EXAMINATION PERFORMANCE OF UNDERGRADUATES IN RELATION TO ATTENDANCE AT LECTURES

T. K. HEWAPATHIRANA

Department of Statistics & Computer Science, University of Kelaniya, Kelaniya, Sri Lanka.

E-mail: hewapath@kln.ac.lk

ABSTRACT

In Sri Lanka many factors that affect the student performance at university examinations have been identified. These include financial difficulties, inability to cope with increased volume of teaching, insufficient reading and poor knowledge in English. The present study was carried out to determine whether there is a significant relationship between the attendance and examination performance in the examinations of some selected course modules in Physics, Statistics & Computer Science, Microbiology and Zoology at the University of Kelaniya. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and Spearman rank correlation test were used in the statistical analysis. Results indicate that there is a significant positive correlation between the attendance and examination performance in majority of the course modules. It appears that although the students get the notes of the missed classes from their peers and take part in discussions with peers before the examination, for some of the course modules, the context may not be familiar and hence they may not perform in the examination as good as those who attend the classes regularly.

Keywords: student performance, attendance, university examinations

INTRODUCTION

The examination performance of undergraduates has drawn the attention of researchers throughout the world in the recent past. Studies carried out in the University of British Columbia has shown that the students who are consistent in their academic activities throughout the semester and who have performed better in tutorial classes and evaluated by tutors to be in the category of "exceeding the expectation" do better in the examinations than their colleagues (Page *et al.*, 2003).

Catanzaro (1996) has shown that the negative mood regulation expectancies and state of anxiety significantly affect the examination performance. Those who have stronger expectancies have shown no performance disruption or even have shown enhanced performance in examinations when experiencing high levels of pre-test state of anxiety. Those with low negative mood regulation expectancies have shown impaired exam performance when experiencing state of anxiety (Catanzaro, 1996).

A study carried out recently in the University of Cambridge has shown that linguistic, contextual and cultural constraints significantly affect the examination performance (Pollitt *et al.*, 2000). Answering the quizzes each week in the Faculties of Medicine and Dental Sciences in the University of British Columbia has been shown to be effective in securing a good pass at the examination (Pachev *et al.*, 2003). Gutierrez *et al.* (2001) have shown that the student study time allocation, both for formal study and self study are significant determination factors of examination performance. However, the formal study is up to 4 times more important than the self study. Finney (2002) has pointed out that the quality of the study time i.e., what the student is actually doing during that study period would be more important in determining the student performance at the examination than the amount of time a student spends in studying course material.

Some work on the student performance in university examinations in Sri Lanka has been carried out in the recent past. Galagedara & Gunawardene (1988) showed that the student performance in the university examinations is associated with family income. Their study has also shown that the students having parents with a low level of education were more likely to get better results than the students having parents with high level of education. This study further showed that those who were boarded in university hostels were more likely to do better at examinations than others. Further, the students of single parent families were more likely to get better results than the students having both parents.

Kottahachchi (1993) identified several factors that hinder the student performance at the universities in Sri Lanka. These include poor knowledge in English, inability of parents to prepare their children for university examinations and inability of students to cope with increased volume of teaching material since the selection depends only on the aggregate mark at the G.C.E. (Advanced Level) examination.

Kottahachchi (1992) related the poor performance of students at the examinations of the Faculties of Medicine and Engineering to poor knowledge of English. Gunawardene (1993) identified insufficient knowledge in English and

financial difficulties as some factors that hinder the examination performance of students at the universities.

Hewawitharana (2001) showed that insufficient lesson reading and poor attendance contribute to low performance at the university examinations.

Hewapathirana (2003) showed that the selection criteria adopted by the University Grants Commission (UGC) to select students to Sri Lankan universities, i.e., 40% on island-wide merit, 55% on district basis and 5% from underprivileged districts (UGC, 2000) do not have any significant effect on the student performance at the university examinations.

In most faculties of Sri Lankan universities, 80% attendance in classes is required or highly encouraged (University of Peradeniya, 2000; University of Colombo, 2003; University of Kelaniya, 2003). The objective of this study was to determine whether there is a significant relationship between the attendance and the examination performance in some selected course units offered for the B. Sc. (General) Degree at the Faculty of Science of the University of Kelaniya. The hypothesis tested was that the attendance at lectures and examination performance are independent from each other.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A total of 12 theory course modules, representing all 3 years of the B. Sc. (General) Degree programme of the University of Kelaniya were selected for this study. These are listed in Table 1. Out of these 12 modules, 6 are in the Physical Science stream and 6 are in the Biological Science stream. Six of these modules, 3 in each stream, are of limited enrolment to which the students are selected based on the criteria used by the University Grants Commission to select students to Sri Lankan Universities (UGC, 2000). These are the course modules offered by the Departments of Microbiology and Statistics & Computer Science.

Table 1 – The course modules used for the present study.

PHYSICAL SCIENCE STREAM			
Department of Physics			
PHYS	1113*	-	General Physics
PHYS	2113**	-	Thermal Physics and Physical Optics
PHYS	3113***	-	Advanced Electricity and Magnetism
Department of Statistics & Computer Science			
STCS	1214*	-	Probability and Statistics
STCS	2224**	-	Statistical Inference
STCS	3114***	-	Database Management Systems
BIOLOGICAL SCIENCE STREAM			
Department of Microbiology			
MIBI	1113*	-	Introductory Microbiology and Bacterial Taxonomy
MIBI	2113**	-	Microbial Genetics, Virus and Diversity of Eucaryotic Microorganisms
MIBI	3113***	-	Medical & Veterinary Microbiology and Microbial Biotechnology
Department of Zoology			
ZOOL	1113*	-	Invertebrate Diversity
ZOOL	2113**	-	Human Biology
ZOOL	3113***	-	Fisheries Biology and Aquaculture

* Offered in the 1st year; ** Offered in the 2nd year; *** Offered in the 3rd year

All students sat the examination under normal conditions. The students with less than 80% attendance were also allowed to sit the examinations. The results of the students who offered the above course modules and their attendance at each module were obtained from each Department. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (K-S test) (Siegel and Castellan, 1988) was carried out to determine whether the attendance and the results were independent from each other. The categories of attendance used were >80%; 40–80% and <40%. 80% attendance was used as one category because attendance at all lectures and laboratory classes is highly recommended in the

University of Kelaniya. Further, 80% attendance is highly recommended at the University of Colombo and is a requirement at the University of Peradeniya. The attendance of <40% was considered as poor while 40–80% attendance was considered as moderate. When grouping students into performance categories, D and E grades were considered in one category because those who obtain these grades are considered as repeaters or failures (Table 2). The grades of A⁻, A & A⁺ were grouped as one category and the grades of B⁻, B and B⁺ as another category. The grade of C⁺ and C were grouped as the other category.

Table 2 – Grading System (Source: Anon. 2003b)

Range of Marks	Grades
85-100	A ⁺
70 - 84	A
65 - 69	A ⁻
60 - 64	B ⁺
55 - 59	B
50 - 54	B ⁻
45 - 49	C ⁺
40 - 44	C
25 - 39	D
00 - 24	E

The Karl Pearson's classical Chi Square test could not be used in the analysis in some cases as the expected frequencies were less than 1 (Sokal and Rohlf, 1995).

Analysis was also carried out using another set of groupings. In this analysis, attendance was considered in 2 categories as $\geq 80\%$ and $< 80\%$ and the examination performance was grouped as fail (grades of D and E) and pass (grades of C and above). Here too, since in some categories, the expected frequencies were less than 1, Karl Pearson's Chi Square test with Yate's correction (Siegel and Castellan, 1988) could not be applied. The K-S test was applied in such instances.

As the proportion of tied observations were found to be large, after incorporating correction factors for the tied observations, Spearman's rank correlation coefficient between the attendance and the grades was also calculated for each course module.

RESULTS

The number of students in each category of attendance and grade for the course modules offered by the Departments of Physics, Statistics & Computer Science, Zoology and Microbiology together with the results of the K-S test are given in Tables 3, 4, 5 and 6 respectively. The results indicated that there is no evidence to reject the null hypothesis, i.e., that the attendance at lectures and the grades obtained at the examinations are independent from each other.

The number of students in different categories and the results of the K-S test when the attendance and results are grouped in to 2 categories of attendance, i.e., $\geq 80\%$ and $< 80\%$, and 2 categories of examination performance, i.e., pass and fail, are given in Tables 7-10. The results of this analysis also indicated that there is no evidence to reject the null hypothesis that the attendance of either $\geq 80\%$ or $< 80\%$ and passing or failing an examination are independent from each other.

The Spearman rank correlation coefficients between the grades obtained at the examinations and attendance for each course module are given in Table 11. These values for all Physics and Statistics & Computer Science modules, and for ZOOL 2113 are significant at 5% level indicating that there is a significant positive correlation between the attendance and examination results of these modules.

Table 3 - The number of students in each attendance category, grades obtained and the results of the K-S tests for the course modules offered by the Department of Physics (O_i = Observed frequencies; E_i = Expected frequencies; $D_{\max} = \text{maximum} |F_{O_{ij}} - F_{E_{ij}}|$ where F is the cumulative probability; n = Sample size of each category; p = Level of significance).

Course Module	Attendance		Grades				$D_{\max}$	p
			A ⁺ ,A,A ⁻	B ⁺ ,B,B ⁻	C ⁺ , C	D, E		
PHYS 1113	< 40%	O_i	0	0	2	1	0.041	>0.05
		E_i	0.13	0.51	1.01	1.35		
	40-80%	O_i	1	4	9	18		
		E_i	1.44	5.39	10.79	14.38		
	> 80%	O_i	3	11	19	21		
		E_i	2.43	9.10	18.20	24.27		
PHYS 2113	< 40%	O_i	0	0	3	2	0.075	>0.05
		E_i	0.35	1.53	1.39	1.74		
	40-80%	O_i	0	4	8	13		
		E_i	1.74	7.64	6.94	8.68		
	> 80%	O_i	5	18	9	10		
		E_i	2.92	12.83	11.67	14.58		
PHYS 3113	< 40%	O_i	0	4	3	13	0.067	>0.05
		E_i	0.58	4.64	6.38	8.41		
	40-80%	O_i	0	4	12	7		
		E_i	0.67	5.33	7.33	9.67		
	> 80%	O_i	2	8	7	9		
		E_i	0.75	6.03	8.29	10.93		

Table 4 - The number of students in each attendance category, grades obtained and the results of the K-S tests for the course modules offered by the Department of Statistics & Computer Science (O_i = Observed frequencies; E_i = Expected frequencies; $D_{\max} = \text{maximum} |F_{O_{ij}} - F_{E_{ij}}|$ where F is the cumulative probability; n = Sample size of each category; p = Level of significance)

Course Module	Attendance		Grades				$D_{\max}$	p
			A ⁺ ,A,A ⁻	B ⁺ ,B,B ⁻	C ⁺ , C	D, E		
STCS 1214	< 40%	O_i	0	0	0	2	0.086	>0.05
		E_i	0.24	0.75	0.63	0.39		
	40-80%	O_i	0	6	6	8		
		E_i	2.39	7.46	6.27	3.88		
	> 80%	O_i	8	19	15	3		
		E_i	5.37	16.79	14.10	8.73		
STCS 2224	< 40%	O_i	0	1	1	4	0.091	>0.05
		E_i	0.44	2.07	1.75	1.75		
	40-80%	O_i	0	9	6	10		
		E_i	1.82	8.64	7.27	7.27		
	> 80%	O_i	4	9	9	2		
		E_i	1.75	8.29	6.98	6.98		
STCS 3114	< 40%	O_i	0	1	4	3	0.054	>0.05
		E_i	0.74	4.00	1.78	1.48		
	40-80%	O_i	1	17	5	6		
		E_i	2.69	14.50	6.44	5.37		
	> 80%	O_i	4	9	3	1		
		E_i	1.57	8.50	3.78	3.15		

Table 5 - The number of students in each attendance category, grades obtained and the results of the K-S tests for the course modules offered by the Department of Zoology (O_i = Observed frequencies, E_i = Expected frequencies; $D_{\max} = \text{maximum} |F_{O_{ij}} - F_{E_{ij}}|$ where F is the cumulative probability; n = Sample size of each category; p = Level of significance)

Course Module	Attendance		Grades				$D_{\max}$	p
			A ⁺ , A, A ⁻	B ⁺ , B, B ⁻	C ⁺ , C	D, E		
ZOOL 1113	< 40%	O_i	0	0	0	0	0.034	>0.05
		E_i	0	0	0	0		
	40-80%	O_i	0	2	3	1		
		E_i	1.07	3.22	1.52	0.18		
	> 80%	O_i	12	34	14	1		
		E_i	10.93	32.78	15.48	1.82		
ZOOL 2113	< 40%	O_i	0	3	0	0	0.062	>0.05
		E_i	0.25	1.88	0.61	0.25		
	40-80%	O_i	0	7	6	2		
		E_i	1.27	9.41	3.05	1.27		
	> 80%	O_i	5	27	6	3		
		E_i	3.47	25.71	8.34	3.47		
ZOOL 3113	< 40%	O_i	0	1	1	1	0.023	>0.05
		E_i	0.31	1.19	1.38	0.13		
	40-80%	O_i	2	8	8	1		
		E_i	1.98	7.52	8.71	0.79		
	> 80%	O_i	3	10	13	0		
		E_i	2.71	10.29	11.92	1.08		

Table 6 - The number of students in each attendance category, grades obtained and the results of the K-S tests for the course modules offered by the Department of Microbiology (O_i = Observed frequencies, E_i = Expected frequencies; $D_{\max} = \max |F_{O_{ij}} - F_{E_{ij}}|$ where F is the cumulative probability; n = Sample size of each category ; p = Level of significance)

Course Module	Attendance		Grades				$D_{\max}$	p
			A^+, A, A^-	B^+, B, B^-	C^+, C	D, E		
MIBI 1113	< 40%	O_i	0	0	0	0	0.058	>0.05
		E_i	0	0	0	0		
	40-80%	O_i	1	4	1	3		
		E_i	1.64	4.36	1.91	1.09		
	> 80%	O_i	5	12	6	1		
		E_i	4.36	11.64	5.09	2.91		
MIBI 2113	< 40%	O_i	0	0	1	2	0.043	>0.05
		E_i	0.40	0.90	1.00	0.70		
	40-80%	O_i	1	3	2	1		
		E_i	0.93	2.10	2.33	1.63		
	> 80%	O_i	3	6	7	4		
		E_i	2.67	6.00	6.67	4.67		
MIBI 3113	< 40%	O_i	1	1	1	1	0.026	>0.05
		E_i	1.14	1.57	0.86	0.43		
	40-80%	O_i	3	4	2	1		
		E_i	2.86	3.93	2.14	1.07		
	> 80%	O_i	4	6	3	1		
		E_i	4.00	5.50	3.00	1.50		

Table 7 - The number of students in pass-fail and $\geq 80\%$ & $< 80\%$ attendance categories and the results of the K-S tests for course modules offered by the Department of Physics (O_i = Observed frequencies; E_i = Expected frequencies; $D_{\max} = \text{maximum} |F_{O_i} - F_{E_i}|$ where F is the cumulative probability; n = Sample size of each category; p = Level of significance).

Course Module	Attendance		Pass	Fail	$D_{\max}$	p
PHYS 1113	$< 80\%$	O_i E_i	16 19.27	19 15.73	0.0367	> 0.05
	$\geq 80\%$	O_i E_i	33 29.73	21 24.27		
PHYS 2113	$< 80\%$	O_i E_i	15 19.58	15 10.42	0.0636	> 0.05
	$\geq 80\%$	O_i E_i	32 27.42	10 14.58		
PHYS 3113	$< 80\%$	O_i E_i	23 24.93	20 18.07	0.028	> 0.05
	$\geq 80\%$	O_i E_i	17 15.07	9 10.93		

Table 8 - The number of students in pass-fail and $\geq 80\%$ & $< 80\%$ attendance categories and the results of the K-S tests for course modules offered by the Department of Statistics & Computer Science (O_i = Observed frequencies; E_i = Expected frequencies; $D_{\max} = \max |F_{O_{ij}} - F_{E_{ij}}|$ where F is the cumulative probability; n = Sample size of each category; p = Level of significance).

Course Module	Attendance		Pass	Fail	$D_{\max}$	p
STCS 1214	$< 80\%$	O_i E_i	12 17.73	10 4.27	0.0855	> 0.05
	$\geq 80\%$	O_i E_i	42 36.27	3 8.73		
STCS 2224	$< 80\%$	O_i E_i	17 21.98	14 9.02	0.0905	> 0.05
	$\geq 80\%$	O_i E_i	22 17.02	2 6.98		
STCS 3114	$< 80\%$	O_i E_i	28 30.15	9 6.85	0.0398	> 0.05
	$\geq 80\%$	O_i E_i	16 13.85	1 3.15		

Table 9 - The number of students in pass-fail and $\geq 80\%$ & $< 80\%$ attendance categories and the results of the K-S tests for course modules offered by the Department of Zoology (O_i = observed frequencies; E_i = Expected frequencies; $D_{\max} = \text{maximum} |F_{O_{ij}} - F_{E_{ij}}|$ where F is the cumulative probability; n = Sample size of each category; p = Level of significance.

Course Module	Attendance		Pass	Fail	$D_{\max}$	p
ZOOL 1113	$< 80\%$	O_i	5	1	0.122	> 0.05
		E_i	5.82	0.18		
	$\geq 80\%$	O_i	60	1		
		E_i	59.18	1.82		
ZOOL 2113	$< 80\%$	O_i	16	2	0.008	> 0.05
		E_i	16.47	1.53		
	$\geq 80\%$	O_i	38	3		
		E_i	37.53	3.47		
ZOOL 3113	$< 80\%$	O_i	20	2	0.0225	> 0.05
		E_i	21.08	0.92		
	$\geq 80\%$	O_i	26	0		
		E_i	24.92	1.08		

Table 10 - The number of students in pass-fail and $\geq 80\%$ & $< 80\%$ attendance categories and the results of the K-S tests for course modules offered by the Department of Microbiology (O_i = Observed frequencies; E_i = Expected frequencies; $D_{\max}$ = maximum $|F_{O_{ij}} - F_{E_{ij}}|$ where F is the cumulative probability; n = Sample size of each category; p = Level of significance).

Course Module	Attendance		Pass	Fail	$D_{\max}$	p
MIBI 1113	< 80%	O_i E_i	6 7.91	3 1.09	0.0579	>0.05
	$\geq 80\%$	O_i E_i	23 21.09	1 2.91		
MIBI 2113	< 80%	O_i E_i	7 7.67	3 2.33	0.022	>0.05
	$\geq 80\%$	O_i E_i	16 15.33	4 4.67		
MIBI 3113	< 80%	O_i E_i	12 12.50	2 1.50	0.018	>0.05
	$\geq 80\%$	O_i E_i	13 12.50	1 1.50		

Table 11 - The rank correlation coefficients between the grades obtained and attendance for each course module considered in the present study.

Course module	Rank Correlation Coefficient (r_s)	Number of Students (n)	Level of Significance
PHYS 1113	0.25	89	< 0.05
PHYS 2113	0.41	72	< 0.05
PHYS 3113	0.31	69	< 0.05
MIBI 1113	0.16	33	> 0.05
MIBI 2113	0.23	30	> 0.05
MIBI 3113	0.13	28	> 0.05
STCS 1214	0.56	67	< 0.05
STCS 2224	0.50	55	< 0.05
STCS 3114	0.46	54	< 0.05
ZOOL 1113	0.21	67	> 0.05
ZOOL 2113	0.35	59	< 0.05
ZOOL 3113	0.23	48	> 0.05

DISCUSSION

The results of the K-S test indicates that the null hypothesis, i.e., the grade obtained for a particular course module and the attendance for that course module are independent from each other, can not be rejected. However, the values obtained for the rank correlation coefficient (r_s) indicated that there is a significant correlation between the grades obtained at the examination and the attendance at the lectures for 7 of the 12 course modules considered for this study (Table 11). Although the K-S test could be used successfully with discrete distributions (Siegel and Castellan, 1988), it is specifically designed for continuous distributions. When this test is applied to discrete data the tabulated critical values produced may be over conservative and might lead to the wrong conclusion in accepting the null hypothesis (Neave and Worthington, 1992). This may be the reason for observing statistically significant r_s values for the modules in Statistics & Computer Science and Physics, and ZOOL 2113. Therefore, the Spearman rank correlation was considered to be more appropriate for the analysis of this data set than the K-S test. Hence the results of the rank correlation were considered in the interpretation of results.

If a student does not attend a particular lecture, he/she copies the notes from one of the colleagues who was present at the class. As such, being absent, the student does not miss any notes. Further, there is peer mentoring among the students and most of the times they discuss among themselves the things that they could not understand. However, the results of the present study indicate that in some of the course modules such as those in Physics, Statistics & Computer Science and ZOOL 2113 (Human Biology), self studying after getting a set of notes and clarifying the matters which they could not understand with the assistance of peers, may not be helpful to get a better grade as being present in the classes during the lecture. This shows that in order to understand better, the presence at lectures is necessary for at least some course modules.

As Catanzaro (1996) has pointed out, state of anxiety, depression just before the exam and negative mood regulation expectancies may also influence the performance at the examination of a course module. If a student is absent for most of the lectures, these attributes may play a significant role in the examinations of at least some course modules such as those in Physics, Statistics & Computer Science and ZOOL 2113 (Human Biology).

In a case study of a immigrant student to England from Pakistan, Pollitt *et al.* (2000) argued that linguistic, contextual and cultural issues can significantly influence the performance at the examinations. They have concluded that use of ordinary English words with special meanings can cause unexpected problems to students. However, such a situation does not arise in the examinations considered in the present study because the students are given the question paper both in Sinhala and English languages and they are allowed to answer in any one of those two languages as they prefer. Regarding contextual issues, Pollitt *et al.* (2000) pointed out that if the context is not familiar, the comprehension and task solution are prevented. The context may not be familiar when the student has not attended the classes. This may also be a reason for the observations made for Physics, Statistics & Computer Science and ZOOL 2113 (Human Biology) course modules although the absentees get down the notes of their missed classes from their colleagues and clarify the difficult areas at the discussions held with colleagues. However, for some of the course modules such as those in Microbiology and some modules in Zoology considered in the present study, which are mostly of descriptive nature, self-studying using the notes obtained from peers, and getting difficult sections clarified through peer mentoring appear to be sufficient in order to achieve a good level of performance.

A recent study has shown that the examination performance in the University does not depend on the performance at the G. C. E. (Advanced Level) examination (Hewapathirana, 2003). According to existing selection criteria adopted by the UGC, the students who get low marks at the G.C.E. (Advanced level) examination can enter a university on district basis or under the category of underprivileged districts. However, Hewapathirana (2003) has shown that they perform equally well at the university examinations as those who have obtained high marks at the G.C.E. (Advanced Level) examination. Therefore, cultural issues suggested by Pollitt *et al.* (2000) in the U.K. may not be an issue in Sri Lanka.

In all course modules considered in the present study, the students are required to answer the tutorials given during the semester and those tutorials are marked and handed back to the students. The answers are then discussed at the tutorial classes. This also helps the students to achieve a good performance at the examinations. Students who are absent do not get an opportunity to attend these tutorial classes and get the feed back from the teacher. This may be another reason for the significant correlation between the attendance and examination performance for some course modules such as those in Physics, Statistics & Computer Science and ZOOL 2113 (Human Biology). Pachev *et al.* (2003) have reported a similar situation in the University of British Columbia where they found a significant correlation between the performance at weekly quizzes and examination performance.

The time allocated for both formal study in lecture and self study has been found to be a significant determinator of examination performance in Spain (Gutierrez *et al.*, 2001). For the examinations of the course modules considered in the present study, the students get a study leave period of 3 weeks after the course module is completed. The students prepare hard during this period for the examinations. Therefore, although their attendance is poor, they have sufficient time after the course module is completed to prepare for the examination. This may be one of the reasons for the independence between attendance and examination performance for some of the modules such as those in Microbiology and some Zoology modules which are mostly of descriptive nature. However, for some of the course modules such as those in Physics, Statistics & Computer Science and ZOOL 2113 (Human Biology) this self study during study leave period and peer mentoring appear to be not sufficient to get a better grade at the examination without attending the classes as it would be difficult to familiarize with the context.

In a study carried out in the Open University of Sri Lanka, Hewavitharana (2001) too has shown that attendance at the day schools has a significant effect on the examination performance.

Several other factors have been suggested to have some influence on the student performance at the university examinations. These include insufficient reading (Hewavitharana, 2001), inability to cope with the increased volume of teaching material (Kottahachchi, 1993), inability of parents to prepare the students for university examinations (Kottahachchi, 1993) and financial difficulties (Galagedara & Gunawardene, 1988; Gunawardene, 1993). However, in order to make conclusions on the contribution of these factors to examination performance, detailed statistical analyses have to be carried out on unbiased data. Further, it would also be necessary to carry out a study using a well organized ethically accepted questionnaire distributed among the failed students in order to ascertain the reasons for their unsuccess in the examinations.

CONCLUSION

There is a significant positive correlation between the attendance and examination performance for majority of the course modules offered at the Faculty of Science of the University of Kelaniya. It appears that although the students who are absent for most of the classes get the notes of the missed classes from their peers and take part in discussions with peers before the examination, for some of the course modules, the context may not be familiar and hence they may not be successful in the examination as well as those who have attended the classes regularly.

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