

## **Planning Without Planner: Enhancing Learning through Self-Assessment**

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Received Date: 16 August 2019

Accepted Date: 5 November 2019

### **ABSTRACT**

*A university environment's freedom and flexibility can derail students who have not mastered time-management skills. During high school, they had a rigidly structured schedule but unfortunately, students often struggle to balance their academic, personal and work commitments when they are in the university. In university, the students will be challenged with many competing demands on their time. Consequently, many students simply choose to give up and let the situation takes its course. Without intervention from a lecturer or parents, the student is unlikely to succeed and will end up with low academic results. Even though there are many apps that have been developed to assist them in managing time, the students need to 'see time' or in other words make time visual. Therefore, the SCAP is a worthwhile guideline that is specially invented in promoting their time effectively and efficiently.*

**Keywords:** self-management tool, enhancement, learning experience

### **INTRODUCTION**

Learning how to manage time effectively is considered as an important skill for students to master. However, many students find it difficult in finding the time to complete all their tasks, leading to overwhelming feelings of stress and frustration. In addition, most students fail to manage their time beneficially. Becoming better at managing their time allows the students to become more organized, more confident, and learn more effectively. Good time management can also help students to avoid the dreaded procrastination problem that can be a slippery slope to stress, frustration, guilt, and higher level of anxiety. These issues can lead to low self-esteem and even depression, creating a fall-off point for grades. Hence, effective time management skills are especially important for high school students. As students enter high school, they need to deal with more subjects, assignments, tests, and extracurricular activities. Good time management skills can help to keep them on track and reduce stress as they take on more work.

The concept of time management is normally defined in terms of the clusters of behavior that are deemed to facilitate productivity and alleviate stress (Lay & Schouwenburg, 1993). Effective time management strategies will increase the students' academic performance (Campbell & Svenson, 1992) and are frequently suggested by academic assistance personnel as aids to improve the achievement of college students. In other words, productive study methods are characterized by "time management" and "strategic studying" (Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983; Kirschenbaum & Perri, 1982). Time is a finite resource and it is not easy to balance their responsibilities. As stated by Macan, Shahani, Dipboye and Phillips (1990), the component of time management was conceptualized in terms of setting goals and priorities, the use of mechanics (like listing priorities), preference of an organized workplace, and the perceived control of time. The foremost purpose of the present study was educational competency, using time managing techniques, test pressure, and test proficiency (Faisal, Miqdadi, Abdulla & Mohammad, 2014). Academic competence scores were established to some extent improved in the current sample demonstrating that students found course material/content encouraging and enjoying their classes. Consequently, time attitudes include the perception that the individual is in control of time, the perception that the person is efficiently managing his time and the perception that the individual is making constructive utilization of time (Karim & Mitra, 2015). Hence this paper aims to initiate Student Checklist Academic Performance (SCAP) as a guideline that is specially invented in promoting self-reflection and learning among students. It is expected that students can manage their time effectively and efficiently.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **The concept of Student Self-Assessment and Reflection**

Students are an intrinsic part of the information sharing process where they can reflect on their learning and be involved in several ways. Students need to be clear about; what they have learnt, which learning strategies are successful, what they need to focus on next and the importance of the subject matter. Hence, the concept of Self-Assessment and Reflection will help students to assess their own learning for the purpose of improving it to a better way. Self-assessment is a valuable learning tool as well as a part of an assessment process. Through self-assessment, students can identify their own skill gaps, their weaknesses in the subject matter, help them to see the focus of their attention in learning, set realistic goals, revise their work and track their own progress. According to Sande and Llorente (2014), during the last few decades, focusing on activities that encourage student learning rather than on instructor teaching activities has emerged as a growing educational trend. Examples of activities that promote student learning include peer learning, collaborative learning, group working, project working, and problem based learning. On the other hand, the manner in which students approach their learning is highly conditioned by the assessment method; thus, assessment is a fundamental part of the learning process. These processes help the students to stay engaged and motivated thus encourages self-reflection and responsibility for their learning.

The ideas of student self-assessment progresses originated from the study that conducted by Andrade and Valtcheva (2009). The researchers agreed that self- assessment allowed students to collect information about their own performance or progress, and then compared it to the stated criteria, goal or standard and revise accordingly. Indirectly, it gave the students the freedom and independence to identify the area of their strengths and weaknesses. Pintrich (2000) said that self-assessment is capable in boosting learning and achievement, and to promote academic self-regulation, or the tendency to monitor and manage one's own learning. Students also believe that self-assessment gives benefits to them. In a study conducted by Andrade (2008), the students said that the criteria of self-assessment helped them to focus on the key elements of an assignment, learn the material, increase their effectiveness in identifying the

strengths and weaknesses of their work, increase their motivation and mindfulness, and even decrease anxiety. Some students said the self-assessment made them feel more confident about their work.

Researchers suggest that self-regulation and achievement are closely connected with students who set goals, make flexible plans to meet them, and monitor their progress as they have a tendency to learn more and do better in school than students who do not. Self-assessment is a core element of self-regulation because it involves the awareness of the goals of a task and checking one's progress toward them. As a result of self-assessment, both self-regulation and achievement can increase (Schunk, 2003). Student assessment is important to encourage students to be more independent, define life goals clearly, try hard to achieve goals and to know about their own weaknesses and potentials. Although students are typically able to think about the quality of their own work, they do not always do so. The presence of teachers are needed to monitor students' achievement. Having said that, encouraging the students to take measures of their own learning is more compelling than the teacher providing all the assessments. In addition, Winsor (2017) stated that there are several elements that must be implemented to make self-assessment be meaningful as possible to the students. The rubrics and student feedback are the elements that can be considered to assess their competencies and most importantly can be understood by both students and teachers. Furthermore, students need to be taught and assist in using self-assessment data to improve their performance.

According to Goodrich (1996), self-assessment influences the students' performance on the assignment and task that can help them plan their own goal as students become more self-regulated in their learning. The students need to be aware of the value of self-assessment, access to clear criteria on which to base the assessment, a specific task or performance to assess, models of self-assessment, direct instruction and assistance with self-assessment, practices, cues regarding when it is appropriate to self-assess, and opportunities to revise and improve the task or performance in order for effective self-assessment. By having these, only then the students can see how self-assessment benefits them.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study used quantitative method as approaches to provide a deeper understanding about the problems of the study. The data were obtained from questionnaires. The distribution of questionnaires was conducted through online survey, which was created using Google Form. A total number of 124 questionnaires were distributed to the students of Diploma in Public Administration. In this study, the descriptive analyses were used to analyse the data. Further explanations about the findings are discussed in the result section. There are two sections in the questionnaires which are section A and B. Section A consists of questions related to the demography of the respondents such name, gender and the students' current semester. Section B consists of multiple choice questions of the respondents' feedback about the perception and awareness of self-management. The questions lead the respondents to choose their option either a Yes or a No. Based on the study conducted, the researchers were able to identify the students' perception towards the new approach of self-management tool.

## **RESULTS**

This section describes the analyses of the questionnaires. The questionnaires consist of three (3) parts which are part A for the demographic profile of the respondents, part B is to measure the students' awareness on the usage of academic planner and part C is to identify the students' perception on the usage of academic planner. The main objective of this study is to identify student's perception towards new self-

management tool in their academic journey. The descriptive analysis was carried out to achieve this objective.

**Table 1: Profile of Respondents**

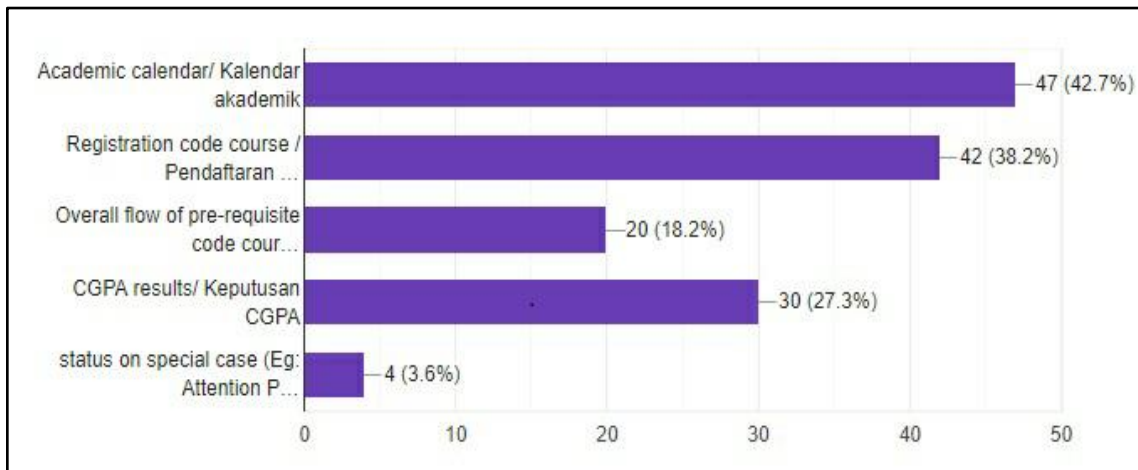
Details	Percentage %
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	33.1
Female	66.9
<b>Semester</b>	
1	0.8
2	37.2
3	28.9
4	25.6
5	7.4
others	0.1

Part (A): Table 1 describes the details of 124 respondents for this study. Most of the respondents are female which is 66.9.1 percent (81) and 33.1 percent (40) are male. Majority of the respondents are from semester 2 that is 37.2 percent, followed by semester 3 28.9 percent, semester 4 25.6 percent, semester 5 7.4 percent and 0.8 percent for semester 1 students of Diploma in Public Administration

**Table 2: Students' Awareness on the usage of Academic Planner**

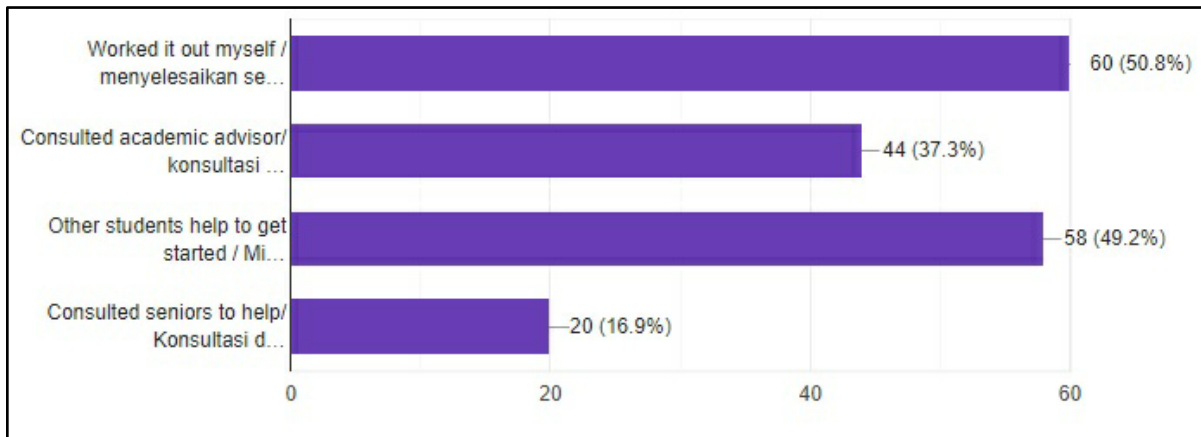
NO	QUESTIONS	YES (%)	NO (%)
1	Do you have a planner?	62.3	37.7
2	If yes, what type of planner do you have: 1. Personal 2. Academic	67.8 32.2	-
3	I believe that planner is able to assist my academic planning, affairs and resources from semester 1 until 5	77.3	22.7
4	I do not have any difficulties in managing my academic planning, affairs and academic resources from semester 1 until 5	41.4	58.9

Part (B): Table 2 describes the students' awareness on the usage of academic planner. From the study that has been conducted, it was found that 62.3% of the respondents have a planner and 37.7% do not have a planner. However, the types of the planner that most of the students have were personal planner which was 67.85 % meanwhile academic planner is only 32.2%. In receiving the feedback from the students about whether they believe that the academic planner is able to assist their academic planning, affairs and resources, 77.3%% of the respondents agreed while 22.7% did not. Moreover, they were also asked whether they have any difficulties in managing their academic planning, affairs and academic resources from semester 1 until 5. Apparently, 41.4% answered yes while 58.9% of the respondents answered No. The data show that the percentage of the respondents who have difficulties in managing their academic planning, affairs and academic resources are quite high.



**Figure 1: The difficulties of the students encountered when manage their academic resources**

Figure 1 illustrates among the items asked to the students to specifically identify the students' difficulties when managing their academic resources. Question No.5 stated; "Please choose what are the difficulties that you have encountered to manage your academic resources?". The results found that majority of the respondents, 42.7% had difficulties in managing their academic calendar, followed by registration code course (38.2%), CGPA results (27.3%), overflow of pre-requisite code course (18.2%), and status on special case e.g.: attention P1 status (3.6%).



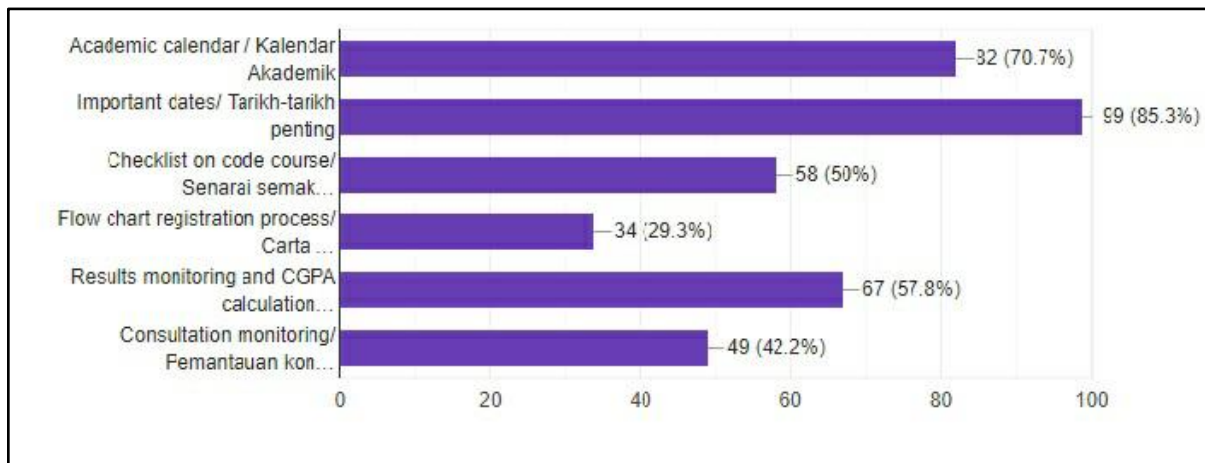
**Figure 2: Methods used by the students to solve the difficulties**

Meanwhile in Figure 2 illustrates the ways the respondents solve the difficulties in question No.6 which stated; "How do you solve the difficulties?". Most of the respondents answered that they solve the difficulties by working it out myself (50.8%), other students' help to get started (49.2%) followed by consulting the academic advisor (37.3%) and the least percentage was by consulting seniors for help (16.9%).

**Table 3: The Students' Perception on the Usage of Academic Planner**

NO	QUESTIONS	YES (%)	NO (%)
1	Do you recommend having a proper academic planner that is prepared by the faculty?	91.8	8.2
2	If the faculty decided to provide an academic planner for each student, will you buy it?	75.4	24.6

Part (C): Table 3 describes the students' perceptions on the usage of academic planner. From the study that has been conducted, it was found that 91.8% of the respondents agreed to the urgency to have a proper academic planner that is prepared by the faculty and only 8.2% did not agree. In addition, the next question asks to identify the opinion of the students' willingness to buy the academic planner if the faculty provided it for them and the results indicated that 75.4% agreed and only 24.6% did not agree to buy the planner.



**Figure 3: List of the Items preferred by the students to be included in the academic planner**

Figure 3 illustrates the last part of this questionnaire which is to identify the items that the students prefer to be included in the potential academic planner. The last question is "Please choose what are the items that you prefer to be inserted in the academic organizer?" and the most of the respondents preferred important dates (85.3%) to be inserted followed by academic calendar (70.7%), results monitoring and CGPA calculation (57.8%), checklist on code course (50%) and flowchart registration process (29.3%).

## DISCUSSIONS

Referring to Figure 1, it shows that the percentage of the respondents who had difficulties in managing their academic planning, affairs and academic resources are quite high. Among the highest difficulties faced by the students is managing the academic calendar. An academic calendar contains information related to day to day business at the academic institution. It is a guide for the students to be alert about withdrawal of courses, add, drop deadlines, semester break as well as the examination date. In fact, based

on the results above, the students are aware about the importance of having an academic planner in managing their student's life. It shows that academic planner can be a tool of self-management for the students. Self-management is a psychological term used to describe a strategy that helps students take responsibility for their own behavior in a classroom (Edelson, 2001). Most of the students basically have their own personal planner but this planner does not directly guide them to achieve what they need in term of their academic achievement. While a future career may seem like a long way off since the students are still in high school and even college, creating an academic plan for their future is an imperative step in achieving goals.

Currently, in order to face the difficulties in managing their academic life, most of them prefer to resolve them by themselves. Most of them fail to resolve their problems properly. Consequently, their problems become more complex when there is no obvious solution and strategy to solve their issues. These types of problems cause a great deal of stress and anxiety and it requires new and different strategies.

From the study that has been conducted, it was found that most of the students agreed to the urgency to have a proper academic planner prepared by the faculty and they are willing to buy the academic planner. Hence, it is justifiable to produce a guideline that promotes self-reflection and learning among students. SCAP contains most of the elements that the students prefer to have. It includes important dates such as the deadline for add and drop subjects, academic calendar results monitoring and CGPA calculation, checklist on code course and the flowchart of registration process. Creating goals and tracking progresses on a student's GPA is an essential part of an effective academic plan. GPAs are used by colleges, graduate degree programs and financial aid programs in assessing students' abilities to meet the expectations set upon them.

Even though there are many contemporary apps that have developed by a variety of developers, the students still need to 'see time' or in other words make time visual. SCAP will consider the three components of self-management which are self-monitoring, self-evaluation and self-reinforcement (Edelson, 2001). Self-monitoring requires the monitoring of a target behavior in short intervals to guide the person to become more aware of his/her own behavior (Edelson, 2001). Self-evaluation requires a person to determine whether he/she is engaged in the target behavior in relation to the goals that have been set (Edelson, 2001). Self-reinforcement refers to self-delivery of rewards for reaching the goals set by them (Edelson, 2001). In addition, it is expected that students can manage their time effectively and efficiently.

## **CONCLUSION**

Most lecturers expect university students to be mature enough to set up their academic planner, goal, time management, financial and their daily activities. However, surprisingly, some students are still clueless and face difficulties in managing their academic matters. Sometimes there would be a tension between the lecturers' expectations and the students' standard of quality. Some students are greatly troubled by the fact that their lecturers' expectations clash with their own standards. As a result, the students would feel demotivated, lost focus, and lost interest in study. Hence, SCAP was developed to help students to manage their academic planner in line with the lecturers' expectations. SCAP promotes the concept of self-assessment and self-regulation that lead to self-reinforcement. By using SCAP, students can identify their own skill gaps, where their weaknesses lie, where to focus their attention in learning, set realistic goals, revise their work and track their own progress. As a result, universities will finally produce good and quality students to serve the nation.

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