

The Purposes of College Education *

(as Perceived by CPU Freshmen)

by

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What do young people perceive as the purposes of college education? To discover their purposes for going to college, freshmen were asked to rate as **highly important**, **of average importance**, or **of low importance** eight statements of purposes of college education. They were invited to write additional purposes of a college education, if there were any they wanted to add. Then each stated purpose was scored. A weight of 3 was given to each response of "high"; 2 to each response of "average"; and 1 to each response of "low". Tables were then prepared to show how the various groups of students ranked these purposes.

Tables 1 and 2 show that regardless of sex, age, and SES the res-

pondents reported that they go to college primarily for vocational or professional training. Both groups and all sub-groups ranked this reason first.¹

Although both groups ranked general education² second in importance as their reason for going to college, it made a poor second in that there was no perfect correspondence between the ranks assigned to it by the various sub-groups, especially among the boys. (There was agreement of only .76 [rho] between the ranks given by the younger and older boys to the various purposes, and also between the ranks given by the high and low SES sub-groups of boys. Among the girls, the agreement between the age groups and that between

*Part of the findings of a survey conducted in August, 1973, among the freshmen in the Colleges of Nursing, Education, Engineering, Arts and Sciences, Agriculture and Commerce of Central Philippine University. Only 1,192 freshmen were included in this survey.

¹Whole groups refers to groups formed on the basis of sex. Sub-groups refers to age groupings or SES classes.

²It is felt that even if the young respondents could not adequately articulate an explanation of "general education," the vague meaning they have of "general education and of general intellectual development" would not be very far from what it means.

the SES groups was higher.) General education ranked second in the whole group of boys with only three score points more than the third-ranking category, "preparation for participation in community activities." In the girls' group, it was closely followed by "philosophy of life."

The next three high-ranking purposes of the boys were also those of the girls, only the ranks of these three varied somewhat in the two groups. These were "participation in community activities," "developing ability to get along with people," and "developing a philosophy of life."

The boys and girls scored lowest the same three purposes, although they assigned slightly different ranks to these. The boys ranked lowest (Rank 8) "meeting people important in one's future"; this was ranked sixth by the girls (Rank 6). The girls considered least important "preparation for happy family life"; this was ranked seventh by the boys. "Social life" which was ranked seventh by the girls was ranked sixth by the boys.

The agreement between boys and girls' choices of purposes of college education is indicated by a rho of .85.

A COMMENTARY

The ranks the young people assigned to all eight purposes of col-

lege education seem to show that they take college seriously or that they look upon college as serving serious purposes.

Since both boys and girls look upon college education as the chief avenue for a steady life work, they probably look to another social agency to prepare them for family life. Hence, they rated low "preparation for family life" even though, as will be shown by the findings of a survey of life goals, they rated first "successful family life" as a life goal.

That girls ranked "meeting people important in one's future" two steps higher than did the boys is a bit surprising when one considers the more public and aggressive role men play in social and vocational life. But, probably, the boys felt that their future business and social associates as well as prospects for marriage partners would not be limited primarily to their college acquaintances and friends. These might be so in the case of the girls.

Comparison of College Groups

In order to discover whether college groups had considerably different purposes for college education, responses were tallied for each college and a table was prepared to show the ranks of the responses given by the seven different college groups to each purpose. The last column in this table gives the ave-

rage rank of each responses. The average rank was obtained by adding the ranks given by the seven groups to a response and the sum was divided by 7. Then each rank was compared with the average rank.

Purposes of College Education

The girls in the various colleges did not vary considerably in the importance they gave to the various purposes of college education. On the other hand, among the boys, there were six college groups which deviated much from the other groups in regard to four purposes. (See Table 3 and 4.)

Education and Engineering boys ranked eighth (last) "participation in community activities and solving community and national and world problems." This is a much lower than that given by the other groups of boys. The Commerce and Nursing boys gave about the same ranks (7 and 7.5) to "happy marriage and harmonious family life"; this is much lower than the average rank given by the groups of boys. The Science boys ranked much lower "ability to get along with different kinds of people," but ranked "harmonious family life" second only to vocational preparation. The agriculture boys ranked very much lower than did the other boys "basic general education and general intellectual development."

Except those found among the Education, Nursing, and probably the Science boys, the above findings are not very surprising.

Those who go into the sciences tend to be less interested in human interpersonal relations than those who go into the service professions. Surprisingly, however, the Science boys surveyed showed great concern with a particular kind of interpersonal relationships, those in one's home (happy marriage and harmonious family life). Agriculture people tend to be more concerned with practical activities than with general intellectual pursuits. Probably, those in engineering do not readily perceive their activities as direct involvement in "community activities and solving community problems" in the more popular and narrower sense of the term.

One would think that the Nursing boys, being in a service profession of which "tender, loving care" seems to be an integral part, would give as much importance to "happy marriage and harmonious family life" as the rest of the boys. Can it be that the Nursing boys surveyed are among those imbued with plans for working abroad so that "marriage and harmonious family life" is not a major concern of theirs? There were only two Education boys, too small a group to warrant a comparison.

TABLE I
SCORES AND RANKS OF PURPOSES OF COLLEGE EDUCATION
(OBTAINED AMONG THE BOYS)

Purposes*	SCORES					RANKS				
	Older	Younger	High	Low	Whole Group	O	Y	H	L	Whole Group
Develop abilities, techniques and attitudes required in one's career or life work; provide vocational or professional training.	272	658	279	651	930	1	1	1	1	1
Provide a basic general education and general intellectual development.	261	631	275	617	892	3	3	3.5	3	2
Prepare students for participation in community activities and in solving community, national and world problems.	257	632	267	622	889	4	2	5	2	3
Develop ability to get along with different kind of people.	256	628	275	609	884	5	4	3.5	4	4
Help develop moral capacities or ability to know what is right and wrong, help one find a philosophy of life and system of values.	262	621	278	605	883	2	5	2	5	5
Provide gay, glamorous, varied and interesting social life.	225	542	240	527	757	6	7	6	7	6
Prepare young people for a happy marriages and harmonious family life.	214	547	233	528	761	8	7	7	6	7
Provide opportunities for meeting people, who will later be important in one's future (wife or husband-to-be; and professional, social, and business associates, etc.)	215	511	212	514	726	7	8	8	8	8

TABLE 2
SCORES AND RANKS OF PURPOSES OF COLLEGE EDUCATION
(OBTAINED AMONG THE GIRLS)

Purposes*	SCORES					RANKS				
	Older	Younger	High	Low	Whole Group	O	Y	H	L	Whole Group
Vocational or professional training	286	2010	580	1716	2296	1	1	1	1	1
General Education	264	1958	571	1651	2222	4	2	3	2	2
Philosophy of Life	270	1945	575	1640	2215	3	3	2	3	3
Participation in community	263	1915	563	1615	2178	5	4	4	4	4
Ability to get along	272	1872	546	1598	2144	2	5	4	5	5
People important in one's future	237	1646	470	1413	1883	7	6	8	6	6
Social Life	238	1624	484	1378	1862	6	7	6	7	7
Preparation for family life	218	1553	475	1296	1771	8	8	7	8	8

*For complete statements of purposes of college education, see Table I.

TABLE 3
RANKS ASSIGNED BY EACH COLLEGE GROUP OF BOYS TO
PURPOSES OF COLLEGE EDUCATION

Purposes*	Arts	Sciences	Agricul- ture	Educa- tion	Engineer- ing	Commerce	Nursing	Average Rank
Ability to get along with people	7.5	8	3	4.5	4.5	6	5	5.5
Vocational or professional training	3.5	1	2	1.5	1.5	1	2	1.8
Basic general education	2	3	8	1.5	1.5	4.5	1	3.1
Participation in community activities	1	5.5	4	8	8	3	3.5	4.57
Philosophy of life	3.5	4	1	4.5	4.5	2	3.5	3.3
Happy marriage and harmonious family life	5.5	2	6	3	3	7	7.5	4.86
Varied and interesting social life	7.5	5.5	5	6.5	6.5	8	6	6.43
Meeting people important in one's future	5.5	7	7	6.5	6.5	4.5	7.5	6.4

*For complete statements of purposes, see Table I.

TABLE 4
RANKS ASSIGNED BY EACH COLLEGE GROUP OF GIRLS
TO PURPOSES OF COLLEGE EDUCATION

Purposes*	Arts	Sciences	Agricul- ture	Educa- tion	Engineer- ing	Commerce	Nursing	Average Rank
Ability to get along with people	4	5	5	3.5	3	5	5	4.4
Vocational or professional training	2	1	1	1	1.5	1	2	1.4
Basic general education	3	2	3	3.5	4	2	1	2.6
Participation in community activities	5	4	4	6	1.5	4	3.5	4.0
Philosophy of life	1	3	2	2	5	3	3.5	2.8
Happy marriage and harmonious family life	8	8	6	7	6.5	8	7.5	7.3
Varied and interesting social life	6.5	7	8	8	8	6.5	6	7.1
Meeting people important in one's future	6.5	6	7	5	6.5	6.5	7.5	6.4

*For complete statements of purposes, see Table I.