

Factors affecting the academic performance of the undergraduate students, with special reference to the University students in Sri Lanka

R. M. U. R. K. Rathnayaka,

urkrathnayaka@gmail.com, 0716958987

Lecturer (Temporary), University of Kelaniya

Abstract

The education has become one of the most emerging and competitive industry in Sri Lankan market. In recent years many private universities and education institutes are established in the country in order to make more opportunities to get degrees and other qualifications. The advanced level exam is the most competitive exam in the Sri Lankan education as here mention due to many reasons such as the key qualification to enter into a state university, more important for the future career and high competition. The university education is one of the most important exams after the Advanced Level exam in Sri Lanka. Since the entire undergraduates who got good marks in their Advanced level it makes more and more competitive. As found by the number of researchers in their studies show, there are many factors that are affecting for the academic performance of the undergraduate students. So the focus of the study is to identify the factors that affected for the academic performance of university students with special reference to university students in Sri Lanka. According to this study, the academic performance has measured through better exam results (GPA). Stress, attitude, exam preparation, writing exam paper and the time management are the independent variables of the study. Based on the variables, five hypotheses have developed. University of Kelaniya has taken at the research site of the study and 200 students have selected through the sampling method of non-probability convenience sampling. Both primary and secondary sources used for the study and the primary data collection have been conducted via a self-administered questionnaire. Descriptive data analytics enriched with correlation analysis have used to analysis data with the aid of SPSS. The study findings showed that there's a positive, strong relationship between the time management and the academic performance. Also, it has found that, there's a weak positive relationship between exam preparation, stress, attitude and writing exam paper between the academic performances of the students.

Key words: Stress, Attitude, Exam Preparation, Time Management, academic performance

1.0 Introduction

After the open economic policy in 1977, the importance of education is increasing in both urban and rural areas in the country. 1.2% of students are selected to 15 state universities all over the country. Few of them carried out all the courses and some of them are having few specific areas. Due to these limitations the competition of the industry is much higher in the 21st industry. This situation makes many differences and future implications in the industry. The A/L exam is one of the most competitive exams in the Sri Lanka and in the whole South Asian region. Nearly 257,000 students are facing A/L exam each year and only 25,000 students are selected to state universities. Most of them who got medium results usually follow a degree program in a private educational institute. So normally most of the population 20-30 between is studying for the first time in their graduate education. (University Grants Commission 2017) When they enter to university they have to decide the stream of subjects to continue study in their academic years. This will face to more and more competitive exams and make their life more difficult. The university consists exam in every year and some of them have exams in each six months. To make their life more successful they have to pass all of

these exams with higher grades. It is important to understand how to success in these exams since they are the final steps to enter their careers. Manage these examinations will bring them good results with a spark of a bright future. According to literature surveys, many reasons are affected to decide the exam results in university education (Zirpoli 2008)

Many universities and researchers conducts researches in order to understand the major reasons behind the success or unsuccessful of the students' exam results. Yet most of them are only focused on one angle rather than concern about the whole idea behind the secret exam success. There are few literature on exam success factors in the case of Sri Lanka context since they touches global aspects. It should relate most of these factors to Sri Lankan culture to make them more sense of student's life. It is very important to understand their mentally and physically status before facing exam to make the best out of it. Here we are investigating how to get best results in their exams related to Sri Lankan state universities.

This research work is conducted in order to understand and evaluate the best practice which can be applied in education for the

future generation. The most importance is, to understand the reasons why many students tend to get lower results in their university exam, to recognize the best practices which will help students to obtain best results and to propose best tactics to manage student's time effectively. The findings will also help academics in all aspects to determine their activities, tactics and strategies. It makes conducting the research is valuable to all the parties who engage in the education industry.

1.1 Objectives of the study

1.1.1 Key Objective

- To find out the factors which influence on academic performance of undergraduate students in Sri Lanka

1.1.2 Specific Objectives

- To find how the effective study habits helps to success in exam.

- To find what are the ways and means to reduce exam stress
- To understand what are the tactics, making positive attitude in exam.
- To recognize how to manage students' time.
- To recognize what are good strategies for higher performances.

2.0 Methodology

The research population is all the students in University of Kelaniya. There are around 8000 internal students in 4 faculties at University of Kelaniya (Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies, Faculty of Science, Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Social Science) these are the 4 faculties at University of Kelaniya at Dalumaga premises. The sample size is 200 students at the University of Kelaniya and the sample has to cover all the faculties and learning disciplines. They have selected through convenience sampling and This 200 student sample includes.

Faculty	Number of students
Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies	50
Faculty of Science	50
Faculty of Humanities	50
Faculty of Social Science.	50

Following hypotheses has developed to examine the relationship between identified variables.

H1 - There is a positive relationship between stress management and academic performance.

H2 - Attitude about the exam and academic performance are positively correlated.

H3 - There is a positive relationship between preparing for the exam and academic performance.

H4 - There is a positive relationship between managing exam paper writing and academic performance.

H5 - Time management and academic performance are positively correlated.

Table 2: Sample respondents

Faculty	Number of students
Commerce and Management studies	46
Social Science	66
Science	29
Humanities	41

3.1 Demographic analysis

182 responses received for the study and the majority of them are from Faculty of Social Sciences. The majority of the students represented the final year and when it comes

Descriptive data analysis has been done for the primary data which has collected through a structured questionnaire which include both close ended and open ended questions. Correlation has used to test the hypotheses .Collection of secondary data includes reading articles, referring book, accessing databases which help to formulate the research into a specific direction.

3.0 Results & Discussion

The survey is conducted in university of Kelaniya undergraduates who consist in all four faculties at the University. Data collection has done for the students when there are no exams for them in the near days. The responses received from the sample respondents are as follows.

to their academic performance, most of them are in the range of GPA 3.0 to 3.29. Out of them, 115 students are female respondents.

3.2 Hypotheses Analysis

Table 3: Hypotheses Analysis

Hypotheses	Pearson Correlation	Test results	Analysis
There is a positive relationship between stress management and academic performance	0.312	Accepted	A positive weak relationship between stress management and academic performance
Attitude about the exam and academic performance are positively correlated.	0.401	Accepted	A positive weak relationship between attitude about the exam and academic performance
There is a positive relationship between preparing for the exam and academic performance.	0.330	Accepted	A positive weak relationship between preparing for the exam and academic performance
There is a positive relationship between managing exam paper writing and academic performance.	0.113	Accepted	A positive weak relationship between managing exam paper writing and academic performance
Time management and academic performance are positively correlated.	0.724	Accepted	A positive strong relationship between time management and academic performance

4.0 Conclusion

Finally the conclusion of the research is to the outcome of the overall effort of the researcher in the study are. The education is the success of any nation in the modern era where it becomes the biggest tool for success in competition as a person as a

nation. The education of the university is the gate to higher levels of achievement with greater recognition in the society. To make that objective a reality the state and all the other relevant parties has to work in a more reconciliation for the better of future generation. The success of the education is a

prominent responsibility of undergraduates. They have to play bigger role in the success of the nation's future.

According to the findings of the research there are key principles the students have to adjust in their education life. They help to make a great foundation for their future success.

- It is not enough to have a good attitude about the exams the more important to use that attitude to prepare in a better manner and write the exam paper at student best capabilities.
- Start studying early, as soon as possible will guarantee the best results in university exams.
- Discussing what you learn with friends and analyzing them is more important to acquire a good knowledge and success in exams.
- Students who have a high level of exam stress have to adopt some techniques in order to reduce the stress level into a manageable amount.
- When writing exam paper reading the whole exam paper is must and selecting the first question to answer is the second best thing.

- There can be many bad practices in the current exam system yet the students have kept a positive attitude toward exam and work for it.
- Use of other interactive methods such as Mind map, Audio and Videos is very effective.
- Increase the level of memory using strategies is important.
- Learn the subject in more practical manner is very important.

The development of English knowledge pays off in many situations.

If students can adapt to these strategies it is guaranteed that they can achieve good results in their university exams and able to make a better future for them and the whole nation.

5.0 References

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