

INVESTIGATION OF FACTORS AFFECTING POOR PERFORMANCE IN SCIENCE SUBJECT IN THE G. C. E. (O/L) IN THE ISLAND ZONE OF JAFFNA DISTRICT IN SRI LANKA

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Students in the Island zone of Jaffna district in Sri Lanka perform poorly on science subject in G.C.E. (O/L) examination compared to students in other educational zones. This prevailing situation could be due to many interrelated factors. However, there is a dearth of research on this aspect in remedying the situation. Thus, this study aimed at investigating the factors affecting the poor science performance of students in the Island zone of Jaffna district in G.C.E. (O/L) examination. The findings of this study will help in remedying the issue to meet the national goals of the education in Sri Lanka. This is a mixed methods study. Thus, quantitative and qualitative approaches were used in the data collection process. The convenient sampling technique and random sampling technique were used in selecting the sample for the study. The sample consisted of 232 G.C.E. (O/L) students, 25 science teachers, and 20 school principals from twenty schools in the Island zone. Students sample included the students who sat the G.C.E. (O/L) examination before 2015. Survey questionnaires and documents on students' achievement for five years were used in the data collection process. Semi-structured interview schedules were used in conducting students' focus group. Survey instrument was administered in the data collection process with minimal disturbance to selected schools. The G.C.E. (O/L) examination results were used as reference points and indicators of students' science performances in the schools of the Island zone. The data analysis was conducted through the statistical package for social Sciences (SPSS) and MS Office excel. Data were analysed for descriptive statistics and regressions. Qualitative data were analysed using thematic and content analysis. The results revealed that parents occupation, students attitude, travelling distance of teachers to their schools, types of teachers, usages of physical resources, leave taken by teachers, completing the syllabus, students' learning hours at home, lab facilities, usage of laboratories, practical activities while teaching-learning process, student attendance, usage of learning materials, teacher commitments, and supporting by others for learning relate with the students' science achievement at the G.C.E. (O/L) examination. Hence, these issues should be addressed in a suitable way to improve the students' science performance in Island zone to meet the expected national educational goals in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: science achievement, teacher commitments, travelling distance