

A Comparative Study of Students Higher Education Performance Expectations and their Academic Achievements

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ABSTRACT

This study was more of a quantitative comparative study. It also used qualitative approach to analyze the data. The research employed systematic and stratified random sampling methods to involve 150 second year degree students out of 603 targeted research population of KMU in 2020. Rating scale questions and document review were conducted to determine the link between students' earlier university performance expectations and their actual academic achievements. Questionnaires of close-ended and open-ended items were employed as a complementary tool to investigate intervening factors.

The results from analyzed data unveil that the correlation coefficient between students' university performance expectations and their actual academic achievement is $r = 0.989$. It implies students with high university performance expectations are more or less likely to be high-achieving than students who had low-achieving prospects. The periodic intervening constraints interplaying between students' performance expectations and their academic achievements are lack of self-study time, random study habits, inadequate academic consultancy and follow-up, absence of tutorial support, achievement anxiety, ethno-linguistic and/or religious affiliation groupings, a heightened sense of the right to deserve a passing grade (i.e. 'C') and inability to readjust oneself to the new academic demands. One of the implications of this finding is that there should be an officially delegated office in charge of university students' study habits and academic success strategies.

Keywords: Education, Expectations, Performances, University Achievements.

INTRODUCTION

As a rule, the values of modern higher education emphasize on the principles that the instructional system should encourage student-focused learning practices. The notions such as learning from differential experiences, contextualizing or localizing pedagogical tasks, making use of authentic texts, creating interactive classroom atmosphere, eliciting students' background life experiences, ensuring students' mental readiness and meeting students' needs, interests and expectations are of the most academic pillars believed to be at the center of the modern pedagogical values.

Higher institutions, in particular, are believed to be the forerunners in implementing shared and versatile academic learning practices. These are centers where students learn how to construct and build up knowledge and skills from own learning potentials. The learning instructions are assumed to allow the students to be more autonomous and responsible for their own learning.

Recognizing students' academic performance expectations and achievements is so important due to that the students' academic performances and achievements play a decisive role in producing the best quality graduates who will become great manpower to the progressive development of a country. As a result, one of the foundation pillars of university academic concerns should be to try to get a clear picture of students' prior university academic performance expectations and its impacts on the students' achievements.

Freshman students often encounter the challenges of meeting tough academic demands, while they are still under pressure to familiarize themselves with the new and complex academic environment and practices. The learning tasks are so testing and so wide-ranging that students are expected to confront the progressive academic challenges. In other words, by its own very nature, the academic environment promotes differences in thinking, interpersonal interactions, active engagement, analytic and self-regulated learning strategies. And this in turn could generate favorable learning atmosphere that does not only meet students' expectations, but also that maximizes their academic performance skills. Yet, it should be accompanied by progressive academic achievements.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Though studying at a higher institution demands new coming students to have clear academic expectations, some students may not have clearly set and hypothesized academic expectations. For instance, Blonna has discussed that some students may have no or low expectations about higher institution academic demands. Such students often encounter problematic situations. Put differently, those students who lack expectations are often stressed when they are surrounded by some challenging academic environments. For instance, "...

Some are trying to cope with demands of adapting to a new living environment, new peers, academic pressures, and sexual concerns. What is more, it has been made clear that "Issues such as the nature of college classes, autonomy, the time requirement of academic work, and the outside demands on students' time were examined as factors that influence the perception of academic work as stressful".

Research findings have confirmed that there is a substantial mismatch between students' higher education performance expectations and their actual university academic achievements. Different factors might be cited as reasons for the mismatch and the magnitude of these differences may vary from institution to institutions. Eventually, however, have stated that "Studies conducted in quite different settings have shown that student achievement can be affected by expectations induced in instructors." It implies that there are cases in which instructors

may institutionalize their own expectations which may or may not meet the student's academic prospects. And this may create the condition that incites mismatch between the students' and their instructors' academic expectations.

The crux of the matter is that the existence of mismatch between students' expectations and their higher institutions academic results may have long-term effects on the students' self-confidence, competence and on their future academic life. Even worse is that students, who are being trapped in such expectations and academic achievement mismatch may experience academic failure. Otherwise, they may suffer a lot to cope up with the academic anxiety and stresses that are confronted due to the demanding nature of academic tasks. There may also be cases in which those students who face such mismatch become anxious and so frustrated that they give up their academic efforts. In particular, "... Anxiety, discomfort and fear are incompatible with the learning process and make the teaching and learning difficult.". As a result, the students become vulnerable to academic warnings, drop outs or even to academic dismissals.

Have further noted that students who face a new learning environment are likely to be exposed to at least two basic challenges. The first is that the students have to cope with the increasing academic challenges. The other is that they have to try their best to confront additional challenges including the demands of new environment, peer influence, gender-related threats, new learning strategies, dormitory pressures, and the likes.

On the other hand, have claimed that "Today, a huge number of students enter college study with remarkably poor study skills and habits." They further argue that students who lack effective study skills and experience, and who fail to expect more demanding study habits in their college life are less likely to succeed in their academic achievements. In a much similar way, Blonna has also presented the evidence that "..... Some college students feel inadequate and unable to cope with the intellectual demands of college. They lack the study skills.... Still others cannot handle the autonomy. With no one nagging them to get up and go to class or study, they fall behind in their classes. They lack the self-discipline necessary to get their work done."

It has been made clear that college study is more of the outcome of hard work and so it requires setting a fixed study time-table, identifying a quiet study place, keeping concentration on what is being studied and making consistent and timely revision. Provided that students fail to expect such academic demands, they are likely to be trapped in complex academic challenges. Students who suffer from such academic

pressures often achieve low grades; otherwise, they are victims of academic sackings.

Further argued that students who fail to expect more challenging academic conditions in their higher institution studies will encounter academic stress. In particular, students who live independently for the first time confront many demanding situations. In the words of Blonna, "Dealing with roommates, making new friends, and developing romantic relationships all provide potentially challenging or stressful situations." It would seem highly likely that students whose expectations do not go in line with the actual university academic demands, or whose expectations mismatch with the actual academic environment may show poor academic performances. Of all, one of the potential reasons is that such students are often less motivated and do have less courage to actively engage in the tough academic practices.

In view of that, it is vital to investigate the type of relationships between students' university performance expectations and their actual achievements. The kind of university education performance expectations students develop is likely to determine their actual academic achievements. Hence, taking timely action to scrutinize students' university performance expectations and intervening factors could be of the potential determinants of students' university academic success.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The central objective of this study is to investigate the kind of relationships between students' prior academic performance expectations and their actual university academic scores. Besides, the study tries to find out some of the prevailing constraints which interplay between students' attempts to meet their hypothesized expectations and their actual academic achievements.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is so important because it tries to find out the kind of relationships between students' prior higher institution academic performance expectations and their actual academic achievements. This in turn helps institutions to reform the academic practices to incorporate students' expectations in the way it enriches the students own learning potentials. Moreover, our understanding of the relationships between students' prior higher education academic performance expectations and their academic achievements enables us to get the students to adapt themselves to the actual demands of university studies before they face the real academic problems. The findings of the study also provides a viable means for assessing how to accommodate students' expectations as learning resources in the instructional materials and learning practices.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study was planned to focus on second year degree students of Kotebe Metropolitan University in the academic year of 2020. So, the result may be limited to the degree students and so may not be applicable to all KMU students of the year 2020.

LIMITATIONS

This research considered only 2nd year degree students of KMU in the academic year of 2020. The study did not consider the possibilities of some intervening factors including the academic differences due to differences in school background, personal abilities/efforts in achievements, gender and cultural factors and related issues.

CONCLUSION

Students at a university level are highly expected to exploit their prior academic or life experiences, exchange ideas or information with others, discuss various academic or social issues, solve problems in pairs/groups, or in whole class discussions, summarize a topic, give feedbacks or comments on their classmates' opinions or ideas, debate on selected sensitive issues, dramatize, dialogue, present seminars or oral speech in front of the peers and so on.

It would appear possible that the changes observed in contemporary higher institution academic system tend to heighten more of the shift from quality of education to quantity of products. Seemingly, pressurizing recent universities to accommodate more and more students progressively becomes a trend of the present academic phenomena. And this, in turn, could certainly induce significant impacts on the students' academic achievements.

This study tried to investigate the link between students' earlier university education performance expectations and the students' actual academic achievements. Moreover, the study tried to provide insight into the main intervening constraints which hinder students not to meet their university academic expectations. It mainly focused not only on what kind of academic performance expectations did students have about higher institutions academic demands and achievements, but also it tried to investigate how much did students' previous university academic performance prospects influence their earlier academic year grades.

Analysis of data using quantitative and qualitative research methods confirmed that there is a significant correlation between students' university education performance expectations and their actual academic achievements. Students with very high and/or high academic expectations are more or less likely to be high achievers than those who had low achievement expectations.

The study also contained further analysis that could offer additional insights into some constraints which attributed to students' failure to secure the expected academic achievements. The findings unveil that there have been seven ranking constraints that interplay between students' earlier academic performance expectations and their actual academic scores. Illustratively, lack of study time, poor study habits, , lack of guidance and consultancy follow up, ethno-linguistic/ religious affiliation groupings, misconceptions of grading rules, self-readjustment challenges and achievement anxiety to cope up with the academic practices,

Alternatively, the existence of positive match between students' university academic performance expectations and their actual university academic achievements could have a significant influence on the students' future performances, achievements and self-confidence in their academic as well as in their after school life. Yet, students who are low achievers due to low university academic acceptations may develop intense anxiety and frustration which may make them vulnerable to academic warnings, drop outs, or academic dismissals. Thus, higher institutions should take earlier actions to screen out students' prior university academic performance expectations in order to make the necessary corrections if there may be a need.

The study concluded that there needs to be comprehensive higher institution pedagogical reforms which could help students' to exercise and readjust their earlier university academic performance expectations to experience advanced academic success. Higher institution curriculum should validate community-based academic practices where students practice more of the expected social and life related issues and learning activities. Similarly, it is highly significant to underline that higher academic institutions should, firstly, inform students to develop higher expectations of university academic performances. Secondly, institutions should try hard to familiarize students on how to study in a university. Thirdly, institutions should officially notify fixed and regular programs for students' self-study time. What is more, there should be an officially assigned office that makes follow-up and provides feedback to the concerned body regarding instant corrections on students' university study habits and academic success strategies.

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