

Factors Affecting Academic Performance of Undergraduate Students: Special Reference to Faculty of Management and Commerce, South Eastern University of Sri Lanka

Mathaka Deeragee Chanaka Priyankara^a and Mohamed Ismail Mujahid Hilal^b

^a Amarasekera & Company, Colombo. Sri Lanka

^b Faculty of Management & Commerce, South Eastern University of Sri Lanka
University Park, Oluvil. Sri Lanka.
priyankaramdc@gmail.com, mujahidh@seu.ac.lk

Abstract

This study was designed to investigate the factors affecting on academic performance of undergraduate students with special reference to Faculty of Management and Commerce (FMC), South Eastern University of Sri Lanka (SEUSL). Data were collected from 120 respondents of FMC, SEUSL by using the simple random sampling method. The findings revealed that the existence of a significant relationship between English language proficiency, library facility utilization, computer laboratory utilization, lecture attendance and participation in extra activities and academic performance of undergraduate students. This research also confirmed that the most influencing factors for improving academic performance of the student is the English language proficiency (ELP) and academic performance will decrease when students participate in extra activities. Hence, the university has to make facility enhancement with regard to English language, library facility, computer laboratory and improve the attendance of the undergraduates for increasing the academic performance.

Keywords: Academic performance, Undergraduate, English Language Proficiency, South Eastern University of Sri Lanka

Introduction

Academic performance is measured by the examination results. It is called as “Grade Point Average (GPA)” which is one of the major measures to measure the academic performance. Hoyle (1986) argued that schools and university are established with the aim of improving knowledge and skills to those who go through them and behind all this is the idea of enhancing good academic performance.

Although many studies carried out with regard to factors affecting academic performance of students, no any studies have been done at South Eastern University of Sri Lanka (SEUSL). The study will enable the researcher to make recommendations to student and SEUSL’s policy makers especially those in the Quality Assurance unit, the Examination branch as to what policies and strategies can be employed to improve academic performance in institutions of higher learning. The findings will help the University administration to review which methods are used to improve academic performance of student. This research will also be a source of reference for other researchers to further study in student’s academic performance in South Eastern

University of Sri Lanka. The research question is that what are the important factors that affect undergraduate students' academic performance? Thus, the objective of this research paper is to explore factors that affect the academic performance of the students and the Nature of the impact.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Grade Point Average (GPA) was considered as dependent variable to measure academic performance of the student. Sandika *et al.* (2012). Most of the researchers concluded that there were significant relation among academic performance and English language proficiency. Harb *et al.* (2006) investigated and found that most significant factor with positive effect on academic performance was a proficiency in English. Few researchers argued that there were only weak relationship between academic performance and English proficiency. Therefore, researchers hypothesize that

H₁: There is a significant relationship between English language proficiency and academic performance of undergraduate students.

According to Halsey *et al.* (2005), the growth of the information requirement for the purpose of study, learning, teaching and research is important and this is facilitated by available facility and utilization of library. This confirms that there is significant positive relationship between library usage and academic performance. It was also confirmed by Ston and Pattern (2001) that statistically significant correlation across a number of universities between library usage and student attainment. Further concluded that students' GPA was significantly correlated with the students' library usage (Sandika *et al.*, 2012). Thus, the hypothesis is

H₂: There is a significant relationship between library facility utilization and academic performance of undergraduate students.

According to Mehmet (2010), if student had well experience in use the computer laboratory, it helps student attain higher benefits from the laboratory for improve higher attainment at examination. It was also conclude that having a personal computer or having the possibility to access computer from the lab at the faculty that they attend affect students' computer skills in a positive way. According to Richard (2000), computer literacy with performance at project and mid-term exam is significant and concluded that there was significant relationship between academic performance and computer literacy. This leads the hypothesis that

H₃: There is a significant relationship between computer laboratory utilization and academic performance of undergraduate students.

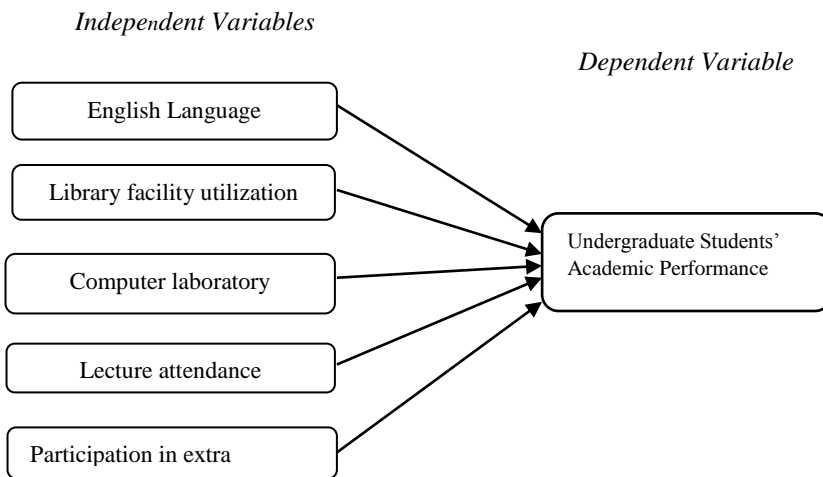
Lecture attendance is two types that are attended in physical attendance of lectures and online lecture recordings. Williams *et al.* (2011) consider only traditional physical attendance only. According to Romer (1993) concludes evidence on absenteeism in undergraduate economics courses at three major US universities, found an average attendance rate of about 67 present. The paper also presented regression results, based on a sample of 195 Intermediate Macroeconomics students, indicating a positive and significant relationship between student attendance and examination performance. On the basis of these findings, study suggested that academic performance should measure including attendance is mandatory. Measures aimed at increasing attendance, including making attendance mandatory, could be considered. Therefore, forth hypothesis is

H₄: There is a significant relationship between lecture attendance and academic performance of undergraduate students.

According to Muhammad et al. (2012), there was relationship between academic performance and participation in the co-curricular activities. Conclusion in this study was that Athletic and sports participation improves the performance of the students. Fujita (2005), suggest that students feel that participation in sports, and watching television each improve academic achievement. Thus, it is hypothesized that

H₅: There is a significant relationship between participation in extra activities and academic performance of undergraduate students.

These relationships between dependent variables and independent variables and hypothesis are depicted in the following conceptual framework.



Source: Researchers construction

Methodology

Primary data was used for this study. The study is quantitative in nature. According the Dean office' response, FMC was showed the number of undergraduate students is 869, which was considered as target population for the research. The research sample is 120 of undergraduate students selected from students at FMC of SEUSL. The respondents were selected from the department of Accountancy and Finance, Department of Management, Management Information System Unit (MIS). The number of 120 respondents was chosen by simple random sampling technique.

The Pearson correlation and Regression analysis were used to identify the relationship between independent variables and dependent variable. Some descriptive statistics were also used to analyze obtained data.

Reliability test

Reliability of total Items and Individual Items shows in Table 1.

Table 1. Reliability Statistics

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Total items	0.715	31
English Language Proficiency	0.856	4
Library Facility Utilization	0.872	9
Computer Laboratory Utilization	0.628	5
Lecture Attendance	0.783	4
Participation in Extra Activities	0.835	3
Academic Performance	0.698	4

Source: Survey Data

Respondents' Characteristics

Out of 120 respondents 52.5% were female and 47.5% were male undergraduate students. Data were collected from all students of all years namely first year, second year, third year, and fourth year undergraduate student are 34 (28.3%), 31 (25.8%), 29 (24.2%), and 26 (21.7%) respectively. In classifying them into courses of study, 46.7% of the students belong to Bachelor Business Administration. 31.7% and 21.7% are studying Bachelor of Commerce and Management and Information Technology.

Results and Discussion

There are five independent variables impact on Dependent variable. Those are English language Proficiency, Library facility utilization, Computer Laboratory utilization, Lecture attendance and Participation in extra activities. Perceived level of impact of each variable on academic performance is given in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Variable

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
English Language Proficiency	120	3.760	0.519
Library Facility Utilization	120	3.199	0.989
Computer Laboratory Utilization	120	3.125	0.496
Lecture Attendance	120	2.959	0.770
Participation in Extra Activities	120	3.300	0.671
Academic Performance	120	3.967	0.426

Source : Survey data

According to Table 2, overall mean of English language proficiency, Library facility utilization, Computer laboratory utilization, Lecture attendance, Participation in extra activity are 3.760, 3.199, 3.125, 2.959 (near to 3.000), and 3.300 respectively. This shows that respondents are in agreement that independent variables have effect on students' academic performance.

Correlation analysis is used to examine the patterns of relationship among the selected variables with the aim of discovering the nature of their interdependence and their effect.

Table 3. Correlation Matrix

		ELP	LFU	CLU	LA	PEA
LFU	Pearson Correlation	.511**				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
	N	120				
CLU	Pearson Correlation	.285**	.425**			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000			
	N	120	120			
LA	Pearson Correlation	.421**	.381**	.401**		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		
	N	120	120	120		
PEA	Pearson Correlation	-.295**	-.316**	-.171	-.348**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.063	.000	
	N	120	120	120	120	
AP	Pearson Correlation	.725**	.638**	.476**	.656**	-.426**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	120	120	120	120	120

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

There is degree of association between English language proficiency, Library facility utilization, Computer Laboratory utilization, Lecture Attendance and Participation in extra activity with students' academic performance are 72.5%, 63.8%, 47.6%, 65.6% and -42.6% respectively as shown in Table 3. Further, since there is positive correlation between dependent variables and independent variables, multi coleneriaty has to be tested.

In order to test the relationships between ELP, LFU, CLU, LA and PEA on academic performance, multiple regression was carried out.

Table 4. Coefficient in Regression

Predictor	Beta	t	P value	VIF
(Constant)	5.282	2.410	0.018	
English Language Proficiency (ELP)	0.335	7.254	0.000	1.487
Library Facility Utilization (LFU)	0.235	3.779	0.000	1.590
Computer Laboratory Utilization (CLU)	0.118	2.222	0.028	1.331
Lecture Attendance (LA)	0.257	5.542	0.000	1.449
Participation in Extra Activity (PEA)	-0.130	-2.024	0.045	1.204

$F = 68.291$, $p = 0.000$, $R Square = 0.75$, $Adjusted R Square = 0.739$, $n = 120$

As per the regression results, the multiple regression formula is given as under;

$$AP = 5.282 + 0.335_{ELP} + 0.235_{LFU} + 0.118_{CLU} + 0.257_{LA} - 0.130_{PEA}$$

Further, analysis of model in Table 4 shows that F value of 68.291 with p value 0.000 which shows that the overall model is highly significant and there is evidence to conclude

that there is a relationship between five independent variable and academic performance. R Square (R^2) confirms that the model explain 75 % of total variance of academic performance predicted by the independent variables such as ELP, LFU, CLU, LA, and PEA.

According to the results of the regression analysis, English language proficiency ($t = 7.254, p < 0.05$), Library facility utilization ($t = 3.779, p < 0.05$), Computer facility utilization ($t = 2.222, p < 0.05$), Lecture attendance ($t = 5.542, p < 0.05$), and Participation in extra activity ($t = -2.024, p < 0.05$) are affecting the academic performance of undergraduates at South Eastern University of Sri Lanka.

Conclusions

This study was conducted to explore the important factors that affect the students' academic performance. Research was conducted at Faculty of Management and Commerce, South Eastern University of Sri Lanka. Analysis revealed that English language proficiency, Library facility utilization, Computer laboratory utilization and Lecture attendance are the factors that affect the student academic performance and contribute to the enhancement of academic performance of the undergraduates. This research also confirmed that the most influencing factors for improving academic performance of the student is the English language proficiency (ELP) and academic performance will decrease when students participate in extra activities. Hence, the university has to make facility enhancement with regard to English language, library facility, computer laboratory and improve the attendance of the undergraduates for increasing the academic performance.

Limitations

There are certain limitations of this study. Firstly, the sample size taken in this study was very small that is only 120 (120 students out of 869 students in Faculty of Management and Commerce). If this study is being carried out again with large sample size the result might be improved than existing study. Secondly, limitation of the study was that study conducted at Faculty of Management and Commerce in South Eastern University of Sri Lanka and this has to be extended to other universities as well to improve the results. Finally, researchers considered only five factors influencing on academic performance, and ignore others relative factors that affect the student performance due to personal constraints of the researchers. Therefore, more factors should be considered to assess the academic performance.

References

- Abubakar, B. (2005). *Psycho-social-linguistic factors that facilitate high achievement in senior school certificate English language*. Journal of Educational Research and Development, 1 (1); 67-76
- Adegboye, A. O. (1993). *Proficiency in English language as a factor contributing to competency in Mathematics*. Education today, 6(2), 9-13
- Aina, J.K. (2013). *Effective Teaching and Learning in Science Education through Information and Communication Technology [ICT]*, IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education, 2(5), 43-47.
- Amin, M. E. (2005). *Social Science research: conception, methodology and analysis*. Kampala:Makerere University Press.

- Bailey, S. (2013). *Does the availability of lecture recordings affect student attendance and academic performance?*, Study of Higher Education, Unit for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching: University of Kent.
- Fujita, K. (2005). *The Effects of Extracurricular Activities on the Academic Performance of Junior High Students*. Kimiko Fujita: The Master's College.
- Furst-Bowe, J. & Boger, C. (1996). *An analysis of required computer competencies for university students*. Journal of Research on Computing in Education, 08886504, Winter95/96, 28 (2).
- Garland, A.M. (2010). *Assessing the relationship between student involvement and academic performance in higher education*. the Faculty of the Department of Counselling and Student Affairs, Western Kentucky University Bowling Green, Kentucky.
- Halsey, R. S., et al. (2005). Library (institution). Microsoft Encarta 2006 [CD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation
- Harb, Nasri, & El-Shaarwi, A. (2006). *Factors Affecting Students' Performance*. MPRA Paper No. 1362.
- Hewapathirana, T.K. (2005). *Examination performance of undergraduates in relation to attendance at lectures*: Department of Statistic & Computer Science, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, J.Sci.Univ.Kelaniya 2(2005)115-134
- International Technology Education Association. (1996). *Technology for all Americans: Phase 1*. International Technology Education Association, Reston, VA. Retrieved March 04, 2010 from http://www.iteaconnect.org/TAA/PDFs/Taa_RandS.pdf.
- Jacob, K.A, Ogundele, A.G., & Olanipekun, S.S. (2013). *Students' Proficiency in English Language Relationship with Academic Performance in Science and Technical Education*: Physics Department College of Education (T) Lafiagi, Kwara State, Nigeria, American Journal of Educational Research, 1(9), 355-358.
- Jagannath, K. D. & Praveen, R. (2001). *Library facilities and the academic achievement of secondary students*.
- Khan, M.Y.,Jamil, A., Khan U.A, & Kareem, U. (2012). *Association between Participation in Sports and Academic Achievement of College Students*. International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences August 2012, 2(8),ISSN: 2222-6990
- Lahore, L.L. (2008). *Community college students and differences between computer skills self-assessment and objective computer-based skills assessment*. Unpublished Dissertation, Seattle University.
- Martha, K (2009). *Factors affecting academic performance of undergraduate Students at Ugandachristian University*.
- Mehmet, G.U.C.L.U (2010). *University students' computer skills: a comparative analysis*. The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology, 9(2)
- Mlambo, V. (2011). *An analysis of some factors affecting student academic performance in an introductory biochemistry course at the University of the West Indies*. Caribbean Teaching Scholar, 1(2), 79–92
- Morahan-Martin, J. (1992). *Gender differences in computer experience, skills and attitudes among incoming college students*. Collegiate Microcomputer, 1(10), 1-7
- Muhammad, D., Tahir, N., and Ali, H., and Iqra, M. (2012). *The effect of co-curricular activities on the academic performances of the students: a case study of the islamiauniversity of Bahawalpur*. Pakistan, Bulgarian Journal of Science and Education Policy (BJSEP), 6(2)
- Mushtaq, I. & Khan S.N. (2012). *Factors Affecting Students' Academic Performance*: Mohammad AliJinnah University Islamabad, Pakistan, Global Journal of Management and Business Research, Volume12 Issue 9 Version 1.0 June 2012.
- Ministry of Higher Education (2012). *National higher education strategic plan of Sri Lanka Mid-term plan (2012-2015)*. http://www.mohe.gov.lk/images/pdf/strategic_vision_low_resolution.pdf
- O'Brien, E., & Rollefson, M. (1992). *Extracurricular participation and student engagement*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

- Oyewusi, F.O., and Oyeboade, S.A. (2009). *An Empirical Study of Accessibility and Use of Library Resources by Undergraduates in a Nigerian State University of Technology*. Library Philosophy and Practice, ISSN 1522-0222
- Rahman, S., Afsaneh, B., and Seyyed, M.A.S., (2011). *A Closer Look at the Relationship between Academic Achievement and Language Proficiency among Iranian EFL Students*. Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 1(12), pp. 1740- 1748.
- Richard, Y.L. (2000). *The impact of computer literacy on student academic performance in the introductory management information systems course*. The Dream Catchers Group, Academy of Educational Leadership Journal Publisher, 4 (2), ISSN: 1095-6328.
- Rochester, J., & Rochester, J. (1991). *Computer for People: Concepts and Applications*. Homewood, IL: Irwin.
- Romer, D. (1993). *Do students go to class? Should they?* Journal of Economic Perspectives, 7(3), pp. 167-74.
- Sandika, A.L., Atapattu, N.S.B.M., & Weerasinghe, W.M.C.B. (2012). *Factors Affecting the Academic Performance of Agriculture Undergraduates- a Case in Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna*, SAARC Journal of educational research, VOL.9, pp 6-18.
- Stanca, L. (2004). *The effects of attendance on academic performance: panel data evidence for Introductory Microeconomics*. Economics Department, University of Milan Bicocca.
- Stone, G., & Pattern, D. (2011). *Does Library Use Affect Student Attainment? A Preliminary Report on the Library Impact Data Project*, Bryony Ramsden, University of Huddersfield, UK.
- South Eastern University of Sri Lanka (2009). *Students' hand book (2008/09)*. Faculty of Management and Commerce, University Park, Oluvil
- Williams, A., Birch, E., & Hancock, P. (2011). *The impact of on-line lecture recordings on student performance*. Business School, The University of Western, Australia.
- Wong, S.H.W. & Webb, T.D. (2011). *Uncovering Meaningful Correlation between Student Academic Performance and Library Material Usage*.