



***Factors Affecting Academic Achievement of the Foreign  
Undergraduate Students at Sudanese Universities  
“A Case Study of Somali Students”***

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**Abstract**

The present study investigated factors affecting the academic achievement of undergraduate Somali students at Sudanese universities. A sample of 169 participants was selected with non-probability sampling and data collected through a questionnaire. The study employed descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. The findings of the study revealed insignificance of gender and residence concerning the academic achievement of students. However, the analysis indicated the statistical significance of age and year of study. Moreover, the study concluded insignificance of institutional factors and study habit factors. The findings of this study have important implications for higher education

institutions in general and for the lecturers and instructors whom they are entrusted to enhance the academic performance of the students. Thus, the researcher has recommended at the end of the study some measures that can be taken into consideration to enhance the academic achievement of undergraduate students and foreign students in particular.

**Key words:** factors, Academic Achievement, Foreign Student/ International Student, Undergraduate Student, Sudanese Universities, Somali Students.

## **Introduction**

The postsecondary education in general is a new experience to the students who are their first time enrolled into university which comprises students of different cultural backgrounds and diverse norms and values. Therefore, the high education institutions have to contain these differences among the students in educational setting that correspond to their learning styles.

In this context, Sudan has become attractive study destination for students looking for higher education from different countries particularly from Africa and Asia. Furthermore, Sudanese higher education institutions have offers scholarships to many students from Africa including students from Somalia who are the focus of this paper. According to Hassan et al (2015) there are many research studies conducted in certain context to examine the various factors influencing the academic achievement of the students but their findings and conclusions are not - in many cases- consistent with one another despite the same factors under study. The disagreement among the researches is

due to the different specific contexts in which the study has been carried out. As result, this study is being carried out in peculiar context in terms of location and participants from particular country.

## **Review of Literature**

### **Concept of Academic Achievement**

The measurement of academic performance according to Okorie (2014) can be measured in several ways for most of educational institutions use grading system an indicator of students' academic achievement. Therefore, grades are certainly the most well-known indicator of academic achievement and thus grades are the student's "score" for their classes and overall tenure. To ascertain the quantitative nature of measuring student's achievement, Mutua (2015) elaborated that the most highly valued method of determining whether a successful completion has taken place for a learner is quantitative in nature. Some researchers like Steve (2000) as quoted by Mutua (2015) raised semantic arguments and contended that academic achievement is distinctive from academic performance in a sense that academic performance is defined as the observable or measurable behaviour of a person in a particular situation usually experimental situation. This means that performance measures the aspect of behaviour that can be observed at a specific period. But the academic achievement is cumulative and progressive.

### **Factors Affecting Academic Achievement of Students.**

This research sought to examine factors affecting academic achievement of students and specific attention is given factors relevant to

foreign students although most of factors are commonly shared between foreign and national students.

### **Gender**

The relationship between sex of the student and the academic achievement has been an issue of discussion among the educational practitioners and researchers. According to Eshetu (2015) gender difference in attitudes and behaviors as well as differential course taking and biological differences between the sexes may all be instrumental in giving rise to gender differences in achievement. Some studies (Farooq et al, 2011) have found a gap between the achievement of boys and girls, with girls showing better performance than boys in the subjects of mathematics and English as well as cumulatively. It is also identified by Mazharul Islam (2014) that gender of student is a significant determinant of academic performance.

Some researchers argue that girls receive higher grades than boys because they exert more effort, work harder, and their academic culture is more study oriented than boys. Woodfield and Earl-Novell (2006 cited in Jayanthi, et al., 2014) observed after analyzing more than a million graduating students that female students did better than male students. On the other hand, Raychaudhuri, et al (2010) in their study have inversely showed that boys are performing better than girls, and by this result disproved the prevalent assumption that girls perform better than the boys. This is also supported by the result of study conducted by Eshetu (2015) that showed male students performed better than females and the results were statistically significant.

## **Age**

Human being passes through age stages in the life circle and each stage has its unique experiences even though education is lifelong learning process. In this regard, Mlambo (2011) posited that issue of student age and recent changes in educational policies around the world have led to an increase in the number of mature-age admissions in educational institutions. While a large proportion of undergraduate students are still 19-year olds, the ages of students in classes are now more variable than 10 to 15 years ago.

Diaz (2003) confirmed that age as an important factor in explaining the academic accomplishment of the students. Diaz further elaborated that as student get older the scores observed for academic environment, academic motivation and social support perceived by the student decreased. On the other hand, there are some studies (Kyoshaba, 2009; Lake and Boyd, 2015; Mlambo, 2011) that reported age has no influence on academic achievement of the student.

## **Student's Place of Residence**

It is a wide held view that there are academic benefits to living on campus that many colleges and universities require their students to live on campus during part and sometimes their entire college career. Most often, colleges and universities require traditional degree seeking students to live on campus during their freshman year (De Araujo and Murray, 2010). According to Nelson, et al. (2016) Students, who live on-campus, at least during their freshman year, have been shown to be more likely to complete their degrees than are students who live off-campus.

Living off campus allows for a student's time to be directed towards other obligations which may hinder the opportunity for a student to "develop a sense of place". Some studies like Zhang & Dunkel (2017) revealed that students who lived in campus housing had a higher first year to second year retention rate in three years among four year cohorts and a higher fall to spring retention rate for two cohorts. Campus housing was positively related to a higher retention rate.

However, Shehry and Youssif (2017) disputed with those findings and conversely reported a highly significant relationship between long distance between home and the campus which affects the educational attainment of the students. They further elaborated that arriving home late, difficulty in getting ready for exams, tiredness, inability to do homework and exercises, inability to concentrate in classes, repeated absences during lectures etc. are also important factors.

### **Effect of Study Habit on Academic Achievement**

Learning skills and study habits refer to how students deal with their studies and manage their course workloads to accomplish different tasks required for the academic program. Thus, the application of effective study skills and the use of learning strategies is associated with the academic success of the students. According to Abisola and Kudirat (2017), some students lack fundamental practices of good study habits as they do not attend classes, do not take down notes, and do not do their assignments, do not read their books, or make use of the library. These attitudes may negatively affect their academic performances. In this regard, Siah and Maiyo (2015) concluded that the academic

achievements of the students having good and poor study habits differ significantly and the students having good study habits achieve higher than the students having poor study habits. In a related study, Mazharul Islam (2014) reported that time spent in study, particularly time spent more than 14 hours per week, showed a significant positive effect on achieving very good to outstanding results. Similarly, Ali et al., (2013) described that study time is one of the most important factors affecting student scores. It is also reported by Tesfaw and Derebew (2014) who indicated that absent from school and department preference have a negative impact on the academic achievement of students. This is in line with Mazharul Islam (2014) who stated that student's level of attendance in class also showed a significant positive association with better results.

### **Learning Resources and Facilities**

The availability of learning resources and facility in the university have major impact on the student's academic performance. The first impression of the student in general and foreign student in particular is the university environment both physically and academically in terms of resources available and facilities and services in place. Adeniyi and Adeniyi (2017) stated that there are independent factors that can affect student satisfaction based on services offered by universities. These include quality of teaching, student research facilities, library book collections and services, campus infrastructure, canteen facilities, space for group discussions, sport programmes, ICT (PC and Internet) facilities. In similar manner, Ogbogu (2014) posited that institutional resources and facilities have significant impact on students' performance.

Additionally, Benware and Deci (1984 cited in Ogbogu (2014) suggested the need for Universities to provide some of the following physical facilities within its environment to enhance performance: conducive hostel facilities with inbuilt study rooms, special facilities for the physically challenged who encounter greater academic challenges, career centre designed to provide career counselling activities, equipped libraries and provision of computer and internet facilities.

### **Foreign Students' Adjustment and Academic Integration**

The movement of students across cultures and geographic boundaries in pursuits of international education, credential and exposure has been intensified because of the globalization and internationalisation trends. Students who are looking for post-secondary education are no longer constrained by national boundaries (Mazzarol et al., 2001).

As explained by Aderi et al., (2013) there are tremendous studies revealed that students experience an adjustment period after their entrance into the institution of higher education. Student adjustment includes academic, social and personal-emotional adjustment which relates to experiences such as developing and maintaining goals, expectation, identities, roles, and social networks, as well as student attrition. It is also stated in a study carried out by Rienties et al. (2012) that foreign students are insufficiently adjusted to higher education in their host country, both academically and socially. Henceforth, foreign students experience adjustment strains within their host environment that are unique to them, such as cultural differences, language constraints, and social behaviors. It is further delineated by the study of Gebhard (2012)



cited in Mesidor and Sly, 2016) that multiple factors contribute to the academic, social, cultural, and psychological adjustment of foreign students. The study further explained that foreign students encountered problems in adjustment in language barriers, unfamiliarity with available resources and how to access those resources.

According to Severiens et al. (2009) there are formal and informal integration, each of which is important for successful integration. For formal academic integration it includes the academic consultations related to studying and the contacts with faculty members. On the other hand, informal academic integration involves contacts between teachers and students outside the direct context of the learning environment, i.e. whether students and teachers consider themselves to be at more or less the same level socially, and whether they discuss personal matters with each other.

### **Objectives of the Study**

#### ***The main objectives of the research were to:***

1. Explore the effect of demographic factors (age, gender, residence and year of study) on academic achievement of the undergraduate students from Somalia.
2. Analyse the impact of the institutional factors (University) on academic achievement of undergraduate students from Somalia.
3. Determine the effect of study habits of students on academic achievement of university students from Somalia.

### ***Hypotheses of the Study***

1. There is no statically significant difference at level ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) among Somali undergraduate students' achievement according to gender.
2. There is no statically significant difference at level ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) among Somali undergraduate students' achievement according to their residence.
3. There is no statically significant difference at level ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) among Somali undergraduate students' achievement according to their age.
4. There is no statically significant difference at level ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) among Somali undergraduate students' achievement according to their year.
5. There is no a statically significant influence of the institutional factors on academic achievement of students at level ( $\alpha=0.05$ ).
6. There is no a statically significant effect of study habits on academic achievement of undergraduate students at level ( $\alpha=0.05$ ).

### **Method and Procedure**

The study adopted a descriptive research design to explore the ideas and views of the respondents to identify factors associated with Somali undergraduates' academic achievement at Sudanese universities.

#### ***Population and Sample of the research***

The population in this study is the foreign undergraduate students of the academic year 2018-2019 from Somalia. The study selected two universities which are; International Africa University and the Ahfad University of Women, both are located in Khartoum, the capital city of

Sudan. These two universities host a bulk number of Somali students in Sudan.

The researcher randomly selected 169 participants; 143 of them are from the International University of Africa and the remaining 26 are in Ahfad University of women and distributed questionnaires through the Somali students union.

### **Instrumentation**

For this study, the researcher developed an instrument which is a questionnaire based on the reviewed literature. The questionnaire comprised a demographic section that included 9 items that provided the personal information of each participant that related to gender, age, and language of instruction in high school, University, year of study, residence, and CGPA (cumulative grade point average). And students' questionnaire comprised 19 items which are about two components of factors affecting the academic achievement of foreign undergraduates from Somalia. These components are; Institutional Factors and study habits. This section of the questionnaire is designed using a 5 point Likert scale which is coded and scored as follows: 1= Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3= Undecided, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree.

### **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The data was sorted, coded, and keyed in, then analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences data analysis software (SPSS Version 20). To come up with the findings and results of hypothesis tests, a descriptive statistical analysis such as frequencies and percentages were

used, as well as inferential statistical analysis namely, T-tests, ANOVA, and Multiple Regression Analysis.

### **Descriptive analysis of demographic patterns of the participants**

In this study, the researcher selected the relevant variables for the research in order to analyze for their relationship and determine their reciprocal effects. Thus, demographic variables of this study were; age, gender and residence. Table 1 summarized demographic information of the participants and explanation follows.

**Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the participants**

University	Gender	Residence	Age range	Year of study
N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
IUA: 143 (84.6%)	Male: 100 (59.2%)	On campus: 101 (59.8%)	19-21: 49 (29%)	2 <sup>nd</sup> year: 73 (43.2%)
AUW: 26 (15.4)	Female: 69 (40.8%)	Off campus: 68 (40.2%)	22-24: 89 (52.7%)	3 <sup>rd</sup> year: 37 (21.9%)
			25-27: 27 (16%)	4 <sup>th</sup> year: 59 (34.9%)
			28+: 4 (2.4%)	

N= Number IUA= International University of Africa AUW= Ahfad University of Women

As shown in Table 1, the overwhelming majority of 84.6% (N=143) of the study participants were from the International University of Africa. It is also indicated that a great percentage of 59.2% (N=100) were male students and female students counted 40.8% (N=69). Similarly, a remarkable majority of 59.8% (N=101) were campus residents whereas the remaining 40.2% (N=68) were residing outside of the campus. About the age ranges of the study participants, a considerable majority of 52.7% (N=89) were in the age range of 22-24 years old. Moreover, the table

depicted participants' year of study whereas the great majority of 43.2% (N=73) were in the second year of the study and it is followed by students in the fourth year with the percentage of 34.9% (N=59).

### Analysis of Institutional Factors Component

The questionnaire of the study consisted of items related to institutional factors to measure student's perspective on institutional factors that might have impact on their academic achievement. These factors include Orientation and academic integration, language courses, equipment and teaching materials, services and facilities, extracurricular activities and academic support. Table 2 summarized scored frequencies and percentages on the statements and a discussion follows.

**Table 2: Frequencies and Percentages of Students' Responses on Item Related to Institutional Factors**

	Item	SD	D	UD	A	SA
1	I could have chosen another faculty	50 (29.6%)	16 (9.5%)	20 (11.8%)	44 (26%)	39 (23.1%)
2	Orientation program helped my integration	27 (16%)	20 (11.8%)	43 (25.4%)	56 (33.1%)	23 (13.6%)
3	Language courses contribute into adjustment	36 (21.3%)	29 (17.2)	40 (23.7%)	42 (24.9%)	22 (13%)
4	comfortable with equipment and teaching materials	28 (16.6%)	32 (18.9%)	32 (24.9%)	41 (24.3%)	26 (15.4%)
5	Facilities available in the library helped	21 (12.4%)	17 (10.1%)	31 (18.3%)	64 (37.9%)	36 (21.3%)

	<b>Item</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
6	Participation in extracurricular activities	32 (18.9%)	34 (20.1%)	39 (23.1%)	43 (25.4%)	21 (12.4%)
7	Services and facilities in the hostel	45 (26.6%)	33 (19.5%)	32 (18.9%)	38 (22.5%)	21 (12.4%)
8	Support from faculty members and other staff	40 (23.7%)	38 (22.5%)	29 (17.2%)	45 (26.6%)	17 (10.1%)
9	Satisfied with studying at university	15 (8.9%)	8 (4.7%)	29 (17.2%)	62 (36.7%)	55 (32.5%)

SD= Strongly Disagree    D= Disagree    UD= Undecided    A= Agree    SA= Strongly Agree

As displayed in Table 2, almost half (49.1%) of the participants agreed that “they could have chosen another faculty” if they were given chance at the beginning according to their wish. About the integration and adjustment as foreign students, a remarkable percentage of 46.7% agreed with the benefits of orientation programs while less 37.9% agreed that language courses helped their academic integration and adjustment to the university environment. Moreover, it is observable that about 25% of the participants were undecided about items related to integration and adjustment. Additionally, a remarkable majority of 59.2% of the students agreed that they were satisfied with the Facilities available in the library. But, on other hand, about 39.7% of the participants expressed that they comfortable with the equipment and teaching materials. The most disagreed items are related to “services and facilities in the hostel” and “Support from faculty members and other staff” with percentages of

46.1% and 46.2% respectively. Overall, an overwhelming majority of the participants with a percentage of 69.2% expressed their general satisfaction with their study at university.

### Analysis of Study Habit Factors Component

The survey instrument of the study comprised items related to study habits to explore the effect of the study habit on the academic achievement of the student. Among the items included are; attendance, taking notes, on-time submission of assignments, daily schedule of study, allocating time for the library, setting goals, and time management. Table 3 summarised frequencies and percentages of participant's responses.

**Table 3: Frequencies and Percentages of Students' Responses on Items Related to Study Habits**

	Item	SD	D	UD	A	SA
10	Attending the class with having read about the lecture	22 (13%)	35 (20.7%)	39 (23.1%)	46 (27.2%)	27 (16%)
11	Taking notes during the lecture in the class	7 (4.1%)	14 (8.3%)	26 (15.4%)	77 (45.6%)	45 (26.6%)
12	Submission of assignment on time	7 (4.1%)	19 (11.2%)	39 (23.1%)	65 (38.5%)	39 (23.1%)
13	Discussing with students out of class	14 (8.3%)	25 (14.8%)	37 (21.9%)	65 (38.5%)	28 (16.6%)
14	Putting daily schedule for studying	16 (9.5%)	30 (17.8%)	41 (24.3%)	53 (31.4%)	29 (17.2%)
15	Allocating time for the Library	14 (8.3%)	24 (14.2%)	29 (17.2%)	61 (36.1%)	41 (24.3%)

	<b>Item</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
16	Studying seriously when exam approaches	7 (4.1%)	10 (5.9%)	22 (13%)	47 (27.8%)	83 (49.1%)
17	Relating the topic studied with experiences	5 (3%)	13 (7.7%)	60 (35.5%)	61 (36.1%)	30 (17.8%)
18	Setting goals for the study for motivation	4 (2.4%)	11 (6.5%)	41 (24.3%)	60 (35.5%)	53 (31.4%)
19	Making efficient use of time	13 (7.7%)	15 (8.9%)	38 (22.5%)	57 (33.7%)	46 (27.2%)

SD= Strongly Disagree    D= Disagree    UD= Undecided    A= Agree    SA= Strongly Agree

As illustrated in Table 3 a percentage of 43.2% of the participated students agreed upon “Attending the class with having read about the lecture” while a relatively considerable percentage of 34% disagreed. Moreover, a great majority of 72% of the respondents agreed with the statement “Taking notes during the lecture in the class”. It is also agreed upon “Submission of assignment on time” with the remarkable majority of 62% even though nearly a quarter of the respondents of 23% were undecided. The item “Allocating time for the Library” scored up 60.4% and “Making efficient use of time” gained an agreed percentage of 70% but 49% of the respondents agreed on the item related to “Putting daily schedule for studying” while about 27% disagreed with the later. Meanwhile, almost 55% of the respondents agreed on “Discussing with students out of class” while a percentage of 23% disagreed with it. About “Relating the topic studied with experiences” a great majority of 54% agreed upon it, but a remarkable percentage of 36% were undecided.



Additionally, a great majority of the respondents agreed on “Setting Goals for the study for motivation” with the majority of 67%. However, the highest agreed item of the study habit components was “Studying seriously when exam approaches” with the vast majority of 77% which connote to students’ tendency to last minute rush, a negative habit that overturns other positive characteristics. However, it might suggest that students pay more effort and time during the examination period in addition to previous exertions and common endeavours.

### **Testing Hypotheses**

The research is interested to find out variations of academic achievement by the demographic variables which are; gender, age, year of study, and residence. Thus to determine these variations based on the research hypotheses, Independent Samples T-test, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), and Multiple Regression were conducted as demonstrated underneath. Based on that, the researcher presents below results of the six hypotheses of the study:

**The researcher used an independent T-Test to examine hypothesis I and 2 for the variables; ; gender and residence which stated as underneath;**

1. There is no statically significant difference at level ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) among Somali undergraduate students’ achievement according to gender.
2. There is no statically significant difference at level ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) among Somali undergraduate students’ achievement according to their residence.

**Table 4: Summary of T-Test Analysis of Students' Difference in Their Academic Achievement According to Gender and Residence**

Variables	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Gender	1.016	167	.311	H <sub>0</sub> Accepted and supported
Residence	-.580	167	.562	H <sub>0</sub> Accepted and supported

The summary of the result presented in Table (4) indicates P-values of variables; Gender and (0.311) and Residence (0.562) are great than ( $\alpha=0.05$ ). The implication of this result is that there is no statically significant difference at level ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) among Somali undergraduate students' achievement according to their gender and residence.

**Tasting hypotheses** 3, and 4 of the variables; age and years of the study as presented below, the researcher used ANOVA:

3. There is no statically significant difference at level ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) among Somali undergraduate students' achievement according to their age.
4. There is no statically significant difference at level ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) among Somali undergraduate students' achievement according to their year.

**Table 5: Summary of One-Way ANOVA of Students' Difference in Academic Achievement According to Age Groups**

Age groups	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Discussion
Between Groups	7.181	3	2.394	3.479	.017	H <sub>0</sub> was Rejected
Within Groups	113.518	165	.688			
Total	120.698	168				

The summary of the result shown in Table (5) explores the P-value of the age group of the study is (0.017) less than ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Thus, there is a statically significant difference at level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) among Somali undergraduate students' achievement according to their age. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

**Table 6: Mean Scores of Academic Achievement Within Age Groups Based on GPA**

Age group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
19-21	49	2.37	.951
22-24	89	2.73	.750
25-27	27	2.93	.874
28 and above	4	2.25	.500
<b>Total</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>2.64</b>	<b>.848</b>

As shown in Table 6 age group of 25-27 scored up the highest score of GPA grade points average with a mean of 2.93 followed by the age

group 22-24 with a mean of 2.73, the least scores were obtained by the age group of 19-21 compared to other age groups of 25-27 and 22-24.

**Table 7 Summary of One-Way ANOVA of Students' Difference in Academic Achievement According to Year Of Study**

Age groups	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Discussion
Between Groups	9.059	2	4.530	6.735	.002	H <sub>0</sub> was rejected
Within Groups	111.639	166	.673			
Total	120.698	168				

The P-value of the study's age group is 0.002 smaller than ( $\alpha=0.05$ ), according to the summary of the results demonstrated in Table (7). As a result, there is a statistically significant difference among Somali undergraduate students' achievements based on their years of study. As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected.

**Table 8: Mean Scores of Academic Achievement According to Year of Study Based on GPA**

Year of study	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
2nd Year	73	2.40	.878
3rd Year	37	2.97	.726
4th and above	59	2.75	.801
<b>Total</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>2.64</b>	<b>.848</b>

As indicated in the descriptive Table 8 there is a statistically significant difference of mean scores of GPA among the respondents

according to the year of study. The senior respondents of third and fourth and above have scored the highest scores of GPA 2.97 and 2.75 respectively. The least mean of scores were obtained by the second year students with mean score of 2.40.

**Testing hypotheses five and six** as stated below, the researcher used Multiple Regression Analysis in order to determine the impact of institutional factors and habitual factors on academic achievement of student.

5. There is no a statically significant influence of the institutional factors on academic achievement of students at level ( $\alpha=0.05$ ).
6. There is no a statically significant effect of study habits on academic achievement of undergraduate students at level ( $\alpha=0.05$ ).

The outcome of the two independent variable; institutional factors, habitual factors and dependent variable; academic achievement of student was displayed in table (8).

**Table 9: Coefficients (significance of variables)**

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	2.640	.456		5.795	.000	1.741	3.540
	Institutional Factors	-.064	.100	-.051	-.642	.522	-.261	.133
	Study Habits	.056	.115	.039	.489	.625	-.171	.283

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Achievement

Table 9 showed Beta coefficients that resulted from multiple linear regression analyses to determine the effect of the independent variables (institution and study habit) on the dependent variable (academic achievement). Institutional factors have the least Beta weight of  $B = (-0.064)$  with  $p\text{-value} = (0.522)$  which is greater than  $p\text{-value} = (0.05)$  which indicates a statistically insignificant level. So we accept the null hypothesis that stated: "There is no *a statically* significant influence of the institutional factors on academic achievement of students". In the same table 9, the study habit is the independent variable that has a beta weight of  $B = (0.056)$  with a  $p\text{-value}$  of  $(0.625)$  that is greater than  $(p=0.05)$  which is also statistically insignificant and accordingly we accept the null hypothesis that stated; "There is no *a statically* significant effect of study habit on academic achievement of Somali undergraduate students".

## **Discussion**

The study employed multiple statistical analyses of descriptive and inferential to test the hypotheses formulated. Demographic variables such as; gender, age, residence, and year of study were investigated as a determinant of academic achievement of the undergraduate Somali students. The result of t-tests revealed insignificance of gender to the academic achievement of students. This result is consistent with other studies (Akesse and Dhuferra, 2015; Cyril, 2015; and Remali et al., 2013) who reported the insignificance of the sex of student to academic achievement. However, there are other studies (Mazharul Islam et al,

2014; Mehari and Ayalew, 2016; Alam et al., 2014) that concluded gender of students as a significant determinant of academic performance.

The residence was also one of the demographic variables examined in this study and a similar result to gender which is the insignificance of residence to academic achievement was revealed by the t-test analysis. This result is consistent with other studies (Shehry and Youssif, 2017; Ali et al., 2013) that reported there was an insignificant relationship between student's academic achievement and the area that students live in. The other demographic variable included in this study was age and the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) resulted in the significance of age factor to academic achievement of Somali undergraduate students. The outcome of the significant impact of the age on academic achievement is in line with the reviewed literature (Ali et al., 2013; Alam et al., 2014; Nyikahadzoi et al., 2013; Nelson et al., 2016) that reported the significance of the age variable as a determinant of academic achievement of the student. On the other hand, there are some studies (Kyoshaba, 2009; Lake and Boyd, 2015; Mlambo, 2011) that reported age does not influence the academic achievement of the student.

The other investigated variable in this research was institutional factors to academic achievement of the student. The result of multiple regression analysis revealed insignificance of the institutional factors about the academic achievement of the student. The finding of this study for statistical insignificance of institutional factors is in line with the study of Ogbogu (2014) who investigated the institutional factors which affect the performance of Public Administration students in a Nigerian

University which revealed that the institutional variables considered did not have any significant impact on students' performance. However, some studies (Odeh et al., 2015; Zenebe, 2015; Akomolafe and Adesua, 2015) indicated inconsistency with the finding of this study and revealed that institutional resources and facilities have a significant impact on students' performance.

Lastly, this study investigated the study habit variable concerning the academic achievement of the student. A multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictive level of significance of study habits to the academic achievement of the student. The result indicated that there is a statistical insignificance impact of study habits on the academic success of the student. This finding is in disagreement with literature (Adamu, and Duna, 2018; Rabia et al., 2017; Chandana, 2014; Nonis & Hudson, 2010; Miguel & Ksenia, 2015; Tesfaw and Derebew, 2014; Abisola and Kudirat, 2017; Ayodele and Adebisi 2013) who reported study habit is powerfully predictive of academic achievement of the student.

## **Conclusion**

The transition from high school to university combined with traveling to study abroad is a very crucial stage of students' academic pursuit as it presents a difficult challenge to many students to fulfill their dream of successful postsecondary education and professional career in their future life. Many studies employing various approaches and different methods have emerged in recent years to explore factors affecting the academic achievement of students at diverse educational levels. In this context, this



study has attempted to investigate factors affecting the academic achievement of foreign undergraduate students in Sudanese universities. Participants of the study were students from Somalia who are studying at Africa International University and Ahfad University for Women.

Findings of the study revealed the insignificance of the demographic variables such as; gender and residence concerning academic achievement for Somali undergraduate students. However, the study concluded the significance of the age and year of study to the academic achievement of the student. The study further discovered the insignificance of the institutional factors with the academic achievement of the student. Nevertheless, the study found a great majority of the participants agreed on the benefits of institutional integration such as orientation programs and language courses which helped their academic integration and adjustment. Conversely, students expressed dissatisfaction with hostel services and facilities as well as interaction with academic staff. Moreover, despite the high percentage of agreement with items related to study habits such as; attendance, note-taking, daily study schedule, etc., the study found insignificance of study habits about academic achievement.

In a nutshell, this study does not claim conclusive findings on factors affecting academic achievement but presents results of analysis of some variables selected as determining factors that influence the academic success of a student in the context of foreign students. Therefore, it is part of ongoing educational researches on the course of investigating underlying causes of academic success or failure.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher would like to put forward the following recommendations;

1. Higher education institutions in Sudan should maintain a robust policy of social and academic integration of foreign students that are specifically developed for a better learning environment for foreign students to keep the reputation of Sudanese universities as emerging destinations of study for many foreign students.
2. Mature students at age of 22 and above should be a criterion for admission and if younger students are admitted they should be assessed to test their competency and if they show their capability they move on to join the regular program otherwise they should take prerequisite courses and get duly prepared.
3. Improving the level of interaction between students and faculty members including academic and non-academic staff by creating more space for academic advice, educational counseling, and close follow-up of student's progress.
4. Hostel facilities and accommodation services should be improved to relieve students of homesick stress and other related feelings of foreignness.
5. Induction programs targeting foreign students should be maintained on a regular basis which increases student adaptability to the institution's environment in terms of policy and practice.

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