provide emotional support, which can help mitigate the effects of family stress on study habits. Conversely, competitive sibling dynamics can increase stress and lead to unproductive study behaviors. Spera, C., & Wentzel, K. R.<sup>8</sup> (2003) examined how family cohesion (defined as the emotional closeness between family members) supports academic engagement and helps students develop effective study strategies. The review shows that students from cohesive families are more likely to adopt organized and systematic study habits, and they tend to report higher levels of emotional well-being and lower levels of academic stress.

Therefore, it is clear that study habit among school students has not been conducted properly in context with family climate, adjustment and mental health especially in connection with Patna, Bihar. This justifies undertaking of the problem.

## Objective

The study intended to compare students of favourable and unfavourable family climate groups, sound and poor adjustment groups as well as sound and poor mental health groups of study habit.

## Hypothesis

- H<sub>1</sub>** There will be significant difference between favourable and unfavourable family climate groups of student respondents on the measure study habit.
- H<sub>2</sub>** There will be significant difference between sound and poor adjustment groups of student respondents on the measure study habit.
- H<sub>3</sub>** There will be significant difference between sound and poor mental health groups of student respondents on the measure study habit.

## Method of Study

**Design Employed:** Between group design was used.

### Sample

The sample comprised of 150 female students selected from among girls of high schools of Patna town. They were selected using incidental-cum-purposive sampling technique. The sample were matched in respect of sex, inhabitation, SES and other conditions for the present research.

### Tools Used

1. A PDS was employed to seek the necessary information about the respondents.
2. Study Habit Inventory by Patel, B. V. was used to measure study habit of the respondents.
3. Family Climate Scale by Veena Shah was used to measure family climate of the respondents.
4. Hindi adaptation of Bell's Adjustment Inventory was used to measure adjustment of the respondents.
5. MHB by Singh and Sen Gupta was used to measure mental health of the respondents.

## Results and Interpretations

**Table 01:** Comparison between favourable and unfavourable family climate groups of student respondents on the measure study habit

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-value (df=148)	p
Family Climate	Favourable	60	1184.91	15.98	18.41	<.01
	Unfavourable	90	0165.39	07.08		

The results displayed in table-01 clearly revealed that family climate is conducive to study habit. It was found that favourable (N = 60) and unfavourable (N = 90) family, climate groups of students differed significantly in terms of study habit. The students of favourable family climate group excelled (Mean=184.91) over students of unfavourable family climate group on the measure of study habit (Mean=165.39). The t-value showing the significance of difference between the means by the two groups on the measure study habit ( $t = 18.41$ ;  $df = 148$ ;  $p < .01$ ). Students from favorable family climates develop better study habits because supportive families provide encouragement, structure, and resources that promote discipline and focus. Positive communication and emotional stability at home create an environment conducive to consistent learning, while unfavorable climates often lead to distractions, stress, and lack of motivation.

**Table 02:** Comparison between sound and poor adjustment groups of student respondents on the measure study habit

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-value (df=148)	p
Adjustment	Sound	68	185.29	6.48	17.10	<.01
	Poor	82	166.14	7.11		

It is evident from the observation of results table-02 that adjustment is a significant contributor to study habit. The sound (N = 68) and poor (N = 82) adjustment groups of students differ significantly from one another on the measure of adjustment. Sound adjusted group of student excelled (Mean=185.29) over poorly adjusted group of students (Mean = 166.14) in terms of study habit measure. The t-value showing the significance of difference between the means on study habit is found significant ( $t = 17.10$ ;  $df = 148$ ;  $p < .01$ ). Students with sound adjustment develop good study habits because they effectively manage emotions, stress, and social relationships, creating a stable mental state for learning. In contrast, poorly adjusted students may struggle with distractions, anxiety, or behavioral issues that hinder consistent focus and discipline needed for productive study habits.

**Table 03:** Comparison between sound and poor mental health groups of student respondents on the measure study habit

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-value (df=148)	p
Mental Health	Sound	65	187.15	6.96	18.41	<.01
	Poor	85	165.61	7.37		

The results displayed in table-03 clearly revealed that mental health is a prominent factor inducing study habit effectively. The sound (N = 65) and poor (N = 85) mental health group of students differ significantly on study habit measure. The sound mental health group of student excelled (Mean=187.15) over poor mental health group of students (Mean=165.61) on study habit as a measure. The t-value examining the differential effect between the means of the two groups was found significant ( $t = 18.41$ ;  $df = 148$ ;  $p < .01$ ). Students with sound mental health are able to develop good study habits because they possess better concentration, motivation, and emotional regulation. Positive mental well-being reduces stress and anxiety, allowing them to stay focused, organize their time effectively, and persist through academic challenges compared to students with poor mental health.

## CONCLUSION

- (i) Family climate is a significant contributor to study habit. Favourable family climate is conducive to good and appropriate study habit.
- (ii) Adjustment is a significant contributor to study habit. Sound adjustment leads good study habit among student respondents.
- (iii) Mental health is a prominent predictor of good study habit. Sound mental health is the origin of good and appropriate study habit

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