

The Self-esteem, Social support and College Adjustment of Business and Accountancy Students

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ABSTRACT

Literatures indicate that the transition from high school to college is one of the planned and expected changes in an adolescent's life. However, this movement brings about certain changes, and the student has to face not only academic demands but also psychological, social, emotional and financial challenges. A great many research has determined variables that predict successful adjustment to college life. This research focused on two: Self-esteem and Social support. 377 college students from the College of Business and Accountancy answered standardized questionnaires regarding Self –esteem Social support and College Adjustment. Their answers were scored and tallied and went through statistical analysis. Through the Correlation Coefficient, it was revealed that Social support had the greater impact on the adjustment to college of the participants from Tarlac State University. With .313 significant at .01 level, the data indicated that an increase in Social Support leads to a parallel increase in College Adjustment. Students value the presence of support of family, friends, significant others and University staff in making a smoother transition into University life. This implies that sources of support and strength such as the family and friends should have mutual understanding and cooperation if needs of the students are to be met.

Keywords: self-esteem, social support, college adjustment

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the planned, predicted and scheduled changes in an adolescent's life is the transition from high school to college. Elias and Schuyler (1986) said “such transition represents an important developmental crossroad with opportunities for growth and advancement. Students are more likely to feel grown up, have more subjects from which to select, have more time to spend with peers, have more opportunities to explore different lifestyles and values, enjoy greater independence from parental monitoring, and may be more challenged intellectually by academic work”. But sometimes, the transition from high school and collegiate niche might expose college freshmen to a lot of changes that can lead to problems. Consequently, there

are many students who drop out, take a longer time to graduate, or are unable to complete their studies.

In a research conducted by Baker and Schultz about college adjustment, results revealed that students who had low adjustment and performance expectations were more likely to seek counseling services. Psychological distress factors (i.e. depression, homesickness, mental stress) negatively affected student's adjustment to college while positive self – esteem, positive self- concept and positive social network consequently affects college adjustment positively (Baker and Siryk, 1984).

Of primary concern to university or college administrators is how to retain the students who enroll at their institution, and what factors might determine for students to complete their degree. There are a lot of studies that pertain to the factors that predict successful college adjustment. This research intends to focus on two variables, Self-esteem and Social Support.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study aims to answer the following questions:

2.1 How are the TSU-CBA participants described in terms of their

- a. Year level
- b. Gender
- c. Age
- d. Course
- e. Length of stay in College of Business and Accountancy

2.2 Is there a relationship among Self-esteem, Social Support and College Adjustment?

2.3 What are the implications of the findings to the practice of Guidance and Counseling in the College of Business and Accountancy?

3. RESEARCH METHODS AND MATERIALS

The study utilized a descriptive-correlation research design. This will determine the relationships (if there are) among the variables of the study such as Self-esteem, Social support and College adaptation of the students of the College of Business and Accountancy. The researcher used the *State Self- Esteem Scale* to measure the self-esteem of the participants. This was constructed in 1991 by Heatherton, T. F. & Polivy, J.A. This is a 20-item scale that measures a participant's self-esteem at a given point in time. The 20 items are subdivided into 3 components of self-esteem: (1) performance self-esteem, social self-esteem, and appearance self-esteem. All items are answered using a 5-point scale (1= not at all, 2= a little bit, 3= somewhat, 4= very much, 5= extremely). The scale

has acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .92$).

The second instrument that was utilized in the study is the *Interpersonal Support Evaluation List shortened version* by Cohen, Mermelstein, Kamarck, & Hoberman in 1985. A 12-item measure of perceptions of social support, this measure is a shortened version of the original ISEL (40 items; Cohen & Hoberman, 1983). This questionnaire has three different subscales designed to measure three dimensions of perceived social support. These dimensions are: Appraisal Support, Belonging Support and Tangible support. Cronbach's alphas for the ISEL-12 total score were all above .70

The third psychometric tool that was employed by the researcher is the *College Adjustment Test (CAT)* by Pennebaker, (2013). It measures the implications of the personality, stage, and inhibition-confrontation models for accelerating the coping processes in relation to college adjustment in freshmen. The 19-item survey achieves this by tapping the degree to which students have experienced various thoughts and feelings about coming to college. The internal consistency of the scale is acceptable, with Cronbach $\alpha = .79$. Lastly, the researcher formulated a self-report questionnaire about the demographic profile of the respondents which identified their age, sex and collegiate course.

Three hundred seventy-seven college students (265 females, 112 males) aged 15-24 years ($M = 17.25$, $SD = 1.10$) from the TSU College of Business and Accountancy were randomly selected as partakers of the study. Majority of the respondents are in their second and third year in the college.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Descriptive statistics of the participants

Table 1 shows the different year levels from which the participants belong to. Majority come from the Second year college students followed by the Third year. The least number of participants belong to the First year students.

Table 1
Descriptive statistics for the year level of participants

| YEAR LEVEL | N | PERCENT |
|----------------------|------------|-------------|
| 1 ST YEAR | 64 | 17.0% |
| 2 ND YEAR | 119 | 31.6% |
| 3 RD YEAR | 110 | 29.2% |
| 4 TH YEAR | 84 | 22.3% |
| TOTAL | 377 | 100% |

Table 2. The gender frequency is reflected in Table 2. Majority of the participants are females, comprising 70.3 % of the sample. The remaining percentage, 29.7% are males.

Table 2
Descriptive statistics for the gender of participants

| GENDER | N | PERCENT |
|---------------|------------|----------------|
| MALE | 112 | 29.7% |
| FEMALE | 265 | 70.3% |
| TOTAL | 377 | 100% |

Table 3 indicates the age range of the participants. The greatest percentage belongs to 18 years, followed by 17. Majority of the participants are from 16-20 years, with a couple of them belonging to 23 and above

Table 3
Descriptive statistics for the age of participants

| AGE | N | PERCENT |
|--------------|------------|----------------|
| 15 | 5 | 1.3% |
| 16 | 47 | 12.5% |
| 17 | 92 | 24.4% |
| 18 | 102 | 27.1% |
| 19 | 69 | 18.3% |
| 20 | 37 | 9.8% |
| 21 | 19 | 5.0% |
| 22 | 4 | 1.1% |
| 23 | 1 | 0.3% |
| 24 | 1 | 0.3% |
| TOTAL | 377 | 100% |

The College of Business and Accountancy offers seven courses: Accountancy, Accounting Technology, Economics, Entrepreneurship, Financial Management, Hotel and Restaurant Management and Marketing Management, Table 4 indicates that majority of the participants belong to Accountancy and Accounting Technology, which also happens to have the biggest number of population in the college, since they are counted as one. They are followed by the First Year students, and Marketing Management.

Table 4
Descriptive statistics for the course major of participants

| COURSE MAJOR | N | PERCENT |
|---------------------|------------|----------------|
| FIRST YEAR | 70 | 18.6% |
| ENTREPRENEURSHIP | 45 | 11.9% |
| MARKETING MGMT | 49 | 13.0% |
| ACCOUNTANCY | 46 | 12.2% |
| ACCOUNTING TECH | 44 | 11.7% |
| HRM | 41 | 10.9% |
| FINANCIAL MGMT | 40 | 10.6% |
| ECONOMICS | 42 | 11.1% |
| TOTAL | 377 | 100 % |

Table 5 illustrates the length of stay of the participants in the College of Business and Accountancy. It should be noted, however, that year level is not always synonymous to length of stay in the college. Some participants are 2nd year level but they have been staying in the College for three years. This may be due to shifting of courses, failing grades and other delays.

Table 5
Descriptive statistics for the years of stay of participants in the College of Business

| YEARS OF STAY | N | PERCENT |
|----------------------|------------|----------------|
| 1 | 91 | 24.1% |
| 2 | 105 | 27.9% |
| 3 | 101 | 26.8% |
| 4 | 73 | 19.4% |
| 5 | 7 | 1.9% |
| TOTAL | 377 | 100% |

4.2 Correlation of the three variables (Self-esteem, Social support and College adjustment)

Table 6
Correlation among the variables

| | | Self-Esteem | Social Support | College Adjustment |
|---------------------------|---------------------|-------------|----------------|--------------------|
| PART1 (Self-Esteem) | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .313** | -.092 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 | .075 |
| | N | 377 | 377 | 377 |
| PART2 (Social Support) | Pearson Correlation | .313** | 1 | .022 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | | .674 |
| | N | 377 | 377 | 377 |
| PART3 (College Adjust) | Pearson Correlation | -.092 | .022 | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .075 | .674 | |
| | N | 377 | 377 | 377 |

***Significant at alpha level .05**

**** Significant at level .01**

Using the Pearson-Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, it was found that among the variables, only Self- Esteem and Social Support have a significant relationship. These two variables are significantly positively correlated at alpha level .01. This does not support any of the previous researches from which the present research drew inspiration from. Based on the statistics, this could mean that for the Tarlac State University College of Business and Accountancy participants, neither Self-esteem nor Social Support had an effect on their Adjustment to College. Through the help of future researches, Adjustment to College may be influenced or predicted by other factors such as personality traits, intelligence, motivation, kind of university atmosphere, etc.

Having a strong positive correlation between Self-esteem and Social support demonstrates that for the participants, the support of their loved ones and significant people in life such as family, relatives, classmates and professors are deemed essential in the development of positive outlook in themselves and in their abilities. Still a collectivist society, the Philippines knew the importance of family and friends' belief in attaining certain goals and objectives, or to simply bring out the best in one another. Looking at this in another perspective, if the family and friends of the students are not very supportive of them or their endeavors, it can be detrimental to their confidence and belief in themselves and their capabilities.

4.3 Implications of the finding to the practice of Guidance and Counseling in the College of Business and Accountancy

Part of the university administrators' pursuit is to ensure that the students' retention rate is adequate to sustain the vital academic and extracurricular functions of their respective institutions, there is a need to determine the factors that are imperative in predicting how well enrolled students can cope with the demands of university academic community. Interventions should also be employed to lessen the number of students who withdraw from classes without sacrificing the commitment to quality education.

Correlation reveals that among the three variables in the study, Self-Esteem and Social Support are the ones that are positively correlated. Neither has an effect on College adjustment that is strong enough to be considered significant. College adjustment may be predicted or affected by other variables – maturity, personality, intelligence, socioeconomic status, university atmosphere, etc.

The self – esteem of an individual is a construct that is likely to develop over time, and sometimes with the help of both positive and negative life experiences. But what may boost and accelerate its growth, according to this research is the encouragement of family and friends and other significant people in an individual's life.

“During adolescence and emerging adulthood, young people increase their circle of influence, turning to friends as well as family for advice and support to cope with the myriad of developmental tasks and transitions that accompany this period” (Parker et al., 2012). As Guidance Counselors, we need to take into consideration the important roles that significant people have to play not only in the self- esteem, but in the holistic development of students. This can be done by incorporating the presence of parents in the school activities. College orientations, family conferences, Spiritual Recollections, intramurals and homeroom guidance are avenues by which students indirectly reveal the people who are important in their lives.

Research is needed to clarify and illuminate the connections and interaction of college adjustment with other variables such as personality, academic achievement, motivation, etc. This would significantly help the Guidance Office come up with research-based interventions and program plans that would assist students in the transitions they experience. A better understanding of the students may be a key part of helping them develop and achieve amidst the many challenges college life brings about.

This research inevitably suffers from a number of limitations. This research was conducted on a relatively small number of (relatively young) undergraduate students, and the narrowness of the sample may not be reflective of their wider communities.

The instruments utilized were generally developed in the Western setting for use with, for the most part, Western participants. While these scales have been frequently used in other researches, the development of local instruments of self-esteem, social support and college adjustment may be particularly important in the Philippine setting if in the future this research will be replicated. Understanding the impact of these two variables on everyday interactions offers Guidance Counselors and educators a challenging new area for social research.

Nevertheless, it is believed that the results do have a number of potential implications. There is a strong, positive correlation between self-esteem and social support regardless of an individual's age or course. Therefore, knowing who they are, what encourages them, and who they draw strength from can help students choose techniques that maximize their strengths while in college. Encouragement from families and friends is essential as they navigate the quirky but rewarding adventure that is college life.

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