



ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND MEASURE OF CHARACTER AND PERSONALITY OF ENGINEERING STUDENTS WITH AND WITHOUT REFERRAL FROM COUNSELLING CENTER

DR. JAKE M. LAGUADOR* ; MRS. MERLINDA PESIGAN**

*College of Engineering,
Lyceum of the Philippines University,
Batangas City 4200, Philippines

**Counselling & Testing Center
Lyceum of the Philippines University,
Batangas City 4200, Philippines

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to identify the causes why students are being referred to the CATC by the faculty members and what happened to these students after undergoing counselling. It also intended to determine if there is a difference between Engineering Students with and without Referral in terms of Year Level, Degree Program, Student Classification and Academic Performance. Descriptive type of research was utilized in study using the documentary analysis procedure.

Results showed that absenteeism is the foremost reason of the reported causes of referrals while majority of the students obtained passing grades from the courses where they were referred by their teachers and only few obtained a failing grade. Engineering students with and without referral come from all year levels, and student classification and both groups obtained different levels of grade-point average while those students from non-degree programs have higher possibility of being referred to CATC. Only *Humility* and *helpfulness* established a significant difference between students with and without cases of referral to CATC wherein engineering students without referral obtained significantly higher means against those with referrals in terms of *possessed characteristics*; while *creativity* established a significant difference between groups wherein those students with referral obtained significantly higher mean against those without referral in terms of *acquired values*.

Keywords: Academic Performance, Character, Traits, Referral System

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence in its natural way makes one long for a carefree life in an atmosphere totally different and far away from the care and control of parents. Different courses and new college environment may sometimes make it difficult for the students to get acclimatized to the engineering curriculum (Kousalya et al, 2006). Complexities and challenging demands of engineering sometimes affect the way students appreciate the value of education through maintaining their academic performance that measures their ability to demonstrate knowledge, values and skills. Intricacies in the program of study have always been part of the students' life in all levels with varying degrees which differ from the way students handle the situations. The essence of incorporating guidance and counselling into the school system was to eliminate overwhelming ignorance of many young people on their choices of career prospects and personality maladjustment among the students (Oye et al, 2012).

Absenteeism takes place when students are already uneasy with the pressures coming in from their daily school activities. This is where the role of the Counselling Center comes in to prevent the problems of the students to become unbearable.

Establishment of many engineering colleges has created a wide opportunity to many students to aspire to become engineers. Many parents thrust their children to become engineers without assessing or allowing them to choose between available courses, suitable to their interests and ability (Kousalya et al, 2006). Students consequently fail to gain the right aptitude for engineering education. Absenteeism can be one convenient way to escape from the systematic engineering curriculum.

Absenteeism in schools suggested the involvement of parents and more frequent meetings with them by teachers. Skipping classes, particularly big lectures where an absence can go undetected, is a tradition among college undergraduates who partly come late or swap notes with friends (Bolo & Lincoln, 1983; Kousalya et al, 2006). Absenteeism from lectures by the university students appears to be a serious problem that seems to transcend and defile all the strategies by the university authorities and lecturers' efforts to curb it (Fayombo et al, 2012).

Since students are active participants in their learning experiences and must take responsibility for achieving their potentials through successful completion of each stage of their studies, it is common therefore to see many universities coming up with various measures to

ensure students' attendance at lectures in accordance with their commitments to encourage and help the students to achieve their potentials to the maximum capability in their studies and in developing lifelong skills and competencies. Attendance is a key component in students' retention, progression, achievement and employability, it is therefore important that schools have in place effective mechanisms to monitor the attendance of students they consider to be "at risk", and to engage with them positively at an early stage (Heriot Watt University, Policy on Student Attendance, 2007).

Before the students learn how to be punctual in attending classes, teachers must do it first. Students adjust to the environment and people that can possibly influence their attitude towards punctuality. Teachers must be consistent on their attendance that will serve as good training for the students to value the time they need to wake up early and catch up the first lesson in the morning without being late. That habit will later become their routine until they join the workforce of professionals (Laguador, 2013b).

Yahaya et al (2009) concluded that disliking the teachers makes truant in low level. Teachers have to understand the socio-economic and family background of the students in order to know the factors that influenced them. This may help the teachers in understanding the failure or the behavior of the students who played truant. Teachers who are considerable should give reasonable amount of homework based on students' learning level so that the students can complete the work well.

Referral System is one of the services being catered by the Counselling and Testing Center (CATC) at the Lyceum of the Philippines University (LPU), particularly in the Lyceum International Maritime Academy (LIMA) Campus, for the College of Engineering. It basically accepts referral of students with problems in terms of academics and behaviour. Faculty members are the ones tasked to initiate the referring of students, most especially those with two or more absences in a course.

Some students don't have a clear vision regarding their reason for being in college. Perhaps they are here at their parent's insistence, not feeling what they are doing or what they really want to do with their life. Sometimes courses and majors are chosen to please others, but have little or no relationship to the student's true interests. Many students just aren't sure about what they really want to do in their future career. It takes a fairly clear purpose to motivate a

student to successfully engage in the lengthy and difficult process of higher education (Sirswal, 2008).

It is necessary to identify the causes of problems encountered by the students and the guidance counsellors served as the instrument or channel to resolve or remedy the difficulties identified. Knowing the students better through interviews will give surface analysis of problems that will open to a deeper sense and cause of the academic dilemma inside the classroom. Students with absenteeism problem need to be reported immediately to prevent the accumulation of more record of absences that leads to dropping out of students. Parents were called to be informed regarding the untoward behaviour of their children and they are considered part of the process to determine the cause of absenteeism that affects the class performance.

Student-respondents were classified according to their degree program, course classification whether the students are enrolled in general or professional courses, year level and the student classification. The occurrence of the report in referral shows that the faculty members are really doing their part in helping the students understand the cause of their problems. The study also identified which constitutes the greater percentage of referral either from General Education or from professional education courses, higher or lower year level, with greater than or less than required units enrolled meaning those who are regular or irregular students. These categories helped the researchers to become more specific in addressing the needs of the students.

Measure of Character and Personality (*Panukat ng Ugali at Pagkato*) is considered an important variable in the study to describe the personality or characteristics that the subject – respondents might have in common and also revealed some differences as compared to the characteristics of other students without referral to CATC. This study can be a useful information to understand better the possible causes of problems from the innate behaviour of the students.

This research looked into the percentage difference of the number of students referred when they are grouped according to the degree program. Outcomes of the referral system report were identified through the result of the final grades obtained by the students from the courses where they received referrals. Possible final grades that can be obtained are 75% or 3.00 and above as passing grade, Incomplete (INC), Officially Dropped (OD), Unofficially Dropped (UD)

or the worst Failing mark or 5.00. This study summarized the results of the data gathered directly from the records and reports of CATC handling the Referral System.

This study also served as an indirect evaluation of the Referral System being done by the CATC. Likewise, the guidance office was given insights regarding the students' grades since one of the major concerns of their service is to prevent students from obtaining UD, OD, INC and failing marks.

The findings of the study would serve as the basis for strengthening the services being offered by the Counselling and Testing Center, especially on evaluating the outcomes of the Referral System being done by the faculty members among students who need an immediate and utmost guidance. Identifying the nature and characteristics of the students with referral to CATC would also provide baseline information to the faculty members to share with their students the possible consequences of having those characteristics which are most commonly possessed by the students under the referral system. Some factors might also be helpful to determine the causes and understand the behaviour of these students. On this note, people around them might also be significant instrument to transform the lives of the subject-respondents having personalities that are different from the other students.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to identify the causes why students are being referred to the CATC by the faculty members and what happened to these students after undergoing counselling. The study focused on determining the profile of the students for SY 2012-2013 who were referred by the faculty members to CATC when they are grouped according to Degree Program, Year level and Student classification. It also intended to determine the causes for referring the students to CATC by the faculty members and its outcomes and the academic performance of Engineering Students with and without Referral from CATC during 2nd Semester SY 2012-2013 when they are grouped according to profile as well as the difference between Engineering Students with and without Referral in terms of Year Level, Degree Program, Classification and Academic Performance. It also aimed to determine the result of the Measure of Character and Personality in

terms of *Possessed Characteristics* and *Acquired Values* and its differences between students with referral and students without referral.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Research Design

The descriptive type of quantitative research method was utilized in the study. In quantitative descriptive research, the researcher's purpose is to answer questions about a variable status by creating numerical descriptions of the frequency with which one of the variables occurs (Zulueta & Costales, 2003).

Participants

Fifty-one (51) Engineering students from all levels with referral record from CATC during School Year 2012- 2013 specifically for counselling were the subjects of the study and 52 were randomly selected for comparison of some variables between two subjects under study. Students were given referral by their teachers due to their absences, tardiness and untoward behaviour. They were reported by the teachers to Counselling and Testing Center for appropriate action.

Instrument

The 'Panukat ng Ugali at Pagkatao' (PUP) was the main instrument used in the study. This is a standardized test written by Dr. Virgilio G. Enriquez together with the National Science and Development Board (NSDB) as a sponsored research project in the early 1970s which sought to construct a test in Filipino that measured Filipino-oriented traits, behaviors, and attitudes, primarily to identify inventive talent.

Procedure

Documentary Analysis was utilized to gather pertinent data for the study. The analyzed data were driven from the reports of the CATC through referral system. Records of academic performance during 2nd semester SY 2012-2013 were obtained from the OPHRA. Documentary analysis was also utilized to gather data of the result of PUP.

Data Analysis

Frequency count, rank and percentage were the statistical tools used to interpret the profile of the students classified according to Degree Program, Year level and Student classification. Data also shows the causes for referring the students to CATC by the faculty members and its outcomes.

Arithmetic mean was used to interpret the academic performance of Engineering Students with and without Referral from CATC during 2nd Semester SY 2012-2013 when they are grouped according to profile. T-test was used to examine the difference between Engineering Students With and Without Referral in terms of Year Level, Academic Performance; and the result of Measure of Character and Personality in terms of *Possessed Characteristics* and *Acquired Values*. Chi-square test was used to test the difference between Engineering Students With and Without Referral in terms of students' classification and their degree program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Fourth Year Engineering students obtained the highest percentage of students with referral which is composed of 21.82 percent followed by the Third year students with 10 out of 49 or 20.41 percent, and First year students with 16 out of 91 or 17.58 percent.

Majority of these fourth year engineering students were from Industrial Engineering and Computer Engineering which are non-board degree programs wherein they are the students who did not qualify to take up BSME and BSECE programs because they failed in the qualifying exam or they did not take the exam anymore. The level of intellectual capacity of those students from non-board degree programs is different from the board programs. The students from non-board degree programs tend to be lax and negligent to their studies and sometimes accumulate too many absences due to lack of pressure from their courses being taken. Engineering students encountered difficult courses in allied engineering sciences during third year and fourth year levels where they really find it hard to go and stay along with the lessons due to its complexity. Therefore, sometimes they opt not to attend classes instead. Sometimes courses and majors are chosen to please others, but have little or no relationship to the student's true interests. Many students just aren't sure about what they really want to do in their future career. It takes a fairly

clear purpose to motivate a student to successfully engage in the lengthy and difficult process of higher education (Sirswal, 2008).

Fifth year engineering students obtained the least percentage of students with reported referrals to CATC which was composed of 8.82 percent. There were 51 out of 290 engineering students or 17.59 percent who were referred to CATC for counselling. When it comes to degree program, Industrial Engineering students obtained the highest percentage with reported referrals to CATC with 34 percent, followed by the Computer Engineering Students with 18 percent, and General Engineering with 15 percent. Electronics Engineering students obtained the least frequency of 1 out of 9 students or 11 percent.

There were more irregular students who were referred to CATC with 27 out of 51 or 52.9 percent against 47.1 percent of the regular students. But the little difference in the frequency of 3 is not really significant in the number of students.

Reported Causes of Referrals and Its Outcomes

Absenteeism is the foremost reason of the reported causes of referrals with 62.7 percent followed by those students not attending their classes from the first meeting until the time of reporting to CATC for almost two to three weeks. There were 10 or 13.3 percent that were referred due to not taking major examination and with very low grades. The least reason of reported cases as cause of referral is the late comers with 4 percent.

In terms of the outcomes of the referral system of CATC, majority of the students obtained passing grades from the courses where they were referred by their teachers as denoted by the 41.33 percent with grades ranging from 2.00 to 3.00. There were 22.67 percent who obtained a remark of UD and most of them have still balances on their accounts with 21.33 percent. Eight or 10.67 percent of them have INC remark while 3 or 4 percent obtained a failing grade. In effect, most of students with referral from CATC obtained passing grade as compared to the number of students who failed.

Academic Performance of Engineering Students with and without Referral from CATC

First year students obtained the highest academic performance in terms of year level both with and without referral; while Third year students obtained the least performance for those with referral, and Fourth years students for those without referral.

General Engineering (GE) students obtained the highest academic performance in terms of degree program for those students with and without referral; while Computer Engineering (CpE) obtained the least performance for those with referral and Electronics Engineering students (ECE) for those without referral. There was only one student from ECE who was referred to CATC but this student still has a balance from accounting and his grade cannot be generated from the system. Meanwhile, nobody from Mechanical Engineering (ME) was referred to CATC for any reason.

When it comes to classification of students, regular students obtained higher grades than irregular ones which are true for both with and without referral to CATC.

Table 1

Difference between Engineering Students with and Without Referral in terms of Year Level, Degree Program, Classification and Academic Performance

	t-values	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remarks
Year Level	-1.386	.169	Not Significant
Academic Performance	-1.474	.146	Not Significant
	X²	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remarks
Degree Program	8.54	.044	Significant
Classification	.009	.925	Not Significant

Engineering students with and without referral do not significantly differ in terms of year level, classification and academic performance as denoted by the computed p-values of 0.169, 0.146 and 0.925 which are greater than the 0.05 level of significance. This implies that engineering students with and without referral were from all year levels and student classification. The academic performance of those students with and without referral did not establish significant difference which implies that both groups obtained different levels of grade-point average.

However, there is a significant difference between the two groups in terms of degree program as indicated by the computed p-value of 0.044 which is less than the 0.05 level of significance. This implies that those from Industrial Engineering and Computer Engineering which are non-board degree programs have higher tendency of being referred to the CATC than those students from board degree programs.

Among the characteristics defined in the Measure of Character and Values, only *humbleness* and *helpfulness* established a significant difference between students with and without cases of referral to CATC wherein engineering students without referral obtained significantly higher means against the means obtained by the students with referral as denoted by the computed p-values which are less than the 0.05 level of significance.

These are the only characteristics that differentiate the qualities of two groups of respondents while the rest of the characteristics do not establish differences where they share common values in terms of *possessed characteristics*.

According to a study from the University Of Washington Foster School Of Business, humble people are more likely to be high performers in individual and team settings. They also tend to make the most effective leaders (Johnson, 2012).

Among the characteristics defined in the *Measure of Characters and Personality*, only *creativity* established a significant difference between students with and without cases of referral to CATC wherein engineering students with referral obtained significantly higher mean of 3.17 against the 2.65 mean of those students without referral, as denoted by the computed p-value of 0.011 which is less than the 0.05 level of significance. This is the only characteristic that differentiates the qualities of the two groups of respondents while the rest of the characteristics do not establish differences where they share common values in terms of *acquired values*.

Creative thinking is viewed as crucial for educated persons to cope with a rapidly changing world. Many educators believe that specific knowledge will not be as important to tomorrow's workers and citizens as the ability to learn and make sense of new information. Findings of the study of Anwar et al (2012) clearly support the importance of instruction in creative thinking skills to increase the probability of academic success for all students, especially those having low grades or I-Q level.

CONCLUSION

Fourth Year Engineering students obtained the highest percentage of students with referral from BS Industrial Engineering Program with irregular student status. Absenteeism is the foremost reason of the reported causes of referrals while majority of the students obtained passing grades from the courses where they were referred by their teachers and only few obtained a failing grade. First year students obtained the highest academic performance in terms of year level while General Engineering (GE) students in terms of degree program and regular students obtained higher grades than the irregular ones which is true for both with and without referral to CATC. Engineering students with and without referral come from all year levels, and student classification and both groups obtained different levels of grade-point average while those students from non-degree programs have higher possibility of being referred to CATC.

Only *humbleness* and *helpfulness* established a significant difference between students with and without cases of referral to CATC wherein engineering students without referral obtained significantly higher means against those with referrals in terms of *possessed characteristics*; while *acquired values* established a significant difference between groups wherein those students with referral obtained significantly higher mean against those without referral in terms of *acquired values*.

RECOMMENDATION

Fourth year BS Industrial Engineering students (now Fifth Year) must be given separate Guidance and Counselling service through CATC to address their specific problems and personal concerns between family and academic matters. Teachers may continue to refer to CATC their students who incurred two or more absences to discuss with the parents regarding the punctuality and attendance of their children. Teacher may provide extra projects and assignment for those students who are frequently not attending regular classes for them to realize the consequences of their absences especially the students from Industrial and Computer Engineering programs. Teachers must always monitor the grades of the students and inform them regarding the status of their class performance every after the major examination so that they would know how they perform in the course. Dean and Department Chairs of Engineering together with the Counselling and Testing Center must always provide seminar or simple presentation during

general assemblies and major events of the college on topics related to academic performance, leadership capability, skills and values development. Teachers must also integrate the value of humility and cooperation in the classroom activities so that students would be able to grasp the essence of teamwork to make the classroom set-up an enjoyable environment to lessen absenteeism.

References

- Fayombo , G. A. Ogunkola, B. J., Olaleye, Y. L. (2012). Cross Institutional Study of the Causes of Absenteeism among University Students in Barbados and Nigeria, *Journal of Educational and Developmental Psychology*, 2(1): 122- 136
- Heriot Watt University. Policy on Student attendance (2007). [Online] Available: <http://www.hw.ac.uk/registry/resources/studentattendancepolicy.pdf>
- Kousalya, P., Ravindranath, V., VizayaKumar, K. (2006). Student Absenteeism in Engineering Colleges: Evaluation of Alternatives using AHP, *Journal of Applied Mathematics and Decision Sciences*, DOI: 10.1155/JAMDS/2006/58232
- Laguador, J. M. (2013). Developing Students' Attitude Leading Towards a Life-Changing Career. *Educational Research International*, 1(3): 28 – 33.
- Oye N. D., Obi M. C., Mohd T. N., Bernice, A. (2012). Guidance and Counseling in Nigerian Secondary Schools: The Role of ICT, *International Journal of Modern Education and Computer Science*, 4(8): 26-33.
- Sirswal, Desh Raj (2008), Academic Problems, url: <http://niyamakreference.blogspot.com/2008/04/academic-problems.html>, date retrieved: May 10, 2012.
- Yahaya, A., Ramli, J., Hashim, S. Ibrahim, M. A. (2009). The Relationship between School, Class and Co-Curriculum Absenteeism on the Academic Performance of Selected Secondary School, *Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(4): 355-361.
- Yahaya, A. Y. Boon, J. Ramli, N. Yahaya and R. R. Rahman (2009). The Relationship between Dimensions of Personality, Self Concept and Family Influence on Students in the FELDA Scheme in Johore Malaysia. *Eur. J. Soc. Sci.*, 11.
- Zulueta, F. M. and Costales Jr., N. E. B. *Methods of Research: Thesis-Writing and Applied Statistics*, Navotas, Metro Manila, Philippines: Navotas Press, 2003, ch. 5, pp. 75-76.