

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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Abstract

While some students excel in their academic performance, a large chunk of others perform dismally which leads to lengthened period spend at tertiary institutions. This has recently raised an alarm for the need to examine the factors that influence students' performance. Failure to address the causes of performance among students may result in the loss of university reputation. Subsequently, the industry may lose confidence in graduates from the university. However, few studies have been conducted on this subject especially in South African context. Therefore, the study sought to fill this lacuna by investigating the factors that influence academic performance of students. The study adopted a descriptive research design and quantitative research approach. The sample consisted of 330 students enrolled in financial management course at the University of Technology in South Africa. The key findings revealed that attending tutorials, use of previous examination papers, self-given homework, student-run study groups and use of the library are factors that were helpful in improving the academic performance of students. The results of this study also revealed that stable income status of parents and parental involvement with schoolwork were associated with great academic achievement. The results of this study also indicated that parents are increasingly getting involved in the students' academic work. The academic managers should provide different facilities and employ various teaching methods to enhance academic performance.

Keywords: Students, Academic Performance, Tertiary Education, South African Education.

INTRODUCTION

Access to higher education is one matter and success to graduation is another. Colleges and universities have no value without students as students are the most essential asset for any educational institute. According to Mushtaq and Khan (2012), the social and economic development of the country is directly linked with student academic performance. Students' performance plays an important role in producing the best quality graduates who will become great leaders and manpower for the country, thus supporting the country's economic and social development (Double, Niharika and Supriya, 2011). Mlambo (2011) notes that high failure rates at universities lead to unacceptable levels of reduced graduate throughput. It is therefore imperative that a diagnostic study is carried out to identify the factors associated with performance. Furthermore, there is a fierce growth of competitiveness in the global marketplace (Eze and Inegbedion, 2015). This is crucial for universities to offer the best possible educational experience for students, thus facilitating high academic performance. This ensures that the university does not lose its competitive value when ranked amongst other universities.

The university may not be able to become the preferred university due to the poor performance presented by some students. Students' performance is expected to improve in order to raise the university standard. Students are still not performing well as there are high rates of repeating modules. Part-time students seem to be exhausted from working all day when they attend lectures. This reduces their concentration during lectures, yet financial management requires much attention. Moreover, some students just lack commitment and motivation. Moreover, some students seem not to have a strong numerical background as they are coming from programmes. Mlambo (2011) notes that high failure rates at universities lead to unacceptable levels of reduced graduate throughput. It is therefore imperative that a diagnostic study be carried out to identify factors associated with academic performance. The study seeks achieve the following objectives: to establish the socio-economic and cultural factors affecting students' academic performance; and to establish the institutional factors affecting students' performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The review the institutional and socio-cultural factors that affect students which include poverty as a barrier to academic success, influence of family on academic achievement, inadequate educational experience prior to university entry, numeracy problems, and illiteracy as factor. It also discusses learning facility deficits that students acquire during their tertiary levels which hamper learning.

Socio-cultural factors that influence academic achievement

Social and cultural factors entail common traditions, habits, patterns and beliefs present in a population group (Mbugua, Kibet, Muthaa and Nkonke, 2012). Cultural constraints negatively impact academic achievement levels amongst students. In addition, students from insecure environments show emotional problems at the college. Cultural perspectives suggest that many historically under- represented students encounter challenges when they start college, which makes it difficult to take advantage of their resources (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges and Hayek, 2006). According to Nel and Müller (2010), socio-cultural factors play a vital role in students' understanding at a tertiary education level. Many difficulties arise with academic writing skills development as English is an almost foreign language to many students from rural areas. The authors found that socio-cultural attitudes to self-expression and their pedagogical background affect the way in which students perceive learning through the Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT), which is English in most Black-majority institutions at tertiary level. Depending on the institution attended, and their use (or not) of the LOLT, the transition from high school to tertiary institutions is exceedingly difficult for some students.

Poverty as a barrier to academic success factor. According to Ford (2011), prolonged exposure to poverty has a negative effect on students' academic performance. The most damaging effects of poverty are mostly seen amongst students that live in deprived environments for the greater part of their lives. Students from these environments have a higher probability of having learning disabilities and developmental problems, thus limiting their academic performance.

Families living in poverty face both direct and indirect consequences of their economic status (Kyshaba, 2015). These include lack of the necessary resources and exposure to various stressors associated with poverty. This can affect students emotionally, physically and psychologically, thus leading to poor academic performance. Students experiencing poverty proper are constantly exposed to stressors that can adversely affect their academic life. These students do not have sufficient resources to use for their studies. Unlike other forms, this impacts directly on them as students.

The influence of family on academic achievement factor. The family unit is integral to academic success because it is in this system that children are first exposed to learning through socialisation (Osaikhiuwu, 2014). The type of home environment in which a child is raised influences the type of adult the child will be. For example, Mbugua et al. (2012) note a positive correlation between the academic performance of students and their parents' level of education. Students from poor backgrounds, as well as those whose parents do not have tertiary qualifications, are likely to struggle and drop out of school (Nyikahodzi, Matamande, Taderera and Mandimika, 2014). In addition, Mbugua, et al. (2012) attribute this to a lack of positive role models in children's lives. The family is a place where needs are fulfilled through concrete and tangible ways (Mamhute, 2011). Furthermore, Williams (2007) notes that the participants in her study highlighted the importance of family support to assist them along the journey. Support comes in various forms, such as help from their spouses or partners and from other family members. Support from one's spouse is a source of power for many women, inasmuch as they may add onto the workload, encouragement from spouses can be used as an instrument of success in order to succeed in one's educational endeavours (Lynch, 2008). Lack of this type of support could be a hindrance to the success of married students.

Personal factors that influence academic achievement

The numeracy problem factor. Numeracy is the ability to understand and use maths in daily life, at home, work or school (Jones, Coetzee, Bailey and Wickham, 2018). The state of mathematical education in South Africa is poor. In addition, students acquire learning deficits at an early age which usually left untreated resulting in dire consequences not only for the students but for the economy as well. Spaul (2013a) unpacks the causes of mathematical learning deficits amongst children of school-going age in South Africa. The author asserts that in order for one to master cognitive skills, learning has to not only take place at an early age but also in a hierarchical manner. The literature points out that the learning difficulties students face throughout their schooling careers are caused by learning deficits acquired during their schooling period.

The illiteracy as factor. Illiteracy is the condition of being unable to read and write (Venkat and Spaul, 2015). As indicated, in order for one to master cognitive competence in reading and writing, learning has to take place at an early stage, because most subjects are supposed to be taught in English. Mastery of these concepts allows students to further master concepts in mathematics and science (Van-Der-Berg, Taylor, Gustafsson, Spaul and Armstrong, 2011). In a study by Nel and Müller (2010) on the impact of teachers' limited English proficiency on English second language learners in South Africa, it was highlighted that English second-

language students are often deemed at risk of academic exclusion because of the language transition they make once they enter into tertiary institutions. This is because they are expected to learn not only from lectures but also independently through textbooks and assignments. The challenge arises because students are expected to read in order to learn, but they were not adequately equipped during the foundation stages with resources that allowed them to learn to read (Van Der Berg, et al., 2011). This in itself could be one of the reasons why students are failing to pass their courses.

Institutional factors that affect student performance.

Although universities function as academic institutions, they are also business entities that try to find a balance between the pursuits of their business agenda versus their academic agenda (Osaikhiuwu, 2014). This often has an influence on the number of resources invested into student wellbeing. Institutional resources thus play a key role in ensuring a conducive environment for learners and ultimately affects academic performance. The availability of sufficient equipment, books, facilities and human resources is critical to the academic performance of students. However, poor infrastructure, inadequate teaching staff and insufficient equipment are often common at universities (Bell and Federman, 2013). This results in poor academic performance as the conditions are not conducive to and do not promote positive learning experiences.

The inadequate educational experience prior to university entry factor. One cannot discuss academic success and failure without taking into consideration the state of the SA education system and its implications for students enrolled in institutions of higher learning. Spaul (2013b) provides a critical review on the quality of education in South Africa from 1994 to 2011, ranking the South African education system amongst the worst in the world. Furthermore, the report emphasises that the poor quality of education in tertiary severely impedes students' ability to pursue further training and education. As a result, skill deficits amongst those within the population of under-performing institutions are likely to persist. Another important aspect that will lead to inadequate educational experience prior to university entry is being taught by teachers who lack sufficient qualifications and skills. Of particular importance, as it relates to the South African education system, is a study by Venkat and Spaul (2015) which showed that South African lecturers lack skills and qualifications, being amongst some of the least knowledgeable in the world. This is especially so in subjects such as mathematics, where lecturers were shown to be unable to properly address the questions posed to them by students. The study is guided by Social Cognitive Learning Theory.

Social Cognitive Learning Theory

The preceding discourse indicates that Social Cognitive Learning Theory (SCLT) constitutes a learning theory that has emerged from the notion that individuals acquire knowledge by comprehending human cognitive processes and observing the actions of others is pivotal to understand concept (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). Concisely, the acquisition of knowledge relies on both internal cognitive processes and external factors. Formulated during the 1950s, this theoretical framework comes from behaviourism by emphasising the cognitive processes

involved in learning. Individuals are influenced by their surroundings to a certain extent, but they are not entirely shaped by them (McCormick & Martinko, 2004). Equally significant is the notion that the institutions establish advantageous surroundings and subsequently exert authority over them. Through deliberate selection of environments, institution can shape the personal development of student. Bandura (1997) states that the choices of learning are shaped by both abilities and environments. Bandura further state that a singular internal principle that consists of three interdependent components. According to Ilmiani, Wahdah and Mubarak (2021), social cognitive learning theory (SCLT), human behaviour as a dynamic and reciprocal interaction between personal factors, behaviour, and the environment. In line with this study, the socio-economic factors and institutional factors will be examined and their influence on student academic performance.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed quantitative research approach and descriptive research design. The target population was the 330 students who are registered in the 3rd and 4th years of financial management. For the purposes of this study, non-probability sampling was used. A census method was used in this study as sampling technique. These 330 students were all sent the questionnaire, but only 160 responded to the questionnaire. Therefore, the 160 respondents to this questionnaire constitute the sample for analysis. The respondents were sent an e-questionnaire through software that allows for reminders. The respondents were sent a link which they automatically filled, and the researcher receives the feedback. From the 330 students who were doing their 3rd and 4th year studies at university of technology, only 160 took part returned the completed questionnaire. The 170 students who did not take part in the investigation declined of their own free will. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data since it is quicker and less expensive when compared to other techniques used for data collection. The descriptive statistics was used to analyse the data. The most efficient means of summarising the characteristics of large sets of data is through the use of descriptive statistics. Participants were guaranteed that the information they provided were not related to them in any way, respecting their wish to stay unknown. This investigation ensured anonymity and confidentiality by not asking respondents for their names, and the researcher kept the surveys in a secure place that was inaccessible by the public.

RESULTS

Altogether, there were 330 students doing their 3rd or 4th year at DUT. However, only 160 responded to the questionnaire. Therefore, the response rate was 49% from all the respondents who were part of the target population. The research instrument comprised 33 questions, with a 5-point Likert scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. In this study, majority of the participants were females. In the category of respondents younger than 20 years, 44.3 percent were male and 55.7 percent were female. The 20 to 29-year age group contributed 71.9 percent of the sample population, comprising 31.9 percent males and 40 percent females. Therefore, the 20 to 29-year age group had the highest number of respondents, probably because these were undergraduate students. The participants were predominantly African (95 percent). This

was due to the composition of students enrolled at the DUT, with the majority being African, specifically in the Faculty of Management Sciences. The majority of respondents were single (82.5 percent). This is probably due to the fact that most people tend to go to universities just after finishing their matric and before taking on any other commitments, such as getting married and having families. Full-time students contributed the most respondents (55.6 percent). Full-time students are more likely to live in DUT residences and receive a full grant or are richer students living at home with parents who have paid their fees. The majority of the participants comprised of the respondents (55.0%) were fourth-year students. Majority of the respondents were pursuing diplomas (85 percent).

Objective 1: To establish the socio-economic and cultural factors affecting students' performance;

Table 1: The socio-economic and cultural factors affecting students' performance

		Low		Medium		High	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Educational Level of my parents/ guardians	Q4.1	62	39.2 %	74	46.8 %	22	13.9 %
Income status of my parents/ guardians	Q4.2	83	52.9 %	66	42.0 %	8	5.1%
Involvement of my parents/ guardians in my schoolwork	Q4.3	69	43.9 %	48	30.6 %	40	25.5 %

As shown in Table 1, the approximately half (46.8%) of the respondents indicated that the educational level of their parents were medium. The level of education of respondents impacts on students' performance. Students from poor backgrounds, as well as those whose parents do not have tertiary qualifications, are likely to struggle and drop out of school. In terms of income status of the parents or guardian, the almost half of respondents (42%) indicated that the income status of their parents or guardians was medium. The income status of guardians impacts on students because some students might attend classes late, thus affecting their performance. In relation to involvement of the parents or guardians in the schoolwork, approximately 43.9% of respondents indicated low involvement of the parents. These results show that the largest group of respondents have low involvement of parents or guardians in their schoolwork. For students to reap maximum benefits in an education system, the learning should not be solely left to the student-teacher relationship, but should be extended to include active parental involvement amongst other education stakeholders.

Objective 2: To examine the current academic performance of students

This objective is measured by checking the tutorial attendance, class tests, previous examinations and self-given homework.

Table 2: Current academic performance

		None		Poor		Fair		Good		Excellent	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Tutorial Attendance	Q5.1	18	11.4 %	9	5.7%	40	25.3%	55	34.8 %	36	22.8 %
Class Tests	Q5.2	2	1.3%	8	5.1%	39	24.7 %	84	53.2 %	25	15.8%
Previous Examinations	Q5.3	3	1.9%	2	1.3%	45	28.5 %	86	54.4 %	22	13.9 %
Self-given Homework	Q5.4	14	8.9%	29	18.5 %	45	28.7 %	51	32.5 %	18	11.5 %

In terms tutorial attendance, as shown Table 2, the majority of respondents (57.8%) indicated they had good tutorial attendance. In a study by Horn and Ijansen (2009), it was also found that tutorial attendance had a far greater effect on grades than lecture attendance. This could have probably been due to smaller class sizes for tutorials, which may lead to a more active and effective learning process. In terms of academic performance based on class tests (Table 2), the most respondents (69%) showed that they had good performance. Regarding previous examinations, bulk of the respondents (68.3%) indicated that they performed well in their previous examinations. Regarding self-given homework, almost half of the respondents indicated that they accomplished their academic performance using self-given homework.

Objective 3: To investigate institutional factors that affect students' academic performance

Various items were put forward (Table 3) as assisting students in achieving success with their studies, with the results illustrated below

Table 3: Institutional factors that affect students' performance.

		NOT APPLICABLE		LEAST HELPFUL		AVERAGE		HELPFUL		MOST HELPFUL	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
LECTURES	Q6.1	2	1.3%	18	11.4%	44	27.8%	60	38.0%	34	21.5%
TUTORIALS	Q6.2	23	14.5%	19	11.9%	18	11.3%	49	30.8%	50	31.4%
PRINTED TEXTBOOKS	Q6.3	9	5.7%	11	7.0%	37	23.4%	70	44.3%	31	19.6%
ONLINE STUDY MATERIAL	Q6.4	26	16.7%	32	20.5%	41	26.3%	43	27.6%	14	9.0%
USE OF LIBRARY	Q6.5	17	10.8%	23	14.6%	48	30.4%	47	29.7%	23	14.6%
USE OF COMPUTERS	Q6.6	20	12.7%	21	13.4%	40	25.5%	41	26.1%	35	22.3%
STUDENT RUN STUDY GROUPS	Q6.7	11	6.9%	16	10.1%	34	21.4%	35	22.0%	63	39.6%
PAST EXAM PAPERS	Q6.8	2	1.3%	7	4.4%	26	16.5%	63	39.9%	60	38.0%
REGULAR TESTS	Q6.9	5	3.2%	7	4.5%	48	30.6%	59	37.6%	38	24.2%

In terms of lectures, the majority of the respondents (86, 8%) indicated that lectures were helpful. The results showed that the majority of students claimed lectures helped them. Regarding tutorials, as shown (Table 3), 62.2% of the respondents indicated that tutorials were most helpful in achieving their studies at their institution. This implies that the majority of the respondents are positive about tutorials. The results showed that tutorials play a significant role in student success. Therefore, tutoring was found to play a significant role in academic performance. With regards to printed textbooks, as illustrated in Table 3, bulk of the respondents (63.9%) indicated that printed textbooks were helpful in achieving their studies at their institution. The results imply that printed textbooks are crucial for academic excellence. In relation to online study material, as shown (Table 3), the most respondents indicated that online study material was neither most helpful nor least helpful. The main reason behind this is probably the fact that most learners use the printed study guides and study material that is given by lecturers. As for the use of library, almost half of the respondents (44.3%) the use of the library was helpful to achieve their studies at their institution. Regarding the use of computers, over half of the respondents (52.2%) indicated that the use of computers was helpful. In terms of student-run study groups, as illustrated in Table 3, most respondents (61.6%) indicated that student-run study groups are helpful to improve their performance at their institution. In terms of past exam papers, majority of the respondents (77.9%) indicated that past exam papers were helpful to excel in their studies. In relation to regular tests, most respondents (61.8%) indicated that regular tests were helpful to achieve academic excellence.

DISCUSSION

With regard to the socio-economic and cultural factors that affect student performance, the results revealed that the educational level of their parents was medium. This affects the value they placed on their children's education hence have a profound effect on student performance. A study carried out by Farooq, Chaudhry, Shafiq and Berhanu (2011) on factors affecting students' quality of academic performance found that the results of the study revealed that socio-economic status and parents' education have a significant effect on students' overall academic achievement. A study conducted by Mbugua, et al. (2012) revealed a positive correlation between the academic performance of students and their parents' level of education. Farooq, Chaudhry, Shafiq and Berhanu (2011) and Mbugua, et al. (2012)s' studies did not specifically address the educational level of the parents and student academic performance. Hence, the current study adds new knowledge in the area of student academic performance. Children from poor backgrounds, as well as those whose parents do not have tertiary qualifications, are likely to struggle and drop out of school. The findings revealed that the income status of their parents or guardians was low. Low-income impacts negatively on students' performance. Some go to school hungry, hence their concentration levels are affected. A study conducted by Ford (2011) on the effect of family poverty on children's academic achievement found that the relationship between family poverty and academic achievement. The findings are in line with a study carried out by Machebe, Ezegebe and Onusha (2017) on the impact of parental level of income on students' academic performance in high school in Japan and the findings revealed that greater academic achievement for a student is attained by

those students from financially buoyant families. Ford (2011) and Machebe, Ezegbe and Onusha (2017) s' studies did not specifically address the income status and academic achievement. Hence, the current study adds new knowledge in the area of student academic performance.

The findings revealed that parents' involvement was low in their schoolwork, but those who did not have parental involvement were more likely to obtain better bachelor passes. Findings from research undertaken by Machebe et al. (2017) showed that the income level of parents impacts the academic achievements of the student. Likewise, a study carried out by Mahuro, Hungi and Lamb (2016) on the parental participation improves student academic achievement found that an increase in parental participation through parenting and communication types of involvement significantly increases students' literacy. Similarly, a study carried out by Osaikhiuwu (2014) on institutional factors affecting the academic performance of public administration students in a Nigerian University revealed that the institutional variables considered (such as unfavourable learning conditions, interrupted water supply and poorly equipped library) did not have any significant impact on students' performance. Machebe et al. (2017), Mahuro, Hungi and Lamb (2016) and Osaikhiuwu (2014) s' studies did not specifically address the parents' involvement. Hence, the current study adds new knowledge in the area of student academic performance.

There was no significance found when comparing pre-matric circumstances with claimed academic performance. This is an important and encouraging finding as it shows that even a student from a poor background gains access to tertiary education, it is a social leveller. However, this finding is at variance with a study carried out Cassidy (2011) on exploring individual differences as determining factors in student academic achievement in higher education, students in higher education found that prior academic achievement provide a partial explanation for academic achievement in higher education. How the student utilises learning opportunities at DUT then becomes a more important determinant of success.

In terms of the factors affecting students' academic performance, the study results revealed that students attended tutorials regularly to improve their academic performance. This showed that tutorial attendance has an impact on academic performance, but some students can still excel without attending tutorials. In a study by Horn and Ijansen (2009), it was found that tutorial attendance had a far greater effect on grades than lecture attendance. The results of this study were congruent with a study carried out by Abdulraheem, Yusuf and Odutayo (2017) on the effect of peer tutoring on students' academic performance in economics in Nigeria found that there is no significant difference in the performance of students taught using conventional instructional strategies and peer tutoring. A study conducted by De Clercq and Shalem (2014) on teacher knowledge and employer-driven professional development found that there is no significance differences between teachers' practice and learners' performance. Additionally, the results showed that tutoring was helpful when it came to academic performance. This is supported in the study by Abdul-Raheem, et al. (2017), which analysed the role of tutoring in improving academic success. The study found that self-given homework is associated with greater academic achievement and improves the student's memory and thinking skills. The

findings of this study are consistent with a study conducted by Eze and Inegbedion (2015) on the key factors influencing academic performance of international students in UK Universities found that the most significant of these barriers include the foreign language, which particularly concerns inadequate acquaintance with the English language; adjustment barriers, making friends, academic issues and pressure from performance expectations and work-load issues. Abdul-Raheem, et al. (2017) and Eze and Inegbedion (2015)s' studies did not properly address the organisational factors that affect student performance. Hence, the current study adds new knowledge around academic performance.

The findings indicated that part-time students benefitted from tutorials more than full-time students. Similarly, a study carried out by Baker (2003) on investigation of social problem-solving appraisals on adjustment to university, stress, health, and academic motivation and performance found that self-perceived problem-solving abilities had direct beneficial effects on academic performance during students' second year of study. Again, a study conducted by Horn and Jansen (2009) on investigation into the impact of tutorials on the performance of economics students found that lecture attendance contributes positively to the performance of economics students. AbdulRaheem, et al. (2017) studied the role of tutoring in improving academic success and found that tutoring promotes understanding and ultimately, academic performance. Baker (2003), Horn and Jansen (2009) and AbdulRaheem, et al. (2017) s' studies did not specifically address the impact of tutorials on part-time and full-time students. Hence, the current study adds new knowledge around academic performance.

In addition, the findings indicated that previous examination papers helped their studies and this correlated with their claimed academic performance. The results implied that students who took time revising previous examinations had better performance. The findings of this study were also in line with a study conducted by Ayaz, Ali, Khan, Ullah and Ullah (2017) on the impact of school library on students' academic achievement at secondary school level in Southern district of Pakhtunkhwa revealed that there is significance relation between school Library and students' academic achievement. A study carried out by Aderanti and Amuda (2015) on perceived influence of information sources availability and use on the academic performance of secondary school students in a Nigerian Metropolitan City found that there is significant relationship between the information sources availability and use, and academic performance. Ayaz et al. (2017) and Aderanti and Amuda (2015)s' studies did not specifically address the relationship between previous examination papers and academic performance. Hence, the current study extends knowledge in the area of academic performance.

Furthermore, the results showed that self-given homework also has influence on academic performance. The findings revealed that students who undertook homework themselves had better academic performance as compared to those who did not. These results implied that doing homework helped students to understand the subject better, thus improving their performance. This is also concordant with the works of Castaño-Muñoz, Duarte and Sancho-Vinuesa (2014) who studied the interactive learning and the findings revealed that increasing the time devoted to studying online is only improve academic achievement when it takes place as some form of interactive learning. Furthermore, using the library and student-run study

groups were also found very helpful in this study to improve academic performance. When students used the library, this assisted them to gather resources that were helpful, thus impacting on their performance. Similarly, a study carried out by El-Seoud, Taj-Eddin, Seddiek, Ghenghesh and El-Khouly (2014) on the impact of e-learning on Egyptian higher education found that the use of interactive features of e-learning increases the motivation of undergraduate students for the learning process. Likewise, a study carried out by Van Der Berg et al. (2011) indicated that the use of the library has a positive impact on students' academic performance as it improves student vocabulary, grammar, writing and spelling skills. In addition, a study conducted by Castaño-Muñoz, Duart and Sancho-Vinuesa (2014) found that student-run study groups have a significant positive impact on academic achievement as lower performing students benefit from those students with higher. El-Seoud et al. (2014), Van Der Berg et al. (2011) and Castaño-Muñoz et al. (2014)s' studies did not specifically address the library and student-run study groups and student academic achievement. Hence, the current study adds new knowledge in the area of student academic performance.

In addition, the results revealed that part-time students confirm that having printed textbooks is helpful when it comes to their academic performance. Furthermore, student-run groups were also found to be important in improving student performance, especially where third-year students are concerned. This is in line with similar study by Karemera, Reuben and Sillah (2003) on the effects of academic environment and background characteristics on student satisfaction and performance revealed that satisfaction with academic environment and services are significantly correlated with college performance. Likewise, a study conducted by Abbasi and Mir (2012) on the impact of teacher's ability, student's work ethics and institutional environment on student performance of University of Gujrat found that work ethics has no significant impact on students' performance. Karemera et al. (2003) and Abbasi and Mir (2012)s' studies did not specifically address the difference between printed textbooks and academic performance. Hence, the current study adds new knowledge in the area of academic performance. However, the findings revealed that some students do not use the provided facilities, such tutorials and library. The findings of this study were also in agreement with a study conducted by Abbasi and Mir (2012) on the impact of teacher's ability, student's work ethics and institutional environment on student performance of University of Gujrat found that teacher's abilities have no impact on student's performance. Ullah and Farrog (2008) found that the use of the library has a positive impact on students' academic performance as it improves a student's vocabulary, grammar, writing and spelling skills. Abbasi and Mir (2012) and Ullah and Farrog (2008)s' studies did not specifically address learning facilities issues. Hence, the current study adds new knowledge in the area learning facilities.

CONCLUSION

The purpose was to investigate the factors affecting students' academic performance. The findings revealed that attending tutorials, previous examinations, self- given homework and study groups were the main institutional factors influencing students' performance. The results of this study indicated that the educational level of the parents, income status of the parents and involvement of the parents in the academics the key socio-economic factors that affects the

students' academic performance. However, findings of this study revealed that despite the poor background of some students, they managed to pass their studies and progressed to years 3 and 4. Based on the results of this study, the university management should encourage self-given homework, student-run study groups and library attendance to improve students' academic performance. Lecturers are the crucial drivers of good quality education and should be sufficiently equipped to meet student needs. The key limitation of this study is that it only focused on quantitative research approach. Hence future study may use a qualitative approach to gain deep insights from the students regarding obstacles to academic performance.

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