

Whole Person Development Status of Students in Four Universities in Iloilo, Philippines: Inputs for the Development of an Enhanced Learning Environment Program

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ABSTRACT

This descriptive-correlational study determined the whole person development (WPD) status of students in terms of social, spiritual, psychological, intellectual, professional, and physical domains. Nine hundred twenty six (926) senior high school students were randomly selected to provide information using a standardized questionnaire, Whole Person Development Inventory (WPDI). Findings revealed that generally, students have high status in WPD, and among the six WPD domains, the spiritual ranked the highest while psychological the lowest. Sub-domains that were rated the greatest are spiritual quest, peer relationship, and family relation while the least are emotional health, community care, and civic responsibility which suggest that students need more help in these areas. Academic achievement, gender, number of activities, nature of activities, and availment of peer counselling were found to be significantly related to overall status of WPD; religious affiliation to intellectual and physical domains; living arrangement to spiritual and intellectual; gender to physical; type of university to social and physical; number of activities to all the domains except psychological; nature of activities to spiritual and psychological; and availment of peer counselling to social, professional and physical. A combination of gender, academic achievement, number of activities, nature of activities, and availment of peer counselling service were found to be significant predictors of the WPD status and among these variables, the nature of activities participated in by the students was the strongest predictor of the status of WPD.

Keywords: Whole Person Development, Enhanced Learning Environment

INTRODUCTION

Whole person development is an important aspect of life. It is a progressive process through which the intellectual, physical, professional, psychological, social, and spiritual capacities of an individual can be holistically enhanced (Ng, P., et al., 2016). It prepares a learner for a successful adulthood, and to be able to survive the challenges, (Jones, 2008); (Ruiz & Sabio, 2012); (Acosta, Takiki, & Ruthowski, 2017) believed that WPD puts emphasis on the

progressive holistic development of a person rather than intellectual alone. They further concluded that for human resources to be of best use to society, they should be holistically developed.

Generally, educational institutions measure students' academic performance using test scores on cognitive or intellectual capacity. Public education at all levels continues to face important problems that have not been resolved by any approach to

date (Larimer, 2008), and these problems include learner disengagement of apathy, social, behavioral, and affective difficulties in the classroom and/or school setting, lower than expected levels of academic performance and achievement and failure to consistently produce adequately trained and socially responsible employees and citizens. Larimer (2008) concluded that beyond the effects of these problems on the school system and in the personal lives and future of the students, such problems contribute to social, ethical, and economic disabilities in society at large and these problems will remain intractable until the education of the whole person is systematically addressed from a holistic and constructivist perspective. With the introduction of Outcomes-Based Learning, schools are now incorporating demonstrable skills in measuring academic performance.

In a recent study on student emotional skills conducted by Acosta, Takiki, & Ruthowski, (2017), they found out that higher levels of socio-emotional skills are correlated with a greater probability of being employed, having completed secondary education, and pursuing tertiary education. They suggested that socio-emotional skills should be developed at the primary school age, the optimal age for sharing these skills.

Meanwhile, there is a rising cases of adolescents committing suicide and the growing number of “cutters” among the young brought about by the low socio-emotional development status because of the lack of socio-emotional skills (ucanews.com, 2016). Furthermore, it has been established that there is a link between educated manpower and economic development. In the world of globalization, the room for advancement lies in the ability of countries to understand how to make the best use of their resources – both human

and natural (Ruiz & Sabio, 2012). Human resource, to be of best use, should be holistically developed. Optimization of learning and development will require attention to all aspects of human ability and potential. Higher education institutions have been given the mandate to produce graduates with the highest level of whole person development possible. This kind of graduates is necessary to boost not only the economic development of the country but also the other aspects of development.

Families strive to send their children to higher education institutions to improve their lot in life in the future or to break the cycle of poverty. However, if they are not holistically trained and developed, competing for jobs, coping with failures and mistakes, and being resilient amidst challenges in life would be too difficult.

This poses a question on whether our students now are being developed holistically. There is dearth of literature, especially at the local level that can provide answers to this question which elicit elaborate answers. As mentioned earlier, WPD requires progress in social, spiritual, psychological, intellectual, professional, and physical capacities or an individual. It also requires scientific assessment of factors that facilitate or hinder the whole person development in schools. Evidence to this effect is yet to be discovered, hence, this study was conducted.

The general objective of this study was to determine the whole person development status of students in four universities in Iloilo, Philippines.

This study is anchored on the Student Development Theory that looks at how growth and development of students happens during the years they are attending college. It makes use of various theories.

On the psychological aspect, the Identity Development Theory espoused by Arthur Chikering and Linda Reisser (1969) suggests that there are seven vectors of development that the student move through during their college years and there are: 1) developing competence, 2) managing emotions, 3) moving through autonomy towards independence, 4) developing mature interpersonal relationships, 5) developing purposes, and 6) developing identity can help personnel to better understand and support students.

For the cognitive-structural aspect, the Scheme of Intellectual and Ethical Development Theory by William Perry (1970) is useful. It considers how the students understand their experiences, how they consider and organize information in teaching, learning, and change which are core aspects in the Cognitive Structural Theory (as cited by Almy & Genishi, 1979). He shows how helping the student move from the dualistic stage to the relative stage can be helpful to the learning process. In the dualistic state, the students think that the teachers have all the answers and thus, find it difficult to analyze and reflect. In the relative stage, the students develop a set of values and they makes choices in the contextual world. In other words, they can already make wise decisions using what they have learned or experienced.

The earlier Theory of Moral Development, specifically the Stages of Moral Reasoning by Lawrence Kohlberg (1958), cited by Nagelsen (2006), considers how the ability of students to reason affects the way they behave. This includes stages of moral development where students develop a sense of personal responsibility for their actions and ultimately for a morally just society – form pre-conventional morality where students wish to avoid punishment, to

post-conventional morality where ethics is seen used in its ultimate potential – students are now able to apply their ethical position to a set of problems.

Information and data on the whole person development status of the students should be available in educational institutions. However, this information and data is not available, hence, the need for this study to guide administrators to create an environment conducive to produce holistically-developed graduates - graduates who are socially, spiritually, psychologically, intellectually, professionally, and physically developed.

Whole Person Development Inventory

The Whole Person Development Inventory was validated for several years since 1968 by researchers from Hong Kong Baptist University (Petrus Ng, Xiging Susan Su, Gina Lai, Dennis Chan, Eddie Ho, Vivien Chan, Heide Leung, Vicki Kwan, and Chloe Li). They came up with six domains, namely, social, spiritual, psychological, intellectual, professional, and physical. The social domain includes civic responsibility, community care, cultural engagement, family relationship, and peer relationship. The spiritual domain includes art appreciation, moral commitment, and spiritual quest. Psychological domain includes emotional health and self-appreciation; Intellectual domain includes intellectual capacity; Professional includes career preparation and leadership; and Physical domain includes physical maintenance and physical fitness. These various capacities should be developed for students to be cited as holistically developed individuals.

Whole Person Development

Human beings were carefully and wonderfully made by our Creator, our God

who made the heaven and the earth and everything in them. They are so complex and complicated that until now, with all the studies made of them, no one can still fully know and understand human beings but the only One, the Creator. But we know that they are composed of body, soul, and spirit. While attitude, performance and potential they have are dependent on so many factors. The following are some of the evidences.

Jenney (2010), in his study on student peer relationship found out that this variable has a strong predictive relationship with college student self-rated pro-social character and in fact has a much stronger impact on social character traits, compassionate self-concept, social oriented character and overall college outcome than achievement-oriented character. He concluded that if students spend more time hanging out with their friends, they may not be able to do their academic tasks well,

hence classroom performance, but they enjoy with their friends.

Kim (2015) found out that certain time requirements of physical education graduation are positively associated with student academic growth especially in mathematics and science. The study of Vail (2016) also revealed that there was a consistently positive relationship between overall fitness and academic achievement, that is, as overall fitness scores improved, mean achievement scores also improved, and that the relationship appeared to be stronger for females than for males and stronger for higher socioeconomic status than for lower socioeconomic students.

Kilgo, Ezell, et al. (2015) revealed that active and collaborative learning and undergraduate research had broad-reaching positive effects on critical thinking, need for recognition, and intercultural effectiveness.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used a descriptive-correlational research design and utilized a one shot-survey for collecting primarily quantitative data. Qualitative data were used to substantiate quantitative information.

Population and Sample Respondents

The target population of this study consisted of 3,855 senior high school students (Grade 11 and Grade 12) in four universities in Iloilo City, Philippines enrolled during the second semester of School Year 2017-18. A sample of 926 was determined using the formula by Smith (1983).

Sampling Technique

The researcher secured the approval of the conduct of the survey from the respective university presidents. Then the lists of Grade 11 and Grade 12 students, secured from the respective registrar's office were used as sampling frames. Systematic sampling with a random start was used to select the 926 respondents of this study.

Research Instrument, Consent and Assent Forms

The data gathering instrument used in this study has three parts. Parts 1 and 2 were prepared by the researcher and Part 3 is an adopted, 100 per cent, the Whole Person Development Inventory developed

and validated in 2016 by a group of researchers at Hong Kong University (HKBU).

Part 1 was used to collect students' personal information and student-related characteristics and Part 2 was used to collect the university-related characteristics. Part 3 was used to collect data on the whole person development status of the students in each of the six domains and 15 sub-domains. Parental consent was sought for students aging below 18 years of age.

After approval of the proposed paper together with the instrument by the Graduate School panel or evaluators, the instrument was subjected to content and construct validation by three experts in the field of whole person education. Suggestions from the evaluators were then considered in the refinement of the instrument which was later piloted to 30 Grade 11 and Grade 12 students in non-target university. The collected data was then encoded in the computer for internal consistency test using Cronbach Alpha test. The result of the test shows an alpha of 0.86 which means that the questions in Parts 1 and 2 have acceptable internal consistency. Part 3 is composed of questions adopted from a standardized WPD questionnaire by Hong Kong Baptist University researchers. The final instrument was reproduced and distributed to the target respondents.

Data Gathering Procedure

A letter requesting for permission to conduct the study was personally handed by the researcher to the presidents of the four universities. Upon the approval of the university presidents of the letter, copies of the final questionnaires were distributed to the respondents together with the informed

consent and assent form (for respondents below 18 years of age) stating the purpose of the study, the data to be collected, how their personal information will be ethically processed, used and disposed of, the options to or not to participate in the survey at any time during the conduct of the study, and the need to have their parents' consent (for respondents below 18 years old).

Data Processing and Analysis

Each of the retrieved questionnaires was reviewed for completeness of data, after which the data were encoded in the computer using Microsoft Excel and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. Frequencies and central tendencies using mean and standard deviation were generated to describe the personal characteristics of the respondents, the university-related factors, and the status of their WPD. Inferential statistics using Chi-square, Gamma, and Cramer's V, set at 95% level of confidence were generated. Furthermore, to determine which among the variables were significant predictors of students' WPD, beta coefficients were generated. To comply with the requirements of linear regression analyses, linear relationships among variables were tested and non-parametric data were converted into parametric using dummy data.

Ethical Review and Plagiarism Tests

After the approval of the proposal, the document together with the research instruments and Consent and Assent Forms were submitted for plagiarism test by the University Review and Continuing Education Center and ethics review by the University Ethics Review Committee.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Student Personal Characteristics

The data revealed that the majority of the senior high school students in these four universities are Roman Catholic, either living

with immediate or non-immediate family members, female, and with good to very good academic achievement.

Table 1
Students' Characteristics

| Religious Affiliation | f | % |
|--|------------|---------------|
| Protestant | 105 | 11.34 |
| Roman Catholic | 768 | 82.94 |
| Others Christian Religious Affiliation | 35 | 3.78 |
| Others Religious Affiliation | 18 | 1.94 |
| Total | 926 | 100.00 |
| Living Arrangements | | |
| Living with father or mother | 96 | 10.37 |
| Living with father, mother, and siblings | 534 | 57.67 |
| Living with father, mother, siblings, grandparents | 116 | 12.53 |
| Other living arrangements | 180 | 19.43 |
| Total | 926 | 100.00 |
| Gender | | |
| Female | 616 | 66.50 |
| Male | 310 | 33.50 |
| Total | 926 | 100.00 |
| Academic Achievement | | |
| Outstanding (98-100) | 4 | 0.40 |
| Very good (93-97) | 197 | 21.30 |
| Good (88-92) | 541 | 58.40 |
| Average (83-87) | 163 | 17.60 |
| Fair (78-82) | 21 | 2.30 |
| Total | 926 | 100.00 |

University-Related Characteristics

Results showed that most of these students are involved in one or more extracurricular school activities such as in sports, academic, and religious activities but less in outreach and community services. Results also showed that they have not recognized the necessity of peer counselling. According to Pasha (2015), students who are especially reluctant to seek peer counselling services are more likely to have less psychological and emotional support from

people they often mingled with and if this situation is not sufficiently supported with other similar support, for example, involvement in extra-curricular activities, may result to psychological and emotional imbalance. In other words, students with less involvement in extra-curricular activities and who are reluctant to seek peer counselling are more prone to social and psychological imbalance; two of the six domains of whole person development.

Table 2
University-Related Characteristics

| Type of University | f | % |
|--|------------|---------------|
| Private, Sectarian University | 575 | 62.10 |
| Public, Non-Sectarian University | 351 | 37.90 |
| Total | 926 | 100.00 |
| Number of Activities Involved In | | |
| 0 Activity | 151 | 16.31 |
| 1 – 2 Activities | 370 | 39.96 |
| 3 – 4 Activities | 215 | 23.22 |
| 5 and Above | 190 | 20.51 |
| Total | 926 | 100.00 |
| Number of Activities Involved In | | |
| No Activity Involvement | 151 | 16.31 |
| Only One Activity | 204 | 22.03 |
| Academic | 70 | 2.37 |
| Social | 11 | 1.19 |
| Sports and athletics | 61 | 6.59 |
| Religious | 59 | 6.38 |
| Other Activities | 3 | 0.32 |
| Multiple Activities | 571 | 61.66 |
| Academic | 437 | 12.12 |
| Social | 261 | 7.24 |
| Sports and athletics | 279 | 7.74 |
| Religious | 769 | 21.33 |
| Total | 926 | 100.00 |
| Peer Counseling Service Availment | | |
| 0 no visit | 617 | 66.63 |
| 1 -2 times | 223 | 24.09 |
| 3 – 4 times | 73 | 7.88 |
| 5 and above | 13 | 1.40 |
| Total | 926 | 100.00 |

Overall Whole Person Development Status

Generally, the perceived overall status of WPD of respondents is *high* (mean=4.49) with less than one point deviation (SD=0.54) from the overall mean score. In terms of specific domains, spiritual recorded a very *high* level (mean=4.80), SD=0.58 and all five

domains recorded a *high* level of WPD (mean=>3.75 to 4.75) with standard deviation of less than one point (SD<1.0). The domain that has the least mean score is psychological domain (mean=4.25, SD=0.78).

Table 3
Status of Students' Whole Person Development

| WPD | Very High | | High | | Moderate | | Low | | Total | | M | SD |
|---------------|-----------|-------|------|-------|----------|-------|-----|-------|-------|--------|------|------|
| | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % | | |
| Overall | 118 | 12.74 | 606 | 65.44 | 196 | 21.17 | 6 | 0.65 | 926 | 100.00 | 4.49 | 0.54 |
| Spiritual | 317 | 34.23 | 507 | 54.75 | 95 | 10.26 | 7 | 0.76 | 926 | 100.00 | 4.80 | 0.58 |
| Professional | 213 | 23.00 | 444 | 47.95 | 230 | 24.84 | 39 | 4.21 | 926 | 100.00 | 4.53 | 0.78 |
| Social | 142 | 15.33 | 574 | 61.99 | 199 | 21.49 | 11 | 1.19 | 926 | 100.00 | 4.47 | 0.58 |
| Intellectual | 170 | 18.36 | 464 | 50.11 | 265 | 28.62 | 27 | 2.91 | 926 | 100.00 | 4.45 | 0.75 |
| Physical | 221 | 23.87 | 368 | 39.74 | 242 | 26.13 | 95 | 10.26 | 926 | 100.00 | 4.38 | 0.97 |
| Psychological | 105 | 11.34 | 474 | 51.19 | 277 | 29.91 | 70 | 7.56 | 926 | 100.00 | 4.25 | 0.78 |

Results showed that students' whole person development status in these four universities is general high with minimal variation in their responses. Using the standardized whole person inventory of Hong Kong Baptist University to interpret this result, we can say that these students have high awareness and connection to the transcendent, and usually search for ultimate meaning as well as engagement in spiritual practices (spiritual domain). They also have high motivation to learn to earn or maintain professional credentials such as academic degree to formal coursework,

attending conferences, and informal learning opportunities situated in practice (professional domain) as well as good relationships with people in different environments and situations (social domain). These three domains appear to be the most developed and the least are their psychological (cognitive, emotional, intellectual functioning), physical (control over body, particularly muscles and physical coordination), and intellectual (organization of minds, ideas, and thoughts to make sense of the world they live in.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The results of this study gave rise to the following conclusions:

1. Religious affiliation has a significant relationship with the status of the students in WPD-Intellectual domain of the whole person development.

2. Living arrangement has a significant relationship with the status of the students in WPD-Spiritual domain. Specifically, results revealed that students living off campus residences were more likely to have a higher commitment to church mission than students living in residence halls on campus. Furthermore, living arrangement has a significant relationship with their status in WPD-Intellectual domain of the WPD.

3. Gender has a significant relationship with the status of the students in Whole Person Development and in WPD-Physical domain. Gender medicine therefore aims to include biological and socio-cultural dimensions, and their effects on women and men, to improve health and health care which is connected to health maintenance. Academic achievement has a significant

relationship with the status of the students in WPD, WPD-Social, WPD-Spiritual, WPD-Intellectual, and WPD-Professional domains.

4. The type of university the students are enrolled in has a significant relationship with the status of the students in WPD-Social domain. The number of extra/co-curricular/outreach activities the students are involved in has a significant relationship with their status in whole person development in all its domains except the WPD-Psychological. This is evidenced by past researches. The nature of extra/co-curricular/outreach activities the students are engaged in has a significant relationship with the status of the students in whole person development and in WPD-Spiritual and WPD-Psychological domains. The peer counseling service availment has a significant relationship with the status of the students in WPD-Social, WPD-Professional, and WPD-Physical domains and whole person development. The nature of extra/co-curricular/outreach activities, peer counselling service availment, and gender

are the significant predictors of whole person development status.

5. Finally, the findings confirm the conceptual framework of this study that student-related independent variables: (1) religious affiliation, (2) living arrangement, (3) gender, and (4) academic achievement; and so with the university-related independent variables: (1) type of university, (2) the number of extra/co-curricular/outreach activities the students are involved in, (3) the nature of extra/co-curricular/outreach activities the students are engaged in, and (4) peer counselling service availability affect or are related to the status of the students in the six (6) domains, hence to the whole person development status of the students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study and the conclusions made, the following recommendations are presented, that:

1. the universities, both private and public, make of the enhance learning environment program interventions to help address the deficiencies in socio-emotional capacities or development status of the students with modifications to suit their specific situations;

2. university administrators make use also of the findings of this study to further enhance the learning environment to be more conducive to the holistic development of the students. Enhanced learning environment ensures the development of the students in the six domains of the whole person development: (a) WPD-Social domain, (b) WPD-Spiritual domain, (c) WPD-Psychological domain, (d) WPD-Intellectual domain, (e) WPD-Professional domain, and (f) WPD-Physical domain. This will be reflected in the improvement of the

employability rating of their outcomes or graduates, among various benefits.

3. faculty members refer to the study findings to equip themselves, especially on how they may be able to help their students raise the bar in their socio-emotional capacities +or development status. This will redound to narrowing the gap between knowledge and skills requirements of the employers and the knowledge and skills that shall have been acquired by the graduates.

4. parents or families of the students refer to the findings of this study to gain insights on how to deal with their student-children. This also reminds them that their children are just their adolescent stage and needed to be understood and supported in order to help them ease their agony as they strive to be independent. Moreover, any outcome from the partnership of the schools and families to level up to the soft skills of the graduates may redound to the benefit of families as their offspring shall have been equipped to land a job, thus compensation is expected.

5. future employers make the findings of the study as a guide to know which schools offer socio-emotional program interventions to their students for their graduates comply with their knowledge and skills requirements, e.g., to help them where to scout for employees they are looking for employees who can surely fit in their jobs as they are socio-emotionally mature - - the ones needed by employers according to Acosta, et. al. (2016);

6. government look into the findings in this study so funds may be allocated to universities to implement program interventions like training of faculty members to be more effective in their honing of the socio-emotional skills of students, hence the hope of having human resources (socio-emotionally mature graduates)

needed for the economic and other aspects of development of the nation becomes a reality;

7. students also refer to this study to know to expect from their school to help them in addressing their deficiencies in socio-emotional capacities or socio-emotional development status – and be persons of holistic development; well-rounded individuals, ready to face the challenges of life;

8. school administrators and students cooperate to continue and strengthen the programs that are connected to the significant predictors of the WPD status (nature of activities, academic achievement, number of activities, peer counselling service availability and gender);

9. and future researchers may make use of the findings to understand the relationships of the variables used and find areas of further study of their interest.

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