

## **Changes of Student Performances During and After the Ragging Period**

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When I was interviewing the students for the special degree program, I noticed that students' second semester results are better than first semester results. When I asked them reasons for the low results in the first semester they replied that lack of freedom during the first semester due to ragging could be the main reason.

There are a lot of studies which addressed the social and psychological aspects of ragging but there are hardly any studies which examine the consequences of ragging on academic performances of students. Studying the impact of ragging on the academic performance of students is important because when students start their university career with low performances it will affect their future academic success. Therefore, I have attempted to study the impact of ragging on the academic performance of students using non-parametric statistics.

This study was performed using first year Arts Faculty students of the 2009/2010 academic year of the University of Peradeniya. Students' Grade Point Averages (GPA) for the two semesters and ragging related information were gathered from questionnaires administered to the students. A proportionate sample was taken and sample size was 30. To compare first and second semester students' performance, I used the Sign test and Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test. To analyse the association between ragging and student performances, I used a Chi-Square test.

The second semester GPA was significantly higher than the first semester GPA ( $p < 0.0001$ ). The  $p$  values ( $p < 0.000$ ) for students in Sinhala and Tamil medium streams were similar and it was concluded that second semester GPA is better than the first semester GPA in both mediums. However, results for English medium students were different from the other two mediums. There was no significant difference between first and second semester GPAs in English medium students ( $p = 0.9331$ ). Results of the Chi-square test for Sinhala ( $p = 0.030$ ) and Tamil medium ( $p = 0.002$ ) students indicated that there is an association between ragging and the performance of the Sinhala and Tamil mediums students but there was no such association for English medium students.

In the Arts Faculty undergraduate programme, there are two semesters for one academic year. When new students come to the University, there is a period which is known as a ragging period. This period is not well defined and it may be as long as three months or more. During this period, new students are not allowed to go to the library and most of their time is wasted and they are under various stresses. However, there are some students who are against ragging and the above situation does not affect them. Almost all the Sinhala and Tamil mediums students are subjected to ragging while English medium students are not affected.