
Academic performance and sense of purpose: the moderating role of family support among public university students

Mohd Shahidan Shaari

Faculty of Economics & Business,
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak,
Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia
Email: smshahidan@unimas.my

Nur Salimah Alias and Faiz Masnan

Faculty of Business & Communication,
Universiti Malaysia Perlis,
Kangar and Arau, Perlis, Malaysia
Email: salimah@unimap.edu.my
Email: faizmasnan@unimap.edu.my

Abdul Hayy Haziq Mohamad*

School of Business and Management,
University of Technology Sarawak,
Sibu, Sarawak, Malaysia
Email: abdul.hayy.haziq@uts.edu.my
*Corresponding author

Mohd Juraij Abd Rani

Faculty of Business & Communication,
Universiti Malaysia Perlis,
Kangar and Arau, Perlis, Malaysia
Email: juraijrani@unimap.edu.my

Abstract: This study contributes to the literature by demonstrating how academic performance directly strengthens student' sense of purpose and how family support amplifies this effect among 563 Malaysian public university students. The investigation was undertaken in 20 public universities, focusing on an undergraduate population of 681,000 students. A non-randomised sampling technique was used, specifically convenience sampling, to collect data efficiently. A statistical regression model was implemented to study the variable relationships. The results show that both academic performance and family support play a significant role in shaping student' sense of purpose, with academic performance having a stronger direct impact. Additionally, family support serves as a moderator, strengthening the meaningful connection between educational attainment and personal purpose. These findings emphasise the importance of academic achievement in boosting student'

M.S. Shaari et al.

motivation, self-identity and long-term goals, while also highlighting the crucial role of family support in building resilience and goal-setting skills. Based on these insights, the study recommends that universities establish structured academic support and family engagement programs to reinforce student purpose and motivation. These findings can guide higher education institutions in designing initiatives that improve student resilience, reduce dropout risk and foster long-term goal setting.

Keywords: sense of purpose; academic performance; family support; student motivation; higher education; Malaysia.

Reference to this paper should be made as follows: Shaari, M.S., Alias, N.S., Masnan, F., Mohamad, A.H.H. and Rani, M.J.A. (XXXX) 'Academic performance and sense of purpose: the moderating role of family support among public university students', *Int. J. Management in Education*, Vol. x, No. y, pp.xx–xx.

Biographical notes: Mohd Shahidan Shaari is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Economics & Business, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). Prior to joining UNIMAS, he served at Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP) for 13 years. He holds a Bachelor's, Master's, and PhD. in Economics, specialising in environmental and energy economics, from Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). His research focuses on economic sustainability, socioeconomics, energy policies, and environmental economics.

Nur Salimah Alias is a Lecturer at the Faculty of Business and Communication, Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP). She earned her PhD in Psychology from Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), a Master's degree in Educational Psychology from Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), and a Bachelor's degree in Industrial and Organisational Psychology from UTM. She began her academic career in 2013 and has since been actively engaged in teaching, research, and academic development. Her research interests primarily revolve around psychology and human behaviour, including cognitive development, motivation, mental health, and workplace psychology.

Faiz Masnan developed an early interest in business during his undergraduate studies, where he earned a Bachelor of Business (Hons) in International Business. He later pursued a Master of Science in the same field at Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) before obtaining his PhD in International Entrepreneurship. Following his graduation, he began his academic career as a Senior Lecturer at his alma mater in 2020, where he continues to contribute to research and education in international business and entrepreneurship. His work focuses on global business strategies, entrepreneurial ecosystems, and cross-border trade dynamics.

Abdul Hayy Haziq Mohamad is a Lecturer at the School of Business & Management, University of Technology Sarawak (UTS), Malaysia. He began his academic career in 2018 as a Substitute Lecturer at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) Sarawak, before joining UTS as a Lecturer in 2019. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Natural Resource Economics (UMT, 2014), a Master's degree in Economics with a focus on Islamic Finance (UKM, 2017), and completed his PhD in International Economics at UNIMAS in October 2025. His research interests include environmental and natural resource economics, renewable energy, Islamic finance, and international trade.

Mohd Jurajj Abd Rani is a Lecturer in the Department of Business, Faculty of Business & Communication, Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP). His research interests lie in consumer behaviour, entrepreneurial marketing, and