THE LEVEL OF AWARENESS OF NURSING STUDENTS TO THE RETENTION AND ELIMINATION POLICY: A BASIS FOR AN ORIENTATION PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

As defined in various articles, student retention is the extent to which the learners stay in a Higher Education Institution and complete a program or course of study within a specified time. Retention at university matters. It matters morally, as we know the life chances of people who complete a degree are dramatically improved. It matters financially, as students who leave a university before graduation take their fees with them. And it matters nationally, as the higher the education level of the population, the greater the nation's level of productivity and innovation. Despite all the information contained in the student's manual, it is unclear whether students are aware of these policies necessary for the journey in the University. No such study existed at the moment of this writing. It should be noted that students must be aware of this information, so they are guided on the rules and regulations of a University. This brings us to the research questions on what is the level of awareness of UCLM nursing students of the University's Retention and Elimination Policy. This is very important so that decisions can be made to further initiate more campaigns regarding the policy. a report emphasized the practices that improve student retention which include (A) addressing widening participation, and those focusing on the development of learning and teaching; (B) a focus on the context of institutional practice (Action on Access, 2003). In conclusion, initiatives and programs in organizations or institutions focusing on retention and elimination policies for the development of the student and the institution seem to be very crucial. The mean scores yielded 2.324 and 2.6 which is interpreted as a low level of awareness as stated in the descriptive interpretation. Students have poor knowledge of these policies which could be crucial for them moving forward. Therefore, the measurement findings of this study highlight how the application of an orientation program and how affects their level of awareness of policies in general. Programs in orientation programs and distribution of student manuals for information dissemination as mentioned earlier in the paragraph should be increased. Promoting these activities should increase the level of understanding of the students. The consequences will lead to a lowering of student engagement and most likely lead to attrition.

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INTRODUCTION

As defined in various articles, student retention is the extent to which the learners stay in a Higher Education Institution and complete a program or course of study within a specified time. It is usually termed the "student dimension, persistence, success, or withdrawal. On the contrary, it can be by retention within an institution or University or perhaps the system for example graduation rates, and then the responsibility shifts to the institution or government. Retention at university matters. It matters morally, as we know the life chances of people who complete a degree are dramatically improved. It matters financially, as students who leave a university before graduation take their fees with them. And it matters nationally, as the higher the education level of the population, the greater the nation's level of productivity and innovation(Crosling et al., 2009; Scott et al., 2008).

The University of Cebu currently has a College Manual reflecting its' Retention and Elimination Policy. Under academic policies on pages 18-19, it shows that: *"The general retention requirements vary with the status of the prospective student and the program in which he/she is to enroll. The University reserves the right not to retain any applicant whose qualifications do not meet the standards and requirements of the program in which he/she is to enroll."*

9.1 If in any one semester or summer session, a student failed in 1/3 of the units for which he/she is registered, he/she may not enroll in the same program without the written recommendation of the college dean. If the student failed the second time, he/she may enroll in another program if accepted by the college dean of the new program or recommended for career evaluation by concerned parties (e.g. Dean's Office, Guidance Center, SAO, etc.)

9.2 For other requirements about the retention of students to different colleges, please refer to the program-specific supplemental student manual. (e.g. Supplemental Student Manual for Maritime Education, Supplemental Student Manual for Nursing, etc.)

9.3 The disciplinary rules and regulations of CHED and the University govern the non-academic reasons for the non-readmission of a student.

For the College of Nursing, a supplemental manual bearing the Retention and Elimination Policy (Pages 11-12) exists, so the students will get informed on these matters. It reflects:

A. Retention

Note: Nursing subject has a parallel RLE. Therefore, failure in the said subject would mean failure in RLE or vice versa (Art.7 Sec.15a CHED Memorandum Order No.5 Series of 2007.)

1. *A student will be retained if he/she falls in one to two subjects in a semester.*
2. *A student with failure/s in RLE/ Laboratory subjects will be made to repeat the same along with their lecture components.*

B. Elimination

1. *A student will be eliminated or disqualified from continuing in the College of Nursing if he/she incurs failure in:*

    1.1 three (3) or more subjects in a semester

    1.2 any repeated subject

2. *A student may be eliminated or expelled or asked to withdraw, after due process, on the following grounds:*

    a. *Illegal termination of pregnancy*

    b. *Serious error in the clinical area which directly or indirectly affects the condition of the patient*

    c. *Diseases such as psychosis, cancer, heart disease, palsy, epilepsy, STD, etc.*

    d. *Subversion*

    e. *Concealment of civil status or age*

    f. *Immorality or gross misconduct (drug abuse, manhandling, illegal assembly, posting on social media, etc.)*

    g. *Falsification and tampering with school and hospital records*

    h. *Fraudulent acts.*

    i. *Utilizing hospital and school supplies and equipment for personal use; making false entries; and charting medications, not administered*

    j. *Abandonment of duty*

    k. *Forgery*

    l. *Plagiarism*

    m. *Malversion of funds*

    n. *Vandalism*

    o. *Mockery*

    p. *Other violations or offenses stipulated in UC College Student Manual*

    q. *Wearing body piercing, and jewelry while in uniform*

    r. *Public display of affection while in uniform*

    s. *Smoking and drinking alcoholic beverages*

    t. *Engaging in the obscene act in public*

    u. *Invasion of patient privacy.*

Despite all this information, it is unclear whether students are aware of these policies necessary for the journey in the University with regards to their continuation/ retention. It should be noted that students must be aware of this information, so they are guided on the rules and regulations of a University. This is confirmed by Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) (2008), that data gathering on retention, progression, and completion is not implemented by HEIs.

A study by Yorke et al. (2008), reported that non-continuation of students was affected by factors identified such as being poorly informed about chosen course (and, or, institution), financial concerns, and the social aspects of an HEI (Higher Education Institution). The key finding of this research is that the student-tutor contact time may be a more important factor influencing retention.

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The House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts Committee (2008) concluded that there is a need on improving retention in HEIs and that there was a need for improvement in several areas of student retention. More recently, the National Audit Office (2007) has examined the progress in improving retention and concluded that there is still scope for universities to improve retention. They need good quality management information including data on the reasons for leaving. They can provide additional academic support for students, for example for those struggling with the mathematical elements of their course. A literature review undertaken in four selected countries: Australia, Ireland, the Netherlands, and the United States reported that certain conditions must be met to improve student retention. For example: (A) reducing the wide variation in universities retention rates; (B) supporting students; (C) information for potential students (Van Stolk et., al 2007). It was also found that the more the students know about their institutions and courses, the less likely they are to consider withdrawal (Yorke, M. et., al, 2007).

A qualitative study by Quinn et., al (2005) on the reasons for the withdrawal of students included issues such as being on the wrong course, academic challenges, a lack of institutional belonging, and non-university commitments. It was emphasized that academic support, welfare-related support, and other student services are necessary for student retention (Thomas et., al.,2002). Several articles reflected theories informing on student retention research and the factors influencing their decisions (Ellis, 2020; Graham, 2017). These strategies as cited by several articles include faculty use of attendance policies, student orientation programs, scheduling, advising and counseling programs, and performance-based financial aid (J. R. Bailey, 2017; T. Bailey et al., 2016; Tinto, 2017; Voigt & Hundrieser, 2008). One way of improving student retention is transition support which includes orientation to materials, efficient, convenient accesses, and responsive student support systems; all working together to support the university's operation(Scott et al., 2008).

This brings us to the research questions on what is the level of awareness of UCLM nursing students of the University's Retention and Elimination Policy. This is very important so that decisions can be made to further initiate more campaigns regarding the policy. a report emphasized the practices that improve student retention which include (A) addressing widening participation, and those focusing on the development of learning and teaching; (B) a focus on the context of institutional practice (Action on Access, 2003). The findings of the study will serve as a component of a student orientation program designed to fit the needs of the students.

METHODOLOGY

The study will adopt a descriptive approach, deriving the data through the quantitative method. The study will utilize a 5-point Likert-Type Scale response and its' anchors as suggested by an article (Aasa, 2016; Vagias, 2006). The description of the scale includes 5-Extremely aware; 4-Moderately aware; 3-Somewhat aware; 2-Slightly aware; 1-not at all aware. These descriptors will be tabulated together with the contents in the University of Cebu (UC) College Manual and UCLM-College of Nursing Supplemental Manual. A questionnaire was developed based on the

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categories inside the student manual. The student questionnaire will include 12 questions based on the headings analyzed by the researcher covering the following topics: (A) Familiarity with the concept of Retention and Elimination Policy- 1 question; (B) Student awareness of the university policy under academic policies in pages 18-19 – 6 questions; (C) Student awareness on the College of Nursing's Retention and Elimination Policy- 5 questions. Demographic details about age, gender, and family background will also be gathered. For the Likert scale questions and analysis, the absolute and relative frequency of each response for each item of the scale, mode, median (MDn), and interquartile range (IQR) will be analyzed.

The respondents were the nursing students of the college of nursing from levels 1-4 (n=289). They are the chosen respondents and will be evaluated whether they are familiar with or have read the students' manual. The researcher will utilize a convenient sampling technique The sample size is computed based on established guidelines and is reflected in Table 1 (Fox & Hunn, 2009; Madow, 1968; Morse, 2000). The researcher will utilize a 5% margin of error appropriate for the sample size. The confidence level is 95% and a response distribution of 50%. These factors were used to get statistically significant results for the population. After approval from the Dean of the College of Nursing, the University Research Office, and the Campus Director data gathering will commence and will be distributed via Google forms. Table 1 presents the descriptive equivalence of the scores that will be interpreted and the following statements were taken from established sources (Aasa, 2016; Stosic et al., 2020; Vagias, 2006)

Table 1. Likert scale descriptive equivalent

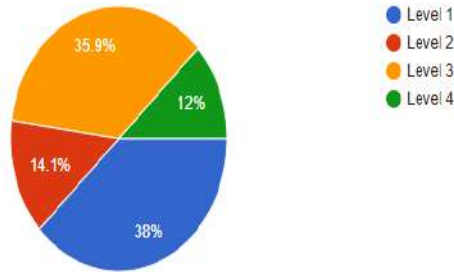| Score code	Range	Description
1	1.0-1.8	Lack of awareness
2	1.81-2.6	Low level of awareness
3	2.61-3.40	Medium level of awareness
4	3.41-4.20	High level of awareness
5	4.21-5.0	Complete awareness

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As presented in the chart (Part 1), the respondents came from different levels of nursing students. The majority of the respondents (73.9%) are female and 25% are males. Supporting and enhancing the student experience (academic, social, welfare and support) from first contact through to becoming an alumnus is critical to success in higher education today both for the student and the institution (Ciobanu, 2013).
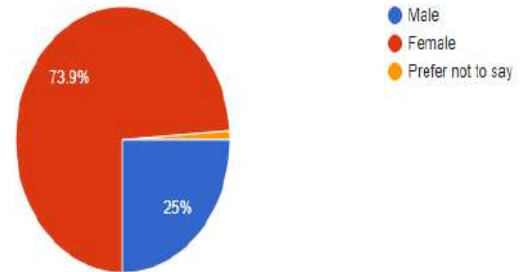
Part 1. Profile of the respondents

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Year level

Gender

Part 2 shows the manual distribution to the students. 58.7% of the students stated that they know a student manual exists while 35.9% are not aware that exists.

Although many are aware of the existence of the student manual, what is surprising is that a third of the students (69.6%) were not given a University manual and almost the same number (72.8%) were not given the college of the nursing supplemental manual. The capacity of a student to develop a sense of belonging within the higher education institution is the critical factor determining student retention. The creation of a caring, supportive and welcoming environment within the University is critical in creating a sense of belonging (Kenneth Tanner & Edward Combs, 1993; Schwartz & Tinto, 1987).
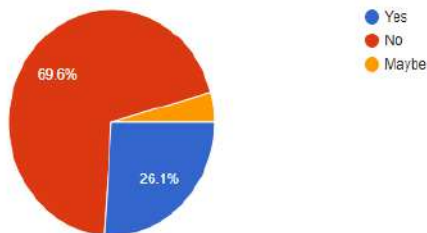
Part 2. Manual distribution

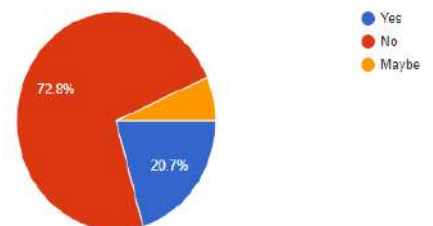**Are you aware that these student manuals exist?**
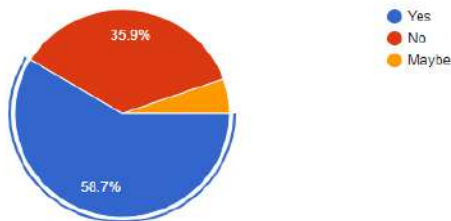
Part 2.1 Manual distribution

Were you given a UNIVERSITY STUDENT MANUAL?

Were you give a COLLEGE OF NURSING SUPPLEMENTAL MANUAL?

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Part 3 shows the level of awareness of the students of the retention and elimination policy of the University based on the survey conducted (n=298). Based on the results, the mean scores yielded 2.324 and 2.6 which is interpreted as a low level of awareness as stated in the descriptive interpretation. The results may be closely related to the poor distribution of the University and College of Nursing supplemental manual.

Part 3. Level of awareness of retention and elimination policy

Awareness of the contents of the University of Cebu College Manual	Mean	sd	Interpretation
	2.324	0.312	Low level of awareness
Awareness of the contents supplemental manual of the college of nursing	2.6	0.43	Low level of awareness

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, initiatives and programs in organizations or institutions focusing on retention and elimination policies for the development of the student and the institution seem to be very crucial. The mean scores yielded 2.324 and 2.6 which is interpreted as a low level of awareness as stated in the descriptive interpretation. Students have poor knowledge of these policies which could be crucial for them moving forward. Therefore, the measurement findings of this study highlight how the application of an orientation program and how affects their level of awareness of policies in general. Programs in orientation programs and distribution of student manuals for information dissemination as mentioned earlier in the paragraph should be increased. Promoting these activities should increase the level of understanding of the students. The consequences will lead to a lowering of student engagement and most likely lead to attrition.

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