Literature review

There are many researches done based on the factors that influence the academic performance of the students. The factors that often take into consideration include stress level, time management, learning style and other factors that might influence the academic performance of the students during the clinical years.

In Malaysia, most of the researchers evaluated students academic performance based on cumulative grade point average (CGPA) (Ervina and Othman, 2005; Manan and Mohamad, 2003 Abd Agus and Makgbul, 2002). In this study, the CGPA was used as the measurement of students’ academic performance.

Based on studies, learning style can be one of the factors that affect academic performance among students. Students who are actively engage in learning process are observed to have significant positive correlation; have greater CGPA (Ali et al, 2009). In the context of classroom, active learning involves students in doing things and thinking about the things they are doing (Bonwell and Eison, 1991). Furthermore, according to Sansgiry and Sail (2006), strategies of studying can contribute to the academic performance of the students. Besides that, the amount of knowledge gained from clinical experience was, however related to strategic and deep learning style both in final year and at the time of application. Success reported was related to strategic or deep learning style in final year according to McManus et al., (1998)*.* According to Shankar et al., (2006), students mainly used deep and strategic learning styles. However, the study revealed that Indian medium students tend to have a more surface learning style than others while English medium school students were having deep learning style compared with vernacular medium students. There was a negative correlation between surface learning style and marks obtained in the second year university examination. Moreover, further studies are required to study on clinical years because the amount of knowledge gained from clinical experience was also related to learning styles of students.

According to Sansgiry and Sail (2006), time management can be one of the factors that might contribute in the academic performance among students as well as learning strategies. Other than that, according to Misra and McKean (2000), it also showed that females managed their time more efficiently than males. In measuring the inter-relationship between academic stress and anxiety, time management and leisure satisfaction, result revealed that there was a greater association of stressors and reactions to stressors with time management behaviors than with leisure satisfaction.

Stress can be one of the factors that affect academic performance. This is supported by Mouzan et al. (1991) which showed that the students’ poor performance were generally due to financial problems and family responsibilities as it leads to major stress or tension that affect academic performances. However, based on Sanders (2002),there was a limited support for an association between stress and academic performance although stress has a negative effect on academic performance. On the other hand, based on Malathi & Damodaran (1999), the potential negative effects of emotional distress on medical students include impairment of functioning in class-room performance and clinical practice, stress-induced disorders and deteriorating performance. It is supported by Bramness et al., (1991), learning ability of students is very much affected by the high level of stress. Excessive stress may result in mental and physical problems and may diminish a student's sense of worth and might affect his/her academic achievement.

According to Misra and McKean (2000), results showed that students, in general, experienced higher stress due to pressure and self-imposed stress as compared to changes, conflict, and frustration. Female experienced higher self-imposed stress and more physiological reactions to stressors than males; indicating they sweat, stutter, and experience headaches due to stress more than males. A cross-sectional study was done by Mohsin Shah et. al., (2009) study showed that overall mean perceived stress was significantly higher among female students. However, there was no significant difference between male and female students as stated by Cohen, the inventor of PSS. In measuring the interrelationship between academic stress and anxiety, time management and leisure satisfaction, result revealed that there was a greater association of stressors and reactions to stressors with time management behaviors than with leisure satisfaction. A significant age difference existed in students' reactions to academic stress. Older students with high Perceived Control of time, low anxiety, and who utilized their leisure time to learn and increase knowledge, had less physical and psychological reactions to academic stress.