

# WAYS OF HANDLING LATE ARRIVING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS

<sup>1</sup>KALAIMAGAL RAMAKRISHNAN, <sup>2</sup>YAP CHIEW LIN, <sup>3</sup>JEYARANI PERIASAMY

<sup>1,2</sup>University of Nottingham

<sup>3</sup>INTI International University

Email: <sup>1</sup>kalaimagal.ramakrishnan@nottingham.edu.my, <sup>2</sup>chiew-in.yap@nottingham.edu.my

<sup>3</sup>jeyarani.periasamy@newinti.edu.my

---

**Abstract**— Each semester there are cases where International students arrive late after the date of enrollment. Failure of fast adapting to this critical situation may adversely affect their academic performance. The current study aims to identify the needs of the late arriving international students towards the academic support, and to evaluate the current academic support provided to them. A total of seventy one late arriving international students and twenty eight academic staff from two Private universities were involved in this study. It is concluded that the majority of late arriving students was satisfied with academic support provided in all the two universities. However, based on the findings, only a small group of the International students managed to overcome the academic dilemma of late arriving.

---

**Keywords**— Academic dilemma, Academic Staff, Higher Learning Institution, International Students.

---

## I. INTRODUCTION

People generally feel emotionally less secure in a new or strange environment (Shertzer and Stone, 1971). When the Higher Learning Institutions (HLIs) students enroll into the university and become members of the institution for the very first time, they generally face a number of adjustment problems, the result of stressful experiences they are subjected to by the environments, events, or situations in their new environment.

Gardner (1986) stressed that, student experiences in their early days in the university serve as the foundation on which the rest of their entire university experience. Colby (2004) suggested that the International students that are attending less than 80% of teaching sessions had a 50% chance of failing, and 67% chance of not getting a first or upper second class mark. The first year student experience has been recognized as important foundational to student success at university (Bridges, 2003). This importance has been extends across personal, social and academic competences (Nelson et al., 2009). The examination performance of tutored students was slightly better than the non-tutored students (Hendriksen et al., 2012). Helping the students to develop self-awareness, self-direction, and self-confidence” gives moresignificant effects (Hendriksen et al., 2012).

A number of problem statements were identified during the preliminary of the study. One of the main issues highlighted during the preliminary research was that, the academic support given is on the ad hoc basis and case to case. This is because, there is no standard written document to refer in the case for late enrolling students. In addition to that, the support offered by various groups of personnel in the universities isthe lack of consistency and it creates multiple standards to the students. There is also an issue with the needs and perceptions of the late

arriving international students towards the academic support, which are not discovered.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Hamblin (1989) stressed that, newly enrolled students may feel confused, tense, threatened, anxious, and even helpless at the beginning of their university life. Student academic performance is inversely correlated with class absenteeism has been reported for various disciplines, including psychology (Jones, 1984), pharmacy (Hidayat et al., 2012), computing and information (Colby, 2004), biomedical sciences (Bevitt et al.,2010). As discussed by the researchers, students who register late do not do as well in their classes and tend not to complete their coursework (Roueche&Roueche, 1994; Sova, 1986). A study by Roueche and Roueche (1993) found that students who register late are more likely to withdraw or fail than students who register on time.

There are three main research questions discussed in this paper. The first question is “What are the needs of the late arriving international students towards the academic support?” The second question is “What are the late arriving international students’ perceptions towards the academic support offered?”. Finally, the paper discusses on “What are the academics’ perceptions towards the academic support delivered to students?”. In order o answer these three research questions, three research objectives wereidentified. The first research objective of this study is to identify the needs of late arriving international students towards the academic support. Secondly, it investigates the late arriving international students’ perceptions towards the academic support offered. Finally, the student investigates the academics’ perceptions towards the academic support delivered to students. For an example, for those students who arrived late, they should be guided carefully either

physically or the university should upload proper guidelines.

### III. METHODOLOGY

The survey included both closed and open-ended questions, including the 7Cs tool which consists of the dimensions of care, control, clarify, challenge, captive, confer, and consolidate, to evaluate the effectiveness of current academic support provided to the late arriving international students. All survey items were measured using 5-point Likert *scale anchored* from, which represents strongly agree to 5 which represents strongly disagree. While all items for students were phrased in positive form, all items for academic staff were phrased in negative form. The data collected was then analysed using descriptive statistics.

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results from the students indicated that 32% of the students enrolled 1-2 weeks late and 34% of the students enrolled late more than two weeks to three weeks. Only 6% of the students enrolled late more than four weeks. When the students were asked on the reasons of late arriving for International students, 74% of the students gave the reason of visa problem. The others gave the reasons of family issues, financial issues, hospitalization and others. Based on the data collected, the students agreed that the academic staff were approachable to discuss their late arriving circumstances ( $M = 2.18$ ). Based on the findings, it also highlighted that the module selection advice was most needed by the majority of students (84%). However, only 58% of the students from all the universities claimed to have received it. Besides that, 67% of the students wished to have additional classes, but only 32% of the students claimed to have them. The results suggested a more intense support is needed in these two areas. The results from 7Cs tool indicated that the effectiveness of the replacement classes were close to neutral response with a mean of 2.45. Overall, 14% students claimed that they did not receive sufficient academic support and only 8% were found unable to overcome the academic dilemma due to late arriving.

When the academicians were asked about the number of late arriving students that they handled, 74% of them highlighted that they are handling at least one late International students in a semester in an academic year.

Based on the academicians' feedback on the ways of handling the late arriving International students, 52% of the staff highlighted that they handled the students based on personal judgement. 56% of the respondents highlighted that they handled the late arriving International students based on the experienced staff advice and 87% of the students handled the late arriving International students based on the Head of

Department or Head of School. Only 45% of the respondents handled the late arriving International students based on the school guideline.

When the respondents were asked about the types of academic support provided by them to their students, 76% of the academic staff claimed that they provided additional classes for late arriving students. 68% of them brief their students on the module to register. Only 38% of them gave module selection advice. Major challenges faced by academic staff in handling late arriving students include students' passive learning attitude ( $M=2.32$ ), difficulty in squeezing lectures in the short time ( $M=2.24$ ), and finding a common slot for replacement classes ( $M=2.18$ ). In addition, academic staff claimed that the late arriving students were partially unable to cope with lectures ( $M=2.93$ ) and coursework ( $M=2.76$ ). In addition to that, the majority of the academic staff (98%) agreed that a standard guideline should be developed.

Students who enroll late met more challenges compared to the earlier admits students, and were perhaps the least equipped to handle the problems. They needed more solutions; some of the younger students had problems of motivation and confidence problems. A few of the advisors reasoned that late enrollees have greater needs than the earlier registered students do.

### CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the majority of late arriving students were satisfied with academic support provided. However, the academic staff would expect a positive learning attitude and better academic performance from late arriving students.

The academicians who participated in this research provided a wealth of information and willingly contributed their proficiency and perceptions. However, the impressions they reported may be deceptive or partisan by individual biases. Further qualitative and quantitative research will be necessary to confirm these characteristics. Future research could extend this survey by including academic staff and students from both private and public universities in Malaysia. Replication of the survey across many different universities of different background may provide a holistic understanding of the problems facing the late arriving international students and preventive measures can be taken to overcome such problems at the institutional level.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Faculty of Science, University of Nottingham (Malaysia Campus)

### REFERENCES

- [1] Bevitt D., Baldwin C., and Calvert J. 2010. Intervening early: attendance and performance monitoring as a trigger

- for first year support in the biosciences. *Bioscience Education*, (15).
- [2] Bridges, W, 2003. *Managing transitions* (2<sup>nd</sup>ed.) Cambridge, MA: Perseus Books Group.
- [3] Colby, J. (2005). Attendance and Attainment-a comparative study. *Innovation in Teaching and Learning in Information and Computer Sciences*, 4(2).
- [4] Ferguson, Ronald, and Danielson C. "How Framework for Teaching and Tripod 7Cs Evidence Distinguish Key Components of Effective Teaching. "*Designing Teacher Evaluation Systems: New Guidance form the Measures of Effective Teaching Project*. Ed. Thomas J. Kane, Kerri A. Kerr, and Robert C. Pianta. Jossey-Bass, July 2014.
- [5] Gardner, J.N. (1986) The freshman year experience. *College and University*, 61, 261–274.
- [6] Hamblin, D. (1989) A pastoral programme. Oxford: Blackwell
- [7] Hendriksen S.I., Yang L., Love B., Hall M.C., 2005. Assessing academic support: The effects of tutoring on student learning outcomes. *Journal of College Reading and Learning* 35(2), Spring, 56-65.
- [8] Hidayat L., Vansal S., Kim E., Sullivan M., and Salbu R. 2012. Pharmacy student absenteeism and academic performance. *American journal of pharmaceutical education*, 76(1).
- [9] Jones, C. H. (1984). Interaction of absences and grades in a college course. *The Journal of Psychology*, 116(1), 133-136.
- [10] Nelson KJ, Duncan M.E., Clarke J.A., 2009. Student success: the identification and support of first year university students at risk of attrition. *Studies in Learning, Evaluation, Innovation and Department*, 6(1). pp 1-15.
- [11] Roueche, J. E., & Roueche, S. D. (1994). Climbing out from between a rock and a hard place: Responding to the challenges of the at-risk student.
- [12] Shertzer, B. & Stone, S.C. (1971) *Fundamentals of Guidance*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mif in Company.
- [13] Sova, A. D. (1986). A study of the success rate of late admits in Freshman English at the two-year college. Binghamton, NY: Inst. for Community College Research. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 275 370).

★ ★ ★