# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACADEMIC SELF-CONCEPT, PARENT EXPECTATIONS, TEACHER EXPECTATIONS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF SJK(C) CHEE TONG STANDARD 5 STUDENTS

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A project report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education (Educational Psychology)

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#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Dr. Nooraini Bte Othman for her encouragement and support as my research advisor. Her professional guidance and inspiration is beyond words.

I would also like to thank my parent, Ewe Lai Huat and Ooi Ah Mooi for their patience, inspiration, and understanding during this busy time in my life. Their positive attitude and thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to my course mate, Lim Wai Wai and Kong Bee Leng for their support.

# **DEDICATION**

To my beloved mother and father

#### **ABSTRACT**

The main purpose of this study was to study the relationship between independent variables (academic self-concept, parent expectations and teacher expectations) and academic achievement of SJK(C) Chee Tong standard 5 students. Data were gathered from 200 standard 5 students of SJK(C) Chee Tong who will be seating in UPSR examination next year. The reliability of this study was tested with Cronbanch's Alpha and the result was 0.899. The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 14. The findings of this study showed significant weak correlation between academic self-concept and academic achievement. Specific academic subject self-concepts exhibited weak correlations or no correlations with academic achievement. Chinese Comprehension self-concept, Malay Comprehension self-concept, Malay Essay self-concept, English self-concept and Mathematics self-concept showed a weak influence to academic achievement, whereas Chinese Essay self-concept and Science self-concept has no correlation with academic achievement. Meanwhile, the findings also showed parent expectations were weakly linked to academic achievement and teacher expectations has small effect on academic achievement. Further study need to be carried out to find the reason of low correlations between academic self-concept, parent expectations, teacher expectations and academic achievement.

#### **ABSTRAK**

Kajian ini bertujuan mengenal pasti hubungan antara pembolehubah tidak bersandar (kendiri akademik, harapan ibu bapa dan harapan guru) dan pencapaian akademik murid tahun 5 SJK(C) Chee Tong. Data dikumpul dari 200 murid tahun 5 SJK(C) Chee Tong yang akan menduduki peperiksaan UPSR pada tahun depan. Kebolehpercayaan kajian ini telah diuji dengan Alpha Cronbanch dan hasilnya ialah 0.899. Data ini dianalisis dengan menngunakan Pakej Statistik bagi Sosial Sains (SPSS) edisi 14. Hasil kajian menunjukkan terdapat hubungan yang signifikan tetapi lemah antara kendiri akademik dan pencapaian akademik. Kendiri akademik mengikut subjek mempunyai hubungan yang lemah atau tiada hubungan dengan pencapaian akademik. Kendiri Pemahamam Bahasa Cina, kendiri Pemahamam Bahasa Malaysia, kendiri Penulisan Bahasa Malaysia, kendiri Bahasa Inggeris dan kendiri Matematik menunjukkan pengaruh yang lemah terhadap pencapaian akademik, manakala kendiri Penulisan Bahasa Cina dan kendiri Sains tidak mempunyai hubungan dengan pencapaian akademik. Sementara itu, hasil kajian menunjukkan harapan ibubapa mempunyai hubungan yang lemah dengan pencapaian akademik dan harapan guru mempunyai efek yang kecil terhadap pencapaian akademik. Kajian lanjutan perlu dilaksanakan untuk mencari sebab-sebab yang menyebabkan hubungan lemah antara kendiri akademik, harapan ibu bapa, harapan guru dan pencapaian akademik.

# LIST OF TABLES

TABLE NO.	TITLE	PAGE
Table 3.5.1	The results of Cronbach's alpha internal consistency test	43
Table 3.7.2.1	Correlation coefficient interpretation (Gay at el., 2009)	46
Table 4.2.2.1	Distribution of Chinese Comprehension self-concept	103
Table 4.2.2.2	Distribution of Chinese Essay self-concept	104
Table 4.2.2.3	Distribution of Malay Comprehension self-concept	105
Table 4.2.2.4	Distribution of Malay Essay self-concept	106
Table 4.2.2.5	Distribution of English self-concept	107
Table 4.2.2.6	Distribution of Science self-concept	108
Table 4.2.2.7	Distribution of Mathematics self-concept	109
Table 4.2.3.1	Distribution of Parent Expectations 1	110
Table 4.2.3.2	Distribution of Parent Expectations 2	111

Table 4.2.3.3	Distribution of Parent Expectations 3	112
Table 4.2.4.1	Distribution of Teacher Expectations 1	113
Table 4.2.4.2	Distribution of Teacher Expectations 2	114
Table 4.2.4.3	Distribution of Teacher Expectations 3	115
Table 4.2.5.1	Distribution of Academic Achievement	116
Table 4.3.1.1	Analysis of academic self-concept by academic Achievement correlations	57
Table 4.3.1.2	Analysis of specific subject academic self-concept by academic achievement correlations	58
Table 4.3.2.1	Analyses of parent expectations by academic achievement correlations	60
Table 4.3.3.1	Analyses of Teacher expectations by academic achievement correlations	60
Table 5.2.1	Summary of the correlation	62

# LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE NO.	TITLE	PAGE
1.7.1	Theoretical Model of Study	10
2.4.1	The relationships among the dimensions of self-concept	
	and achievement	23

# LIST OF FLOWCHART

FLOWCHART NO.	TITLE	PAGE
3.6.1	Research Procedure	44

# LIST OF GRAPHS

GRAPH NO.	TITLE	PAGE
1.3.1	Last 5 years of SJK(C) Chee Tong UPSR Passes Percentage	e 6
4.2.1.1	Distribution of the respondents based on gender	49
4.2.1.2	Distribution of the respondents based on races	50
4.2.1.3	Distribution of the respondents based on religion	51

# LIST OF PIE CHARTS

PIE CHART	NO. TITLE	PAGE
4.2.2.1	Chinese Comprehension (BC1) self-concept & achievement	52
4.2.2.2	Chinese Essay (BC2) self-concept & achievement	52
4.2.2.3	Malay Comprehension (BM1) self-concept & achievement	53
4.2.2.4	Malay Essay (BM2) self-concept & achievement	53
4.2.2.5	English (BI) self-concept & achievement	54
4.2.2.6	Science (SN) self-concept & achievement	54
4.2.2.7	Mathematics (Math) self-concept & achievement	55
4.2.3.1	Parent expectations & academic achievement	55
4.2.4.1	Teacher expectations & academic achievement	56

#### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BC1 - Chinese Comprehension

BC2 - Chinese Essay

BI - English

BM1 - Malay Comprehension

BM2 - Malay Essay

Math - Mathematics

SN - Science

# LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX	TITLE	PAGE
A	Questionnaire	95
В	Tables of Distribution	103
С	Confirmation letter from faculty	117

#### **CHAPTER 1**

#### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Introduction

Academic achievement can be described as the excelling of a student in academics, by way of achieving good grades which will ensure the route to successful career in future life. The aims of academic achievement are by and large similar in most educational organizations. Educators stress on the importance of academic achievement, stating that it is the most crucial way of establishing a student firmly on his path to a successful career. Rational and logical thinking have always been associated with learned and educated people. The aim of academics is not to merely gain bookish knowledge, it develops and enhances the ability of an individual to think and perceive the various situations that life offers. The cognitive development and progress of the mental ability of the academician will obviously have a positive impact on the society in which he or she survives. Thus, academic excellence not only ensures an individual development, it ensures the competency of a society in globalization.

Malaysia is now at the mid-point of its journey towards becoming a developed nation by the year 2020. The road ahead will be both challenging and demanding. During the next 10 years, Malaysia has to deal with great changes in the

global environment while improving and upgrading the country's domestic conditions. Thus, upgrading human resources qualities is a priority task to ensure Malaysia can compete in the globalization. As we mentioned above, academic excellence ensures the competency of a society in globalization. Therefore, improving the academic achievement equals to improving the human resources qualities.

As Ministry of Education is a vital party to improve the qualities of the human resources, a lot of implementation has been run to improve the quality of education especially primary education because everyone knows that the foundation is the most important part in learning. These implementations include increasing basic education infrastructure, revising the norms for teacher allocation, and ensuring 50 percents of primary school teachers are university graduates by 2010, strengthening the Integrated Primary School Curriculum (Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah, KBSR) to further improve the 3R skills among pupils, making the curriculum more relevant to current emerging needs of the country, and strengthening all co-curriculum programs to reinforce the development of intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and physically balanced individuals. However, UPSR (Primary School Achievement Test) result shows not everyone achieves an excellent result.

Last year, a total of 496,439 pupils sat for UPSR, only 42,029 candidates or 8.5 per cent of the pupils scored straight A's in all the tested subjects and the number of candidates who scored D or E grades or failed to achieve the minimum passing requirement is 4 per cent (19,960 pupils).

Based on the UPSR result, it shows that although Ministry of Education has put so many efforts in quality improving, the result was still not satisfied. The excellent pupils are only a few although they all are equally able students. Hilliard III (1991) makes the following statement explaining about all children being born with high ability, "What has become increasingly well documented however is that while maturation and nurturance may explain some aspects of thinking, teaching, and learning, babies start from a cognitive baseline that is nothing short of awesome."

Since all the students are born equally able, the question then becomes, what are contributing factors to the academic success of the primary students. Much research has been done on the variables that impact education achievement. Three factors that have emerged as influential on academic success are academic self-concept, parent expectations and teacher expectations. Therefore, this research focuses on the relationship between independent variables (academic self-concept, parent expectations and teacher expectations) and academic achievement of standard 5 students. Standard 5 students were chosen because they will sit for UPSR exam next year. UPSR is the most important exam for primary student. The findings from the study will give the direction to the authority to make the intervention.

#### 1.2 Background of the problem

Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological theory state that a child is at the center of the model and he is constant interaction with the environment. Surrounding the child is the "microsystem" that is comprised of those entities that directly impact the child including family members, teachers, neighborhood, school, etc. Outside of this microsystem is the "exosystem" that includes those entities that exert indirect influences on the child. Beyond the exosystem is the "macrosystem" which influences larger society and culture. The final system is "chronosystem" which contains the elements of time and history (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986; Bubolz & Sontag, 1993). Therefore, academic achievement of a student is not only due to student himself, it also due to the environment surroundings student, like parent expectations and teacher expectations.

In a major study of personality and motivation in relation to school achievement, Cattell, Sealy and Sweney (1966) found that of the total variance in school achievement, 21 to 25 percent were accounted for by a culture fair intelligence test, 27 to 36 percent by personality traits and 23 to 27 percent by motivational traits. The finding suggest that the level of prediction of school

achievement could be doubled by adding measures of personal traits to measures of ability and trebled by the addition of motivational measures. Since the self-concept is both personal and motivational variable, its overall contribution to the variance of academic achievement should be quite high. However, the global, one-dimensional self-concept is not a very useful educational construct (Marsh & Cravan, 1997). Instead, educators emphasize the multidimensional, hierarchical self-concept (Byrne, 1996; Marsh, 1990; Shavelson & Marsh, 1986). It is because how good students feel about themselves in subject areas such as math, science, and economies bears little or no relationship to how good they feel about themselves in subjects such as English, history, and foreign languages (Marsh, Byrne, & Shavelson, 1988). For example, educator finds a weak correlation between a student's math self-concept and his or her verbal self-concept (Marsh & Shavelon, 1985; Marsh et.al., 1988).

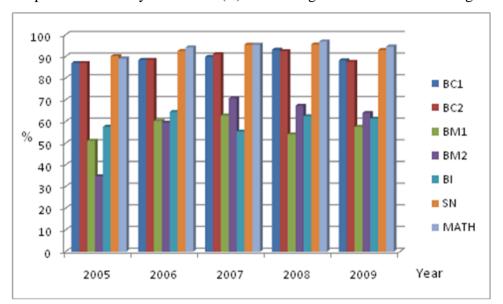
The family is the basic institution that children learn who they are, where they fit into society, and what kinds of futures they are likely to experience. It is generally agreed that the family is an important factor in student academic development and achievement. In particular, the home environment may influence the achievement of an individual in any particular endeavor. A growing body of research has shown that students perform better academically when parents are involved with their child's schooling (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Catsambis & Beveridge, 2001; Christenson, Rounds, & Gorney, 1992; Coleman; Epstein, 1991; Fehrman, Keith, & Reimers, 1987; Feuerstein, 2000; Jeynes, 2003; Keith et al., 1993; Hara, 1998; Rumberger & Palardy, 2005; Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996; Thompson, 2002). In fact, higher parent expectations for children have been associated with a greater likelihood of attending college (Hossler & Stage, 1992), selection of more core academic courses (Catsambis, 2001) and better academic performance (Fehrmann, Keith, & Reimers, 1987; Gill & Reynolds, 1999). Parent expectations influence child expectations (Patrikakou, 1996, 1997; Trusty, 1998) and motivation as well (Jacobs, Davis-Kean, Bleeker, Eccles, & Malachuk, 2005), both which are associated with academic performance.

The motivation and the achievements of pupils appear to be affected by what teachers believe they are capable of, irrespective of whether this belief true or not.

Research on teacher expectations for their students has generally found that students live up (or down) to the expectations that their teachers have for them (Jussim & Eccles, 1995; Rubie-Davies, 2007), particularly in the younger grades and when teachers know relatively little about their students' actual achievement level. Moreover, there is evidence that students in school whose teachers have high expectations achieve more than those in other schools (Marks, Doane, Secada, 1998).

Teachers often form their expectations about individual student early in the school year, sometimes based on information about achievement level, race, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, gender, speech characteristics, or labels (Good & Brophy, 1991). Teacher expectations directly affect the ways the teachers treat their students. Specifically, they treat students they perceive to be high achievers differently from those they perceive as low achievers (R. Weinstein, 2002). This differential treatment typically takes four different forms (Good, 1987a, 1987b; Good & Brophy, 2003). First, teacher interact more with perceived high achiever. Their interactions are more positive. They make more eye contact, stand closer, and orient their bodies more directly toward the students, and they seat these students closer to the front of the class. Second, teachers give perceived high achievers more thorough explanations, their instruction is more enthusiastic, they ask more follow-up questions, and they require more complete and accurate students answers. Third, teachers call on perceived high achievers more often, they allow the students more time to answer, and they provide more encouragement and prompt perceived high achievers more often. Forth, teachers praise perceived high achievers more but criticize them less. They offer high achiever more complete and lengthier feedback and more conceptual evaluations. Children of all ages are aware of the different expectations teachers hold for students (Stipek, 2002). In one study, research concluded, "After ten seconds of seeing and/ or hearing a teacher, even very young students could determine the extent to which that student was loved by the teacher" (Babad, Bernieri, & Rosenthal, 1991, p. 230). **Expectations** are usually unconscious, and teachers often do not realize that they have different expectations for all students.

#### 1.3 Statement of the problem



Graph 1.3.1: Last 5 years of SJK(C) Chee Tong UPSR Passes Percentage

Graph 1.3.1 showed the last 5 years of SJK (C) Chee Tong UPSR passes percentage. It showed that the results are not satisfying especially subjects Malay and English. Broonfenbrenner's (1977) ecological theory implies that not only the child himself contributes to his academic achievement, but his environmental reinforcements also attribute to his academic attainment and many studies showed that academic self-concept, parent expectations and teacher expectations affect the academic achievement. Thus, the researcher was interested to know the contributions of the variables that mentioned above towards the academic achievement of students SJK (C) Chee Tong so that the school can make some countermeasures.

#### 1.4 Research Objectives

The objectives of this dissertation are as follow:

- i. To identify the relationship between academic self-concept and academic achievement among respondents?
  - a. To identify the relationship between Chinese Comprehension self-concept and academic achievement among respondents?
  - b. To identify the relationship between Chinese Essay self-concept and academic achievement among respondents?
  - c. To identify the relationship between Malay Comprehension self-concept and academic achievement among respondents?
  - d. To identify the relationship between Malay Essay self-concept and academic achievement among respondents?
  - e. To identify the relationship between English self-concept and academic achievement among respondents?
  - f. To identify the relationship between Science self-concept and academic achievement among respondents?
  - g. To identify the relationship between Mathematics Comprehension selfconcept and academic achievement among respondents?
- ii. To identify the relationship between parent expectations and academic achievement among respondents?
- iii. To identify the relationship between teacher expectations and academic achievement among respondents?

#### 1.5 Research Questions

The central research questions guiding the study are:

- i. Is there any significant relationship between academic self-concept and academic achievements among respondents?
  - a) Is there any significant relationship between Chinese Comprehension self-concept and academic achievements among respondents?
  - b) Is there any significant relationship between Chinese Essay self-concept and academic achievements among respondents?
  - c) Is there any significant relationship between Malay Comprehension selfconcept and academic achievements among respondents?
  - d) Is there any significant relationship between Malay Essay and academic achievements among respondents?
  - e) Is there any significant relationship between English self-concept and academic achievements among respondents?
  - f) Is there any significant relationship between Science Comprehension and academic achievements among respondents?
  - g) Is there any significant relationship between Mathematics self-concept and academic achievements among respondents?
- ii. Is there any significant relationship between parent expectations and academic achievements among respondents?
- iii. Is there any significant relationship between parent expectations and academic achievements among respondents?

#### 1.6 Research Hypotheses

In this study, null hypotheses are tested. They are:

- i. H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between academic self-concept and academic achievement among the respondents.
  - a.  $H_{02}$ : There is no significant relationship between Chinese Comprehension self-concept and academic achievement among the respondents.
  - b.  $H_{03}$ : There is no significant relationship between Chinese Essay self-concept and academic achievement among the respondents.
  - c. H<sub>04</sub>: There is no significant relationship between Malay Comprehension self-concept and academic achievement among the respondents.
  - d. H<sub>05</sub>: There is no significant relationship between Malay Essay selfconcept and academic achievement among the respondents.
  - e. H<sub>06</sub>: There is no significant relationship between English self-concept and academic achievement among the respondents.
  - f.  $H_{07}$ : There is no significant relationship between Science self-concept and academic achievement among the respondents.
  - h)  $H_{08}$ : There is no significant relationship between Mathematics self-concept and academic achievement among the respondents.
- ii. H<sub>09</sub>: There is no significant relationship between parent expectations and academic achievement among the respondents.
- iii. H<sub>10</sub>: There is no significant relationship between teacher expectations and academic achievement among the respondents.

#### 1.7 Theoretical Framework

To understand the variations in academic achievement of students, Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological model was applied, and student achievement was conceptualized within the multiple contexts in which they operate. Bronfenbrenner (1977) proposed conceptualizing human development as occurring through the interactions between the person and the various, changing environments within they reside. More specifically, the ecological model views the individual as operating within various environmental systems, with each system occurring within a larger one. The systems are called the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. In the individual level, academic self-concept variable are located within the individual, and are brought into their interactions with others.

The microsystem describes the relationship between the individual and their immediate environments, such as school, home, and community. For children in primary school of Malaysia, it is important to assess the expectation of their parents and teachers towards their academic achievement.

Parent Expectations

Academic Self-concept Expectations

Academic achievement

Mircosystem

Mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem are not examined here.

Figure 1.7.1: Theoretical Model of Study

The theoretical model of this study (see Figure 1) contains four variables of interest and is constructed according to Bronfenbrenner's model. Within the child resides the academic self-concept variable and academic achievement variable. Surrounding the child is the microsystem that contains the variables of parent expectations and teacher expectations.

#### 1.8 Scope of study

The survey was carried out in SJK(C) Chee Tong. Questionnaires were distributed to standard 5 students of Year 5 of SJK(C) Chee Tong to study (i) the relationship between academic self-concept (UPSR subjects self-concept) and academic achievement, (ii) the relationship between parent expectations and academic achievement and last but not least, (iii) the relationship between teacher expectations and academic achievement.

#### 1.9 The significant of study

This study is important because all the while, school administrations emphasize on cognitive development. They even provide tuition to upper primary school with hope that they can do well in UPSR, but they did not consider the contribution of the psychological variables, namely academic self-concept, parent expectations and teacher expectations which are much more important.

The researcher hopes to use the findings from the study to inform academic services as well as to create innovative interventions to enhance the academic achievement of children in SJK (C) Chee Tong.

#### 1.10 Limitations of the study

The main purpose of this research is to improve the UPSR results of SJK ( C ) Chee Tong. The results may not be applied to the other school.

#### 1.11 Definition of important terms

#### **Academic self-concept:**

Shavelson, Hubner, and Stanton (1976) defined self-concept as a person's perception of himself. These perceptions are formed through one's experience with the environment, and influenced especially by environment reinforcements and significant others. This definition is also transferable with academic self-concept, and is applicable to students in the school environment. Shavelson et al. (1976) mentioned that academic self-concept was an important piece of a more general selfconcept displayed by children and teenagers. In other words, they represented the self-concept as a pyramid with the apex being a more self-concept, and the lower part being divided into academic and non-academic self-concept. The academic selfconcept is itself divided into sub-areas of academic self-concept such as English, History, Math and Science. Supporting this model, Marsh (1990), used Confirmatory Factor Analysis to show that each school subject from Grade 5 to 10 corresponded with a distinct academic self-concept. Marsh and collaborations (Marsh, Byrne & Shavelson, 1988; Marsh & Shavelson, 1985) also realized the need to further investigate two higher order academic domains, Mathmatics and Verbal, and group students' academic self-concept accordingly. Compared to one general factor of academic self-concept, the results showed a better fit for the two higher order factors of academic self-concept (Marsh, 1990). Marsh (1992) further demonstrated that academic self-concept scales are more distinct and less inter-correlated than the achievement scores pertaining to related academic subjects. In other words, the specific academic subject needs to be taken into consideration when investigating links between academic self-concepts and academic achievement (Marsh, 1992).

Consequently, Marsh (1992) recommended that researchers use different scale for assessing the self-concept linked to specific academic subjects.

In this study, academic self-concept is consisted of 7 subjects UPSR self-concept, namely Chinese Comprehension self-concept, Chinese Essay self-concept, Malay Comprehension self-concept, Malay Essay self-concept, English self-concept, Science self-concept and Mathematics self-concept.

#### **Parent expectations:**

Parent expectations refer to the expectations that parents have for their children's education. Goldenburg et al. (2001) reported that students who perceived high parent expectations regarding academics tended to fulfill these expectations. For example, those students with mothers who expected them to complete college were half as likely to drop out as those students who did not perceive their mother to have these expectations.

In this study, parent expectations perceived by the students are examined.

#### **Teacher expectations:**

Teacher expectations can be defined as inferences that teacher make about future behavior or academic performance of their students, based on what they know about their students (Good, 1987). These cues can be either objective (e.g. past achievement, students' motivation) or subjective (e.g. teacher prejudices, stereotypes).

Good and Brophy (1977) suggested that a teacher expecting specific behavior and achievement from a student will behave differently toward that student. For example, the teacher may wait less time for students who are assumed to be low achievers to answer, or she may criticize these low expectancy students more often. This treatment by the teacher tells each student what behavior and achievement the teacher expects from him. Weinstein (1998, p. 83) suggest that the "expression of

low expectations by differential treatment can inadvertently lead children to confirm predictions about their abilities by exerting less effort & ultimately performing more poorly." Some researchers (e.g. Cooper & Tom, 1984; Cooper, 1979) suggest that the real impact of teacher expectations is in sustaining motivation. Thus, a teacher who expects a student to be disinterested may either not notice the student's interest or may respond inappropriately when the student shows enthusiasm, thus stifling the student's motivation.

Research has demonstrated that teachers often treat those students they perceive as lower achieving in ways that may prove counter-motivational. Good (1987), for example, found that teachers often seat lower-achieving students farther away from them, pay less attention to the slower student, call on slower students less often, wait less time for them to answer, fail to provide follow-up questions, criticize more frequently, praise less often, and give less frequent and less detailed feedback. All of these teacher behaviors reduce a student's interest in or desire to engage in achievement activities.

In this study, teacher expectations perceived by the students are examined.

#### **Academic achievement:**

Base on Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 7th Edition, academic is connected with education, especially studying in schools and universities. Whereas achievement is a thing that somebody has done successfully, especially using their own effort and skill. Therefore, academic achievement means success in education.

In this study, academic achievement means respondents gain a good result in 7 main subjects, namely Malay Comprehensive, Malay Essay, Chinese Comprehensive, Chinese Essay, English, Science and Mathematics.

#### 1.12 Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the factors that may correlate to the academic achievement. It is our hope that the findings from this study will be used to inform academic services as well as to create innovative interventions to enhance the academic achievement of children in SJK (C) Chee Tong.

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