

## Factors Affecting the Academic Performance of In-Service Students in Science Education

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**Abstract :** This study sought to determine factors that affect academic performance of mature age students in Science Education at University of Zambia. It was guided by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. The theory provided relationship between achievement motivation and academic performance. A descriptive research design was used. Both Qualitative and Quantitative research methods were used to collect data from 88 respondents. Simple random and purposive sampling procedures were used to collect from the respondents. Concerning factors that motivate mature-age students to choose Science Education Programs, the following were cited: need for self-actualization, acquisition of new knowledge, encouragement from friends and family members, good performance at high school and diploma level, love for the sciences, prestige and desire to be promoted at places of work. As regards factors that affected the academic performance of mature-age students, both negative and positive factors were identified. These included: demographic factors such as age and gender, psychological characteristics such as motivation and preparedness to learn, self-set goals, self esteem, ability, confidence and persistence, student prior academic performance at high school and college level, social factors, institutional factors and the outcomes of the learning process. In order to address the factors that negatively affect academic performance of mature-age students, the following measures were identified: encouraging group discussions, encouraging interactive learning process, providing a conducive learning environment, reviewing Science Education curriculum and providing adequate learning materials. Based on these factors, it is recommended that, the School of Education introduces a program in Science Education specifically for students training to be teachers of science. Additionally, introduce majors in Physics Education, Biology Education, Chemistry Education and Mathematics Education relevant to what is taught in high schools.

**Keywords :** academic, performance, in-service, science

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