THE FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENTS’ PERFORMANCE IN MATHEMATICS AT GCE (O/L) EXAMINATION: THE CASE OF KALKUDAH ZONE

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION (EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT) FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES MAHIDOL UNIVERSITY 2011

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T.RAVI : 5338160 SHEM/M

M.Ed. (EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT)

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ABSTRACT

This research mainly focused on students’ mathematics performance in the Kalkudah Educational zone situated in Sri Lanka. The study found the demographic factors, instructional factors, and individual factors that affected the mathematics performance of students. The students’ mathematics performance of the research setting had continuously showed lower levels than the other zones in Sri Lanka. There was no professional research available for the Kalkudah zone.

This was a mixed method study. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed. Data were collected in 21 GCE (O/L) schools in the Kalkudah zone. The target population was 993 students. A questionnaire was developed based on the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Programme for International Student Achievement (PISA). A focus group interview was done as the qualitative part. For the data analysis, t-test, one-way ANOVA, LSD post-hoc test and Pearson correlations were applied.

It was found that there was no significant difference between gender of the students and their mathematics performance; the mean difference was not significant. However, other demographic factors (parent’s educational level and family’s monthly income), instructional factors (curriculum, teaching methodology, teacher competency, and school context) and individual factors (self directed learning, algebra ability, and concentration) showed significant differences in mathematics performance of the students; the mean difference was significant. The recommendations from the findings are further research and remedial educational projects in the zone.

KEY WORDS: FACTORS AFFECTING/ MATHEMATICS PERFORMANCE/ GCE (O/L)/ STUDENT PERFORMANCE / KUKUDEH ZONE

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