Satisfaction of Graduating Students during Exit Interviews in University of Cebu, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

The University Guidance Center conducts exit interviews of graduating students as means of assessment for the University's services, where the graduating students have one final self-assessment before they leave the portals of the university which is considered their home for almost four years. The study aimed to determine the overall student feedback on their learning experiences, importance, and relevance of the skills gained and student satisfaction rating of Student Personnel Services for the school year 2013-2014 and to identify the areas of strengths, and recommend measures for improvement. The study employed descriptive survey method using researcher made questionnaires. The respondents were the 713 graduating students from the different colleges of the University of Cebu Main Campus, Philippines, first semester of the school year 2013-2014. They were advised to answer the four-part questionnaire. The gathered data were treated using frequency, simple percentage, and rank. Findings revealed that majority of the respondents enroll in the course for their parents or relatives encouraged them; the discussion questions contribute to the professional development of the interviewees that affect an in-depth knowledge in their chosen profession. The study concluded that the graduating students are pleased with the services of the Student Personnel Department. However, some suggestions and comments need to be addressed for the improvement of the University in general.

Keywords — Guidance and Counseling, exit interview, descriptive method, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Exit interviews of university graduating students have been used to evaluate academic programs. It is the assumption of the researchers that developing and implementing an exit interview plan encourages feedback for department program assessment (Stewart, Martin Jr, & Steedle, 2011).

The program aims to give awareness to the graduating students as to the different life adjustments which they need to consider after graduation. Implementing this program helps the Guidance Center query information from the graduating students concerning the efficacy of the school, university staff, and facilities. Moreover, the University of Cebu and the student personnel services are perceived through the useful mechanism provided by the program. This profiled data may somehow be helpful in improving or enhancing programs and services – its student body management, academic force personnel services, facilities and academic curriculum.

The guidance counselors explain the results to the graduates during their exit interviews and remind them that successful career is not a matter of chance, but a matter of choice. They need to continue growing to overcome their weaknesses (Exit Interview for Graduating Students, 2011). They too are exhorted to remember the five core values of the University – Innovation, Camaraderie, Alignment, Respect, and Excellence. The guidance counselor is responsible for conducting the exit interview, ensuring clear communication procedures (Student Exit Interview Process, 2010).

The Guidance Counselor generates informative reports and information related to dropouts, including demographics, reason(s) for dropping out, relevant student history (attendance, academics, discipline, and health), successful interventions, unsuccessful interventions, and satisfactions of the services given to students by the university. The University of Cebu, like any other higher education institutions (HEIs), operates within their educational goals and objectives that need to be regularly evaluated. In line with the mission, the Guidance Center commits itself to be the focal center of the school's holistic development of its students. Also, to actively participate in promoting school image through the implementation of innovative and practical career guidance, testing programs, and effective student-friendly counseling services that are aimed to increase students' admission, students' satisfaction, and retention rate.

The study assessed the graduating students on the academic services of the University regarding the appropriateness of the curriculum, knowledge, skills and values learned, utilization of the knowledge, expertise, and values, and their satisfactions during their stay in the University. The researchers saw the potential use of the exit interview results to improve the services of UC whose lifeblood is its students and finds ways so that it may efficiently and more serve its students. The study aimed to discuss the efficacy of the exit survey process in UC with an end view of proposing curricular development for the University not only to pass accreditation, but also to satisfy the graduates.

Consequently, the theoretical foundations of exit interview provide feedback that leads to organizational improvement directed to in place processes and procedures.

FRAMEWORK

The study is anchored on Change Theory, where education can be very powerful in reforming for better results (Fullan, 2006). By developing a theory of change based on sound theory, University administrators assure that their program offerings cater the right activities for the desired outcomes (Christensen & Carlile, 2009; Moriarty & Smallman, 2009). By creating a theory of change programs, it is easier to sustain, bring to scale, and evaluate, since each step – from the ideas behind it to the outcomes. It hopes to provide the resources needed which are clearly defined within the theory (Waldman, 2009).

Assessment needs are conducted for a variety of reasons. It includes student satisfaction for departmental performance such as advising, course offerings, career preparation, instruction, and class sizes (Corts, Lounsbury, Saurdargas & Tatum, 2000). The student assessment for HEI's services is inversely related to student complaints regarding advising, and career development (Robinson & Timperley, 2007; Corts et al., 2000).

Many professional accreditation associations require that academic institutions use a variety of assessment instruments to measure student and program achievements (Cameron, Wise & Lottridge, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2000). Professional schools and colleges face increasing pressures from accreditation agencies and other peer organizations for better academic programs and to coordinate national curricular requirements (Diamond, 2005; Durand & McGuire, 2005; Sears & Granello, 2002).

Even though much of the assessment data were collected to reconcile the specifications, it is possible for the academic units to use the existing assessment techniques for curricular improvements (Adao, 2014; Coates & Radloff, 2013; Matthee, 2005).

The schools are required to use national outcomes evaluation methods to assess students' learning (Handelsman, Ebert-May, Beichner, & Bruns, 2004; McCracken *et al.,* 2001). Various HEIs assess the student's achievement and satisfaction as the outset of curriculum evaluation (Adao, 2014; Suskie, 2010; Bresciani, Zelna & Anderson, 2004; Kimmell, Marquette & Olsen, 1998).

The study of Etcuban (2013) concluded that teachers are the most valuable human resource in any University, it is important to remember that they need a wide variety of ongoing educational opportunities to improve their teaching practice. These opportunities could only be realized if there is proper planning made by the University administrators.

The study of Copland (2003) suggests that the benefit of an investigation is relevant to HEI's progress, and a vehicle for developing and distributing leadership. Within the schools where reform processes are most mature, the principal's role shifts to focus more narrowly on the primary personnel issues, framing questions and supporting inquiry processes. Findings provide evidence of the efficacy of policy strategies rooted in new understandings of school leadership.

The growth of HEIs within, between and across schools, as part of the implementation of whole system reform, is being studied (Harris & Jones, 2010). It describes the way in which professional learning communities are being developed to support improvement and change across the education system (Cherrington & Thornton, 2015). The study concludes by suggesting that professional learning communities offer one way of generating improved skills that can positively contribute to system-wide improvement (Harris & Jones, 2010; Harris, 2001).

An efficient enhancement process for HEIs requires building the space for organizational change. It obliges pressure and support from both external and internal sources (Harris, 2001). The need for change agentry is well established. However, little has been written as an external agent of change. The study focuses on a highly successful school improvement project and draws upon related empirical evidence to explore. The study of Harris (2001) suggests that the responsibilities placed are not helpful in working with HEIs that will build the capacity for improvement.

Adult students often leave college because they lack sufficient time or money to continue and succeed. The increase of financial aid and services correlate the needs for better advising, and student counseling with faculty and peers (Wlodkowski, Mauldin & Campbell, 2002). Employers are demanding that university graduates not only have the knowledge but the appropriate skills to be efficient and productive in the workplace. The HEIs are redesigning their educational model to adapt to the emerging challenges (Bouslama, Lansari, Al-Rawi, & Abonamah, 2003).

The study of graduating students with regard to the satisfaction of the University services helps assess the administrators to improve the facilities and the curriculum in general.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aimed to determine the overall student feedback on their learning experiences, importance, and relevance of the skills gained and student satisfaction rating of Student Personnel Services for the school year 2013-2014 and to identify the areas of strengths, and recommend measures for improvement. Specifically, the study sought to determine the: 1) primary reason(s) for the students for taking the program; 2) contributing factors that added to their learning; 3) skills or knowledge gained which they believe is important and relevant to their field of practice; and 4) feedback from the students as to their experiences with different Student Personnel Services offices in particular, and with the University in general.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed the descriptive method. Most of the respondents are from Colleges of Computer Studies, Engineering, Customs Administration, and Hotel and Restaurant Management. The detailed questionnaire was employed through the use of the Exit Interview Checklist for graduating students. The University of Cebu, Philippines was the locale of the study. The respondents were the graduating students from the different colleges of the University of Cebu Main Campus for the first semester of the school year 2013-2014. The instrument used in the study was a four-part detailed questionnaire made up of students' possible reasons for taking the course, their learning experiences, importance and relevance of the skills gained during their stay in the university.

Also, a two-part student satisfaction questionnaire on the Student Personnel Services was utilized. Each part had five indicators, which the respondent had to rate from 5 as the highest to 1 as the lowest. To achieve the desired results, the guidance counselors made a letter of request to the department deans to refer their graduating students to the guidance office. Also, the guidance counselors coordinated with the graduating class officers to disseminate information as to the importance of filling up the Exit Interview Survey. The retrieved results were then interpreted using frequencies, percentages, and weighted mean.

Table 1. Profile of the respondents

Program	Population	Sample	Percentage Served	Rank
Information Technology	31	31	100.00	1
Civil Engineering	34	34	100.00	1
Mechanical Engineering	25	25	100.00	1
Electrical Engineering	15	15	100.00	1
Customs Administration	57	57	100.00	1
Computer Engineering	13	13	100.00	1
Arts	43	43	100.00	1
Hotel & Restaurant Management	128	128	100.00	1
Elementary Education	51	51	100.00	1
Accountancy	20	19	95.00	2
Criminal Justice	53	49	92.45	3
Business Administration	180	162	90.00	5
Secondary Education	48	43	89.58	6
Naval Architecture	2	1	50.00	7
Total	**700**	**671**		

The table shows that most of the respondents are from the programs of Information Technology, Allied Engineering, Customs Administration, Arts, Hotel and Restaurant Management, and Elementary Education. They are selected using purposive random sampling.

The researchers secured an informed consent from the respondents providing them realization to the purposes of the study, their agreement to participate as those surveyed, their freedom not to continue if they felt uncomfortable with the questions, the welfare they will receive from the output of the study, and their right to information confidentiality. The gathered data from the respondents were tallied, tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted using frequency, simple percentage, and rank.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Reasons for taking the program

Results showed that most of the respondents enrolled in a program influenced by their parents or relatives. The data imply that parents have a significant role

in the career choice of their children that might affect the latter's' academic achievement in school.

The study of Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara and Pastorelli (2001) on a structural model of the network of socio-cognitive influences which shape children's career aspirations and trajectories. Familial socio-economic status is linked to children's career paths only indirectly through its effects on parents' perceived efficacy and academic goals. Children's perceived educational, social, and self-regulatory efficacy influence the types of occupational activities. Perceived occupational self-efficacy gives direction to the kinds of a career that pursue student for work consideration. The perceived effectiveness is the actual academic achievement, which is the primary motivation for a career preference. The intentions of parents are associated with the career development of their children.

These findings are supported by Schröder, Schmitt-Rodermund and Arnaud (2011) that personality traits, adolescent identification, gender, family business, and parental succession preference and preparation are associated with career choice intentions of children.

Sax and Wartman (2010) said that parental involvement in higher education has received significant attention to college campuses, this study had received scarce consideration in the empirical literature on college student development.

Table 2. Learning experiences of the respondents

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1. The discussion questions contribute to my professional development.	4.15	Agree	1
2. The course assignments significantly contribute to my professional development.	4.10	Agree	2
3. The mentorship experience helps to improve my academic performance.	4.06	Agree	3
4. The objectives of the course are achieved.	4.04	Agree	4
5. The course assignments in the university are challenging.	4.00	Agree	5
6. The faculty clearly states the course objectives.	3.97	Agree	6
7. The faculty clearly communicates the course requirements.	3.96	Agree	7
8. I have enough contact with the faculty to facilitate my learning.	3.93	Agree	8

9. The faculty in the university has a strong commitment to student learning.	3.91	Agree	9
10. The faculty uses reasonable methods in evaluating my work and learning.	3.88	Agree	10
11. The textbooks used in the course at the university significantly contribute to my learning.	3.87	Agree	11
12. My interaction with the faculty has been good.	3.85	Agree	12
13. The faculty in the school seems to be well prepared and organized.	3.68	Agree	13
14. The mentorship experience contributes to my professional growth.	3.66	Agree	14

The table revealed that the discussion method contributes to the professional development of the respondents. The data imply that this type of approach enhances the learning experiences of the students in and out of the classrooms.

The study of Penuel, Fishman, Yamaguchi and Gallagher (2007) points to the significance of teachers' perceptions about how their professional development experiences were combined with teacher learning and program implementation. Avalos (2011) concluded that complexities of teacher professional learning had taken cognizance for optimism about their effects, which can sustain in time.

Table 3. Knowledge and skills gained by the respondents

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1. In-depth knowledge in the chosen profession	4.40	Very Important	1
2. Oral communication skills	4.36	Very Important	2
3. Ability to work independently	4.32	Very Important	3
4. Problem-solving skills	4.32	Very Important	3
5. Ability to work in groups	4.30	Very Important	4
6. Information technology	4.26	Very Important	5
7. Writing skills	4.23	Very Important	6
8. Creativity	4.23	Very Important	6
9. Quantitative reasoning	4.22	Very Important	7
10. Global perspective	4.18	Important	8
11. Scientific reasoning	4.11	Important	9

The study affirms that the majority of the respondents gained in-depth knowledge and skills in their chosen profession from the University. The data

imply that the University is right to its functions that are to supply and generate knowledge to its students through instructions, research, and extensions.

Improving professional learning for educators is a crucial step in transforming schools and improving academic achievement (Brooks, 2014). The University needs to bolster teacher skills and knowledge to ensure that every teacher can teach different learners, knowledgeable about student learning, competent in multiple core academic content, and skillful at the craft of instruction (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson & Orphanos, 2009). The schools with the support of stakeholders need to make sure that learning processes are well-planned and organized for the benefit of students. This can be achieved through high quality, sustained professional learning throughout the school year, at every year level and in every subject.

Table 5. Respondents' satisfaction with university environment

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1. Quality of career advising and information	4.16	Satisfied	1
2. Quality of teaching by faculty in your major	4.14	Satisfied	2
3. Communication between teachers and students regarding student needs and concerns	4.02	Satisfied	3
4. Quality of instruction by faculty outside major	4.01	Satisfied	4
5. Opportunities to interact with students from diverse backgrounds	3.97	Satisfied	5
6. Quality of laboratories and classrooms	3.97	Satisfied	5
7. Campus life	3.86	Satisfied	6
8. Campus climate for the broad diversity of students at the University	3.80	Satisfied	7
9. Quality of school facilities (e.g. comfort rooms, study halls, drinking fountains & canteens)	3.74	Satisfied	8
Aggregate Mean	**3.96**	**Satisfied**	

The majority of the respondents were pleased with the University due to giving a quality of career advising and information. The data imply that the College Guidance Center excel in providing career advising and information to students in the university. Career advising is one of the programs of the College Guidance Center that is conducted to advise and monitor students regarding their academic achievements in their chosen course. Monitoring of students is

done on a semestral basis wherein they are invited to the Center for educational and social follow-up.

The study of Heisserer and Parette (2002) recommends that college students and guidance counselors require a detailed plan to addresses intrusive advising, training, managing student databases, and intervention evaluation.

Respondents' satisfaction with student personnel services

Results revealed that the respondents were highly satisfied with the staff and the office of the College Guidance Center. It implies that the students find the staff and its services of the College Guidance Center as experienced implementers of the services of the University.

Schools are becoming increasingly concerned with ways to increase retention rates, student success in college, and comfort level in the campus for college students. Although there are many approaches for helping students' transition to a university, one important intervention strategy is to increase supportive relationships in the campus through counseling and support services. Specifically, by providing academic and social support services, through programs like Educational Opportunity Program, Academic Support Program for Intellectual Rewards and Enhancement, and Faculty Mentoring Program, students promote significant correlation among other students and in turn feel more integrated into campus life (Grant-Vallone, Reid, Umali, & Pohlert, 2003). Results indicated that students who reported a higher level of self-esteem and more peer support had better academic and social adjustment. Also, students who frequently utilized student support services and counseling have greater social change. Students who adjusted better to campus life were more likely to be committed to the goal of their college degree and more committed to the University.

The faculty members are accountable for monitoring the effectiveness of the career services offered by the College Guidance Center as part of their teaching mission. Accordingly, appropriate metrics are needed to measure and track service quality in career services setting (Engelland, Workman & Singh, 2000).

Plan to pursue an additional education within the next year

Some of the respondents (38.29%) agreed that they re-enroll in the University the subjects that will help them enhance their technical skills. It implies that some students love to re-enroll in the University to gain skills.

Singell (2001) investigated whether financial aid affects college retention. The results showed that need- and merit-based aid significantly increases retention,

but selection biases have various effects on the need and ability of each student.

Kerkvliet and Nowell (2005) found out that students' future intentions for re-enrollment are a major determinant for re-enrollment. It may reflect the ancillary role that a university plays in many of its students' career and academic plans.

Some students did not indicate comments and suggestions in the checklist. However, in the course of the interview, the counselor was able to draw out observations and recommendations from them. The comments are general feedback generated from the different departments. Each respective departmental exit interview report has accurate observations.

CONCLUSIONS

The student satisfaction survey during the exit interviews gives a powerful tool to improve the quality of student's learning. It measures student satisfaction level and priorities, showing how they are satisfied as well as the issues that are deemed important to resolve. The study concluded that the graduating students are satisfied with the services of the Student Personnel Department. However, some suggestions and comments need to be addressed for the improvement of the University in general, such as proper ventilation of classrooms, additional CCTV camera along corridors and increase Internet bandwidth.

TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

The output of the study was used as inputs in the improvement of the curricular offerings of the University such as facilities and equipment, faculty development, research, and community extension. The improved curriculum gives students the best avenue for learning during their stay in the University.

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