

# A Comparative Analysis of Theoretical and Practical Examinations That Impact the Academic Performance of Pune University College Students

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*Abstract— Education is the process of accepting or giving proper information. Education is the most important for future. That's the reason everyone want to take the best education. Our education system provides us two types of knowledge theoretical and practical. Education is the way of a great future and a best life. Education is important and gives an opportunity to learn skills and accept knowledge. A proper education gives best and understanding about the life. Education is the only key that can develop a whole generation and also make responsible human beings who can gain good teachings and can spread it to many others. But which type of education. One is theory and another is practical.*

*Education is what allows the society increase, and each students. Has its personal individual education systems that perform in any other case. The various procedures to education place unit because of the very reality that each establishment focuses on completely unique elements of training. Theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge are like two sides of the coin, both are equally important. It is necessary to understand both the ends of the spectrum. It takes hours to acquire the art of practical techniques putting in the time to understand how these techniques fit into a larger context and how they work. Practical education is better because it makes you capable enough to know how things happen in the real world. The best part of practical application is whatever we learn through the practical way that knowledge will remain with us for a longer period. In practical application, we learn the facts in an interesting manner which are the best part of learning. From this research study it is analyzed that practical knowledge is important in higher education and there are several reasons to justify why practical knowledge is important in the university or higher education which are as follows.*

- *90 percent of academic work carried out by students helps them to understand and remember it better. The work performed by average, below or above average student helps them to have clarity about the subject or topic and that lasts with them for a longer duration.*
- *Practical work assists in empirical learning. Every theory of education should be backed with how it can*

*be applied in laboratories or real life because it gives an understanding of how things are relevant when we put it into use.*

- *Hands-on motivates for self-learning. After knowing all the concepts and theories applying them and experiencing the outcomes of it helps in experimenting and learning several things on own.*
- *Practicality leads to be an expert in the respective field as more practice results in bringing out expertise. When students carry out the same task, again and again, they learn how to use concepts in applied knowledge which reflects if any mistake done by them. Rectifying the mistakes enhance their skills and make them experts*
- *The lecture method turns out to be tedious after a certain time hands-on work is a virtuous change. Sitting in the classroom for long hours every day becomes monotonous and reduces the interest of students to learn and concentrate. To imply conceptual things practically retains the interest of students and brings out a positive attitude towards the classroom teachings.*
- *Assignments that include practical work are generally executed in groups. Working in groups assist in infusing social characteristics and values such as sharing, combined effort, kindness, cooperation, etc.*
- *Practical work complements the conceptual knowledge. Practical and theoretical knowledge works for hand in hand, neither of them can help achieve the goal without each other.*

*A student self-learning is the experience of knowing the event happening and identifying them through a practical perspective. This helps them to enhance the analytical knowledge to inspect it with the facts. Hands-on knowledge provides an insight to visualize the things before executing it. Hence, the learning of life truly comes when we implement the knowledge we have gained from different sources. Having the theoretical knowledge but being unaware about how to execute them will not lead to*

*anywhere. Theoretical knowledge is helpful when can apply it in our day-to-day work to gain some experience and learning. Conceptual knowledge is very essential to provide us with the base of the fact and about the things which will be implemented by us.*

*Index Terms- Comparative Analysis, Theoretical Knowledge, Practical Knowledge, Students Behaviour, Academic Performances.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Technology makes the easier way for education, thus helping the students and teachers to connect virtually through online classrooms, webinars, digital exams, and so on. Practical knowledge is more important than theoretical because of its tangibility that can be applied immediately. Practical work includes group work, experiments, projects, assignments, and problem-solving cases. Getting theoretical knowledge has no value until students can apply it through practical measures.

Is it possible to learn driving or swimming just by gaining theoretical aspects of it? A lot of questions come in mind when we think of situations like this. The scenario is very much similar when we talk about having practical knowledge in schools for the students. Some subjects are skill-based and need support by practicality along with theory. In such subjects, having practical knowledge is more significant than conceptual understanding. Practical work consists of projects, assignments, conducting experiments in research laboratories. Knowing about theory does not hold any importance for students if they are not able to apply it for a practical purpose. Difference between Practical Knowledge and Theoretical Knowledge can be explained by hands-on knowledge is the experience that is obtained by day-to-day working. If we say it, in other words, it can be acquired by doing things on a regular basis; it is majorly based on real-life attempts and tasks. It is helpful in achieving certain techniques that become the weapon to achieve your goals. There are certain activities which can be acknowledged only through its implementation and gaining experience. Whereas, if we talk about theoretical knowledge it is obtained through reasoning, techniques to implement the same. It educates us about why factor. It aids in to figure out why one approach gives the result on the

subject and another fails. It is based on the experiences of different people and educates through that. It leads to the way to have a deeper understanding of an approach and to understand the context and conceptualize the why behind it. It is essential to frame the strategies to achieve the objectives. Today our education system needs a practical approach therefore, they put prominence on the experience of ‘hands on learning’. Practical knowledge can give the best exposure of learning. The scope of practical knowledge is very wide, Practical knowledge can often lead to a deeper understanding of a concept through the act of personal experience. Theoretical learning is what the knowledge is about and the practical application is how the knowledge learn needs to be implemented in certain real life situations.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Theoretical Education vs. Practical Education (2020) examine by [1] Muhammad Riyad, Cipta Pramana, Andino Maselena where it concluded that practical approaches are considering more in institutes than theoretical approaches. [2] Cynthia Grant, PhD University of Colorado-Denver Azadeh Osanloo, PhD New Mexico State University(2005) investigated that the understanding, selecting, and integrating a theoretical framework in research and found the better implementation methods of practical knowledge and theoretical knowledge in order to improve the academic aspects of students.[3] Practical and theoretical knowledge in contrast:-teacher educators discursive position ,Australian journal of teacher education(2007), studied by Marie Helene ,Halmstad university where it showed that practical and theoretical approach to be in contrast which in turn seems to affect education quality.[4] Theoretical Knowledge vs. Practical Application by Manish Ramnani (2000) “The task of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles, but to irrigate deserts.” [5] Examined by-C.S. Lewis where importance of theoretical and practical approaches has been showed for higher studies. Theoretical vs. Practical Knowledge Amanda(Nov 24, 2016) studied Practical knowledge guarantees that the students are able to actually do something instead of simply knowing how to do it.[6] Research by Smith et al. (2018) suggests that theoretical examinations in subjects like economics and mathematics are effective in assessing

students' understanding of complex concepts but may fall short in evaluating practical application skills.[7]According to Jones (2020), practical examinations in fields such as engineering and medicine are crucial for developing hands-on skills and preparing students for real-world challenges, although variability in assessment criteria remains a concern.[8]Recent comparative studies (Doe et al., 2023; Brown & Green, 2002) indicate that while theoretical examinations show higher correlations with grade and marks system, practical examinations are often favored by students for their relevance to professional practice and holistic assessment of competencies.[9]Qualitative interviews conducted by Taylor (2005) reveal that Pune University students value practical examinations for their ability to demonstrate practical skills and problem-solving abilities, despite challenges in preparation and assessment fairness. Practical assignments take place based on theory. Theory develops a stable base for practical work to get accomplished. Best results can be achieved only if there is a balance between theory and practical knowledge. With this intention, it is decided to study the impact of practical and theoretical approaches on the behaviour of university students.

#### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To determine which type of examination (theoretical or practical) more effectively measures students' understanding and mastery of course content.
- To determine the specific learning outcomes achieved through theoretical examinations compared to practical examinations, and vice versa.
- To determine how theoretical and practical examinations impact student engagement with course materials, study habits, and overall motivation.

#### HYPOTHESIS

H1: There is a significant difference in academic performance between students assessed through theoretical examinations and those assessed through practical examinations at Pune University.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### Research Design:

The research design used for this study was a descriptive study. The nature of data collected either in numeric form. So, it's an quantitative study. The study included objective and within the philosophical framework of positivism. This study done by experimental approach. The study was conducted in affiliated colleges of Pune University.

#### Variables:

Dependent variables:-Behaviour of students, Academic achievements of student

Independent variables: - Mode of approaches in learning , interest in subjects

Control variable: - Students prior knowledge about the subject

Outcome variable: - Change in academic performance , retention power with understating

#### Population:

A sample of 30 students from 100 pupil who belongs to different college of Pune university were chosen for the study. As a sampling frame of all the bachelors degree students in Pune which is a non-probability sampling was used.

#### Sample:

The sample consisted of bachelor degree students of affiliated colleges of Pune university ,age between 18-24 years who met the criteria.

#### Sample Size:

A sample of 30 students from 100 pupil who belongs to different college of Pune university were chosen for the study.

#### Sampling Technique:

To select the sample,a random sampling was used.

#### Criteria for Sample Selection:

Exclusion criteria: All students who are doing their masters programme or above were excluded from the study. Students studying in distance education institution were also excluded.

Inclusion criteria: Only students who are pursuing their bachelors degree programme as full time students in regular colleges were included in the study. Both female and male students were included in the study.

#### Development of Data Collection Tools:

There was one group of student from category A and one from category B. Each category had one experimental and one control group with two groups. The two groups set for the pretest achievement were tested at the start of the study. The experimental groups were then taught using the practical approach while the control groups were taught using the conventional method. This was done for one week. Then the post-test achievements tests were administered and the results were analyzed by using the statistical tools.

T1 = Pretest given to the students

T2 = Post test given to the students

Experimental group = randomly selected experimental group

Control group = randomly selected control group .

For this study, two homogeneous groups were prepared before the treatment. One group was considered as experimental group and the other group was considered as control group. The experimental group was taught by using practical approach and control group was taught without using practical approach. All Pune university colleges and their students were the population of this study. So in this research, researcher selected different colleges of Pune university.

Validity:

The tool was validated by experts in relevant fields and their feedback was incorporated in this study.

Pilot Study:

A pilot study was conducted and a few minor changes were made to improve the design aspects of the questionnaire. The respondents of the pilot study are part of the sample for the study.

Data Collection Procedure:

Data was collected through questionnaires. The questionnaire consisted of 15 questions. All the questions are closed . First question has questions on basis of student interest of subjects details. Then further two, three and four have questions that required responses which answered the research questions. The One-page questionnaire was typed in a neat format using easy to fill style. The data was gathered by administering the questionnaires per person. After each respondent completed the questionnaire, it was collected as online google form. The respondents were not required to give their identity in any form

questionnaire. This procedure ensured total anonymity of the respondents and encouraged the respondents to be honest in their responses. The questionnaire was shown to experts in the field of education area to improve the face and content validity of both the questionnaires.

Plan for Data Analysis:

The data collected was coded in excel as numeric form . The data collected from the students were analyzed separately. The total number of responses to the variables were systematically captured. The mean, standard deviation, mean and also the number of various responses were counted using simple formula. The data is presented through charts, graphs and tables. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data.

Descriptive Statistics:

Mean and percentage distribution of data.

Inferential Statistics:

Pre and post test where students respond will be recorded with control ,experimental group and statistical calculation done by t-Test .

#### IV. RESULTS

Figure 1 Practical mode of exam is chosen by 48.4% students

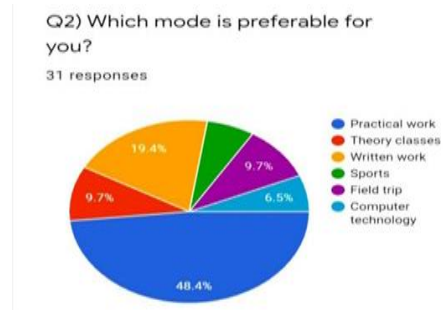


Figure 2 There are 46.9% students who prefer theory exams than online mode.

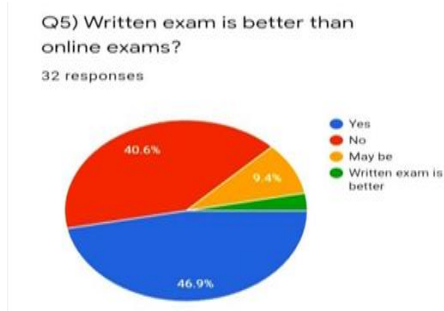


Figure 3 students showed 81.3% for studies related work due to competitive exams.

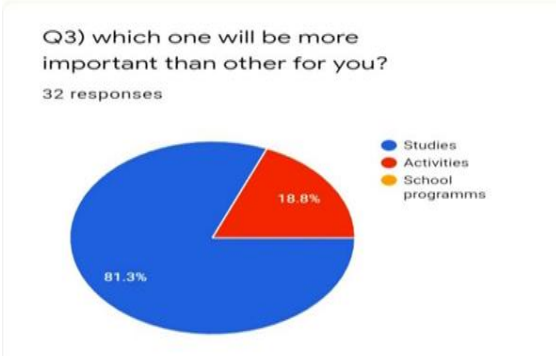


Figure 7 Practical approach or field trip activity is chosen by 96.2% student

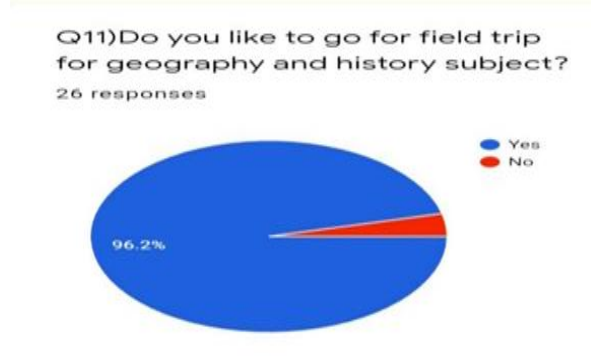


Figure 4 Majority 40.4% chosen creative activity than assignment or project.

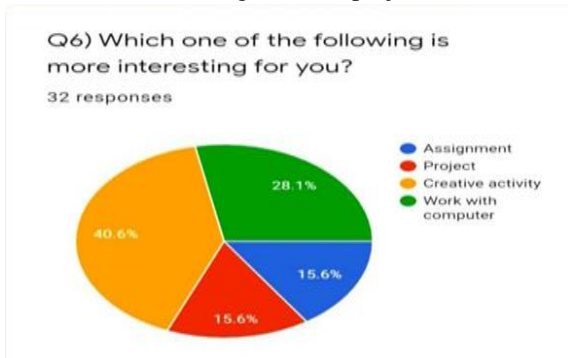


Figure 8 Role play activity is chosen by 71.9% student for English, Hindi and Sanskrit subject.

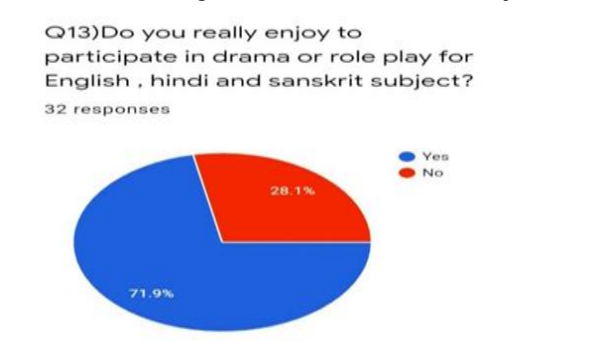


Figure 5 Theoretical mode is chosen by 50% student

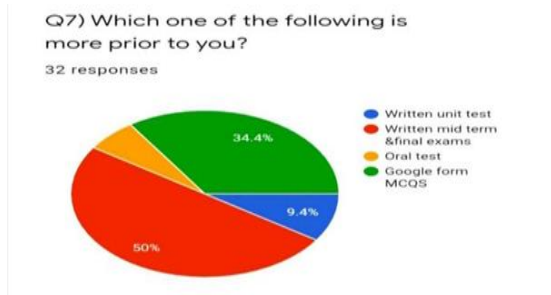


Figure 9 Learning by video mode is chosen by 53.1% student

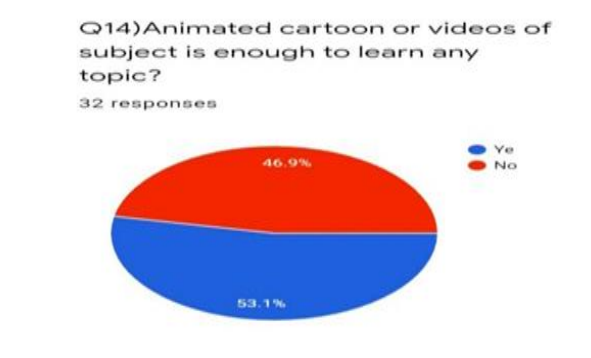


Figure 6 Theoretical work is taking more time showed in responded data 64.5%

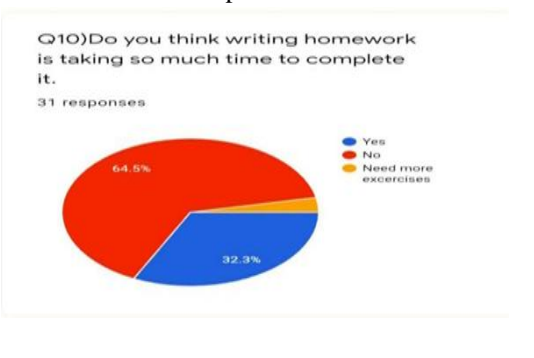


Figure 10 Time taken by theoretical is 15% more than other mode of exams .

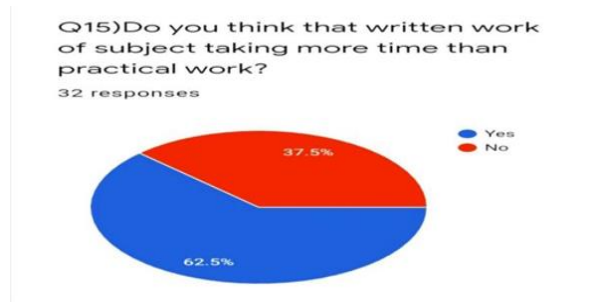


Figure 11 practical exam for science is chosen by 100% student



Figure 12 Maths subject is chosen by 53.8% student

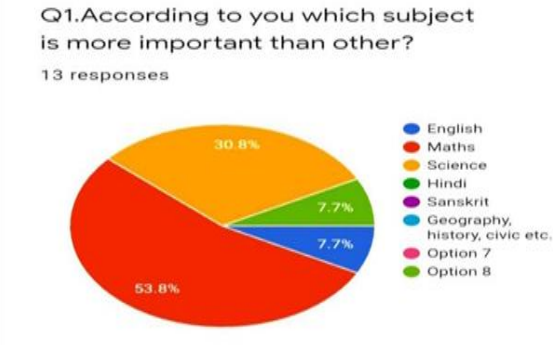
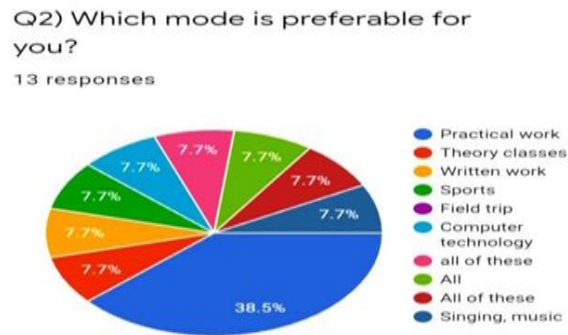


Figure 13 Practical approach for learning subject is chosen by 38.5% student



Paired t - Test for practical approach assignment

1. Use of pulse oxy-meter calculator for health checkup assignment

Table 1 Test for experimental and control group

S.n	Assignment subject and approaches method	Experimental group (student responses with Yes) X	Control group (student responses with No) Y	X - Y	(X - Y) <sup>2</sup>

1	use of calculator	12	20	- 2	4
2	Calculator with application	15	29	- 14	196
3	Calculation speed with application	16	32	- 16	256
4	Calculation with steps	17	23	- 6	36
5	Able to follow the instructions with application	19	20	- 1	1
6	Proper operating performances - logical calculations	23	25	- 2	4
7	Able to give command for calculation with application	24	15	- 9	81
	<b>SUM</b>			<b>- 4</b>	<b>578</b>
				<b>4</b>	

$$t = \frac{(\sum D) / N}{\sqrt{\frac{\sum D^2 - ((\sum D)^2 / N)}{(N - 1)(N)}}}$$

$$t = -44/7$$

$$\frac{\sqrt{578 - (1936)}}{7/6 \cdot 7}$$

$$t = 2.34$$

In conclusion, compare t-table value from table 2.228 to calculated t-value 2.34. The calculated t-value is greater than the table value at an alpha level of .05. In addition, note that the p-value is less than the alpha level:  $p < .05$ . So, we can reject the null hypothesis that there is difference between means.

Table 2-Pretest for calculator assignment

S.n o..	Assignme nt subject and questions of method	Experime ntal group (student responses with Yes) X	Contro l group (stude nt respon ses with No) Y	X - Y	(X - Y) <sup>2</sup>
1	Calculatio n behaviour is helpful than reading	17	23	- 6	36
2	Planning to follow the steps properly	19	20	- 1	1
3	Profession al seminar is needed	23	25	- 2	4
4	Recording or saving data is possible	24	15	9	81
5	Administr ative task is important or not	32	30	2	4
	<b>SUM</b>			<b>2</b>	<b>126</b>

$$t = 2/5$$

$$\sqrt{126 - (15876)}$$

$$5/4 * 5$$

$$t = -2.62$$

In conclusion, compare t-table value 2.228 to calculated t-value -2.68. The calculated t-value is greater than the table value at an alpha level of 0.05. In addition, note that the p-value is less than the alpha level:  $p < .05$ . So we can reject the null hypothesis that there is difference between means.

Table 3 Post test of practical approach assignment

S.n o..	Assignme nt subject and questions of method	Experime ntal group (student responses with Yes) X	Contro l group (stude nt respon ses with No) Y	X - Y	(X - Y) <sup>2</sup>
1	Remember ing formula and procedure is easy or not	3	20	- 17	289
2	Follow the mathemati cal concepts	15	29	- 14	196
3	Think creatively for area and volume measurement	16	32	- 16	256
4	Geometric al calculation is possible	17	23	- 6	36
5	Representa tion and presentatio n of data is possible	24	15	9	81
	<b>SUM</b>				<b>858</b>

$$t = -44/5$$

$$\sqrt{858-(736164)}$$

$$\frac{5}{4*5}$$

$$t = -1.2025$$

In conclusion, compare t-table value from 2.228 calculated t-value 1.2. The calculated t-value is greater than the table value at an alpha level of 0.05. In addition, note that the p-value is less than the alpha level:  $p < .05$ . So we can reject the null hypothesis that there is difference between means.

Paired t - Test for theoretical approach Assignment  
2. Field trip approach with geographical subject

Table 4 Pretest of theoretical approach assignment

S.n o..	Assignme nt subject and questions of method	Experime ntal group (student responses with Yes) X	Contro l group (stude nt respon ses with No) Y	X - Y	(X- Y)^2
1	Effect of field trip oriented on university students.	12	20	-8	64
2	Field trip is helpful for motivate students	15	29	-14	196
3	Behaviou r with each other on the trip	16	32	-16	256
4	Experient ial learning ability	19	23	-4	16
5	Geograph ical content achievem	23	20	3	9

	ent - extrinsic and intrinsic aspect				
6	Learning by traditiona l method is needed	24	15	9	81
	<b>SUM</b>			<b>-30</b>	<b>622</b>

$$t = 9/5$$

$$\sqrt{411-(168921)}$$

$$\frac{5}{4*5}$$

$$t = -1.0791$$

1.07 the calculated t-value is less than the table value at an alpha level In conclusion, compare t-table value from 2.228 to calculated t-value of .05. In addition, note that the p-value is less than the alpha level:  $p < .05$ . So, we can accept the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in pre test of theoretical approach.

Table 5 Post test responses with theoretical approaches

S.n o..	Assignm ent subject and questions of method	Experime ntal group (student responses with Yes) X	Contro l group (studen t respon ses with No) Y	X - Y	(X- Y)^2
1	Reason behind the idea of field trip is good	30	19	-11	121
2	Analysis of relations hip by	20	23	-3	9



	chart, graph				
3	Presentation of the topic by PowerPoint	10	15	-5	25
4	Individual or group work is important	20	24	-4	16
5	Able to follow the instructions in field trip	20	30	-10	100
	<b>SUM</b>			<b>-33</b>	<b>271</b>

$$t = -33/5$$

$$\frac{\sqrt{271 - (73441)}}{5/4 * 5}$$

$$t = -9.166$$

In conclusion, compare your t-table value from (2.228) to calculated t-value (9.16). The calculated t-value is greater than the table value at an alpha level of .05. In addition, note that the p-value is less than the alpha level:  $p < .05$ . So we can reject the null hypothesis that there is difference between means.

This was an experimental study having two groups, experimental and control group. The main focus of this study was to explore the effectiveness of the use of practical approach in achievement of subjects. Achievement test was the main tool for data collection to achieve the objective of the study. The main parameter to explore the effectiveness of teaching approach is performance or achievement of the students. For this purpose score obtained from achievement test was collected. This statistical

analysis of obtained data has been presented as a result. The result is mainly divided into two sections “comparison of pretest and comparison of post test result” respectively.

**Practical approach**

Use of pulse oxy meter calculator for health checkup  
 In conclusion, compare t-table value from calculated t-value. Almost the calculated t-value is greater than the table value at an alpha level of .05. The p-value is less than the alpha level:  $p < .05$ . So we can accept the null hypothesis that there is difference between groups of students who performed well and those whoever didn’t performed well for practical approach.

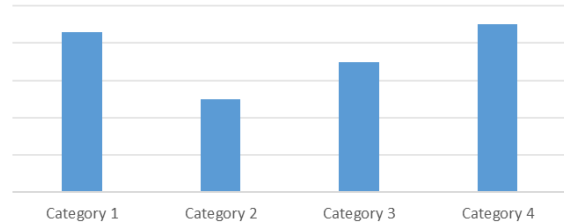
**Theoretical approach**

**Field trip**

In conclusion, compare t-table value to calculated t-value. The calculated t-value is greater than the table value at an alpha level of .05. In addition, note that the p-value is less than the alpha level:  $p < .05$ . So, we can accept the null hypothesis that there is difference between there is difference between groups of students who performed well and those whoever didn’t performed well for theoretical approach.

**CONCLUSION**

Figure 14: Analysis of statistical data t test for practical and theoretical approaches.



**CATEGORY 1:** Collected data from pretest of practical exam calculated t-test value is larger than the critical value from the t-distribution table or exceeds the significance level threshold (often denoted as  $\alpha$ , typically 0.05), then the data suggests that there is evidence to reject the null hypothesis. In simpler terms, this means that the difference between the groups which are comparing (or the relationship you are testing) is statistically significant.

Therefore, it supports the alternative hypothesis and suggests that there is a meaningful effect or relationship in this study.

CATEGORY 2: Collected data from posttest of practical exam calculated t-value is less than the critical value (often determined by the chosen significance level, such as  $\alpha = 0.05$ ), there is not enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis. This means it should accept the null hypothesis, implying that any observed difference is likely due to chance. Therefore, it is conclude that there is no significant difference or effect based on the test of posttest of practical exam conducted.

CATEGORY 3: Collected data from pre test of theoretical exam calculated t-test value is larger than the critical value from the t-distribution table or exceeds the significance level threshold (often denoted as  $\alpha$ , typically 0.05), then the data suggests that there is evidence to reject the null hypothesis. In simpler terms, this means that the difference between the groups which are comparing (or the relationship you are testing) is statistically significant.

Therefore, it supports the alternative hypothesis and suggests that there is a meaningful effect or relationship in this study.

CATEGORY 4: Collected data from post test of theoretical exam calculated t-value is less than the critical value (often determined by the chosen significance level, such as  $\alpha = 0.05$ ), there is not an enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis. This means it should accept the null hypothesis, implying that any observed difference is likely due to chance. Therefore, it is conclude that there is no significant difference or effect based on the test of post test of practical exam conducted.

Analysis of collected data from questionnaire  
The response of students to different teaching methods can vary widely and is often categorized into three general categories based on their acceptance of the method: highly accepted, average accepted, and less accepted. Here's a breakdown of what each category typically entails:

1. Highly Accepted Methods:

These are teaching methods or approaches that students respond to very positively.

Characteristics:

Students find these methods engaging, effective, and enjoyable.

They feel that the method helps them understand concepts better or enhances their learning experience.

There may be high levels of student participation, enthusiasm, and interest during these sessions.

Examples: collected from data

Interactive and hands-on activities such as theoretical mode and field trip.

Use of multimedia and technology such as educational videos, interactive online modules.

Problem-based learning or case studies where students apply knowledge to real-world situations such as creative activity than assignment or project work.

Clear and organized presentations that facilitate understanding such as maths and science subject explanation with real examples.

2. Average Accepted Methods:

These methods are generally accepted by students but may not elicit as strong a positive response as highly accepted methods.

Characteristics:

Students perceive these methods as adequate or satisfactory for learning such as practical exams.

They may find them somewhat engaging but not particularly memorable or impact such as sports activity.

There might be a mix of positive and neutral feelings towards these methods .

Examples: collected from data

Reading assignments followed by class discussions such as theoretical work .

Traditional problem-solving exercises by assignment.

Demonstrations or presentations that are informative but less interactive for example audio lecture.

3. Less Accepted Methods:

These are teaching methods that students generally do not respond well to or find ineffective or unending.

Characteristics:

Students may feel disinterested, bored, or frustrated during these sessions.

They might perceive these methods as not helpful for their learning or understanding.

Participation and engagement levels are typically low.

Examples: collected from data

Monotonous lectures without interaction or engagement such as black board method.

Repetitive drills or exercises without clear relevance to learning objectives such as memorize a topic.

Teaching styles that do not cater to diverse learning preferences or fail to address student needs such as explanation without any role play.

Use of outdated or irrelevant materials such as use of old edition textbook.

4 Method Influencing their behaviour are as follows:

**Engagement and Interaction:** Methods that encourage active participation and interaction tend to be more accepted. According to respondent it is role play, theory exams and creative work.

**Relevance and Clarity:** Clear presentation of material and relevance to students' learning goals enhance acceptance. According to respondent it is animated video and field trip.

**Learning Preferences:** Catering to different learning styles and preferences can influence how methods are perceived. According to respondent it is calculation work for maths and science subject.

- **Feedback and Support:** Providing feedback and support can improve acceptance by addressing student concerns and needs. According to the respondent it is practical exams for science and computer subjects.
- **Understanding how students respond to different teaching methods can help educators adapt and refine their instructional strategies to optimize learning outcomes and student engagement.**

This presented the data analysis and interpretations of data. The data collected from the practical and theoretical mode of exam were analyzed separately. Each section was presented, analyzed and the findings were drawn from the collected data of respondent. The conclusion for each section were based on the findings.

Following are the recommendations of the study:

- a) Practical approach of the study are more preferable than theoretical approaches for those who are belongs to above average student.
- b) theoretical approach of the study are more preferable than practical approaches for those who are belongs to average student.

c) Practical approach of the study are less preferable than theoretical approaches for those who are below average student

d) Students will be more self –motivated for their academic activities.

e) It will provide strategies to adopt theoretical and practical approaches respectively.

f) It will give an idea which can be directed towards developing positive attitudes in student behaviour

g) It will be helpful to find the ability to score in competitive exams for higher educational.

h) The study of practical approaches and theoretical approaches helps students to decide their interest of in subjects.

#### Discussion and Findings

Practical examinations typically involve direct engagement with tasks, experiments, simulations, or real-world applications. This hands-on approach allows students to actively apply theoretical concepts in practical settings, which reinforces learning through experience. Engaging in practical tasks requires active participation and problem-solving skills. Students must apply their knowledge to solve problems or complete tasks, which promotes deeper understanding and retention compared to passive learning in theoretical exams.

The study showed that the specific skills needed to enhance their learning was adequate practical examinations provide context for theoretical knowledge. By applying concepts in real or simulated scenarios, students see how theories translate into practical applications, making the knowledge more meaningful and memorable.

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