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## The Relationship between Lecturers' Teaching Style And Students' Academic Engagement

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### Abstract

This study aimed to identify the relationship between lecturers' teaching style and students' academic engagement in a university in Malaysia. The study was conducted using a survey through questionnaires distributed to 266 students. Types of teaching styles used are in accordance with the teaching style of Grasha (1996). In order to determine the dimensions of the lecturers' teaching style and students' engagement level in academic, the descriptive statistics based on percentage, mean and standard deviation were used. As for the lecturers' teaching styles, majority of the lecturers use personal model followed by expert style, while delegator style gets the lowest mean. Majority of the respondents were found to have involved in academic engagement. The results also show that there is a significant but moderate relationship between lecturers' teaching style with the students' academic engagement.

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*Keywords:* teaching style; academic engagement; lecturers and students

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### 1. Introduction

Student academic excellence is the main agenda for any educational institutions and colleges. To ensure that academic excellence can be achieved, it requires action and cooperation from all parties. The learning

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environment which is inviting, conducive and fun is essential in teaching and learning. This is because the students' ability and readiness to learn does not only depending on the students themselves, but also lie in the suitability of a teacher's teaching style (Felder & Henrique, 1995).

Research involving college and university students development shows that time and energy students devote to educationally purposeful activities is the single best predictor of their learning and personal development (Astin, 1993; Pascarella, 2001). Thus, those institutions that engage their students more in the variety of activities' that contribute to valuable outcomes of college can claim to be of higher quality in comparison with similar types of college and universities.

Student engagement is defined as the student's psychological investment in and the effort directed toward learning, understanding, and mastering knowledge, skills, or crafts that academic work intends to promote (Newman, 1992). More than just the energy to complete the task, engagement represents the psychological investment that cognitively involves students in the work they are doing. Student involvement has been found to be one of the important predictors of their academic performance. A student who is more involved in university life would perform better academically.

Students' involvement theory which was developed by Astin (1984). Claims that students involvement in academic will influence the student's psychosocial development throughout his/her university or college life. To ensure the academic excellence, it requires actions and cooperation from all parties. The learning environment which is inviting, conducive and fun is essential in teaching and learning. This is because the students' ability and readiness to learn does not only depend on the students themselves, but also lie in the suitability of a teacher's teaching style (Felder & Henrique, 1995).

Grasha and Hicks (2000) argues that in order to guarantee the effectiveness of a teaching and learning process, it is simply not enough to focus only on the students' learning styles. Teaching styles also need to be considered as an important element in a lesson. According to Grasha (1996), the teaching styles are the pattern of belief, knowledge, performance and behavior of teachers when they are teaching. In this study, according to Grasha (1996), there are five dimensions of teaching styles which are the expert style, formal authority style, personal model style, delegator style and facilitator style.

There were studies done to identify the association between teaching styles with students' achievement such as the study by Zin (2004) and Aitkin and Zuzovsky (1994) and there is also a study that connects their teaching with students' cognitive styles (Evans, 2004). Past studies on the engagement of students found that there is a correlation between students' engagement and the teaching and academic achievement (OECD, 2000). However, their studies found that teaching is not the main factor affecting academic achievement of students.

Studies regarding university teaching style are very less conducted, especially the teaching styles which are related to students involvement or even as university graduates. Therefore, this study will be answering questions of what is the dominant teaching style practiced by university lecturers and whether there is a relationship between lecturers' teaching styles and students' participation.

## **2. Objectives of study**

The objectives of the study are to:

1. identify lecturers' teaching styles in Universiti Utara Malaysia
2. explain students' academic engagement in Universiti Utara Malaysia
3. determine the relationship between lecturers' teaching style and students' academic engagement

## **3. Literature review**

Good teachers, are able to wheedle and motivate though there are teachers who are strict, and emotional. There are studies that found that most teachers teach according to how they have first learnt (Stitt-Gohdes, 2001)

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