

An empirical study of factors affecting students' academic performance in schools at secondary level. special reference on science stream A/L students in paddiruppu zonal education division

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Abstract

The ultimate academic output of the school is measured out of the A/L results produced by the students which decide the pass and fail. This study was designed to investigate the factors affecting the low academic performance of Science students in schools at secondary level in Paddiruppu Education Zone. A large number of students are studying G.C.E.(A/L) in Paddiruppu Zone. However, performance of the Science students was low in Paddiruppu Education Zone when compared with the national average of passes.

The objective of the study was to identify the factors affecting the low performance of G.C.E. (A/L) Science stream students of Paddiruppu Education Zone and explore the ways and means of improving the performance of Science students. Emphasis was put on trying to establish the relationship among students* commitment, quality of teaching, teaching environment, family income and evaluation on academic performance of A/L Science students in the selected Zone.

The data was collected using structured questionnaires from eighty (80) students and twenty (24) teachers who were the respondents, selected from five IAB schools using the simple random sampling method in Paddiruppu Education Zone. The data was analyzed using descriptive and Statistical analysis such as regression and Pearson correlation.

The findings of the Statistical analysis identified that there was a significant positive relationship between students' commitment, quality of teaching, evaluation with students' academic performance. There was a weak relationship between teaching environment and family income with students' academic performance. Furthermore, findings of this study showed that the insufficient self-study time, lack of students' interest for learning, poor understanding ability and difficulties in easy learning, poor use of teaching aids and methodology, lack of conducting additional classes after school hours, insufficient practicals for all the subjects, lack of laboratory facilities, lack of remedial teaching and insufficient evaluation were the significant factors that effected the academic performance in Science stream.

On the basis of the findings, this research was concluded that quality of teaching was the most important determinant of the students' academic performance, while evaluation and students' commitment were the second and third important factors.

Adjusted R₂ value of regression analysis revealed that these three variables were explained by 56% of the proposed model. It means that three of the variables together could explain 56% coefficient of determination. There may be other or unknown factors of 44% which may have the direct effect on the academic performance of students. These three variables were found to be the critical factors to improve the students' academic performance.

Finally, the researcher recommended that the A/L Science students must be motivated to do self-study and make to increase their interest in learning. The teachers should understand the students and apply effective methodology in classroom teaching. It is the duty of the principals and the Zonal Monitoring Panel to motivate the students to conduct additional classes after school hours, complete the scheduled practicals in time and provide good laboratory facilities. The teachers should do remedial teaching to evaluate the students properly and to assess the achievement level of the students. The effective and regular evaluation can motivate the students to achieve better academic performance. On the other hand, parents should also take care of their children and guide them in a proper way. The research findings will help the educational administrators and the policy makers to enhance the pass rate in Science stream.