

The New Students Adaptation to University

Mohamad Kamil Ariff Khalid, Normala Ismail, Jolin Norshyme Hashim, Azeni Abu Bakar
Faculty of Business Management
Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Pahang, Kampus Raub
Pahang, Malaysia
kamildk@pahang.uitm.edu.my

Abstract—Adaptation among new students at the university plays an important role in determining their success at university. The study showed that adjustment problems are one of the reasons students fail to complete their study. The sample size of the study consist of 143 First Semester Diploma students in the Faculty of Business Management studies at University Teknologi MARA Pahang, Raub Campus. The instrument used is questionnaires. There are four subscales designed to measure the effectiveness of student adjustment to university that are academic adjustment, social adjustment, personal (emotional) adjustment and institutional commitment. The study indicated that adaptability on campus has a relationship with psychosocial abilities possessed by the students. Among the psychosocial abilities which have a positive and significant impact on student adjustment is emotional intelligence, coping and social support. All three of these psychosocial capabilities were found to play an important role in helping students adjust and perform at the university. Thus, the university must take proactive steps to develop emotional intelligence, coping and social support among new students to improve their adaptability.

Keywords—students; university; adjustments

I. INTRODUCTION

To pursue higher education deserves a recognition that is encouraging and rewarding for students. However, many new students are not able to face the challenges of life on campus and hence could not complete their study [1]. Past research shows that many students cannot continue their studies to the second semester because they could not handle various problems encountered on campus. [2] Reported that 40% of students enrolled in four-year programs in the United States failed to earn a degree and 57% leaves the university before the fall session of the second year of study. A study conducted by [3] reported that the transition from secondary education to higher education is a difficult experience for most first year students. This condition causes them to face adjustments problems on campus. New students are often confronted with personal and interpersonal challenges in the new university. Among the challenges that may become a source of stress to new students include planning for their future, struggling with exams and assignments, dealing with lecturers, choosing area of specialization and learning to be independent financially and emotionally. Failure to address these challenges may affect their academic performance and could be a major cause of students leaving their university [4].

In fact, research shows that the first six weeks on campus is a critical period in determining the retention of students at universities [5]. Past study conducted locally also found that students also cannot escape the problem of adjustment. For example, [6] reported that the main problems faced by new students at Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) are financial, academic, health, social and personal problems.

Adjustment problems among new students and their failure to complete their studies raised an important concern considering that these students were selected based on their good or excellent academic achievement at the pre-university level. According to [2], there are seven main factors which caused students withdrawals from the program are academic difficulties, adaptation, vague goals, commitments, financial issues, incompatibilities between students and institutions and isolation.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

While previous studies show that adjustment issues can cause pressure and challenges to new students. Such studies have never been conducted at the Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). This issue cannot be underestimated as it can be a critical phase that could influence students' subsequent academic achievement. Thus, this study should be conducted at UiTM level to have a better understanding of the actual experience students go through during the adjustment phase. By having better understanding of the real situation, it will help students to achieve success. It will be a major disadvantage for UiTM if problems like this have a negative impact on the students' academic achievement. As it is known, only selected students who perform well academically will continue their studies at UiTM. Hopefully, the academic potential possessed by these outstanding students can be maintained and developed despite the occurrence of institutional change.

III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To examine the extend of adjustment among Semester One students of the Faculty of Business Management (FBM) at UiTM Pahang, Raub Campus

- To assess the relationship between the components of adjustments among Semester One students in the FBM at UiTM Pahang, Raub Campus.

IV. VARIABLE DEFINITIONS AND MEASUREMENT

A. Academic Adjustment

Academic adjustment is made up of demands in academic education that must be met by the students [7]. In this study, it covers aspects such as motivation (attitude and motivation toward goal and academic tasks), application (the extent to which motivation is reflected in the efforts of actual academic or the success of academic requirement met by the students), performance (the effectiveness of academic function) and academic environment (satisfaction the academic environment at the university).

B. Social Adjustment

Social adjustment means demands in terms of students' participation in social activities [7]. In this study, it includes relationships with others on campus, contact with family members after being away from them as well as fulfilling the social environment at the university including the satisfaction of the dormitory and extracurricular activities offered.

C. Personal (Emotional) Adjustment

Personal (emotional) adjustment is the claim of psychological and physical aspects of the students' ability [7]. From the psychology aspects, the demands that must be met are as emotional stability, control feelings and thoughts, stress and anxiety. From physical aspects, the demands faced by the students include physical fitness, sleep, appetite and weight conditions.

D. Institutional Adjustment

Institutional adjustment requires students to establish a degree of satisfaction with education in general and in particular to the university the students are studying [7]. It is also called institutional commitment. In this study, satisfaction is evaluated based on the students' commitment to the goals of the institution, the quality of education and the relationship built between the students and the university.

V. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

H1: There is a significant relationship between institutional commitments with academic adjustment.

H2: There is a significant relationship between institutional commitments with personal (emotional) adjustment.

H3: There is a significant relationship between institutional commitments with social adjustment.

H4: There is a significant relationship between personal (emotional) adjustments with academic adjustment.

H5: There is a significant relationship between personal (emotional) adjustments with social adjustment.

H6: There is a significant relationship between social adjustment and academic adjustment.

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This is a field research based on cross sectional study in which one or more independent variables and dependent variables are studied among UiTM students. The unit of analysis consists of students who responded to the survey.

B. Population and Sample

The study population consisted of students in the FBM taking Diploma at UiTM Pahang, Raub Campus. The study also used the stratified random sampling taken from different groups of the population sample which composed of students taking Diploma in Banking Management (DIB) and Diploma in Business Management (DBS) studies programs. The sampling consists of Semester One students' from June to October 2016 study sessions. According to the Students' Academic Affairs Division (BHEA) of UiTM Pahang, Raub Campus, the total number of student intake in the FBM was 289. Referring to Krejcie and Morgan's Sampling and Population Table [8], the selected sample size is a total of 169 students. The distribution of sampling consists of 49.7% students from the DIB study program and 50.3% from the DBS program.

C. Data Collection Technique

Based on the objectives of the study, a quantitative approach using a questionnaire is used to obtain the research data. The instrument was administered when students were in Semester One before they sit for their first Semester Final Examination. The data collection was conducted face to face between the researcher and the study sample. The samples were collected in the classroom and the respondents were given twenty minutes to answer the questionnaire. The respondents were also briefed on the objectives and procedures of the research. Since the number of students is different in each classroom, the sample size for each program is also different. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed. Of these, 169 questionnaires were used for further analysis, while 31 questionnaires could not be used because they were incomplete. The questionnaire consisted of two parts, Part A on demographic information (personal) and Part B is related to adjustment disclosures which is measured by using survey items constructed by Byrd and Macdonald [7].

VII. FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Data from this study were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. The findings and results of the study are as follows:

A. Descriptive Data

Of the 169 respondents, 45.5% were male and 54.5% were women. 99.1% of them aged between 17-20 years and the remainder is over 21 years. In terms of races, 97.7% of the respondents are Malays and 2.1% are others. 48.3% of the respondents are from urban areas and 51.7% of them are from rural areas. 25.2% of the respondents had a family income between RM1,001-RM1,500, 7.7% between RM1,501-RM2,000, 5.6% between RM2,001-RM3,000 and 11.2% earns RM3,001 and above.

In terms of education, 62.2% of the respondents are from urban secondary schools and 37.8% are from rural secondary schools. The type of secondary school attended by the respondents also differs in which 15.4% were from residential schools, 71.3% from the government secondary schools and 13.3% from other types of school. The respondents also attended different streams of classes where 32.2% of them are from the science stream, 48.3% are from the arts stream and 19.6% from other streams. The findings showed that majority of the respondents are good and average students. They performed well at the Peperiksaan Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) level in 2015. 53.7% of the respondents scored between 5As-7As, 37.2% between 3As-4As, 7.7% between 1A-2As and the remaining 1.4% gains 8As and above.

B. Validity Analysis

The validity of sixty-six items of the adjustment disclosures which is coordinated from 1 = do not closely related to me to 9 = closely related to me shows that the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is significant to measure the adequacy of the sampling size. The Kaiser-Meyer-Ohlin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy is 0.906 as illustrated in Table I.

TABLE I. KMO AND BARTLETT'S TEST

Kaiser-Meyer-Ohlin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.906
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	408.952
	D.F.	143
	Sig.	0.000

Communality among variables is based on the method of Principle Axis Factoring (PAF). Results showed that all items have commonality more than 0.30. In the early stages, the total variance is explained in three stages. There are five factors with eigenvalues between 1.131-11.827 and the percentage explained is between 4.790-42.238. Referring to the eigenvalues given, it is estimated that there are four factors that will be extracted with eigenvalues greater than 1 respectively. If the four factors are extracted, 65.189% of the variance could be explained. The second stage shows the total variance explained in the final stage. The eigenvalues for the four factors have been

reduced between 0.734-11.445 with cumulative percentage variance of this factor has decreased to 57.975%. Finally, the third stage shows eigenvalues of each factor and total variance after each rotation. The eigenvalues changed between 1.893-4.798 with a cumulative 57.975% of the variance remains.

Next, the Varimax rotation method was used to produce the matrix that contains the coefficients or loading factors which represents the correlation between the factors and variables. The results show that there are some genuine variables that have a capacity of more than 0.30 at only one factor. The genuine variable Factor 1 consists of twenty-four items with a load factor between 0.491-0.798, Factor 2 consists of twenty items with a load factor between 0.445-0.697, Factor 3 is made up of fifteen items with a load factor between 0.366-0.771 and Factor 4 consists of seven items with factor loadings between 0.720-0.726. To meet the purpose of the study, these four factors are encoded with new names. Factor 1 as Academic Adjustment (Academic), Factor 2 as Social Adjustment (Social), Factor 3 as Personal (Emotional) Adjustment (Personal) and Factor 4 Institutional Commitment (Institution).

C. Reliability Analysis

The Cronbach's Alpha reliability measurement technique is used in this study. The results of the reliability analysis of each dimension are Academic Adjustment (0.893), Social Adjustment (0.808), Personal (Emotional) Adjustment (0.828) and Institutional Commitment (0.793). Each variable achieved an acceptable value according to [9] which requires at least 0.700 and above.

D. Correlation Analysis

Table II shows the results of Pearson correlation. The study found a significant positive correlation between academic adjustment with social adjustment (0.537), personal (emotional) adjustment (0.772) and institutional commitment (0.560) at $\alpha = 0.01$ (two-tailed test). This means that academic adjustment is important in determining students' academic success. If the students' social adjustment, personal (emotional) adjustment and institutional commitment are stable, the more likely they are to achieve academic success [10].

TABLE II. PEARSON CORRELATION RESULTS

	Academic	Social	Personal	Institution
Academic	1.000			
Social	0.537**	1.000		
Personal	0.772**	0.465**	1.000	
Institution	0.560**	0.570**	0.585**	1.000

** Correlation is significant at $\alpha = 0.01$ (two-tailed test)

A significant positive correlation was also found between social adjustment with personal (emotional) adjustment (0.465) and institutional commitment (0.570) at $\alpha = 0.01$ (two-tailed test). This means that students' academic performance will be affected if they are emotionally unstable [4]. Finally, a significant positive correlation was found between personal (emotional) adjustment with institutional commitment (0.585) at $\alpha = 0.01$ (two-tailed test). It is possible that students will be successful if the quality of the relationship that is built between them and the university is good [10].

E. Regression Analysis

The first analysis takes academic adjustment as the dependent variable while social adjustment, personal (emotional) adjustment and institutional commitment as independent variables. The value of the coefficient of determination (R²) is 0.58. This means that 58% of the variation in academic adjustment can be explained by social adjustment, personal (emotional) adjustment and institutional commitment. The F-statistics value = 42.049 is greater than the F (3, 139) = 2.60 value for $\alpha = 0.05$. This model is valid at 95% confidence level in determining variation in academic adjustment.

The second analysis takes social adjustment as the dependent variable while personal (emotional) and institutional commitment as independent variables. The value of R² is 0.455. This shows that 45.5% change in social adjustment can be described by personal (emotional) adjustment and institutional commitment. The F-statistics value is 16.504 is greater than the F (2, 138) = 3.00 value for $\alpha = 0.05$. This model is valid at 95% confidence level in determining change in social adjustment.

Finally, the third analysis takes personal (emotional) adjustment as the dependent variable and institutional commitment as the independent variables. The value of R² is 0.216. This means that 21.6% variation in personal (emotional) adjustment is explained by the institutional commitment. Simultaneously, the F-statistics value = 8.81 is greater than the F (1, 137) = 3.01 value for $\alpha = 0.05$. This model is valid at 95% confidence level in determining change in institutional commitment. Overall, the regression model is significant in determining the students' academic adjustments.

F. Hypotheses Testing

H1: The t-test result showed that the t value = 2.936 greater than the value t = 1.96 at degrees of freedom (D.F.) = 101 for $\alpha = 0.05$ (two-tailed test). This indicates that at 95% confidence level, there is a statistically significant relationship between institutional commitments with academic adjustment [4, 10].

H2: The t-test result showed that the t value = 5.92 greater than the value t = 1.96 at D.F. = 101 for $\alpha = 0.05$ (two-tailed test). This indicates that at 95% confidence level, there is a statistically significant relationship between institutional commitments with personal (emotional) adjustment [4, 5].

H3: The t-test result showed that the t value = 3.921 greater than the value t = 1.96 at D.F. = 101 for $\alpha = 0.05$ (two-tailed test). This indicates that at 95% confidence level, there is a statistically significant relationship between institutional commitments with social adjustment [5, 10].

H4: The t-test result showed that the t value = 6.415 greater than the value t = 1.96 at D.F. = 101 for $\alpha = 0.05$ (two-tailed test). This indicates that at 95% confidence level, there is a statistically significant relationship between personal (emotional) adjustments with academic adjustment [4, 10].

H5: The t-test result showed that the t value = 3.799 greater than the value t = 1.96 at D.F. = 101 for $\alpha = 0.05$ (two-tailed test). This indicates that at 95% confidence level, there is a statistically significant relationship between personal (emotional) adjustments with social adjustment [5, 10].

H6: The t-test result showed that the t value = 1.022 smaller than the value t = 1.96 at D.F. = 101 for $\alpha = 0.05$ (two-tailed test). This indicates that at 95% confidence level, there is no statistically significant relationship between social adjustments with academic adjustment [3].

VIII. CONCLUSION

The descriptive analysis showed that majority of the respondents is made up of intelligent students who obtain good SPM results of 5As and above. Reliability analysis results showed that all variables in this study meet the purpose of statistical reliability of the Cronbach's Alpha. Further, the study found that academic adjustment has a significant positive correlation with social adjustment, personal (emotional) adjustment and institutional commitment.

Next, regression analysis results showed that personal (emotional) adjustment factor affects 58% of the academic adjustments. The study also found that personal (emotional) adjustment has a strong influence in shaping the social adjustment of the students [4, 5]. The analysis showed that 45.5% change in the personal (emotional) adjustment affects the social adjustment factor.

Finally, the hypotheses testing results showed that five of the six associations were significant at 95% confidence level with the t-value greater than 1.96 and the hypotheses are accepted. Overall, the study found that personal (emotional) adjustment factor has the highest estimate in this model [4, 6].

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

The adjustment problem among university students is one of the important issues dealt with at the international level as well as local. The focus should not only be on aspects of cognitive (thinking) alone [11]. Students should be exposed to a variety of strategies and resources that can help them accept and react to changes immediately and be more comfortable in facing the adjustment process in order to improve their academic performance [6]. Similar to previous findings, this study also found that adjustment problems have an impact on students' achievement at the diploma level. The indicator that most affect them is academic adjustments such as motivation, application, self-development and feeling of comfortableness with the environment [12].

It is clearly shown here that students who face difficulty with their academic adjustment could lead to negative consequences which may eventually affect their performance [13]. It can be seen from the results of the study that in order to ensure that students are able to adapt comfortably in academic aspects, attention should be given also to the aspects of social adjustment, personal (emotional) adjustment and institutional commitment [12]. A good academic adjustment depends on the students' emotional stability and involvement in social activities in the institution. A stable emotional state means that students are happy with controlled emotion [13].

Therefore, various aspects must be addressed not only by students but also lecturers and management to improve and enhance the adjustment capacity of students at the university to express the desire of UiTM in producing holistic graduates. Finally, in line with the findings, further research is needed to identify steps that can be taken to improve the overall level of students' adjustment in the UiTM system. A qualitative study can also be performed to identify factors that can affect the level of students' adjustment.

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