

What Impacts Academic Success in University?

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Abstract: This study aims to explore the factors of academic success among university students at one of the Malaysian universities. In this study, every effort was made to include all of the full time diploma students of Faculty of Business Management of a public university for the past eight semester (four years) until April 2016 in order to provide a detailed overview of the entire population. The final samples yielded 382 randomly selected students for the past eight semesters until April 2016. The instruments comprised the report of final examination analysis of the students and the detailed information from the students' database. The report of final examination analysis of the students and the students' database provided data concerning students' curriculum achievement in university and students' CGPA. Information concerning students' co-curriculum post can also be obtained and confirmed.

From the findings of Pearson bivariate correlational analysis, concerning the university subject results, there was significant correlation between students' CGPA and English subject grade in university ($p < 0.01$), Accounting subject grade in university ($p < 0.01$), Mathematics subject grade in university ($p < 0.01$), Management subject grade in university ($p < 0.01$), Economy subject grade in university ($p < 0.01$), Marketing subject grade in university ($p < 0.01$), Finance subject grade in university ($p < 0.01$). However, there was no significant correlation ($p > 0.05$) between CGPA and co-curriculum post hold by university students during their academic year. In conclusion, academically successful students were found to perform better in university subjects. Extracurricular activities do not contribute to university students' successful academic performance.

Key words: academic success, university student, curriculum achievement, correlation

1. Introduction

The definition of quality of education varies from country to country and culture to culture. Hence, it is difficult to measure the quality of education because they result in the form of transformation of knowledge, life skills and behaviour modifications of learners (Tsinidou, Gerogiannis, & Fitsilis, 2010). According to Goddard (2003), the environment, the personal characteristics and the social assistance play an important role in the students' academic success.

Student success is among the most widely researched areas in tertiary education (Van Den Bogaard, 2012). Generalizability of the research finding in tertiary education is problematic due to cultural and social differences between countries, institutions and programs of study. According to Goduka (1996), students entering universities

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have a wide range of cultural, economic, and social backgrounds, thus these gives them totally different educational opportunities and experiences. As these backgrounds bring about different academic potential and expectations, it would be difficult to decide which variables play an important role to influence students' academic success and which do not.

Hence, there is a crucial need to further investigate the significance of different variables in contributing to the success of the students in their academic performance specifically in their tertiary education. This study sought to discover what variables relate to university students' academic success. Identifying these variables benefit the academic progress of university students and draw useful implications for university administrators, faculties and lecturers. More specifically, the study aims to explore the factors of academic success of university students.

The research questions were addressed as follow:

- (1) What factors relate to university students' academic success?
- (2) Do extracurricular activities contribute to university students' successful academic performance?

2. Literature Review

Different countries have different ways on how to measure students' previous academic performance. The tertiary education system in Malaysian universities measure students' academic performance via their score in the subjects taken in which it would be presented by a Grade Point Average (GPA).

There are many factors that affect the students' academic success in their tertiary education (Waters & Marzano, 2006). A study by National Commission on Children (1991) discovered that the factors of poverty, race, living in a single-parent family and low income group of family background are among the factors that lead to a high failure rate among children in the United States. They explained further that students with parents' low income have high risk for poorer health and nutrition. Additionally, students in low income families would opt for employment during their study which may be harmful to school achievement if work hours are extremely long (Magdol, 2015). Magdol (2015) in her study also explained on the factors of low participation in extracurricular activities as one of the factors that contribute to students' academic success. She believes that students who actively involved in extracurricular activities would gain positive pressure and would be benefit from challenges and developmental opportunities of activities.

Ahmad and Khan (2012) and Ngorosho (2011) have documented research on the association between socioeconomic status and students' academic success from different populations. In the study conducted by Ahmad and Khan (2012), they found a significant relationship between parental socioeconomic conditions and academic achievements of the children in secondary examination. They further concluded that majority of the children from better socioeconomic background performed better in secondary examination as compared to those children from low socioeconomic background. Similarly, Ngorosho (2011) found five key variables which are fathers' and mother's education, house wall material, light source and the number of books for school subjects in the homes. These key variables are the significant indicators of home environment in rural eastern Tanzania (Ngorosho, 2011). Parents from low socioeconomic status fail to provide their children with basic requirements for schools and thus play a very important role in the academic life of a student (Ahawo, 2009).

3. Methodology

The study employed a quantitative method that examined the responses of a large group of students with

regards to the issue of factors of students' academic success. It looked into the students' university achievement (CGPA) and their university subject results. The quantitative description of the relevant features of the data collected (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2003) was conducted.

This study looks into the factors that influence the students' academic success in university. This study studies on the possible relationship between the students' cumulative grade point average (CGPA) and university subject results. A correlational analysis was used to collect and analyze data from the samples. A correlational analysis is appropriate for this study because this analysis shows if they have a relationship between the variables.

In this study, every effort was made to include all Faculty of Business Management full time diploma students in a public university for the past eight semester (four years) until April 2016 in order to provide a detailed overview of the entire population. The population was the full-time diploma students of Faculty of Business Management in the university. Due to considerable constraints which cannot be controlled, the final samples yielded 382 students for the past eight semester until April 2016.

The instrument comprised the report of final examination analysis of the students and the detailed information from the students' database. Data concerning curriculum achievement in university of the students and students' CGPA can be obtained. The data collected were analyzed by using IBM SPSS version 22.0. Descriptive statistics were generated on the students' CGPA and the contributing factors. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were calculated to identify correlations, if any, for the students' CGPA and university subject results. The university subject results comprised English, Mathematics, Economics, Accounting, Management and Marketing subjects.

4. Results

4.1 Academic Success of University Students and Subjects Taken in University

Mean CGPA for students is 2.77 meanwhile mean score for English subject is 2.64, mean score for Accounting subject is 2.47, mean score for Mathematics subject is 2.74, mean score for Management subject is 2.91, mean score for Economy subject is 2.75, mean score for Marketing subject is 2.62, mean score for Finance subject is 2.24 (refer to Table 1).

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of Academic Success and Subjects Taken in University

	Mean	Std. Deviation
CGPA	2.77	.54
Mean_English	2.64	.61
Mean_Accounting	2.47	.87
Mean_Maths	2.74	.95
Mean_Management	2.91	.69
Mean_Economy	2.75	.73
Mean_Marketing	2.62	.73
Mean_Finance	2.24	1.02

Refer to Table 2, there was significant correlation between students' CGPA and English subject grade in university ($p < 0.01$). In addition, there was significant correlation between students' CGPA and Accounting subject grade in university ($p < 0.01$). There was also significant correlation between students' CGPA and Mathematics subject grade in university ($p < 0.01$). There was significant correlation between students' CGPA and Management subject grade in university ($p < 0.01$). There was significant correlation between students' CGPA and Economy subject grade in university ($p < 0.01$). There was significant correlation between students' CGPA and Marketing subject grade in university ($p < 0.01$). Finally, there was significant correlation between students' CGPA and Finance subject grade in university ($p < 0.01$).

Table 2 Correlations of Academic Success and Subjects Taken in University

CGPA	Mean English	Mean Account	Mean Maths	Mean Manage	Mean Economy	Mean Market	Mean Finance
Pearson Correlation	.495**	.699**	.759**	.689**	.694**	.689**	.582**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.2 Academic Success and Co-Curriculum Post Hold

With reference to Table 3, there was no significant correlation ($p > 0.05$) between CGPA and co-curriculum post hold by university students during their academic year. Meaning that, the academic success of the university students was not influenced by students co-curriculum post hold during their academic year.

Table 3 Correlation between CGPA and Co-Curriculum Post Hold In University

Detail	University Hold Post	
CGPA	Pearson Correlation	.029
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.575
	N	382

5. Conclusion

Academically successful students were found to perform better in university subjects. Higher performance in English, Accounting, Mathematics, Management, Economy, Marketing and Finance subjects in university were found to be correlated with students' academic success. In conclusion, the findings of this study were found consistent with Waters & Marzano (2006) who reported that there were many factors that affected the students' academic success in their tertiary education. This finding was also found contradictory to a study done by Magdol (2015) where she discovered that students' involvements in extracurricular activities contribute to students' academic success.

Due to the time and resources constraints, the variables in this study limited to students' CGPA, and university subjects results. There is important need for further study to look into factors that may explain the academic success of university students in term of psychological, educator and environment perspectives. Further study should include an investigation of students' personality traits, intelligence, awareness and motivation to success academically. The researcher suggests to integrate these variables with other variables to further explain and predict the academic success of university students.

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