Paper Review Report

data2paper Reviewer Panel

April 12, 2026

Manuscript: Effects of Study Habits on Undergraduate Academic Performance
Submission Type: Empirical Research Article (Cross-sectional survey with OLS regression)
Sample: 312 undergraduate students across three universities
Word Count: 289 (severely incomplete)

Editorial Decision

Decision

Major Revision

Overall Score

28 / 100

Critical Issues

1. **No references or literature review.** The manuscript contains zero citations. Every reviewer identified this as a disqualifying omission. An empirical journal article cannot be evaluated, situated in the field, or published without engagement with prior scholarship. A minimum of 30–40 peer-reviewed sources is expected.
2. **No quantitative statistical reporting.** The Results section presents no regression coefficients, standard errors, confidence intervals, p-values, R^2, effect sizes, or model fit statistics. All findings are stated in qualitative, directional language only.
3. **Manuscript length is severely insufficient.** At approximately 289 words, the paper is roughly one-tenth the length of a publishable empirical article (6,000–9,000 words).

Summary of Reviewer Agreement

All five reviewers converge on the following points:

- The research question is legitimate and practically relevant.
- The multi-campus design is a genuine strength.
- The authors' epistemic honesty regarding causal inference limitations is commendable.
- The manuscript is fundamentally incomplete: zero references, zero tables/figures, zero statistical output, 289 words total.
- A theoretical framework is absent — variable selection is not grounded in any established model.

- Measurement operationalization is undisclosed, preventing assessment of construct validity.
- The Conclusion overreaches by making intervention recommendations from cross-sectional correlations.

Summary of Reviewer Disagreement

The primary divergence concerns severity:

- The **Editor-in-Chief** recommended "Major Revision — Borderline Reject," questioning whether revision alone can address the scope of deficiencies.
- The **Methodology** and **Domain** reviewers both recommended "Major Revision" with serious concerns about methodological transparency.
- The **Perspective Reviewer** recommended "Minor Revision" (confidence 3/5), viewing practical relevance more generously from a behavioral science standpoint.
- The **Devil's Advocate** raised the most fundamental challenge: the study may be measuring pre-existing academic orientation rather than behavioral effects, rendering policy recommendations unsupportable.

The editorial decision follows the majority consensus (4 of 5 reviewers recommend Major Revision).

Integrity Notes

The integrity verification found zero citations in the manuscript, with zero verified references, zero suspicious entries, and zero unverifiable entries. The absence of any citation infrastructure means the paper's scholarly provenance cannot be assessed.

Revision Roadmap

Priority rubric: P1 = must fix or decision drops a tier; P2 = should fix to improve acceptance probability; P3 = optional polish.

P1 — Critical

1. **[P1] Add a complete reference list (30–40 sources).** Include foundational works (Richardson et al., 2012; Zimmerman, 2002; Credé et al., 2010; Cohen et al., 1983) and recent publications. Integrate citations throughout all sections. *Raised by: all reviewers. Section: References, Introduction, Methods, Discussion.*
2. **[P1] Report full statistical output.** Present a regression table with B, SE, β, t, p, 95% CI, R^2, adjusted R^2, and F-statistic. Add descriptive statistics table and effect sizes. *Raised by: eic, methodology, domain, perspective. Section: Results.*
3. **[P1] Expand manuscript to 6,000–9,000 words.** All sections require full scholarly development. *Raised by: eic, methodology. Section: All.*

4. **[P1] Add a literature review.** Engage with self-regulated learning, time management, academic stress, sleep/cognition, and attendance literatures. Synthesize prior findings and identify gaps. *Raised by: eic, domain, devils_advocate. Section: Introduction/Literature Review.*
5. **[P1] Introduce a theoretical framework.** Ground variable selection in Zimmerman's SRL framework or comparable model. Map predictors to theoretical constructs. *Raised by: eic, domain, perspective. Section: Introduction, Discussion.*

P2 — Important

6. **[P2] Provide complete methodological detail.** Instruments, item wordings, reliability, sampling strategy, response rate, missing data handling, IRB approval. *Raised by: eic, methodology. Section: Methods.*
7. **[P2] Report OLS assumption diagnostics.** Residual plots, VIFs, heteroscedasticity tests, influential observations. *Raised by: methodology. Section: Methods/Results.*
8. **[P2] Add power analysis or sensitivity analysis.** Essential for interpreting the null sleep-duration finding. *Raised by: methodology. Section: Methods.*
9. **[P2] Address omitted variable bias.** Discuss prior academic ability, conscientiousness, SES as likely confounders. *Raised by: devils_advocate, methodology. Section: Methods, Discussion.*
10. **[P2] Revise Conclusion to remove causal/intervention language.** Replace prescriptive recommendations with hypothesis-generating framing. *Raised by: eic, devils_advocate, perspective. Section: Conclusion.*
11. **[P2] Articulate a clear novel contribution.** Specify what this study adds beyond replication. *Raised by: eic, domain, devils_advocate. Section: Introduction.*
12. **[P2] Test for disciplinary moderation effects.** Social science vs. engineering interaction terms or stratified analyses. *Raised by: devils_advocate, perspective, methodology. Section: Methods, Results.*
13. **[P2] Improve stress measurement description.** Specify exact instrument; acknowledge single-item limitations. *Raised by: perspective, domain. Section: Methods, Discussion.*
14. **[P2] Reframe the null sleep-duration finding.** Distinguish duration from quality; cite sleep quality literature. *Raised by: perspective. Section: Results, Discussion.*
15. **[P2] Discuss reverse causation explicitly.** Dedicate a paragraph distinguishing this from generic causal disclaimers. *Raised by: devils_advocate, methodology. Section: Discussion.*
16. **[P2] Address common method bias.** All variables are self-reported via the same survey; discuss and consider remedies. *Raised by: methodology, devils_advocate. Section: Limitations.*

P3 — Polish

17. **[P3] Provide full sample demographics and institution characteristics.** *Raised by: eic, methodology, perspective. Section: Methods.*
18. **[P3] Add Data Availability Statement and analysis code.** *Raised by: methodology. Section: End matter.*
19. **[P3] Include keywords in the abstract (4–6 terms).** *Raised by: eic. Section: Abstract.*

20. **[P3] Consider structural and equity perspectives.** Planning capacity may reflect SES privilege. *Raised by: perspective, devils_advocate. Section: Discussion.*
21. **[P3] Discuss potential mediation role of stress.** Present conceptual DAG or path model. *Raised by: devils_advocate. Section: Discussion.*
22. **[P3] Refine the title for specificity.** *Raised by: domain. Section: Title.*

Reviewer Reports

Editor-in-Chief

Recommendation: Major Revision — Borderline Reject **Confidence:** 4/5

Summary

This manuscript addresses a topic of enduring relevance — the behavioral and psychosocial predictors of undergraduate academic performance. The study draws on a multi-campus survey of 312 students and employs OLS regression. The research question is coherent and the methodology appropriate in principle. However, the manuscript falls substantially short of publication standards: no literature review, no references, no tables or figures, and a total word count of approximately 289 words.

Strengths

1. **Practically relevant research question** with direct implications for student success programming.
2. **Multi-campus sample design** from three universities, improving generalizability.
3. **Transparent acknowledgment of limitations**, including self-report bias and cross-sectional constraints.
4. **Inclusion of psychosocial alongside behavioral predictors**, reflecting current discourse on student mental health.
5. **Appropriate statistical approach** — OLS regression with demographic controls, without overclaiming causation.

Key Weaknesses

1. **Critical:** Missing literature review entirely; zero references.
2. **Critical:** Manuscript is 289 words — a fraction of publishable length. All sections are skeletal.
3. **Major:** No theoretical or conceptual framework guiding variable selection.
4. **Major:** Sample description is insufficient; representativeness cannot be assessed.
5. **Major:** Limited originality; no clear novel contribution articulated.

Dimension Scores

Dimension	Score	Key Issue
Originality	22	Familiar question, no novel contribution
Methodological Rigor	30	Appropriate design, but execution unevaluable
Evidence Sufficiency	12	No statistical output presented
Argument Coherence	35	Surface logic present, no theoretical scaffolding
Writing Quality	45	Clear prose, but document far too incomplete

Methodology Reviewer

Recommendation: Major Revision **Confidence:** 5/5

Summary

The most serious deficiencies are the near-total absence of statistical reporting, the lack of assumption testing for OLS regression, and the failure to address threats to internal validity. The paper presents no regression coefficients, standard errors, confidence intervals, effect sizes, or model fit statistics. Beyond reporting gaps, the study lacks a power analysis, missing data disclosure, instrument validity information, and sampling procedure details.

Strengths

1. Appropriate circumspection regarding causal inference.
2. Multi-campus sampling frame.
3. Multivariate control strategy with relevant demographic covariates.
4. Theoretically grounded variable selection (in principle).
5. Acknowledgment of self-report limitations.

Key Weaknesses

1. **Critical:** Complete absence of quantitative statistical reporting.
2. **Major:** No OLS assumption testing reported.
3. **Major:** No power analysis or sample size justification.
4. **Major:** Unspecified sampling strategy and recruitment procedure.
5. **Major:** Measurement validity and reliability not established.

Methodological Fallacies Detected

- **Reverse causation** (moderate–high risk): Students with higher GPAs may adopt structured habits as a consequence of success.
- **Omitted variable bias** (high risk): Conscientiousness and SES are uncontrolled.

- **Common method bias** (moderate risk): All variables self-reported via same survey.
- **Ecological/aggregation ambiguity** (low–moderate risk): Clustering within universities unmodeled.

Dimension Scores

Dimension	Score	Key Issue
Originality	42	Incremental at best
Methodological Rigor	18	Critical information absent
Evidence Sufficiency	12	No numerical evidence
Argument Coherence	38	Unsupported by evidence
Writing Quality	52	Clear but far too brief

Domain Reviewer (Educational Psychology)

Recommendation: Major Revision **Confidence:** 5/5

Summary

The most serious deficiency is the complete absence of a reference list. No theoretical framework organizes variable selection. Measurement operationalization is undisclosed. Effect sizes and model fit statistics are unreported. The contribution framing is underdeveloped. With substantial revision addressing theoretical grounding, citation practice, and analytical transparency, the study has potential for a modest contribution.

Strengths

1. Multi-campus sampling with ecological breadth.
2. Practical relevance for student-support services.
3. Honest limitation acknowledgments.
4. Integration of psychosocial and behavioral predictors.
5. Accessible methodology with appropriate controls.

Key Weaknesses

1. **Critical:** No reference list or in-text citations.
2. **Major:** Absence of a theoretical framework (Zimmerman's SRL model is the natural fit).
3. **Major:** Operationalization and measurement transparency lacking.
4. **Major:** Missing effect sizes and model fit statistics.
5. **Moderate:** Contribution framing is underdeveloped.

Missing Key References

The reviewer identified ten essential references, including Richardson et al. (2012), Zimmerman (2002), Pintrich (2000), Britton & Tesser (1991), Credé et al. (2010), Cohen et al. (1983), Bandura (1997), Curcio et al. (2006), Pascoe et al. (2020), and Macan et al. (1990).

Dimension Scores

Dimension	Score	Key Issue
Originality	35	Multi-campus is modestly distinctive
Methodological Rigor	40	Appropriate OLS, but transparency absent
Evidence Sufficiency	30	Narrative results only
Argument Coherence	45	Broadly sound, key comparison unsupported
Writing Quality	60	Clear and accessible
Literature Integration	5	No references cited

Devil's Advocate Reviewer

Strongest Counter-Argument

The study may be measuring prior academic ability rather than behavioral habits. Students who maintain weekly study plans and attend classes consistently are likely students who were already academically oriented. The regression controls (age, gender, year, major) are conspicuously silent on the most obvious confounders: prior academic ability, intrinsic motivation, and socioeconomic background. Without these controls, OLS coefficients are almost certainly upward-biased.

The Conclusion's policy prescription assumes that intervening on behavior will shift GPA — a causal claim the design cannot support. Prior literature (Credé & Kuncel, 2008; Robbins et al., 2004) shows that study skills account for only modest incremental variance after controlling for prior achievement.

Critical Issues

1. No measure of prior academic ability among controls; associations likely reflect pre-existing academic orientation.
2. The Conclusion's intervention recommendation is a causal claim dressed in hedging language, violating the study's stated epistemological limits.
3. GPA used as unidimensional outcome without accounting for disciplinary grading heterogeneity; pooling engineering and social science without interaction terms is problematic.

Major Issues

1. Confirmation bias in the treatment of the null sleep result ("modest positive direction").
2. Reverse causation never explicitly addressed.
3. Cherry-picking of predictors: omission of structural variables (course load, employment hours, disability status, first-generation status).
4. Missing stakeholder perspectives: SES and first-generation status uncontrolled.
5. No effect sizes reported; "significantly higher GPA" is unquantified.

Unexamined Premise

The paper operates within an unexamined behaviorist-individualist frame, assuming academic underperformance is primarily a function of individual behavioral deficits. The alternative structural frame — that GPA variation is substantially produced by institutional resources, instructor quality, and systemic inequities — is not considered.

Perspective Reviewer (Behavioral Science & Public Health)

Recommendation: Minor Revision **Confidence:** 3/5

Summary

From a behavioral science and public health standpoint, the paper addresses a genuinely important question for campus wellbeing and educational policy. The multi-campus design, integration of psychosocial and behavioral predictors, and clear writing are notable positives. However, the study's architecture rests on underexamined assumptions. Stress measurement is likely inadequate; sleep measurement conflates duration with quality; the regression model ignores likely reciprocal and mediation pathways; and the conclusion overreaches relative to the design.

Strengths

1. Policy-relevant construct selection.
2. Multi-campus design.
3. Honest limitations section.
4. Integration of stress as a covariate.
5. Accessible, clearly structured writing.

Key Weaknesses

1. **Major:** Stress measurement likely inadequate for the claims being made (single item vs. validated PSS).
2. **Major:** Sleep duration without sleep quality renders the null finding uninterpretable.
3. **Moderate:** Regression model does not engage with reciprocal and mediation pathways.

4. **Moderate:** Conclusion overreaches relative to design.
5. **Moderate:** Disciplinary and demographic heterogeneity underexamined.

Assumption Audit Highlights

- *Implicit:* Study planning is volitional and equally accessible to all students (ignores structural barriers).
- *Implicit:* Stress is an individual-level variable amenable to individual-level intervention (ignores institutional stressors).
- *Paradigmatic:* Academic performance is the primary outcome; wellbeing is positioned instrumentally.

Dimension Scores

Dimension	Score	Key Issue
Originality	42	Modest value from multi-campus + combined predictors
Methodological Rigor	38	Measurement inadequacies for stress and sleep
Evidence Sufficiency	40	Adequate sample, insufficient reporting
Argument Coherence	55	Logically organized, conclusion–limitations tension
Writing Quality	68	Clear, accessible, minor hedging inconsistencies
Significance & Impact	50	Important topic, limited by evidence–conclusion gap

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Integrity Verification Appendix

Metric	Value
Total Citations	0
Verified	0
Unverifiable	0
Suspicious	0

The manuscript contains no references whatsoever. No citation integrity assessment was possible. All reviewers independently identified the absence of a reference list as a critical, disqualifying deficiency.