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**SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING READINESS (SDLR) AND ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE: A STUDY AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

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**Bachelor of Science with Honours (Cognitive Science)
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NAZIRA BINTI HASSAN

**This project is submitted
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a
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The project entitled Self-directed learning readiness (SDLR) and academic performance: a study among university students was prepared by Nazira Binti Hassan and submitted to the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Sciences with HonourS (Cognitive Science).

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ABSTRACT

Introduction. This study aimed to find out the relationship between Self-directed Learning Readiness (SDLR) and Academic Performance: A Study among University Students.

Method. The sample consists of 100 students from the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development (FSCHD). All the respondents were from the first, second, and third year of Cognitive Science students.

Pearson Correlation is the method that is used to test the relationship.

Results. There is no relationship between Self-directed Learning Readiness with student's academic performance.

Conclusion. Students' academic performance and gender are not related to SDLR while student's current studies related to SDLR as there is a significant relationship between SDLR with student's current studies.

Keywords: *Self-directed Learning Readiness, Academic Performance, Self-Control, Desire for Learning, Self-management*

ABSTRAK

Pengenalan. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui hubungan antara Kesediaan Pembelajaran Berarah Sendiri (SDLR) dan Prestasi Akademik: Satu Kajian di Kalangan Pelajar Universiti.

Kaedah. Sampel terdiri daripada 100 pelajar dari Fakulti Sains Kognitif dan Pembangunan Manusia (FSCHD). Kesemua responden adalah dari pelajar Sains Kognitif tahun satu, kedua dan ketiga. Pearson Correlation adalah kaedah yang digunakan untuk menguji hubungan.

Keputusan. Tidak ada hubungan antara Kesediaan Pembelajaran Berarah Sendiri dengan prestasi akademik pelajar.

Kesimpulannya. Prestasi akademik dan jantina pelajar tidak berkaitan dengan SDLR sementara kajian semasa pelajar berkaitan dengan SDLR kerana terdapat hubungan yang signifikan antara SDLR dengan kajian semasa pelajar.

Kata kunci: *Kesediaan Pembelajaran Berarah Sendiri, Prestasi Akademik, Kawalan Diri, Keinginan untuk Belajar, Pengurusan Kendiri*

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Akkilagunta et al. (2019) established the concept of self-direction through the active engagement of students in all phases of learning, from defining the learning objectives to the evaluation process. Self-directed learning readiness is characterized as the degree to which the individual possesses the attitudes, talents, and personality features required for self-directed learning (Örs, 2018).

Malaysian higher-learning institutions recognize the importance of self-directed learning (SDL) as expected by 21st-century learners. Educators are the facilitators of student learning and producers of meaningful content in the classroom, as innovation and creativity have been emphasized in the classroom sense (Nordin et al., 2016).

According to a study conducted by Pham & Renshaw (2013), Asian teachers were reluctant to allow students to participate in the learning process as involved and independent learners. For many years, spoon feeding through heavy lectures or teacher-centric approach has been the traditional method of teaching in classroom. New development in educational environments such as flipped classrooms, where students have to be able to deal with resources, show independence and be self-disciplined to be successful in their academic outcomes, has placed high demands on learners to be more responsible in their learning (Fahnoe & Mishra, 2013).

However, students are still being spoon-fed. This problem has negatively affected the students themselves because they will lack critical thinking skills and problem-solving abilities that essential to have a better performance in academics. Nevertheless, to address those issues, perhaps a study that investigates self-directed learning readiness (SDLR) and academic performance among university students by Quantitative method could help resolve the situation. Additionally, self-directed learning (SDL) is seen as an effective mode of learning for college students (Prabjane, 2013), but there is still a lack of empirical evidence to assess college student readiness in SDL, especially in the local context.

Many researchers have been done to the different types of learning approaches like problem-solving learning, self-regulated learning, and others. However, some researchers indicated a high tendency for university students to choose self-directed learning as a learning approach for adult students. This is because they can learn at their own pace and handle their learning based on their set learning goals or objectives. Research conducted by Park et al . (2005) stated that first and second year medical students regarded self-directed learning as the most successful form of learning for them to acquire broader knowledge as compared to other active modes of learning such as problem-based learning and team-based learning.

The university undergraduates are expected by the lecturers or professors to be able to in-charge or take their responsibility in their learning because they are more mature and possess critical thinking skills than the younger learners due to the learning environment requirement. They are also expected to be independent and responsible in their learning and decision making as well. Adult students are more complex and have more sophisticated insights, they always bring the knowledge that has learned in the classroom to apply in their career; skills developed at home and work; and also turn the experiences of a wide variety of relationships into learning. They are more likely to see how ideas can become actions and theory can become practice.

This chapter relates to the study context, problem statement, research goals, research questions , research theories, conceptual structure and interpretation of words, study limitation, and study significance.

1.1 Background of the Study

Lounsbury et al. (2009) give an overview of the history of Self-driven learning (SDL); Self-directed learning is "a willingness to participate in learning activities where the person is more involved in actively designing and carrying out learning practices without being supported or influenced by others (such as a instructor, parent or peer)" (Lounsbury et al., 2009, p. 411). Atmojo (2013) stated that as students become more independent in learning, not only the application of problem-based learning can increase student interest in lectures (Muhson, 2009) but an increase in quality learning also. Therefore, SDL is an important skill that needs to be had by students (Conradie, 2014).

Based on Cazan and Schiopca (2014), all individuals able to have self-directed learning, but their degree of development is different because of their differences, which include a desire to learn, self-esteem, openness to experience and intelligence. Self-directed learning plays an important role in education, as it helps students to get good academic results and performance. The term 'self-directed learning' is viewed as an effective mode of learning for college students. This is because learning in college requires students to be self-directed were they capable of conducting such learning at whatever time or place it is (Cohen as cited in Prabjanee et al., 2013). Self-directed learning is a required skill for students and staff to remain lifelong learners (Örs, 2018). Throughout the literature it was discussed in terms of two things, the mechanism and the personal characteristic. It is a process that centers on the autonomy of the learner during the learning process. While, it focuses on the ability of the learner to arrange the process of learning in terms of personal traits (Song & Hill cited in Örs, 2018).

Self-directed learning is one of the effective modes of learning for students , particularly for college students because college learning requires self-directed students (Prabjanee et al., 2013). Teachers should also use SDL to inspire students to learn independently, and encourage students to be more accountable in learning and studying (Rahman, 2017).

In Fisher et al. (2001) writing the word 'self-directed learning readiness' started to appear. The researchers believed that the notion of self-directed learning readiness explores the degree to which the self-directed learner takes personal responsibility and understands the independence associated with learning what is important to the individual. The degree of control depends upon the attributes, behaviors, and skill of the learner's personality. Meanwhile, according to Ramli et al. (2018), Self-directed learning readiness (SDLR) is defined as the level of readiness or ability of a person to learn independently consisting of three components namely attitude, ability, and personal characteristics (Fisher & King, 2010). In short, learners hold a responsibility to stimulate self-direction and assure that they are capable to direct their learning for personal development in an initiative way.

Several researchers have done their work on the readiness of self-directed learning about factors such as age, gender and academic performance by using the Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale to help students become conscious of their self-directed learning choice. In 2009 Fisher and King updated the Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale and validated it. This sacrifices 29 items divided into three major categories: self-management (10 items), learning ability (9 items) and self-management (10 items).

There was a statistical disparity between a male and a female student regarding self-management, motivation for learning, and complete readiness for self-directed learning (RSDL) score according to Taha and Elgzar (2019). It shows that, compared to a male student, most female students have high self-management, desire for learning, and total RSDL score. In comparison, relative to the female students, male students have strong self-control. A research by Ramli et al. (2018) shows that SDLR does not impact the academic performance of the students in terms of academic achievement.

There are several studies in the literature concerning preparation for self-directed learning. All the research, however, centered more on the medical field area as did students from other fields such as nursing students. The present research appears to be relevant in terms of contributing to other areas such as the Cognitive Science course. The nature of Cognitive Science studies may differ from medical fields hence this begins to address the gaps. Cognitive Science is an interdisciplinary subject, integrating humanities and hard science study into the human mind. Thus, this course is not only a topic but also a mindset that allows people to draw from what had learned and made connections between what we know. Hence, the results of this study are expected to contribute to the self-efficiency of the understanding of the importance of lifelong learning , especially in Cognitive Science students.

1.2 Problem Statements

Self-directed learning readiness (SDLR) is a skill required for learners in the 21st century. Learners should be held accountable for their learning. Higher education students are required to concentrate more on active learning in Malaysia, as in other countries, than a passive approach to learning. This is because they are more mature and possess higher critical thinking skills than younger learners due to the learning environment requirement.

Education has a problem where most Asian teachers or educators are unwilling to empower students to participate as active and independent learners in the learning process (Pham & Renshaw, 2013). The traditional method, such as spoon feeding through heavy lectures or teacher-centered approach, has been used in classroom teaching for many years. Despite new developments in educational landscapes, such as flipped classrooms, high expectations have been placed on learners to be more accountable in their learning (Fahnoe & Mishra, 2013), spoon feeding still occurs. For example, providing lecture notes and learning materials to the students and assume the students will learn on their own.

This problem has negatively affected the students themselves because they will lack critical thinking skills and problem-solving abilities that essential to have a better performance in academics. A possible cause of this problem is spoon-feeding. Nevertheless, to address those issues, perhaps a study that investigates self-directed learning readiness (SDLR) and academic performance among undergraduates' students by a quantitative and convenience sampling technique could help resolve the situation. This study also attempts to find out the relation between SDLR and students' gender and year of studies. The results of this study could give knowledge to educators, who then can plan instructions tailored to students' SDLR.

1.3 Research Objectives

1.3.1 General Objective:

The general purpose of this research is to investigate the relationship between self-directed learning readiness (SDLR) and academic performance among university students.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives:

1. To examine the significant relationship between self-directed learning readiness (SDLR) and academic performance among university students.
2. To examine the significant difference between self-directed learning readiness (SDLR) based on a student's gender.
3. To examine the significant difference between self-directed learning readiness (SDLR) across years of studies.

1.4 Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between Self-directed Learning Readiness (SDLR) and students' academic performance.
2. There is no significant difference between Self-directed Learning Readiness (SDLR) based on students' gender.
3. There is no significant difference between Self-directed Learning Readiness (SDLR) across years of studies.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

This framework illustrates the relationship between Self-directed Learning Readiness (SDLR) with student's academic performance. This framework will be used to develop questions and hypotheses for this study.

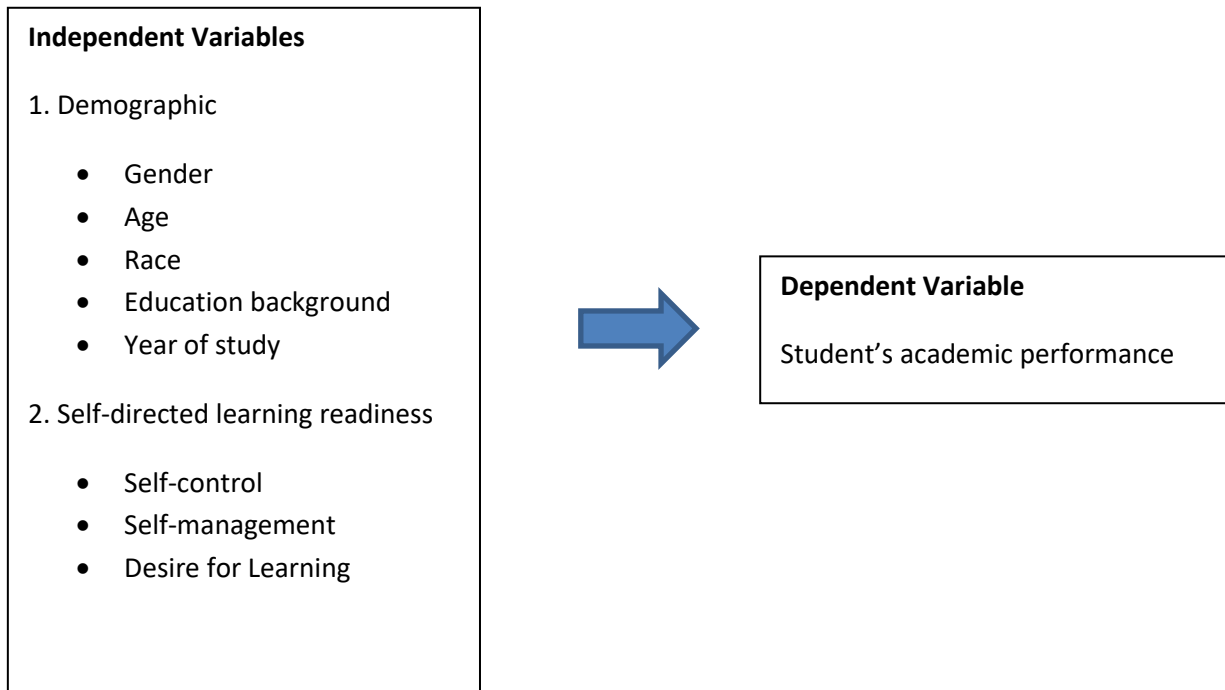


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

1.6 Definition of Terms

Table 1

Definition of Terms

Terms	Conceptual Definition	Operational Definition
<p>Self-directed Learning Readiness (SDLR)</p>	<p>A cycle whereby individuals, with or without the support of others, take the initiative, in diagnosing their own learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material sources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes (Knowles as cited by Prabjanee, 2013). Guglielmino (2008) argued that self-directed learning, when faced with obstacles, is an inherent, fundamental and normal characteristic of human beings, and this characteristic differs according to the spectrum, depending on situations.</p>	<p>Level of preparedness of students for independent study. SDLR was expressed by using a self-directed learning readiness scale developed by Akkilagunta et al. (2019). The Abridged 29-item self-directed learning readiness scales comprise of 29 items divided under three domains: self- control, self-management, and desire for learning. The objects rank from 1 to 5 on a Likert scale.</p>

<p>Self-control</p>	<p>Self-control is closely related to learner control, self-monitoring, and self-efficacy (Vess, 2015). Learner management refers to "reflecting on specific learning needs, formulating learning goals (with qualified faculties as appropriate), and choosing and implementing desired learning types, strategies, and activities" (Bulik, 2009, p.52).</p>	<p>Self-control is operationalized to include the following statements. "I like to make decisions for myself, I prefer to set my criteria on which to evaluate my performance, and I have high beliefs in my abilities" (Akkilagunta et al., 2019).</p>
<p>Self-management</p>	<p>This refers to the skills by which the person can direct his potentialities and activities toward the achievement of specific goals. It is concerned with how to set goals, design plans, tasks scheduling and tracking, decision making, managing time, and self-evaluation (Omisakin & Ncama, 2011).</p>	<p>Self-management is operationalized to include the following statements "I am self-disciplined, I manage my time well, I set specific times for my study, and I am organized" (Akkilagunta et al., 2019).</p>

<p>Desire for learning</p>	<p>Desire-to-learn, according to Merriam & Bierema (2014), means learning for the love of intellectual challenge, or the desire to master a topic, or practice for the satisfaction it brings "(p. 147)</p>	<p>Anyone with a strong desire to know should be in agreement with these statements (Akkilagunta et al. (2019) : “I will ask for help in my learning when necessary, I am open to new learning opportunities, I am open to new ideas, and When presented with a problem I cannot resolve, I will ask for assistance”.</p>
<p>Academic Performance</p>	<p>Academic performance represents performance outcomes that indicate the degree to which a individual has achieved specific goals that have been the focus of activities in educational environments , especially in schools , colleges and universities (Steinmayr et al., 2014).</p>	<p>Academic performance was measure by using self-reported academic performance that was developed by Gedefaw et al. (2015).</p>

1.7 Limitations of Study

Barriers are a constraint, or issues arise when the work is performed. The drawback of this analysis in terms of the method employed is about the survey's self-reported existence. Interpretation should be performed carefully as this study is focused on the assumptions of the participants regarding themselves rather than their actual behaviors. This research then focused on three SDLR factors; the factors are self-control, self-management and learning desire. This study did not consider other potential factors that could affect the academic performance of the students. Cultural history, teacher skills, and socio-economic status for example.

1.8 Significance of Study

This research was aimed at finding out whether self-directed learning readiness (SDLR) is influencing the academic performance of a student. The present research tends to be significant in terms of contributing to make up in other fields such as the Cognitive Science course. The nature of Cognitive Science studies maybe differs from medical fields hence this begins to address the gaps. Cognitive Science is an interdisciplinary subject, integrating humanities and hard science study into the human mind. Thus, this course is not only a topic but also a mindset that allows people to draw from what had learned and made connections between what we know. Hence, the results of this study are expected to contribute to the self-efficiency of the understanding of the importance of lifelong learning , especially in Cognitive Science students.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides the previous information on meanings and interpretations relevant to the subject of this research, Self-directed learning readiness, academic performance, gender, and year of studies. This chapter also offers previous information on the relationship between Self-directed learning readiness with students' academic performance, gender, and year of studies.