

THE EFFECTS OF A SOCIAL SUPPORT STRATEGY ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND COPING ABILITIES AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to evaluate the effectiveness of a social support strategy and coping abilities among Malaysian Undergraduate students in one of the university in northern part of Malaysia. Two questions were forwarded, i.e. do Malaysian undergraduates apply social support strategy when facing with academic performance problem, while the second questions is how do male and female undergraduates practice their coping abilities in order to perform in their academic. The research instrument used in this study was the Social Support Strategy Scale (Sullivan, 2010) which contains 14 statements. A total of 200 respondents (100 males and 100 females) made up of undergraduate students from 13 different schools (School of Physics, Housing, Building and Planning, Management, Mathematics, Computer Science, Educational Studies, Chemistry, Social Science, Pharmacy, Biology Science, Technology Industry, Communication, and Humanities) had been randomly chosen as the study sample. The findings showed that 85.57% of the female students and 82.21% of male students agreed that the Social Support Strategy helped them to cope with academic performance problems. The highest score (95%) showed among female students is by talking to their friends to seeking for specific advice to solve their problems, while the lowest score (80%) is referred to talking to another student in order to get an emotional support. On the other hand, the male students did not share their problem with other students (86%) and also they did not seek for any advice from their peers (78%). Besides, the result from the interview analysis also suggested that social support strategy was effective for the Malaysian male and female undergraduate students in helping them to cope up with their academic problems. A few practical recommendations were also forwarded specifically to the higher education department, the university, parents and the students involved.

Keywords: social support, coping ability, academic performance, undergraduate students