

The Quality of International Student Mobility Program of the Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology from the Perspective of Chinese Master of Business Administration Students

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DOI: 10.29322/IJSRP.12.06.2022.p12651
<http://dx.doi.org/10.29322/IJSRP.12.06.2022.p12651>

Paper Received Date: 06th June 2022
Paper Acceptance Date: 21st June 2022
Paper Publication Date: 25th June 2022

Abstract- This study assessed the quality of the International Student Mobility Program of Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology (NEUST) based on two factors: curriculum and performance of faculty. Data were gathered using a survey questionnaire distributed to 70 Chinese students under the Master of Business Administration programs (MBA) of NEUST Graduate School. This study utilized descriptive statistics to analyze the data. Findings showed that Chinese MBA students have positive feedback on the learning delivery of the institution as they marked excellent ratings to the said program. The results of this study could be used to continuously enhance the learning delivery of the degree program offerings of NEUST internationally.

Index Terms- Chinese students, internationalization, international program, learning delivery, NEUST

I. INTRODUCTION

Higher Education Institutions worldwide have been facing the challenge of becoming more responsive to the changes in the global academic environment. Universities have been under more significant pressure from external settings due to globalization during the last few decades (Cinches, Russel, Borbon, & Chavez, 2017).

Internationalization has influenced universities to take a leap and continue to improve their academic programs to stay relevant in delivering quality education beyond their local venues. Internationalization has evolved from a minor effort to a crucial component of the reform agenda over the previous half-century and has become part of the strategic goals in higher education (de Wit & Altbach, 2021; de Wit & Deca, 2020).

Global surveys demonstrate the growing importance of internationalization in higher education and the importance of educating students for a globalized world for many institutions (Egron-Polak, 2011). Indeed, internationalization has risen to the top of the priority list for higher education institutions worldwide (Zhou, 2017).

As defined by Knight (2008), internationalization in higher education is the process of “integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education” (cited in de Wit, 2020, p. ii). For Altbach and Knight (2007), internationalization refers to the policies and methods used by academic systems and organizations and individuals to adapt to the global academic environment.

The internationalization of higher education is no longer viewed as a goal in and of itself but as a tool to increase educational quality of the institutions (Jibeen & Khan, 2015). The benefits of internationalization of higher education are knowledge translation and acquisition, mobilization of talent in support of global research, and enhancement of the curriculum with worldwide content (Jibeen & Khan, 2015). For Crisan-Mitra and Borza (2015), the internationalization of higher education is a significant development trend and a venue for gaining competitiveness and success in higher education and worldwide academic mobility. As part of internationalization,

universities have engaged in specific measures such as branch campuses, cross-border collaboration arrangements, programs for international students, developing English-medium programs and degrees, and others have been implemented. (Altbach and Knight, 2007). By conducting internationalization, universities seek to respond to globalization to develop international trust (Rosyidah, Martin & Rosyidi, 2020).

In the Philippines, Higher Education Institutions are also driven to foster internationalization in their academic programs. In the words of Rosaroso, Yap and Gador (2015), “such academic endeavor serves as the ultimate goal of any higher education institution not only in the pursuit for accreditation but also for global recognition as well” (p.23). Every higher education institution strives to provide its consumers and clients with high-quality instruction, student services, research outputs, and community outreach initiatives (Dotong & Laguador, 2015). Dotong and Laguador (2015), also noted that Philippine Higher Education Institutions' vision clearly demonstrates their aspiration to move towards internationalization.

The passing of the Transnational Higher Education Act (RA 11448) in August 2019 signifies the commitment of the government to foster the modernization and internationalization of Philippine higher education sector (Salvador & Berse, 2020). The RA 11448 stressed that:

“The State recognizes that rapid developments brought about by globalization, including liberalization of trade in goods and services and expanding use of information and communication technologies, have created a climate for borderless teaching and learning. In this light, the State shall endeavor to modernize the Philippine higher education sector, and bring international quality standards and expertise into the country, to make higher education globally competitive, attract a flow of talented students, faculty, and staff and improving the country's human resource base.”

The Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology (NEUST), a state university in the Philippines, has opened its borders and welcomed international students to its various degree programs. The internationalization endeavor of the university reflects on its vision as “locally responsive and internationally relevant and recognized university of science and technology”; and on its mission “to bring about development impact to local and international communities (RA 8612).

At present, the NEUST-Graduate School (GS) department of the university accommodates Chinese students who are enrolled in graduate degree programs both at the master's and doctoral levels. In the report of EOL (2014), China is currently the number one source country of international students worldwide, with over 3 million Chinese students going overseas to study from the years 1978 to 2013 (cited in Liu, 2016, p. 42). In addition, majority of international students are pursuing better education programs offered in other countries other than their host countries in order to pursue greater prospects in the future (Ngamkamollert & Ruangkanjanases, 2015).

With the threat of coronavirus 19 (COVID19) pandemic, educational institutions worldwide had to shift the teaching delivery mode from face to face to online teaching and learning (Md Yunus, Ang, & Hashim, 2021; Maheshwari, 2021). However, education should continue to be friendly and supportive to all learners, since it is critical to maintain students' behavioral intentions in any type of learning environment (Md Yunus, Ang, & Hashim, 2021).

In NEUST-GS, classes for Chinese students are held online through various teleconferencing platforms like Zoom and Voov. Moreover, satisfaction with online learning is an essential factor in fostering effective educational processes including the delivery of lessons to students (Elshami, Taha, Abuzaid, Saravanan, Al Kawas & Abdalla, 2021). The study conducted by Gopal, Singh, & Aggarwal (2021) revealed that quality of instructor, course design, prompt feedback, and expectation of students positively impact students' satisfaction and impact students' performance.

This study assessed the quality of the International Student Mobility Program of Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology (NEUST) based on two factors: curriculum and performance of faculty. The results of this study could be used to continuously enhance the learning delivery of the degree program offerings of NEUST internationally.

II. METHODOLOGY

All the 70 Chinese students under the Master of Business Administration programs of NEUST Graduate School were the participants of the study. To gather necessary data for the completion of this study, the researcher used a questionnaire presented through google form, and all texts have Chinese translations for the participants to clearly understand the questions being asked. The respondents were asked to assess the learning delivery provided to them by the NEUST Graduate School in terms of the course content, faculty performance, and interpreter effectiveness using the five-point Likert rating scale. The data gathering was facilitated before the end of the second semester, Academic Year 2020-2021. The researcher also asked the respondents for their consent and informed them that the information gathered would be treated with strict confidentiality and be used solely for this study.

To determine the validity of the questionnaire, it underwent a validity test. The validity test was conducted on five experts from the academe including an interpreter to check the Chinese translation of the questions. For its reliability test, the researcher conducted a pre-survey procedure to 15 other Chinese students enrolled in other degree programs who were not part of this study to determine the questionnaire's reliability. The data gathered from the dry run were analyzed using the Cronbach alpha for items that had been revealed in the instrument used by the researcher. The reliability score was relatively high, with an overall Cronbach alpha of .775. Using descriptive statistics, data gathered were analyzed using the rating scale below:

Table 1. Rating Scale for Validity Testing

Rating	Rating Scale	Verbal Interpretation
5	4.21 - 5.00	Excellent
4	3.41 - 4.20	Very Good
3	2.61 - 3.40	Good
2	1.81 - 2.60	Fair
1	1.00 - 1.80	Poor

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 presents the quality of the international student mobility program of NEUST in terms of course content. The students have claimed that the content of lessons given to them are relevant to their present profession, either as employees or business owners (WM=4.56). The topics are motivating and relatable on the part of Chinese students as theories and principles discussed are well complemented with real-life examples. According to Belet (2018), teachers should make their lessons relevant to their students' life in order to boost their involvement and achievement.

Table 2. Quality of the international student mobility program of NEUST in terms of curriculum

Course Content	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Alignment with latest trends in business	4.12	Very good
Quality of learning materials	4.45	Excellent
Relevance of the lessons to student's needs	4.56	Excellent
General Weighted Mean	4.37	Excellent

The students also gave an excellent mark on the quality of learning materials (WM=4.45). For instance, instructional materials provided to them contain information from reliable and updated sources. High-quality instructional materials can increase student achievement as much as or more than many more costly interventions (Allan & Leifer, 2017, cited in Oregon Department of Education, 2022).

In addition, the Chinese MBA students found topics relevant to the latest trends in business (WM=4.12). Lessons are designed to make them acquainted with the contemporary business world both in the local and international setting. Future business leaders must be prepared to compete and meet the challenges of the global business phenomenon and the scenario created by globalization and internationalization in the corporate world. (Mei & Saedah, 2013).

Table 3. Quality of the international student mobility program of NEUST in terms of faculty performance

Faculty performance	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Mastery on the subject content	4.38	Excellent
Organizing lesson	4.25	Excellent
Teaching methodology used	4.67	Excellent
Communication skills	4.08	Very good
Awareness to current Issues	4.05	Very good
General Weighted Mean	4.32	Excellent

From the data presented above, it can be gleaned that course professors have excellent performance as assessed by the Chinese students. For the respondents, their course professors have possessed mastery on the subject being taught (WM=4.38) and competence in organizing lessons (WM=4.25). Only the essential topics are included in the discussions, so they have used the time allotted efficiently.

According to Kamamia, Ngugi and Thinguri (2014) ...

the mastery of subject matter is an essential skill that a teacher requires to be endowed with, in the teaching and learning process as it has a direct impact on teaching and learning process in schools. Teachers are required to know what they are teaching because understanding of subject matter by a teacher implies that the teachers is able to grasp the main points and teach them

to the learners, and to correct any misconceptions of knowledge, and all this revolves around the teachers understanding of the subject matter (p. 641).

World Bank's (2011) study defined teacher effectiveness "as the capacity of a given teacher to lead their students to sustained achievement gains" (cited in Demiroz and Yesilyurt, 2015, p. 864).

Faculty-in-charge are also excellent in using various methods and techniques and instructional material in their respective class as claimed by the Chinese students (WM=4.67). Online discussions have made more interactive and meaningful with the innovative teaching methodology coupled with relevant instructional material utilized by the course professors. Munawaroha (2017) noted that teachers' teaching approaches and the learning environment established during the learning process benefited students' learning achievement in class. In addition, the teaching strategies employed by teachers impact how well students succeed academically (Isa, Mammam, Badar & Bala, 2020).

Chinese students have also noted that their course professors are well aware of the current issues relevant to their courses that further complemented the theories discussed to them (WM=4.08). On the other hand, course professors have been perceived to have a high degree of communication skills (WM=4.08). Despite of the presence of interpreters in class, the ability of the professors to convey the ideas to their student and their manner of delivery matter the most. For Khan, Khan, Zia-Ul-Islam, & Khan (2017), "good communication skills of a teacher are the basic need of academics success of students, and professional success of life. Teachers with poor communication skills may cause failure of students to learn and promote their academics" (p.18).

In the words of Rice (2003), the caliber of the teacher is important and the most influential school-related factor determining student accomplishment.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Course professors must continue harnessing their pedagogical content knowledge to stay credible in teaching international students. Course professors must also acquaint themselves with the organizational culture, business practices, and business landscape in China to relate more to the discussion of theories and principles.
2. Course content must be designed to the learning needs of the international students, personally and professionally.
3. Chinese language proficiency training must be provided to the faculty members for them to establish good communication among their students and to check on the translation of the class interpreters.

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