

# **The Effects of Dhamma School Education on Students' School Academic Performance: With Special Reference to Weligepola Education Division in Rathnapura District**

**N. M. A. Jayasinghe<sup>1</sup> and S. D. Chathurani<sup>2</sup>**

**Department of Economics, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Nugegoda**

**[1:jayasinghe@sjp.ac.lk](mailto:jayasinghe@sjp.ac.lk); [2:rasuni.1991cha@gmail.com](mailto:rasuni.1991cha@gmail.com)**

## **Introduction**

Currently, Sri Lankan students involve two ways in their education process; such as school education and Dhamma School education. Those are free process in the Sri Lankan context. It has believed that through the Dhamma School education can be able to follow to the discipline and planned life well. Therefore, most of parents are paid their attention to direct their children to the Dhamma School around any religions. In the Sri Lankan Buddhism Sunday Dhamma School commenced by H. S. Olcott. However, as results of school education is more competitive, Dhamma School values is becoming a lite values of students' academic profile. In this phenomenon it should be investigate whether effect to increase students' school academic performance to attend to the Dhamma School education.

## **Literature Review**

Firstly, it should be understood what is the theoretical background of effects of attending to the religious studies on student's educational attainments. If it is the study of religious activity and education attainment is mainly empirical, the empirical analysis is based on a sound theoretical background of this context. Fan (2008) argues that people's religious participation is determined by the concern for their children's human capital accumulation as well as their religious beliefs. In the framework of Azzi and Ehrenberg (1975) and Iannaccone (1990, 1998) individuals' current religious participation increases an individual's stock of "religious human capital" and thereby increases the individual's utility from future participation. Also, the existing theoretical literature implies that education is related with religious activities; besides, religious activities are related with other social factors.

Jeynes (2003) has been pointed out that religiously committed urban children performed better on most academic measures than their less religious counterparts even when controlling for race, and gender; under the study of assessed the effects of student religious commitment on the academic achievement of urban and other children. In addition, when Further, He used the 1992 National Education Longitudinal Survey (NELS) data set for this study and results have been further indicated that the effects for religiosity were usually greater for urban children than they were for nonurban children. Religiously committed Black and Hispanic children performed better on most academic measures than their less religious counterparts, even when controlling for socioeconomic status, gender, and whether the student attended a private religious school (Jeynes, 1999). Mayer & Sharp (1962) show that being a part of a religious group promotes conformity such as going to classes or completing assignments. Several studies

have shown that the religious students are braver and perform better academically (Mooney 2010, Jeynes, 2005, Jeynes, 2007). According to existing literature generally found that there has a positive impact of the religion on student success. Therefore, it is important to investigate whether Dhamma School education has positively associate to increase school education achievements of a student.

### **Problem Statement**

Identify the effects of Dhamma School on Students' School Academic Performance is the problem of this study.

### **Aim and Objectives**

The aim of the study is to identify the effects of Dhamma School on the Students' School Academic Performance (SSAP). In order to achieve the aim, two specific objectives were set such: to find out the factors determining the effects of Dhamma School on the education of children and to identify the associations that determines the effects of Dhamma School on SSAP.

### **Methodology**

This part states about the methodology related with the study. 150 students in two (02) schools in Weligepola education division in Balangoda educational zone was selected out of three (03) divisions in Ratnapura district as it is a division that adequately represent different aspects that needed to the study such as socio-economic variance. While Weligepola education division was selected purposively, as Weligepola division represents study related characteristics, students were selected randomly. The researcher used a structured questionnaire and a survey of households for the collection of data. The study applied descriptive analytical methods and chi-square test of the analyze.

### **Results and Discussions**

Key results of the study indicate that demographic factors like the mothers' level of education, employment status of mother, household income and number of family members engaged in studies and attending Dhamma School are associated significantly with the Students' School Academic Performance. Whist, factors like gender and fathers' level of education significantly not associate with the SSAP. Further, when consider the non-demographic factors; athletic performance, expenditure on education, self-study time positively affect the SSAP.

Table 1: SAP differences and non-demographic factors

Factor	Chi-Square test results*
Gender	$x^2 = 1.662, df = 1, p > 0$
Mothers' level of education	$x^2 = 1.861e2, df = 3, p = 0$
Fathers' level of education	$x^2 = 0.202, df = 3, p > 0$
Employment status of mother	$x^2 = 1.431e2, df = 1, p = 0$
Employment status of father	$x^2 = 10.675, df = 1, p = 0$
Household income	$x^2 = 24.281, df = 5, p = 0$

No. of members who are engage in studies	$x^2 = 22.707, df = 2, p = 0$
Expenditure on education	$x^2 = 24.346, df = 3, p = 0$
Athletic performance	$x^2 = 3.394e2, df = 4, p = 0$
Self-study time	$x^2 = 49.85, df = 5, p = 0$
Attending tuition	$x^2 = 0.988, df = 1, p > 0$
Attending Dhamma School	$x^2 = 2.718e2, df = 1, p = 0$

Source: Author construct by sample survey in 2017

\*Significant level is 95%

The common perception of the society is that attending Sunday Dhamma School inculcates good habits and behaviors, including discipline among children. Discipline is of great importance for educational attainment and thus the researcher also looked at whether there is a correlation between a student attending a Dhamma School and his or her academic performance. The study showed that 78% of the respondents attended Dhamma School, while the other did not. Most of those who didn't attend Dhamma School have done so in a bid to spend more time on their education. However, the study can be found that among those who attend Dhamma School less than 50% attend classes regularly. Although there are four Dhamma School sessions a month, on average, 50% do not attend even two classes out of the total.

Therefore only 44% of the students of the sample were regularly attending Dhamma School. It was also shown during the study that there is a positive correlation between attending Dhamma School and the SSAP ( $x^2 = 2.718e2, df = 1, p = 0$ ). In this context, there is no reason for a student to not attend to the Dhamma School. The evidence shows student who are allocate a significant amount of time on dhamma education, regularly perform better academically in an extremely competitive education system in Sri Lanka.

### Recommendations

These results suggest that due to attend Dhamma School by student he can be able to increase his school academic performance. However, not only Dhamma School education but also other key socio-economic factors effect to the academic performance maintain well. Therefore, parents should be encourage their children attend to the Dhamma teaching for develop their values in society.

**Keywords:** academic performance, demographic factors, Dhamma School, non-demographic factors

### Key References

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