



The Impact of Learning Facilities on Students' Academic Performance in Professional an Accountancy Qualification Program: Empirical Evidence

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Learning facilities both academic and non-academic facilities have a great impact on students' academic performances in an externally examined professional accountancy program i.e. Association of Chartered Certified Accountant (ACCA) Qualification and therefore, inadequacy of such facilities may translate to students' poor performances. This study examined the availability and convenience of the learning facilities that were provided by the selected Gold Status Approved Learning Provider (ALP) in Malaysia to local students who have enrolled in an ACCA Qualification program. The research objective of this study is to determine the significant relationship between the availability of academic and non-academic facilities and the academic performance of ACCA students in their professional and fundamental exam papers. A survey questionnaire was employed as the main instrument to collect data for statistical analysis from the ACCA students who had enrolled and registered for their June 2017 examination. The empirical findings of this study may provide an initial step forward in recognizing the role of essential learning facilities that would help to overcome the problem of ACCA students' poor academic performances in the selected Gold Status ALP.



Key words: *Learning Facilities, Academic Performance, ACCA Program's Students, Gold Status Approved Learning Provider.*

Introduction

Learning professional subjects, particularly in the Association of Chartered Certified Accountant (ACCA) Qualification program is not like reading a novel, memorizing or even like just mastering the accounting terms (JaneBell 1994, Mercado, Bayugo, Leynes, Lontok, Medilla & Manongsong, 2016, Bravenboer & Lester, 2016). Learning to pass ACCA fundamental and professional exam papers is challenging nowadays.

This study aim to explore the satisfaction level and respective problems encountered by professional accounting students in learning professional subjects from the selected Gold Status Approved Learning Provider in Malaysia for the Association of Chartered Certified Accountant (ACCA) Qualification program. Specifically, this study is conducted to describe the students' level of satisfaction in terms of learning facilities provided by the selected Gold Status Approved Learning Provider (ALP) including both academic and non-academic facilities in order to improve the learning process of ACCA's professional and fundamental exam papers. The second major objective of this study is to determine the significant relationship between the availability of academic and non-academic facilities and the academic performance of ACCA students in their professional and fundamental exam papers.

Therefore, an understanding and analysis of the various possible learning facilities provided by the selected gold status ALP in Malaysia for both academic and non-academic facilities would help to improve the learning styles of the professional accounting students and the teaching styles of the accounting educators for the students' academic achievements and universities' or colleges' performances to retain the ACCA "Platinum Approved Learning Partner Status".

Literature Review

Satisfaction of students differs for every level of education. Students who are at a higher level i.e. studying in a higher educational system seek more quality education (Laguador, Villas & Delgado, 2014; Al-Fadley, Al-Holy & Al-Adwani 2018) and perfection of the system at the study place because it satisfies their esteem and develops all the capabilities to be an effective educational personality.



According to Ferriman (2013), learning is a complicated concept as everyone is unique in their own ways and learns in their own ways also. Therefore, accounting students deal with different learning strategies that will definitely help their academic achievement especially in their professional subjects. Physical factors can interfere with individual students' motivation to exert effort in a course. These factors are those affecting the environment and the physical characteristics of the ALPs and accounting professional students also. This refers to things like the size of the classroom, teaching visual aids, etc. The major importance of the physical environment is that it can affect students' comfort and, to some extent, their ability to learn (Mercado, Bayugo, Leynes, Lontok, Medilla & Manongsong, 2016).

Fayyad, et. al.(2013); Al-Azab (2016) noted some personal and motivational factors such as smoking, homesickness, carelessness, lack of adequate effort, lack of self-confidence, lack of ability to be competent, inability to be well planned and organized in a person also constitute crucial problems for academic achievement (Ali & Haseeb, 2019; Haseeb, Abidin, Hye, & Hartani, 2018; Suryanto, Haseeb, & Hartani, 2018). The type of teaching methodology and strategies of the educators / tutors can make the professional subject easy or difficult as observed by most students surveyed. The educators / tutor's personality and style of interaction with the students have also been reported to be a very crucial variable in student's achievement (Ahmed, Majid & Zin, 2016; Ali & Haseeb, 2019; Haseeb, Abidin, Hye, & Hartani, 2018; Haseeb., 2019; Suryanto, Haseeb, & Hartani, 2018).

Moreover, the rapid spread and acceptance of globalization and the enormous developments in information, communication and technology (ICT), have led to dramatic changes in the business environment and brought new challenges to business education particularly the global recognized professional accounting education i.e. the ACCA Qualification program (Mohamed & Lashine, 2003; Abasimi & Xiaosong 2016). In fact, students' academic performances may also be affected by stress factors due to learning and memory (Rafidah et.al, 2009; Mujtaba & Jamal 2018) and information competency factors (Lowry, 2012; Abd, Khatibi & Ferdous 2018) through the academic library's role (Oliveira, 2017), the website quality of education providers and career information websites from the professional accounting bodies (Janvrin, Gary & Clem, 2009; Akay, 2018). Therefore, this paper identifies the challenges facing professional accounting students and accounting the education provider (ACCA in United Kingdom and its ALPs) in providing students with knowledge and skills to raise their competency level as global professional accountants.

Research Methodology

In this study, a survey questionnaire was used as the main instrument to collect data from all ACCA Program students who have registered classes with the selected Gold Status ALP in Malaysia to seat their fundamental and professional exam papers in the June and December 2017 examination. The selected ALP is a private college university located in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia which was ready to offer high quality home-grown degree programs in the area of Accountancy, Communication, Human Resources, English and Information Security as well as to produce more graduates from its professional accountancy programs offered such as CAT & ACCA and ICSA qualification.

The first part of the survey questionnaire asks for the respondent's demographic profile in terms of student's name, student card number, email address and number of semesters studied at ALP. The second part is about the students' satisfaction in terms of learning facilities that could improve students' learning process in professional accounting subjects. A five-point scale from '1' to '5' was used for respondents to indicate the level of students' learning satisfaction for the multiple question items used to measure the continuous improvement of the academic and non-academic facilities provided by the selected ALP for students' academic achievements. The five-point Likert scale is used ranging from "1" is for very dissatisfied, "2" is for somewhat dissatisfied, "3" is for neutral, "4" is for somewhat satisfied and "5" is for very satisfied.

Maheswari (2016) used a self-made inventory to gather information for the study on available academic and non-academic facilities in higher educational institutions in India. In this study, the multiple question items used for learning facilities including both academic and non-academic facilities were obtained from 13 ALPs' website information provided by the local and oversea based ACCA Platinum and Gold Status ALPs being listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Local and Oversea Based ACCA Platinum & Gold Status ALPs

	Platinum Status ALPs		Gold Status ALPs	
	Oversea	Local	Oversea	Local
1	BPP University, London	Kolej Damansara Utama (KDU)	De Montfort University	Elite International college
2	Kaplan University, London	Tunku Abdul Rahman (TAR) University College	-	FTMS College
3	Birmingham City	Sunway TES	-	INTEC Education College

	University (BCU), UK			
4	-	Sunway Kuching	-	Malvern International Academy
5	-	-	-	Methodist College KL

The learning facilities including both academic and non-academic facilities provided by the above listed ACCA Platinum and Gold status ALPs were benchmarked for the multiple question items to be used by this exploratory study. Thus, the final list as shown in Table 2 below comprising 14 items for academic facilities and 15 items for the non-academic facilities were included in the survey questionnaires for hypotheses testing and statistical analysis. The examination results provided for ACCA June 2017 examination were used in this study to evaluate student's learning performance at this selected Gold status ALP. A statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 was employed to analyse the data collected from the survey questionnaires and to interpret the statistical results for empirical evidences of this study (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016 and Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001).

Table 2: Learning Facilities Provided By ACCA Platinum and Gold Status ALPs

LEARNING FACILITIES		
	ACADEMIC FACILITIES	NON ACADEMIC FACILITIES
1	Library	Cafeteria
2	Classroom	Lockers (FOC for all students)
3	Air Conditioned Classroom	Wifi Hotspot throughout the campus
4	LCD Projector for teaching and learning purposes	Sports Facilities (Futsal /Badminton Court)
5	Computer Labs with comprehensive IT Facilities	Student Lounge
6	Better Wifi Internet Access	Counselling Room
7	Bookshop (textbook, stationery,etc)	Consultation Room
8	Printing shop	Separate Male & Female Prayer Room
9	Virtual Learning Environment	Security Guards
10	Digital Interactive Board	Student Car Park
11	Online Digital Materials (Free Download)	Conducive and Safe Dormitory Facilities

12	Counselling Services for Emotional Support	Non Resident Accommodation Facilities
13	Academic Advisor (Mentor / Mentee)	Students Society Activities
14	Consultation clinic (Lecturer & Student)	Alumni Network Activities
15	-	Industrial Linkages Activities

The researchers personally distributed 150 questionnaires to ACCA students who had attended classes for fundamental and professional examined papers at this selected Gold Status ALP in Malaysia. Only 107 out of 150 questionnaires (39.75%) were perceived usable for data analysis purposes. The breakdown details of survey questionnaires distributed and returned for data analysis is shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Distribution and Collection of Survey Questionnaires

ACCA Students & Papers	Distribution Number	Collection	
		Number	Percentage (%)
F7 (Financial Reporting)	50	35	32.7
F9 (Financial Management)	45	33	30.8
P3 (Business Analysis)	25	18	16.8
P4 (Advanced Financial Management)	25	19	17.8
P7 (Advanced Auditing & Assurance)	5	2	1.9
	150	107	100

The Cronbach's Alpha is computed to verify the reliability of the data collected from the survey questionnaire and the study variables of learning facilities provided by this selected Gold status ALP. According to Sekaran (2000), the closer the Cronbach's Alpha to 1, the higher the internal consistency reliability. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for each independent variable of this study is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Coefficient of Cronbach's Alpha

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients
Learning Facilities		
1. Academic Facilities	14	0.906

2. Non Academic Facilities	15	0.918
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Data Analysis and Discussion of Results

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

The following results in Table 5 below show the professional accounting students' satisfaction with regards to academic facilities and non-academic facilities provided by the selected gold status ALP to support and continuously improve students' learning facilities.

Table 5: Professional Accounting Students' Satisfaction with Academic Facilities

	ACADEMIC FACILITIES	Mean Score	Satisfaction Level	Rank
1	Library	3.5047	Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	6
2	Classroom	3.5047	Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	5
3	Air Conditioned Classroom	3.8879	Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	1
4	LCD Projector for teaching and learning purposes	3.7103	Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	2
5	Computer Labs with comprehensive IT Facilities	3.1981	Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	8
6	Better Wifi Internet Access	2.6729	Somewhat Dissatisfied	14
7	Bookshop (textbook, stationery,etc)	3.1215	Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	11
8	Printing shop	2.8598	Somewhat Dissatisfied	13
9	Virtual Learning Environment	3.1963	Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	9
10	Digital Interactive Board	3.0952	Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	12
11	Online Digital Materials (Free Download)	3.1308	Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	10
12	Counselling Services for Emotional Support	3.2430	Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	7
13	Academic Advisor (Mentor / Mentee)	3.5140	Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	4

14	Consultation clinic (Lecturer & Student)	3.6132	Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	3
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As presented in Table 5 the results in terms of students' satisfaction with academic facilities were ranked in status from number 1 to 12, students perceived and ranked those academic facilities provided by this selected gold status ALP as "3" i.e. for "neutral" (neither satisfied nor dissatisfied) level of satisfaction from the given five-point Likert scale used ranging from "1" as very dissatisfied to "5" as very satisfied. In addition, it was found students were dissatisfied with the Wi-Fi Internet Access and Printing Shop provided by this selected gold status ALP. Students preferred that these two (2) important problems of academic facilities to be reviewed and addressed quickly by ALP as effective learning facilities tools before forthcoming ACCA examinations.

Based on Table 6 below, for the results of students' satisfaction with non-academic facilities, the overall assessment of the students satisfactions was at Likert scale point "3" i.e. "neutral" (neither satisfied nor dissatisfied) level of satisfaction from the five-point Likert scale used ranging from "1" as very dissatisfied to "5" as very satisfied. However, it was found that there were five (5) non-academic facilities being ranked as "somewhat dissatisfied" which required ALP's quick response to students suggestions about improving non-academic facilities such as student lounge, sport facilities, Wi-Fi hotspot throughout the campus including students cark park and lockers.

Table 6: Professional Accounting Students' Satisfaction with Non - Academic Facilities

	NON - ACADEMIC FACILITIES	Mean Score	Satisfaction Level	Rank
1	Cafeteria	3.3551	Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	3
2	Lockers (FOC for all students)	2.5048	Somewhat Dissatisfied	15
3	Wifi Hotspot throughout the campus	2.6075	Somewhat Dissatisfied	13
4	Sports Facilities (Futsal / Badminton Court)	2.7944	Somewhat Dissatisfied	12
5	Student Lounge	2.8774	Somewhat Dissatisfied	11
6	Counselling Room	3.0935	Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	8
7	Consultation Room	3.1028	Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	6

8	Separate Male & Female Prayer Room	3.7925	Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	1
9	Security Guards	3.6449	Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	2
10	Student Car Park	2.5429	Somewhat Dissatisfied	14
11	Conducive and Safe Dormitory Facilities	3.0943	Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	7
12	Non Resident Accommodation Facilities	3.1714	Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	5
13	Students Society Activities	3.2243	Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	4
14	Alumni Network Activities	3.0654	Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	9
15	Industrial Linkages Activities	3.0561	Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	10

Table 7 below shows the overall assessment of the students' satisfaction with regard to learning facilities provided by this selected gold status ALP to enhance their ACCA examination and academic achievements. Based on this result, the overall assessment of students satisfaction perception for learning facilities provided was rather neutral (51%) i.e. neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and about 30% and 19% responses were considered satisfied and dissatisfied respectively with regards to the learning facilities provided by the selected ALP.

Table 7: Overall Rating for Learning Facilities (Academic and Non Academic Facilities) provided by the selected Gold Status ALP

Likert Scale	Learning Facilities	Frequency	Percentage
1	Very Dissatisfied	3	2.8
2	Somewhat Dissatisfied	16	15
3	Neutral	51	47.7
4	Somewhat Satisfied	28	26.2
5	Very Satisfied	3	2.8
	Non Response	6	5.6
	Total	107	100

Inferential Statistical Analysis

The following statistical analysis such as factor analysis and multiple regression analysis (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001; Aktug & Iri 2018) are used to extract the valid factors and to investigate the relationships between learning facilities including the academic and non-academic (independent variable) and professional accounting students' ACCA academic results for June 2017 examination (dependent variable).

Factor Analysis was used to confirm that only three (3) academic facilities are in conformity with the findings of the literature review and are thus valid for this study of a selected gold status ALP. In addition, the factor analysis has also confirmed that there are only two (2) non-academic facilities for hypotheses testing. Table 8 below shows the summary of factor analysis results, factors and Cronbach's Alpha scores to justify that the study variables in this study of the selected gold status ALP were reliable for hypotheses testing via multiple regression analysis.

Table 8: Summary of Factor Analysis Results, Factors and Cronbach's Alpha Scores for the Learning Facilities provided by the selected Gold Status ALP

Factors	Items	Factor Loadings	Eigenvalue (%)	Cronbach's alpha
Academic Facilities	KMO = 0.832, Sig. = 0.000, Eigenvalue= 67%			
Technological Factors	6	0.685 – 0.906	45.153	0.879
Physical Factors	3	0.703 – 0.903	12.932	0.850
Motivational Factors	4	0.636 – 0.891	8.770	0.815
Non-Academic Facilities	KMO = 0.887 Sig. = 0.000, Eigenvalue= 60.724			
Motivational Factors	9	0.520 – 0.929	49.926	0.924
Physical Factors	4	0.554 – 0.858	10.799	0.812

Multiple Regression Analysis was used to find the relationship model and to investigate the relationships between learning facilities including the academic and non-academic (independent variables) and professional accounting students' ACCA academic results for the June 2017 examination (dependent variable). This statistical technique also helps to identify the significant predictors between learning facilities (academic and non-academic facilities) and the students' ACCA academic results for June 2017 examination. Table 9 below shows the summary of regression results for the positive and significant relationship between learning facilities (academic and non-academic facilities) and students' academic performance (ACCA June 2017 examination) in the selected gold status ALP in Malaysia.

The hierarchical regression models in Tables 9 and 10 below were used for the hypotheses testing of the research objectives of this study i.e. to examine the positive and significant relationship between learning facilities (academic and non-academic facilities) and professional accounting students' academic performances. In a hierarchical regression, the variables are entered in stages. The order in which the variables or groups of variables are entered is decided on theoretical or conceptual grounds. This approach is deemed appropriate when causal relationships among the independent variables can be predicted.

Table 9: Model Summary of Learning Facilities (Academic and Non-Academic Facilities)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.206 ^a	.042	.033	1.673	.042	4.637	1	105	.034
2	.207 _b	.043	.024	1.681	.001	.063	1	104	.803
3	.239 ^c	.057	.030	1.676	.014	1.548	1	103	.216
4	.282 ^d	.080	.043	1.664	.023	2.497	1	102	.117
5	.288 ^e	.083	.038	1.669	.004	.395	1	101	.531

^aPredictors: (Constant), Academic Facilities: Physical Factor

^bPredictors: (Constant), Academic Facilities: Physical Factor, Technological Factor

^cPredictors: (Constant), Academic Facilities: Physical Factor, Technological Factor, Motivational Factor

^dPredictors: (Constant), Academic Facilities: Physical Factor, Technological Factor, Motivational Factor, Non-Academic:Physical Factor

^ePredictors: (Constant), Academic Facilities: Physical Factor, Technological Factor, Motivational Factor, Non-Academic Facilities: Physical Factor, Motivational Factor

The Model Summary in Table 9 reveals how much variation in the dependent variable is explained at each stage of the regression. At Stage 1, when physical factors for academic facilities are included, the model explained 4.2% of the variation of students' academic performance with R Square = 0.042, significant F Change at 0.034 at $p < 0.05$. For the following Stage 2, 3, 4 & 5, when more independent variables of learning facilities are added step by step to the model but somehow the model 2, 3, 4 and 5 shown in Table 9 are found not significant.

Table 10: Regression Coefficient of Learning Facilities (Academic and Non-Academic Facilities)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	4.725	.830		5.693	.000		
	Academic: Physical Factor	-.480	.223	-.206	-2.153	.034	1.000	1.000
2	(Constant)	4.765	.849		5.611	.000		
	Academic: Physical Factor	-.438	.281	-.188	-1.560	.122	.637	1.571
	Academic : Technological Factor	-.065	.258	-.030	-.250	.803	.637	1.571
3	(Constant)	4.237	.947		4.473	.000		
	Academic: Physical Factor	-.476	.282	-.204	-1.690	.094	.629	1.590
	Academic : Technological Factor	-.162	.269	-.076	-.605	.547	.582	1.718
	Academic: Motivational Factor	.279	.224	.132	1.244	.216	.813	1.230
4	(Constant)	4.056	.948		4.281	.000		
	Academic: Physical Factor	-.480	.280	-.206	-1.717	.089	.629	1.590
	Academic : Technological Factor	-.422	.313	-.197	-1.347	.181	.422	2.371
	Academic: Motivational Factor	.273	.223	.129	1.226	.223	.813	1.230
	Non-Academic: Physical Factor	.384	.243	.194	1.580	.117	.596	1.677
5	(Constant)	3.908	.979		3.992	.000		
	Academic: Physical Factor	-.498	.282	-.213	-1.766	.080	.623	1.606
	Academic : Technological Factor	-.460	.320	-.215	-1.438	.154	.407	2.459
	Academic: Motivational Factor	.219	.239	.104	.916	.362	.708	1.412

Non-Academic: Physical Factor	.320	.264	.162	1.210	.229	.507	1.972
Non-Academic: Motivational Factor	.217	.345	.088	.628	.531	.463	2.159

Dependent Variable: Professional Accounting Students' Academic Performance

Supported Hypotheses: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Table 10 indicates that the physical factor provided by the academic facilities is no longer a significant variable when the other four independent variables are entered into the regression equation. In other words, the quality of students academic performance is no longer showed in the significant regression model 1 as shown in Table 9 and Table 10.

Both significant regression model 1 in Table 9 and Table 10 indicate that the physical factor provided by the academic facilities at the selected gold status ALP has a negative and significant relationship to the students academic performance. Table 10 shows that the Tolerance Values are all above 0.1 and the VIF are all below 10 to indicate that there is no multicollinearity problem.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The overall assessment of students' satisfaction for learning facilities provided by the selected gold status ALP was 51% preferred to the neutral perception (neither satisfied nor dissatisfied), 30% indicated a satisfied level and 19% gave their perceived responses as dissatisfied (Jabarullah and Hussain, 2019). For the case of technological factor of academic facilities, students were found to be dissatisfied with the WI-Fi Internet Access and Printing Shop provided by the selected gold status ALP. Students preferred that these two (2) important problems of academic facilities be addressed quickly by the selected gold status ALP to support its learning facilities before the forthcoming ACCA examinations. It was also discovered that there were five (5) non-academic facilities which were ranked "somewhat dissatisfied" which also required ALP's quickness to respond to student suggestions about improving non-academic facilities such as student lounge, sport facilities, Wi-Fi hotspot throughout the campus, students cark park and lockers.

In addition, the main objective of this study was to determine the significant relationship between the availability of academic and non-academic facilities and the academic performance of ACCA students in their professional and fundamental examined papers. Through the hierarchical regression models, the model at stage 1 is found to be a significant model where physical factors for academic facilities such as air-conditioned classrooms, LCD



Projectors and library facilities are urgently required to be addressed by the selected ALP. The significant regression model 1 in Table 9 and Table 10 indicates that the physical factor provided by the academic facilities at this selected gold status ALP has a negative and significant relationship to the students' academic performances. Thus, it could be statistically interpreted that the accounting students' academic performances for the ACCA June 2017 examination was considered good despite insufficient provision of physical environment factors in respect to the academic facilities provided by the selected gold status ALP.

It is recommended that the selected gold status ALP may have to respond immediately and give attention to suggestions and major complaints of the students. Since students can study for the ACCA Qualification all over the world and can obtain study materials through its global network, the selected ALP should provide good learning facilities in terms of physical environment factors, technological factors and motivational factors to enhance the learning styles of its students and teaching styles of its educators/instructors. The campus should come complete with wireless access coverage (Wi-Fi) available 24-hours per day which covers classrooms, lecture halls, cafeteria, library, student lounge, and open areas that are conducive to students' discussions, communications, eLearning and work on course assignments. Classrooms and lecture halls need to be fully equipped with updated technologies like projectors, sound systems and instructor PCs should have high-speed internet access. There must be a number of facilities equipped with digital interactive boards for better teaching and learning between instructors and students. All registered students are recommended to be given their own ID that enables them to access the campus' computing facilities. This includes Internet access, wifi access, and systems like eLearning. Student accounts should also give access to facilities like scanning, photocopying and printing. For non-academic facilities, physical environment factors such as a well-stocked library with many volumes of reading material (printed and electronic), parking bays on campus, cafeteria and snack corners, and a comprehensive range of sports facilities housed in a sports complex and conducive and safe dormitory facilities should also be considered to enhance students' academic performance.

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