

Students' Perceptions and Expectations in the Virtual Faculty Exchange Program: The Case of Higher Learning Institutions in the Philippines and Indonesia

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Abstract:- Over the years, globalization has benefitted education in many aspects. This study aims to understand the students' perceptions and expectations of virtual faculty exchange programs conducted in higher learning institutions from the Philippines and Indonesia. This study utilized descriptive research to describe the undergraduate students' perceptions on the instructional aspect of the virtual faculty exchange program and their expectations to provide a basis for improving the quality of the activity in the future. This study was participated by seventy-seven (77) undergraduate students taking up computing courses from the Philippines and Indonesia during the second semester of Academic Year 2020-2021. Results revealed that the student's perception of the quality of the instructions received from both universities was "Very Good" (WM = 4.41), indicating that students were excited and looked forward to learning many things in the virtual faculty exchange program. Moreover, the expectations of the students showed that student-respondents had expectations relating to improving themselves, learning new things from foreign instructors, cultural and international experience, the personality of the instructors, and self-expression. In conclusion, the findings of this study provide a basis for improving the quality of delivering instruction for the virtual faculty exchange program.

Keywords:- Students' Perception, Expectations, Virtual Faculty Exchange Program.

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the years, globalization has benefitted education in many aspects. Through globalization in education, many essential advancements in different forms have been observed and implemented. The utilization and integration of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in the teaching and learning process have significantly enhanced and improved the delivery of instructions, especially in the pandemic. The increasing demand for ICT has been influenced by globalization. *Globalization* is defined as the process of collaborating and exchanging ideas, people, and resources in consideration of the cultural, political, economic, and technological aspects in the local, national, and regional borders [1]. Aside from the increasing demand for ICT tools and services, Philippine Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have gone through Internationalization due to the Philippine Government commitments to bilateral, multilateral, regional, and international agreements in higher education [2].

Internationalization in the context of Philippine Higher Education involves integrating "international, intercultural, and global dimensions into the goals, functions, and delivery of higher education" [2]. Partnership, collaboration, and interchange of higher education between nations are processes involved in the Internationalization of Philippine Higher Education. Through Internationalization, academic quality is improved, students and staff are allowed to become internationally oriented [3], higher learning institutions are given a chance to benchmark among partner institutions and establish a strong linkage which may result in the enhancement of the programs and activities involving research, curriculum, community extension projects, and administration. Through Internationalization, higher learning institutions are given a chance to improve their reputation through international partnerships and engagements [4].

In 2019, a global pandemic caused a significant change in how people perform things, including how teaching and learning were being delivered. The pandemic has limited the people's movements, and students are forced to stay at home while higher learning institutions continuously strive to provide and deliver quality education. Different learning modalities have been implemented and utilized to support the needs of different students.

Amidst the pandemic, home-based Internationalization provides an opportunity for higher learning institutions to conduct faculty exchange programs by integrating different ICT tools. Home-Based Internationalization includes "activities that occur in the home campus without the learner or the education service provider moving out of their respective national territories" [2]. This ensures safety among the students and faculty involved in the program.

For higher learning institutions with departments or units that are new in virtual faculty exchange, it is essential to understand the students' perceptions and expectations to provide a basis on how to improve the quality of delivering instruction in the future. All involved higher learning institutions may adjust based on the given perceptions and expectations of the students to make future activities and collaborations more at ease and lessen the discomforts that may be brought by the difference in culture and the differences in the teaching and learning process. This study aims to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the perceptions of the students on the delivery of instruction in the virtual faculty exchange program?

2) What are the expectations of the students in the virtual faculty exchange program?

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A. Research Design

The normative survey method was used to discover the perceptions and expectations of the student-respondents on virtual faculty exchange programs as far as delivery of instruction is concerned. A normative survey, according to Bitonio (2014), as cited by Luciano et al. (2020), is commonly used to explore opinions according to respondents that can represent a whole population [5]. The survey is appropriate in this study because it enables the researchers to formulate generalizations.

B. Research Instrument

The researchers used a survey tool which is composed of three parts. The first part covers the demographic profile of the student-respondents, the second part is consist of 9-item statements covering the students’ perceptions in terms of the delivery of instructions and the instructors, and the last part contains an open-ended question for the expectations on the delivery of instruction in the conduct of the virtual faculty exchange program.

C. Response Mode

A 5-point Likert Scale, as shown below, was used to describe the student respondents' perceptions of the virtual faculty exchange program.

Numerical Rating	Verbal Description
5	Strongly Agree
4	Agree
3	Neutral
2	Disagree
1	Strongly Disagree

Table 1: Response Mode

D. Scoring Guide

The following scale was used in the presentation of data:

Numerical Rating	Verbal Description on Students’ Perception
5.00 – 4.21	Very Good
4.20 – 3.41	Good
3.40 – 2.61	Fair
2.60 – 1.81	Poor
1.80 – 1.00	Very Poor

Table 2: Scoring Guide

E. Reliability Analysis

Based on the reliability analysis made on the 9-item instrument, Table 3 shows that the instrument used were valid and reliable with Cronbach’s Alpha of .946. The value of Cronbach’s Alpha indicates that the instrument has an excellent internal consistency. Internal consistency is a measure of reliability, and it reflects the extent to which the items in the instrument measure various aspects of the same construct [6].

F. Research Locale and Respondents

This study was conducted before the virtual faculty exchange program commenced between a university from the Philippines and Indonesia. Of the student-participants in the program, seventy-seven (77) undergraduate students volunteered to join distributed as follows:

Profile	Factor	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	52	67.5
	Female	25	32.5
	Total	77	100.0
Year Level	1 st Year	49	63.6
	2 nd Year	27	35.1
	3 rd Year	0	0.0
	4 th Year	1	1.3
	Total	77	100.0
Higher Learning Institution	Philippines	60	77.9
	Indonesia	17	22.1
	Total	77	100.0
Age	18	23	29.9
	19	30	39.0
	20	13	16.9
	21	8	10.4
	22	3	3.9
	Total	77	100.0

Table 3: Respondents Profile

G. Data Gathering Procedure

The data gathering procedure was divided into four main phases, namely: (1) seeking permission to conduct the study, (2) administration of the instrument via Google form, (3) retrieval of the accomplished instrument; then, finally (4) organization and analysis of collected data.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

H. Students’ Perception on the Delivery of Instruction during the Virtual Faculty Exchange Program

Items	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
Activities will be conducted and delivered using appropriate learning materials essential for online learning.	4.39	Very Good
Course topics are well-organized, logical, and consistent.	4.42	Very Good
Online discussions will contribute to my learning	4.38	Very Good
Course lessons are intellectually challenging.	4.16	Good
Course materials provided will contribute to my learning.	4.48	Very Good
Instructors will provide timely feedback	4.34	Very Good
Instructors will provide opportunities for students to learn from each other	4.48	Very Good
Instructors will be responsive to requests or inquiries.	4.44	Very Good
Instructors will treat students with respect.	4.62	Very Good
Overall Grand Mean	4.41	Very Good

Table 4: Students’ Perceptions

Table 4 presents the survey result on the perceptions of the student-respondents in the conduct of the virtual faculty exchange program. Overall, respondents perceived the activity as very good, with an overall mean of 4.41. Results indicate that students from the Philippines and Indonesia positively perceived the virtual faculty exchange program. Yao et al. (2012) assert that college students' held a positive perception of the interactions with international faculty, particularly in academic learning and change of perspectives.

Of the nine items included in the instrument, student-respondents perceived that the instructors would treat everyone with respect during the activity. This item got the highest mean rating of 4.62. Respecting students help boost teachers' effectiveness in the delivery of instruction. It is essential to consider that instructors must have a positive attitude towards their students, be consistent, fair, and flexible to gain mutual understanding and effective teaching and a learning experience [8]. Responding to students' needs, inquiries, and requests were also viewed by the student-respondents very well, with a mean rating of 4.44. This indicates that student-respondents positively perceived instructors as responsive to their learning needs. Kiefer et al. (2014) suggest that responsive teachers' role plays a vital role in students' academic motivation. Thus, improving their academic performance [9].

In the conduct of the virtual faculty exchange program, students perceived that instructors would provide them with opportunities to learn from one another, as reflected in the mean rating of 4.48. Collaborative learning is a practical approach in 21st-century teaching and learning, allowing the students and teachers to exchange ideas, learn new knowledge, and develop skills within and outside the class hours. Task-based learning, Problem-Based Learning, and Project work are a few strategies teachers can employ to increase student engagement and improve learning [10]. The student-respondents perceived the instructor's timely feedback as very good, as reflected in the mean rating of 4.34. Giving timely feedback provides an opportunity for students to improve their knowledge and skills. This practice also ensures consistency and transparency among the instructors.

For the course materials and activities, student-respondents perceptions were perfect in terms of the delivery of the lessons using appropriate learning materials (WM = 4.39), organized, logical, and consistent (WM = 4.42), and that the materials and the discussions will significantly contribute to their overall learning (WM = 4.38, WM = 4.48). On the other hand, student-respondents viewed the lessons as intellectually challenging but lower than the other items (WM = 4.16). This provides new opportunities for future studies as to why students have a low perception of the lessons, which can be intellectually challenging. Several factors may be considered for future studies to understand this further.

I. Students' Expectations on the Virtual Faculty Exchange Program

Categories / Main Idea	Frequency	Percentage
The virtual faculty exchange program will help me improve my skills.	8	10.39%
The virtual faculty exchange program will provide new learnings, opportunities, and platform for self-improvement.	16	20.78%
The virtual faculty exchange program will introduce me to a new culture and provide me an international cultural experience.	18	23.38%
The virtual faculty exchange program will be composed of skilled teachers, provide learning materials, and have a friendly class ambiance.	20	25.97%
The virtual faculty exchange program will help me develop my self-expression abilities.	2	2.60%

Table 5: Students' Expectations

Table 5 presents the data gathered about the student respondents' expectations from the Virtual Faculty Exchange Program.

The answers were collected and categorized based on the main idea they were trying to convey. Based on those, the researchers were able to derive five (5) categories:

- Improvement
- Learning something new and having opportunities
- An international and cultural experience
- Teacher personality, materials, and class ambiance
- Self-expression

Based on the results, twenty (20) or 25.97% of the student-respondents expected to meet skilled teachers to provide them a good learning experience.

Moreover, they hope that the instructional materials that will be used are comprehensive but easy to understand - that they will be able to use them as references even after the exchange program. The students also expected a welcoming and friendly class ambiance to make the sessions more fun and engaging.

Eighteen (18) students, representing 23.38% of the respondents, said they expect to learn more about the Filipino culture and gain an international cultural experience despite the virtual set-up.

Sixteen (16) students (20.78%) wrote that they hope that the exchange program will provide new learnings, opportunities, and platforms for self-improvement. Despite the language difference, they looked forward to the knowledge they would gain from international teachers and how the lessons and discussions will be delivered.

Eight (8) or 10.39% of the students shared that one of their expectations from the program is to help them improve their personality and social skills.

Moreover, two (2) or 2.60% of the respondents hoped that the exchange program would help encourage them to speak up and enhance their self-expression abilities.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusion

This study surveyed the perceptions and expectations of the student-respondents before conducting the virtual faculty exchange program in two higher learning institutions in the Philippines and Indonesia. It was participated by seventy-seven undergraduate students. Results revealed that the students have very good perceptions of the instructors and instructional learning materials. However, there was only a good perception of the intellectually challenging lessons. In terms of the expectations, results revealed that student-respondents have expectations relating to their improvement, learning something new from foreign instructors, international and cultural experience, teacher personality, materials, class ambiance, and self-expression.

B. Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, the following are the recommendations drawn in this study:

- A similar study may be done in the future involving a more significant number of respondents from both higher learning institutions;
- Faculty members who will participate in virtual faculty exchange programs may review the results of this study to serve as their basis on how to improve the learning experiences of the students;
- Faculty members may consider the perceptions and expectations of the student-respondents to provide a more meaningful learning experience in the future;
- The perceptions and expectations of the exchange faculty members may also be gathered and conducted as another research to serve as the basis for participating institutions in improving future collaborations with other institutions.

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