

Multifactor Analysis of Variables Impacting the Academic Achievement of University Undergraduates in Sri Lanka

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The candidates who enter the university are considered by Educationalists to be the cream of the achievers who manage to get through the GCE Advanced Level. But the question arises as to why we begin to perceive vast differences among the achievements of these very same high achievers once they enter the university. The current research explored the multi dimensions in the concept of academic achievement. 90 undergraduates from the Faculty of Arts, University of Peradeniya were chosen as the sample. Data were collected using a questionnaire consisting of 8 subscales in the areas of stress, socio economic status, procrastination, language, social climate, academic involvement, academic participation and academic achievement. In order to explore the scales in detail, the items of the stress and social climate scales were factor-analyzed using SPSS. Findings suggest that academic achievement is negatively correlated with stress ($r = -0.280$, $p=0.016$) and that socio economic status has no observable relationship with the said variable. In doing further analysis using the factor clusters of the stress scale, researchers found that the factor of “how well one grasps study material” ($r = -0.222$, $p = 0.050$) and the factor of “obstacles” ($r=-0.321$, $p= 0.004$) are significantly negatively correlated with academic achievement. The factor cluster of “belongingness” in the social climate scale negatively correlates with procrastination ($r = -0.242$, $p = 0.036$). An overall look at the findings support the researcher’s problem that many different factors do play a part in shaping the academic achievement of university undergraduates.

Keywords: academic achievement; SES, social climate; stress, procrastination