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## A Study of Relationship among Different Factors and Academic Performance of Girls at Graduate Level

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### Abstract

*The present research study was design to investigate the relationship among different factors and academic performance of girls at graduate level. The variables under consideration were related to admission percentage of girls, socio-economic status of parents and school background of learners and their academic performance. The data were collected from 120 students through self made questionnaire from different college students of University of Delhi using the simple random sampling technique. For analysis, correlation, t-test and ANOVA were used. The findings revealed that different factors and academic performance are closely related of graduate students.*

**Keywords:** Socio-Economic Status, Academic Performance, Admission Percentage, School Background, Girls Education

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### 1. Introduction

With the changing scenario worldwide, the life has become more and more competitive. Academic performance is affected by a number of factors including admission percentage, social economic status and school background. Geiser and Santelices (2007), Acato (2006), and Swart (1999) all argue that admission points which are a reflection of the previous performance influence future academic performance. The Admission Centers of different universities reports that institutions have found that a selection rank based on a student's overall academic achievement is the best single predictor of success for most courses. The researcher agreed with the scholars that admission percentage affect to academic performance at university and that is why according to the University of Delhi, the basis for entry to university is admission percentage which are derived from percentage and grades or both.

According to Graetz (1995), one's educational success depends very strongly on social economic status of the parents. Considine and Zappala (2002) argue that families where the parents are advantaged socially, educationally and economically foster a high level of achievement in their children. The researcher agreed with Considine and Zappala (2002) because students from high social economic backgrounds are well exposed to scholastic materials, which aid their intelligence. Sentamu (2003), Kwesiga (2002) and Portes and Macleod (1996) as cited in Considine and Zappala (2002) all argue that the type of school a child attends influences academic achievement. According to Minnesota measures (2007), a report on higher education performance, which was produced by the University of Minnesota, the most reliable predictor of student success in college is the academic preparation of students in high school.

Academic performance according to the Cambridge University Reporter (2003) is frequently defined in terms of examination performance. In this study academic performance was characterized by performance in tests, in course work and performance in examinations of undergraduate students. According to the University of Delhi prospectus, admission points are weights attached to the applicant's past academic records. The admission points for this study were characterized by direct entry scheme in graduate courses. Durden & Ellis (as cited in Staffolani and Bratti, 2002) observed that measures of prior educational performance are the most important determinants of student performance. This implies that the higher the previous performance, the better the students will perform academically.

Social Economic Status (SES) according to Considine and Zappala (2002) is a person's overall social position to which attainments in both the social and economic domain contribute. They add that social economic status is determined by an individual's achievements in education, employment, occupational status and income. In this study social economic status (SES) was characterized by family income, parental education and parental occupation. Graetz (1995) argues that children from high social economic status families perform much better at school compared to children from low SES families.

Schools according to Sentamu (2003) are social institutions in which groups of individuals are brought together to share educational experiences and such interactions may breed positive or negative influences on learners. In this study, school background was characterized by location of school (urban or rural), school ownership (public or private schools), school academic status and school financial standing.

Records in the office of the University showed that University of Delhi has a merit-based system of admissions; it admits students following the minimum requirements as provided for by the University. These students were from various school backgrounds. The students' academic performance is assessed by use of tests, assignments and examinations. Much as it is normal for students in an educational institution to perform well and others poorly, even after receiving the same services, the researcher is curious to know what makes some students perform well and while others perform poorly.

The importance of academic achievement has raised several questions for educational researchers. What factors promote academic achievement in students? How far do the different factors contribute toward academic achievement? The researcher liked to investigate what factors affect the performance of the students. The recommendations of this research will go along way in assisting the policy makers at university level to come up with policies and strategies that can be employed to improve academic performance.

## **2. Need and Justification of the Study**

A lot of research has been done on factors affecting academic performance of college students but there was scarce information about academic performance of students at University of Delhi. The study was enable the researcher to make recommendations to Universities policy makers especially those in the Quality Assurance unit, the Central Academic office and the Ministry of Education and Sports on what policies and strategies can be employed to improve academic performance in institutions of higher learning. The findings will help the University Admission's Board to review its methods of admitting students in order to improve

academic performance. The report will also be a source of reference for other researchers intending to study academic performance of University of Delhi students.

### 3. Statement of the Problem

The researcher established the relationship between factors affecting and academic performance at undergraduate level students' of University of Delhi with specific reference to admission percentage, social economic status and school background. As the problem discussed above lead to researcher to examined the affect of factors on Academic performance of girls at graduate level. In this nutshell the topic of investigation was-

***"A Study of Relationship among Different Factors and Academic Performance of Girls at Graduate Level"***

### 4. Objectives of the Study

In view of the available and studied literature and importance of the topic, the following objectives were set:

- i) To establish the relationship between students' admission percentage factor and academic performance of undergraduate students.
- ii) To establish the relationship between parents' social economic status factor and academic performance of undergraduate students.
- iii) To establish the relationship between students' former school background factor and academic performance of undergraduate students.

### 5. Hypotheses of the Study

To give the present research a momentum in proper direction in the light of available literature, the following hypotheses have been formulated.

- i) There exists no significant relationship between students' admission percentage factor and academic performance of undergraduate students.

ii) There exists no significant relationship between parents' social economic status factor and academic performance of undergraduate students.

iii) There exist no significant relationship between students' former school background factor and academic performance of undergraduate students.

## 6. Variables of the Study

The variables investigated in the present study along with their nature have been discussed here.

### 6.1. Independent Variables

'Factors affecting' are taken as independent variables for the purpose of the present investigation.

### 6.2. Dependent Variables

'Academic Performance' is taken as dependent variable. The score of the final examination of the students will be taken as academic achievement.

## 7. Operational Definitions of Key Words

**Admission Percentage:** Admission percentage which include direct entry percentage to take the admission in university course at graduate level.

**Socio-economic Status:** Parents' social economic status, which was conceptualized as parents' education, parents' income and parents' occupation.

**School Background:** It is former school background, which was conceptualized as location of the former school (urban or rural); ownership of former school (public or private).

**Academic Performance:** It pertains to the scores of a student achieved in some formal examination.

## **8. Population of the Study**

The respondents in this study were under graduate girl students because the study was about academic performance of undergraduate students. So, carry out the proposed research graduate girls of different colleges of University of Delhi were chosen from Delhi NCT.

## **9. Sample of the Study**

The initial sample of this study consisted of 120 girl students from the different colleges of Delhi University. The sample was chosen from Delhi NCT.

## **10. Method of Sampling**

In this proposed study the sample was based on the stratified random sampling.

## **11. Research Methodology**

The proposed study was based on survey method. All description of the present study including findings and implications were written in detailed form.

## **12. Tool**

All the respondents filled their answers in questionnaires. The researcher used the questionnaires because the population was literate and large and time for collecting data was limited. The researcher developed closed-ended questions because they are easy to fill, save time and keep the respondents focused on the subject. The questionnaire was divided into necessary sections delineating personal information, questions about the independent variable and the dependant variable.

## **13. Types of Data**

In this study, the primary and secondary data were collected from the colleges, especially girl's colleges of University of Delhi NCT.



#### **14. Sources of Data**

- » The primary data were found with the help of self made questionnaire.
- » The secondary data were taken from the previous year's results (scores of a student achieved in previous years examination) of graduate level girls students.

#### **15. Statistics**

Data from questionnaires were compiled, sorted, edited, classified and coded into a coding sheet and analyzed using a computerized data analysis package known as Statistical Package for Social Science. The correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) was used to compute the relationship between admission percentage, parents' social economic status, school background and academic performance. The researcher also used the ANOVA to find out how academic performance varied.

#### **16. Research Procedure**

The researcher obtained a letter of introduction from the Regional Director, IGNOU, Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, to conduct this research at Delhi. A letter of permission to carry out the research obtained from the college principal's in order for the researcher to carry out the study. The researcher obtained documents such as students' lists and numbers and records on admission and academic performance from the academic office. The researcher administered the questionnaires on the girls' students of different colleges of University of Delhi. This data were collected in the year 2015 using questionnaires, and documentary analysis.

On the very first day of the visit to the respective college, all the students were clubbed together and were informed about the purpose of the study. A rapport was established and well conductive atmosphere was created.

Questionnaire was given after taking them into confidence that the information's so generated will be kept confidential and will not be used for any other purpose. After filling the personal details, the students were requested to turn the page to read the instruction carefully and enabled to understand the questions by explaining the examples quoted by the author. Aftercollecting the filled Questionnaire prepared the tables and analyzed the data by using specific statistics.



## 17. Delimitations

- (i) The study was delimited to graduate colleges especially girls colleges.
- (ii) This study was limited to colleges of Delhi University only.
- (iii) Only about 120 girls were screened for the present study.
- (iv) The study was limited to the use of Mean, S.D., Correlation and ANOVA. Other advanced statistics may be used.
- (v) The present study was covered a small sample and there is a stern requirement to conduct such study on a larger group from various universities of Delhi or rather India.

## 18. Main Findings

### ***18.1. Objective One: To establish the relationship between students' admission percentage factor and academic performance of undergraduate students.***

The first hypothesis stated, "There exists no significant relationship between students' admission percentage factor and academic performance of undergraduate students."

The researcher tried to aggregate all four items of admission percentage, diploma percentage and other exam percentage into one index so as to test the variable admission percentage to academic performance but the aggregation failed. Therefore each of the four items, diploma percentage and other exam percentage were related to academic performance as shown in tables.

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to determine the relationship between percentage and academic performance, the Pearson product moment correlation index  $r$  gave a significance or  $p$ -value of 0.00 which is less than  $\alpha = 0.01$ . The results revealed that percentage are significantly related to academic performance of undergraduate students. The Pearson product moment correlation index  $r$  of diploma and academic performance gave a significance or  $p$ -value of 0.001, which is less than  $\alpha = 0.05$  as shown in the table, implying that the

diploma admission percentage influence academic performance. The Pearson product moment correlation index  $r$  of mature age and academic performance gave a significance or  $p$ -value of 0.52 which is greater than alpha 0.05, it implying that there is no relationship between mature age admission percentage and academic performance of undergraduate students at University of Delhi. The Pearson product moment correlation index  $r$  of other examination percentage and academic performance gave a significance or  $p$ -value of 0.06 which is greater than alpha 0.05 implying that there is no relationship between examination percentage and academic performance of undergraduate students at University of Delhi.

These findings revealed that both level admission percentage and diploma admission percentage are significantly related to academic performance. The findings indicate that students with high admission percentage and diploma admission percentage perform well at university and those with low points perform poorly. The findings of this study are consistent with a number of scholars including; Staffolani and Bratti, (2002), McDonald, Newton, Whetton and Benefield (2001), Mohammad and Almaheed (1988) Waller and Foy (1987) and who all demonstrated that measures of prior educational performance are the most important determinants of student success in college and university. The researcher noted that the studies by Geiser and Santelices (2007), Anderson, Benjamin and Fuss (1994) and Waller and Foy (1987) and Mohammad and Almaheed (1988) were all correlative studies and they had similar conclusions and so was this study.

This result may be explained by Geiser and Santelices (2007), who argued that high school grades or admission points reflect a students' cumulative performance over a period of years and that is why they are consistently the best predictor of college success. A result confirmed by Anderson, Benjamin and Fuss (1994) who found that students who performed well in high school also performed better in college. Geiser and Santelices (2007) argued that as a selection criteria, emphasis on high school grades focuses on the mastery of specific skills and knowledge required for college-level work. In addition, the results could also owe to the fact that, that students who had previously performed well continue to do so because they have a strong potential to easily catch up with university work and they are motivated to do so (Durr, 1997). The results of this study are not in line with

Huw, Reddy and Talcott (2006) who found that grades obtained at A' level obtained did not predict academic performance at university and the Academic Admission Council of Oregon State University (2003) who found that traditional measures of academic potential at best explain only 30% of the variation in first year at college GPA. The results in this study about diploma points being significantly related to academic performance are in line with Ringland and Pearson (2003), Wheeler (2006) and Richardson (1994) whose study on non-traditional entrants, (diploma holders) showed that non-traditional entrants performed as well as traditional entrants (A' level) as long as they had performed well at their previous qualifications. The performance of non-traditional entrants was attributed to age (Parameswaran, 1991) and to life experience. (Staffolani and Bratti, 2002)

According to the findings of this study, mature age points and exam percentage are not related to academic performance of undergraduate students at University of Delhi. However the findings about mature age may be explained by Geizer and Santelices (2007) who argued that standardized admission tests reflect the student's performance in a single three hours sitting and this makes it difficult to determine future performance after a student has been examined only three hours. This is supported by Cushing and McGarvey (2004) and Durr (1997) who both found that standardized entrance examination tests do not predict performance at university. Mohammad and Almaheed (1988) explain that international students may differ in performance from resident students because they differ in academic behavior. The researcher is of the opinion that it could be because the systems of education are different and that students have to adjust to a new and different system of education. However this is a recommended area for further research.

### ***18.2. Objective Two: To Establish the Relationship between Parents' Social Economic Status Factor and Academic Performance of Undergraduate Students.***

The second hypothesis stated, "There exists no significant relationship between parents' social economic status factor and academic performance of undergraduate students". The study measured the items of social economic status and academic performance and the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient  $r$  gave a significance or p-value of 0.008, which is less than alpha 0.05 as shown in table 9.

This study revealed that parents' social economic status is significantly related to academic performance of undergraduate students. The findings indicate that the higher a parents' social economic status, the higher the academic performance of the student.

The results of this study may be explained by Considine and Zappala (2002) who found that families where the parents are advantaged socially, educationally and economically foster a higher level of achievement in their children. They also found that these parents provide higher levels of psychological support for their children through environments that encourage the development of skills necessary for success at school. The results are also consistent with Hansen and Mastekaasa (2003), who argue that according to the cultural capital theory one could expect students from families who are closest to the academic culture to have greatest success. The results of this study owe to the fact that, low social economic status negatively affects academic achievement because low social economic status prevents access to vital resources and creates additional stress at home. (Hansen and Mastekaasa, 2003). The results are not in agreement with Pedrosa, et al (2006) who found that students coming from disadvantaged socio-economic and educational homes perform relatively better than those coming from higher socio-economic and educational strata.

The findings of this study confirmed the findings of Combs (1985) who concluded that, in virtually all nations, children of parents high on the educational, occupation and social scale have far better chance of getting into good secondary schools and from there into the best colleges and universities than equally bright children of ordinary workers or farmers. Combs (1985) adds that the findings of many empirical studies suggest that children whose parents are at the bottom of the social economic hierarchy are not as inclined to seek or gain access to available educational facilities as the children with families located at the middle or top of the hierarchy. In Kenya the trend is the same, children from middle and high social economic backgrounds join the first world schools for example, Namagunga, Gayaza, Budo and Kisubi among others and are able to gain access to university and they continue to perform well.

The researcher believes that the findings are valid because University of Delhi is a Central Government University, which is not requires its students to pay more fees but another particulars have the need of more budget to spend on the educational materials and educational equipments etc. Students from middle or high social economic background are able to abide by these requirement and settle down to study whereas those from poor socio-economic backgrounds may not find the money easily so they spend time moving up and down raising the money and this may affect their performance at university. More so according to table, the respondents rated the education level of their father/male guardians as good and that the occupation status was also good, the income level column also showed that these respondents are from fairly good social economic backgrounds. This could be the reason why they are able to afford higher education. Other studies with similar findings are Dills (2006) who found that students from the bottom quartile consistently perform below students from the top quartile of socio-economic status and Hansen and Mastekaasa (2003), whose analysis showed that students originating in classes that score high with respect to cultural capital tend to receive the highest grades.

***18.3. Objective Three: To Establish the Relationship between Students' Former School Background Factor and Academic Performance of Undergraduate Students.***

The third hypothesis was stated; "There exist no significant relationship between students' former school background factor and academic performance of undergraduate students". The study measured the items of former school background and academic performance and the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient index  $r$  gave a significance or  $p$ -value = 0.00 which is less than  $\text{Alpha} = 0.01$  hence indicating a significant relationship between former school background and academic performance as shown in table 12. This study revealed that there is a significant relationship between former school background and academic performance. This indicates that the type of school the student attended affects students' academic performance at University of Delhi.

The findings of this study are consonant with the results of Portes and Macleod, (1996) cited in Considine and Zappala (2002) who found that the type of



school a child attends influences educational outcomes. Kwesiga (2002) and Sentamu (2003) also reported that the school a child attends affects academic performance. The results of this study confirm what was reported by Minnesota measures (2007), that the most reliable predictor of student success in college is the academic preparation of students in high school. This could owe to the fact that schools have an independent effect on student attainment and that school effect is likely to operate through variation in quality and attitudes, so teachers at disadvantaged schools often hold low expectations of their students which compound the low expectations the students have, hence leading to poor performance by the students. (Sparkles (1999) as cited by Considine and Zappala 2002) .The results are also in line with Kwesiga's (2002) argument that school has an effect on the academic performance of students but argued that school facilities determine the quality of the school, which in turn influences the achievements, and attainment of its pupils. Sentamu (2003) also agrees that the type of school one attend affects academic performance because schools influence learning in the way content is organized and in the teaching, learning and assessment procedures. All these scholars agree in principle that schools do affect academic performance of students.

The researcher compared the different variables of former school background to academic performance just to find out if indeed all the variables do influence academic performance of students. The results using Pearson product moment correlation showed that the location of the school yielded a p-value of 0.02 less than 0.05, showing a significant relationship, a result consistent with Felder, Mohr, Dietz and Ward (1994) findings that urban students enjoy greater success than rural student, a result also supported by Tremblay, Ross and Berthelot (2001), Kolcic (2006) and Considine and Zappala (2002). On the other hand the findings of this study disagree with Lee and McIntire (2001) and Hobbs (2001) whose findings revealed that there is no significant difference between performance of rural students and urban students. Ownership yielded a p-value of 0.03, financial status yielded a p-value of 0.00 values less than  $\alpha = 0.05$  implying that they both influence academic performance. According to the studies cited, ownership (public or private) and financial status (funding) were lamped together. The findings of this study disagree with Sampson (2004) and Sutton and Galloway (2000) who found that there is no difference

between the academic performance of private and public schools. Academic status of the former school yielded a p-value of .000 less than 0.05 implying that the academic status of the former school affects the academic performance of students. The researcher has observed that schools with renowned academic standing in Delhi foster into their students a culture of discipline and a reading culture, so that a student with that kind of school background is able to perform well at university.

## **19. Conclusions**

The following conclusions drawn as a result of the research work carried out in the area of academic performance of undergraduate students at University of Delhi reflect both the theoretical and practical lessons, which can be drawn from the study.

### ***19.1. Objective One: To Establish the Relationship between Students' Admission Percentage Factor and Academic Performance of Undergraduate Students.***

The researcher confirmed the research hypothesis one, that "There exists no significant relationship between students' admission percentage factor and academic performance of undergraduate students". But there is a positive relationship between admission percentage obtained at entry percentage level and academic performance of undergraduate students and that there is no relationship between mature age points and academic performance of undergraduate students.

### ***19.2. Objective Two: To Establish the Relationship between Parents' Social Economic Status Factor and Academic Performance of Undergraduate Students.***

The researcher confirmed the research hypothesis two, that "There exists no significant relationship between parents' social economic status factor and academic performance of undergraduate students". But there is also a positive relationship between parents' social economic status and academic performance of undergraduate students.

### ***19.3. Objective Three: To Establish the Relationship between Students' Former School Background Factor and Academic Performance of Undergraduate Students.***



The researcher confirmed the research hypothesis three, that “There exist no significant relationship between students’ former school background factor and academic performance of undergraduate students”. But there is a positive relationship between former school background and academic performance of undergraduate students.

## **20. Recommendations**

Basing on the study findings and the conclusions, the researcher derived the following recommendations:

### ***20.1. Objective One: Based on the Admission Percentage and Academic Performance***

University of Delhi should maintain its selection criteria of using previous performance at entry level of percentage or diploma as a measure of admitting students for undergraduate programs.

Mature age students continue to be given an entrance exam but since it is not enough to determine the students’ academic performance, they should be given a supplementary year or probation year to test their competency and if they excel, then they move on to join the regular program. University of Delhi should maintain the practice of giving some applicants admission to a pre-university year to bring them on board to Indian education system.

### ***20.2. Objective Two: Based on the Parents’ Social Economic Status (SES) and Academic Performance***

The University of Delhi admissions committee should not only focus on academic performance of applicants but also on the parents’ social economic status. The university could also devise means of paying special attention to students from low social economic backgrounds. For example the university could improve the student support system such that students from low social economic backgrounds are identified and assisted with financial aid or even a student loan scheme could be developed to purchase the educational materials, practical equipments, apparatus, machines etc.

### ***20.3. Objective Three: Based on the Former School Background and Academic Performance***

Former school background is important in determining academic performance; therefore the university should keep data of where their students come from and could try to develop a link with the schools where their most disciplined and excelling students come from so that more students are admitted from these schools.

### **21. Suggestions for Further Research**

- (i) Further research may be taken up on a larger sample of girls.
- (ii) Other aspect affecting 'Academic Performance' may also be explored.
- (iii) Further studies may be conducted by controlling variables like as I.Q. more concisely.
- (iv) The present study can't be comprehensive unless subjected to many variations.
- (v) The findings of the study need to be cross-validated.
- (vi) In order to better understand the systems' theory input-output model, there's need to investigate the role management and staffing play in academic performance of students in Higher institutions of learning.

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