FACTORS AFFECTING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AT UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Martha Kyoshaba, hereby declare that, this dissertation is my original work and has never been presented to any university or institution for any academic award.

Sign:……..

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Date:……..

APPROVAL

This dissertation has been written under our supervision and has been submitted for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Educational Management with our approval as supervisors.

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Date:……

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late mother, Mrs. Petrid K Majara who always wanted me to be a teacher, my husband Jacobs who encouraged me to strive on and my little girls, Isabel and Christabel whom I want to follow in my footsteps.

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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to investigate the factors affecting academic performance of undergraduate students of Uganda Christian University (UCU). Emphasis was put on trying to establish the relationship between admission points, parents' social economic status, former school background and academic performance of undergraduate students at Uganda Christian University. The study employed the use of correlation design to establish the nature of the relationships. The validity and reliability of research instruments was established and data was collected from 340 respondents selected from all the six faculties of Uganda Christian University using the simple random sampling method. To analyze the data, the Pearson product moment correlation statistical tool was used with the aim of establishing the relationship between students' admission points, parents' social economic status, former school background and academic performance of undergraduate students at Uganda Christian University. This formed the basis of the detailed analysis and conclusions and recommendations.

The findings revealed the existence of a significant relationship between students' A' level and Diploma admission points and academic performance, but there was no relationship between mature age points and academic performance. The findings also revealed that there was a significant relationship between parents' social economic status and academic performance and a significant relationship between former school background and academic performance. On the basis of the findings, the researcher made the following conclusions; A' level and diploma admission points are the most objective way to select just a few students from a multitude of applicants for the

limited spaces available at universities in Uganda. Parents' social economic status is important because parents provide high levels of psychological support for their children through environments that encourage the development of skills necessary for success at school. That location, ownership and academic and financial status of schools do count on making a school what it is and in turn influencing the academic performance of its students because they set the parameters of a students' learning experience. The researcher also confirmed the system's theory input output model.

On the basis of the conclusions made, the researcher recommended that; Uganda Christian University maintains its selection criteria of using previous academic performance as a measure of admitting students for undergraduate programs. However mature age students could be given supplementary year or probation year to test their competency in addition to the entrance exam. The university should improve the student support system such that students from low social economic backgrounds are identified and assisted through offering scholarships. This study identified the need to investigate and analyze the mature age and international students' recipe for success in higher education with the intention of developing some of these aspects for inclusion in all student selections.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This Chapter contains the background, purpose, objectives, questions, hypotheses and significance of the study.

1.1 Background

Academic performance is affected by a number of factors including admission points, social economic status and school background. Geiser and Santelices (2007), Acato (2006), and Swart (1999) all argue that admission points which are a reflection of the previous performance influence future academic performance. The Universities Admission Center (2006) reports that tertiary institutions in Austria have found that a selection rank based on a student's overall academic achievement is the best single predictor of tertiary success for most tertiary courses. The researcher agrees with the scholars that admission points affect academic performance at university and that is why according to the Uganda Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act (2001), the basis for entry to university is admission points which are derived from A' level points, Diploma points and Mature age points.

According to Graetz (1995), one's educational success depends very strongly on social economic status of the parents. Considine and Zappala (2002) argue that families where the parents are advantaged socially, educationally and economically foster a high level of achievement in their children. The researcher agrees with

Considine and Zappala (2002) because students from high social economic backgrounds are well exposed to scholastic materials, which aid their intelligence. Sentamu (2003), Kwesiga (2002) and Portes and Macleod (1996) as cited in Considine and Zappala (2002) all argue that the type of school a child attends influences academic achievement. According to Minnesota measures (2007), a report on higher education performance, which was produced by the University of Minnesota, the most reliable predictor of student success in college is the academic preparation of students in high school.

The researcher adapted the Systems theory input-output model advanced by Ludwig Von Bertalanffy in the early 1950s. This theory, according to Koontz and Weirich (1988) postulates that an organized enterprise does not exist in a vacuum but is dependant on its external environment thus the enterprise receives inputs, transforms them and exports the out put to the environment. In this study the university admits students (inputs) and then transforms them through teaching and learning which is reflected by the students' academic performance (output).

Academic performance according to the Cambridge University Reporter (2003) is frequently defined in terms of examination performance. In this study academic performance was characterized by performance in tests, in course work and performance in examinations of undergraduate students. According to the UCU prospectus, admission points are weights attached to the applicant's past academic records (UCU, nd) and according to the Uganda Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions act (2001) there are three main entry schemes to higher education in Uganda, the direct entry (A' level), the mature age entry scheme and diploma entry

scheme. The admission points for this study were characterized by direct entry scheme (A' level), diploma entry scheme and mature age scheme. Durden & Ellis (as cited in Staffolani and Bratti, 2002) observed that measures of prior educational performance are the most important determinants of student performance. This implies that the higher the previous performance, the better the students will perform academically.

Social Economic Status (SES) according to Considine and Zappala (2002) is a person's overall social position to which attainments in both the social and economic domain contribute. They add that social economic status is determined by an individual's achievements in, education, employment, occupational status and income. In this study social economic status (SES) was characterized by family income, parental education and parental occupation. Graetz (1995) argues that children from high social economic status families perform much better at school compared to children from low SES families.

Schools according to Sentamu (2003) are social institutions in which groups of individuals are brought together to share educational experiences and such interactions may breed positive or negative influences on learners. In this study, school background was characterized by location of school (urban or rural), school ownership (public or private schools), school academic status and school financial standing.

Records in the office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs show that Uganda Christian University (UCU) has a merit-based system of admissions; it admits

students following the minimum requirements as provided for by the Uganda Universities and Other Tertiary Institution's Act (2001). UCU prospectus, nd. It is believed that most of the students admitted are from medium and high social economic backgrounds because UCU is a private university where students pay their fees and majority of the students are either self sponsored or paid for by their parents. These students are from various school backgrounds. The students' academic performance is assessed by use of tests, assignments and examinations. Much as it is normal for students in an educational institution to perform well and others poorly, even after receiving the same services, the researcher is curious to know what makes some students perform well and while others perform poorly as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Admissions points and academic performance of some students who graduated in 2007.

	BSc in Information Technology		**Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication**		**Bachelor of Business Administration**		**Bachelor of Arts in Education**	
Student	A' level Points	CGPA	A' level Points	CGPA	A' level Points	CGPA	A' level Points	CGPA
1	11	4.76	13	4.96	14	4.42	9	4.43
2	8	4.59	18	4.40	15	4.54	19	4.41
3	13	4.56	Diploma	4.68	6	4.48	11	4.51
4	10	3.02	13	2.97	Diploma	3.03	6	3.15
5	9	2.99	8	2.96	10	3.02	7	3.11
6	10	2.72	5	2.89	Diploma	2.92	8	2.96

Source: Records from the Central Academic Office. Key: CGPA cumulative grade point average.

Table 1 shows the three high performers and three low performers who graduated in 2007 in selected courses. For example compare student 1 and 4 of Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication, both were admitted with 13 points at A' level but student 1 has a CGPA of 4.96 which is a first class degree while 4 has 2.97 which is a second lower degree, or student 1 and 6 of Bachelor of Arts with Education, 1 has a CGPA of 4.43 and 6 has 2.96 yet their A' level points are 9 and 8 respectively. The researcher would like to investigate what factors affect the performance of the students. The recommendations of this research would go along way in assisting the policy makers at UCU to come up with policies and strategies that can be employed to improve academic performance.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Academic performance, which is measured by the examination results, is one of the major goals of a school. Hoyle (1986) argued that schools are established with the aim of imparting knowledge and skills to those who go through them and behind all this is the idea of enhancing good academic performance. Uganda Christian University whose vision is to be a center of excellence in the heart of Africa is keen on quality assurance and maintenance of standards. However the academic deans and the quality assurance committee have noted that while some students perform highly and others perform do not perform well. They are concerned about those who do not perform well because if this poor performance goes unchecked, the university may lose its reputation, which may result in loss of confidence in UCU graduates. Much as the

situation described here causes concern, it is not yet known why some students fail to attain the standards expected of them. There is lack of sufficient research in the case of UCU as to what factors affect academic performance of the students. The researcher would therefore like to establish the factors affecting academic performance of undergraduate students of Uganda Christian University with specific reference to admission points, social economic status and school background.

1.3 Purpose

To find out if factors like admission points, parents' social economic status and former school background affect academic performance of undergraduate students at Uganda Christian University.

1.4 Specific objectives

i) To establish the relationship between students' admission points and academic performance of undergraduate students.

ii) To establish the relationship between parents' social economic status and academic performance of undergraduate students.

iii) To establish the relationship between students' former school background and academic performance of undergraduate students.

1.5 Research Questions

i) What is the relationship between students' admission points and academic performance of undergraduate students?

ii) What is the relationship between parents' social economic status and academic performance of undergraduate students?

iii) What is the relationship between students' former school background and academic performance of undergraduate students?

1.6 Research Hypotheses

i) There is a positive relationship between students' admission points and academic performance of undergraduate students.

ii) There is a positive relationship between parents' social economic status and academic performance of undergraduate students.

iii) There is a positive relationship between students' former school background and academic performance of undergraduate students.

1.7 Scope

The study was conducted at Uganda Christian University in Mukono, Uganda, using correlation design and a sample of first year, second and final year students selected from all the six faculties at UCU. The content scope covered factors such as admission points, socio-economic status and school background which affect academic performance of undergraduate students. The study covered the period of academic year 2006/2007 and 2007/2008.

1.8 Significance

A lot of research has been done on factors affecting academic performance of college students but there is scarce information about academic performance of students at Uganda Christian University. The study will enable the researcher to make recommendations to Uganda Christian University policy makers especially those in

the Quality Assurance unit, the Central Academic office and the Ministry of Education and Sports on what policies and strategies can be employed to improve academic performance in institutions of higher learning. The findings will help the University Admission's Board to review its methods of admitting students in order to improve academic performance. The report will also be a source of reference for other researchers intending to study academic performance of Uganda Christian University students.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This Chapter contains the theoretical review, conceptual framework and the review of related literature.

2.1 Theoretical Review

The theory adapted for this study was derived from the System's theory input-output model developed by Ludwig Von Bertalanffy in 1956. The theory, according to Koontz and Weihrich, (1988) postulates that an organized enterprise does not exist in a vacuum; it is dependant on its environment in which it is established. They add that the inputs from the environment are received by the organization, which then transforms them into outputs. As adapted in this study, the students (Inputs) are admitted into the university, with different admission points, from different social economic backgrounds and are from various school backgrounds, when they get into the university system, the management of the university transforms them through the process of teaching and learning and the students output is seen through their academic performance.

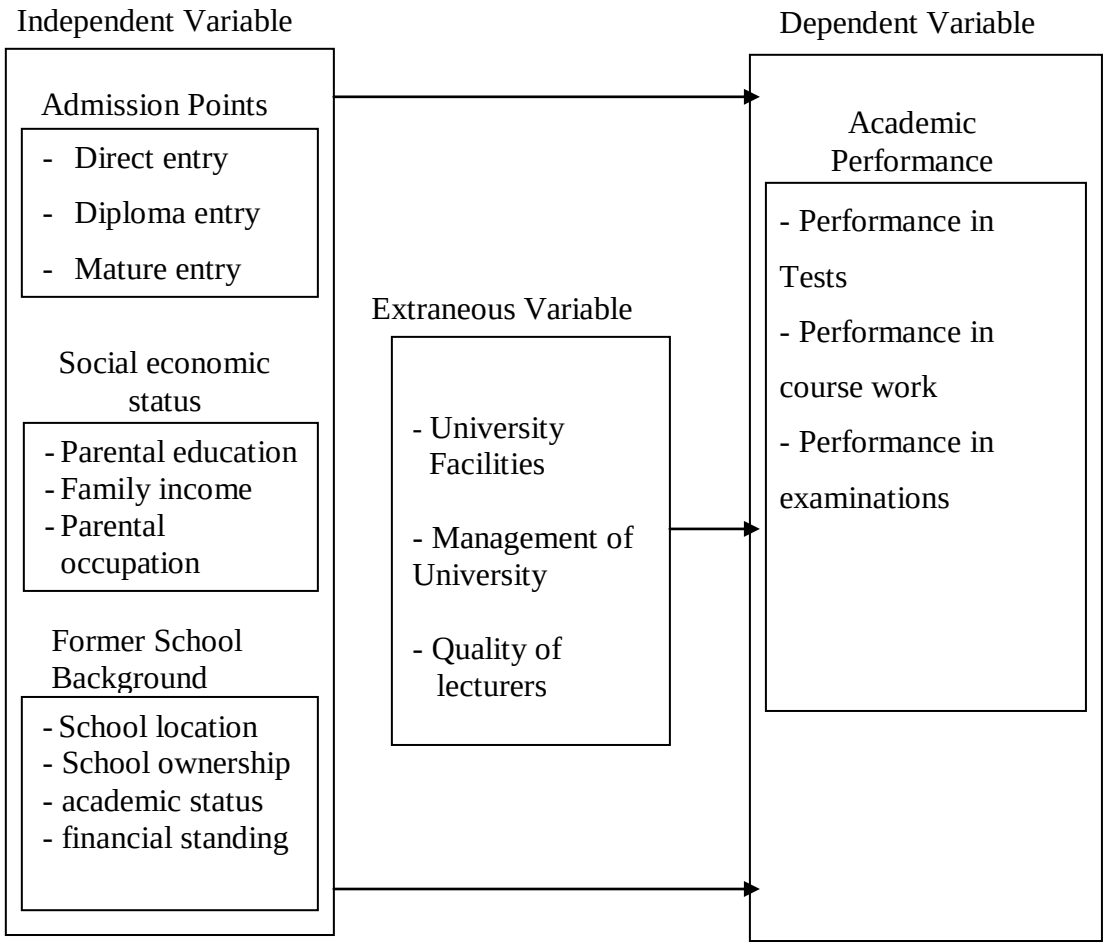
Robbins (1980) argued that organizations were increasingly described as absorbers, processors and generators and that the organizational system could be envisioned as made up of several interdependent factors. System advocates, according to Robbins (1980) have recognized that a change in any factor within the organization has an impact on all other organizational or subsystem components. Thus the inputs, the processors and the generators should function well in order to achieve the desired

outcome. Saleemi (1997) in agreement with Robbins (1980) argued that all systems must work in harmony in order to achieve the overall goals. According to the input-output model, it is assumed that the students with high admission points, high social economic background and good school background will perform well if the university facilities are good, the lecturers and the management of the university is good which may not always be the case and this is the shortcoming of this theory. According to Oso and Onen (2005), the interrelationships among parts of a system have to be understood by all parties involved. This theory requires a shared vision so that all people in the university have an idea of what they are trying to achieve from all parties involved, a task that is not easy to achieve.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

This section proposes a conceptual framework within which the concept, academic performance is treated in this work. It is arrived at basing on the System's theory Input-Output model advanced by Ludwig Von Bertalanffy in 1956. The selection of the model is based on the belief that, the quality of input invariably affects quality of output in this case academic performance (Acato 2006)

Fig 1 Conceptual framework of the factors affecting academic performance



Source: Adopted from Koontz and Weihrich (1988:12).

Fig. 1 Conceptual framework model

Fig 1 shows the linkage between different factors and academic performance. It shows that academic performance as a dependent variable is related to the dependent variables, which are admissions points, parents' social economic status and student's former school. According to Fig.1, admission points which include direct entry points, diploma points and mature age points are linked to academic performance. If the

admission points are high, then the academic performance is likely to be high and if admission points are low, then academic performance may be low. This argument is supported by Geiser and Santelics (2007), Staffolani and Bratti (2002), and McDonald et al (2001) whose studies showed that previous performance affects future performance.

Parents' social economic status, which was conceptualized as parents' education, parents' income and parents' occupation, is linked to academic performance. The figure shows that academic performance is dependent on parents' social economic status. That is students from high social economic backgrounds will perform better than their counter parts from low social economic backgrounds as discussed. This is supported by Dills (2006) and Owens (1999). It is also in line with Hansen and Mastekaasa (2006) who argued that according to the cultural capital theory one could expect students from families who are closest to the academic culture to have greatest success.

The third dependent variable is former school background, which was conceptualized as location of the former school (urban or rural); ownership of former school (public or private) academic status of the former school and financial status of the former school is linked to academic performance of students. That is the type of school a student attends is likely to contribute to their academic performance of the student in future. Students from high-class schools are likely to perform well due to the fact that they attended those schools. An argument supported by Considine and Zappala (2002) Kwesiga (2002) and Sentamu (2003).

The researcher also identified some extraneous variables, which may affect academic performance, these include, the university management, facilities and the quality of lectures among many. These variables are part of the input and process explained in the Ludwig's Input-Output model. They play a role in bringing out the output, which is academic performance. If these variables are not controlled, they may interfere with the results of the study. The researcher controlled the effect of the extraneous variables by randomly selecting students because randomization according to Amin (2005) is one of the ways to attempt to control many extraneous variables at the same time. The researcher randomly selected the subjects as seen in section 3.4 of chapter three.

2.3 Related literature

This section is divided into three subsections. The first section reviews related literature on the concept of admission points as related to academic performance, followed by the subsection which reviews literature on the concept of parents' social economic status and its relationship to academic performance. The final subsection reviews literature on the concept of students' former school background and academic performance.

2.3.1 Admission points and academic performance

Accepted wisdom suggests that applicants with higher results in their entry qualifications should perform better at degree level. One wonders if this wisdom is scientifically proven. The last decade has seen an increase in literature relating to predictors of academic performance with much debate on whether conventional measures of academic achievement are the best determinants of future performance at university. In Uganda today, the main admission criteria to universities is prior performance either at A' level, at Diploma or at Mature age examinations (Universities and Tertiary Institutions Act, 2001). This, according to the literature reviewed is being practiced worldwide, admission boards else where in the world use prior academic performance to select students for admission. For example in the United States, Minnesota measures (2007), in the United Kingdom, Waller and Foy (1987), in South Africa, Swart (1999) and in Kuwait, Mohammad and Almaheed (1988) among many. Several countries use these standards of admission because according to Staffolani and Bratti, (2002), measures of prior educational performance are the most important determinants of student performance an argument supported by The Universities Admission Centre (2006) report in which it is stated that tertiary

institutions in Austria have found that a selection rank based on a student's overall academic achievement is the best single predictor of tertiary success for most tertiary courses.

In their study on validity of high school grades in predicting student success beyond the freshman year Geiser and Santelices (2007), found that high school grade point average is consistently the best predictor of college grades. They cite Geiser and Studley (2003) who sampled 80,000 students admitted to the University of California and tracked 4 year college outcomes including cumulative grade point average and graduation in order to examine the relative contribution of high school record in predicting longer term college performance, and their key findings were that high school grades were the strongest in predicting four year college outcomes for all academic disciplines. A view similar to that of Geiser and Santelics (2007) was held by Anderson, Benjamin and Fuss (1994) who carried out a study on the determinants of success in university and found out that students who performed well in high school also performed better in college. Geiser and Santelics (2007) and Anderson, Benjamin and Fuss (1994) all from the United States found evidence to suggest that high school grades were without doubt the best predictors of academic performance.

However these studies were based on a sample of students whose system of education has four years of secondary school (O'level), which is totally different from Uganda's system, which has six years of secondary level, and this may not be applicable to Uganda. In addition, Waller and Foy (1987) showed in their study that O'levels were an inferior predictor of success at University. The researcher found it useful to compare the results with countries that have the same system of education as that of

Uganda for the results of such studies provide a more uniform and valid yardstick of assessing and comparing student ability and achievement. For example a study on the British school system which is almost similar to the Uganda system of education, Waller and Foy (1987) carried out an investigative study of British school examinations as a predictor of university performance in pharmacy, they used the Pearson product moment correlation using the SPSS to analyze their data and in their conclusion stated that pre-university performance is significantly correlated with undergraduate performance.

Findings similar to those made by Waller and Foy (1987) were confirmed by Mohammad and Almaheed (1988) whose study on evaluation of traditional admissions standards in predicting Kuwait students' academic performance revealed that secondary school scores proved to be instrumental in predicting university performance. The period in which the studies of Mohammad and Almaheed (1988) and Waller and Foy (1988) were done in the early 1980's therefore most of the literature they cited was for the 1960s and 70s which is now obsolete, however the researcher found their research methodology quite relevant and their use of the statistical package of social science research.

However Huw, Reddy and Talcott (2006) disagree with the view that academic performance is determined by prior academic performance. In their study on the relationship between previous academic performance and subsequent success at university, found that subjects studied at A' level and grades obtained did not predict academic performance at university. They cite Pearson and Johnson (1994) who demonstrated that there was an overall mark association of only 0.28 between A' level

grades and degree performance. A view held by the Academic Admission Council of Oregon State University (2003); in their study on undergraduate admissions who found that traditional measures of academic potential such as high school Grade Point Average (GPA) scores at best explain only 30% of the variation in first year at college GPA. It should be noted that even if these studies do not agree with the previous scholars who found that prior performance affects future performance, they do acknowledge that admission points are related to academic performance at university but to a very small extent. Thus confirming McDonald, Newton, Whetton and Benefield (2001) and Staffolani and Bratti (2002) who demonstrated that A' level scores still out perform any other single measure of cognitive aptitude in predicting success at university.

Another form of entry to university is through diploma and mature age entry, surprisingly for a subject of such importance, few studies have been reported linking other forms of entry to academic performance. Ringland and Pearson (2003) carried out a study on the differences between diploma entrants and direct A' level entrants and how each category performed. They sampled 608 respondents of which 154 were diploma entrants, and found that there were no significant differences between groups in terms of academic performance and concluded that performance of one prior to university affected performance at university. The findings of Ringland and Pearson (2003) are supported by Wheeler (2006) whose results in the study on success of non-traditional students in an undergraduate program showed that there was no difference in performance of non-traditional entrants and traditional entrants as long as both categories had performed well at their previous qualifications.

Mpofu (1997) investigated academic performance on mature students in higher education and argued that mature age is a second chance scheme for those who could not obtain the necessary formal qualification for university, however before these people are finally admitted to university, they must have proven record of capability for this level of study as demonstrated by their level of performance in a set examination by the university. Mpofu (1997) concluded that these students perform as well as the regular students admitted under the direct entry scheme. A view similar to that of Mpofu (1997) was held by Parameswaran (1991) whose study compared academic success of mature students and traditional students and Richardson (1994) who investigated academic performance of mature age students in higher education and concluded that mature students perform as successfully as direct entry students. However Parameswaran (1991) attributed this performance not just to grade but also to age, saying that mature age students are older than direct entry student. The scholars cited have proven in their studies that prior academic performance, which, in this study is measured by admission points, is related to academic performance in the university. Even the scholars who did not agree with that belief admitted that prior performance is related to future performance but to a small extent. These studies have led the researcher to hypothesize that there is a relationship between admission points and academic performance of undergraduate students.

2.3.2 Social economic status and academic performance

Social economic status is most commonly determined by combining parents' educational level, occupational status and income level (Jeynes, 2002; McMillan & Western, 2000). In most of the studies done on academic performance of students, it is not surprising that social economic status is one of the major factors studied while

predicting academic performance. Hansen and Mastekaasa (2003), argue that according to the cultural capital theory one could expect students from families who are closest to the academic culture to have greatest success. It is believed that low social economic status negatively affects academic achievement because low social economic status prevents access to vital resources and creates additional stress at home. (Eamon 2005; Jeynes, 2002). Graetz (1995) carried out a study on social economic status in education research and policy found that social economic background remains one of the major sources of educational inequality and adds that one's educational success depends very strongly on the social economic status of one's parents. Considine and Zappala (2002) agree with Graetz (1995), in their study on the influence of social and economic disadvantage in the academic performance of school students in Australia found that families where the parents are advantaged socially, educationally and economically foster a higher level of achievement in their children. They also found that these parents provide higher levels of psychological support for their children through environments that encourage the development of skills necessary for success at school.

On the contrary Pedrosa R.H, Norberto W.D, Rafael P.M,Cibele Y.A and Benilton S.C (2006) in their study on educational and social economic background of undergraduates and academic performance at a Brazilian university, found that students coming from disadvantaged socioeconomic and educational homes perform relatively better than those coming from higher socioeconomic and educational strata. They called this phenomenal educational resilience. This could be true considering that different countries have different parameters of categorizing social economic status. What a developed country categorizes as low social economic status may be

different from the definition of low social economic status of a developing country. Additionally students do not form a homogenous group and one measure of social economic disadvantage may not suit all sub groups equally.

Combs (1985) argued that in virtually all nations, children of parents high on the educational, occupation and social scale have far better chance of getting into good secondary schools and from there into the best colleges and universities than equally bright children of ordinary workers or farmers. Combs (1985) adds that the findings of many empirical studies suggest that children whose parents are at the bottom of the social economic hierarchy are not as inclined to seek or gain access to available educational facilities as the children with families are located at the middle or top of the hierarchy. Dills (2006) had a similar view with Combs (1985) when she found that students from the bottom quartile consistently perform below students from the top quartile of socioeconomic status. Another similar view was held by Hansen and Mastekaasa (2006), when they studied the impact of class origin on grades among all first year students and higher level graduates in Norwegian universities. Their analysis showed that students originating in classes that score high with respect to cultural capital tend to receive the highest grades.

McMillan and Westor (2002) argued that social economic status is comprised of three major dimensions: education, occupation and income and therefore in developing indicators appropriate for high education context, researchers should study each dimension of social economic status separately. They add that education, occupation and income are moderately correlated therefore it is inappropriate to treat them interchangeably in the higher education context. An argument similar to Considine

and Zappala (2002) who argued that the social and the economic components of the socio-economic status equation may have distinct and separate influences on educational outcomes. The researcher therefore reviewed literature on each of the components of social economic status in relation to academic performance.

Family income, according to Escarce (2003) has a profound influence on the educational opportunities available to adolescents and on their chances of educational success. Escarce (2003) adds that due to residential stratification and segregation, low-income students usually attend schools with lower funding levels, have reduced achievement motivation and much higher risk of educational failure. When compared with their more affluent counterparts, low-income adolescents receive lower grades, earn lower scores on standardized test and are much more likely to drop out of school. Escarce (2003) is in agreement with Combs (1985) and Sentamu (2003) who argued that social class determines what school a child will attend and whether the child will pass the examinations. Considine & Zappala (2002) found that children from families with low income are more likely to exhibit the following patterns in terms of educational outcomes; have lower levels of literacy, innumeracy and comprehension, lower retention rates, exhibit higher levels of problematic school behavior, are more likely to have difficulties with their studies and display negative attitudes to school.

King & Bellow (1989) used parents' occupation as a proxy for income to examine the relationship between income and achievement and found that children of farmers had fewer years of schooling than children of parents with white-collar jobs. They also determined that the schooling levels of both parents had a positive and statistically significant effect on the educational attainment of Peruvian children. They argue that

how much education a child's parents have is probably the most important factor in determining the child's educational opportunities. They observe that the higher the attainment for parents, then the greater their aspirations for children.

Owens (1999) in her study exploring beliefs about academic achievement studied the relationship between parent and guardian educational attainment to academic achievement and concluded that the educational attainment of parent or guardian does have a relationship with academic achievement of their children, she argued that the higher the parent or guardian's educational achievement, the higher the academic achievement similar to what King & Bellow (1989) had said. Sentamu (2003) argued that rural families and urban families where both parents were illiterate or had inadequate education do not seem to consider home study for their children a priority and that illiterate families will not foster a study culture in their children since the parents themselves did not attend school or the education they received was inadequate to create this awareness in them. These differences in home literacy activities are likely to be reflected in school achievement.

According to the literature cited it can be seen that social economic status is related to academic performance, whether one studies social economic status as a whole or with distinct dimensions, there is considerable support to hypothesize that parents' social economic status affects academic performance of students. (Jeynes 2002; Eamon 2005; Greatz 1995; Considine & Zappala 2002; Hansen & Mastekaasa 2003) Students who come from low social economic backgrounds earn lower examination scores compared to their counter parts from high social economic backgrounds (Eamon 2005).

2.3.3 Former school background and academic performance

Students' educational outcome and academic success is greatly influenced by the type of school which they attend. The school one attends is the institutional environment that sets the parameters of a students' learning experience. Depending on the environment, a school can either open or close the doors that lead to academic achievement. According to Considine and Zappala (2002) the type of school a child attends influences educational outcomes. Considine and Zappala (2002) cite Sparkles (1999) whose study in Britain shows that schools have an independent effect on student attainment and that school effect is likely to operate through variation in quality and attitudes, so teachers in disadvantaged schools often hold low expectations of their students which compound the low expectations the students have, hence leading to poor performance by the students. Kwesiga (2002) agrees that school has an effect on the academic performance of students but argued that school facilities determine the quality of the school, which in turn influences the achievements, and attainment of its pupils. Sentamu (2003) argues that schools influence learning in the way content is organized and in the teaching, learning and assessment procedures. All these scholars agree in principle that schools do affect academic performance of students.

Felder, Mohr, Dietz and Ward (1994) carried out a study on the differences between students from 55 rural students and 65 urban students, in their study, differences in academic performance were observed with the urban students doing better on almost every measure investigated. The urban students outperformed rural students and they continued to perform better in chemical engineering courses in subsequent semesters. They concluded that urban students enjoy greater success than rural students. They

also found that in every measure of scholastic aptitude examined, urban students surpassed rural students. The conclusion of Felder, Mohr, Dietz and Ward (1994), is confirmed by Tremblay, Ross and Berthelot (2001) in their study on factors affecting grade three student performances in Ontario. They found that students' performance was higher in urban schools than in rural schools.

A similar view is held by Kolcic (2006) in his study on academic performance and scientific involvement of final year medical students coming from urban and rural backgrounds. Kolcic (2006) concludes that students from urban backgrounds had significantly better academic and research indicators than those from rural and remote backgrounds. He added that more than half the students from rural backgrounds fail at least one year of study. Cheers, (1990) as cited in Considine and Zappala (2002) argued that students from non-metropolitan areas are more likely to have lower educational outcomes in terms of academic performance and retention rates than students from metropolitan areas and adds that inequity exits with regard to the quality of the education rural students receive often as a result of costs, restricted and limited subject choice; low levels of family income support and educational facilities within their school. The results of Lee and McIntire (2001) are contrary to Kolcic (2006) and Considine and Zappala (2002). The former argue that there is no significant difference between the performance of students from rural schools and from urban schools. In their study on interstate variations in rural student achievement and schooling conditions, they observed that given that many rural students are poor and attend schools where instructional resources and course offerings are limited, the level of their academic performance relative to their non-rural counterparts is

encouraging. They found that in some states rural students scored higher than their non-rural counterparts.

Some researchers have held the view that school ownership and funding does indeed have an effect on performance of the student. Crosne, Johnson and Elder (2004) found that school ownership (that is schools owned by private individuals and those owned by the government) is an important structural component of the school. Private schools, they argue, tend to have both better funding and small sizes than public schools. They found that additional funding of private schools leads to better academic performance and more access to resources such as computers, which have been shown to enhance academic achievement. Sampson (2004) also noted that private schools have alternate sources of funding, higher level of discipline, and are very selective and this is why they tend to have higher academic performance than students from public schools. Considine and Zappala (2002) concluded in their study on school background that students from independent private schools were more likely to achieve higher end of school scores. Crosne, Johnson and Elder (2004), Sampson (2004) and Considine and Zappala (2002) share a similar view and that is; private schools are more likely to have a greater number of students from high SES families, select students with stronger abilities and have greater financial resources. In their conclusions, they maintained that the type of school affects the academic performance of students. Their views are summarized by Miller and Birch (2007), in their study on the influence of high school attended on university performance who argued that outcome at university differs according to the type of high school attended. The studies cited led the researcher to hypothesize that the student's school background is positively related to academic performance of undergraduate students.

Conclusion

In conclusion therefore, the review of literature has provided a backing for the research hypothesis made in chapter 1 sec 1.6. That there is a relationship between admission points and academic performance of undergraduate students, that parents' social economic status is related to academic performance and that school background is related to academic performance of the student. The researcher would therefore like to go ahead and statistically prove the relationship between these three variables, admission points, parents' social economic status and school background and academic performance with reference to Uganda Christian University.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This Chapter outlines the manner in which the study was conducted. The key components are the research design, population, sample size and sampling technique, research instruments, validity and reliability, procedure and data analysis.

3.1 Research design

The study was conducted using the correlation research design because the study was intended to investigate the relationship between admission points, parents' social economic status, school background and academic performance. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (1996), correlation research describes an existing relationship between variables. The study took the quantitative approach because it was based on variables measured with numbers and analyzed with statistical procedures.

3.2 Population

The UCU Enrolment Analysis report 2006/2007 showed the number of undergraduate students at 5306 (Appendix C). Therefore the target population consisted of 5306 students of UCU. The respondents in this study were under graduate students because the study was about academic performance of undergraduate students of UCU.

3.3 Sample size and Sampling technique

The sample consisted of 357 undergraduate students selected from 5306 students of UCU. The 357 respondents were selected from the faculties of Business & Administration, Education and Arts, Social Sciences, Science and Technology, Law

and Theology. However only 340 questionnaires were correctly filled and returned. The number of 357 respondents was chosen basing on the sampling table guide for sample size decisions provided by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) to estimate the sample size. This study employed simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. Simple random sampling was used in order to avoid bias and to ensure that each undergraduate student had an equal chance of being selected. According to Amin (2005) randomization is effective in creating equivalent representative groups that are essentially the same on all relevant variables thought of by the researcher. Purposive sampling was used in selecting respondents because the researcher wanted to study the performance of only undergraduate students.

3.4 Research instruments

All the respondents filled in questionnaires. The researcher used the questionnaires because the population was literate and large and time for collecting data was limited. The researcher developed closed- ended questions because they are easy to fill, save time and keep the respondents focused on the subject. The questionnaire was divided into sections delineating personal information, questions about the independent variable and the dependant variable. Questionnaires were used because they are the main method of data collection (Sarantakos, 1997).

3.5 Validity of Research instruments

Validity of the questionnaire was obtained by presenting it to at least two professional people, including the researcher's supervisor because according to Amin (2005) content and construct validity is determined by expert judgment. The validity of the questionnaire was calculated by using the Content Validity Index formulae and it gave

a figure of 0.7. Kathuri and Palls (1993) argue that instruments with validity confident of at least 0.7 are accepted as valid in research.

3.6 Reliability of Research Instruments

Reliability of the instruments was obtained by using the test- retest reliability. Fraenkel and Wallen (1996) argue that for most educational research, stability of scores over a period of two months is usually viewed as sufficient evidence of test-retest reliability. Therefore the researcher pre-tested and retested the instruments on a small number of undergraduate students in an interval of two months. The researcher computed the reliability for multi-item opinion questions using SPSS computer soft ware. The items were tested using Cronbach Alpha and it gave a reliability figure of 0.79 (Appendix B), which is above the recommended reliability of 0.7 (Kaplan and Saccuz, 1993)

3.7 Procedure

The researcher obtained a letter of introduction from the Dean, School of Education, Makerere University, to conduct research at UCU. A letter of permission to carry out the research was obtained from the deputy vice chancellor (academic affairs) at UCU in order for the researcher to carry out the study. The researcher obtained documents such as students' lists and numbers and records on admission and academic performance from the central academic office. The researcher administered the questionnaires with the help of a research assistant to 357 respondents. This data was collected in the year 2008 using questionnaires, and documentary analysis.

3.8 Data Analysis

Data from questionnaires was compiled, sorted, edited, classified and coded into a coding sheet and analyzed using a computerized data analysis package known as Statistical Package for Social Science 13.0. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was used to compute the relationship between admission points, parents' social economic status, school background and academic performance. The researcher also used the t-Test to find out how academic performance varied with gender.

3.9 Ethical Consideration

Students' admission points and academic performance are property of the university. The researcher therefore sought permission from the deputy vice chancellor of academic affairs to conduct the research. (See section 3.8). The researcher also assured respondents that the study was strictly academic and that utmost confidentiality would be observed (see Appendix A). The data used in this study was anonymously coded and cannot therefore be traced back to individual students.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

4.0 Introduction

This chapter contains the description of the respondents' background, the dependent variable and the verification of hypotheses.

4.1 Background of the respondents

This Section shows the background of the respondents, according to gender, age, faculty of study and year of study as per section A of the questionnaire (Appendix A)

4.1.1 Respondents by gender

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents by gender:

Table 2 Respondents by gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	182	53.5
Female	158	46.5
Total	**340**	**100.0**

Table 2 illustrates that out of the total of 340 respondents, the male students had the highest representation of about 54% and the female respondents had less than 47%. This was because the male respondents were more cooperative then their female counterparts.

4.1.2 Respondents by Age

Table 3: shows the distribution of respondents according to age;

Table 3 Respondents according to age

Age	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 20 years	11	3.2	3.2
21-25 years	250	73.5	76.8
26-30 years	44	12.9	89.7
31-35 years	21	6.2	95.9
More than 36 years	14	4.1	100.0
Total	**340**	**100.0**	

Table 3 illustrates that the highest percentage of respondents (almost 74%) were aged between 21 to 25years, and the least number of respondents (less than four percent) were below 20 years of age. Over three quarters (80%) of the respondents were below 25 years, which is the right age bracket of university students in Uganda. Less than five percent of the respondents were over 36 years old. These respondents are studying and working at the same time and these are not many at Uganda Christian University.

4.1.3 Respondents by Faculty

Table 4: shows respondents according to faculty of study;

Table 4 Respondents according to faculty of study

Faculty	Frequency	Percent
Business & Administration	90	26.5
Education & Arts	30	8.8
Law	76	22.4
Science & Technology	16	4.7
Social Sciences	84	24.7
Theology	44	12.9
Total	340	100.0

Table 4 illustrates that the highest percentage of respondents came from the Faculty of Business and Administration (almost 27%) followed by Social Sciences with a percentage of about 25% and the least number of respondents (less than five percent) were from the Faculty of Science and Technology. This is because the Faculties of Business and Administration and Social Sciences have the largest numbers of students enrolled in the university and the Faculties of Science and Technology and Theology have low numbers (Appendix C).

4.1.4 Respondents according to year of study

Table 5: shows respondents according to the year of study;

Table 5 Respondents according to year of study

Year	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	99	29.1	29.1
2	84	24.7	53.8
3	134	39.4	93.2
4	23	6.8	100.0
Total	**340**	**100.0**	

Table 5 illustrates that the highest percentage of respondents were third year students (over 39%) and the least number of respondents were the fourth year students who were almost 7% of the respondents. This is because UCU has only one program which takes four years and that is the bachelor of laws the rest go up to three years. That is why over 93% of the respondents are third year and below.

4.2 Description of the dependent variable (DV)

This Section describes the dependent variable (Academic performance). In this study, academic performance was conceptualized to mean, grades obtained in tests, in course work and in examination (Cambridge University Reporter, 2003). The dependent variable was addressed in Section E of the questionnaire using five questions (Appendix A) of likert scale ranging from one used to represent poor performance to three used to represent good performance. The respondents were meant to rate themselves according academic performance. Table 6 shows descriptive statistics

showing the frequency, mean and standard deviation for the respective questions in the dependent variable in Section E of the questionnaire in decreasing order;

Table 6 Level of academic performance as perceived by the students

Academic Performance	**Frequency**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
Academic performance in take-home course work	340	2.40	.569
Academic performance in optional courses	340	2.35	.573
Academic performance in core/compulsory courses	340	2.32	.548
Academic performance in previous semester examination	340	2.26	.548
Academic performance in Mid-term tests	340	2.21	.530
Total	**340**		

Table 6 illustrates that students perform highest in take-home course work and lowest in mid-term tests. On the whole, considering the means reflected, the students rated themselves as performing fairly well.

Since personal variables are said to have an effect on academic performance, the researcher considered it important to relate background variables to the dependent variable academic performance. For purposes of testing whether background of respondents affected academic performance, all items in Section E of the questionnaire (Appendix A) for the dependent variable (academic performance) were

aggregated in one index (Acperf) with arithmetic mean = 2.31 and standard deviation =0.40.as shown in Table 7;

Table 7 Arithmetic mean and standard deviation

Academic Performance	Frequency	Mean	Std. Deviation
Acperf	340	2.31	0.40

4.2.1 Variation of Academic Performance (Acperf) with Gender.

The study was interested in whether academic performance (Acperf) varied with gender. Table 8 shows the relationship between gender and academic performance as determined using the independent sample t-test results.

Table 8 Summary of the t-test results for the relationship between gender and Academic performance

Sex	Frequency	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig
Male	182	2.31	0.42	0.956	0.439
Female	158	2.31	0.39		

Means in Table 8, suggest that there is no difference between academic performance of male and female students. This is proved by the t value of 0.956 and its calculated sig = 0.439, which is greater than alpha = 0.05. The conclusion therefore is that there is no significant difference in academic performance between male and female students.

4.2.2 Variation with Age

The relationship between age and academic performance (Acperf) was determined using ANOVA. Table 9 shows a summary of the relationship between age and academic performance using ANOVA.

Table 9 Summary of the descriptive statistics and ANOVA results for the relationship between age and academic performance (Acperf)

Age	Frequency	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig
Less than 20 years	11	2.15	0.49	1.89	0.111
21-25 years	250	2.34	0.37		
26-30 years	44	2.23	0.42		
31-35 years	21	2.24	0.56		
More than 36 years	14	2.17	0.476		
Overall	**340**	**2.31**	**0.40**		

Means in Table 9, suggest that different age groups scored slightly differently on academic performance with age 21 – 25 years scoring highest and less than 20 years scoring lowest. To confirm whether the differences were significant we consider the F value 1.89, whose significance value of 0.111 is greater than alpha = 0.05. The conclusion therefore is that there is no significant relationship between age and academic performance.

4.2.3 Variation with Faculty of study

The study was interested in whether academic performance (Acperf) varied with faculty of study. Table 10 shows a summary of the descriptive statistics and ANOVA results on how Academic performance varied with Faculty;

Table 10 Summary of the descriptive statistics and ANOVA results for the relationship between faculty of study and academic performance (Acperf)

Faculty of Study	Frequency	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig
Business & Administration	90	2.50	0.41	7.700	0.000
Education & Arts	30	2.34	0.31		
Law	76	2.31	0.36		
Science & Technology	16	2.20	0.37		
Social Sciences	84	2.19	0.30		
Theology	44	2.16	0.54		
Overall	**340**	**2.31**	**0.40**		

Means in Table 10, suggest that different faculties scored differently on academic performance with the Faculty of Business and Administration scoring highest and the School of Theology scoring lowest. To confirm whether the differences were significant we consider the F value 7.700, whose significance value of 0.000 is less than alpha = 0.05. The conclusion therefore is that there is a significant relationship between faculty of study and academic performance.

4.2.4 Variation with Year of study

The study was interested in whether Academic performance varied with year of study. Table 11 shows a summary of the descriptive statistics and ANOVA results on how Academic performance varied with year of study;

Table 11 Summary of the descriptive statistics and ANOVA results for the relationship between year of study and academic performance (Acperf)

Year	Frequency	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig
1	99	2.22	0.31	4.887	0.002
2	84	2.42	0.39		
3	134	2.29	0.46		
4	23	2.43	0.36		
Overall	**340**	**2.31**	**0.40**		

Means in Table 11, suggest that different years scored differently in academic performance with the fourth years scoring highest, and the first years scoring lowest. To confirm whether the differences in the mean were significant we consider the F value of 4.887, whose significance (Sig) value of 0.002 is less than alpha = 0.05. The conclusion therefore is that there is a significant relationship between year of study and academic performance of students.

4.3 Verification of hypotheses

This Subsection gives the verification of the three study hypotheses;

4.3.1 Hypothesis One: Admission points and academic performance

The hypothesis was stated; "There is a positive relationship between admission points and academic performance of undergraduate students." To test this hypothesis, the researcher asked respondents to rate their level of passing with reference to their admission points conceptualized as direct entry, diploma entry, mature age entry and entry through other examinations sat by international students. The rating was according to likert scale with one representing poor performance, two representing fair performance and three representing good performance. A summary of the descriptive statistics of respondents' rating their level of performance as per their admission points was given in Table 12 in decreasing order of means.

Table 12 Level of academic performance at admission as perceived by the respondents

Performance on entry	Frequency	Mean	Std. Deviation
Performance in Other exams (International students)	6	2.50	0.55
Performance at A' level	276	2.38	0.54
Performance at Diploma	42	2.36	0.53
Performance at Mature Age Exams	15	2.07	0.26

The means in Table 12, suggest that the respondents who sat other examinations (these were mainly international students from Kenya, Sudan and Tanzania) scored highest followed by the direct entrants (A' level). The respondents who sat the mature age exams scored lowest. On the whole the means suggest that the respondents' admission points were fair.

For purposes of testing hypothesis One, all four items were aggregated into one index (Admpts). Unfortunately the variable Admpts had missing values because of the fact that respondents ticked one of the four options (question 6a, 6b, 6c and 6d)(Appendix A) hence aggregation failed. The dependent variable academic performance (Acperf) was then related to each of the four questions (6a, 6b, 6c and 6d) separately.

Table 13 Summary of the Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis for the relationship between A' level admission points and academic performance

		Academic performance	**Performance at A' level**
Academic performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.351(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	Frequency	340	276
Performance at A' level	Pearson Correlation	.351(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	Frequency	276	276

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

According to Table 13, the Pearson product moment correlation index obtained on the performance in A' level points is r = 0.351. It is positive with significance or p-value = 0.000 which is less than alpha = 0.01 implying that A' level admission points were significantly related to academic performance.

Table 14 Summary of the Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis for the relationship between Diploma admission points and academic performance

		Academic performance	Performance at Diploma
Academic performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.463(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
	Frequency	340	42
Performance at Diploma	Pearson Correlation	.463(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
	Frequency	42	42

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

According to Table 14, the Pearson product moment correlation index obtained on the performance in Diploma points is r = 0.463. It is positive with significance or p-value = 0.000 which is less than alpha = 0.01 implying that diploma admission points were significantly related to academic performance.

Table 15 Summary of the Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis for the relationship between mature age admission points and academic performance

		Academic performance	**Performance at Mature Age Exams**
Academic performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.180
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.521
	Frequency	340	15
Performance at Mature Age Exams	Pearson Correlation	.180	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.521	
	Frequency	15	15

Table 15, illustrates that the Pearson product moment correlation index obtained on the performance in Mature age exams is r = 0.180 with significance or p-value = 0.521 which is greater than alpha = 0.01 implying that mature age admission points were not significantly related to academic performance.

Table 16 Summary of the Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis for the relationship between other examinations and academic performance

		Academic performance	Performance in international exams
Academic performance	Pearson Correlation	1	-.802
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.055
	Frequency	340	6
Performance in other exams	Pearson Correlation	-.802	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.055	
	Frequency	6	6

Table 16 illustrates that the Pearson product moment correlation index obtained on the performance in other examinations is r = - 0.802 which is negative with significance or p-value = 0.06 which is greater than alpha = 0.05. This implies that academic performance is not significantly related to performance in international examinations.

4.3.2 Hypothesis Two: Social economic status and academic performance

The hypothesis was stated; "There is a positive relationship between Social economic status and academic performance of undergraduate students." To test this hypothesis, the researcher asked respondents to rate the level of their parents' social economic

status. Social economic status was conceptualised as parents' education level, parents' income and parents' occupation status. The rating was according to likert scale with one representing low, two representing medium and three representing High. A summary of the parents' social economic status as perceived by the respondents was given in Table 17;

Table 17 Parents' social economic status as perceived by the respondents

Social economic status	Frequency	Mean	Std. Deviation
Education level of Father / Male guardian	323	2.20	0.68
Education level of Mother / Female guardian	270	1.94	0.69
Income level of Father / Male guardian	323	1.91	0.65
Income level of Mother / Female guardian	270	1.76	0.64
Occupation status of Father / Male guardian	323	2.00	0.65
Occupation status of Mother / Female guardian	270	1.85	0.67

The means in Table 17, suggest that the education level of the father /male guardian was medium and occupation status of the father/male guardian was medium. On the whole means in Table 17 suggest that parents' social economic status of the respondents was medium that is not too high and not too low.

For purposes of testing Hypothesis Two, that is whether there is a positive relationship between social economic status and academic performance, all the 6 items on social economic status (Appendix A, Section C) were aggregated into one index SoEcSt with arithmetic mean = 1.95 and standard deviation = 0.52 as shown in Table 18;

Table 18 Arithmetic mean and standard deviation of social economic status (SoEcSt)

Frequency	Mean	Std. Deviation
253	1.95	0.52

The index for Academic performance (Acperf) was already calculated with arithmetic mean = 2.31 and standard deviation = 0.40 in section 4.2. To correlate the two indices, the Pearson product moment coefficient was used;

Table 19 Summary of the Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis for the relationship between parents' social economic status (SoEcSt) and academic performance (Acperf)

		Acperf	SoEcSt
Acperf	Pearson Correlation	1	.167(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.008
	N	340	253
SoEcSt	Pearson Correlation	.167(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	
	N	253	253

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

Table 19, illustrates that the Pearson product moment correlation index obtained is positive at r = 0.167. The significance or p-value = 0.008 which is less than predetermined alpha=0.01 or even alpha = 0.05. This result indicates that there is a significant relationship between parents' social economic status and academic

performance. Thus confirming the research hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between parents' social economic status and academic performance of undergraduate students.

4.3.3 Hypothesis Three: Former school background and academic performance

The hypothesis was stated; "There is a positive relationship between former school background and academic performance of undergraduate students." To test this hypothesis, the researcher asked respondents to rate the level of their former schools in terms of; urban setting, government owned, financial status of school and academic status. The rating was according to likert scale with one representing strongly disagree to four representing strongly agree. A summary of the descriptive statistics of former school background as perceived by the respondents was given in Table 20 in decreasing order of means.

Table 20 Former school background as perceived by the respondents

Former school background	Frequency	Mean	Std. Deviation
Former school was of high academic status	340	3.04	0.80
Former school was of high financial standing	340	2.77	0.91
Former school located in Urban setting	340	2.71	0.96
Former school was government owned	340	2.51	1.11

According to the means in Table 20, the respondents indicated that their former schools were of high academic status and were of high financial standing. The results

of Table 20 seemed imply that on the whole the respondents come from fairly good schools, which are of high academic and financial status and located in the urban area.

For purposes of testing Hypothesis Three, that is whether there was a positive relationship between former school background and academic performance, all the four items on former school background (Appendix A, Section D) were aggregated into one index FomSchool with arithmetic mean = 2.73 and standard deviation = 0.65 as shown in Table 21;

Table 21 Arithmetic mean and Standard deviation of Former School Background (FomSchool)

Frequency	Mean	Std. Deviation
340	2.73	0.65

The index for Academic performance (Acperf) was already calculated as arithmetic mean =2.31 and standard deviation= 0.40 in section 4.2. To correlate the two indices, FomSchool and Acperf, the Pearson product moment coefficient was used;

Table 22 Summary of the Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis for the relationship between former school background (FomSchool) and academic performance (Acperf)

		Acperf	**FomSchool**
Acperf	Pearson Correlation	1	.285(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	340	340
FomSchool	Pearson Correlation	.285(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	340	340

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

Table 22 illustrates that the Pearson's Correlation r = 0.285 computed for former school background (FomSchool) and academic performance (Acperf) was positive with significance or p-value = 0.000 which is less than Alpha=0.01 or even alpha=0.05. This result indicates that there is a significant relationship between former school background and academic performance. Thus confirming the research hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between former school background and academic performance.

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CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study as presented in chapter four. It also presents the conclusions arising from the study and recommendations, which could improve academic performance in Uganda Christian University.

5.1 Discussion of findings

Objective one: Admission points and academic performance

The first hypothesis stated," There is a positive relationship between admission points and academic performance of undergraduate students. The researcher tried to aggregate all four items of admission points, A' level points, diploma points, mature age points and other international exam points into one index so as to test the variable admission points to academic performance but the aggregation failed. Therefore each of the four items, A' level points, Diploma points, Mature age points and other international exam points were related to academic performance as shown in Tables 13,14, 15 and 16.

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to determine the relationship between A' level points and academic performance, the Pearson product moment correlation index r gave a significance or p-value of 0.000 which is less than alpha = 0.01 as shown in Table 13. The results revealed that A' level points are significantly related to academic performance of undergraduate students. The Pearson product moment correlation index r of diploma and academic performance gave a significance or p-value of 0.001, which is less than alpha = 0.05 as shown in Table 14, implying

that the diploma admission points influence academic performance. The Pearson product moment correlation index r of mature age and academic performance gave a significance or p-value of 0.52 which is greater than alpha 0.05 as shown in Table 15 implying that there is no relationship between mature age admission points and academic performance of undergraduate students at UCU. The Pearson product moment correlation index r of other international examination points and academic performance gave a significance or p-value of 0.06 which is greater than alpha 0.05 as shown in Table 16 implying that there is no relationship between international examination points and academic performance of undergraduate students at UCU.

These findings revealed that both A' level admission points and diploma admission points are significantly related to academic performance. The findings indicate that students with high A' level admission points and diploma admission points perform well at university and those with low points perform poorly. The findings of this study are consistent with a number of scholars including; Staffolani and Bratti, (2002), McDonald, Newton, Whetton and Benefield (2001), Mohammad and Almaheed (1988) Waller and Foy (1987) and who all demonstrated that measures of prior educational performance are the most important determinants of student success in college and university. The researcher noted that the studies by Geiser and Santelics (2007), Anderson, Benjamin and Fuss (1994) and Waller and Foy (1987) and Mohammad and Almaheed (1988) were all correlative studies and they had similar conclusions and so was this study.

This result may be explained by Geiser and Santelices (2007), who argued that high school grades or admission points reflect a students' cumulative performance over a

period of years and that is why they are consistently the best predictor of college success. A result confirmed by Anderson, Benjamin and Fuss (1994) who found that students who performed well in high school also performed better in college. Geiser and Santelices (2007) argued that as a selection criteria, emphasis on high school grades focuses on the mastery of specific skills and knowledge required for college-level work. In addition, the results could also owe to the fact that, that students who had previously performed well continue to do so because they have a strong potential to easily catch up with university work and they are motivated to do so (Durr, 1997). The results of this study are not in line with Huw, Reddy and Talcott (2006) who found that grades obtained at A' level obtained did not predict academic performance at university and the Academic Admission Council of Oregon State University (2003) who found that traditional measures of academic potential at best explain only 30% of the variation in first year at college GPA. The results in this study about diploma points being significantly related to academic performance are in line with Ringland and Pearson (2003), Wheeler (2006) and Richardson (1994) whose study on non-traditional entrants, (diploma holders) showed that non-traditional entrants performed as well as traditional entrants (A' level) as long as they had performed well at their previous qualifications. The performance of non-traditional entrants was attributed to age (Parameswaran, 1991) and to life experience. (Staffolani and Bratti, 2002)

According to the findings of this study, mature age points and international exam points are not related to academic performance of undergraduate students at UCU. The researcher is of the view that the small size of this group of mature students and international students may prevent meaningful comparisons because out of 340 respondents only 15 were mature age and 6 were international students may have

been too small to attain statistical significance. However the findings about mature age may be explained by Geizer and Santelices (2007) who argued that standardized admission tests reflect the student's performance in a single three hours sitting and this makes it difficult to determine future performance after a student has been examined only three hours. This is supported by Cushing and McGarvey (2004) and Durr (1997) who both found that standardized entrance examination tests do not predict performance at university. Mohammad and Almaheed (1988) explain that international students may differ in performance from resident students because they differ in academic behavior. The researcher is of the opinion that it could be because the systems of education are different and that students have to adjust to a new and different system of education. However this is a recommended area for further research.

Objective Two: Social economic status and academic performance

The second hypothesis stated," parents' social economic status is positively related to academic performance of undergraduate students at UCU. The study measured the items of social economic status and academic performance and the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient r gave a significance or p-value of 0.008, which is less than alpha 0.05 as shown in Table 19. This study revealed that parents' social economic status is significantly related to academic performance of undergraduate students. The findings indicate that the higher a parents' social economic status, the higher the academic performance of the student.

The results of this study may be explained by Considine and Zappala (2002) who found that families where the parents are advantaged socially, educationally and

economically foster a higher level of achievement in their children. They also found that these parents provide higher levels of psychological support for their children through environments that encourage the development of skills necessary for success at school. The results are also consistent with Hansen and Mastekaasa (2003), who argue that according to the cultural capital theory one could expect students from families who are closest to the academic culture to have greatest success. The results of this study owe to the fact that, low social economic status negatively affects academic achievement because low social economic status prevents access to vital resources and creates additional stress at home. (Hansen and Mastekaasa, 2003). The results are not in agreement with Pedrosa, et al (2006) who found that students coming from disadvantaged socio-economic and educational homes perform relatively better than those coming from higher socio-economic and educational strata.

The findings of this study confirmed the findings of Combs (1985) who concluded that, in virtually all nations, children of parents high on the educational, occupation and social scale have far better chance of getting into good secondary schools and from there into the best colleges and universities than equally bright children of ordinary workers or farmers. Combs (1985) adds that the findings of many empirical studies suggest that children whose parents are at the bottom of the social economic hierarchy are not as inclined to seek or gain access to available educational facilities as the children with families located at the middle or top of the hierarchy. In Uganda the trend is the same, children from middle and high social economic backgrounds join the first world schools for example, Namagunga, Gayaza, Budo and Kisubi

among others and are able to gain access to university and they continue to perform well.

The researcher believes that the findings are valid because Uganda Christian University is a private university, which requires its students to pay fees by a set date. Students from middle or high social economic background are able to abide by this requirement and settle down to study whereas those from poor socio-economic backgrounds may not find the fees easily so they spend time moving up and down raising the fees and this may affect their performance at university. More so according to Table 17, the respondents rated the education level of their father/male guardians as good and that the occupation status was also good, the income level column also showed that these respondents are from fairly good social economic backgrounds. This could be the reason why they are able to afford private higher education. Other studies with similar findings are Dills (2006) who found that students from the bottom quartile consistently perform below students from the top quartile of socio-economic status and Hansen and Mastekaasa (2003), whose analysis showed that students originating in classes that score high with respect to cultural capital tend to receive the highest grades.

Objective Three: Former school background and academic performance

The third hypothesis was stated; "There is a positive relationship between former school background and academic performance of undergraduate students. The study measured the items of former school background and academic performance and the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient index r gave a significance or p-value = 0.000 which is less than Alpha=0.01 hence indicating a significant relationship

between former school background and academic performance as shown in Table 19. This study revealed that there is a significant relationship between former school background and academic performance. This indicates that the type of school the student attended affects students' academic performance at Uganda Christian University.

The findings of this study are consonant with the results of Portes and Macleod, (1996) cited in Considine and Zappala (2002) who found that the type of school a child attends influences educational outcomes. Kwesiga (2002) and Sentamu (2003) also reported that the school a child attends affects academic performance. The results of this study confirm what was reported by Minnesota measures (2007), that the most reliable predictor of student success in college is the academic preparation of students in high school. This could owe to the fact that schools have an independent effect on student attainment and that school effect is likely to operate through variation in quality and attitudes, so teachers at disadvantaged schools often hold low expectations of their students which compound the low expectations the students have, hence leading to poor performance by the students. (Sparkles (1999) as cited by Considine and Zappala 2002) .The results are also in line with Kwesiga's (2002) argument that school has an effect on the academic performance of students but argued that school facilities determine the quality of the school, which in turn influences the achievements, and attainment of its pupils. Sentamu (2003) also agrees that the type of school one attend affects academic performance because schools influence learning in the way content is organized and in the teaching, learning and assessment procedures. All these scholars agree in principle that schools do affect academic performance of students.

The researcher compared the different variables of former school background to academic performance just to find out if indeed all the variables do influence academic performance of students. The results using Pearson product moment correlation showed that the location of the school yielded a p-value of 0.02 less than 0.05, showing a significant relationship (Appendix D), a result consistent with Felder, Mohr, Dietz and Ward (1994) findings that urban students enjoy greater success than rural student, a result also supported by Tremblay, Ross and Berthelot (2001), Kolcic (2006) and Considine and Zappala (2002). On the other hand the findings of this study disagree with Lee and McIntire (2001) and Hobbs (2001) whose findings revealed that there is no significant difference between performance of rural students and urban students. Ownership yielded a p-value of 0.03, financial status yielded a p-value of 0.00 values less than alpha = 0.05 implying that they both influence academic performance. According to the studies cited, ownership (public or private) and financial status (funding) were lamped together. The findings of this study disagree with Sampson (2004) and Sutton and Galloway (2000) who found that there is no difference between the academic performance of private and public schools. Academic status of the former school yielded a p-value of .000 less than 0.05 implying that the academic status of the former school affects the academic performance of students. The researcher has observed that schools with renowned academic standing in Uganda for example Budo, Gayaza, Namagunga, Kisubi, and Nabisunsa among others foster into their students a culture of discipline and a reading culture, so that a student with that kind of school background is able to perform well at university.

5.2 Conclusions

The following conclusions drawn as a result of the research work carried out in the area of academic performance of undergraduate students at Uganda Christian University reflect both the theoretical and practical lessons, which can be drawn from the study.

Objective one: Admission points and academic performance

The researcher confirmed the research hypothesis one, that there is a positive relationship between admission points obtained at A' level and Diploma level and academic performance of undergraduate students and that there is no relationship between mature age points and academic performance of undergraduate students.

Objective two: Social economic status and academic performance.

The researcher confirmed the research hypothesis two, that there is a positive relationship between parents' social economic status and academic performance of undergraduate students.

Objective three: Former school background and academic performance

The researcher confirmed the research hypothesis three, that there is a positive relationship between former school background and academic performance of undergraduate students.

5.3 Recommendations

Basing on the study findings and the conclusions, the researcher derived the following recommendations:

Objective one: Admission points and academic performance

Uganda Christian University should maintain it selection criteria of using previous performance at A' level and Diploma as a measure of admitting students for undergraduate programs.

Mature age students continue to be given an entrance exam but since it is not enough to determine the students' academic performance, they should be given a supplementary year or probation year to test their competency and if they excel, then they move on to join the regular program.

Uganda Christian University should maintain the practice of giving some international applicants admission to a pre-university year to bring them on board to Uganda's education system.

Objective Two: Parents' social economic status and academic performance

The UCU admissions committee should not only focus on academic performance of applicants but also on the parents' social economic status. The university could also devise means of paying special attention to students from low social economic backgrounds. For example the university could improve the student support system such that students from low social economic backgrounds are identified and assisted with financial aid or even a student loan scheme could be developed.

Objective Three: Former school background and academic performance

Former school background is important in determining academic performance; therefore the university should keep data of where their students come from and could try to develop a link with the schools where their most disciplined and excelling students come from so that more students are admitted from these schools.

5.4 Areas of Further research

This study has identified the need to investigate and analyze the mature age and international students' recipe for success in higher education with the intention of developing some of these aspects for inclusion in all student selections

In order to better understand the systems' theory input-output model, there's need to investigate the role management and staffing play in academic performance of students in Higher institutions of learning.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire

Factors affecting academic performance of undergraduate students of Uganda Christian University.

Dear Respondent,

The researcher is carrying out a study whose main objective is to establish whether there is a relationship between admission points, social economic status, school background, and academic performance of undergraduate students at Uganda Christian University. You have been selected as one of the respondents for the study and the information you will give will be treated with utmost confidentiality and used purely for academic purposes. The findings and recommendations from this study are likely to benefit Uganda Christian University in areas such admission of students and teaching and learning. Kindly please spare some of your valuable time to answer these questions.

Thank you.

Yours Sincerely

Martha Kyoshaba

Master of Arts in Educational Management

Makerere University

Please tick or fill in as appropriate.

SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Sex:

Male	
Female	

2. Age:

Less than 20 yrs	
21 – 25 yrs	
26 – 30 yrs	
31 – 35 yrs	
More than 36 yrs	

3. Faculty of study:

Business and Administration	
Education and Arts	
Law	
Science & Technology	
Social Sciences	
Theology	

4. Year of Study:

Year 1	
2	
3	
4	

SECTION B: ADMISSION POINTS

5. What was your entry category into Uganda Christian University?

5 a	A' level	
5 b	Diploma	
5 c	Mature Age	
5 d	Other (State)	

6. Rate your level of performance as per your entry route (Tick one Option)

(A' level, Good is 19 points and above, Fair is 13 -18 and Poor is below 12 points

Diploma, Good is First Class, Fair is Second Class and poor is Pass)

		Poor	Fair	Good
6 a	A' level			
6 b	Diploma			
6 c	Mature Age			
6 d	Other (State)			

SECTION C: SOCIAL ECONOMIC STATUS

7. How would you rate the education level of your parents/guardian?

(High is Degree and above, Medium is Diploma, Low is Certificate and below)

		Low	Medium	High
7 a	Father/ Male guardian			
7 b	Mother/Female guardian			

8. Please rate the income level of your parents/guardian

(High is 1,000,000/= and above, Medium is 500,000-900,000/- and low is below 500000/-)

		Low	Medium	High
8 a	Father/ Male guardian			
8 b	Mother/Female guardian			

9. Please rate the status of your parents/guardian in terms of occupation.

(High is white collar job, Medium is blue collar job and Low is peasant)

		Low	Medium	High
9 a	Father/ Male guardian			
9 b	Mother/Female guardian			

SECTION D: PAST SCHOOL BACKGROUND

10. To what extent do you agree to the following statements about your former school?

(Where former school means A' level school or former tertiary institution or equivalent)

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
10 a	My former school was located in an urban setting				
10 b	My former school was government owned				
10 c	My former school was of high financial standing				
10 d	My former school had a high academic status				

SECTION E: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

11. With reference to the variables mentioned in the table below, how would you rate your academic performance at Uganda Christian University.

		Poor	Fair	Good
11 a	In Mid-term tests			
11 b	In Take-home course works			
11 c	In your previous semesters examinations			
11 d	In core/compulsory courses			
11 e	In optional courses			

Thank you for taking time to fill this questionnaire.

Appendix B

RELIABILTY ANALYSIS – CRONBACH ALPHA

For Multi- item opinion questions

Reliability Statistics for question on parents' social economic status

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.871	6

Reliability Statistics for question on former school background

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.612	4

Reliability Statistics for question academic performance

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.778	5

Reliability Statistics for all multi item opinion questions

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.793	15

Appendix C

UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

STUDENTS' ENROLMENT ANALYSIS FOR ACADEMIC YEAR

2006/2007

FACULTY	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
BUSINESS & ADMINISTRATION			
Bachelor of Business Administration 3	57	45	102
Bachelor of Business Administration 2	55	66	121
Bachelor of Business Administration 1	48	60	108
Bachelor of Business Admin (Eve) 3	20	24	44
Bachelor of Business Admin (Eve) 2	37	51	88
Bachelor of Business Admin (Eve) 1	38	59	97
Bachelor of Economics& Mgt 1	38	50	88
Diploma in Business Admin 2	5	7	12
Diploma in Business Admin 1	15	13	28
Dip in Project Planning & Mgt 2(Eve)	20	14	34
Dip in Project Planning & Mgt 1(Eve)	36	22	58
Bachelor of Business Computing 3(Jan)	2	7	9
Bachelor of Business Computing 2(Jan)	22	32	54
Bachelor of Business Computing 1(May)	20	30	50
Bachelor of Proc & Logistics Mgt 3(Jan)	20	27	47
Bachelor of Proc & Logistics Mgt 2 (Jan)	30	59	89
Bachelor of Proc & Logistics Mgt 1 (May)	40	60	100
TOTAL	**503**	**626**	**1,129**

EDUCATION AND ARTS			
Department of Education			
B.A with Education 3	40	26	**66**
B.A with Education 2	73	47	**120**
B.A with Education 1	80	66	**146**
B of Industrial Fine Art & Design 2	5	4	**9**
B of Industrial Fine Art & Design 1	23	30	**53**
Bachelor of Arts in Languages 1	9	4	**13**
B of Library and Information Science 1	61	51	**112**
Dip in Education/Bachelor Of Education 2	5	7	**12**
Master of Arts in Literature 2	0	0	**0**
Master of Arts in Literature 1	1	0	**1**
TOTAL	**297**	**235**	**532**
Department of Mass Communication			
BA of Arts in Mass Communication 3	32	29	**61**
B of Arts in Mass Communication 2	67	51	**118**
B of Arts in Mass Communication 1	65	53	**118**
TOTAL	**164**	**133**	**297**
SOCIAL SCIENCES			
Department of Social Sciences			
B.A in Social work & Social Admin 3	97	53	150
B. of Social work & Social Admin 2	97	62	159
B. of Social work & Social Admin 1	85	41	126
Diploma in Social work & Social Admin 2	37	27	64

Diploma in Social work & Social Admin 1	20	24	44
B of Social Work & Social Admin 3(Jan)	41	39	80
B of Social Work & Social Admin 2(Jan)	52	58	110
B of Social Work & Social Admin 1(Jan)	69	58	127
D in social Work & Social Admin 2 (Jan)	29	14	43
D in social Work & Social Admin 1 (Jan)	23	12	35
Bachelor of Development Studies 3	61	40	101
Bachelor of Development Studies 2	83	47	130
Bachelor of Development Studies 1	66	46	112
Bachelor of Development Studies 3 (Jan)	8	15	23
Bachelor of Development Studies 2 (Jan)	54	53	107
Bachelor of Development Studies 1 (Jan)	54	71	125
B of Public Administration & Mgt 1	56	60	116
TOTAL	**932**	**720**	**1,652**
SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY			
Bachelor of Science in Information Tech 3	22	29	51
Bachelor of Science in Information Tech 2	40	77	117
Bachelor of Science in Information Tech 1	30	73	103
Diploma in Entrepreneurship & IT 2	12	13	25
Diploma in Entrepreneurship & IT 1	15	29	44
Bachelor of Nursing Science 2	12	2	14
Bachelor of Nursing Science 1	9	1	10
TOTAL	**140**	**224**	**364**
LAW			

Bachelor of laws 4	63	62	125
Bachelor of laws 3	61	61	122
Bachelor of laws 2	75	65	140
Bachelor of laws 1	51	65	116
Bachelor of laws 3(Jan)	30	44	74
Bachelor of laws 2(Jan)	63	68	131
Bachelor of laws 1(Jan)	55	66	121
TOTAL	**398**	**431**	**829**
Bp TUCKER SCHOOL OF DIV			
B of Child Develop & Child Ministry 1	42	14	56
Bachelor of Divinity 3	5	23	28
Bachelor of Divinity 2	1	24	25
Bachelor of Divinity 1	2	20	22
Diploma in Theology 3	0	2	2
TOTAL	**50**	**83**	**133**
Pre-Year Students			
TOTAL	**14**	**20**	**34**
KAMPALA CAMPUS			
Bachelor of Business Administration 3	21	14	35
Bachelor of Business Administration 2	14	16	30
Bachelor of Business Administration 1	21	47	68
B. of Social work & Social Admin 3	31	17	48
B. of Social work & Social Admin 2	43	27	70

B. of Social work & Social Admin 1	53	32	85
TOTAL	**183**	**153**	**336**
TOTAL OF FULL TIME UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS	**2,681**	**2,625**	**5,306**

Appendix D

Pearson Product Moment Correlation between Former school background (FomSchool) and Academic performance (Acperf)

		Acperf
Former school located in Urban setting	Pearson Correlation	.164(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002
	N	340
Former school was government owned	Pearson Correlation	.118(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.030
	N	340
Former school was of high financial standing	Pearson Correlation	.268(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	340
Former school was of high academic status	Pearson Correlation	.256(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	340

Acperf	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	N	340

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

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).