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ABSTRACT

An “officer cadets” can be defined either as a rank held by a candidate at an officer training establishment or a trainee to become an officer in the military services. However it is the initial step of their military career. Basic officer training for Sri Lanka Army is conducted at Sri Lanka Military Academy (SLMA) in Diyathalawa; an affiliated institute with The General Sir John Kotelawala Defense University (KDU), Sri Lanka. The Officer Cadets Development (OCD) Programme at SLMA consists of five terms of six months each which includes of both military and academic studies. Cadets are offered a Bachelor of Science degree in the end. For an officer cadet to complete the degree at SLMA and pass out successfully, he/she must be competent in academic studies, military studies and physical fitness that an officer in military service need to possess.

Officer Cadets are evaluated time to time, throughout their training period at SLMA for their performance in military, academic studies and physical training. Cadets who do not achieve minimum level of expected performance at the end of a particular term are being considered for relegation or repeating the term. These relegated cadets have to repeat the same academic and military courses once again with the junior intake or in an “Alpha intake”. There is a possibility that among the relegated officer cadets some of the cadets get relegated for the second time. Cadets are dismissed from the academy if relegated for the third time. Aim of the research is to identify possible measures to minimize number of relegations due to underperformance in academic course at SLMA.

There were two types of data collected for this research. Secondary data were collected from SLMA records on relegation for last eleven intakes (i.e. Intake 70 -80) used in preliminary statistical analyses. Primary data were collected to check the hypothesis. This included collecting experiences, opinions, comments, suggestions, recommendations data through separate questionnaires distributed and individual interviews conducted among all the stakeholders of the OCD programme at SLMA including cadet officers, relegate cadet officers, course officers, counselors etc.

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The secondary data analyses indicated that deficiency in academic studies is the leading reason for relegation of officer cadets at SLMA, based on the scores of 11 cadet intakes who passed out from SLMA. This provides statistical background to justify the significance of this research. As per the results of primary data analyses, additional revision periods, peer learning and changes incorporated into teaching methods have positive relation to the academic performance improvement of officer cadets. This research has given some recommendations to improve academic performance of officer cadets, thereby reduce number of relegations due to academic underperformance. The recommendations provide insight for both short term and long term improvements in the system.