

# Effectiveness of Intervention Activities Rendered by the Counseling Center to Maritime Students

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## ABSTRACT

*This research work was pursued to gain insights on the effectiveness of intervention activities rendered by the CATC to maritime students. This study could be a help to determine if the intervention activities rendered by the CATC to maritime students are effective and the problems encountered by the maritime students to the services rendered by the CATC. This study utilized a descriptive research method with (240) Maritime students that were chosen on the basis of random sampling. Results showed that the intervention activities rendered by the CATC to maritime students are effective. The observed problem encountered by the maritime students on the interventions rendered by the CATC was confusion of students who have already taken up the given enrichment program but are still included on the list who failed to take it up.*

**Keywords:** *Maritime students, Intervention, Enrichment program*

## INTRODUCTION

Discipline plays a vital part to a cadet's life as a student. Self-discipline gives the power to stick to decisions and follow them through, without changing one's mind, and is therefore, one of the important requirements for achieving goals. This is needed to be instilled to the cadets for them to be competent enough to be aspiring maritime officers. Frequent absence from college is associated with failing grades, poor performance, disciplinary problems and long term social difficulties (Menia, 2014).

The Counseling and Testing Center with the collaboration of the university guarantees that the students will be disciplined through the services given by them. Kamau et al. (2014) emphasized that guidance and counseling programs in schools are geared towards promotion of the development of students.

The Counseling and Testing Center is a department of the university which offers students access to a wide range of counseling services,

resources, and referrals. Many students experience a variety of difficulties including stress, depression, anxiety, and relationship problems during their college years, and find that it is helpful to discuss their personal, educational, or career concerns with a professional. The Counseling and Testing Center provides a supportive and confidential environment for students to explore their concerns and learn new skills to deal more effectively with problems that may be interfering with their personal well-being and academic goals. Enhancing self awareness in utilizing the result of psychological tests as spring board to facilitate group counseling is also being emphasized (Arguelles & Bay, 2014). 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 (Laguador & Pesigan, 2013).

According to Braddock (2001) the purposes of guidance and counseling services in school are to improve academic achievement, foster positive

attitudes toward school, learning, and work, increase acquisitions and application of conflict resolution skill, decrease dropouts (as cited in Hussain, 2006).

Lyceum of the Philippines University (LPU) – Batangas as an institution of higher learning is now making its highest peak to be one of the nation’s prime leaders in providing equally productive and globally competitive graduates to the international community by pushing its image judiciously in the frontier of world-class universities (Laguador, Villas & Delgado, 2014). Student evaluation and assessment has become an integral process of any educational institution towards an improved and quality learning experience (Bay & Subido, 2014). Addressing the issues of affective learning in the development of curriculum always make sense in shaping the character of the students towards an end of producing graduates into a responsible employees (Laguador & Ramos, 2014). In LPU-B, the Counseling and Testing Center also known as CATC never fails to provide the services needed by the students as needed by the curriculum. Academic failures, improper vocational choices, emotional conflicts, social maladjustments are just but few of the common problems faced by the students but the university’s Counseling and Testing Center ensure that these problems encountered by the students are resolved.

LIMA’s CATC also offers the same services just like its counterpart in the main campus. Also the said department helps the maritime students to acquire the discipline appropriate for maritime students who aspire to be future deck and engine officers. LPU-B has institutional learning outcomes which represent the qualities that LPU students should practice and possess as life-long learners which are anchored on the 4C’s: competence, commitment, credibility and collaboration and embedded in the curriculum (Laguador, Dotong & De Castro, 2014) of the Maritime Education in support to the services being provided by CATC.

Assessing the effectiveness is an important part of the process in quality management system to determine the areas need for further improvement (An, Laguador & Portugal, 2015). The researchers as students of the institution conducted this study to know the effectiveness of the services given by the Counseling and Testing Center to students most especially to the maritime students. The researchers also believe that the results of this study will be beneficial to the students as well as to the Counseling and Testing Center in molding the students into future deck and engine officers.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The study aimed to determine the effectiveness of intervention activities given by CATC in terms of academic, spiritual, and character formation; the problems encountered by maritime students to the services rendered by CATC; and propose a plan of action to enhance the intervention rendered by the CATC.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Effective school counselors obtain needs assessment data through a number of ways. One is to identify and list those who are to be served by the services, for example students, teachers and parents. Implementing activities and programs which promote direct interactions among the respondents and the University employees like administrative personnel, professors, and security personnel will reduce uncomfortability among themselves (Buted, Abiad, Aguba, Ellar, Ila, Sales & Caiga, 2014). After this one has to survey the beneficiary’s opinions about the services. In American schools, the data may be obtained through surveys on stakeholders who may include: students, teachers and parents (Lusky & Hayes 2001:30; Reynolds & Cheek 2002:89). Surveys on the guidance and counseling beneficiaries reveal some critical concerns and needs of students in the school. Interviews with students, teachers and parents and observations made in schools are other sources of needs assessment data. School counselors may use students' end of year results, student records, standardized tests, interest inventories and behavior rating scales as sources of needs assessment. Needs can also be obtained from informal conversations with students and from inputs from the school nurse, social worker and the psychologist if they are available. UNESCO (2000:8) adds that in Botswana the beneficiaries’ opinions are collected through the use of questionnaires, brainstorming and school and community records.

Kochhar (2000) stated that in modern times the complexity of life has intensified the need of organized guidance services. Both developed and developing countries lay great emphasis on the guidance of their youth to channelize their energies. Students need to be guided for developing good study habits and adequate preparation to sit in the examination (as cited in Hussain, 2006).

The Counseling and Testing Center of LPU-Batangas commits itself to the following objectives: to actively participate in promoting university image through the implementation of innovative and

effective career guidance, testing programs and dynamic student-friendly counseling services that are aimed to increase student's admission, student's satisfaction and retention rate; to be the focal center of the university's holistic development of its students that will ensure their spiritual, moral and social values through identified student's organizations, innovative guidance, counseling and testing services and programs, and the continuous training and development of CATC human resource, in close coordination with the Deans and other departments of the institution; to actively support LPU's quality assurance programs such as accreditation, Quality Management System (QMS), 5S, Investors in People (IIP), Center of Excellence (COE), Center of Development (CODE) and other programs through the sustainable services and activities provided by the Counseling and Testing Center and; to actively participate in research functions on university through the conduct of relevant researches and surveys that aim to continuously improve the academic performance of the students and the university as a whole service.

To meet the objectives set by the Counseling and Testing Center, services like counseling, career guidance, testing, individual inventory, information service, referral and follow-up, spiritual upliftment, The Caring Group (TCG), and Faculty Advisers Program are given to the students.

**Counseling.** To enhance the students' self-awareness and assists them in proper handling of emotional problems/ concerns and inevitable experiences/ conflicts that occurs to normal people.

**Career Guidance.** To assist and inform the students to have a wise decision in choosing a course suitable to their knowledge (abilities and potentials), interest, personality and financial capability.

**Testing.** To better understand the students' strengths and weaknesses; to provide counseling assistance for them and, to provide selection and placement for quality education/ academic excellence.

**Individual Inventory.** To maintain an organized record of students' personal, educational, vocational and other pertinent data.

**Information Service.** To provide the students with basic information of current educational/ social occupational, health and spiritual that would be useful to them.

**Referral and Follow-up.** Aims to monitor the attendance and academic status of the students for necessary intervention to assist them in their academic difficulties and/or problems.

**Spiritual Upliftment.** Reaching students through: Lyceum Inter- College Support Group Brothers' Keeper (LICSG-BK)- it aims to strengthen the acquisition and development of the school core values of Love of God and Professional Integrity. It encourages positive relationships with God and among Lyceans.

**The Caring Group (TCG).** A recognized student organization which caters to children of OFW or migrant workers; aims to encourage family atmosphere and friendly relationship.

**Faculty Advisers Program.** Helps the students feel and experience security and belongingness. Assist CATC to guide the freshman students to achieve healthy adjustments into a new phase of their lives (transition from high school to college).

According to Counseling and Testing Center (CATC), along with all the services rendered by the CATC to the Maritime students, interventions are also given regarding spiritual development, character formation, and academic development. Dotong (2014) emphasized that the integration of values in all general and professional courses is necessary to provide not only the specific application of skills required but the students can also be equipped with appropriate attitude and behaviour towards work. Consistently monitoring of the academic performance and behavior of students would provide thorough guidance for those who are low achievers (Laguador & Dizon, 2013).

In academic development, CATC monitors the attendance of students to ensure that they are regularly attending their classes. Counselor assists students to know if they encounter problems regarding their studies. CATC also informs the parents of the students who frequently skip class. When the parents of these students responded, a conference between the faculty concerned and the parents are conducted. CATC conducts continuous follow up to the students concerned to monitor their development.

In spiritual development, CATC conducts seminars like "Choose Life". A support group called Lyceum Inter – College Support Group Brother's Keeper is formed to encourage positive relationship between God and among students. Bible sharing is also conducted for spiritual enrichment of students. CATC also conducts community outreach every December to teach the students the value of giving.

In character formation, the CATC conducts self-awareness seminar for the personality development of students. Personality tests are given to evaluate the disposition, attitudes and study habits of

students. Enrichment programs are also conducted for the Standard Based Test of students. A seminar entitled "Embracing the Value of Work and Career" is given to students to teach the students to give importance to their chosen career.

Professional school counselors must always maintain and secure records necessary for rendering professional services to the student as required by laws, regulations, institutional procedures and confidentiality guidelines. They must also avoid dual relationships that might impair their objectivity and increase the risk of harm to students (e.g., counseling one's family members or the children of close friends or associates). If a dual relationship is unavoidable, the school counselor is responsible for taking action to eliminate or reduce the potential for harm to the student through use of safeguards, which might include informed consent, consultation, supervision and documentation. The counselor should maintain appropriate professional distance with students at all times ("Ethical Standards, 2010).

According to the interview conducted to NIMASA students these are the common problems that the students encounter with CATC: failure of proper briefing of students before taking services like enrichment programs. Another is the list of the names of students that will take CATC's service, some students that already taken CATC's service are still included in the list which leads to confusion of the students involved. And lastly, they are unconfident towards the counsels of the CATC officials in regards to the previous cadets being counseled.

## **METHODS**

### **Research Design**

The researchers used descriptive method that is designed to gather information about present and existing conditions. Descriptive research is used to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomena to describe "what exists" with respect to variables or conditions in a situation.

### **Participants**

The total population of maritime students of LIMA was two-thousand one-hundred four (2104). The researchers utilized two hundred forty (240). One hundred ninety-three (193) from the BSMT students and forty-seven (47) from the BSMarE students. Students from first to third year level currently enrolled in LPU-Batangas were the respondents of this study to give their evaluation based on their

experiences. The respondents' were proportionally allocated to each year level.

### **Instrument**

The researchers used a self-prepared questionnaire as the major source in gathering primary data. The researchers also used different references to look for the data that served as basis in making the questionnaire. The instrument was also validated by the counselors' at the Guidance Office of LPU-LIMA.

The questionnaire was divided into two parts. Part I is the interventions activities rendered by the CATC to maritime students in terms of Academic Development, Spiritual Development and Character Formation. Part II includes the problems encountered by maritime students to the services rendered by the CATC.

### **Procedures**

The researchers gathered the information about the topic of the study in order to prepare themselves for the task ahead. Upon collecting sufficient facts about the topic, the researchers promptly began the task of preparing the books, internet, and other data gathering tools. The procedure of constructing questionnaire was also consulted by the researchers to ensure that they bring about good questionnaire that will be used in gathering data for the study.

Upon completing of the first draft of data gathering tool, it was submitted to the research adviser and CATC counselors for comments and suggestions. After integrating the comments and suggestions by the research adviser and CATC counselors, the researchers constructed the final draft for the instrument.

### **Data Analysis**

The data gathered were presented in tabular form to interpret the results. Frequency distribution and weighted mean was used to determine the effectiveness of interventions rendered by the CATC to maritime students. The given scale was used to interpret the result of the data gathered: 3.50-4.00=Highly Effective; 2.50-3.49=Effective; 1.50-2.49=Less Effective; 1.00-1.49=Ineffective.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Table 1 presents the mean score of effectiveness of interventions rendered by the CATC to maritime students in terms of academic development

**Table 1. Effectiveness of Intervention Activities Given by the CATC to Maritime Students**

<b>Academic Development</b>	<b>WM</b>	<b>VI</b>	<b>Rank</b>
1. Monitoring of Attendance	3.50	Highly Effective	1
2. Counseling assistance to students	3.22	Effective	3
3. Parents of referred students were informed through phone calls	3.17	Effective	5
4. When parents replied, there is conference between the faculty concerned and parents	3.23	Effective	2
5. Continuous follow up every (2) two weeks or a month	3.18	Effective	4
6. When need arise, the CATC conducting home visit	3.02	Effective	6
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.22</b>	<b>Effective</b>	

It can be observed from the table that most of the interventions given by the CATC in terms of academic development are effective as indicated by the composite mean of 3.22.

The items registered high to very high mean ranging from 3.02 to 3.50 interpreted “Effective” and “Highly Effective”. This explains that most of the interventions rendered by the CATC in terms of academic development are effective. This is parallel with the CATC’s effort on making such interventions for their counselling service, taking into consideration the needs of maritime students.

The result shows that monitoring of attendance as an intervention for academic development of maritime students got the highest rank with a weighted mean of 3.50 and interpreted as “Highly Effective” because it is the most common intervention that is given to students most especially to those students who are always absent and not attending classes. On the other hand, the intervention that when need arise, the CATC conducting home visit has the lowest rank with a weighted mean of 3.02 and interpreted as “Effective” because this intervention is prevented from happening because of the effectiveness of the other interventions for academic development that CATC gives to students.

**Table 2. Effectiveness of Intervention Activities Given by the CATC to Maritime Students**

<b>Spiritual Development</b>	<b>WM</b>	<b>VI</b>	<b>Rank</b>
1. Conducting Seminar	3.20	Effective	1
2. Having Lyceum Inter-College Support Group Brothers' Keeper	3.15	Effective	2
3. Conducting Bible Sharing Services	3.02	Effective	4
4. Conducting community outreach every December	3.06	Effective	3
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.11</b>	<b>Effective</b>	

Table 2 presents the mean score of effectiveness of interventions rendered by the CATC

to maritime students in terms of spiritual development. It can be observed from the table that all interventions given by the CATC in terms of spiritual development are effective as indicated by the composite mean of 3.11.

The table also shows that conducting seminar as an intervention in terms of spiritual development got the highest rank among the four having a weighted mean of 3.20 and verbally interpreted as effective. It was followed by having Lyceum Inter-College Support Group Brothers’ Keeper and conducting Community outreach every December having a weighted mean 3.15 and 3.06 respectively. However, conducting Bible sharing services intervention got the lowest rank having a weighted mean of 3.02 which is still verbally interpreted as effective.

As shown from the result, the effective and has the highest rank among all interventions in terms of spiritual development is conducting seminar because it mainly deals with creating an atmosphere in which all feel comfortable expressing their ideas which is ideal for seeds of new ideas or points of view to grow. Moreover, it is the most common activity organized by the CATC and it directly addresses issues of sharing information and working cooperatively without fear of judgment or loss of status. However, Bible sharing services got the lowest rank yet effective because it is rarely done due to heavy workloads of the students.

A school guidance program includes all those activities other than instructional which are carried out to render assistance to pupils in their educational, vocational, personal development and adjustment. The fundamental aim of guidance program being the maximum development of the child, all guidance programs must be geared toward attainment of the goal. Guidance services can assist the pupils in knowing themselves-their potentialities and limitations, making appropriate choices in educational, vocational and other fields (“GUIDANCE: CONCEPT”, n.d.).

**Table 3. Effectiveness of Intervention Activities Given by the CATC to Maritime Students**

<b>Character Formation</b>	<b>WM</b>	<b>VI</b>	<b>Rank</b>
1. Conducting Awareness Seminar	3.22	Effective	3
2. Conducting personality test with regards to psychological test	3.20	Effective	4
3. Conducting survey on study habits and attitudes with regards to personality test	3.25	Effective	2
4. Conducting Enrichment program based on the result of Standard Based Test	3.28	Effective	1
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.24</b>	<b>Effective</b>	

Table 3 presents the mean score of effectiveness of interventions rendered by the CATC to maritime students in terms of character formation. It can be observed from the table above that the interventions in terms of character formation are all effective as indicated by the composite mean of 3.24.

The table also shows that conducting enrichment program based on the result of Standard Based Test as an intervention in terms of character formation got the highest rank among the four having a weighted mean of 3.28 and verbally interpreted as effective. It was followed by conducting survey on study habits and attitudes with regards to personality test and conducting awareness seminar having a weighted mean of 3.25 and 3.22 respectively. However, conducting personality test with regards to psychological test got the lowest rank having a weighted mean of 3.20 which is still interpreted as effective. Dotong (2014) stressed that students must learn the value of initiative as future professionals. It has something to with getting ahead of tasks and exceeding the expectations of people. It is doing things beyond responsibility. Developing initiative among students is making them as future assets of the organization.

As shown from the result, conducting enrichment programs based on the result of Standard Based Test has the highest rank and effective intervention because it can help students to grow both academically and socially. Moreover, it offers student the opportunity to study and excel in a specific area as well as the opportunity to build leadership skills.

School counselors provide counseling programs in three domains: academic, career, and personal/social. Their services and programs help

students resolve emotional, social, or behavioral problems and help them develop a clearer focus or sense of direction. Effective counseling programs are important to the school climate and a crucial element in improving student achievement (“Research on School”, n.d.).

Table 4 presents the mean score of problems encountered by maritime students to the services rendered by the CATC. It can be observed from the table above that respondents agreed that there are problems encountered to the services rendered by the CATC as indicated by the composite mean of 2.92.

The result shows that confusion of students who have already taken up the given enrichment program but are still included on the list who failed to take it up has the highest rank and agreed by the respondents having a weighted mean of 2.99. Sometimes the CATC commits mistake on posting the list of names of the students who are needed to report on their office. However, the problem about failure to maintain appropriate professional distance with students which in return results to bias decisions and counsels having a weighted mean of 2.88 got the lowest rank which is still agreed upon by the respondents because some students misinterpret the care and compassion shown by the counsellors towards the other students.

School counselors approach students, parents, teachers, and others with warmth and understanding, an accepting and optimistic attitude about the potentialities of people, and the belief that people can change in positive ways. They are committed to personal change and growth, not only in others, but also in themselves. They have the ability to relate to and effectively communicate with people of all ages and cultural backgrounds. Counselors have a high degree of self-awareness of their own values, knowledge, skills, and limitations, and know not to act beyond the bounds of their professional qualifications (“Roles and Responsibilities”, n.d.).

**Proposed plan of action to enhance the Intervention Activities rendered by the CATC**

To address the confusion of students to the information posted by the CATC, it is important to check the information to be posted before disseminating it. Conduct room to room orientation and post also the information to the CATC bulletin board in order to inform the students with the purpose the services given to them.

**Table 4. Problems Encountered by Maritime Students with the Interventions Rendered by the CATC**

Problems Encountered	WM	VI	Rank
1. Failure to maintain and secure records necessary for rendering professional services to the student	2.97	Agree	2
2. Failure to maintain appropriate professional distance with students which in return results to bias decisions and counsels	2.88	Agree	5
3. Failure to brief students with the purpose of the services given to them	2.89	Agree	3.5
4. Confusion of students who have already taken up the given enrichment program but are still included on the list who failed to take it up	2.99	Agree	1
5. No Confidence towards the counsels of the CATC officials in regards to previous cadets	2.89	Agree	3.5
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>2.92</b>	<b>Agree</b>	

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

The intervention activities rendered by the CATC to maritime students in terms of academic development, spiritual development, and character formation are effective. The observed problem encountered by the maritime students on the interventions rendered by the CATC was confusion of students who have already taken up the given enrichment program but are still included on the list who failed to take it up. A proposed plan of action was formulated to enhance the intervention activities rendered by the CATC.

It is recommended that the CATC management may continue the implementation of interventions and services for further positive progress of the students and formulate more effective interventions. The CATC management may come up with additional interventions and services that will further enhance the academic development, spiritual development, and character formation of maritime students. The CATC management may add more counselors to accommodate more students that need proper counseling. The Counselors may develop a comprehensive school counseling program suited for maritime students and will cater their specific needs in terms of academic development, spiritual development and character formation. The CATC management may consider the proposed action plan by the researchers. Future researchers may conduct similar study with different variables to another set of respondents.

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