

Student Development Practices of one Maritime Education Institution in the Philippines

Edwin M. Agena, Myrna C. Clemino, Emely M. Linatoc, Recalyn M. Manalo, Jake M. Laguardor
Lyceum International Maritime Academy, Lyceum of the Philippines University, Batangas City

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apjme@lpubatangas.edu.ph
www.apjme.apjmr.com

Abstract - *Maritime education institutions are considered important training ground of future seafarers where they should have the resources and practices to deliver quality instruction and relevant services towards efficient and effective implementation of STCW or ILO requirements. This study aims to determine the level of student development practices of one maritime education institution in the Philippines. Descriptive type of research was utilized in the study with 130 Maritime students as respondents. Results showed that the university obtained a high level of student development practices in terms of institution's policies towards human resource development systems and concern for innovations in the methodology of teaching; followed by programs on personal effectiveness and development of essential skills; and last, the initiatives for career guidance and counselling. Understanding cultural diversity is considered important component on developing the potentials and leadership capability of the maritime students towards achieving a good working relationship with other foreign nationalities onboard ship which includes communication and managing pressures.*

Keywords: *Human Resource, Student Development, Maritime Education, STCW, Seafarers*

INTRODUCTION

Developing the character, skills and knowledge of the learners is the primary role of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to prepare them for future employment and become leaders of their respective disciplines. The students are considered the human resources who will support the progress and economic growth of the country. The Philippines is one of the largest providers of seafarers in this part of the region. In 2014, the Philippines contributed 402,000 seafarers to more than 30% of the global maritime workforce (Oxford Business Group, 2016). Therefore, the Maritime industry is expecting that all HEIs have the capability to develop well-equipped and skilled seafarers who will join the workforce ready to face the global challenges. Richter (2016) emphasized that the education and training of seafarers is a main factor of the maritime industry, as it maintains and develops the level of knowledge and skills in the maritime sector and guarantee maritime safety.

Academic institutions are in the frontline of the 21st Century that hone the competencies of the students through innovative strategies on how to deliver the best quality of education suitable for the requirements of the next generation. According to Ziarati, Demirel, Albayrak (2010) Maritime institutions must implement their programme content efficiently and effectively in

accordance with the STCW's requirements and the contents of the IMO Model Courses; they must improve standards of teaching staff, facilities and equipment and proactively support the efforts by the IMO and agencies such as the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) to develop and implement STCW and have a feel for ILO, SOLAS and MARPOL requirements with clear understanding of importance of ISM, ISPS.

This study is anchored on the person environment theories of John Holland which address interaction between conceptualizations of the college student and the college environment, looking at behaviour as a social function of the person and the environment. Those theories are particularly common in career planning where behavior is determined by an interaction between personality and characteristics of environment.

Students really feel if they are being given importance or being valued by the institution. There are so many ways on how college students will consider their learning experience as remarkable or memorable through letting them participate actively in the areas of their interest and in the identified aspects where they understand the need for improvement. Knowing the individual requirements or unique needs of every student is quite difficult for college or department with

big student population. Therefore, what is happening in reality is that the college will provide a common student development activity across all kinds and types of students. At the end of the program, only those students who really feel the need of the outcome will be benefited from the objectives.

Letting the students know what to develop and improve on their attitude, knowledge and skills through proper orientation of student learning outcomes of Maritime Programs as well as the complex development tasks would give them the right self-direction on what to expect in return from the institution towards interdependence. Sometimes students do not really know the challenges of the maritime profession. Therefore, they are complaisant of what they are receiving would be considered enough for them to perform their duties and responsibilities after getting their degrees and diploma. Setting career guidance programs is an important aspect of student development where they can also track or assess personally their progress if they are already closed to the ideal Marine Professionals.

Completing the curriculum with academic performance as measure sometimes would not be enough to check the competence of the learners. There are major aspects of development of a person that cannot be answered by academic performance. Therefore, HEIs are placing much effort to formulate strategies that will touch every aspect of the student learning towards a holistic development to be capable of solving issues and problems of the workplace and even in a larger community. The continuous growth and diversification of maritime activities has led to an increase and an evolution of challenges and threats like accidents in navigation, piracy and terrorism, immigration, illicit traffic and pollution (Bocanete & Nister, 2009). HEIs need to prepare the learners with the skills that could address these dangers and difficulties they might encounter at sea.

This study explores on the observation of maritime students in terms of how LIMA department with the support from the University provides educational services that cater to the development and discovery of students' potential and talents. This serves as an initial assessment of LIMA's student development practices towards continuous improvement.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aims to determine the student development practices of a Maritime Education Institution in the Philippines as observed by the Maritime students in terms of the following

dimensions: Institution's Policies Towards HRD Systems; Programs on Personal Effectiveness and Development of Essential Skills; Concern for Innovations in the Methodology of Teaching; and Initiatives for Career Guidance and Counselling.

METHODS

Research Design

Descriptive type of research method was utilized in the study. Descriptive survey method is appropriate for data derived from simple observational situations, whether these are actually physically observed or observed through the use of a questionnaire (Zulueta & Costales Jr., 2006).

Participants

The respondents of the study comprised of 75 Marine Engineering and 155 Marine Transportation students enrolled during the 2nd Semester Academic Year 2015-2016 at the Lyceum International Maritime Academy, Lyceum of the Philippines University, Batangas City, Philippines. They were identified through systematic random sampling technique.

Instrument

The instrument was adopted from the study of Sharma (2011) where the author obtained a split half reliability of the total scale of 0.94 in the four dimensions.

Procedure

The researchers invited the selected Marine Engineering and Marine Transportation Students in four groups where the questionnaires were personally administered. They were informed regarding the purpose of the study. Only those respondents who expressed their willingness to participate in the study were invited to answer the instrument. The researchers also explained that the data gathered from the survey will be treated with strict confidentiality and their anonymity as participants of the study was also strictly observed.

Data Analysis

Weighted mean was used as statistical tool to interpret the result of the data gathered. The given scale was used to interpret the result of the study: 3.50-4.00: Strongly Agree/Very High; 2.50-3.49: Agree/High; 1.50-2.49: Disagree/ Low; 1.00-1.4: Strongly Disagree/Very Low.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Practices of Maritime Education Institution in terms of Institution's Policies Towards Human Resource Development Systems

Institution's Policies Towards Human Resource Development Systems	WM	VI	Rank
1. This institution has helped me in reaching my peak performance.	3.16	Agree	8
2. This college has helped us to understand our own potentials and abilities.	3.21	Agree	6
3. Our Institution has different strategies for developing excellent and poor performers.	3.08	Agree	9
4. Continuous development of the students is the goal of this college.	3.26	Agree	5
5. I am lacking for my chosen career. Management & teachers of this college are actively involved in talent development of the students.	3.33	Agree	4
6. This school is putting maximum efforts to develop talent of students.	3.17	Agree	7
7. This Institution considers students as a resource to create and transfer knowledge.	3.56	Strongly Agree	1
8. This college believes that each individual possesses special ability.	3.38	Agree	3
9. The focus of this college is to develop our capacity to think and act.	3.45	Agree	2
Composite Mean	3.29	Agree	

Table 1 presents the student development practices in terms of Institution's Policies towards human resource development systems. The composite mean score of 3.29 implies that LIMA has good practices in terms of Institution's Policies towards Human Resource Development Systems. The Maritime students strongly agree that the University considers students as a resource to create and transfer knowledge (3.56). Students believe that the University puts greater value on building the cognitive ability of the learners through creating activities that can encourage active participation and boost the interest.

Meanwhile, they agree that the focus of this college is to develop our capacity to think and act (3.45), LIMA believes that each individual possesses special ability (3.38) and the LIMA management and teachers are actively involved in talent development of the students (3.33). The HEIs are considered as foundation of knowledge where students see themselves as recipients of information and wisdom being shared by the teachers through various learning experiences from instruction, research and community extension. It is important for the students to feel the presence of the school management within their midst to strengthen their aptitude for service and be competent professional marine officers in the future.

Likewise, they agree that continuous development of the students is the goal of this college (3.26), LIMA has helped us to understand our own potentials and abilities (3.21) and the academy is putting maximum efforts to develop talent of students (3.17). Everyone in the academic community is involved in harnessing the potentials of the learners through maintaining department activities and allowing the students to join

competitions and organizations that will make them busy and diligent to carry out assignments efficiently and effectively as leaders and members.

However, they also agree that this institution has helped them in reaching their peak performance (3.16) and LIMA has different strategies for developing excellent and poor performer (3.08) which obtained the lowest weighted mean scores. Focusing on the needs of all types and nature of the students is an essential component on how to practice fairness and justice as considered significant value for the HEIs. Having co-curricular activities that motivate participation of all students and not only for high performing students is a manifestation of being reasonable, impartial and non-discriminatory on the part of the students.

Table 2 presents the student development practices in terms of Programs on Personal Effectiveness and Development of essential skills. They strongly agree that LIMA has taught them the importance of positive attitude in their lives (3.68) and has helped them to realize the importance of goal-setting in their lives (3.51). Faculty members teaching professional courses are very much willing to share their onboard experiences in relation to the topics being discussed in the classroom setting in order to understand by the students the significance of being optimist in dealing with issues and challenges in maritime industry.

Furthermore, LIMA focuses on developing the overall personality of the students (3.28), teachers and authorities provide them the training to learn skills essential for development (3.16) and LIMA focuses in helping students learn the skills that will be useful in the future (3.13).

Table 2. Practices of Maritime Education Institution in terms of Programs on Personal Effectiveness and Development of essential Skills

Programmes on Personal Effectiveness and Development of essential Skills	WM	VI	Rank
1. This College focuses on developing leadership abilities of the students.	3.06	Agree	8
2. Teachers and authorities of this school provide us training to learn skills essential for development.	3.16	Agree	4
3. This college has helped me in handling the pressures related to studies and examination.	3.11	Agree	6
4. This institution has taught us the importance of positive attitude in our lives.	3.68	Strongly Agree	1
5. This college focuses on developing the overall personality of the students.	3.28	Agree	3
6. Our school sees us in terms of future potential, and not on the basis of our past performance.	3.09	Agree	7
7. The focus of this college is to help students learn skills that they will use in their lives.	3.13	Agree	5
8. This Institution provides us opportunities to develop creativity within ourselves.	3.02	Agree	9
9. Here, attention is also paid on how to develop our writing & expression competencies.	2.94	Agree	10
10. This institution has helped us to realize the importance of goal-setting in our lives.	3.51	Strongly Agree	2
Composite Mean	3.19	Agree	

Understanding the personality of the students in the millennial era gives better view on how to deal with them in terms of assessing their needs for improvement and how to keep their interest and motivation striving to learn the necessary skills for future employment. Communication is one of the important skills that maritime students still need to enhance. Ping (2010) emphasized that the sailors' ability to use special English, like professional expertise and skills, has become one of the professional requirements where in the shipping industry, it is a widely acknowledged fact that English is an important part of the sailors' seafaring life.

Moreover, they agree that LIMA helped them in handling the pressures related to studies and examination (3.11), LIMA sees them in terms of future potential, and not on the basis of their past performance (3.09) and LIMA focuses on developing leadership abilities of the students (3.06). Teaching the students on how to handle pressures and stress in performing their roles and responsibilities helps them to strengthen their coping mechanisms in managing difficulties and uncertainties. The abilities of the students measured by trust from the teachers also build strong confidence to become future leaders. Ping (2010) noted that seafarers in service need to bear much more psychological pressure than those who undertake other occupations according to the relevant research data.

They agree that LIMA provides them opportunities to develop creativity within themselves (3.02) and attention is also paid on how to develop their writing and expression competencies (2.94) which obtained the least weighted mean scores. Putting emphasis on creativity is something difficult to achieve because it

is very subjective in nature. As maritime program is not designed for the students to become creative in terms of developing their expertise in expressing once ideas through writing therefore they find it hard to communicate their thoughts.

Table 3 presents the student development practices in terms of concern for innovations in the methodology of teaching. The Maritime students strongly agree that the teachers modify their teaching according to their understanding and requirements (3.52). Meanwhile, they agree that participation of the students is encouraged in the class to develop new insights on different topics (3.46), teachers adjust their teaching according to time taken by students to internalize the concept (3.45) and teachers generate curiosity among students by encouraging queries on the topic taught (3.41). Assessing the learning outcomes provides deeper analysis on the status of academic achievement, progress and development of skills and attitude. This is part of identifying the individual requirements of the students on what areas they really need further improvement. The delivery of instruction is also being provided some references on what teaching methodology or strategy that will be more suitable for the type of students within one class.

Likewise, teachers guide the students to develop the capacity for self-direction and self-improvement (3.39), LIMA encourages teachers to move from teaching for exams to teaching for understanding (3.28), teachers and students work together to maximize the learning for the students (3.25), and teachers are the source of generating self-motivation in the students (3.22).

Table 3. Student Development Practices in terms of Concern for Innovations in the Methodology of Teaching

Concern for Innovations in the Methodology of Teaching	WM	VI	Rank
1. LIMA encourages teachers to move from teaching for exams to teaching for understanding.	3.28	Agree	6
2. Here, participation of the students is encouraged in the class to develop new insights on different topics.	3.46	Agree	2
3. Here, teachers & students work together to maximize the learning for the students.	3.25	Agree	7
4. Teachers here work to bring best out of the students.	3.04	Agree	10
5. Teachers in this college guide the students to develop the capacity for self-direction and self-improvement.	3.39	Agree	5
6. In this school, teachers are the source of generating self-motivation in the students.	3.22	Agree	8
7. Teachers in this school generate curiosity among students by encouraging queries on the topic taught.	3.41	Agree	4
8. The teachers of his institution modify their teaching according to our understanding and requirements.	3.52	Strongly Agree	1
9. In this Institution, teachers adjust their teaching according to time taken by students to internalize the concept.	3.45	Agree	3
10. In this school, teaching is done in a way that students retain their knowledge as they move to higher classes.	3.16	Agree	9
11. Goal of this Institution is not to cover syllabus but to encourage knowledge creation and knowledge sharing.	3.02	Agree	11
Composite Mean	3.29	Agree	

However, they agree that teaching is done in a way that students retain their knowledge as they move to higher classes (3.16), teachers work to bring best out of the students (3.04) and goal of this Institution is not to cover syllabus but to encourage knowledge creation and knowledge sharing (3.02) which obtained the least weighted mean scores. The composite mean score of 3.29 implies that LIMA has good student development practices in terms of concern for innovations in the methodology of teaching.

Table 4 presents the student development practices in terms of initiatives for career guidance and

counselling. Maritime students strongly agree that LIMA has provided them guidance in choosing the right career (3.52). Faculty members are constantly encouraging and motivating the maritime students to finish their studies because there are lots of opportunities in the maritime industry that await for them to explore. Increasing the interest of the students is also one of the responsibilities of the teacher to boost the confidence of the students that they are pursuing the right track.

Table 4. Student Development Practices in terms of Initiatives for Career Guidance and Counseling

Initiatives for Career Guidance and Counseling	WM	VI	Rank
1. This Institution has helped me by providing knowledge of career opportunities available to me.	3.27	Agree	2
2. The guidance provided to me by this school helped me set realistic and meaningful goals in life.	3.13	Agree	3
3. This college has guided me in understanding my strengths and weaknesses vis-à-vis my career goals.	2.87	Agree	6
4. Experts and teachers here made me realize the importance of technical skills	3.05	Agree	4
5. This Institution also gives emphasis on career planning & career development of students.	3.01	Agree	5
6. This college has taught us the need for self-assessment in identifying the right career.	2.86	Agree	7
7. This Institution has provided us guidance in choosing the right career.	3.52	Strongly Agree	1
8. Our school has helped us to prepare Action Plan to work in the direction our career goals.	2.35	Disagree	9
9. Our school has helped us plan our careers in a long term perspective.	2.61	Agree	8
Composite Mean	2.96	Agree	

Meanwhile, LIMA helped them by providing knowledge of career opportunities available to them (3.27), the guidance provided to them helped them set realistic and meaningful goals in life (3.13) and experts and teachers made them realize the importance of technical skills (3.05). LIMA faculty members shared a lot of job openings and opportunities from various shipping companies where they are currently connected. They provide specific backgrounds of the duties and responsibilities that they need to focus on developing and enhancing their technical skills.

Furthermore, this Institution also gives emphasis on career planning and career development of students (3.01), LIMA has guided them in understanding their strengths and weaknesses vis-à-vis their career goals (2.87) and this college has taught them the need for self-assessment in identifying the right career (2.86). Giving the students a lot of information about lifelong learning options will guide them on how to set directions and plans for their future to become ship captains or chief engineers in a short period of time.

However, the respondents agree that LIMA has helped them plan their careers in a long term perspective (2.61) and they disagree that LIMA helped them to prepare Action Plan to work in the direction their career goals (2.35) which obtained the least weighted mean scores. Ping (2010) also noted that the university seafaring students are a special group with the same specialties, ages and problems where group counseling helps them exchange their ideas, discuss problems that may be encountered later and find out feasible solutions. In this way, their capacity of handling problems will be developed, which will effectively prevent tragedies or reduce the chance of psychological problems.

The composite mean score of 2.96 implies that LIMA has good student development practices in terms of initiatives for career guidance and counseling. Having strong personality is one of the characteristics the needs to be developed by the future seafarers during their college days in order to lessen the effect of being isolated from the world and separated from families and loved ones. Salter (2010) emphasized that the avoidance of further social contact or communication with their colleagues can rapidly lead to isolation and depression. The effect of this isolation and depression depends very much on their personality and the possible means of escape from the ship or the contract. Therefore, the role of teachers and guidance counsellors to the development of the learners is very

important to prepare the maritime students on this kind of life in the vessel.

CONCLUSION

Maritime students have observed the University's high level of student development practices first, in terms of institution's policies towards human resource development systems and concern for innovations in the methodology of teaching; followed by programs on personal effectiveness and development of essential skills; and last, the initiatives for career guidance and counselling. The person environment theory of John Holland confirms the result of the study where the University brings positive perspectives on how maritime students are being developed and guided towards achieving their full potentials to become future professional seafarers not only in the country but also to the international community.

Understanding cultural diversity is one of the components for having good interpersonal relationship with other seafarers on board in order for them to cope up with various challenges and adjust to different personalities in a global environment. From the social point of view according to Bocanete and Nister (2009), for individuals, seafarers or shore personnel, globalization means working for long periods in multinational crews and multinational maritime companies in a dynamic and complex environment that can cause cultural identity issues.

RECOMMENDATION

Maritime students need to adjust in various cultures onboard to develop a good working relationship with other crews in the vessel with different nationalities. They should be exposed to numerous student exchange programs where they could be able to communicate and manage their connection in diverse tradition, customs and way of life of foreign students and communities. Salter (2010) noted that it is important not to be prejudiced against other cultures; not to be in denial about the differences between them, but to be tolerant of different cultures, and to respect and value the differences.

The University may still strengthen its student development strategies and other mechanisms to address the requirements of both excellent and poor student performers through giving curricular activities suitable to the main interest and specific needs of different groups to reach the peak of their performance.

Putting greater emphasis on the communication skills of the maritime students is always one of the

challenges among Maritime Education Institutions. The level of confidence in expressing one's thoughts and ideas must be addressed from the classroom setting as well as through the initiatives of student organizations to provide relevant activities to give them motivation in realizing the need for further enhancement of their effective communication abilities in writing and speaking.

Enhancement of knowledge and skills of the teachers must also be given emphasis through retooling on teaching methodologies and modern equipment used in the navigation and propulsion systems on board. The development of advanced navigational technologies, specialised and professional transportation technologies and pollution prevention technologies and regulations were considered important for inclusion into the seafarers' competency standards according to Ziarati, Demirel and Albayrak (2010).

The maritime students may be given proper orientation or discussion on the concept of lifelong learning where they can internalize the value of setting plans and directions in a long term perspective for them to achieve higher goals of being captains and chief engineers.

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