Journal of Education and Practice
ISSN 2222-1735 (Paper) ISSN 2222-288X (Online)
Vol.6, No.22, 2015

Factors that Influences Students Academic Performance: A Case of Rift Valley University, Jimma, Ethiopia

Geremew Muleta Akessa*, Abdissa Gurmesa Dhufera
Department of Statistics, Jimma University, PO box 178, Ethiopia

Abstract
University is one of the places where a systematically organized and scientifically oriented education is offered. It is through such an organized manner that the knowledge, skill and desired attitude of the learner develop, but in a given class it is sometimes seen that there is a difference in achievement as a result of different factors that affect the academic achievement of students. This study was conducted to examine different factors influencing the academic performance of students in higher institution case of Rift valley university Jimma campus Ethiopia. Cross sectional study design was examined. The respondents for this study was 294 students which is determined using simple random sampling technique. A survey was conducted by using a questionnaire for information gathering about different factors relating to academic performance of students. Chi-square test of association and regressions was applied to investigate the effect of different factors on students' achievement.
Keywords: Academic performance, Rift valley university and regression model.

1. Introduction

In this era of globalization and technological revolution, education is considered as a first step for every human activity. It plays a vital role in the development of human capital and is linked with an individual's well-being and opportunities for better living (Battle & Lewis, 2002). It ensures the acquisition of knowledge and skills that enable individuals to increase their productivity and improve their quality of life. This increase in productivity also leads towards new sources of earning which enhances the economic growth of a country (Saxton, 2000).

Creating the conditions that foster student success in college has never been more important. As many as four-fifths of high school graduates need some form of postsecondary education (McCabe 2000) to prepare them to live a economically self-sufficient life and to deal with the increasingly complex social, political, and cultural issues they will face. Earning a baccalaureate degree is the most important rung in the economic ladder (Pascarella and Terenzini 2005; Trow 2001), as college graduates on average earn almost a million dollars more over the course of their working lives than those with only a high school diploma (Pennington 2004). Yet, if current trends continue in the production of bachelor's degrees, a 14 million shortfall of college-educated working adults is predicted by the year 2020 (Carnevale and Desrochers 2003).

The primary weakness of both colleges for the poor and financial aid programs is their inability to help poor kids escape from the impoverished conditions in which they grow up. The vast majority of poor young people can't even imagine going to college. By the time many poor kids are sixteen or seventeen years old, either they have already dropped out of school or they lag well behind their peers educationally.

Whatever the reasons many students do not achieve their postsecondary educational goals or benefit at optimal levels from the college experience, the waste of human talent and potential is unconscionable. What can colleges and universities do to uphold their share of the social contract and help more students succeed?

As Kurt Lewin once said, there is nothing more practical than a good theory. Given the importance of student success in college, using instructive perspectives to guide research and practice is essential. Fortunately, a handful of sound approaches are available, though as we shall see no single view is comprehensive enough to account for the complicated set of factors that interact to influence student and institutional performance, what Braxton, Sullivan, and Johnson (1997) call "the student departure puzzle."

The most often cited theories define student success in college as persistence and educational attainment, or achieving the desired degree or educational credential. These perspectives emphasize to varying degrees the importance of academic preparation and the quality of student experiences during college. This section is organized around a theoretical perspectives of demographical, sociological, organizational, psychological, cultural, and economic, all of which contribute to our understanding of student success in college.

Taken together, the different theoretical perspectives on student success and departure provide a holistic accounting of many of the key factors that come into play to shape what students are prepared to do when they get to college and influence the meanings they make of their experiences.

Thus, this study focuses on factors affecting students' academic achievement at Rift Vally University. Rift Vally University is one of well-established private universities in Ethiopia. Its student population is increasing from time to time. Currently, there are about 5,000 students at undergraduate and TVET level in various modes of delivery in jimma campus.

In a broader context demography is referred to as a way to explore the nature and effects of

demographic variables in the biological and social context. Unfortunately, defining and measuring the quality of education is not a simple issue and the complexity of this process increases due to the changing values of quality attributes associated with the different stakeholders' view point (Blevins, 2009).

Besides other factors, socioeconomic status is one of the most researched and debated factor among educational professionals that contribute towards the academic performance of students. The most prevalent argument is that the socioeconomic status of learners affects the quality of their academic performance. Most of the experts argue that the low socioeconomic status has negative effect on the academic performance of students because the basic needs of students remain unfulfilled and hence they do not perform better academically (Adams, 1996). The low socioeconomic status causes environmental deficiencies which results in low self-esteem of students (US Department of Education, 2003). More specifically, this study aims to identify and analyse factors that affect the quality of students' academic performance.

A series of variables are to be considered when to identify the affecting factors towards quality of academic success. Identifying the most contributing variables in quality of academic performance.

With the increasing diversity of students attending Rift Valley University, there is a growing interest in the factors predicting academic performance. This study is a prospective investigation of the academic performance of Rift valley university students.

General objective of the study is to find out factors those influence the academic performance of rift valley university students

Specific objective are

To determine major factor that affect students' academic performance

To determine if relation exists between socio demographic characteristics and academic performance.

To determine student opinion on academic performance in higher education

To identify teacher opinion on academic performance in higher education

2. Methods and material

The study was carried out at Rift valley University Jimma campus, Jimma, South West, Ethiopia. Jimma is located 350 kilometres away from Addis Ababa in the south west direction. Rift Valley University Jimma campus is one of the branches of Rift Valley University which was established in 2010.

A cross-sectional study design from descriptive design were conducted on Rift valley University Jimma campus. The views of students and teachers on their level of agreement with given statements on factors influencing academic competence of students are considered and the responses could value on a 5 level likert scale ranging from strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree..

This investigation target a population of students and employees working those are registered and working at selected study area.

2.1. Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

It is impractical to collect data on the whole population, considering the size, as well as the time, available to the researcher, hence the need to select a sample that represent the whole population because of time, budget and accuracy for the study.

Simple random sampling method have a guarantee that every programme locations have the same probability of being chosen for the sample and it lets each and every part of the population equal chance of being selected. For populations that are large, Cochran (1963:75) the sample were determined as 294.

2.2. Data Types and Sources

Both primary and secondary sources of data was used for this study. The primary data, which are known as first hand data that are collected for the first time and hence, original in character which will be collected through survey research by using personally administered questionnaires from study area. Review of relevant theoretical and empirical related literatures were made mainly on factors influencing academic performance of student. In addition to this, data are gathered from published and unpublished sources.

2.3. Study Variable

The study were use demographic factors such as students' gender, parents' education, parents' occupation and socio economic status. The quality of academic performance was measured by their CGPA. Data regarding the variables such as parents' education, parents' occupation, SES, urban/ rural belongingness, and students' gender were collected by using a questionnaire.

2.4. Data Collection Techniques and Instrument

Self-administered questionnaire were used to collect data from students. For the rest experienced enumerators are arranged to facilitate distribution and collection questionnaire on hard copy and through e-mail from

participants. Attention were given to the cost and background of enumerators.

The questionnaire have three parts. Part one of the survey requires the participants to provide demographic information while Part two focuses on Student and teachers opinion. A five-point Likert-type scale (1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neutral, 4= agree and 5= strongly agree) will be used to enable respondents rate on each characteristic. The third part include few open ended questions.

2.5. Methods of Data Processing and Analysis

Before the actual data analysis, questionnaires was checked for completeness and consistency. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques such as frequency distributions and percentages. Chi-square test and regression analysis were establish and explain the relationship between the Academic performance and the independent variables. Results of the analysis were presented using tables and graphs.

The Statistical Software Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 is used to generate descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage to present a sample demographic profile of respondents.

3. Result

The average age of the respondents were 19.85+0.89, most 126(42.9%) of the respondents are accounting followed by management, HO and Nursing account 67(22.8%), 51(17.3%) and 50(17%) resp. One hundred seventy six or 59.9% are female and 40.1% are male respondents. Majority are Muslim follower, while education level of father and mothers are illiterate and primary level accounts major value. Majority of their parents are farmer and economic status are Lower middle class.(Table 1)

Table 1. Socio demographic variables of students

Variables		Frequency	Percent
Department	Accounting	126	42.9
	Management	67	22.8
	Nursing	50	17
	Health Officer	51	17.3
Sex	Female	176	59.9
	Male	118	40.1
Religion	Muslim	160	54.4
	Cristian	67	22.8
	Waqefataa	67	22.8
Father's Education:	Illiterate	112	38.1
	Primary	96	32.7
	Secondary	21	7.1
	College and University	65	22.1
Mother's Education:	Illiterate	75	25.5
	Primary	101	34.4
	Secondary	51	17.3
	Missing	67	22.8
Family Jobs status	Farmer	83	28.2
	Merchant	78	26.5
	Gov't employer	65	22.1
	Daily labor	68	23.1
Economic status of your family:	Poor	100	34
	Lower middle class	121	41.2
	Mid- middle class	73	24.8
	Total	294	100

Majority of the student stated Located in safe zone is the dominate factor why they choose RVU followed by Distance from your house, Recommendation of knowledgeable persons, Tuition fee, Library, Computer/internet and faculty.(Table 2)

Table 2. Factors considered before choosing RVU

Factors you considered before choosing RVU	Response of students			
	Yes	%	No	%
Tuition fee	125	42.5%	169	57.5%
Faculty	66	22.4%	228	77.6%
Library	118	40.1%	176	59.9%
Computer/internet	66	22.4%	228	77.6%
Located in safe zone	227	77.2%	67	22.8%
Distance from your house	176	59.9%	118	40.1%
Recommendation of knowledgeable persons	146	49.7%	148	50.3%
Scholarship program	48	16.3%	246	83.7%

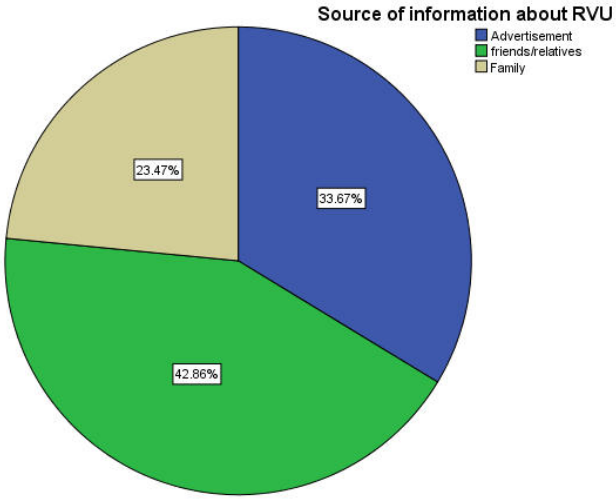

Figure 1. Source of Information about RVU

From figure 1 most of the student gets information from their friends and advertisement as well as from their family.

From table 3 below regarding Factors those have an influence on Development of Academic Competence among students opinion Teachers who are highly motivated contribute to good, Schools which frequently organize academic symposiums and performance of the students 110(37.4%), 67(22.8%) and 109(37.1%) of students says strongly agree resp. While the higher ratio of text books in relation to the students and Accessible to computer, internet library 90(30.6%) and 106(36.1%) resp. respondents disagree. Regarding better the academic performance most of the student respond neutral.

Teachers 'Opinions on the Influence of Competence Teacher absence from school contributes to poor academic performance of students, Teachers who cover their syllabuses on time enhance their student's academic competence and Management system of the University 86(29.3%), 94(32.0%) and 86(29.3%) of the students responds strongly agree resp. Teachers' motivation determines students' performance and University which frequently organize academic symposium or contests for their students usually perform well 75(25.5%) and 101(34.4%) resp. accounts neutral but Teachers with higher teaching load contribute to poor performance of students and Free interaction between teachers and students results in good performance 67(22.8%) and 102(34.7%) responds disagree and agree resp. The average value of their responses implies Teachers who are highly motivated contribute to good and Teachers who cover their syllabuses on time enhance their student's academic competence are the major factor those affect academic performance of students.

Table 3. Influence of Factors on Development of Academic Competence

	strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		strongly Agree		Mean
Students' Opinions on the Influence of Collage Factors											
Teachers who are highly motivated contribute to good	50	17.00%	9	3.10%	58	19.70%	67	22.80%	110	37.40%	3.61
performance of the students	51	17.30%	16	5.40%	67	22.80%	51	17.30%	109	37.10%	3.51
The higher ratio of text books in relation to the students the	51	17.30%	90	30.60%	86	29.30%	67	22.80%	0	0.00%	2.57
better the academic performance	27	9.20%	47	16.00%	96	32.70%	52	17.70%	72	24.50%	3.32
Schools which frequently organize academic symposiums	59	20.10%	51	17.30%	51	17.30%	66	22.40%	67	22.80%	3.11
Accessible to computer, internet library	64	21.80%	106	36.10%	55	18.70%	49	16.70%	20	6.80%	2.51
Teachers 'Opinions on the Influence of Collage Factors											
Teachers' motivation determines students' performance.	33	11.20%	67	22.80%	75	25.50%	68	23.10%	51	17.30%	3.06
The higher the ratio of text books in relation to the students the better the academic performance.	84	28.60%	21	7.10%	51	17.30%	71	24.10%	67	22.80%	3.05
University which frequently organize academic symposium or contests for their students usually perform well	31	10.50%	45	15.30%	101	34.40%	70	23.80%	47	16.00%	3.19
Teacher absence from school contributes to poor academic performance of students	51	17.30%	31	10.50%	59	20.10%	67	22.80%	86	29.30%	3.36
Teachers with higher teaching load contribute to poor performance of students	65	22.10%	67	22.80%	66	22.40%	45	15.30%	51	17.30%	2.83
Teachers who cover their syllabuses on time enhance their student's academic competence	31	10.50%	31	10.50%	67	22.80%	71	24.10%	94	32.00%	3.56
Free interaction between teachers and students results in good performance	0	0.00%	96	32.70%	75	25.50%	102	34.70%	21	7.10%	3.16
Management system of the University	64	21.80%	51	17.30%	52	17.70%	41	13.90%	86	29.30%	3.12

From the overall chi square test output results, p-value less than 5% are department, mothers and fathers education, Economic status of your family, Accommodation as a RVU student are significantly related with student's achievement (GPA).

Table 4. Factors related to Students achievement

Variables		Students achievement GPAs		
		<2.5	>=2.5	Chi-square(P-value
Department	Accounting	60(47.60%)	66(52.40%)	77.6(<0.001)
	Management	7(10.40%)	60(89.60%)	
	Nursing	8(16.00%)	42(84.00%)	
	Health Officer	42(82.40%)	9(17.60%)	
Father's Education:	Illiterate	62 (55.40%)	50(44.60%)	76.02(<0.001)
	Primary	33(34.40%)	63(65.60%)	
	Secondary	20(95.20%)	1(4.80%)	
	College and University	2(3.10%)	63(96.90%)	
Economic status of your family	Poor	8(8.00%)	92(92.00%)	67.23(<0.001)
	Lower middle class	62(51.20%)	59(48.80%)	
	Mid- middle class	47(64.40%)	26(35.60%)	
Accommodation as a RVU student(who pay for you	Family	71(69.60%)	31(30.40%)	73.25(<0.001)
	Scholarship	19(48.70%)	20(51.30%)	
	relative/friends	4(36.40%)	7(63.60%)	
	NGO	4(28.60%)	10(71.40%)	
	Government	4(12.90%)	27(87.10%)	
	Self-sponsored	15(15.50%)	82(84.50%)	
Mother's Education	Illiterate	62(82.70%)	13(17.30%)	124.27(<0.001)
	Primary	50(49.50%)	51(50.50%)	
	Secondary	4 (7.80%)	47(92.20%)	
	College and University	1(1.50%)	66(98.50%)	
Total		117(39.80%)	177(60.20%)	

The study from Ali, Shoukat, et al., 2013 states the correlation analysis shows the age, income and hour have significant role in improving the student performance of graduate student. We compute the strength of association between dependent and independent variables (academic year, education level of father and mother, family job type and economic status, instructor and students opinion).

For Academic years of students (batch)

Academic year is one of the factors that have a significant effect on the student's achievement (GPA). Since its p-value is less than that of (α), β has a significant effect. From the table, the odds of achievement of student who are at second year is less by 44% than the odds of achievement of student who were at first year. While when we would like to compare the student's achievement for year three as compare with first year were not significant.

For Education status of Fathers and Mothers

Mothers and fathers education level have an effect on students achievement those whose father or mothers are at college level have more success as compare with whose parents are illiterate, primary and secondary education level.

For Family jobs type

Students whose families are government employer are more than thirteen times more odds for the achievement as compare with farmer. But students whose family are merchant and daily laborer have less odds by 86% and 49% resp. as compare with the students from farmer

For Economic status of students family

The hypothesis stated," parents' social economic status is positively related to academic performance of students at RVU. The study measured the items of social economic status and academic performance and the Pearson chi-square test of association gave a significance or p-value of 0.001, which is less than alpha 0.05 as shown in Table 6. This study revealed that parents' social economic status is significantly related to academic performance of 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 (2006), 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, 2006). 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.

From this finding an effect on students' achievement whose family are poor and lower middle class have less odds by 92% and 95% as compare with mid-middle class economics status.

For the instructors opinion

Instructor's opinion is also one of the factors that have a significant effect on the student's achievement (GPA). Since its p-value is less than that of (α), β has a significant effect. From the table, the odds of achievement of student whose agree is five times more than the odds of achievement of student whose answer is disagree.

For the students opinion

Student's opinion is also one of the factors that have a significant effect on the student's achievement (GPA). Since its p-value is less than that of (α), β has a significant effect. From the table, the odds of achievement of student whose agree is four times more than the odds of achievement of student whose answer is disagree.

Generally, we can conclude that parameters such as academic year, father and mother education, economic status of parents, students and Instructors opinion implies that the student's achievement is affected by all these factors what we have mentioned above.

Table 5. *Univariate logistic regression for student achievement status*

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I.for EXP(B)	
								Lower	Upper
Year Level	First year [r]			7.635	2	0.022			
	Second year	-0.584	0.254	5.274	1	0.022	0.558	0.339	0.918
	Third year	0.669	0.588	1.291	1	0.256	1.951	0.616	6.182
Father's Education	College and University [r]			39.251	3	0.001			
	Primary	-3.665	.743	24.335	1	0.001	.026	.006	.110
	secondary	-2.803	.750	13.982	1	0.001	.061	.014	.263
	Illiterate	-6.446	1.251	26.533	1	0.001	.002	.000	.018
Mother's Education	College and University [r]			65.672	3	0.001			
	Primary	-5.752	1.053	29.853	1	0.001	0.003	0	0.025
	secondary	-4.17	1.027	16.485	1	0.001	0.015	0.002	0.116
	Illiterate	-1.726	1.134	2.315	1	0.128	0.178	0.019	1.644
Family Jobs status	Farmer [r]			53.133	3	0.001			
	Merchant	-1.975	0.356	30.746	1	0.001	0.139	0.069	0.279
	Gov't employer	2.608	0.757	11.872	1	0.001	13.578	3.079	59.871
	Daily labor	-0.665	0.341	3.791	1	0.052	0.514	0.264	1.004
Economic status of your family	Mid- middle class [r]			49.051	2	0.001			
	Poor	-2.492	0.411	36.756	1	0.001	0.083	0.037	0.185
	Lower middle class	-3.034	0.442	47.072	1	0.001	0.048	0.02	0.114
Students opinion	Disagree [r]						1		
	Agree	1.468	0.26	31.878	1	0.001	4.342	2.608	7.229
Instructors opinion	Disagree [r]						1		
	Agree	1.663	0.262	40.143	1	0.001	5.276	3.154	8.825

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5. Conclusion

This chapter summarizes the general findings of the study in short and precise form. Based on the above result the researcher can give the following conclusion. This means depending on the output of the study the researcher conclude the following points. These points are:

This study only focused on some of parameters: background of students, student's opinion, and teachers (in-structors) opinion Background of students' parents. Based on the finding, the following conclusions are drawn:

• Educators (teachers) have a great role in fostering positive or negative attitude to achievements of students.

• There is a significant academic performance deference between students who are enrolled in the department of Accounting, Health officer, management and Nursing.

There is no association between student's achievement (GPA) and Sex of students as we have seen from the

output. There is strong association between the academic performance (achievement) of students' GPA and fathers and mothers education level. There is strong association between the academic achievement (GPA) of students' students and Economic status of families.

• Institutional facilities (lack of resources) like: reference materials, well organized laboratory equipment's and computer laboratory, and lack of interest to subject matter, were the prior problem that has been seen at RVU Jimma campus. So the institution should give attention on the infrastructures.

Generally, the concerned body 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.

The student performance should be improve if the administration of the college provides proper leaning facilities to the students and also improve the environment of the college.

The student should perform well if they are properly guided by the parents and also by their teacher. If the student should know well about their abilities and their competences then he performs well.

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