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CHALLENGES FACED BY POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS TO BECOME SELF-DIRECTED LEARNERS

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for a degree at any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, this work contains no material that has been previously published or written by another person, except for the quotation and reference which have been duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to identify the challenges that the postgraduate Masters students faced to become self-directed learners. The challenges are determined based on the factors that influence the development of students' self-direction, namely the support provided by the lecturers, peers and library; the students' personal attitudes; as well as the students' knowledge and academic skills. It also aims to compare the challenges that full-time and part-time students encounter, in order to provide broader view of this matter and to help both authorities and students to take appropriate actions in addressing the problems. The population of the study is postgraduate students in Selangor while the samples are Masters students of a local university. A total of 121 questionnaires were distributed to the students but only 56 were returned. The findings suggest that the students faced challenges pertaining to the lack of support provided by the library, poor time management, motivation, ability to think critically, and lack of academic skills in reading journals and writing critically. As for the comparison of the challenges faced by the full-time and part-time students, 9 significant differences are detected which revolve around their perception of the support provided by the library and peers, the use of collaborative learning, dependency on the lecturers, and students' participation in classroom. Based on the findings, actions should be taken by various parties such as the library, students and lecturers in order to overcome the problems. The librarians should improve their service to the students and add more materials in the database; the students should improve their academic skills and learning attitudes; while the lecturers ought to revise their teaching methods to ensure that they are suitable for providing mediums for the students to enhance their knowledge and skills, and work collaboratively with each other.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenalpasti cabaran-cabaran yang di hadapi oleh pelajar pascasiswazah dalam menjadi pelajar celik kendiri. Cabaran-cabaran tersebut di kenal pasti berdasarkan faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi perkembangan pembelajaran kendiri, seperti sokongan yang diterima pelajar daripada pensyarah, rakan-rakan dan pihak perpustakaan; keperibadian pelajar; dan juga ilmu serta kemahiran akademik yang dimiliki pelajar. Ia juga bertujuan untuk membandingkan cabaran yang dihadapi oleh pelajar sepenuh masa dan separuh masa bagi memberi skop yang lebih luas mengenai perkara ini, dan untuk membantu pihak fakulti dan pelajar mengambil tindakan yang sewajarnya dalam menangani masalah- masalah tersebut. Populasi kajian adalah pelajar pascasiswah di Selangor, manakala sampel kajian pula adalah pelajar Ijazah sarjana dari sebuah universiti. Sebanyak 121 borang kaji selidik telah di edarkan tetapi hanya 56 yang dikembalikan. Keputusan kaji selidik menunjukkan bahawa pelajar menghadapi cabaran seperti kekurangan sokongan daripada pihak perpustakaan, masalah pengurusan masa, motivasi, kemampuan berfikir secara kritikal, dan kekurangan kemahiran akademik seperti membaca jurnal dan menulis secara kritikal. Bagi perbandingan cabaran antara pelajar sepenuh masa dan separuh masa, 9 perbezaan telah dikesan antaranya tentang persepsi mereka terhadap sokongan oleh pihak perpustakaan dan rakan-rakan, mempraktikkan konsep pembelajaran secara kolaboratif , kebergantungan kepada pensyarah serta penyertaan pelajar di dalam kelas. Berdasarkan hasil kajian, kesemua pihak perlu mengambil tindakan dalam menangani masalah-masalah tersebut. Pihak perpustakaan perlu memperbaiki perkhidmatan mereka dan menyediakan lebih banyak bahan bacaan kepada pelajar; para pelajar perlu meningkatkan kemahiran akademik dan memperbaiki sikap mereka dalam menimba ilmu; manakala pensyarah perlu memastikan kaedah pengajaran yang

di gunakan sesuai dalam meningkatkan pengetahuan dan kemahiran pelajar, disamping menggalakkan mereka belajar secara kolaboratif.