Factors Affecting Students Academic Performance: A Case Study of Sohar University

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ABSTRACT:

The aim of this study determinant and exploring the factors that effect on students' academic performance in Sohar University (SU), Oman and can be used as a mode for all the higher educational institutions globally to improving the inputs of all stakeholders; students, teachers, and parents. The survey was conducted among the various faculties of (SU) through questionnaire, the primary data were collected from 562 and critical analysis was carried out using regression analyzed. The study finding the environment factors significantly affected on students' performance because they preferred appropriate and quiet university environment than otherwise. Also, the students perceived that teachers who have teaching skills and using a variety of teaching techniques can have a more positive effect on their performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Academic institutions such as Schools, Colleges, and Universities have no worth without teachers and students. These two groups are by and at large the most important assets for any academic institute. The connection between the two groups and academic institution is the performance, in which without students' performance there will be no progress or achievement noted for both the teachers and an academic institution (Gilbert, 2018). Hence, student performance is an important factor in any academic institution. Students' performance in academic has received the attention of many researchers around the globe for many decades. The students' performance factor is one of most challenging aspects in many academic literatures because it affects their performance in academic, social, psychological, economic, and environmental cohesion (Vermunt, 2005; Azhar et al., 2014). Many factors have an influence on the performance of the students but vary from person to person and institution to institution. According to Tsinidou, et al. (2010), there is many different interactions and types of the link between the teachers and students through courses and perceived usefulness as relate to their academic performance. Based on many literature surveys, these factors range from environmental, economic, social, and psychological which have a strong influence on students' academic performance (You, 2018). Other factors such as the role of course experience, effort, motives, and learning strategies have also contributed to student academic performance (Diseth et al., 2010).

Studies have identified casual factors responsible for weak academic performance at many institutional throughout the world (Diseth et al., 2010; Wintre et al., 2011; Azhar et al., 2014; Fernex et al., 2015; Sæl et al., 2017). In addition, most of these studies focus on three elements which are personal, teacher, and institutional factors in students' performance.

It has also been indicated that the student's performance in academic affected by economics factor which may likely influence students grades (Sunshine, et al., 2015). Students learning and gain can also be affected by many multiple factors and their educational success which heavily depend on their societal economic position. Also, it is observed that parent's income or social status has a definite effect on students academic performance and examination grades status positively or negatively (Vermunt, 2005; Azhar et al., 2014).

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Students in different universities with the expectation of improving their performance to success in exams in the quest for high grades, such students always try to attend classes. Many students have attempted to improve their performance through the use of available facilities and resources. Many of factors are facilities and funding resources which are found to affect students' performance and educational realization in their respective university. Moreover, it is highly demanding and preference for students to enhance their academic performance through information and communication services, which can assist many of these students to interact with their peers and many institutions throughout the world.

2.   LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous studies have attempted to define the factors affecting students' universal achievement or performance. These studies are reviewed to support the hypothesis that any students' achievement and performance in the University depend on different types of factors, such as personal, teacher, and institution factors (Umar et al., 2010). University students are the main assets of their institutions under various types of faculty or sectors. In perspective of that, the University plays in an important role in producing better quality graduates who will be a great leader and workforce of their countries thus responsible for other countries' social development and social-economic (Soto and Anand, 2012). This fact is only achievable when the students' academic performance is commendable in all respects.

Academics performance has always been affected by student's self-respect, creativity, and conviction with academic progress. Poor performance influence students future uncertainty about overall outcomes of the university and can decrease the likelihood of students desiring for higher outcomes such as higher grade (Egunsola, 2014). Thus, a student's academic performance is definitely a subject in the spotlight for educators (Wintre et al., 2011; Sæle et al., 2017). The attention of educators has been redirected towards factors that contribute to student academic excellence. Researchers have recognized family, home, demographic, school, and environment as factors that contribute to a student's academic performance.

The role of a family unit is to provide, educate, and protect the children. Thus, all of these acts or functions are carried out within the home, which forms an integral part of education. The environment of the home has major impacts on the child/student, especially during the teenage years. The grooming and mentoring of children begin from the family. The children identify themselves with social class, religion, society, and culture by the acts they learn at home (Ajila and Otutola, 2000). Egunsola (2014) conducted a study on the home environment of students on how it affects students' academic performance in the university. This study used a sample of 900 students through multi-stage random sampling. The author found that economic status, parental educational qualification, home occupation location have a considerable impact on students' academic performance. The home environment essentially means as the offstage for the students' families, which is made up of family members and other resources that affect student live and their education. A study conducted by Farooq et al. (2011) over 300 male and female students in Pakistan found that the higher social economic status results in a higher performance of students. The knowledge gained by students from their parents and other important people at home is most likely to have a positive and valuable impact on academic performance (Beaumont and Soyibo, 2010). The ideas learned at home and the family inspiration towards education and a better life, influence the student's success or failure at school. Parents influence their children academic successes through grooming them in skills, attitude, and behaviors towards education and school (Magnuson, 2007). The parental influence emanates from the environment and the manner parents deal with their children teaching and grooming them. It means that parents can influence academic dealings by their socio-economic standings (Magnuson, 2007). Hence, parents who were highly educated can provide better learning environments for the children (i.e. students). Rayachaudhuri et al. (2010) studied factors that affecting student's performance in

India. An overall data sample of 332 students was obtained from 24 schools in India. They found that parents with higher education are directly responsible and influence their children's higher academic performance (Rayachaudhuri, et al, 2010). Moreover, Ajila and Otutola (2000) explained that parents belonged to different classes of living and they realized the importance of education. The authors added that different environments are created by different families that cater to their children educational inspiration and intellectual growth.

Consistent with student personal related factors mentioned above, teacher-related factors also play a significant impact on students' academic performance. Studies have indicated that the performance of a teacher has a major influence on the performance of a student though varies with places (Nickols, 2016; Gilbert, 2018). The students have a better chance of understanding the subject if the teacher has full command over it (Nickols, 2016). With that command, the teacher will easily deliver the knowledge in such an easy way that the students understand and not struggle for understanding. At times, the teacher does understand the subject but fails to communicate it effectively due to poor communication skills, which in turn influence the university achievement of the students of that class. Similarly, having complete command over the subject does not guarantee that the students will performance efficiently (Nickols, 2016). Coming late to class or not showing up for it (absent) may have a negative impact on the students' performance (Yang, 2004). If the teacher fails to appear for classes, then the interest of the students in the subject is already lost which results in not paying attention at all. The result of it all will be that the students will not like the teacher and the subject as well in the future (Yang, 2004). Although not all students react the same way, many students will still be interested in the subject due to their likeness of it but might not perform up to standards because of the irresponsibleness of the teacher (Yang, 2004).

Also, criticism and motivation of the students by the teacher has great importance in their academic performance (Sali-Ot, 2011). In education, the effect of motivation on students is considering an important factor of student learning. Harju and Eppler (1997) studied the relationships between undergraduate student's performance goals and learning using ranges of ages 18 – 23 of university students and a sample of 312 students. It was concluded that participants who have a motivated learning profile through teaching practices had done more semesters and had a tendency to be more required in learning (Harju and Eppler, 1997). Numerous theories have based psychological behavior from a motivational point of view. Frequent scolding by the teacher may make the student less enthusiastic and may eventually perform poor in the subject against their real self. It is indicated by Hall (1989) that motivation help student to keep interested in studies. Students need motivation, not only tangible but also intangible because it is part of the job of the teacher not only teach students but to groom them, guide them, and have faith in them, especially appreciating them from time to time (Rasul and Bukhsh, 2011). Appreciation can be in a form of kind words or present them with something to boost up their morale. Reward them for their endeavors in academics and for extracurricular activities too, this goes a long way to help the students.

Another most influencing factors on the students' performance are the institutional policies and practices. The major sector of the school such as the private sector or public sector also affects students' performance (Hall, 1989). What goes inside the school is directly proportional to a student's overall outcome. Freeman and Viarango (2013) investigated the effect of college policies over a student's performance. They used data from PISA, which included a sample of 4700 students in 15 colleges from 6 countries. They found that student performance depends on the college they attended and where it is located.

Most of the time a student spends in university or institution is inside a classroom. This is where they learn most of the expertise necessary to help them reach their desired future goals in order to have a better future (Hajizadeh and Ahmadzadeh, 2014). The classroom is where the student learns what they want for their future and how they can

reach that ultimate target (Viaria, et al, 2012). The classroom is a very important area in the grooming of a student, it is highly necessary to understand the factors affecting the overall class ambiance to achieve maximum output. What needs to be understood is that if schools do play a major part in teaching the upcoming generation of students how to be a successful pillar of the society then every preventive measure must be taken to ensure that the students thrive in the provided learning environment (Viaria, et al, 2012).

If this is not taking seriously then the overall setup of the classroom will hinder creativity or will not help in promoting a positive attitude for the students (Viaria et al, 2012). There is a large number of factors that could affect the classroom environment. The physical aspects of a classroom involve wall art and arrangement of chairs. Other factors that could influence the focus of students could be the energy inside the classroom, rules, or the sound quality within the classroom (Obeta, 2014). Teacher's attitude towards its students also affects the classroom environment. How the teachers organize their classrooms, their control, manner of delivering the lecture, their engagement with students leaves behind the positive or negative image on the minds of the students (Obeta, 2014). Teacher's involvement with class plays a major part in getting the message through to the students. If they were not in a good mood, then they will leave a negative impact on their learners in the classroom. In the same manner, if a teacher is highly potential, impact and began to know how to gather his/her audience then that leaves students rooted in the topic. A teacher must understand these factors to provide a better learning environment (Obeta, 2014).

In additions to the above-mentioned factors, studies have been indicated great relationships of students participating in extracurricular activities such as drama, music, and sports (Jamelske, 2009; Fernex et al., 2015; Trautwein & Bosse, 2017). Few of the studies show that students end up performing better at academics because of their involvement in extracurricular activities in their first year in the university while those who do not take part in such activities eventually do not excel at academics. Hence, teachers urge students to take part in other activities outside the classroom in the progress of their programs in the university (Freeman and Viarango, 2013).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Based on objective along with the research questions, the factors are divided into three major parts:First, personal related factors on student's academic performance.

Second, teacher-related factors on students' academic performance.
Third, institution related factors influencing students' academic performance.

This study selected Sohar University as a location of the research by concentrated in six faculties; faculty of business, faculty of IT, Faculty of English, Faculty of Arts & Education, and faculty of engineering, which are all located at GCC region in Oman, Sohar. Sohar University selected because it is one of the biggest private universities in Oman. In addition, Sohar University is a first private university in Oman and it played an important role in the education sector in Oman. As well as, it has students from all areas in Oman. Furthermore, it has international students. Finally, Sohar University has about 6000 students, which is a huge number of students.

The permission for this study is obtained from the office of the Dean per each faculty, Sohar University. The quantitative approach is employed in data collection and analysis. The data is collected from the responders through closed-end questions focusing on specific groups or individuals. Also, the data collection at Sohar University was done through structured questionnaire and distribute among the targeted students through an online questionnaire form Google form, and face to face the responders. We targeted 562 students from faculties of business, IT, English, Arts & Education, and engineering. All data collected were kept confidential, only use for sole purposes of this study. Also, the ethical issue was taken into consideration; forms were freely distributed and filled before the main survey was conducted. Finally, students were selected at random. It took an average of three minutes to fill this questionnaire. Overall we used

positivism to obtained fast and accurate data. Subsequently, we used mono-method, since quantitative data collection technique was used for the questionnaire and online survey to all responders at Sohar University. In addition, we distributed the surveys ones, because in this research project, enough time to distribute more than one's time. Hence, we will testable our proportion into our research project to recognize the factors that affect student performance, at a selected level and faculties. As well as, we conducted a cross-sectional survey in our research project. Furthermore, regression analysis is used for statistical techniques.

Regarding the demographic information, genders both male and female were input in the questionnaire designed. In addition to that, other vital demographic data such as age, faculty of study, father/guardian, social economic status, residential area, all tuition, hours of study, and accommodation. We put a certain number of a questionnaire to securities for each section to each respondent and collected later.

1.1   Problem Statement

There is no obtainable information about factors affecting students' academic performance as a whole in the Sohar University. The only information available so far, best on the knowledge of this researcher, is the study conducted by Trabelsi (2015) who look at the evaluation of Sohar University GFP students' performance in writing based on a pedagogical perspective. This study focused on writing only, did not look at the students' performance as a whole. Furthermore, there is no work that reports the direct impact of student personal related factors, teacher-related factors, and institution-related factors which encompasses the whole aspect of factors influencing students' academic performance. In order to improve the general academic performance of students regardless of their cultural background, there is a need for a study to examining possible factors affecting the students' performance and proffer the best possible solution to resolve the issues. In addition to the above problem, there have been several constraints as regards the high student academic performance at Sohar University campus. The factors affecting the academic performance of

various students have not been considered before now. What are the possible solution to these issues/factors? These issues /factors that affect student's performance are the teacher/lecturer characteristics, study environment, and student personal problems of which can be improved to enhance the performance of the students.

1.2   Research Objective

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the factors affecting students' academic performance at Sohar University. For easy analysis of these factors, the objective is a further breakdown as follows;

(i) To examine the effects of personal factors on student's academic performance,

(ii) To assess the effect of teacher-related factors influencing student's academic performance, and

(iii) To investigate the institution related factors influencing students' academic performance.

1.3   Research Hypotheses

(i) There is a direct relationship between personal related factors and student performance.

(ii) There is a direct relationship between the institution's learning environment and the student's performance.

(iii) There is a relationship between personal factors and student's performance.

1.4   Importance of the study

This research project is undertaken on these three factors because the factors were found to affect the performance of Sohar University students. The research is targeting the education industry in Oman. This is because of the importance of the education sector in advancing and sustaining the social development in Oman. There are many educational institutions, academicians, and the parents interested to know the factors that increase and decrease student performance in school. Hence, the outcomes will benefit all these groups in society.

2.1   Theoretical framework

Students' works and performance can be evaluated along several dimensions including class participation, individual written work in examination and class, and group activities such as independent projects and project presentations (Benford and Newsome, 2006). Our focus here is on the factors affecting students' performance, which are integral to the study and often accounts for student's ultimate position in the society.

In our study, for the factors affecting student's performances, we suggest a conceptual framework that includes three independent variables: personal factors, teachers' factors, and institutional factors, while student performances are the independent variable. This conceptual framework model tries to capture the magnitude of the effect of each of the three independent variables on the dependent construct of the study which is academic performance. Similarly, the combined effect of the three independent variables will also be assessed. The personal factors, teacher-related factors, and institutional related factors as a tool for measuring students' academic performance. Which aims to improve the student's performances by measuring all factors related to personal, teacher, and institution.

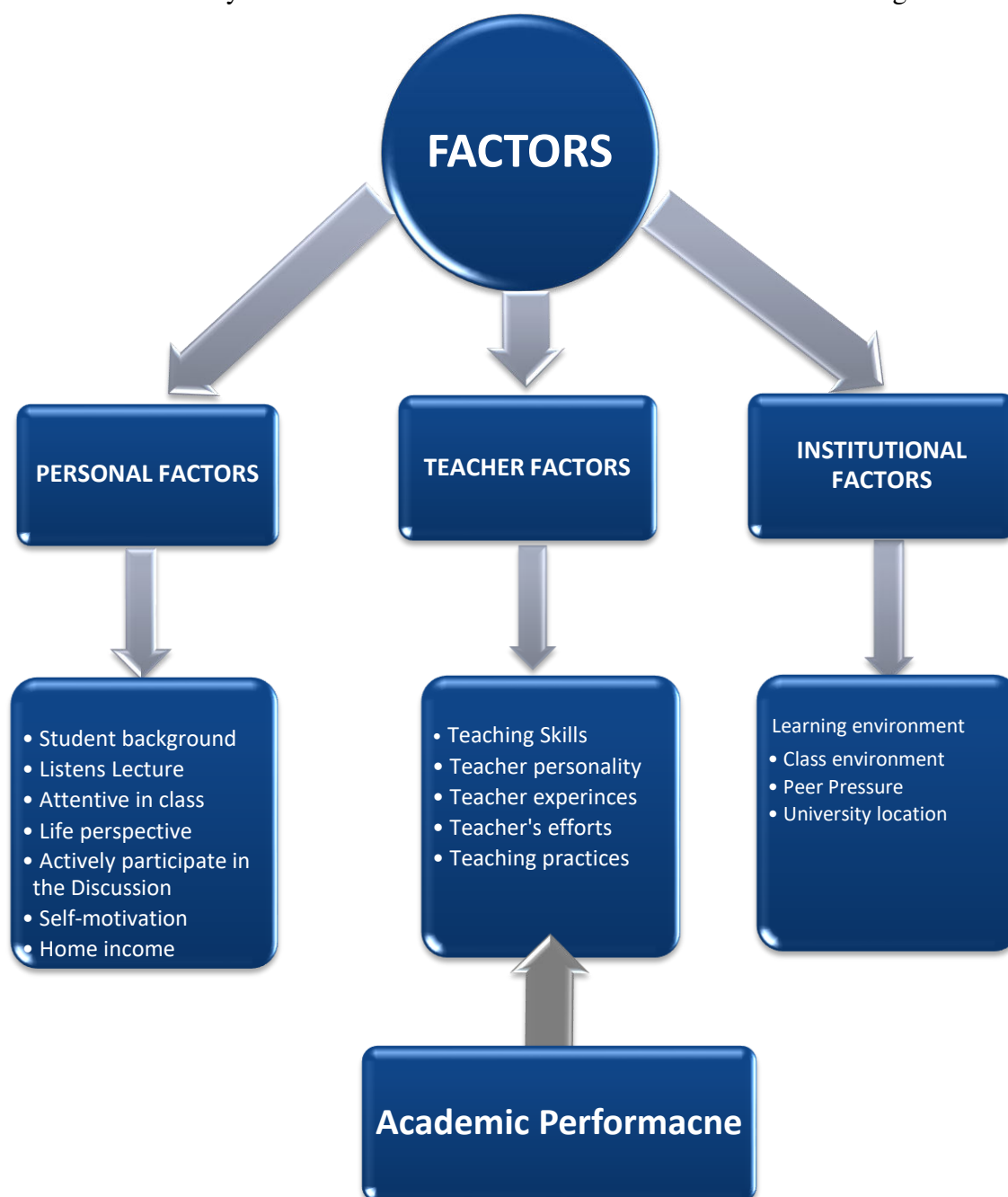A schematic representation of the above theoretical framework is given below.

Figure 1: Theoretical framework

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 1: Summary of Student Personality Related Factors

Statement	A	N	O	R	S	K-S value	Chi^2 value	p-value
Attend the classes regularly	227 40.4%	40 7.1%	76 13.5%	121 21.3%	98 17.4%	6.173	1777.69	
Listen to the lecturer carefully	138 24.6%	36 6.4%	166 29.4%	114 20.3%	108 19.5%	4.400	83.516	
Actively participate in the discussion	107 19%	38 6.8%	147 26.2%	128 21.3%	42 22.8%	4.134	70.117	
I work hard on the assignments, projects, and tests to get good grades	163 29%	29 4.3%	136 24.2%	123 21.9%	116 20.6%	4.735	98.374	.000
I always read the tutorials' questions before the class	75 13.3%	58 10.3%	137 24.4%	140 24.9%	152 27%	4.435	64.886	
I always try to solve the tutorial questions before the class	86 15.3%	52 9.3%	139 24.7%	152 27%	133 23.7%	4.601	62.680	
I always revise and study my lessons in a group of students	105 18.7%	51 9.1%	126 22.4%	131 23.3%	149 26.5%	4.415	50.669	
I always study and revise my lessons alone (not in a group of students)	100 17.8%	49 8.7%	137 24.4%	133 23.7%	143 25.4%	4.307	54.619	
I have studying problems such as: oblivion, anxiety, lack of sleep and laziness	88 15.7%	56 10%	131 23.3%	141 25.1%	146 26%	4.515	53.996	

A= **Always** N= **Never** O= **Often** R= **Rarely** S= **Sometimes**
K-S=Kolmogorov–Smirnovtest **(**The KS test report the maximum difference betweenthe two cumulative distributions, and calculates a P value from that and the sample sizes)

Hypothesis: There is a relationship between the regularity of teachers and student performance and choice of the respondent.

The table above indicated that the p-value is <0.05. So, therefore the null hypothesis gets rejected. There is a lot of significant relationship between students' performance that the choice of the respondent's at Sohar University. In contrast, the K-S value that obtained from test, it is deserved from the choice of respondents that "Attending the classes regularly" where the K-S value (6.173) which is rank first, related with among the "I work hard on the assignments, projects, and tests to get good grades" where the K-S is (4.735) also that followed by K-S value (4.601) of "I always try to solve the tutorial questions before the class".

The above results clear that connect with others that factor effect on students' performance.

Table 2: Summary of Institution Related Factors

Statement	A	N	O	R	S	K-S value	Chi^2 value	p-value
Do the classroom at Sohar university providing a good environment for learning?	93 16.5%	57 10.1%	90 16%	171 30.4%	151 26.9%	5.588	78.925	.000
Does Sohar university have appropriate learning environment?	70 12.5%	42 7.5%	137 24.4%	165 29.4%	148 26.3%	4.937	101.363	
Does University have a specific place for study?	102 18.1%	57 10.1%	122 21.7%	139 24.7%	142 25.3%	4.560	43.178	
Do the university facilities such as class, library, and labs appropriate for the study?	92 16.4%	45 8%	133 23.7%	143 25.4%	149 26.5%	4.585	68.142	

Hypothesis: There is a relationship between the Institution environment and the student's performance.

The table above indicates that the p-value is <0.05. So, therefore the null hypothesis gets rejected. There is a lot of significant relationship between institution environments and student's performance that the choice of the respondent's at Sohar University. Compared the K-S value obtained from test, it is deserved from the choice of respondents that "Do the classroom at Sohar university providing good environment for learning" where the K-S value (5.588) which is rank first, related with among the "Does Sohar university have appropriate learning environment" where the K-S is (4.937) followed by K-S value (4.585) of "Do the university facilities such as class, library, and labs appropriate for study".

The above results clear that connect with others that factor effect on Institution environment and student's performance.

Table 3: Summary of Teacher Related Factors

Statement	A	N	O	R	S	K-S value	Chi^2 value	p-value
I get help from my teacher when I need it	107 19%	46 8%	97 17.3%	175 31.1%	137 24.4%	5.568	81.843	.000
Do lecturers use different teaching practices	51 9.1%	56 10%	144 25.6%	173 30.8%	138 24.6%	4.910	109.228	
Some teachers have weak teaching skills which have a negative effect on student's	92 16.4%	46 8.2%	121 21.5%	156 27.8%	147 26.2%	4.961	71.149	

performance							

Hypothesis: There is a relationship between personal factors and student's performance**.**

The table above indicates that the p-value is <0.05. So, therefore the null hypothesis gets rejected. There is a lot of significant relationship between personal factors and student's performance that the choice of the respondent's at Sohar University. Compared the K-S value obtained from test, it is deserved from the choice of respondents that "I get help from my teacher when I need it" where the K-S value (5.568)

which is rank first, related with among the "Some teachers have weak teaching skills which have negative effect on student's performance" where the K-S is (4.961) followed by K-S value (4.910) of "Do lecturers use different teaching practices".

The above results clear that connect with others that factor effect on Institution environment and student's performance.

ANOVA

statement	GPA		Gender		level		Age	
	F value	P value	F value	P value	F value	P value	F value	P value
Attend the classes regularly	2.802	0.025	.399	.810	.531	.713	2.376	0.50
Listen to the lecturer carefully	3.257	0.012	2.662	0.032	.898	.465	3.446	0.009
Actively participate in the discussion	3.281	0.011	2.467	.044	1.268	.281	3.292	.011
I work hard on the assignments, projects and tests to get good grades	5.267	.000	.966	.426	1.272	.280	1.824	.123
I always read the tutorials' questions before the class	.389	.817	1.513	.197	.534	.711	2.415	0.48
I always try to solve the tutorial questions before the class	.470	.758	1.018	.397	.678	.608	1.680	.153
I always revise and study my lessons in a group of students	2.214	.066	3.332	.010	.436	.783	3.502	.008
I always study and revise my lessons alone (not in a group	2.638	0.33	1.669	.171	3.88	.013	1.800	.127

of students							
I have studying problems such as: oblivion, anxiety, lack of sleep and laziness	1.381	.239	2.406	.049	3.493	.008	.744	.562

statement	GPA		Gender		level		Age	
	F value	P value	F value	P value	F value	P value	F value	P value
Do the classroom at Sohar university providing good environment for learning?	2.128	0.076	3.334	.010	2.957	.020	2.424	.047
Does Sohar university have appropriate learning environment?	2.128	.076	3.334	.010	2.957	.020	2.424	.047
Does University have specific place for study?	4.629	.001	2.390	.05	1.062	.374	3.616	.006
Do the university facilities such as: class, library and labs appropriate for study?	1.256	.286	1.698	.149	.363	.835	1.257	.286
I get help from my teacher when I need it	2.619	.034	.420	.795	.587	.672	2.071	.083
Do lecturers use different teaching practices	2.872	.022	1.698	.149	.327	.860	3.961	.004
Some teachers have weak teaching skills which have negative effect on student's performance	1.508	.198	.854	.491	.396	.812	4.519	.001

We took a gander at the observation explanations against statistic components like (Age, Gender, Level of student, and GPA) to know whether view of individuals varies as indicated by a specific element. We conducted an ANOVA test and looked to the P and F value. Attend the classes regularly which the F value are 2.802, .399, .531 and 2.376 while the relating p value are 0.025, .810, .713 and 0.50 separately. We can state that these gatherings do not differ significantly in their announcement of conviction a nearer examination of recurrence table or mean scores uncovers that many of students strongly agree with many survey that responding's which is effect on students' performance with all professions that statement can except related with others students which is not serious in performance.

"Do the classroom at Sohar University providing good environment for learning" that the F value are 2.128, 3.334, 2.957 and 2.424 but on the opposite side the P value are 0.076, .010, .020, and .047. We can indicates that many of students are different in significantly in their performance. Besides more students express that they survey many statement of environment inside in the institution which is mostly related with performance of the students.

"I get help from my teacher when I need it" that the F value are 2.619, .420, .587 and 2.071 but on the other hand the P value are .034, .795, .672 and .083. Many of students give feedback that attitude of teacher almost helps students when they needed and where they stop working. Always significantly belief that students always meet with teacher and share their problem to solve and need to get more solution and add other profession to get solve in every statement to change their students' performance which is help students in many factors.

5. Conclusion, Discussion and managerial implication

The findings showed that the students of Sohar University are greatly influenced by personal factors which have a significant impact on student academic performance. Students perceive that institution related factors have a significant effect on their performance because they preferred a quiet and appropriate university environment. Students believe that teachers who have teaching skills and using a variety of teaching techniques have a more positive effect on their performance.

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