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Students' Needs Assessment: Basis for Student Service Program Enhancement

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ABSTRACT: This study investigated the needs of students in a state university in Northern Philippines. The descriptivesurvey design was used to provide an accurate picture of the students' needs with a structured questionnaire as a data gathering instrument. Total enumeration was targeted among the second and third year students currently enrolled during the 2ndsemester school year 2016-2017; however, only those 1386 students who responded were taken as respondents in the study. Frequency counts and weighted mean were used in analyzing the data.Results showed that only "expectations" was rated neutral while all the other five factors were rated "important." This finding revealed that students believe in the importance of self-development, study skills, time management, living/working environment, and support system for their personal and academic development. Based on the findings, it is concluded that self-development, study skills, time management, living/working arrangement and support system are considered important for personal and academic development of the students; hence, guidance counselors mayconsider reviewing their guidance program, to possibly incorporate activities that would further develop the five areas of concerns mentioned.

KEYWORDS: *students' needs, assessment, Filipino students, needs assessment*

I.   INTRODUCTION

Needs assessment is of great help in the improvement of an individual, an organization, a project, or in this study, a program – the guidance program. In order to determine which guidance services would best promote the students' personal and academic development, the officeconducted a needs assessment survey. Eliciting information from the students who are the recipients of the services would be a great input for the development of a better program, after all, the recipients participated in itsconception. Furthermore, needs assessment would be a good basis in the identification of future guidance activities. After determining the needs of the students, conducting services that would address their needs come next. Moreover,knowing the clients' needs would be easier on the part of the counselor to adjust activities and interventions.As a starting point in identifying services and activities congruent to the needs of the students, hence, this study.

The focus of this study was to determine the undergraduate students' needsin a Philippine state university in terms of self-development, study skills, time management, expectations, living/working arrangement and support system.

II.   METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive-survey design to provide an accurate picture of the undergraduate students' needs. The participants of this study were 1386 enrolled second and third year students of a state university in Northern Philippines.

There was a single instrument used in gathering data which comprises of 34 items, reflected of which were the six areas of development: self-development, study skills, time management, expectations, living/working arrangement, and support system. Students were asked to answer 34 items on a five-point likert scale (from "very important" to "very unimportant").

The survey questionnaire was distributed and retrieved immediately for tallying and tabulation. Descriptive statistics were performed such as mean, frequency count and percentage and in order to determine the intensity of the students' need, the weighted mean was used.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The table below shows the distribution of mean rating of responses according to areas of needs of the college students. The students' needs were divided into six areas: self-development, study skills, time management, expectations, living/working arrangement, and support system.

For the area self-development, the items which were rated "very important" by the students were: to know and understand myself better (wm=4.27), to develop my self-confidence (wm=4.28) and to make plans for my life (wm=4.69). This shows that the students are not that confident yet, they need to be more aware of themselves in order to have better plans for their life. This finding corroborates with the study on college students' correlatesof behavioral confidence wherein, it was found out that students who are less confident perceive their futures less favorably than highly confident people [1].

When it comes to study skills, all the items were rated either "very important or "important." The three items which were rated "very important" by the students were: to attend my class regularly (wm=4.70), to get a copy of the notes from my classmates if I get absent (wm=4.25), and to submit all my assignments (wm=4.41). This implies that the students are aware of the importance of study skills in order to be academically competent, and they believe that submission of assignments, coping up when they get absent and regular attendance to their classes,are of primordial concern in order to pass their subjects.Physically attending class is associated with students' success in academics. Those who regularly attend their classes got A's while those who attend their classes two days a week or less got mostly C's [2].

In the aspect of time management, the item, to set a time to study before an examination was considered "very important" and got the first rank. This implies that the students take examination seriously since rating in their examination take a big percentage in their final grade. The item, to use a daily planner to organize weekly routine was not considered necessary by the students.

The only item considered "important" under the area, expectations was "to pass al my subjects." Generally, the students' main concern is to pass all their subjects without considering whether they will have better grades in college than in their high school. All the items in living/working arrangement were rated "important." This denotes that the students regard having enough time for themselves, having enough sleep, work issues do not intervene with school work, and comfort in studying are important.

As regards the area, support system, all the items were rated "important" except to have friends and family members who encourage me to finish my studies which was rated "very important." Family emotional support promotes favorable academic outcome; it promotes psychological well-being and foster improved student engagement [3] .

Table 1. Mean rating of the students in the students' needs assessment.

Areas of Need	Overall WMean	Verbal Description	Rank
Self-development			
To know and understand myself better	4.27	VI	3
To do something to get rid of my fears	3.67	I	6
To make plans for my life	4.69	VI	1
To develop my self-confidence	4.28	VI	2
To know my talents and develop them	3.71	I	5
To improve my appearance	3.97	I	4
To get rid of my vices/uncontrollable habits	2.17	U	7
Average	**3.82**	**I**	
Study Skills			
To attend my class regularly	4.70	VI	1
To get a copy of the notes from my classmate if I get absent	4.25	VI	3
To take notes while reading a course material	3.98	I	6
To review my notes in preparation for the exam	4.19	I	4
To understand my lessons	4.01	I	5
To submit all my assignments	4.41	VI	2
To develop my confidence in recitations and discussions	3.80	I	8
To talk to my teachers about difficulty in understanding lessons	3.32	N	9
To maintain balance between work at home and studies	3.95	I	7
Average	**4.07**	**I**	
Time Management			
To use the syllabus as a guide to each of my subject	4.09	I	2

To set a time to study before an exam	4.20	VI	1
To set aside specific time each week to study	3.64	I	4
To successfully balance my social life and study time	3.87	I	3
To use a day planner/calendar to organize my weekly routine	3.19	N	5
Average	**3.80**	**I**	
Expectations			
To find school work NOT BORING	2.84	N	4
To pass all my subjects	3.93	I	1
To have my college grades better than my high school grades	2.90	N	3
Not to feel anxious while taking examinations	3.35	N	2
Average	**3.26**	**N**	
Living/Working Arrangement			
To make studying comfortable	3.80	I	1
Not to have my work responsibilities interfere with school responsibilities	3.59	I	3
To have time to sleep and study	3.46	I	4
To have time for myself	3.74	I	2
Average	**3.65**	**I**	
Support System			
To have friends and family members who encourage me to finish my studies	4.54	VI	1
To have a teacher or staff who shows interest in my success	4.04	I	2
The need of seeing a counselor	3.57	I	3
To develop the ability to discuss my problems with my parents	3.49	I	5
To have a friend whom I can share my problems	3.50	I	4
Average	**3.83**		
General Average	**3.74**	**I**	

Legend:
I   Important
VM   Very Important
N   Neutral
U   Unimportant
VU   Very Unimportant

As shown in Table 2, study skills ranked first with a weighted mean of 4.09. This finding corroborates with the earlier studies of [4] and [5] where in their respondents regarded studying or study skills as "highly needed."

Among the six areas, only "expectations" was rated neutral while all the other five areas of needs were rated "important." This finding reveals that self-development, study skills, time management, living/working arrangement and support system are considered important by the students and the highest need is study skills. This finding implies that students believe in the importance of developing effective study skills or strategies that are important in acquiring favorable grades; developing their self-confidence and talents, setting their priorities or using their time effectively and productively, organizing their activities in order for them to be achievers in their academics, and needing support group for their personal and academic development. This finding corroborates with the study of third year college students where in, among their top ten needs were focused on self-development, study skills, and family relationship [6]   Moreover, [7] explained that the desire to turn to others for psychological support and social affiliation rise in late adolescence.

Studies show that study skills correlated significantly with grades[8] andgood study skills reduce failure and facilitate students to take advantage of learning opportunities[9] .

This finding is similar to the study of Dela Cruz(2014) where, self-development, career development, studies, and family were rated as "very important." In the study of[10] , he had similar findings. Although in his study, he used the terms character building and academics in lieu of self-development and study skills respectively.

Table 2. Distribution of mean rating according to areas of needs.

Areas of Needs	Grand Weighted Mean	Verbal Description	Rank
Self-development	3.85	Important	2.5
Study Skills	4.09	Important	1
Time Management	3.82	Important	4
Expectations	3.23	Neutral	7
Living/Working Arrangement	3.65	Important	6
Support System	3.85	Important	2.5
General Mean Rating	**3.74**	**Important**	

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings presented in the discussion, it is concluded that self-development, study skills, time management, living/working arrangement and support system are important for the personal and academic development of the students.Based on the conclusion made, guidance counselors should includeintheir action plan, activities that would further develop the five areas of concerns mentioned for the development of the personal and academic development of the students. Furthermore, guidance counselors should include activities geared toward the improvement of the students on those areas in designing their guidance and counseling program.

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