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Impact of Socioeconomic and Second Language Learning Backgrounds on the Development of English Writing Skills of Undergraduates (A Case Study on the Faculty of Management and Finance, University of Ruhuna)

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The study focuses on analyzing the impact of socioeconomic backgrounds and second language (L2) learning environment on the development of English writing skills of undergraduates. Under socioeconomic background, parents' educational background and income are considered while the type of school attended and English education received in school are considered under L2 learning environment. Writing skills tested here include only use of accuracy in grammar and style, vocabulary and ability to organize ideas in L2. The study area is the third year undergraduate population of the Faculty of Management and Finance, University of Ruhuna. In the study, 40 undergraduates studying in English and Sinhala mediums, 20 from each medium were selected for information gathering and a comparative study was carried out. In the research, both primary and secondary data as well as qualitative and quantitative data was collected. Qualitative data was accumulated through interviewing, participative observation, focused group discussions etc. methods while quantitative data was collected via a questionnaire survey. The data analysis depicts that the relationship between the education of the family members of the selected student population and the writing skills of the students is considerably low (only 25%). Family members' education levels influence little the development of English writing skills of the students even though there is a positive relationship between these two variables. The type of school attended is classified as 'Urban', 'Semi-urban', and 'Rural' according to the facilities available within the school. According to the results of data analysis, when the nature of school shifts from urban to rural schools, the students' English writing skills gradually decrease correspondingly. The study concludes that socioeconomic background has not influenced the development of students' English writing skills while the 'type of school attended' seems to have a considerable impact on the development of English writing skills.



The English writing skills of the students from urban and semi-urban schools are observed better than that of the students from rural schools.

Keywords: English writing skills, Second Language, Socioeconomic background, Type of school attended