

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the preceding chapters, we have identified student's characteristics and background variables, past academic achievement and behavioral factors which influence the academic performance of the pre-university students in a private college. In addition, the gross and net effects of these variables were analyzed.

In this chapter, a summary of the significant variables and their relative effects will be presented. Further discussion will be focused on the findings and implications of this survey. Lastly, suggestions and recommendations will be made on the directions and measures that can be taken to improve academic performance in higher education.

#### **5.2 SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS**

Pre-university academic performance varies according to student's characteristics and background factors such as gender, family size, medium of instruction at former school and parent's educational level. The explanatory power of student's characteristics and background factors on academic achievement in 'A' Level and SAM examinations is relatively low, explaining up to 11% and 26% of the variance in the examination results respectively. The variances were mainly explained by parent's educational level. Data

indicate that parental influence is more significant among SAM students than 'A' Level students.

Pre-university academic performance correlates strongly with previous academic results. Past academic achievement has a very strong positive correlation with current academic performance. The model which include; the SPM aggregate could explain 80% and 68% of the variance in 'A' Level and SAM examination results respectively. This indicates that the best predictor for pre-university academic performance is academic achievement at secondary level.

Pre-university academic performance was examined in relation to study behavior construct variables, based on the number of hours spent for self-study, and participation in study group or tuition group, and perception of workload and perceived usefulness of the course. The analysis shows that almost all the study behavioral factors (except for the perception of workload) are not associated with academic performance at pre-university level. Overall, the study behavioral factors explain only a very small proportion of the variance in the academic performance in 'A' Level and SAM examinations.

The weak association of study behavioral and social behavioral factors with academic performance at pre-university level is at variance with those found at primary and secondary levels. This warrants a more detailed investigation, on a larger sample with improved methodology in measuring the study behavior.

### 5.3 DISCUSSION

In this section, a few issues will be highlighted and recommendations will be suggested for the consideration by the policy makers in order to improve the educational system, especially at the tertiary level.

At pre-university level, past academic achievement seems to have the strongest impact on student's academic achievement at the pre-university level. It implies that education is a continuous process, the new knowledge is built on the foundation of past knowledge. In order to produce good results at higher educational level, the young ones should be provided with quality education at the primary and secondary school levels. Strategies should be formulated to upgrade the schools especially those in the less developed areas. Young children should be given equal opportunity in educational facilities in order that the underprivileged groups would not lag behind. The disadvantaged children usually come from rural areas, and they require the attention of education authorities in terms of financial resources and better physical facilities. With the help of computers and internet, concerted efforts can be made to narrow the gap between rural and urban students.

Students from families with better educated parents tend to perform better than those whose parents have lower level of education. Highly educated parents have higher earning capacity and can provide their children with better educational facilities. In addition, they usually show greater interest and involvement in their children's study.

Both the material and emotional support exert a strong influence on the level of achievement and maximize the ability of the children. The government, besides implementing the socio-economic programmes to alleviate poverty, which will normally take a long period of time, should also educate the parents to realize the importance of education. Warm home and supportive parents are favorable conditions for the pursuit of knowledge. Smart parenting is the one of the most important factors in nurturing the future generation.

Another important observation in this study was the existence of a group of young students, aged 16 only. They joined the college with excellent secondary school results, and graduated with excellent pre-university results as well. However, all of these better students are from the private schools or international schools where students with extraordinary scholastic ability are recognized. They are given special attention and allowed to go through a faster process of schooling. As a developing country, we require leaders of intellect and expertise to lead our nation towards 2020. Our educational system should be reviewed in order to be more flexible. Young intellectuals should have more challenging educational programmes to develop their talents.

#### 5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND SUGGESTIONS

This study, carried out in a private college, consists of a homogeneous sample. Students are mainly from middle class families. Almost half of their parents have tertiary education, which is not a true reflection of our society. This has not permitted one to capture enough variables for the analysis. The sample is not a good representative of pre-university students in Malaysia, as there were very few Malays. This research project has only studied the academic performance of a sub-group of the pre-university students in Malaysia.

In addition, the questionnaire being used in this study was found to be inadequate. With contrary to expectation, the time spent for self-study does not have any effects on academic performance. Students should be given a clearer definition of 'time for self-study' as 'time spent for doing homework, revision, discussion, etc and exclude time spent for lecture and tutorial'. Students should be given options to choose from, such as 0-5 hours, 5-10 hours and etc, to avoid errors in answering the questions.