

RELATIONS BETWEEN UNDERGRADUATES' LECTURE ATTENDANCE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: A CASE STUDY IN THE COURSE OF FOUNDATIONS IN SCIENCE EDUCATION

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The importance of students' class attendance in higher education is shown by various studies. Some of these studies have focused on how students' class attendance affects the achievement of students. Class attendance of students shows a positive and significant role in academic performance. Though, undergraduates are required to meet minimum attendance 80% in Sri Lankan Universities many students are maintaining poor attendance in their selected courses. This could affect students' meaningful learning at the university level which would eventually impacts their future endeavours. Thus, the aim of this study was to explore the impact of class attendance on academic achievement of second year undergraduates who followed science education courses at the Faculty of Science, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka. In this study quantitative approach was used and the sample included students of Foundations in Science Education (SE 201) course in 2015 and 2017. Undergraduates' attendance was collected during the sessions in the course. Students' final results were formulated on the scores of attendance, assignments, mid-semester examination, and their end-semester examination. The relations between students' attendance and their performance were computed with Pearson correlation. The correlation between the undergraduates' attendance and final results of the selected course (n= 109) in 2015 is 0.6548 (p-value is < 0.01) and the same for 2017 (n= 95) is 0.5718 (p-value < 0.01). Thus, there is a positive relation between students' attendance and their academic achievement. Hence, results show that class attendance significantly affects the students' academic performance. As such, it reveals that students' academic performance increases with better attendance. If the students attend the sessions they obtain first-hand experience as the resource persons share their experience lively in a specific manner. These experiences may help to enhance students' meaningful learning in the subject as learning is not merely memorizing the content. Thus, the undergraduates should be encouraged to attend their lectures to enhance their academic performance.

Keywords: Academic performance, Science education, Undergraduate attendance

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