Title Of Study

MAJOR FACTORS UNDERLYING THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF UNDERACHIEVERS AT UITM CAWANGAN SARAWAK, KAMPUS SAMARAHAN: STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out for the express purpose of determining the major academic and non-academic factors that directly or indirectly contribute to the inability of some of the students at UiTM Sarawak to meet the minimum academic requirement to continue their diploma studies, which is a CGPA of 2.0.

The study investigated this phenomenon from the perspective of the students' own perception of the difficulties that they face. Four categories in the academic domain and three categories in the non-academic domain were identified for the study. They were teaching, learning, assessment and academic support categories for the academic domain and self-management, personal problems and non-academic support categories for the non-academic domain. Data for the study was collected from ninety four students using a questionnaire consisting of 240 items covering various aspects of the seven categories.

The study enabled the researchers to identify various academic and non-academic factors that in the opinion of the students could have contributed to their underachievement. It is hoped that the recommendations made in chapter five would prove useful to the management of UiTM Sarawak in their relentless efforts at helping students who face difficulties in their studies and consequently at producing greater numbers of students who successfully complete their diploma studies each semester.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1   Overview of Research

The UiTM Sarawak management was deeply concerned about the number of students who fail to meet the minimum academic requirement of a CGPA of 2.00 and as a consequence of this, the rate of dismissal of such students. The number of students who suffer this fate did not decrease sufficiently although some corrective measures have been taken to provide such students at risk with some additional academic assistance such as special clinic sessions and motivational talks. This is now being done every semester to help students who face the risk of being dismissed for not being able to perform satisfactorily in the final examination.

Efforts such as these have been useful, no doubt, but they do not seem to produce the results to the extent that we desire. The reason for this is perhaps that students who have eroded into this academic status would have lost much of their self-confidence and as a result their motivation level would have fallen to a deep end. The fact that special classes and workshops are being held for them can make many of them, if not all, feel all the more conscious of their own 'backwardness'.

A member of this research team attended one of these support sessions conducted for the students and found most of the participants looking rather cheerless and withdrawn that it was doubtful how much of what was being delivered to the students was actually being absorbed.

It must also be emphasised that the special help given to the students is in the nature of 'repair work' and as such has its obvious limitations. Admittedly, such corrective

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The following is a brief review of the vast literature that exists on the subject. The literature reflects the enormous extent of research that has been carried out on this academic phenomenon in higher education all over the world. This is quite understandable considering the importance of this phenomenon to everyone, particularly students, educators, educational administrators, parents and taxpayers.

This chapter will first present a discussion of some major theoretical notions regarding the phenomenon of poor academic performance among graduate students and then discuss leading studies that have been carried out to identify major causes of poor academic performance in higher education that are relevant to this research. Some conceptual articles pertinent to this study will also be briefly examined.

2.1   Theoretical Models

The literature on the phenomenon of student performance includes several theoretical models suggested by leading educationalists.

The most commonly referred to model in the student retention/dropout literature is Tinto's multivariate model. It was first offered in 1975, and began with the support of being broadly consistent with a considerable range of other people's research and because it immediately appealed to people's commonsense with its central notion of "integration".

Tinto proposed a multivariate model of student retention in post secondary institutions to explain student departure from college prior to graduation. His model includes a comprehensive set of demographic, cognitive, psychosocial, and institutional factors. The model proposes that both student characteristics and interactions with the social and