

The Correlates Between Students' Sociodemographic and Socioeconomic Background Factors and Level of Academic Achievement: A Case of UiTM Kampus Kuala Pilah Students

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Abstract

Student's academic achievement is one of the aspects that has been the focus and commitment of Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) especially for Bumiputera students. The academic achievement is vital for the institution to be regarded as the quality of higher education provider in Malaysia standing tall among other local universities. This study examined the correlation between students' sociodemographic and socioeconomic background factors and level of academic achievement in UiTM Kuala Pilah campus, Negeri Sembilan. A cross-sectional survey on 144 undergraduates in UiTM Kuala Pilah was engaged and employed for this study. The correlation between sociodemographic (family size, parents' education & place of residence) and socioeconomic background factors and level of student's academic achievement were thoroughly examined and analyzed. The outcome of this study revealed that socioeconomic status was found to have significant positive correlation to the level of student's academic achievement. The substantive results of this study will furnish information to the government and relevant parties, such as the (HEIs) (Higher Learning Institutions) to devise the strategies in dealing with the issue of students' academic achievement. There are needs to put a greater emphasis regarding the disadvantaged students who are facing difficulties to have quality education in university while at the same time planning to sustain the student's welfare

Keywords: Students academic achievement; Sociodemographic factors; Socioeconomic; CGPA

INTRODUCTION

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As Malaysia is envisioned a progressive and developed country by 2020, many aspects of development especially in terms of empowering its people must be directed by the present government. One of the ways in empowering its people is through education which is essence in human life. Every single human being has the absolute right to education especially younger generation. The ones who possess education have the capability to change not just themselves but also the nation and state. These concerns are not without prior evidence. According to UNESCO (2016), education should be the

means to empower younger generation and adults to become active participants that are active in the development of societies. Younger generation such as teenagers and children will be the educators of the societies when they are exposed to adequate education. As education has grown importance in the last decade, many countries put a high awareness and attention towards the importance of education to the country's development. For instance, in Finland, the citizens are given free access to education from pre-primary school until higher education. Not just that, the Finland Government also provides textbooks, daily meals and free transportation to those who are living far away from school. Besides that, in Asia, specifically in Japan, there are full enrollments in compulsory grades with zero rate of illiteracy and the school dropout is at the lowest so far, which is only 2.0 percent (Abe, 2016). Significantly, Kromydas (2017) also viewed that countries such as China or Singapore that are growing economically very rapidly are investing high expenses to develop their higher education system and make it more friendly to talented people from around the world. On the contrary, despite the growth and importance of higher education, the aboriginal people have low participation in pursuing their study in Canada (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009). One of the reasons aboriginal people have low participation in the education is because their families have low incomes and parental education is also one of the contributing factors. Similarly, Van der Berg et al. (2017) have demonstrated that there is only a small percentage of population has access to higher level education in Mozambique which is part of the African continent.

Since the country has achieved independence, Malaysia has gone through many levels of development in its social aspects. One of them is the education system which is to increase the academic achievements of the locals. It is demonstrated that the fundamental way of producing quality graduates is through students' performance (Norilmiah et al. (2019). In other words, the education system has developed rapidly in ensuring education attainment and the quality of educational performance in Malaysia. Numerous policies to reform education in Malaysia have been enacted. One of the education policies that the Malaysian Government is currently committed to is the National Education Blueprint 2013-2025 and the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education) (*The Star Online*, May 23, 2018). One of the key elements in the National Education Blueprint is that the Government is committed to provide education that will increase and maximize the students' academic performance and outcome ("Highlights National Education", 2013). Under this policy, all parties are expected to commit in producing better education for the nation.

Despite all the efforts made and the high allocation spent by the Government in providing better education to the public, the education standard in Malaysia is deteriorating over the years (World Bank, 2013). For example, according to Dr Federico Gil Sander, a senior economist in Malaysia said that "Malaysians students are doing

absolutely worst in schools compared to other Asian countries especially where students in the rural area in Vietnam schools are performing better than Malaysians” (Su-Lyn, 2014). Recently, Silva et al. (2021) reported that the overall data on education in Africa indicate that the share of the working-age population with tertiary education is low. However, there is an increase and Africa is in the early stage of the diffusion of higher education.

As mentioned earlier, in an effort to improve the quality of education delivery, the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 is being implemented meticulously. That is to say that education will be given a priority to maximize the students’ academic performance and outcome. Therefore, main effort made with respect to higher education, the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education) is among the main strategies of the Eleventh Plan (Prime Minister Office, (PMO) 2016). This is expected to support the achievement of 80 percent graduate employability target within six months of graduation. This study aims to contribute to the existing knowledge by documenting the factors associated with students’ academic achievement at Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) in Malaysia. The main objective of the study was to analyze the correlations between sociodemographic (family size, parents’ education & place of residence) and socioeconomic background factors with the students’ academic performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Students’ Academic Achievement, Socioeconomic and Sociodemographic Factors

Academic performance refers to the student’s understanding during learning process which is usually measured through assessments like standardized tests, performance assessments and portfolio assessment (Santrock, 2006). Several studies on a similar context have used different definitions, yet emphasized on the equivalent dimensions of determinants. Academic achievement is frequently defined in the terms of the examination performance (Alam et al., 2014). In measuring a student’s academic achievement, Pinilla and Munoz (2005) propose three determinants to be taken into account which are grades, times, and annual approbation rate. Grades are measured through a sample of grade point average while time is defined as the number of years that a student has been in the institution. Annual approbation rate includes the number of approved courses per year. In addition, Allen (2005) explained that final class grades can be seen as summaries of student’s academic achievement by referring to the content of knowledge that the students have received. According to Kooi and Ping (2006) have conducted a study on the determinants affecting academic achievement and used Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) as the measurement for academic

achievement. While Hanafi and Noor (2016) also using Grade Point Average GPA as the measurement for academic achievement in their study.

Different points of entry are used to enroll in higher education. For example, Malaysia has been using Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) as the qualification to pursue education at higher learning. Meanwhile, in United State, American College Testing (ACT) and Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) have been used as a prerequisite to higher education. In relation to this, many studies have examined the determinants of students' academic achievement. On top of that, Al Shawwa et al., (2015) have demonstrated that the prevalence of students' academic achievement has always been one of the main goals of education. In their study, out of 359 medical students in the Medical Faculty of King Abdulaziz University, more than half (50.4) percent, were reported to have excellent performance. The most probable explanation is that many medical education stakeholders are concerned about students' performances as it reflects their various areas of interest.

Moreover, academic success is often said to have a direct link to employability. Reiger (2011) reported that academic success is important because it is strongly linked to positive outcomes. She further explained that adults who are academically successful and with high level of education have bigger opportunities to be employed, have a more stable occupation and earn a higher salary compared to those with less successful in academic. Srivastava and Joshi (as cited in Farooq et al., 2011) emphasized that academic achievement is one of the criteria in judging people's potentials and capabilities. Clearly, it can be concluded that academic success or high level of academic achievement is the prerequisite to success in work. The most probable explanation is because students with high academic achievement can cope with challenges in adulthood phase and achieve good occupation and are economically success in the future.

A recent study found that sociodemographic can be the main factor that could affect the academic achievement of the students (Remali et al., 2013). There are numerous elements under the sociodemographic factor that could influence the student's academic achievement namely family background, gender, age, motivation, community, culture finance, community characteristics, institutional characteristics and other demographic factors. Even though these features have a robust effect on the students' academic achievement, these elements are different from one individual to another and from one country to another (Hanafi & Noor, 2016). Okioga (2013) measured the relationship between socioeconomic status and academic performance using regression analysis among students of Kisii University College. Results found that students' socioeconomic status had a significant impact on their academic achievement.

Investigating a similar study on secondary school in Maldives, Imran et al., (2013) found that there was a correlation between the socioeconomic status and academic performance, A more recent study done by Ifeyinwa (2017) demonstrated the contrary. In the study conducted at Technical Colleges in Delta State, it was found that there was no relationship between poor family background and academic performance of students. Since the $\chi^2 = 3.38$ at $p > .05$ indicating that poor family background was not associated with the level of student academic achievement. The findings could be vital references from developing countries such as Malaysia and would contribute immensely to existing literature. Based on the results, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H₁:** There is a significant correlation between parents’ education (father) and the students’ academic achievement
- H₂:** There is a significant correlation between parents’ education (mother) and the students’ academic achievement
- H₃:** There is a significant correlation between family size and the students’ academic achievement
- H₄:** There is a significant correlation between place of residence and the students’ academic achievement
- H₅:** There is a significant correlation between socio economic status and the students’ academic achievement

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

As such, the study employed the previous works of Hanafi and Noor (2016) & Okioga (2013) as the basis of the correlations which congregate amongst the variables. The sociodemographic factors (parents’ education, family size and place of residence) and socioeconomic status are expected to affect the level of students’ academic achievement. Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study.

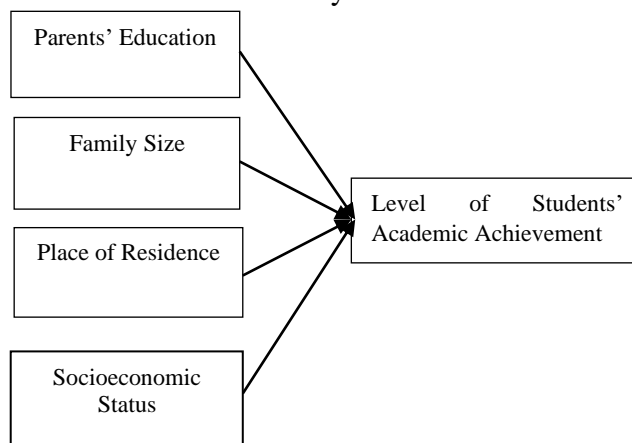


Figure 1: *Conceptual Framework*

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The sociodemographic and socioeconomic profile and the level of academic achievement of UiTM Kuala Pilah Campus students were surveyed. This study employed a quantitative survey method through cross-sectional study. The unit of analysis for this study are undergraduates who are currently studying in UiTM Kuala Pilah Campus, Malaysia. In light of the above context, the current study data were collected and gathered using self-administered questionnaires through purposive and convenience sampling technique. 220 of questionnaires were distributed but only 144 were useable. The constructs in this study were measured using Likert scales drawn from existing studies. In this study, the independent variables of the study were students' sociodemographic and socioeconomic background factors whereas level of academic achievement served as the dependent variable. Hence, the measurement level of academic achievement is adapted from Hanafi and Noor's (2016) study. Accordingly, the respondents were asked to state their current level of CGPA. In addition to that, the sociodemographic factors (parents' education, family size and place of residence) were also adapted from Hanafi and Noor (2016).

Meanwhile for socioeconomic status is adapted from Okioga (2013) study based on the statements such as "*I have the ability to afford basic items*", "*I afford to pay student residential room*", "*I afford to have quality food*" and "*I have the ability to buy academic materials*". As for statistical methods, descriptive analysis was carried out by looking at percentages and frequencies to investigate the profile of students. This was followed by inferential statistics to look at the correlation between variables using Pearson Chi Square and Pearson Correlation Analysis. The data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. Cronbach alpha was employed to determine the reliability. The following table 1 summarizes the Cronbach alpha values for each construct. As the value is 0.839, high reliability of construct is indicated. Sekaran and Bougie (2016) indicate that the reliability value less than 0.60 is poor, 0.60 to 0.70 is moderate, 0.70 to 0.80 is good, 0.80 to 0.90 is exceptionally good, and 0.90 is excellent.

Table 1: *Summary of Reliability Test*

Variables	No. of items tested	Cronbach's alpha	Decision
Socioeconomic status	8	0.839	Preferable

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile

Table 2 shows the summary of respondents’ profile. Females were the majority participated in the study with 81.3 percent compared to male with 18.8 percent. Most of the respondents were at the age of 22 years and above 51.4 percent. The remaining 48.6 percent were 18 – 21 years old. Most of the respondents 72.9 percent were not at their final year at compared to the final year respondents who were 27.1 percent. In terms of place of residence, most of the respondents lived in semi urban areas 42.4 percent followed by rural at 29.2 percent and urban at 27.1 percent. The parent’s monthly income showed a high percentage for RM3,900 and below at 54.2 percent then followed by RM3,901 – RM8,300 at 33.3 percent and RM8,301 and above at 12.5 percent. Besides that, the father’s education and mother’s education background showed the lowest value for “No Formal Education” at 3.5 percent and 4.2 percent respectively. Most of the students’ parents undergone for “High School or Less” which showed the highest value for educational background at 56.3 percent and 60.4 percent approximately. Based on Table 2, most of the students’ parents were married at 95.8 percent and only 2.1 percent were divorced and single parent. In addition, most students lived in nuclear family which means they lived with their parents and sibling’s 91.0 percent while the remaining 9.0 percent lived in joint family. More than half 54.9 percent reported having 3-5 members in their family while 31.9 percent had 6-10 people in their family.

Table 2: *Profile of Respondents*

Variables	Frequencies	Percentage
Gender		
Male	27	18.8
Female	117	81.3
Age		
18 – 21 years old	70	48.6
22 years and above	74	51.4
Years of study		
Non-Final Year	105	72.9
Final Year	39	27.1
Current Academic Undertaking		
Bac. Degree	144	100
Diploma	0	0

Place of Residence		
Urban	40	27.8
Semi Urban	62	43.1
Rural	42	29.2
Parent's Monthly Income		
RM3,900 and below	78	54.2
RM3,901 – RM8,300	48	33.3
RM8,301 and above	18	12.5
Father's Education		
No Formal Education	5	3.5
High school or Less	81	56.3
Tertiary Education	58	40.3
Mother's Education		
No Formal Education	6	4.2
High school or Less	87	60.4
Tertiary Education	51	35.4
Parent Marital Status		
Married	138	95.8
Divorced	3	2.1
Single	3	2.1
Type of Family		
Joint Family	13	9.0
Nuclear Family	131	91.0
Size of Family		
1 – 2 People	14	9.7
3 - 5 People	79	54.9
6 – 10 People	46	31.9
More than 10 People	5	3.5

Correlation Between Parents Education, Family Size and Place of Residence and Student's Level of Academic Achievement

Table 3 shows the correlation of parents' education and student's level of academic achievement. The results showed that there was no significant association between father's education and the students' level of academic achievement. This can be seen as the value of $\chi^2 = 3.560$ and $p > .05$. The p-value indicates that father's education did not influence student academic achievement. Besides that, mother's education also showed no significant correlation with students' level of academic achievement. Since the $\chi^2 = 5.708$ and $p > .05$ which sums up that there is no significant

relationship between both variables. On top of that, the numbers of expected count that less than 5 were reported not more than 5. This means that the study has not violated the assumptions of chi-square. Despite that, there was still no significant relationship between mother's education and students' level of academic achievement. Hence, based on these two variables, the hypothesis (H_1) that there is a significant correlation between father's education and students' academic achievement and hypothesis (H_2) states that there is a significant correlation between mother's education and students' academic achievement in UiTM Kuala Pilah were not accepted.

Based on the result obtained, it was found out that there was no significant correlation between parents' education (fathers and mothers) and students' level of academic achievement. However, the finding is contrary to what was mentioned previously in literature review for parents' educational background. For example, Suleman et al., (2012) found that both father and mother education background give significant effect on students' level of academic achievement. Another study done by Azhar et al., (2013) among students of Master level at University of Sargodha, the finding of the study also claimed that there is a correlation between parents' education and students' level of academic achievement. Both father's and mother's education were found to be significantly associated with the level of academic achievement of students. Further to that, more recent findings by Dukmak and Ishtaiwa (2015) revealed that a significant correlation was found between parents' education and students' academic achievement. Their study was based on the perspectives from students in the preparatory and secondary school of the United Arab Emirates. Thus, it can be concluded that students' level of academic achievement is reflected from parents' educational background. Parents with high level of education are more interested in and involved on the academic achievement of students (Asad Khan et al., 2015).

In addition, consistent with the above findings, Burger and Naude (2019) found in their study that parental education was discovered to be an important predictor of school performance. It implies that children of more educated parents tend to have better access to better quality education. On contrary, the present findings found that parents' education either father or mother were not correlated with the students' level of academic achievement. The most probable explanation due to students are independent enough to learn and study by themselves without referring to their parents. As a result, they managed to score well in their studies even though they are lived with parents that went for high school or less and no formal education background. The outcome of this present study was also supported by past studies related to educational outcome in the East African. Jones and Schipper (2015) reported that parental education does not adequately explain the children's educational outcome. Even though parental education is one of the most cited characteristics of family background, but findings found that it

only explains less than 20 % of children’s educational outcome (Bjorklund & Salvanes, 2011).

Table 3: Summary of Pearson chi-square analysis for Parents’ Education and Students’ Level of Academic Achievement

Variable		χ^2	Df	P-Value	Cramer’s V-Value	Decision
Correlation between Parents’ Education						
a)	Father’s Education	3.560	4	0.469 (p>.05)	0.111	H ₁ is not supported
b)	Mother’s Education and Students’ Level of Academic Achievement	5.708	4	0.222 (p>.05)	0.141	H ₂ is not supported

Next, Table 4 shows the relationship between family size and students’ level of academic achievement. The results showed that there was no correlation between family size and students’ level of academic achievement. This is proven when the Pearson Chi-Square value, $\chi^2= 3.948$, df (6) at p>.05. Therefore, the hypothesis (H₃) is not accepted as there is no significant correlation between family size and students’ level of academic achievement. This shows that the size of family is not related with students’ level of academic achievement. It is viewed that students could do well with their academics whether they have small or big family members. This finding is similar to other studies particularly Al Shawwa et al., (2015), wherein there was no significant correlation between family size and students’ level of academic achievement.

These findings were contrary to few previous studies. For example, a study done by Jabbar et al., (2011) on the effect of demographic factors on the level of academic achievement of students in Pakistan discovered that there was a significant correlation between family size and students’ level of academic achievement specifically in Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination as they used the examination to measure the correlation. Based on their findings, the number of students passed in the examination was high at 76.97 percent with 1 to 3 family size. As the family size increases, the number of students passed in the examination decreases. This can be seen when students have 10 and more family members the percentage of pass in the examination decreased to 31.91 percent. These findings were also supported by Suleman et al., (2012), which found that there was a significant effect of family size on the level of academic achievement of students. Wherein the χ^2 was 115.23, df (2) at p<0.05 indicating that family size did influence the level of academic achievement of students. It can be said that students with less family members performed well in their academics. Conversely, students who scored lower in their academics because they had large family members. These differences in the findings might be due to geographic and sample of respondents which were different. Consistently, Silva et al. (2021) in their

study discovered that a number of previous studies have shown an association between family characteristics and students' academic performance. Such findings have proven that family characteristics influence and play an important role in academic performance.

Table 4: Summary of Pearson Chi-Square Analysis for Family Size and Students' Level of Academic Achievement

Variable	χ^2	Df	P-value	Cramer's V-Value	Decision
Correlation between Family Size and Level of Students' Level of Academic Achievement	3.948	6	0.684 (p>.05)	0.117	H ₃ is not supported

Table 5 shows the summary of Pearson chi square analysis for place of residence and students' level of academic achievement. The finding of the present study revealed that there was no correlation between students' place of residence and students' level of academic achievement. The result presented that $\chi^2= 1.851$ at $p >.05$ indicating that the hypothesis (H₃) is not accepted. In other words, the level of academic achievement of students was not correlated by their residency. However, the finding in this study is inconsistent with previous studies as discussed in the literature review. Jabbar et al., (2011) believed that students' residency gave significant impact on students' level of academic achievement. In their study, it was found that students lived in urban were more excellent in academics compared to those students lived in rural areas. However, the study by Hanafi and Noor (2016) supported this as it was found that there was a correlation between students' residency and level of academic achievement of students. In their study, the result showed that $\alpha= 0.01$ level (path coefficient= 0.273, t-value=5.462, $p<.000$) which indicates urban students performed better than rural students.

The study done by Jabbar et al., (2011) and Hanafi and Noor (2016) were supported by a study conducted by Faisal et al., (2016). 200 undergraduate medical students in Rehman Medical College, Pakistan were used as the sample size for the study and the result demonstrated that there was a correlation between students' residency and their level of academic attainment with p-value at 0.038. Peter (2019) also obtained a similar result, where the academic performance of Makerere University undergraduate students was correlated by the effect of student's place of residence in Uganda. Nevertheless, the present study found that academic achievement of students was not correlated by their residency. A study by Grayson (2017) had evidently signified that research has also demonstrated that student's place of residence has little, if any, impact on their educational outcome.

Table 5: Summary of Pearson chi-square analysis for Place of Residence and Students' Level of Academic Achievement

Variable	χ^2	Df	P-Value	Cramer's V-Value	Decision
Correlation between Place of Residence and Students' and Level of Academic Achievement	1.851	4	0.763 ($p > .05$)	0.080	H ₄ is not supported

Correlation Between Socioeconomic Status and Student' Level of Academic Achievement

Last but not least, Table 6 shows the result of correlation analysis between socioeconomic status and students' level of academic achievement. The r-value obtained was .211 which indicated the low positive relationship between the variables. As mentioned by Cohen (1988) the r-value between 0.1- 0.29, 0.3 to 0.49 and 0.5 and above indicate low, moderate and strong relationships respectively. Based on the results, it implies that there was a low correlation between socioeconomic status and students' level of academic achievement. In other words, as socioeconomic status increases academic attainment of students also increases. Therefore, socioeconomic status appeared to be positively related to the students' academic achievement (CGPA) at $r = 0.211$. $p < .05$. Thus, the hypothesis (H₄) which stated that there is a relationship between socioeconomic status and students' level of academic achievement in UiTM Kuala Pilah is still accepted.

The finding is similar with several previous studies. For example, Adam (1996) stated that low economic status had negative effect on students' level of academic achievement due to the inability to fulfill the basic needs of students which resulted in low academic achievement. In other words, the higher socioeconomic status gives many advantages to the students especially access to basic needs necessary for education purposes (Okioga, 2013). A study conducted by Adamu (2016) was found that there was a strong relationship between socioeconomic status and the students' level of academic achievement. This is due to Pearson r-value is 0.834 which can be interpreted as a strong relationship. Students from low socioeconomic status have insufficient resources and facilities for educational advancement since their parents were unaffordable to provide such materials. Hence, it is tough for the students to achieve good academic achievement since they are lacking in terms of materials and facilities that could help enhance their academic achievement. Contrary to what was hypothesized, Ifeyinwa (2017) conducted a study at Technical Colleges in Delta State discovered that there was no relationship between poor family background and academic performance of students wherein the $\chi^2 = 3.38$ at $p > .05$. The finding justified some views that students from poor family also can obtain good result in academic and same goes to students from rich family are possible to achieve low result in academics.

By comparing from various studies, the study concludes that students with high economic status have high potential to obtain high level of academic achievement.

Table 6: *Summary on Pearson Correlation Analysis between Socioeconomic Status and Students' Level of Academic Achievement*

Variable	R	P-Value	Decision
Correlation between Socioeconomic Status and Students' Level of Academic Achievement	0.211	0.011 ($p < .05$)	H ₅ is supported

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study was conducted in Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Kuala Pilah campus with 144 respondents. Based on the study conducted, it is found that majority of the student live with their parents whose income is RM 3900 and below at 54.2 percent. This data indicated that most of the students in UiTM Kuala Pilah campus are from the middle-income family. Apart from that, most of the students evaluated themselves to be class in average academic achievers' group at 79.9 percent while only small number for low and high academic achievement. Based on the analysis, most students achieved CGPA above the mean score which is 3.33 at 66.4 percent. Different sociodemographic factors and background were tested in this study such as family size, type of family, place of residence, parent's marital status and father's and mother's education. Three (3) factors were analysed which are family size, parents' education and place of residence using the chi square analysis. One (1) factor which is socioeconomic status was tested using the pearson correlation analysis. These factors were not found to be significantly related with level of students' academic achievement. Besides, among the factors, only socioeconomic status was found to be positively significant to the level of student's academic achievement.

There are a few limitations in this study that limit its generalizability. There are several other factors such as gender, entry qualifications, attendance etc. that can lead towards academic performance. Further research is necessary to explore other factors that may affect students' academic performance. The findings obtained from the study cannot truly claim to be representative of all universities especially UiTM because the university is exclusively for Bumiputras. As the sample population was selected from a single tertiary institution and hence there is limited generalizability of our results. By having only homogenous respondents, it limits the variety of responses that can be obtained from different ethnicities. In addition, the fees for the courses provided are fully subsidized and affordable compared to other public universities such as University of Malaya and private universities such as Management and Science University.

Therefore, the respondents were having no difficulty to survive with university life faced by others who studied in private universities such as the high fees for the courses taken. Furthermore, future studies should make private universities as the sample as they are more heterogenous which are more suitable to give meaningful insights into students sociodemographic and socioeconomic background factors and level of academic achievement. Little is known on the correlation between sociodemographic and socioeconomic background factors among university students because most of the discussions in the literature review have been found to address the issue at school level. From that, it is suggested to have more studies on the topic among university students in the future. Lastly, the present study used correlational analysis in certain aspects, which does not prove causal relations between variables

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