

STUDENTS PARENTAL BACKGROUND, STUDY PATTERN AND THEIR APPROACH TO EXAMINATION: A CASE STUDY IN BOTHO UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

For the development of a nation, it is more important to provide higher education to its citizens. This study is being conducted to find out the students parental background relate to their educational level and employment status, students study pattern and their approach to examination. In this paper the author also examined the support by parents and residential area, daily study hours and accommodation trend social factors like personnel commitments and sports activities. For this study, due to time constraint the author focused on accounting students only. A questionnaire has been prepared and collected data from third year students of BSc (Hons) in accounting. The researcher collected data from 27 students from the department of accounting at Botho university, Botswana. The collected data were tabulated, percentage analysis made and graphical illustrations made. This study would shed light on their future plan and sport activities also.

Key words: Educational level, Employment status, Study pattern

1. INTRODUCTION

Many researchers conducted detailed studies about the factors contributing student performance at different study levels. Graetz(1995) suggested “ A student educational success contingent heavily on social status of student’s parents/ guardians in the society. Many studies have been conducted in the area of students achievement and these studies identify and analyze the number of factors that affect the academic performance of the student at school, college and even at university level. Their finding identify student’s effort, previous schooling, parent’s educational background, family income, self motivation of students, age of student, learning preferences and entry qualification of students as important factors that have effect on student’s academic performance in different setting. The utility of these studies lies in the need to undertake corrective measures that improve the academic performance of graduate students.

The past research studies have used several dependent factors that influence academic performance of students in different educational institutions. Some of the factors include class attendance, age, learning preferences, gender, class size, entry qualifications and family income, etc.

According to Gose (1998), 39 percent of college freshmen work 16 or more hours per week, an increase of 4 percent since 1993. Among all business majors, marketing students typically work even more hours per week than do other students (smart, Tomkovick, Jones and Menon, 1999).

Parent’s socio-economic condition which includes parent’s academic and professional qualification, revenue and occupational affiliation are also associated with academic gain of students. The results of many studies confirmed that academic achievement of students is contingent upon parent’s socio-economic condition. So the student’s belonging from higher social economical backgrounds will perform better than other students associated with low social economical backgrounds. “Social and economical status of student is generally determined by combining parents qualification, occupation and income standard” Sarath, A. Nonis Gail I. Hudson (2006) stated that students spending less time studying and more time working are two trends that all colleges and universities will have to confront.

In this study we tried to determine the student parent educational level and employment status and time spent by students on their academic work.

Objectives

This study has been formulated with the following objectives:

- i. To find out the family background of students relate to their parents educational level and employment status.
- ii. To analyze the students study pattern relate to their assessment and approach to examination.
- iii. To find out the students mode of study and motivation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Gratz (1995) suggested that “ A student educational success is heavily contingent on the social status of student’s parent / guardians in the society”. Considine and zappala (2002) noticed the same pattern and postulated that parent’s income or social status positively affects the student test score in examinations. parent’s socio-economic condition, which includes parent’s academic and professional qualification, revenue and occupational affiliation, is also associated with academic gain of

students. The results of many students confirm that academic achievement of students is contingent upon their parent's socio-economic condition. Students from higher social economic backgrounds will perform better than other students associated with low social backgrounds. According to Jeynes (2002) the social economic status of a student is generally determined by combining parent's qualification and income standard.

Conversely however, Pedrosa et.al (2006) in their study of student's social and educational background found out that students who come from deprived socio-economic and educational backgrounds performed relatively better than others coming from higher socio-economic and educational area. This may be because the criteria for categorizing socio-economic standards in different countries differ depending of the norms and values of a particular country. For example, the criteria used to determine socio-economic status in a developed country will be different from that used in a developing or under developed countries.

Influence of age and gender

The influence of age and gender on academic performance has been investigated in a number of studies with widely differing conclusions. Most of the differences in reported findings are due to varying contexts such as subject of study, age and gender interactions. Research has shown that men perform better than women in certain settings while women outperform men in other settings (Haist, Wilson, Elam, Blue, & Foaaoon, 2000) . Borde (1998), on the other hand, found no evidence of academic performance being influenced by gender. Based on an analysis of close to two million graduating students, Woodfield and Earl- Novell (2006) found that female students outperformed male students and attributed this partly to female students being more conscientious and thus less likely to miss lectures. Other determinants of academic performance as discussed earlier include self motivation, family income, and parents level of education. Socioeconomic status of students and their families show moderate to strong relationship with academic performance (Sirin, 2005) but these relationships are contingent upon a number of factors such that it is nearly impossible to predict academic performance using socioeconomic status.

Relationship between time spent in studying and motivation

Nowadays students spent less time in their study and other academic related activities. According to Gose (1998) today's post secondary students are working more hours than their counterparts were years ago. So this will lead students spend less time for study and result negative influence on their academic performance. 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 little or not at all share a similar pattern of grades" (P29).

Besides time spent in reading non ability variables such as motivation (Zimmerman, 1989), and optimism (Nonis & Wright, 2003) also influence academic performance.

3. METHODOLOGY

For this study data were collected from a sample of accounting students attending in Botho university. The data were collected from 27 third year students doing accounting degree program. We issued questionnaire and explained them to those students who involved in this study. The questionnaire comprised three sections apart from general information in section A, section B consists of parental background, section C consists of study pattern, section D consists of examination approach and section E consists of mode of study and motivation.

Regarding parental background we enquired parent's educational level, employment status and their support for children education. Under mode of study and motivation (Sarath A. Nonis, Gail. Hudson 2006) questions helped to determine the time spent outside of class on academic activities like reading the text and lecture notes for class preparation, time spent on reading text books, lecture notes for examination preparation , attending assignments and homework etc.

4. RESULTS and DISCUSSION

The data are presented in the tables and illustrated graphically

Table 1. Gender

Gender	Number of respondents
Male	10 (37%)
Female	17 (63%)
Total	27 (100%)

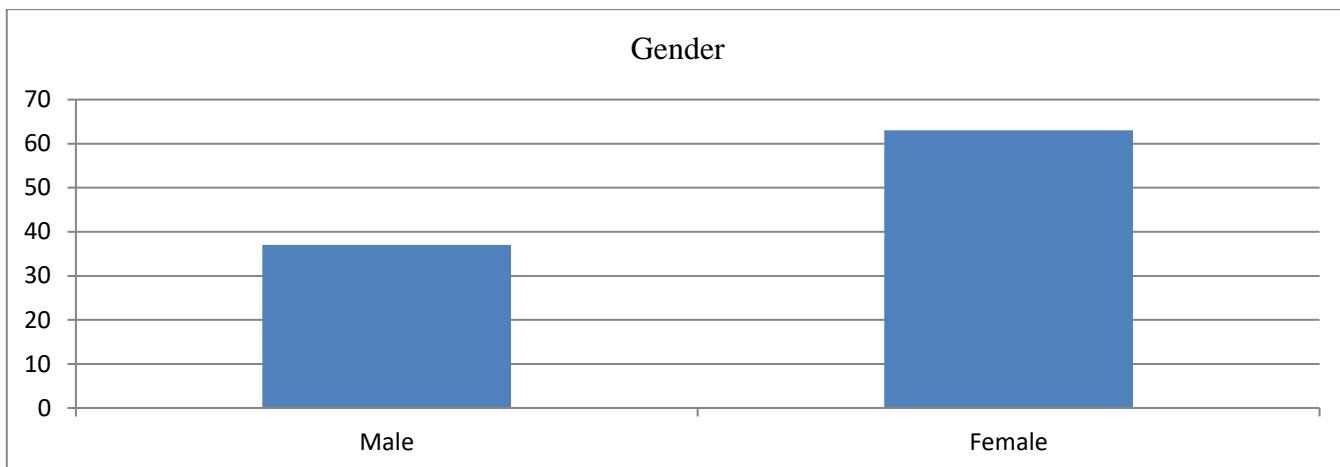


Fig 1

Table 2. Mode of living

Mode of living	Number of respondents
With parents	15(55.55 %)
With guardian	2(7.41%)
On own	10(37.04%)
Total	27(100%)

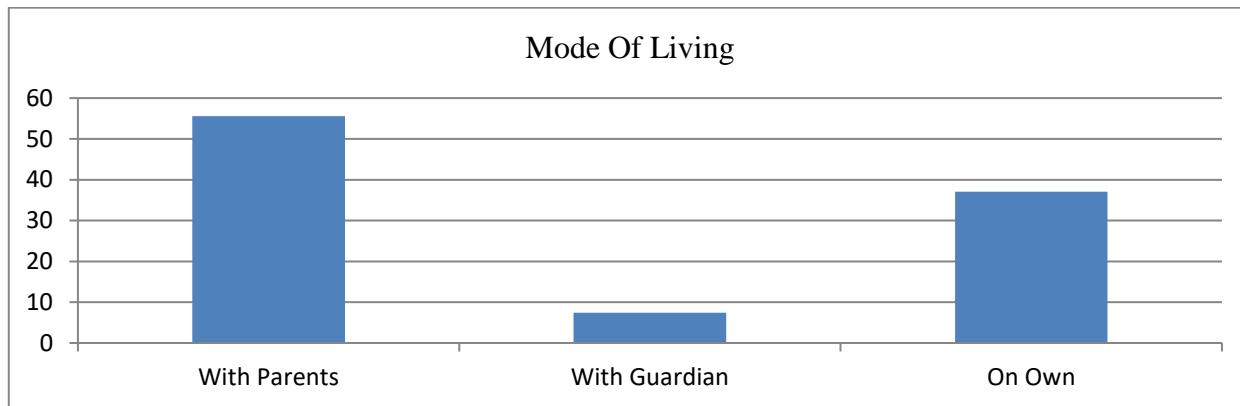


Fig.2

Regarding gender 63 percent of the respondents are females and 37 percent are male students. In this 63 percent of the students are staying with their parents and guardian. Only 37 percent of the students are staying on their own.

Table.3 Educational level of Parents

Educational level	Number of respondents
College	11(40.74%)
Secondary school	10 (37.03%)
Primary school	3(11.11%)
Illiterate	3(11.11%)
Total	27(100%)

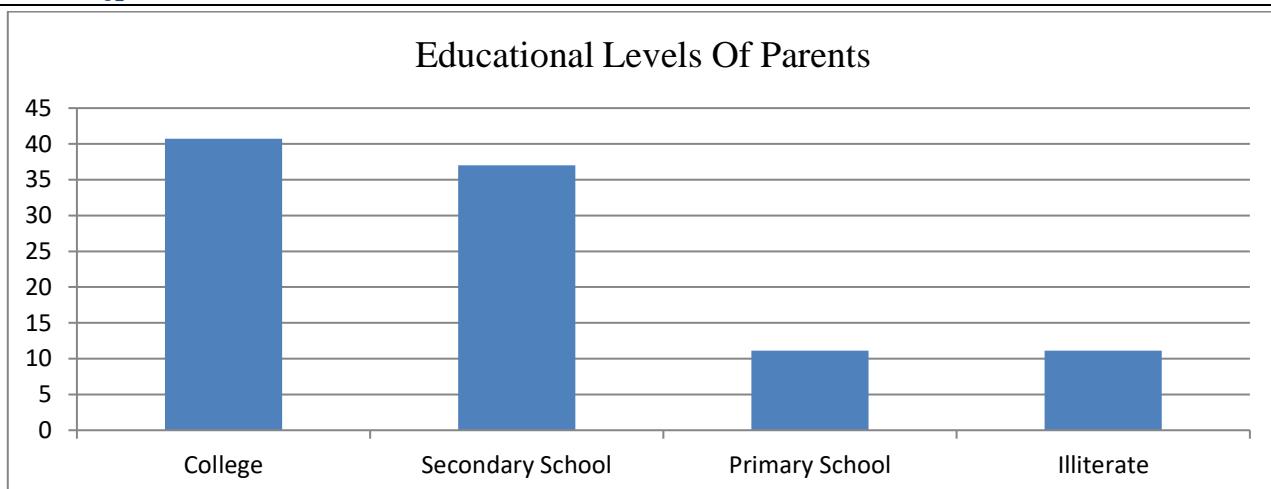


Fig 3

From the table 3 it is evident that 40 percent of the student parents have college level education and 33 percent of the student parents are having secondary level education. That is why 56 percent of the student parents are employed or self -employed. One third of the student parents are unemployed as indicated in the table 4.

Table 4. Employment status of parents

EMPLOYMENT STATUS	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
Employed	8(29.63%)
Self employed	7(25.93%)
Unemployed	9(33.33%)
Other	3(11.11%)
Total	27(100%)

The table 4 reveals that 56 percent of the students parents are either employed or self employed. The unemployed parents accounts to 33 percent.

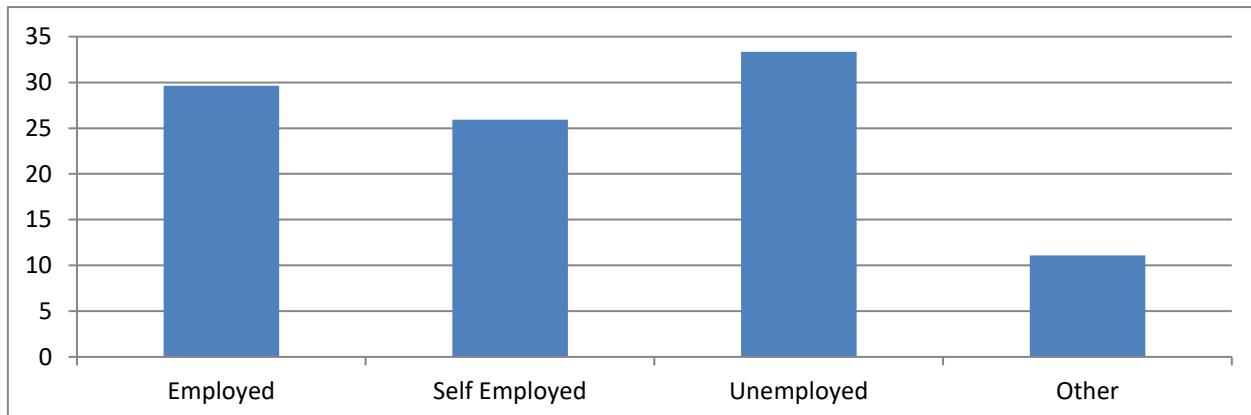


Fig 4. Employment status of Parents

Regarding financial support nearly 74 percent of the students are getting financial support from their parents and 26 percent of the students are not availing any financial aid from their parents as revealed from the table 5. The same has been illustrated in Fig.5.

Table 5. Parental support

PARENTAL SUPPORT	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
Availed	20(74.07%)
Not availed	7(25.93%)
Total	27(100)

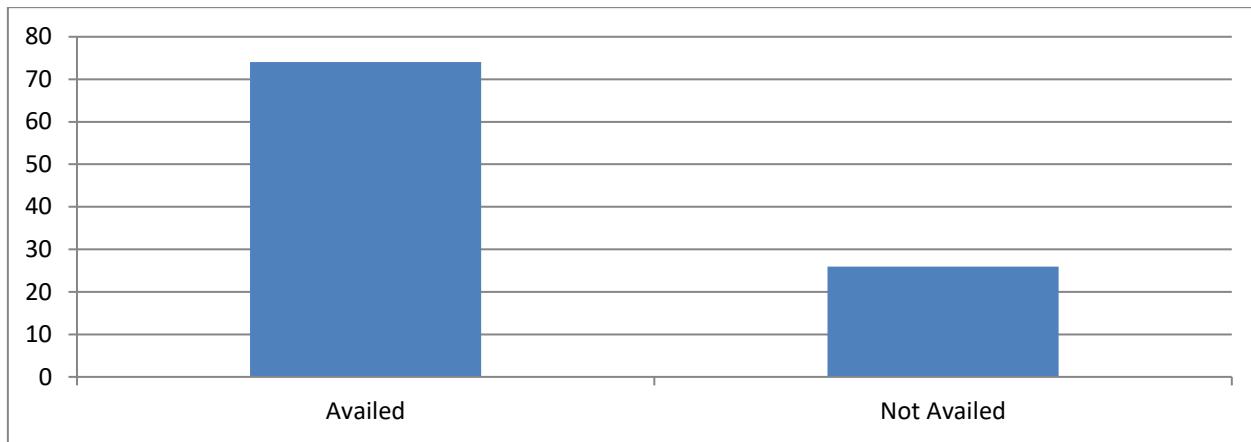


Fig 5. Parental support (in terms of percentage)

Table. 6 Study habit of students

S. NO	STUDY HABIT	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1	Rely on notes than read text books	9(33.33)	9(33.33)	8(29.63)	1(3.7)
2	Read only during internal assessment	3(11.11)	8(29.63)	9(33.33)	7(25.93)
3	Read only during Mid assessment	3(11.11)	7(25.93)	7(25.93)	10(37.03)
4	Read only during end assessment	2(7.41)	9(33.33)	6(22.22)	10(37.03)
5	Prefer to study in the library	3(11.11)	9(33.33)	8(29.63)	7(25.93)
6	Prefer to use Blackboard for reading	-	11(40.74)	8(29.63)	8(29.63)
7	Put off reading until before exam.	1(3.7)	9(33.33)	9(33.33)	8(29.63)
8	Take notes during lecture	4(14.81)	9(33.33)	10(37.03)	4(14.81)
9	Prefer to listen in class than taking notes	1(3.7)	10(37.03)	10(37.03)	6(22.22)
10	Switch off mobile during lesson time	5(18.52)	4(14.81)	14(51.85)	4(14.81)
11	Used to receive and send SMS during lesson time	2(7.41)	5(18.52)	8(29.63)	12(44.44)

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentages)

Regarding study pattern 67 percent of the students rely on notes posted in the black board. Only one -third of the students have the habit of reading text books. 59 – 63 percent of the students read throughout semester period irrespective of the assessment period. 44 percent of the students have the habit of reading in the library. Regarding preparation to examination 63 percent don't postpone reading until examination. Although 48 percent prefer to take notes during lecture, 41 percent prefer to listen in the class room. It is evident from the table 6, One –third of the students only switch off their mobile during lesson time. Nearly 74 percent of the students used to receive and send SMS during lesson time.

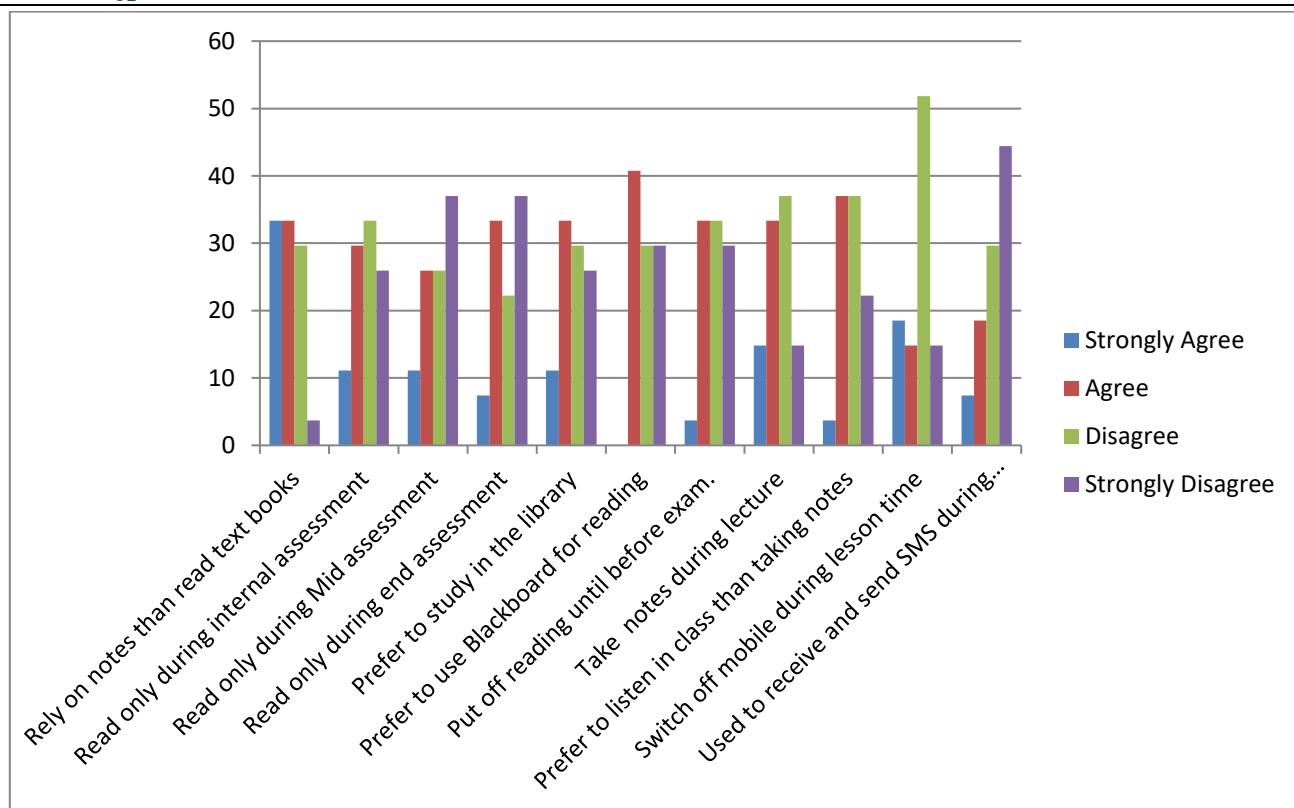


Fig 6 Study habit of students

Table. 7 Student approach to Examination

S.NO.	APPROACH TO EXAMINATION	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1	Become nervous before exam.	5(18.52)	9(33.33)	9(33.33)	4(14.81)
2	Before exam. Plan time to use on each section	2(7.41)	10(37.03)	7(25.93)	8(29.63)
3	Enter exam hall before time	21(77.78)	6(22.22)	-	-
4	Keep pen, pencil, calculator and ID ready before exam	21(77.78)	6(22.22)	-	-
5	Keep mind calm and pray prior to write exam.	12(44.44)	14(51.85)	-	1(3.7)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages)

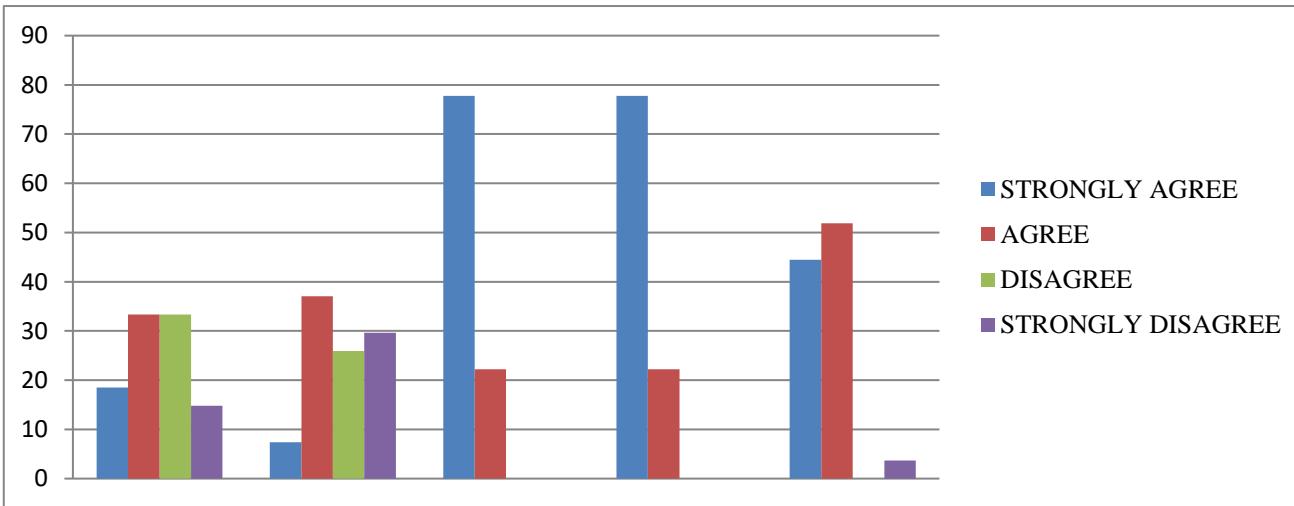


Fig. 7 Student approach to examination

With reference to examination 52 percent feel nervous to approach examination. 45 percent plan time allocation to each section prior to write answers. Regarding punctuality all most all the students enter examination hall in time and keep pen, pencil,

calculator and their ID in advance. Prior to write examination 96 percent of the students says they keep their mind calm and pray.

Motivation and interest in Sports

Regarding time spend for reading on an average 44 percent of the students spend two hours in a day for reading. 38 percent of the students spend 3-4 hours in a day. Although 78 percent of the students prefer to read alone 40 percent of the students feel comfortable in group study also. Regarding motivation 29 percent of the students wants to continue their higher study in accounting. 71 percent of the students wanted to go for job after completion of their degree program. With reference to sports activities only 19 percent of the students are very much interested, the rest are not shown much interest.

Among the respondents 85% of the students have no personal commitments other than their study. Only 15% of the students have some personal commitments to fulfill.

5. CONCLUSION

This paper sought to study the influence of Parental status and time spent for Academic excellence. The descriptive analysis shows that 67% are females and 33% are males among respondents of Botho University. This study indicates that more than 63 percent of the students are staying with parents and guardians. It helps them to become conscious of their duty. Nearly one third of their parents have college level education which prompted them to send their children for tertiary education. Around 56 percent of the parents are employed or self-employed. So majority of the students (74%) get financial support from their parents.

Regarding time spent towards their study above 59 percent of the students read throughout their semester irrespective of their assessment time. 63 percent of the students do not put off reading until before examination. 96 percent of the students agree that they keep their mind calm and pray prior to write examination.

6. Recommendation

This study confine to Accounting students of Botho University only. Hence its results may not be valid externally. We suggest that this study should be conducted at large scale in different institutions so that its findings became useful widely.

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