

Rethinking Academic Success: Study Habits and Academic Performance Among Working and Non-Working PE Students

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Abstract. This study examined the study habits and academic performance of working and non-working college students in Zamboanga City during the School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, it investigated six dimensions of study habits: time management, study environment, note-taking, learning strategies, use of learning resources, and motivation/self-regulation, and analyzed their relationship with academic performance measured through General Weighted Average (GWA). A quantitative descriptive-correlational research design was employed, involving 200 respondents (100 working and 100 non-working students) selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using weighted mean, standard deviation, independent samples t-test, and Pearson correlation coefficient. Findings revealed that both working and non-working students demonstrated a moderate level of study habits, with working students showing slightly higher levels, particularly in time management and self-regulation. In terms of academic performance, working students achieved a Very Satisfactory rating, while non-working students obtained a Satisfactory rating. Despite these differences, results indicated no statistically significant relationship between study habits and academic performance for both groups. These findings suggest that study habits alone may not directly predict academic performance, and that other factors—such as motivation, self-regulation, and contextual conditions—may play a more influential role in shaping academic outcomes. The study highlights the importance of focusing on the quality and effectiveness of learning strategies rather than merely their frequency. The results provide valuable insights for educational institutions in designing targeted interventions and support systems for diverse student populations balancing academic and external responsibilities.

Introduction

The increasing participation of college students in part-time or full-time employment while pursuing higher education has become a prominent feature of contemporary academic environments. Economic pressures, rising educational costs, and the need for financial independence have led many students to engage in paid work alongside their studies. While employment may provide financial support and foster personal development, it also introduces competing demands that can influence students' academic engagement, time allocation, and overall performance.

Academic performance, commonly measured through Grade Point Average (GPA) or General Weighted Average (GWA), remains a central indicator of student success in higher education. Existing literature consistently identifies study habits—such as time management, learning strategies, and self-regulation—as key determinants of academic achievement. Effective study behaviors are associated with improved comprehension, retention, and academic outcomes, while poor study

practices are often linked to lower performance. However, academic performance is a multifactorial construct influenced not only by cognitive and behavioral factors but also by contextual conditions such as employment status.

Recent literature consistently identifies study habits as a critical determinant of academic performance. Core dimensions such as time management, learning strategies, and self-regulation have been shown to significantly influence students' academic outcomes. Effective time management enables students to allocate study time efficiently, prioritize academic tasks, and reduce procrastination, which are associated with improved performance (Britton & Tesser, 1991; Claessens et al., 2007; Macan et al., 1990). Similarly, the use of cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies—such as elaboration, organization, and self-monitoring—has been linked to deeper comprehension and long-term retention of knowledge (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Weinstein & Mayer, 1986; Zimmerman, 2002).

In addition, environmental and behavioral factors play a significant role in shaping learning outcomes. A structured and distraction-free study environment enhances concentration and cognitive processing (Evans & Johnson, 2000; Tanner, 2009), while effective note-taking practices support information encoding and retrieval (Kiewra, 1989; Mueller & Oppenheimer, 2014; Piolat et al., 2005). The utilization of learning resources, including digital tools and institutional support systems, further strengthens students' engagement and academic achievement (George et al., 2006; Means et al., 2013; Tenopir et al., 2011). Moreover, motivation and self-regulation are consistently identified as key predictors of academic success, as self-regulated learners actively plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning processes (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Pintrich, 2004; Zimmerman, 2000). Overall, these findings suggest that academic performance is shaped by a combination of cognitive, behavioral, and environmental factors (Credé & Kuncel, 2008; Richardson et al., 2012; York et al., 2015).

The relationship between student employment and academic performance has been widely examined, yet findings remain inconclusive. Some studies suggest that employment, particularly when exceeding moderate working hours, negatively affects academic outcomes due to reduced study time and increased fatigue. In contrast, other research indicates that employment may enhance students' discipline, time management skills, and sense of responsibility, potentially leading to comparable or even improved academic performance. These conflicting findings suggest that the impact of employment on academic outcomes is complex and may depend on how students manage their study habits and learning behaviors.

The influence of employment status on students' academic experiences further complicates this relationship. Working students often encounter constraints such as reduced study time, fatigue, and role conflict, which may disrupt consistent study routines and academic engagement (Darolia, 2014; Humphrey, 2006; Mortimer, 2003). However, some studies suggest that moderate employment can foster discipline, responsibility, and time management skills, which may offset potential academic disadvantages (Pascarella & Padgett, 2009; Watts & Pickering, 2000). In contrast, non-working students typically have greater flexibility to engage in structured study practices and academic enrichment activities, allowing for sustained focus and higher levels of academic engagement (Nonis & Hudson, 2010; Richardson et al., 2012; Tinto, 1997).

Local studies within the Philippine context reflect similar patterns while highlighting context-specific challenges. Filipino working students often experience time constraints and fatigue that affect their study habits, although some develop adaptive strategies such as prioritization and structured planning (Dela Cruz, 2017; Magulod Jr., 2019; Santos, 2018). Conversely, non-working students generally demonstrate more consistent study routines and greater access to academic resources, which support their learning processes (Garcia, 2025; Magulod Jr., 2019). Furthermore, local research emphasizes that time management, motivation, and resource utilization are critical factors influencing academic performance among Filipino students (Aquino & Castillo, 2020; Labrador et al., 2024; Tan, 2018). These findings indicate that while study habits are important, their effectiveness may vary depending on students' employment status and contextual conditions.

Despite extensive international research, there is a notable lack of localized empirical evidence examining how employment status interacts with structured dimensions of study habits to influence academic performance within specific Philippine contexts. Many existing studies either focus solely on employment or examine study habits independently, without integrating both variables in a comparative framework. Furthermore, limited research has been conducted in urban settings such as Zamboanga City, where socioeconomic conditions and educational environments may shape students' academic experiences differently.

In response to this gap, the present study investigated the study habits and academic performance of working and non-working college students in Zamboanga City. Specifically, it examined study habits across six dimensions—time management, study environment, note-taking, learning strategies, use of learning resources, and motivation/self-regulation—and analyze their relationship with academic performance as measured by General Weighted Average (GWA). Additionally, the study compared these variables between working and non-working students to determine whether employment status is associated with differences in study behaviors and academic outcomes.

This study is anchored in Self-Regulated Learning Theory, which emphasizes learners' active role in managing their cognitive, motivational, and behavioral processes to achieve academic goals. According to this framework, effective learners engage in planning, monitoring, and evaluating their learning strategies, enabling them to regulate time, effort, and resource utilization. Core components of self-regulated learning—such as goal-setting, strategic planning, and self-monitoring—are closely aligned with the dimensions of study habits examined in this study, including time management, learning strategies, and motivation/self-regulation. Prior research suggests that students who demonstrate higher levels of self-regulation tend to exhibit more effective study behaviors and improved academic performance (Pintrich, 2004; Zimmerman, 2002). This theory provides a foundation for understanding how individual learning behaviors may influence academic outcomes among both working and non-working students.

In addition, the study is informed by Student Employment Theory, which explains the dual impact of employment on students' academic experiences. This perspective posits that while employment may introduce constraints such as time pressure, fatigue, and role conflict, it can also promote beneficial outcomes, including increased responsibility, discipline, and time management skills. The theory suggests that the effects of employment on academic performance are not inherently negative or positive but depend on how students adapt to competing demands. In the context of this study, employment status is viewed as a contextual factor that may shape students' study habits and academic outcomes. By integrating this perspective, the study examines how working and non-working students differ in their academic behaviors and performance, providing a more nuanced understanding of how external responsibilities interact with learning processes (Pascarella & Padgett, 2009; Darolia, 2014).

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationship between study habits and academic performance, as well as to compare these variables between working and non-working college students. The design was appropriate for identifying patterns, differences, and associations among variables without manipulating the study environment. A cross-sectional approach was utilized, wherein data were collected at a single point in time to capture students' current study behaviors and academic performance. This approach enabled the analysis of how multiple dimensions of study habits relate to academic outcomes within the context of students' employment status.

The study was conducted among college students enrolled in selected public and private higher education institutions in Zamboanga City during the School Year 2025–2026. A total of 200 respondents participated in the study, consisting of 100 working students and 100 non-working students. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on inclusion criteria, which required that respondents be currently enrolled college students and, for the working group, actively engaged in part-time or full-time employment. This sampling approach ensured that participants possessed relevant characteristics necessary for meaningful comparison while increasing the robustness and generalizability of the findings.

Data were collected using a structured self-report questionnaire designed to measure study habits across six dimensions: time management, study environment, note-taking, learning strategies, use of learning resources, and motivation/self-regulation. Items were rated using a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Rarely) to 4 (Always). The instrument underwent expert validation to ensure content relevance and clarity. In addition, internal consistency reliability was established using Cronbach's alpha, yielding an acceptable reliability coefficient ($\alpha \geq 0.70$), indicating that the instrument was suitable for measuring the intended constructs. Academic performance was measured using students' self-reported General Weighted Average (GWA) for the current academic term.

Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were employed to interpret the data. Weighted mean and standard deviation were used to describe the extent of study habits, while an independent samples t-test was conducted to determine significant differences between working and non-working students. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was utilized to examine the relationship between study habits and academic performance. All statistical tests were evaluated at a 0.05 level of significance. Ethical considerations were observed throughout the study, including informed consent, voluntary participation, and confidentiality of respondents' data.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: What is the extent of study habits of working and non-working students?

Table 1 presents the extent of study habits among working students across six dimensions. The overall mean ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 0.39$) indicates a moderate level of study habits. Among the indicators, time management obtained the highest mean ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 0.42$), corresponding to a high level, suggesting that working students are generally effective in organizing and prioritizing their academic tasks. The remaining dimensions—study environment ($M = 3.12$), note-taking ($M = 3.20$),

learning strategies ($M = 2.95$), use of learning resources ($M = 3.10$), and motivation and self-regulation ($M = 3.14$)—all fall within the moderate level, indicating relatively consistent but not highly developed study practices.

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Time Management	3.36	0.42	High Level
Study Environment	3.12	0.45	Moderate Level
Note-taking	3.20	0.47	Moderate Level
Learning Strategies	2.95	0.50	Moderate Level
Use of Learning Resources	3.10	0.44	Moderate Level
Motivation and Self-regulation	3.14	0.46	Moderate Level
Overall Mean	3.15	0.39	Moderate Level

Legend: 3.25-4.00 Highly Extent; 2.50-3.24 Moderately Extent; 1.75-2.49 Fairly Extent; 1.00-1.74 Low Extent

Table 1. Extent of Study Habits Among Working Students

Table 2 presents the extent of study habits among non-working students across the same six dimensions. The overall mean ($M = 2.99$, $SD = 0.41$) indicates a moderately extent level of study habits. Among the indicators, time management recorded the highest mean ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 0.48$), while learning strategies obtained the lowest ($M = 2.84$, $SD = 0.52$). All remaining indicators—study environment, note-taking, use of learning resources, and motivation and self-regulation—also fall within the moderate level, reflecting generally consistent study behaviors among non-working students.

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Time Management	3.08	0.48	Moderately Extent
Study Environment	3.05	0.46	Moderately Extent
Note-taking	3.02	0.49	Moderately Extent
Learning Strategies	2.84	0.52	Moderately Extent
Use of Learning Resources	2.96	0.47	Moderately Extent
Motivation and Self-regulation	2.99	0.45	Moderately Extent
Overall Mean	2.99	0.41	Moderately Extent

Legend: 3.25-4.00 Highly Extent; 2.50-3.24 Moderately Extent; 1.75-2.49 Fairly Extent; 1.00-1.74 Low Extent

Table 2. Extent of Study Habits Among Non-Working Students

A comparison of the overall means in Tables 1 and 2 shows that working students ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 0.39$) demonstrated slightly higher study habit levels than non-working students ($M = 2.99$, $SD = 0.41$). However, both groups fall within the moderate level range, indicating relatively similar patterns of study behavior across the two groups.

Research Question 2: What is the extent of academic performance in terms of General Weighted Average (GWA) among working and non-working students?

Table 3 presents the academic performance of working students based on their General Weighted Average (GWA). The mean GWA is 1.74 ($SD = 0.31$), which falls within the Very Satisfactory range. This indicates that working students are generally able to maintain a relatively high level of academic performance despite balancing employment and academic responsibilities. In contrast, the academic performance of non-working students the mean GWA is 2.18 ($SD = 0.36$), which is interpreted as Satisfactory. This suggests that non-working students are able to meet academic requirements at an acceptable level, although their performance is comparatively lower than that of working students.

Employment Status	N	Mean (GWA)	SD	Descriptive Level
Working	100	1.74	0.31	Very Satisfactory
Non-working	100	2.18	0.36	Satisfactory

Legend (GWA – 1.00 to 5.00 Scale): 1.00–1.25 – Outstanding, 1.26–1.75 – Very Satisfactory, 1.76–2.25 – Satisfactory, 2.26–2.75 – Fairly Satisfactory, 2.76–5.00 – Did Not Meet Expectations

Table 3. Level of Academic Performance of Students by Employment Status

A comparison of the results in Tables 3 and 4 shows that working students ($M = 1.74$, $SD = 0.31$) achieved better academic performance than non-working students ($M = 2.18$, $SD = 0.36$). Based on the GWA scale, this indicates that working students fall within the Very Satisfactory category, whereas non-working students fall within the Satisfactory category.

Research Question 3: Is there a significant relationship between study habits and academic performance among working and non-working students?

Table 4 presents the relationship between study habits and academic performance among working students. The Pearson correlation coefficient indicates a very weak negative relationship ($r = -0.082$) between the two variables. The computed p-value ($p = 0.418$) is greater than the 0.05 level of significance, indicating that the relationship is not statistically significant. This suggests that variations in study habits are not significantly associated with differences in academic performance among working students.

Moreover, the relationship between study habits and academic performance among non-working students. The results show a weak negative correlation ($r = -0.156$) between the variables. However, the p-value ($p = 0.121$) exceeds the 0.05 significance level, indicating that the relationship is not statistically significant. This implies that study habits do not have a statistically measurable association with academic performance among non-working students.

Variables		N	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Study habits and Academic Performance	Working	100	-0.082	0.418	Not significant
	Non-working	100	-0.156	0.121	

significance: 0.05

Table 4. Correlation Between Study Habits and Academic Performance Among Non-Working Students

The results indicate that there is no significant relationship between study habits and academic performance for both working and non-working students. In both groups, the correlation coefficients are weak and negative, and the p-values exceed the 0.05 threshold, leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis.

Discussion

The present study examined the study habits and academic performance of working and non-working college students, as well as the relationship between these variables. The findings revealed that both groups demonstrated a moderate level of study habits, with working students exhibiting slightly higher levels than non-working students. This suggests that while students engage in generally consistent academic behaviors, these practices are not maximized across all dimensions. The relatively higher scores among working students, particularly in time management, may reflect adaptive behaviors developed in response to the dual demands of academic and work responsibilities. This pattern aligns with prior research indicating that employment can foster discipline, structured scheduling, and prioritization skills (Pascarella & Padgett, 2009; Watts & Pickering, 2000). However, the absence of high-level ratings across most study habit dimensions suggests that both groups may lack advanced or strategic learning practices, particularly in areas such as learning strategies and resource utilization.

In terms of academic performance, the findings indicate that working students achieved a higher mean GWA (Very Satisfactory) compared to non-working students, who were categorized as Satisfactory. This result challenges conventional assumptions that employment negatively affects academic outcomes due to time constraints and fatigue (Darolia, 2014; Humphrey, 2006). Instead, the findings suggest that employment may, under certain conditions, contribute positively to academic performance by promoting time efficiency, goal-oriented behavior, and self-discipline. It is also possible that working students develop compensatory strategies that enable them to maintain performance despite limited study time. Conversely, the relatively lower performance of non-working students may indicate that the availability of time alone does not guarantee effective academic engagement, highlighting the importance of how time is utilized rather than the amount of time available.

A key finding of the study is the absence of a statistically significant relationship between study habits and academic performance for both working and non-working students. This result diverges from a substantial body of literature that identifies study habits as strong predictors of academic achievement (Credé & Kuncel, 2008; Richardson et al., 2012). One possible explanation is that academic performance is influenced by a broader set of variables beyond the study habits measured in this study. Factors such as intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, cognitive ability, assessment design, and external support systems may exert a stronger influence on students' academic outcomes. In particular, self-regulation—although included as a dimension—may operate more complexly as a mediating or moderating variable rather than as a direct predictor of performance.

Another plausible explanation relates to the variability in how study habits are practiced among students. While the overall level of study habits was moderate, this may indicate inconsistency in the application of effective strategies. Students may

engage in study behaviors regularly but not necessarily employ evidence-based techniques (e.g., spaced repetition, retrieval practice) that have been shown to significantly impact learning outcomes (Dunlosky et al., 2013). As a result, the quality of study habits, rather than their frequency, may be a more critical determinant of academic performance. This distinction may help explain why no significant relationship was observed despite the presence of generally acceptable study practices.

The findings also highlight the potential role of contextual and environmental factors in shaping academic performance. For working students, employment-related constraints such as limited time and fatigue may be counterbalanced by increased responsibility and structured routines. For non-working students, the absence of such constraints may not necessarily translate into effective academic engagement if not supported by strong self-regulation and motivation. This suggests that employment status may function not simply as a disadvantage or advantage, but as a condition that interacts with individual behavioral and psychological factors in complex ways.

Overall, the results point to the need for a more nuanced understanding of academic performance as a multidimensional construct influenced by the interaction of behavioral, cognitive, and contextual variables. While study habits remain an important component of academic success, their impact may vary depending on how they are applied and how they interact with other internal and external factors. These findings underscore the importance of examining not only the presence of study habits but also their quality, consistency, and alignment with effective learning principles.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the study habits and academic performance of working and non-working college students, as well as the relationship between these variables. The findings indicate that both groups demonstrate a moderate level of study habits, suggesting that students engage in generally consistent academic practices but may not fully utilize effective or strategic learning approaches. Working students exhibited slightly higher levels of study habits, particularly in time management, and achieved better academic performance compared to non-working students.

Despite these patterns, the results revealed no statistically significant relationship between study habits and academic performance for either group. This suggests that study habits alone may not serve as a direct predictor of academic outcomes. Rather, academic performance appears to be influenced by a more complex interplay of factors, including motivation, self-regulation, contextual demands, and individual differences. The findings highlight that the effectiveness of study behaviors depends not only on their presence but also on their quality and application within specific learning contexts.

The findings contribute to the growing body of literature suggesting that academic performance is a multidimensional construct that cannot be fully explained by study habits alone. While existing theories, such as self-regulated learning, emphasize the importance of behavioral and cognitive strategies, the absence of a significant relationship in this study suggests that these variables may operate in more complex ways, potentially as mediators or moderators rather than direct predictors. This underscores the need for future research to adopt more integrative models that account for psychological, contextual, and environmental influences on student performance.

From an institutional perspective, the findings indicate that simply encouraging students to adopt study habits may not be sufficient to improve academic performance. Educational interventions should focus on enhancing the quality and effectiveness of study strategies, particularly in areas such as learning strategies, resource utilization, and self-regulation. The relatively higher performance of working students also suggests that structured routines and time constraints may, in some cases, promote more efficient academic behaviors. This highlights the importance of developing programs that foster discipline, time management, and goal-oriented learning among all students.

Higher education institutions are encouraged to implement comprehensive and evidence-based interventions to enhance students' academic performance by focusing on the quality and effectiveness of study practices. This includes developing structured study skills programs that emphasize strategies such as spaced practice, retrieval techniques, and metacognitive regulation, alongside strengthening academic support services such as tutoring, mentoring, and learning resource centers. Institutions should also promote the development of self-regulation and intrinsic motivation through goal-setting workshops, academic coaching, and reflective learning activities. Faculty members may contribute by designing structured learning environments that encourage consistent study routines and active engagement with course materials. Additionally, flexible academic policies, including blended learning options and reasonable deadline adjustments, may be considered to support students—particularly those balancing work and study responsibilities. Finally, future research should expand the scope of investigation by incorporating variables such as mental health, socioeconomic status, and workload demands, as well as employing larger and more diverse samples to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing academic performance.

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Competing Interests Statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. Access to the data is subject to ethical considerations and the protection of participants' confidentiality.

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Appendices

No appendices are attached to this study.