

## **6.29 Influence of Gender on Academic Performance: A Comparative Study between Management and Commerce Undergraduates in the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka.**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Many studies have been carried out on the factors affecting the students' academic performance in university examinations. Some of these factors have been identified as attendance of lectures, knowledge of English, income of the parents, perceptions of learning, attitudes of students and lecturers towards education, teaching aids and method and environmental factors. In countries such as United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and USA, it has been recorded that, gender has a significant relationship with the examination performance. Further, these studies have been done for individual subjects. According to this, it can be identified that there are theoretical explanations in respect of influence of gender on university students' academic performance. But there is a lack of comparative studies. Most of them have examined the difference of relationship between gender and academic performance of several categories of university students in Western countries. Therefore, it is important to conduct research in non-Western context. As such, this research tries to indicate the difference of influence of gender on academic performance of various student groups in the Sri Lankan university system by selecting Management & Commerce students who study in the University of Kelaniya.

The objective of the research is to investigate whether there is a significant difference of the performance of Bachelor of Business Management (Human Resource, Accountancy, and Marketing) Special Degree Examinations and performance of the Bachelor of Commerce Special Degree Examinations among the university students with respect to their gender. Variables are neither manipulated nor controlled for the study. Hence, the study was conducted in a non contrived setting. The data for this study was collected at a several point in time. Sample for this study was selected from the students of the above mentioned study programmes. The survey was carried out using 5 years data related to the period, from 2002/2003 academic year to 2006/2007 academic year. The sample was consisted of 1200 students (600 females and 600 males). Stratified random sampling was used to select the sample. The unit of analysis was at the individual level. For this study, independent sample t-test was used to compare the academic performance of two gender categories. Results indicated that there is no significant difference between Commerce and Management students but significant differences could be seen between the academic performance of the male and female students in this study. Exploratory data analysis indicated that in all the course units of Management degrees and Commerce degree, female students tend to perform better at the university examinations than their male counterparts. Hence, the study found that irrespective of the fact that students are Management or Commerce; female students have higher academic performance than the male students.

**Key words:** Comparison, Gender, Academic Performance, Management, Commerce, Examination, University of Kelaniya