

Factors Affecting Students' Academic Performance: The Case of Students at Community Colleges in Bhaktapur District

Balaram Duwal* and Lalita Khonju**

Abstract

This study aims to investigate the important academic factors; teaching method, study habits of students and attendance of students that affect students' academic performance. The study used a survey method and analytical research design. A stratified sampling method was used to select 150 respondents from 1,525 total number of undergraduate students from four high student enrolment community colleges of Bhaktapur district. Regression analysis was used to identify the impact of independent variables on student's academic performance. Mann-Whitney test was used to identify the differences between perceived student's performance across gender, age and faculty. To test for differences between perceived student's performance across study year and guardian occupation, Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted. The result shows that the teaching method and attendance of students have a significant positive impact on perceived student's performance but student's habit has no significant impact on perceived student's performance. However, it has been proved that gender, age, faculty, study year and guardian occupation do not have any differences in perceived student's performance.

Keywords: Academic performance, teaching method, study habits, attendance of students & community college students.

Introduction

Education is one of the fundamental infrastructures of development. Education is the privilege that a state must guarantee to its citizen. Education is kept as fundamental rights in the Constitution of Nepal. In Nepal, basic education is mandatory and the state has guaranteed the education up to the secondary level to be free. Government of Nepal is focusing education on the building of the nation (Ministry of Education, 2018). Bista & Gaulee (2018) claimed that the higher education sector played a critical role in supporting broad-based economic growth and social sector development in Nepal.

As per record of University Grants Commission (2020), a total of 11 universities, four health academies and 1432 higher education institutions are providing mainstream higher education in Nepal. Among them, 147 constituents (10.27 per cent) campuses, 747 private (52.16 per cent) and 538 community (37.56 per cent) campuses are providing higher education. The community campuses are controlled and

* Assistant Professor, PhD in finance, Central Department of Management, Tribhuvan University, Nepal. Corresponding email: balramduwal@gmail.com,

** Student of Bagiswori College (Freelance researcher), Bhaktapur. She can be reached at lovelykhonju15@gmail.com

managed by the stakeholders of the community with non-profit motive as per the rules and regulation of the concerned university. As being a pioneer higher education institution, Tribhuvan University (TU) has 529 community campuses, 61 constituent campuses and 551 private campuses, where a total of 335,543 students are studying in the year 2018/19. Among them, around 36 per cent of students are getting an education in community campuses of TU (University Grants Commission, 2020). The data shows that the community campuses of TU are bearing major responsibility of providing higher education in Nepal. It is noteworthy that the University Grant Commission has awarded altogether 49 campuses from Quality Assurance and Accreditation among them 34 are community campuses. Thus, it became essential to conduct this study focusing on the issue of students' academic performance of community campuses of TU.

In the present era of globalization and technological revolution, students' academic performance is perceived to be of tremendous importance for the overall development of any nation. Students' academic performance plays an enormous role in producing the best quality graduates who will become great manpower to lead a country towards economic and social growth. Therefore, the investigation of factors related to the academic performance of university students become a topic of growing interest in a higher educational circle. Students' academic achievement is one of the major factors considered by employers in hiring workers especially for the fresh graduates (Mohamed et al., 2018).

Students' academic performance is the extent to which students, teachers or institutions have achieved their short or long-term educational goals. It is the performance level in examination and major modules. Measuring the academic performance of a student is a complex task as it cannot be easily quantified or measured in units. In most circumstances, students' performance may be deemed to be a product of environmental, social, economic, psychological and personal factors. However, failure to recognize these factors may retard the educational system and lead to higher failure rates. Therefore, it is important to diagnose the factors that associate suboptimal academic performance to institutionalize the most reasonable remedy.

The main concern of this research is related to the performance of students, which supports the colleges to achieve their goal of academic success. It is necessary to conduct this research to see the level of performance of students and to study different factors influencing the academic performance of community college students and enhance the quality of education. Thus, this study aims to investigate the factors affecting the students' academic performance on community colleges in Bhaktapur district. Furthermore, this study explores whether there is a significant difference in students' academic performance when their

socio-economic characteristics such as age, gender, faculty, study year and guardians' occupation are considered.

Literature Review

There is a considerable amount of research conducted on factors affecting the academic performance of students at different study levels. Dhakal (2020) explored the school-related factors, student-related factors, and parent-related factors which affect the students' performance. However, Atchia and Chinapah (2019) have analysed socioeconomic factors, school leadership, student factor, teacher factor and private tuition factor which affecting academic achievement of secondary school students in Mauritius. They found all those factors had a positive effect on students' academic achievement. Mushtaq and Khan (2012) found communication, learning facilities, proper guidance has a positive relationship with students performance whereas family stress has a negative relationship with it. Mahato (2018) study shows that curriculum activities, management, learning process and faculty factors contribute to students' academic performance. He concluded that curriculum aspects, faculty characteristics, learning process and extra activities have a positive impact on overall students' achievement in the Nepalese business environment.

a) Students' Performance

Waples and Darayseh (2005) used indicators such as diploma GPA, financial accounting scores, management accounting scores and students GPA to predict students' performance. Some others researchers used tests results or previous results since they are studying performance for the specific subject or year (Hijaz & Naqvi, 2006). However, in this study performance is considered as the qualitative factor, which is the result of teaching method applied in classroom, study habits of the students and attendance of students in class. Students' performance is measured through academic achievements and their ability to achieving an academic goal.

b) Teaching method

Teaching method is taken to be the role played by the professor in the teaching process and technology used in the process. To facilitate the process of knowledge transmission, teachers apply appropriate teaching methods that best suit specific objectives and level exit outcomes. Smith et al., (2001) analysed the teaching method and its influence on student academic performance. They concluded that interactive teaching method associated a better gain in test scores in comparison to the didactic teaching method. Isa et al.(2020) indicated that the teaching methods used by teachers determine the extent to which students perform in their academic. They recommended student-centred method and teacher-student interactive method to improve students' academic performance. Furthermore, Baradwaj and Pal (2011)

found that teaching methods work effectively if they suit learner's needs since every learner interprets and responds to questions in a unique way.

H1: There is a positive impact of teaching method on the academic performance of students.

c) Study Habits

Study habits contribute significantly to the development of knowledge and perceptual capacities. Study habits tell a person how much he will learn and how far he wants to go. These all could be decided with the help of one's study habits. Middleton (1979) stated that the study habits of students may be relevant to the prediction of grades because student's grades may be related to their study habits. That is, students with poor study habits may obtain lower grades than those students with better study habits. Similarly, Sheikh and Jahan (2012) stated that study habits are usually defined as the student's ability to manage time and other resources to complete an academic task successfully. Issa et al.(2012) recommended that everyday reading activities in which students engage influence their study skills and subsequent academic performance. There is a general sense in which one appreciates the academic performance of students generally. It is concluded that study habits are correlated with academic performance/ achievement.

H2: There is a positive impact of study habits on the academic performance of students.

d) Attendance of Students

Student's class attendance and engagement plays an important role in contemporary higher education. The attendance is used in checking the daily commitment of students towards their class. It shows the number of time students attend the class. Roby (2003) in his study of attendance and achievement in Ohio schools believed the positive impact of good attendance on academic performance might be greater than people who have less class attendance. Similarly, Jones (2006) discovered a direct correlation between good attendance and student achievement. He further suggested that poor attendance has been linked to poor academic performance. Marburger (2010) claimed that the enforced mandatory attendance policy significantly reduces absenteeism and improves students' exam performance. Similarly, Kassarnig et al.(2017) also found that early and consistent class attendance strongly correlates with academic performance. Thus, in this study, the students' attendance was taken as dependent variables and explored its effect on students' academic performance.

H3: There is a positive impact of attendance of students on their academic performance.

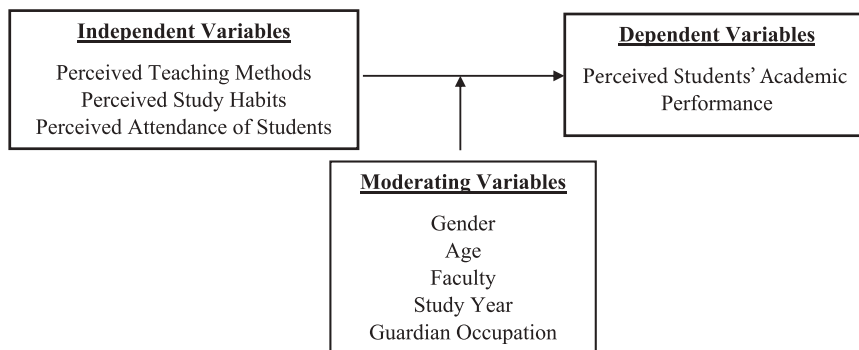
Besides teaching method, study habits and attendance of students, other variables also affect the academic performance of the students. Learning technique, home-related aspects, study habits and physical

resources have a strong positive relationship with academic performance. Similarly, students with good academic performance have better learning techniques, home- related aspects, study habits and physical resource (Mohamed et al., 2018).

Some researchers have also studied the effect of moderating variables on student’s academic performance. Regression results of academic performance of students have varied from faculty to faculty. The result also reveals that age, gender, past academic track, medium of education and absence in the classes have also influenced the academic performances of a student (Alam et al., 2014). Age, gender, year level, marital status, socio-economic status and previous school attended by the student nurses showed the varying extent of influence on their academic performance. A significant difference in the extent of effect gender has on the academic performance of student nurses. Whereas, no significant difference was observed on the extent of effect type of school attended had on the academic performance of the student nurses as indicated by age, year level, marital status, and socio-economic status (Alshammari et al., 2017).

Conceptual framework

Based on the literature review, in this study, a conceptual framework is developed to establish the impact of the teaching method, study habits, and attendance of students on students’ academic performance. The students’ socio-economic characteristics such as; gender, age, faculty, study year and guardian’s occupation are taken as moderating variables as explained by Alam et al., (2014) and Alshammari et al.(2017).



Methodology

Survey, descriptive and analytical research design was used to obtain predetermined objectives. The survey research design was used to collect the data from the respondents and it was used to assess opinions of students on their academic performance. The research has also employed a descriptive research design to explain the status of respondents. The research is analytical because it investigated the factors affecting

the academic performance of students. It also analyzes the effect of moderating variables on academic performance of students.

In Bhaktapur district, there are nine TU affiliated community colleges. Among them, four community colleges which have higher student enrolment are selected for this study. The entire undergraduate students (total 1525 students of management and education faculty) from four community colleges in Bhaktapur district is the population of the study. From the total population, 150 respondents were selected using a stratified sampling method.

Table 1
Frequency table for Total Respondents Sample

College	No of Students	No of Sample	Sample
			Percentage
Adarsha Azad College	271	25	9.23
Jana Adarsha Campus	117	19	16.24
Bagiswori College	580	39	6.72
Khwopa College	557	67	12.03
Total	1525.0	150	9.84

Note: University Grant Commission (2018)

Primary data was used for this study. The structured questionnaires were used. 180 questionnaires were distributed out of which 150 filled-in questionnaires were returned. Mean, standard deviation, correlation, multivariate regression analysis, Mann-Whitney test and Kruskal-Wallis test were conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Science version 25.

The survey has been conducted with a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. Part 1 is related to socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, whereas part 2 is on the factors that affect the academic performance of students. The questionnaire is composed of 21 items classified as teaching method factors, student habits factors, attendance of students factors and student academic performance factor. Five-point Likert scale has been used to measure 21 items ranging from "1" strongly disagree to "5" indicating strongly agree.

For content validity and reliability, Cronbach's alpha for each variable was calculated. Here, the reliability of overall items is 0.816 in Table 2 which means the result is very good. So, the instrument is considered to be reliable. Similarly, the reliability of every item is greater than 0.60, and it asserts that it is good for study.

Table 2
Reliability Statistics

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Perceived Teaching Method (PTM)	.726	6
Perceived Students' Habit (PSH)	.606	6
Perceived Attendance of Students (PAOS)	.718	4
Perceived Students' Performance (PSP)	.649	5
Overall	.816	21

Results

Descriptive Analysis

The mean of perceived student's performance is 3.6560 and the standard deviation is 0.62995. Perceived study habit has 3.3833 mean value with standard deviation value of 0.56618 showing slightly agreed condition with the statement of study habits. Mean of perceived teaching method and perceived attendance of students are 3.7078 and 3.8750 which shows that respondents nearly agree that these variables affect students' performance and standard deviation for these variables are 0.53649 and 0.67726.

Table 4
Descriptive table of Overall Research Variables

Research Variables	M	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
PTM	2	.17	5.00	3.7078	.53649
PSH	1	.33	.5	3.3833	.56618
PAOS		1.00	.4	3.8750	.67726
PSP	1	.40	5.00	3.6560	.62995

Demographic Analysis

Table 5 shows the frequency and percentage of different socio-economic characteristics of 150 respondents.

Table 5
Descriptive table of Overall Research Variables

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	37	24.7
Female	113	75.3
Age		
Below 20	38	25.3
20-30	112	74.7
Faculty		
Management	129	86
Education	21	14
Study Year		
1 st year	29	19.3
2 nd year	13	8.7
3 rd year	87	58
4 th year	21	14
Guardian Occupation		
Business	26	17.3
Job	44	29.3
Agriculture	52	34.7
Others	28	18.7
Total	150	100

Out of 150 respondents, 24.7% were male and 75.3% were female. As per the age of respondents, 25.3% of respondents were below 20 and 74.7% were between 20-30 years. 86% of respondents were from the management faculty and only 14% from education faculty. In terms of educational background, 19.3% of the respondents were from 1st year, 8.7% from 2nd year, 58% from 3rd year and 14% from 4th year. Similarly, 17.3% of respondents' family are engaged in business, 29.3% in the job, 34.7% in agriculture and 18.7% in others.

Correlation Analysis between Two Variables

The study found that there is a low degree of a positive relationship between perceived teaching methodology and perceived student academic performance at ($r=.378$ and $p=0.000$). The findings indicated that there is a weak positive relationship between perceived students' habit and perceived student academic performance at ($r=.266$ and $p=0.001$). The result displayed a moderate positive relationship between perceived student's attendance and perceived student academic performance at ($r=.497$ and $p=0.000$). It shows that if students regularly attend classes, they will have good academic performance.

Table 6
Correlation Analysis of Overall Variables

		PSP	PTM	PSH	PAOS
PSP	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
PTM	Pearson Correlation	.378**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
PSH	Pearson Correlation	.266**	.262**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.001		
PAOS	Pearson Correlation	.497**	.320**	.457**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Regression Analysis

This study investigated factors affecting student academic performance from community college students at Bhaktapur district, Nepal. Three hypotheses were developed after reviewing the literature, to test the hypotheses the regression analysis was employed.

Table 7
ANOVA

		ANOVA ^a				
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	17.772	3	5.924	20.913	.000 ^b
	Residual	41.357	146	.283		
	Total	59.130	149			

a. Dependent Variable: PSP

F-statistics were carried out to find the overall strength of the model. The value of F-statistics 20.913 shows that the model is highly significant

Coefficient

Table 8

Coefficients

Model	Coefficients				Result
	Unstandardized Coefficients		t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	1.06	0.37	2.868	0.005	
Perceived Teaching Method	0.284	0.087	3.28	0.001	Accept the alternative hypothesis
Perceived Students' Habit	0.016	0.087	0.178	0.859	Retain the null hypothesis
Perceived Attendance of Students	0.384	0.074	5.166	0.000	Accept the alternative hypothesis
R	.548 ^a				
R Square	.301				
Adjusted R Square	.286				

a. Predictors: (Constant), PAOS, PTM, PSH

b. Dependent Variable: PSP

Coefficient & Hypothesis Testing

H1: There is a positive impact of teaching method on the academic performance of students. Based on the beta coefficient, the model shows that perceived teaching method causes 28% positive variation in students' performance and t-value is also significant. So, the alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted. This means there is a positive impact of teaching method on the academic performance of students.

H2: There is a positive impact of study habits on the academic performance of students. Study habits of students cause 1.6% variation in students' performance however t-value is not significant. So, the null hypothesis is retained. This means there is no impact on study habits on the academic performance of students.

H3: There is a positive impact of attendance of students on academic performance of students. Attendance of students causes 38.4% variation in students' performance and t-value is also significant.

So, the alternative hypothesis (H3) is accepted. This means there is a positive impact of attendance of students on academic performance of students.

Mann-Whitney U Test

The Mann-Whitney U test is used to test for differences between two independent groups. Table 9 provides the mean rank given to each group on perceived student's academic performance. Male perceived student's academic performance rank mean is 71.30 while the mean rank given to female is 76.88. It means the perceived student's academic performance for the female is slightly larger than those for male students. Likewise, perceived student's academic performance for 20-30 age (mean rank=76.36) is slightly greater than those for below 20 age (mean rank=72.96). The study found that the perceived student's academic performance for management faculty (mean rank =77.26) is greater than education faculty students (mean rank=64.69).

Table 9

Mean Rank

		Ranks	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Perceived Student's Academic Performance	Gender	Male	37	71.30	2638.00
		Female	113	76.88	8687.00
	Age	Below 20	38	72.96	2772.50
		20 - 30	112	76.36	8552.50
	Faculty	Management	129	77.26	9966.50
	Education	21	64.69	1358.50	

The Mann-Whitney U-test showed that there is no significant difference in perceived student's performance between male and female students ($U=1935$, $p=0.495$). Similarly there is no significant difference in perceived students' performance between age below 20 and above 20 students ($U=2031.5$, $p=.675$). The study shows that there is no significant differences in perceived student's performance between management faculty and education faculty students ($U=1127.5$, $p=.216$).

Table 10

Mann-Whitney U value

Test Statistics ^a	PSP	PSP	PSP
	Mann-Whitney U	1935.000	2031.500
Wilcoxon W	2638.000	2772.500	1358.500
Z	-.682	-.419	-1.237
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.495	.675	.216
a. Grouping Variable:	Gender	Age	Faculty

Kruskal Wallis Test

Levene's test suggests that there is a significant difference of 0.001 between the group variance, therefore, assumption of homogeneity of variance is violated and non-parametric Kruskal Wallis test which is a non-parametric alternative to the ANOVA test was conducted for analysis.

Table 11

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

PSP

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
6.162	3	146	.001

The table lists the mean ranks on perceived student's performance for each year group and guardian occupation. Mean rank of a third-year student has highest i.e. 83.21 and lowest is 58.38 with second-year students. Furthermore, the students whose guardian occupation is business have the highest mean rank (90.65) followed by job and agriculture.

Table 12

Mean Rank of Perceived Student's Academic Performance

		Ranks	
		Study Year	Mean Rank
Study Year	1st year	N 29	68.03
	2nd year	13	58.38
	3rd year	87	83.21
	4th year	21	64.48
	Total	150	
Guardian Occupation	Business	26	90.65
	Job	44	77.43
	Agriculture	52	68.88
	Others	28	70.70
	Total	150	

A Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted to evaluate differences among the study year groups on perceived student's performance. The test was not statistically significant (chi square=7.047, $p=0.070$), so retain the null hypothesis. It indicates that the distribution of perceived student's performance is the same across categories of the study year.

Table 13

Test Statistics

Test Statistics^{a,b}		
	PSP	PSP
Chi-Square	7.047	4.859
Df	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.070	.182
b. Grouping Variable	Study Year	Guardian Occupation

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

Similarly, a Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted to evaluate differences among the guardian occupation on perceived student's performance (table 13). The test was not statistically significant (chi square=4.859, $p=0.182$), so retain the null hypothesis. It indicates that the distribution of perceived student's perception is the same across categories of guardian occupation.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study was carried out to investigate the major factors that affect student academic performance. This work was conducted to examine the impact of the teaching method, student's habit and attendance of students. The study revealed a low degree of a positive relationship between perceived teaching methodology and perceived student academic performance at ($r=.378$ and $p=0.000$). The findings indicated that there is a weak positive relationship between perceived students' habit and perceived student academic performance at ($r=.266$ and $p=0.001$). The result demonstrated a moderate positive relationship between perceived student's attendance and perceived student academic performance at ($r=.497$ and $p=0.000$). It shows that if students regularly attend classes, they will have good academic performance, which is consistent with the result of (Kassarnig et al., 2017) and (Marburger, 2010).

Further, the result shows that the teaching method has a significant positive impact on perceived student's performance. It is consistent with the study made by Bharadwaj & Pal (2011) and Smith et.al. (2001). But student's habit has not significant impact on perceived student's performance which is contradict with Middleton (1979), and Issa et al. (2012) Ali, Abdulkadir, & Abdi (2018). Likewise, the result shows that the attendance of students has also significant positive impact on perceived student's performance which is similar with the findings of Roby (2004), and Jones (2006).

Furthermore, it has been proved that gender, age, faculty, study year and guardian occupation do not have any differences on perceived student's performance. This finding is contradicts with Alam et al. (2014) and Alshammari et al.(2017).

Thus, it can be concluded that the undergraduate students' academic performance is influenced by the teaching method and attendance of students. However, students habits do not have an impact on student's performance. Likewise, the Mann-Whitney test and Kruskal-Wallis test result proved that the distribution of student's performance is the same across categories of age, gender, faculty, study year and guardian occupation.

Implications

This finding is significant as it can be used by college administrators and teachers in designing and implementing the program towards the improvement of student's academic performance among community colleges of Bhaktapur district, Nepal. In the study, teaching method and student's attendance have a significant impact on student's performance thus teacher need to give more attention to their teaching method to improve student's performance. Student's attendance plays important role in student's performance therefore college should manage the necessary environment and policy to motivate students for higher attendance. The colleges should review their methods of teaching to improve students' academic performance. Teachers and parents' role is necessary to improve study habits of students.

Limitations

Even though the utmost effort has been made to prepare this paper, there are some limitations to the study. Students' academic performance is affected by various environmental factors, socio-economic and psychological factors such as class size, class test results, family condition, age and gender differences, economic status of parents, etc. But this study considered only teaching method, study habits and attendance of students variables for the study. In this study, students' academic performance was measured based on perceptions of students only. It can be done using scores and ranks in exams. The research was limited to the study of bachelors' level students only.

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