A Study on the Factors that Impact on the Academic Performance of the Computer Science and the Information Technology Students in University of Malaya

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the factors that could affect the academic performance, based on Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA), of the Computer Science and the Information Technology undergraduates at the Faculty of Computer Science & Information Technology (FCSIT), University of Malaya. Factors investigated included whether the students were staying on-campus or off-campus, their English proficiency, interest in the respective major, prior programming knowledge and the percentage of coursework done by oneself. Data for the study were collected, using a questionnaire survey. Analysis of data was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). To investigate the relationship between categorical variables, cross-tabulation was used. The study reveals that the undergraduates who stay off-campus generally perform better than those who stay on-campus; higher proficiency of English contributes to better academic results but does not guarantee excellent results; the Computer Science undergraduates perform better overall than the Information Technology undergraduates; interest in the respective major; prior programming knowledge and completing coursework totally by oneself do not necessarily lead to better academic performance.

Key words: Factors, Performance, Computer Science, Information Technology, Undergraduates, Survey, SPSS

INTRODUCTION

The Faculty of Computer Science & Information Technology (FCSIT), University of Malaya, enrolled the first batch of Bachelor of Computer Science undergraduates in 1990 (University of Malaya, 2002). The Bachelor of Computer Science programme equips its undergraduates with the knowledge and skills of the different aspects of computing which include computer hardware, computer networking technology, intelligent systems, information systems, Internet as well as software development and maintenance (University of Malaya, 2003). Six years later, in 1996, the Bachelor of Information Technology programme was introduced. This new programme focuses on providing its students with the skill and knowledge of computer technologies and their applications in different fields such as multimedia, management, e-commerce, web programming and information science.