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Profile of Students with Physical and Sensory Impairments of Biliran Province State University - College of Industrial Information and Communication Technology - Naval, Biliran Philippines

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ABSTRACT

Individuals with physical and sensory impairments that are now in the tertiary level were not provided with appropriate and sufficient support that could assist them to sustain their educational needs. There may be an initiative from state colleges and universities to grant services to these individuals but there are still some lapses in the identification and classification of the impairments thus resulting to unsuccessful delivery of the said services. As an initial step in the provision of services and assistance to individuals with physical and sensory impairments is to provide a clear profile of these individuals that are enrolled in the sole university in the province of Biliran starting with one specific college which is the College of Industrial Information Communication Technology (CICT). The profiling of these students would aid the Student Affairs Services Office in determining the prevalence of students with physical and sensory impairments, proper provision of financial assistance and scholarship grants as well as in the making of necessary adjustments and modifications in its services to the students.

Keywords: Physical and sensory impairments; Students' profile; Support Services; Assessment

INTRODUCTION

According to the survey of the United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (1994), "around 15% of the global population, or roughly 1 billion people, live with impairments, making them the world's largest minority – a minority that of course includes many students". Results from the 2010 Philippine Census which was released in January 10, 2013 shows that "92.1 million household population in the country, 1,443 thousand persons or 1.57 percent had impairments, Region VIII has 1.75 percent proportion of Persons with Disabilities or Special Needs to the Household Population, the 3rd highest proportion of PWDs in the country". Also in the said survey "persons with impairments were more likely to be in the ages 10-14 years which is 7.2 percent". Therefore, these individuals with such age bracket should be in college by the year 2018.

With high regards to equality our country has conveyed in its legislations the promotion of fairness in accessing appropriate quality education regardless of their nature (The 1987 Philippine Constitution, Article XIV, Sections 1&2) and it would be unlawful to deny admission to any course for the reason of having a disability (Republic Act 7277, Chapter 2, Section 12). Educational assistance should be provided through scholarship grants, financial aids, and other incentives to qualified persons with impairments and facilities and equipment be modified to ensure quality education. (Republic Act No. 9442, Rule IV, Sec. 6.7 & CHED Memorandum No. 09. S. 2013, Article IX, Sec.25)

Despite all of these laws and bylaws in "catering the educational needs of learners with impairments which cannot be met by the traditional and existing educational system" (Inciong, 2007). As well as the "individualized and systemized planning and implementation of instructions to learners with impairments for them to achieve their greatest possible potential (Heward, 2003). The study of Peter Van Dyck, et.al.(2001), Yap et.al. (2008), Sachs & Schreuer, (2011), shows lack of financial support and assistance is the primary reason why higher education universities and colleges are inadequately

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providing necessary accommodations deemed to be suitable for learners with impairments which also results to inability of the individual to pursue higher education.

Biliran Province State University as the only tertiary educational institution in the province of Biliran caters the educational needs not only of the Biliranons but as well as its neighboring provinces, it welcomes all kinds of learners including those with impairments. A number of students with impairments are observed around the campus but the Office of the Students Affairs doesn't have a complete and comprehensive list of those enrolled students who are identified to have any physical or sensory impairments. Only of this year it was suggested to the Registrar's Office that an option "with an impairment" in the Student Application Form and in the Enrollment Form should be added.

Through the initiative and benevolent hearts of the Federation of Students Council of the Biliran Province State University they have provided scholarship grants for these students with impairments, the resources for the scholarship grants would come from the organizations own funds but recipient of the scholarship are not yet fully determined.

The aforementioned encouraged the researcher to conduct a survey on individuals with impairments who are enrolled in Biliran Province State University specifically in the College of Industrial Information Communication Technology (CICT) so that the administration could provide the necessary support and services they could render to these college students for them to pursue their tertiary education without or less difficulty especially in the financial aspect and for them to attain their utmost potential as an individual. The College of Industrial Information Communication Technology (CICT) was chosen by the researcher since the primary data gathered from the Student Affairs and Services Office and Guidance Office shows that a high number of enrolled college students with physical impairments are enrolled in the said college.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

All individuals are unique, yet they have much in common. If all learners are part of the regular settings and all learners participate in the general curriculum, then all educators and service providers need to know techniques to care for and educate all types of learners. They may have diverse needs, whether temporary or permanent, they have the basic educational and personal needs as their regular peers.

The concept of Inclusive Education requires a paradigm shift "a fundamental change in the way we think about differences among people, in the way we choose to organize schools for education and how we view the purpose of education", (Developmental Disabilities Task Force). Including children with diverse abilities can improve education for all-academically, as well as socially and emotionally. One of Inclusive education's goals is to provide an opportunity to design support and services around the learner, rather than fitting the learner into existing services. These individuals with physical and sensory impairments are struggling but still manage not to fail badly enough did not receive any services and may be falling between the cracks. Every inclusive school including state colleges who opens its doors to learners with special needs must identify the needs of these learners to provide the necessary support and services. (United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization (UNESCO) 1994)

Inclusive Education also has its barriers to a full and successful implementation; (1) Lack of Awareness on the part of the teacher and other service providers that there is a learner with special needs who is enrolled in the regular setting. It also includes having a positive attitude in accommodating the needs of the learner. (2) Lack of Professional Preparation, staff are untrained to cater learners in the inclusive setting resulting to inability to accommodate the learning challenges and solve problems that may arise. (3) Lack of Support on the part of the administration and the families and these supports comes in many forms. Financial, emotional and provision of opportunities for these learners to be able to acquire and develop skills which be of use when they seek for employment. (Inclusive Early Childhood Education, 2006)

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The lack of existing identifiable prevalence and profile of learners with physical and sensory impairments results to faulty in the delivery of support services to deserving students by the Student Affairs and Services Office and the Guidance Office. Without the necessary assistance and support their educational and financial needs learners with physical and sensory impairments in the tertiary level experience adversity in pursuing their college degree. Thus, this study aimed to explore the profile of learners with physical and sensory impairments in Biliran Province State University College of Industrial, Information and Communication Technology-Naval, Biliran Philippines.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilizes the non-experimental quantitative method of research. It is a research design used to identify the particular population of a certain group of students. This method was considered the most appropriate for the researcher's purpose since it ascertains the prevalence of the unidentified number of officially enrolled students with physical and sensory impairments, their unique profile and specific category of impairment in the research locale.

Data were gathered from the College of Industrial, Information and Communication Technology (CICT) with the population of 1, 028 officially enrolled students since the primary data coming from the Student Affairs Services Office shows most of the students with physical and sensory impairments are enrolled in the said college.

To collect the data needed to answer the specific questions set forth in this study, a prepared questionnaire by the researcher were used. The questionnaire has 3 sets in concurrence with the disability categories of Children with Special Needs. Each set is consisting of a list of observable characteristics of children with special needs, the profile characteristics of identified college students which the student will supply with to be determined by the researcher as well.

The items for the characteristics of individuals with special needs for this research instrument of the study were adapted from the characteristics of each specific disability category as stipulated in Introduction to Special Education (2007), which the researcher organized and collated.

Subject instructors will go through with the prepared questionnaire and primarily identify whether a student with physical and sensory impairment is present in his/her class based on the given observable characteristics. The identified college student to have physical and sensory impairments were given a questionnaire to identify its unique profile.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

From the total population of 1028 officially enrolled students in the College of Industrial, Information and Communication Technology 78 or 7.59% are identified to have physical and sensory impairments. Majority of these students or 48.72% have physical impairments that varies from congenital anomaly, amputations and fractures while 34.62% have visual impairments that is categorized from deformities of the eye to hyperopia and myopia and 16.67% have hearing impairments that ranges from hard of hearing to partial loss of hearing.

Table 1: The Prevalence of Students with Physical and Sensory Impairments.

Students with Impairments	f	%
Physically Impaired	38	48.72%
Hearing Impaired	13	16.67%
Visually Impaired	27	34.62%
TOTAL	78	100%

Most of the identified students with physical and sensory impairments are aged 22-24 years old or 38.46% of the identified prevalence while aged 16-18 and 19-21 are both 30.77%.

Table 2. The Age Bracket of Identified Students with Physical and Sensory Impairment

Age Bracket	f	%
16-18 years old	24	30.77%
19-21 years old	24	30.77%
22-24 years old	30	38.46%
TOTAL	78	100%

Mainly these students are in the first year level, 44.87%, 23.08% are now in the second year level while 20.51% are in the third year level and only 11.54% have reached the fourth year level.

Table 3: The Year Level of the Identified Students with Physical and Sensory Impairments

Year Level	f	%
First Year Level	35	44.87%
Second Year Level	18	23.08%
Third Year Level	16	20.51%
Fourth Year Level	9	11.54%
TOTAL	78	100%

The College of Industrial, Information and Communication Technology has three programs, the Bachelor of Science in Information Technology wherein 46.15% of the identified students with physical and sensory impairments are enrolled while 32.05% are taking up Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and 21.79% are enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Information System.

Table 4: The Course of the Identified Students with Physical and Sensory Impairments

Program	f	%
Bachelor of Science in Information Technology	36	46.15%
Bachelor of Science in Computer Science	25	32.05%
Bachelor of Science in Information System	17	21.79%
TOTAL	78	100%

Proper assessment and intervention is crucial to clearly identify the nature and severity of the impairment of the learner and for proper placement and further vital interventions be provided. These assessment and interventions come in different forms such as checkups, diagnoses, physical treatments,

medications, surgeries and others. Out of 78 identified students with physical and sensory impairments only 33.33% have been subjected to any of the mentioned assessments and interventions, leaving a huge percentage of 66.67% of the students unassessed by medical practitioners.

Table 5: Students with Physical and Sensory Impairments with and without Medical Interventions

Medical Interventions	f	%
Has gone through Medical Interventions	52	66.67%
Has not gone through any Medical Interventions	26	33.33%
TOTAL	78	100%

There are various scholarship grants that can be availed by the students of Biliran Province State University but 58.97% of the students with physical and sensory impairments have not received any scholarship grants that could support them in pursuing their studies while only 41.03% have availed scholarship grants.

Table 6: Students with Physical and Sensory Impairments with and without Scholarship Grants

Scholarship	f	%
With Scholarship	32	41.03%
Without Scholarship	46	58.97%
TOTAL	78	100%

CONCLUSION

A simple survey from one of the seven colleges of the lone university of Biliran province shows an identified prevalence of students with physical and sensory impairments in significant number and the evidence in this study led to the following conclusions: (1) there is a deficiency in the proper assessment and evaluation of students' impairments which is necessary in providing intervention and accommodation of their needs (2) there may be scholarship grants provided for the students but a scholarship grant particularly for students with impairments is not available (3) most of the students are mature learners but still in the first year level in college.

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