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A District-Wise Analysis of University Admissions in Sri Lanka: Comparing Cut-off Z-scores for Study Programs

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The University Grants Commission (UGC) has been releasing district-wise cut-off Z-scores for various study programs. This allows for a comparison of districts based on their cut-off Z-scores for each program. The study programs considered in this analysis are Medicine, Engineering, Law, Management, Computer Science, Physical Sciences, Agriculture, and Bioscience. The average cut-off Z-scores across different universities have been calculated for each study program from 2010 to 2021. For a particular study program, there are different cutoffs for different universities. The averages across universities have been calculated for each district and study program. The main objective of this study is to determine whether there are statistically significant differences in the average cut-off Z-scores among districts for each study program. The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) technique has been employed for this purpose. If a significant difference is found, further analysis using the Least Significant Difference (LSD) test can be conducted to group the districts for each study program. This grouping will help identify the toughest and easiest districts to gain university admissions for each of the eight study programs. The results of this study indicate that there is a significant difference among districts for all study programs. Colombo is the most competitive district to gain admission to the Medical faculty. Matara is the most competitive district for the study programs in Engineering, Computer Science, and Physical Science. Galle is the most competitive district for the study programs in Law, Management, Agriculture, and Bioscience. The districts of Colombo, Matara, Galle, Kandy, Hambantota, Kurunegala, and Kalutara are commonly found in the top group for all study programs. Mullaitivu is identified as the district with the lowest average cut-off Z-score to gain admission to all study programs except Law, while Kilinochchi has the lowest cut-off Z-score for the study program Law. Additionally, the districts of Mullaitivu, Kilinochchi, and Mannar consistently fall into the lowest category across most study programs.

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