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EXPLORING THE FACTORS INFLUENCING THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE
OF LIBYAN POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to explore the factors that influence the academic performance of Libyan postgraduate students in selected Malaysia universities. A case study qualitative research design was used to answer four research questions. Open-ended interview questions were used to collect data from the 11 participants as a sample of the study using a purposive sampling technique. The qualitative data analysis was used to reflect factors that influence the academic performance of the participants. The results showed that academic satisfaction and self-motivation, customs, religion, and adaptation issues, and political situation in Libya and psychological tension are the contributing factors that influenced the academic performance of Libyan postgraduate students in selected Malaysia universities. The study also found that family responsibilities and psychological pressure, lack of English proficiency skills and academic stress, financial decision and fear of the future, family conflicts and partner attention deficit disorder, and lack of qualifying test before leaving Libya constitute to the factors affecting Libyan students' academic performance. In conclusion, the results of the interview reveal that a number of Libyan postgraduate students are facing some challenges which influenced their academic performance negatively. The implication of this study suggested that higher education authorities in Libya should improve on their system of delegations and more funds should be allocated to all Libya embassies in various countries, so as to cater for the needs of Libya students followed by continuous supervision and suitable training programs before and after leaving the country.





MENEROKA FAKTOR-FAKTOR YANG MEMPENGARUHI PRESTASI AKADEMIK PELAJAR PASCASISWAZAH LIBYA DI MALAYSIA

ABSTRAK

Objektif kajian ini adalah untuk meneroka faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi prestasi akademik pelajar pascasiswazah Libya di universiti-universiti Malaysia yang terpilih. Reka bentuk kajian kes yang berbentuk penyelidikan kualitatif digunakan untuk menjawab empat soalan kajian. Soalan temu bual secara terbuka digunakan untuk mengumpul data daripada sebelas orang peserta sebagai sampel kajian dengan menggunakan teknik persampelan bertujuan. Analisis data kualitatif digunakan untuk menggambarkan faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi prestasi akademik para peserta. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa kepuasan akademik dan motivasi diri, adat, agama, isu penyesuaian, keadaan politik di Libya dan ketegangan psikologi adalah merupakan faktor-faktor penyumbang yang mempengaruhi prestasi akademik pelajar pascasiswazah Libya di universiti-universiti yang terpilih di Malaysia. Kajian ini juga mendapati bahawa tanggungjawab keluarga, tekanan psikologi, kelemahan menguasai kemahiran berbahasa Inggeris, tekanan akademik, keputusan kewangan, ketakutan terhadap masa depan, konflik keluarga, gangguan kekurangan perhatian pasangan dan kelemahan dalam ujian kelayakan sebelum meninggalkan Libya adalah faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi prestasi akademik pelajar-pelajar Libya. Kesimpulannya, hasil temu bual menunjukkan bahawa beberapa orang pelajar pascasiswazah Libya menghadapi cabaran yang mempengaruhi prestasi akademik mereka secara negatif. Implikasi kajian ini mencadangkan agar pihak berkuasa pendidikan tinggi di Libya harus memperbaiki sistem delegasi mereka dan lebih banyak dana diperuntukkan kepada semua kedutaan Libya di pelbagai negara untuk menampung keperluan pelajar-pelajar Libya diikuti oleh penyeliaan berterusan dan beberapa program latihan yang bersesuaian untuk pelajar-pelajar Libya sebelum dan selepas meninggalkan negara.



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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION



1.1 Introduction

Academic performance is the extent to which a student has achieved their short or long-term educational goals (Donnelly, Hillman, Castelli, Etnier, Lee, Tomporowski, & Szabo-Reed, 2016). Cumulative GPA and completion of educational benchmarks such as secondary school diplomas and bachelor's degrees represent academic achievement. Academic achievement is commonly measured through examinations or continuous assessments. Students' academic performance is affected by numerous factor including gender, age, anxiety, stress, environment, motivation, and emotions, teaching faculty, students' schooling, guardian social economic status, meta-reflective thinking and





learning, learning and study skills, engagement versus disengagement, quality of instruction, and socioeconomic status residential area of students, medium of instructions, tuition trend, daily study hour and accommodation (Salloum, Goddard, & Larsen, 2017). Students' academic performance should be viewed as a longitudinal process of interactions between individual students' attributes, for example, skills, financial resources, dispositions, intentions, commitments and characteristics of other members of both the academic and social systems of the institution (Rimfeld, Kovas, Dale & Plomin, 2016). The usefulness of this study lies in the need to investigate likely factors that affecting the academic performance of Libya postgraduate students in Malaysia (Mega, Ronconi & De Beni, 2014).



1.2 Background of Study

Education is as old as human being and there is no nation without any form of education. Education given to anybody is essential to the pace of the economic, political and social development of any nation (Olujuwon, 2002). Participants in the world conference in Jomtien (2006) entitled "Education for all" stated that Education is an inalienable right for everybody, men and women of all ages all over the world. This is why the majority of countries of the world make every effort to allocate some amount of money to the educational sector. For any nation to attain its national aspiration, the citizens are expected to provide with quality education that will be oriented towards instilling value for the worth and dignity of a person; capability to make judicious decision, share





responsibility for the society, moral and spiritual values in interpersonal relationship among others (Onyekuru & Ibegbunam, 2013).

Globalization has instigated students to study out of their own countries especially in Malaysia (Snoubar & Celik, 2013). The purpose of choosing this country is because of better condition of educational advantage that would be gained when compared to their home country, at the same time, both the students and countries that provide quality education will have mutual benefits. According to the statistics released by (MoHE (2011) that in the global market, international student seeking for knowledge is increasing with over 3.3 million. For about five decades, there was sharp declining of students who go to UK, US, Canada and Australia for education. Presently, China, Malaysia and Singapore have become a citadel of learning for international students (Verbik & Lasanowski, 2007). However, this trend has contributed immensely to some countries in Asian continent while enrolment of international students in Malaysia seems to be very high.

Moreover, according to the data released by the Ministry of higher education in Malaysia revealed that 80,000 international students are receiving the education in Malaysia (MoHE, 2011). The Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education projected that the number of International Students will increase geometrically by the year 2009 to 2012. Currently, the number of international students who studied in Malaysia was 170,068 (MoHE, 2018). This huge figure will accrue more income for Malaysian government. Now, Malaysia has 20 public funded universities, 37 private universities and university colleges and private universities are 69 respectively. The government universities and private





universities are competing for international students. This is because of slight reduction in government fund to the universities that pave way for universities to continue recruiting international students (Abdullahi, 2006, Jina, Sinha, & Saheney, 2011). In fact, Malaysia is noted for citadel of learning for the international students. Majority of Malaysian universities were rated low in world ranking of universities in 2014, this might be the cause of increment in the number of international students- Source?

It is undeniable that students' academic performance is of paramount concern to Libyan government as any visionary government striving for the future prospect of its country would actively put in place a sound education for its citizens, hence, the Libyan government sponsors some students outside the country because there is the need to transform the country and compete with other developing countries that have developed in education. Academic performance of these students will determine the future direction of the country. As a matter of such importance, Libyan government sponsors some students to continue their higher studies in some of the Malaysian universities. As documented by the Libyan embassy in Malaysia, It was mentioned that some students are facing academic problems which needed to be addressed. Thus, the present study is designed to investigate the factors that influence the academic achievement of Libyan students in the Malaysian universities.





Table 1.1

Projection on International Students into the Malaysian Higher Education Institutions

Year	2009		2010		2011		2012		2015	2017
	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private		Public
Projection	19895	54474	22741	61589	25587	68704	28433	75819		170,068
Total	74369		84330		94291		104252		150000	

Source: http://www.mohe.gov.my/web_statistik/

The Table 1 above shows the projection made by the government of Malaysia through its Ministry of Higher Education to utilize the advantage of globalization concept in the area of educational policy. In the Table, Malaysia experienced a staggering influx of 74,369 foreign students from different parts of the world into the country as initial intake. In the next 3 years, the population of foreign students in the country has increased by 28.66%. There are many favourable numbers of factors that could explain this sharp increase of foreign students into the country of Malaysia. However, highlighting such possible factors is out of the context of this study but some factors would be in record as causes for sharp increase of foreign students registering into the Malaysia Higher Institutions.





Hence, receiving the Libyan students being admitted into the Malaysian Higher Institutions should not be a case in isolation as the Libyan government not only followed the suit of other developing nations to allow its citizens to study in the Malaysian Higher Institutions with full scholarship funded by the home government, but Libyan government also showed its interest to strengthening its diplomatic relations with Malaysia more in the area of educational development. Nevertheless, it is perceived to be encouraging as the increase of foreign students brings along corresponding favourable advantages to the economy of Malaysia as well. Hence, the Education authority was highly motivated to project the presence of 170, 068 of foreign students in the in the country by 2017 from just 74, 369 in 2009.



1.3 Statement of the Problem Statement

Libya is one of the countries that sponsored the education of some of its citizens abroad; hence, they study in many countries of the world, including Malaysia. There are quite a number of students; currently, they are 846 in total in which, 386 of them are studying various courses in Master's degree level while 429 are studying different programmes in the doctoral degree. However, these students are faced with various challenges; ranging from economic, adaptation and language problems. Other problems include the lack of awareness, family, political and importantly, the lack of effective follow-up about their well-being by the state of origin. Consequently, that development constitutes psychological problems. The findings of Alavi and Mansoor (2011) supported this argument that Arab





students who study in Malaysia are facing problems in their study and academic performance has been affected. These problems of the Libya scholarship students collectively result either into graduating with a weak academic achievement or prolonged study period beyond the required time-limit approved for the completion of the study before obtaining the required academic certificate.

For example, some students were expelled from their rented houses because of their inability to pay the rent for months as a result of the delay experienced in the payment of their scholarship by the home authority. This was one of the challenges mentioned by some of the students when the interview was conducted with them while empirical evidence was the broadcast in several Libyan television channels including Al- Naba channel on

28/8/2017 at 8:54 pm that:



“There are difficulties for the Libyan students studying in foreign countries including Malaysia. Many students, as a result of these financial challenges have resulted to engage in manual works such as working as attendants in restaurants or providing services as companies’ lorry drivers outside their scholastic pursuit to enable them cover expenses for the family needs.”

(Al-Naba TV Channel).

The challenges led to a shortage of students’ time for studying against the desire of committed students who should be a full-time student. In addition, the lack of follow-up by the Libyan official educational policy actors from the beginning of the arrangements of the scholarship contributed to the difficulties faced by the Libyan students abroad. In addition, the cause of the political situation in Libya and the changing of the ministry continuously make the problem more complex to the extent that many of the students





produce candy (sweet food made from sugar and chocolate) at home and sell it to solve their economic situation themselves. This business development helps those at finishing stage of their study to be financially capable in order to complete their degree.

Libyan students' challenges had been mentioned in several demonstrations including the one held in front of the Libyan Embassy where the director of the academic attaché, Dr. Samir Kershman came out of the Mission's building on 18/7/2017 at 6:00pm and addressed the protesters about the problems of the Libyan students in Malaysia. He started by saying that:

“I have protested the very poor financial situation of the Libyan students and also the decisions issued by the competent authorities in the Ministry of Higher Education in Libya. I also pointed out the lack of full awareness of the problems of students, which led to the disruption of many of their academic procedures that eventually caused them to think on many issues instead of preoccupied with their study only”

(Participant 'A1')

He said further that “I have given an example of a lot of problems, the most important of which is the inability to remit funds to universities for more than two years. Dr. Samir also noted that some students could not access their examination result at the end of the semester because of the inability of the academic attaché to pay the expensive tuition fees on behalf of some Libyan students to some private universities.





The research conducted by Malaklolunthu and Selan (2011) revealed that English language is one of the problems of Arab international students in Malaysia universities. Then, they need to develop themselves academically in order to be excelled. Just as it was said by one of the participants to the researcher while conducting an interview that:

"I was tired of English language so much that it caused me a constant anxiety and a psychological contract as studying all day and night led to my marital problems that eventually get nearly to the level of my divorce and I hated my life".

(Participant 'A2').

However, there are some other problems related to the personality of the Libyan students such as; lacking the awareness of many things in Malaysia leading to the delay or suspension of some other things, including lack of knowledge about Malaysia. For instance, some students, out of ignorance rely on the advice of friends which resulted to choosing a university that is not appropriate for their area of specializations while some were wrongly directed to rent private apartment in locations that are far away from their university campus. According to one of the participants during an interview, he informed the researcher that he stays in Kajang while his Institution of learning is located in KL. When the researcher asked for the reason, he said:

"When I came I did not know but some friends suggested this top hill, but afterwards, I became tired of the long distance coupled with the lack of time to study, which led to poor achievement in learning English and therefore I could not be admitted to any of the Malaysian leading universities."

(Participant 'A3')





All these problems and many others have indirect relationship to the academic achievement of the Libyan students. There are a significant number of students who cannot focus on the academic achievement especially those who cannot concentrate on academic pursuit such as those who were unable to register their children in schools as a result of some of the above mentioned problems. Therefore, they waste the life of their children indirectly for not learning in school and that has had a very bad psychological reality on them. This group of students are incapable of concentrating on their studies. Those are the examples pointed out by Dr. Al-Sameer, the Director of Academic Research while the researcher was conducting exploratory Research Interview. He said that: "There is a student who has two wives and 12 sons, his mental and educational conditions could not cope to maintain such a majority." One of the factors affecting the students' academic

achievement is the political situation in Libya as mentioned by one of the participants in the survey who said:

"One of my eyes concentrates on the study while the other eye concentrates on the news about the situation in Libya with a follow-up because sometimes I cannot reach my family by phone, except by the News only"

(Participant 'A3')

In line with this, these problems were not confined to the Libyan students in one demonstration in front of the Libyan embassy alone, but they staged many demonstrations as the situation had forced them to do so. The last demonstration manifested at exactly 6pm on 2/10/2017 because there were some students that were already expelled from their rented apartments due to non-payment of rent caused by the lack of remittance of the students' scholarship for a period of seven months. They (the students) considered non-





payment of their scholarship as a crime; they lost time in their studies and afterwards resulted to demonstrations with a follow-up on Face-book. They were waiting for the response from the competent authorities and other relevant leaderships.

This is in line with the result given by Mustaffa and Ilias (2013) on the academic performance of Arab students in Northern university of Malaysia which showed that many of the Arab students lack adjustment and adaptability as the main problems facing Arab students in Malaysia. One of the participants said:

"We have no confidence in ourselves, not even in our country and that is why the students are exhausted and this is the situation of the country".
(Participant 'A3')



Based on all these problems, another participants pointed that:

"This research is the first of its kind and that it was first studied by a student about the knowledge, the students' problems and their reasons as well as trying to find a suitable solution for them in the future."
(Participant 'A1')

He reiterates further that the researcher has mentioned in her study some of the most important things and we need to consider them regarding all the problems of the students and their causes. However, both the competent authorities in Libya and the students themselves have their own shared responsibilities. He persevered in his attempts to develop some solutions and observed that such research will assist in a long way to reduce the known problems of the students and address the likely causes.





In addition to the aforementioned problems, the researcher looks into the factors affecting Libyan postgraduate students in Malaysian universities and proffer solution to the problem. Looking at previous studies on the factors associated with the academic performance of Arab international students in Malaysia. Zhai (2004) discovered that Arab students lacking adjusting to academic stress, language challenges and cultural differences within the school. In the same vein, Andrade (2006) also discovered that international students facing challenges in English language, loneliness, homesickness, lack of experiences to interact with host students. Further, Malaklolutunthu and Selan (2011) investigated various challenges of international students in Malaysia universities, the study revealed that finance constitutes one of the key factors that influence academic performance of international Arab students. Likewise, in the study of Al-Zubaidi & Rechards, (2010) and Wan et al. (2013) found that depression, helplessness, hostility, anxiety, and withdrawal and sexual issues affect academic performance of the international students. On the other hand Lin and Yi (1997) also discovered that many international students experience problems from academic demand, individualism, financial concern, non-assertiveness, insomnia, stereotyping and discrimination. Finally, in the research investigated by Tseng and Newton (2002) on the challenges of international students revealed that they are being confronted with personal psychological adjustment, general living adjustment, academic adjustment and socio-cultural adjustment as the challenges affecting students' academic performance.

Many studies have been conducted on challenges of international students but none of the studies that have investigated the academic challenges facing by Libyan students





ever examined the problems confronting Libyan Scholarship students in Malaysia. Thus, there is the need to explore the influencing factors of academic achievement of Libyan postgraduate students in Malaysia.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The key purpose of this study is to explore the factors influencing the academic performance of Libyan postgraduate students in some selected Malaysian universities. This study offers these following objectives:

1. To study the factors influence the academic performance of Libyan postgraduate students in the Malaysian Higher institutions.
2. To examine how Libyan postgraduate students deal with arising problems towards their academic performance.
3. To explore the role of the Libyan embassy (academic attaché) in solving academic problems facing Libya postgraduate students in Malaysia.
4. To propose suitable suggestion on how to improve the academic performance of Libyan postgraduate students in Malaysian universities.





1.5 Research Questions:

Having stated the objectives for this present study. The following research questions were formulated.

1. What are the factors influencing the academic performance of the Libyan postgraduate students in some selected Malaysia universities?
2. How did Libyan postgraduate students deal with arisen problems towards their academic performance?
3. What are the roles of the Libyan embassy in solving academic problems facing Libyan postgraduate students in selected Malaysia universities?
4. What are the suitable suggestions required to improve the academic performance of Libyan students in Malaysian universities?

1.6 Theoretical Framework used for the Study

Theoretical framework is the theory that the researcher adopts to guide the research. It is the application of theory or set of concepts drawn from the same theory to explicate an event or to show some explanation on a research problem (Imenda, 2014). There are two theoretical frameworks: Maslow theory and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory. This is the structure that can hold or support a theory of a research study. It introduces and describes the theory that explains why the research problem under study exists (Gabriel,



2008; Swason, 2013). There are two theoretical frameworks, (a). Maslow theory of motivation and (b) Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory.

a. Maslow theory:

In this study, Maslow's hierarchy of needs is adopted. The knowledge of theoretical framework informs the researcher to draw the conceptual framework. Therefore, two theoretical frameworks were used, namely: Maslow' Hierarchy of Needs theory and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological theory. These two theories help the researcher to have better clue about the research's conceptual framework and to build on some variables which are discussed in chapter two.

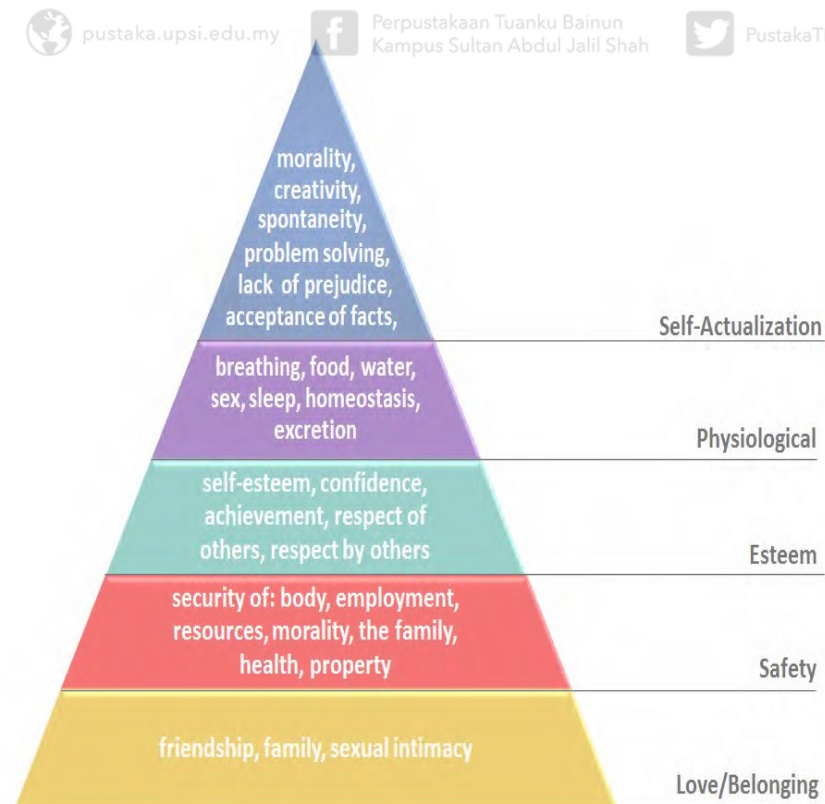


Figure 1.1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
(Source: Ahmed (2017))



The Abraham Maslow's theory of hierarchy developed between (1943 -1954) explains that human being needs to be motivated to achieve organizational objectives. In his book published in 1954 proposed five hierarchies of needs that serve as stimulus to motivate workers. They are as follow:

- 1). Psychological need
- 2). Safety needs
- 3). Social needs
- 4). Esteem needs and
- 5). The needs for Self-actualization



Physiological needs refer to the needs of that human being need in order to carry out the necessary activities to attain survival in life. The needs include the air, sleep, water, sex, and food. When all these are not adequate, we may be sick and unhappy. According to him, when these are provided at appropriate time, human being is motivated and become actively producing at work. Also, safety needs are the needs relating to psychology in nature. We need security for our family and home. When the needs of family are improper, they cannot move to the next level because anxiety will set in. Love and a sense of belonging are postponed until they are secured. The love and needs of belonging also contributed to human being's needs to actualize organizational objectives. As the nature of human being, they like to affiliate with reliable and progressive groups that operate in places like clubs, religions and churches, societies and associations as well. This constitutes universal need to express affection and acceptability by other people. Self-





esteem needs in this case: There are two esteem needs for human beings that are important to attained performance at work. The competence or mastery of a task and good opinion of other people are required. Lastly, the need for self-actualization, according to Maslow theory of motivation, it explains that people who have all their lower order needs met progress towards the fulfilment of their potential. These constitute oneness with God; strive for knowledge, peace, self-fulfilment, enlightenment and aesthetic mind-set.

Based on the theory in Figure 1.2, we may agree that Libyan postgraduate students need to be motivated in their academic achievement. The theory further established that the university needs to create motivational support to ameliorate some of the challenges facing Libyan students in the areas of adjustment such as in cultural awareness, personal and psychological adjustment, general living adjustment, academic adjustment and socio-cultural adjustment. Kamauru (2000) found that when students are adequately motivated and encouraged in area of academic challenges, academic achievement would be improved. Students' motivation serves as agent of transformation that can facilitate effective teaching. Askari (2006) also supported that unmotivated students in the school setting can lead to anxiety, pessimism, depression and failure. When students are motivated, guided and directed by lecturers their academic performance will improve (Amrai, Motlagh, Zalani, & Parhon, 2011).





Conceptual model for this study was built from relevant related literature. Also, this conceptual model was derived from the discussed theoretical framework for this study. This model tries to describe the factors that are influencing the academic achievement of Libyan students and how the situation can be ameliorated with the adopted theory.

b. Theoretical Framework – Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Theory

In this theoretical framework, the itemized factors that influence academic performance of the Libyan students in Malaysian Higher Institutions are crucial to active performance of man when they are in positive state. At the microsystem level, bi-directional influences are strongest and have the greatest impact on individuals. However, interactions at outer levels can still impact the inner structures of the system. (aquette, and Ryan, 2001).



However, these factors spread across the various system levels as explained in the Ecological system theory of Bronfenbrenner. The theory states that different types of environmental systems influenced human development as posited by famous psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner, this theory helps us understand why we may behave differently when we compare our behavior in the presence of our family and our behavior when we are in school or at work.

In line with the conceptual framework above, the theory of Urie Bronfenbrenner is relevant to the context of the study but at the period of maturity of the child after whatever the child might have experienced in the childhood stage which may reflect in his future



life. Bronfenbrenner argues that there are five levels in human life's context that interact with his developmental stages of life. The five stages are the Microsystem, Mexosystem, Exosystem, Macrosystem, Chronosystem.

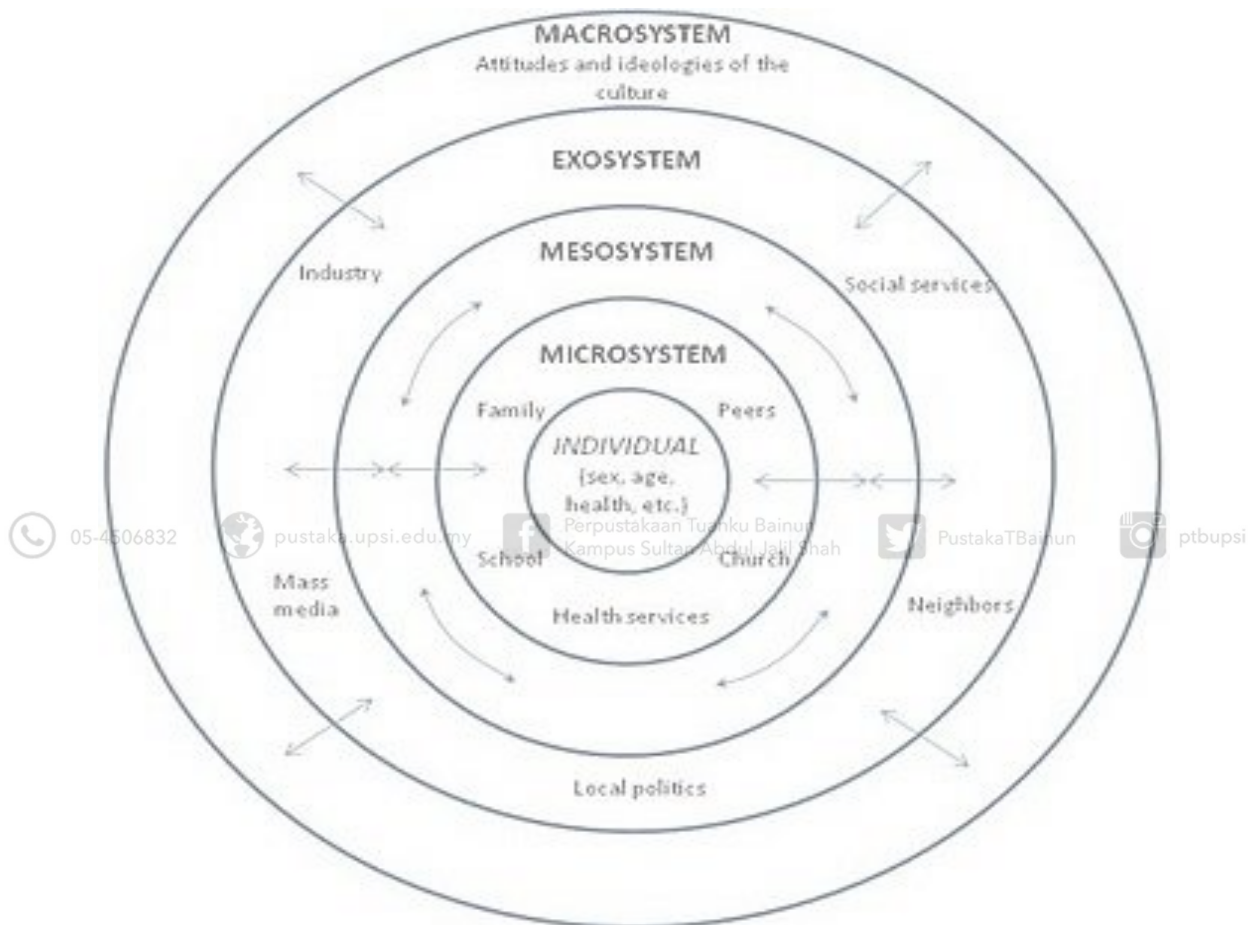


Figure 1.2. The Ecological Model of Bronfenbrenner (Source: Oppennheimer and Valez Agosto, 2017)

In his initial theory, Bronfenbrenner postulated that the ecological system in which the growth takes place be given a consideration in order to understand human development. In furtherance, Bronfenbrenner acknowledged the relevance of biological,



genetic and psychological aspects based on anyone's genetic development history of the person in human development as ecological model. The immediate physical and social environments (microsystem) of a child continue to have effect on his genetic, biological and psychological makeup. These are refers to institutions and groups that directly and indirectly affect the child's development including; family, school, religions, Neighbourhood. Others are peers, institutions teachers, church and the environment etc. There is also an interaction among the systems within the environment (mesosystem) that play crucial roles.

The context at the Ecosystem points to the relationship between the child's parents and the teachers or between the church and his neighborhood. However, these are referred to as the relationships between small worlds or connections between contexts. The relationship in microsystem is bi-directional. That is to say your reactions to the people would eventually have reflection on how they treat you in return in the microsystem. Examples include the relationship between family experiences, school experiences, church experiences, including experiences from the care-givers and peers. Exosystem is the setting in which there is a link between the context where the person does not have any active role, and the context where the child is not actively participating (Sincero, Mar 14, 2012). The layer defines the larger social system in which the child does not function directly.

The structures in this layer play some impacts on the child's development by interacting with some structures in her microsystem (Berk, 2000). Parent's workplace schedules or community-based family and resources are examples. The child's





involvement at this level is rare while he however, feels the positive or negative force involved with the interaction with his own system. This is the system stage of political, economic and social levels that influences the structure and availability of microsystem in man and the manner in which man are affected. Bukatko & Daehler (1998) explain that social, political, and economic conditions are themselves influenced by the general beliefs and attitudes (macrosystems) shared by members of the society. The chronosystem includes the transitions and shifts in one's lifespan. This may also involve the socio-historical contexts that may influence a person. That is the level where most of the factors in the Figure 1.2 are greatly active in the life of man.



1.7. Conceptual Framework: Application of the Two Theories to Libyan Students' Situation

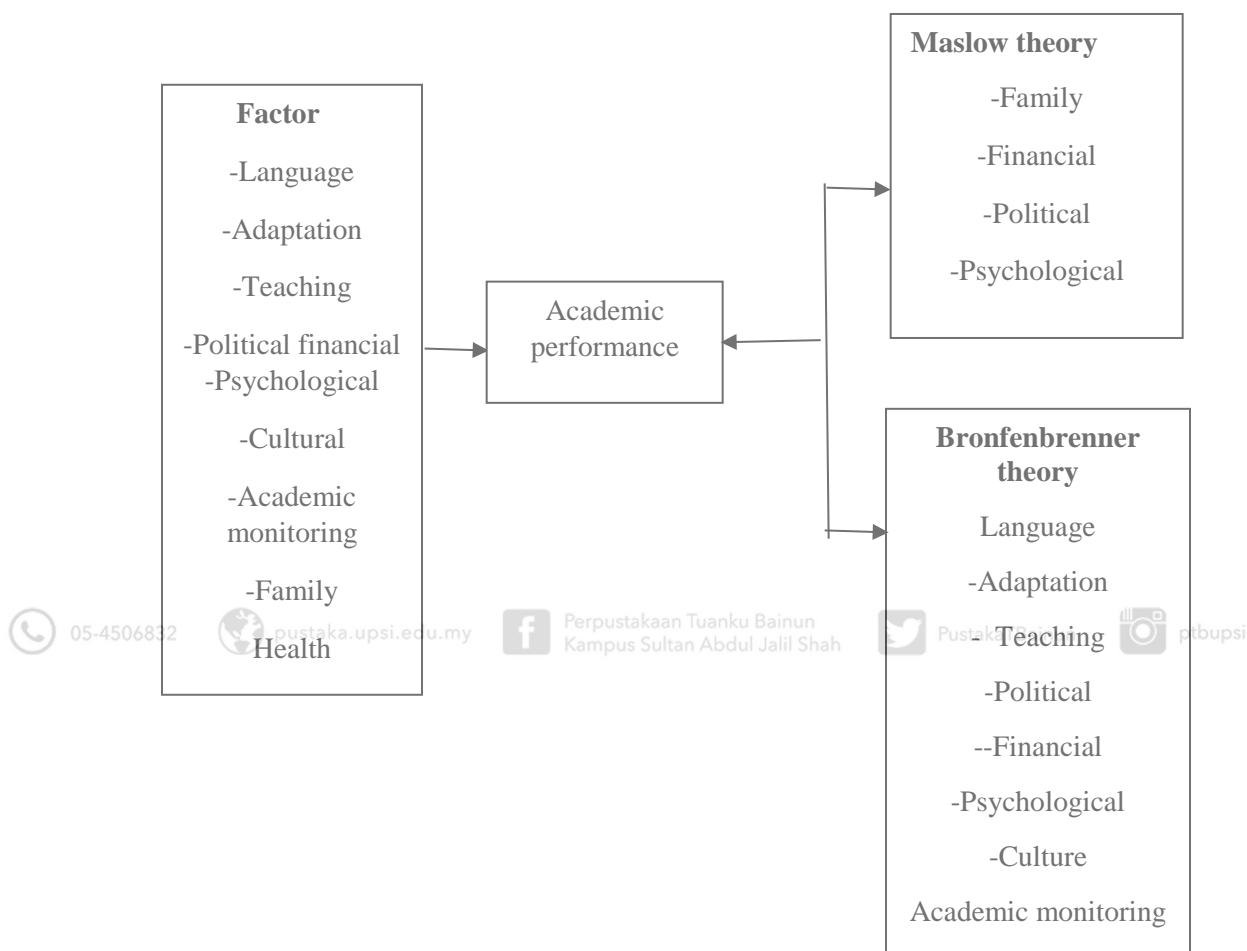


Figure 1.3. Integration of Maslow's and Urie Bronfenbrenner's Theories: A Practical Concept (Source: Researcher's initiative)

The ecological system theory is an important model with relevance to the context of this study. The environment used here as a variable is an important tool that supports the various reasons, taken a child as a replica of the Libyan students that are confronted with challenges militating against their desired academic achievement. Actually, the Microsystem stage of



man is the basic lifetime when the parental-care constructs the life of the child. The influence of family, school, church, mosque and the peers is of paramount and possibly life experience for a child. However, the attributes of these factors are subject to what the environment dictates otherwise some of the benefits or disadvantages in the influencing factors in child's life may not be actualized. Whichever of the variables that play crucial role in child's life, it would live in his mind forever. For instance, the advice from a parent to the child to "practice endurance and that success is always the end product of struggle" would be child's watch word irrespective of other counter advices from anyone in that direction.



When child grows and lives an independent life, the full acceptance or rejection of knowledge he had acquired from those influencing variables such as parent, teacher peers etc. would be ready for use under the environment in which he has no power to control the affairs except he can only adjust his own knowledge from the influencing variables.

Such is the typical situation of the Libyan students whose government has provided them with golden opportunity of Scholarship grant to study in Higher Institutions of learning worldwide including Malaysia where some of the students find it difficult to integrate their lifestyle with the interaction of the changes experienced in the environment. Ecosystem is the setting in which there is a link between the context the person does not have any active role, but existing at the context where person is actively participating. At this point, it means the state of life of man can't control the affairs of life he finds himself because the environmental attributes are more powerful beyond his





control. However, he is left with the option of adjusting his habit and behavior to accommodate the changes the environment is dictating. The example of these are political situation and social contexts man found himself especially in a foreign country outside one's own country's borders where one has no power or right to change, undermine or distort sovereign legacy. Here your influenced knowledge from the parents, school, peer group and so on must be applied or utilized to blend with the environment in order to win yourself consolation for achievement on your goals and objectives. An adage says "you cannot direct the wave but you can only adjust the sail"

The environment is a very useful theory to understand the influences that surround the students' educational performance and thus affect his achievement directly. It is the theory that examines how the individual develops in relation to the social environment and the resulting interactions between the person and the environment. Bronfenbrenner further developed the model; chronosystem that explains how the person and environments change over time. He also placed a greater emphasis on processes and the role of the biological person. The Process–Person–Context–Time Model (PPCT) has since become the bedrock of the bioecological model. (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006).

The university student is the development axis and has the specific characteristics and personality traits that affect the development path. The person develops the processes that come to stimulate or confuse the student and this does not happen over time and in context. Context is the most important element of the theory. As per the context of this study, the application of Bronfenbrenner's theory, the childhood stage of the man could be





coined under the context of this study as the period the Libyan Students were studying under the care and guidance of Libyan government when all needed education provision were provided in relation to the policy of the Libyan Ministry of Education. This is the microsystem and ecosystems level. However, the theory is more relevant to this study at the macro system and the Chronosystem level consecutively. The chronosystem includes the transitions and shifts in one's lifespan. This may also involve the socio-historical contexts that may influence a person.

The chronosystem during the time an example of divorce is cited to have serious effect on the child may be coined to the time of chaotic situation in the country of Libya where each member of the citizen did not have access to the freedom of social benefits and freedom of movement. For those who have benefited from receiving the scholarship grant prior the time of active war in the country are at the verge of divorce with the nation as they have already taken shelter in a foreign country. Hence, they are bound to suffer financial inadequacy, family ties, depression and doubt about the future of the country hence, regular follow-up from the disorganized authority may not be in place as the nation remains in anarchy when there is no government that would take control of the nation. That is the period of divorce between the state and its people so the children of such separated family would be confronted with suffering of various dimensions.

As stated in the theory, there are four elements that affected the students who have been studying towards achievement of scientific study and they are as follows:





1. Face - to - face activity in the interactions with the environment directly with the family or peers or campus environment where any negative or positive change has a direct impact on the student and consequently affect the academic outcomes.
2. The processes that occur as a result of the interaction between the struggle to react to the new culture, new friends and new university and the obstacle encounter of mastering the English language with the opposing financial condition that was amount to 11 months to receive grants are resulting in new interactions and new effects and thus have impacts on students' performance
3. For the effects on the individual, but indirectly, such as the impact of teaching methods and the difference in teaching method and Malaysian educational programs and the use of the Internet significantly.
4. The effects of beliefs, policies, and system. The Libyan state is a variable and the political situation is unstable, thus affecting the achievement of the Libyan student in Malaysia. It's an example of socio-political conditions, politically unstable countries, and the deterioration of the country's economy, countries where there is no good education have an impact on the individual and his educational level (Kail, & Cavanaugh, 2010).

The various components of the student's imagination are dynamic and are not fixed on any level of the system of changing the country, changing the system, changing culture, changing language, changing the system and style in the family and changing the financial





situation. This situation indicates the period of the chronosystem; when man has no power to change the changes in the environment as a result of the divorce brought which resultantly represent a chaotic time for the child that has no freedom of access to parental care. All of these changes would have had direct impacts on the student's classroom environment from being unable to concentrate in class with the pressure of distraction and thus have a direct impact on academic performance of students.

In these environments the interaction between the student and the different changes in the environment may responsible for external changes that have occurred to the Libyan students in relation to their academic performance due to changes experienced in the environment. However, whatever the source of the challenges could be in the environment; whether because of the new language, family problems, political situation or any other, their origin had effects on students' performance. The importance of events is that they affect the relations between the students and their environment, which creates the possibility of change and the effect will be the result of the interaction between all the forces within the system.

Hence, in relevance of Bon theory to the study under context, we see that the suffering of the Libyan students in Malaysian higher institutions was principally linked to the delay of the scholarship, family problems, difficulties in learning a new language, a study of changes in the curricula and methods of teaching, the difficulty of creating new lifestyle with different language of dialogue and dealings with the new country in all its details. As in the organizational strategy, management practices, the poor awareness of the





education ministries in Libya and the lack of effective follow-up of their academic activities in Malaysia, will undoubtedly have an impact on the educational achievement of the Libyan students in Malaysia. The greater the negative effects on the students the lesser the academic achievement, and the more positive effects in the students' environment the greater the students' achievements.

1.7.1 Integration of the Two Theoretical Concepts In Relation to the Challenges against Libyan Students' Academic Performance in Malaysian Higher Institutions

Maslow theory of Hierarchy of needs as means of motivation for human being is basically to obtain the most efficient and effective moment of man in support of the realization of organizational or individual goals while the basic knowledge to learn in Bronfenbrenner's theory of ecological system conceptualizes the development of man from the childhood to the adult stage and the emerging changes from his interactions with the environment.

For man not to lose control over his daily activities and for him not to be stressful to the extent of becoming a deviant while striving to attain a position of prospect during his active lifetime at work or while pursuing certain ambition, Maslow's hierarchy of needs comes to his rescue as motivational mechanism to ginger increase in performance. Maslow posits that man should be relieved with some number of needs as a strategy in form of motivation such as self-actualization, esteem, social safety and psychological needs. That is the part of the reasons that satisfaction of certain needs be met by the Libyan students studying at the Malaysia higher institutions before they could perform excellently well in





their studies. The needs are but not limited to the Family, Safety, Finance, Security, Self-Efficacy, Competency, Sleep and Sex. In the case of Bronfreneer's theory, as child develops, his needs ultimately increase and are subject to changes as a result of the demand by the environment that he finds himself.

The positive assistance and guide from the environment at the early stage of life such as the parent, the school, teachers, peers, church, mosque etc. are there to teach him the lesson of becoming resilience to challenges of life in his future time at the microsystem and ecosystem. That is the reason that all the units of the environment at microsystem would keep on impact knowledge in him and make for him the provision of all needs that are of necessity for making him be hopeful for prospect in life. The stage those challenges would come naturally from the interaction with the environment is the microsystem period, when challenges would demand for his capability and endurance.

This is the period man would be tested of the lesson the environment had taught to him and the knowledge acquired during his childhood stage in microsystem and Ecosystem environment. Microsystem in its own is the period when the social, political and economic challenges would take their tolls on man's needs. The needs are but not limited to family, health, finance language, adaptation, and teaching. Others are teaching methods experienced in different university environments, cultural difference, political and economic situation and psychological needs, all these needs are relative of course. At the Microsystem and Chronosystem level, the political, economic and social systems are in the hands of the authority unto which every man has surrendered his sovereignty and loyalty.





Hence, man has no control over the ideological, political, social and economic concepts pursued by the authorities; consequently, it becomes the dominant entity to control the state affairs where every citizen identifies his or her commitments and responsibilities toward his own ambition and to the state under the enabling environment provided by the authorities. At their stage of adult in the macro system, the students have no much control over the family, their safety in a foreign country such as Malaysia where they found themselves to embark on academic studies. The Libyan students also have no control on the security except what the authorities provide. Therefore, this need may necessitate their financial capability to rent apartment in an area where security is regularly provided or they may need to hire the service of private security organization or securing a Private Bodyguard.



This kind of environment is where they could stay to enjoy good sleep in order to possess self-efficacy and commendable competence in their day-to-day academic works. All these may not be achieved to support their academic performance without financial needs to cater for them all. Not until they are reimbursed through the scholarship grant by the Libyan Ministry of Higher Education, their needs may not be met and their academic performance and final achievement in that direction would continue to suffer a setback. These are the significance and relevance of the Maslow's theory of motivation and Bronfenbrenner ecological theory from the effects of the environment regarding the factors influencing the academic performance of the Libyan students in Malaysia.





1.8 Significance of the Study

This present study will serve as benefits for universities in Malaysia and the Institute of Postgraduate Study to design a mechanism that ameliorates the problems confronted by Libyan postgraduate and other international students in Malaysia. This study will help to educate them further on the problems of some foreign students and to understand the necessary actions that would be taken to address such situation. This study is fundamental because it provides better solution on how to improve the performance of Libya international students. This study also allows the government of home country to discover various categories of challenges facing Libya postgraduate students in Malaysia. As a result of that, they will devise strategies that will reduce the challenges facing Libyan postgraduate international students.



Likewise, the study will enable the lecturers to understand the problem of international students and how to create suitable approaches that will improve the academic performance of Libyan postgraduate students.

More so, the outcome of this present study would definitely add to the existing literature by widening the stock of knowledge on the problems faced by international students in Malaysia. Besides, it would be a source of material for prospective researchers who intends to conduct research on Libya postgraduate students in Malaysia. This study will help the Libyan government to know how to motivate the Libyan postgraduate students in Malaysia to improve their academic performance since motivation serves as strategy that improves holistic performance.





1.9 Limitations of Study

This study is to investigate the challenges that affect the academic achievement of Libya postgraduate students in selected Malaysia universities. Universities outside Malaysia would not be included in this study. In view of this, Best and Kahn (2000) asserts that limitations are beyond the control of the researcher and may affect the conclusion of the study. The researcher has no access to the required financial capacity to embark on trips to investigate the condition of other Libyan students on scholarship in other Malaysia universities such as University Utara Malaysia and University Sains Malaysia. This would call for further research in the future in order to find more facts about the cause of predicaments of Libyan Scholarship students in Malaysia.



1.10 Operational Definitions

Education: Education is refers to in this study as process of impacting learning, skills and knowledge on to learners.

Libyan Postgraduate Students: This refers to Libyan international students that left their own country to study higher degree for the purpose of acquiring education, skills and knowledge in another country such as; Malaysia.



Challenges: This refers to difficulties faced by Libyan postgraduate students in Malaysia with challenges in language proficiency, cultural barriers, teaching methods, accommodation, family problems, psychological problems, lack of awareness, lack of effective follow-up, lack of improvement in the education, and the health issues.

Academic Performance: This study, it refers to Academic achievement represents performance outcomes that indicate the extent to which a person has accomplished specific goals that were the focus of activities in instructional environments, specifically in school, college, and in selected Malaysia Universities.

1.11. Summary

This study has explained the challenges faced by Libyan postgraduate students studying in Malaysian universities. The following key areas have been highlighted such as background of the study, problem statement, research objectives, and research questions. Also, theoretical framework, conceptual framework, and operational definitions were discussed as shown in Figure 1.4. The next chapter; the literature review will be discussing related variables to the study.

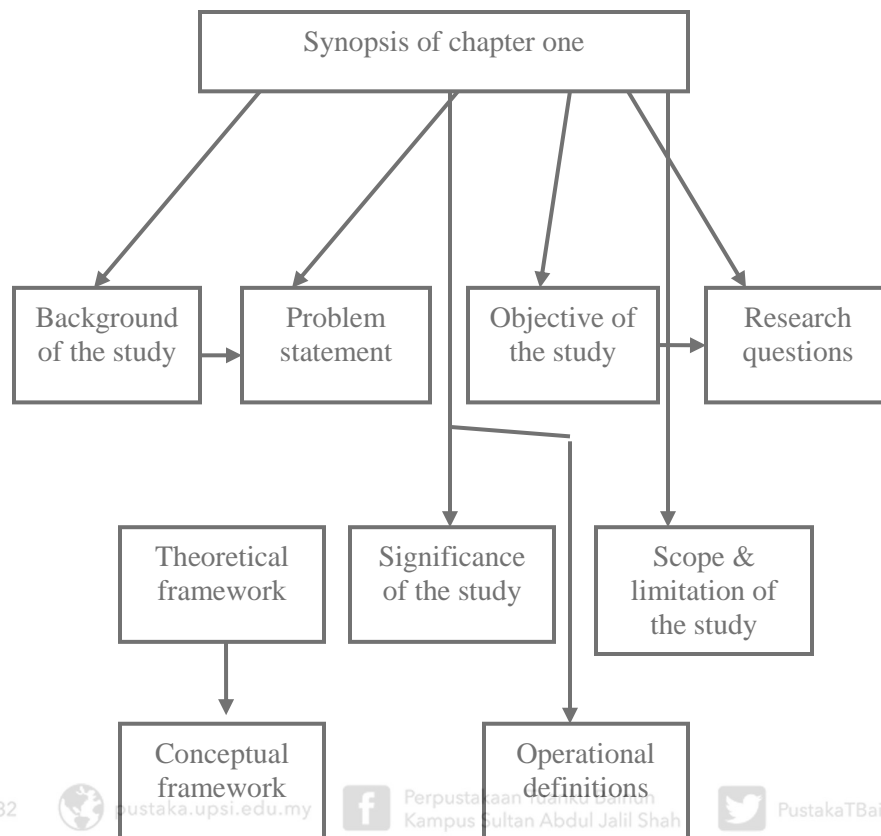


Figure 1.4. Proposed Summary of Chapter one