



Auburn University

**Dissertation Defense
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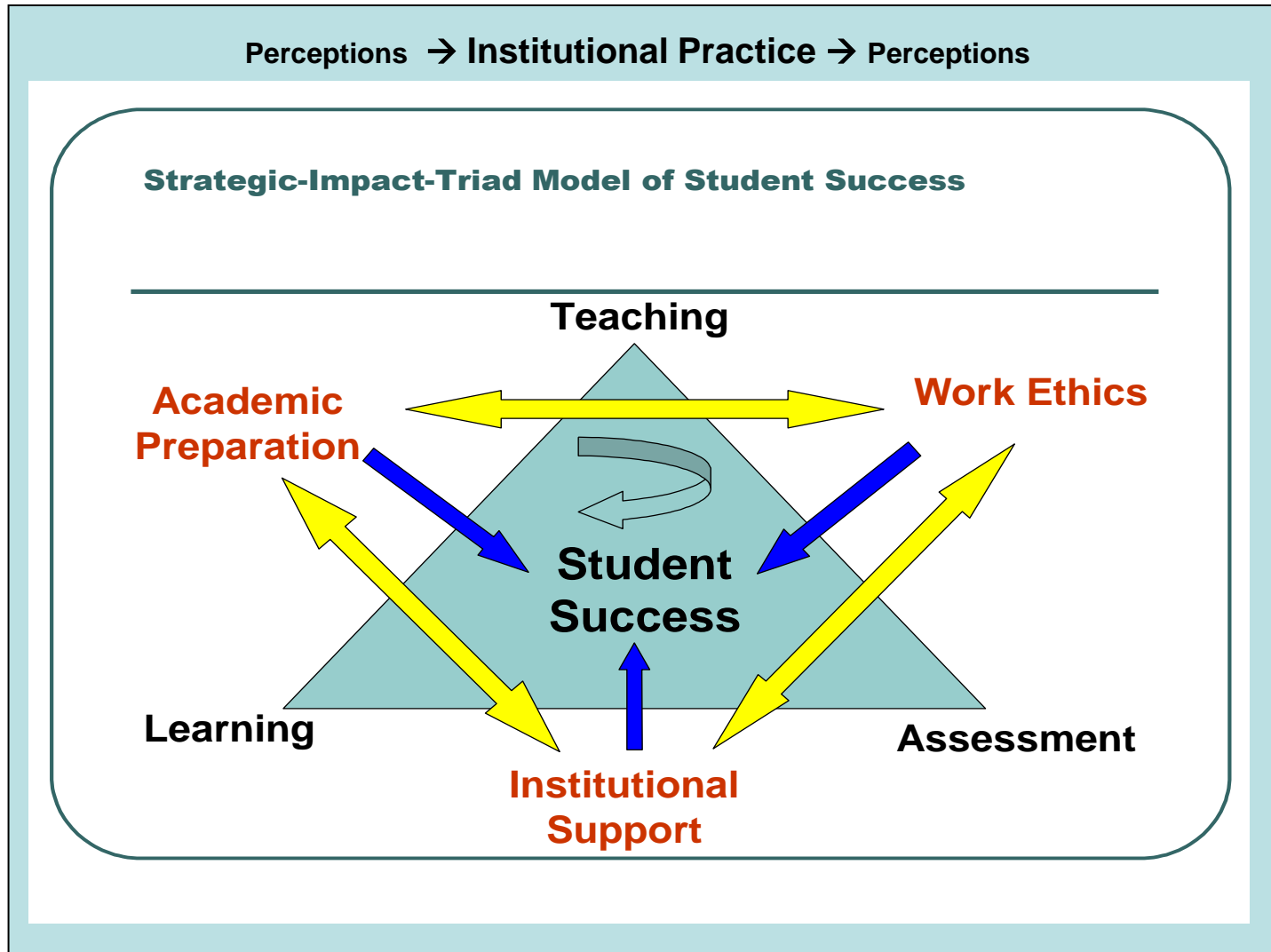


Strategic Factors of Institutional Practice Impacting Student Success in the Community College as Perceived by Students and Faculty: Academic Preparation, Work Ethics and Institutional Support

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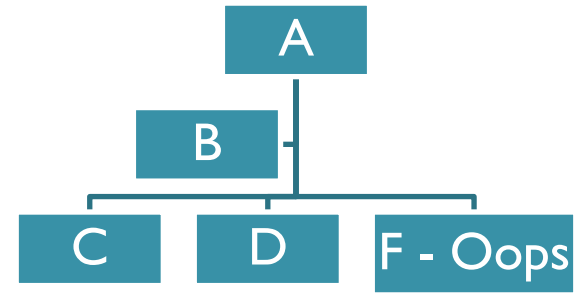


The Dynamics of the Study: To Be Continued...





Community College
Student Success is
Hierarchical...



As defined by the National Postsecondary Education Cooperative [NPEC] (2006):

What is student success? Is it earning a degree, acquiring new knowledge and skills, getting a job after graduation? Students, families, faculty, legislators, trustees, the press and the public, all have ideas about what constitutes student success, and their ideas [perceptions] aren't necessarily the same. Understanding student success becomes even more complicated when we consider the diversity of students in postsecondary education. Is success measured the same way for 22 year old full-time college students and for 45 year old part-time students? For students with high test scores and for those who don't yet write and compute at a college-level? Should success be measured the same way for these students? How can decision-makers be better informed about the many ways in which postsecondary student success may be defined and measured? (p. 1)



Why study perceptions of students and faculty?

“When you reach a point in your life when you have to question the magic of creation, and all the world seems against you, remember: we do not live in a world of reality, we live in a world of perceptions...it is up to you to decide, to which world you belong.” *Justin S., Age 15*

■ Policies = a guide to influence and direct practice

■ Reality = what we do in practice

■ Perceptions = the reason we do what we do in practice

△ Student Success ← successful, effective, and valid practice

lectures, labs, research, meetings, parking, lunch, email, advising, sleep, patience, assessments, academics, life skills, institutional action, and all other practices...



Introduction to the Study

The Problem Investigated in This Study:

... was that students and faculty do not share common perceptions of educational practice, e.g., *attendance*

... and, therefore, these perceptual differences result in variances in the applications of educational practice (and levels of community college student success)

Purpose of the Research

To investigate and compare the relationship between faculty and students in terms of how these groups perceived institutional practices impacting student success (within the domains of academic preparation, work ethics and institutional support)



Research Questions

What is the relationship between faculty and students' perceptions in assessing the impact that:

academic preparation has on the success of the college student?

institutional support has on the success of the college student?

PRACTICES

work ethics has on the success of the college student?

academic preparation, work ethics, and institutional support has on the success of the college student?




Limitations of the Study

- ⊕ Limited to community and technical colleges
- ⊕ Participants were restricted to faculty and students
- ⊕ Faculty sub-groups limited to female/male (ratio 2:1)*
- ⊕ Student sub-groups limited to female/male (ratio 3:1)*
- ⊕ *Domain emphasis:*
 - ⊕ academic preparation & practices therein...
 - ⊕ work ethics & practices therein...
 - ⊕ institutional support & practices therein...



Review of the Literature: *Overview*

- ✦ Historical Context of Community Colleges
- ✦ Critical Need to Understand the “Open-Door”
- ✦ Community College Students: 0 to ∞
- ✦ Institutional Practice: “Tip the Balance” 
- ✦ Examples of Community College Associations/Studies
 - ✦ American Association of Community Colleges
 - ✦ League for Innovation in the Community College
 - ✦ Community College Research Center
 - ✦ Office of Community College Research and Leadership
 - ✦ Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)
 - ✦ Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count
 - ✦ Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE)



Review of the Literature: *Academic Preparation*

- ✦ National Concern for Lack of College-Readiness
- ✦ Pre-and-Present Preparation: The Continuum...
- ✦ Academic Practices: “Student versus Faculty”
- ✦ Community College Student Success is Strategically Dependent on Effective Academic Preparation Practices, e.g. , *Writing Across the Curriculum, Remediation...*
- ✦ *Example:* Data from the American College Testing Service indicated that student preparation for college-level reading is at its lowest point in more than a decade, spanning 1994 to 2005. (ACT, 2006)



Review of the Literature: *Work Ethics*

- ✦ National and International Concern for Lack of Work Ethics Within/Throughout the U.S. Workforce
- ✦ Work Ethics ~ Employability Skills ~ Soft Skills ~ Life Skills
 - ✦ Technical Skills = “Global Commodity”
 - ✦ Intellectual Capital = “Non-Technical Assets”
(Life-Skills Tera-Byte Flash-Memory Policy Manual)
- ✦ Difference in Perceptions About Teaching Work Ethics; Significant Agreement About the Necessity For Viable Work Ethics:
- ✦ Example: *Boston Area Advanced Technological Education Connections* (BATEC) (2007), “The case for soft skills might appear to be open-and-shut, given industry’s strong endorsement. Paradoxically, despite the importance of employability skills, neither educators nor students appear to appreciate them as employers do” (p. 33).



Review of the Literature: *Institutional Support*

- ✦ Effective Institutional Infrastructure Promotes Success
- ✦ Institutional Support Aligned with Student Support Services (Student Affairs) and Organizational Characteristics, e.g., leadership, helpful, friendly, facilities, campus safety, etc.
- ✦ Institutional Support: Bridge Between Academic Preparation and Work Ethics

Academic
Preparation



Work
Ethics

- ✦ Example of the impact of institutional support:
“...Community college leaders have a responsibility to re-examine their own practices and assumptions, holding themselves accountable for adopting cost-effective and learning-centered strategies that help ensure student success.” (Boswell & Wilson, 2004, p. 49)



Methods: *Design of the Study; Population and Sample*

Design of the Study

- Quantitative and Qualitative Framework (Mixed-Methods)
- Extensive Literature Review
- Existing Survey Instrument Unavailable
- Web-Based Survey Method (*SurveyMonkey.com*) via SSL Encryption

Population

- 1,195 Community Colleges Nationwide
- 11,600,000+ Students; 500,000+ Faculty

S A M P L E

- 18 Community & Technical Colleges contacted
- 6 colleges voluntarily participated
- (51,771 Students; 3,073 Faculty)
- Alabama, (4) Georgia (1) & Florida (1)
- Faculty Members and Students (Population Samples)
- 396 Students and 152 Faculty Members Responded (😞)



Methods: *Instrumentation & Data Collection*

Instrumentation

- Quantitative and Qualitative Measurement
- Pilot Study and Expert Panel Validation
- Student and Faculty Demographics
- Three Likert-Scale Sections
 - Scale 1: 1) Below Average, 2) Average, 3) Above Average
 - Scale 2: 1) Not Important, 2) Somewhat Important, 3) Important, 4) Very Important
 - Scale 3: 1) Required for Student Success, 2) Not Required for Student Success
- Four Open-Ended Questions

Data Collection

- Letters to 18 College Presidents (6 Volunteered to Participate)
- Web-based collection method (30 Day Window for Pilot Study and the Final Dataset; collection via *SurveyMonkey.com*)
- Follow-up phone calls, emails, and letters of appeal



Results: Research Question 1 (Note: Benchmark)

What is the relationship between faculty and students' *perceptions* in assessing the impact that *academic preparation [practices]* has on the success of the community college student?

- ✘ Students and Faculty “Agreed” on Academic Preparation Practices
- ✘ No Significant Difference ($p = .342$)

- ✓ Males and Females “Disagreed” on Academic Preparation Practices
- ✓ Significant Difference ($p < .001$)

- Cronbach's $\alpha = .837$, Student and Faculty Sample: $N=548$
- Student & Faculty: $F(1,516) = .904$, $p = .342$, $\eta^2 = .002$
- Gender analysis: $F(1,516) = 12.662$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .024$



Results: Research Question 2 (Note: Benchmark)

What is the relationship between faculty and students' *perceptions* in assessing the impact that *work ethics [practices]* has on the success of the college student?

- ✓ Students and Faculty “Disagreed” on Work Ethics Practices
- ✓ Significant Difference ($p = .018$)

- ✓ Males and Females “Disagreed” on Work Ethics Practices
- ✓ Significant Difference ($p < .001$)

- Cronbach's $\alpha = .851$, Student and Faculty Sample: $N=531$
- Student & Faculty ANOVA: $F(1,500) = 5.628$, $p = .018$, $\eta^2 = .011$
- Gender analysis: $F(1,500) = 14.570$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .011$



Results: Research Question 3 (Note: Benchmark)

What is the relationship between faculty and students' *perceptions* in assessing the impact that *institutional support [practices]* has on the success of the college student?

- ✓ Students and Faculty “Disagreed” on Institutional Support Practices
 - ✓ Significant Difference ($p < .001$)

 - ✓ Males and Females “Disagreed” on Institutional Support Practices
 - ✓ Significant Difference ($p < .001$)
-
- Cronbach's $\alpha = .897$, Student and Faculty Sample: $N=531$
 - Student & Faculty ANOVA: $F(1,497) = 14.237, p < .001, \eta^2=.028$
 - Gender analysis: $F(1,497) = 17.158, p < .001, \eta^2=.033$



Results: Student Success Practices Benchmark*

Perceptions of Student Abilities (Practices):

- ▶ *Positively Correlated to Previous Research*
- ▶ *Significant Difference in Perceptions of Student Practices/Abilities*

- Students: 94.7% indicated average or above average
- Faculty: 88.6% indicated average or below average
- Cronbach's $\alpha = .911$, Student and Faculty Sample: $N=548$
- Student and faculty assess 15 practices (abilities) *
- Scale: 1) Below Average; 2) Average; 3) Above Average
- ANOVA: $F(1,527) = 360.692, p < .001, \eta^2 = .406$
- Student $M=2.46$, Faculty $M=1.86$ (Difference = .60)

* *Attendance, Writing Ability, Team Player, Motivation to Succeed in College, Oral Presentations, Producing Quality Work, Computer Skills, Success in High School, Respect for Others, Enjoy Learning New Things, Reading Ability, Time Management, Math Skills, Leadership, Work Ethic*



Results: Research Question 4

What is the relationship between faculty and students' *perceptions* in assessing the impact that academic preparation, work ethics *and* institutional support has on the success of the college student?

How do you respond to the following statements?

	Required for Student Success	Not Required for Student Success
Academic Preparation is:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work Ethics are:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Institutional Support is:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Students:

Academic Preparation: 98.4%

Work Ethics: 96.25%

Institutional Support: 94%

Faculty:

Academic Preparation: 100%

Work Ethics: 96.9%

Institutional Support: 93%

- Cronbach's $\alpha = .936$; 36 Composite Variables
- Student and Faculty Sample: $N=531$
- Student & Faculty ANOVA: $F(1,499) = 8.181, p = .004, \eta^2=.016$
- *Levene's Test*: $F(1,499) = .483, p = .488$



Results: Qualitative Findings Summary Themes Perceived...

Open-Ended Questions Presented:

1. What should community colleges do to support students who are academically unprepared?

Academic Preparation Themes

1. Maximize Tutoring Services (269 references);
2. Involved and Caring Faculty to Help Students Succeed (183 references);
3. Promote the Purpose and Offerings in Remedial Courses (175 references);
4. Effective Academic Advising (72 references).

2. How can community colleges help students acquire and practice good work ethics?

Work Ethics Themes

1. The Necessity of Work Ethics (245 references);
2. Practice Work Ethics Daily (160 references);
3. Group Work Accountability (94 references);
4. Involvement of Community and Business Leaders (71 references);
5. Feedback on Personal Work Ethics (45 references);
6. Instill Work Ethics via Workshops (22 references).



Results: Qualitative Findings Summary Themes Perceived...

3. What can a community college do to improve its institutional support to help students succeed in college from enrollment to graduation?

Institutional Support Themes

1. College Wide Dynamic Support Services (321 references);
2. Effective Advising at all Levels of the Institution (131 references);
3. Easy and Open Access to Administrators (56 references);
4. Innovative Institutional Practices to Support Student Success (52 references);
5. Effective Online Resources (48 references);
6. Consistent Communications from the Institution (36 references).







4. What institutional practice(s) (actions by members of the college) have you observed that help(s) or harm(s) the success of a student?

Institutional Practices Themes

1. Variations of Providing Specific Help to Students (328 references);
2. Classroom Practices, Good and Bad (297 references);
3. Specific Actions to Support Student Success (64 references);
4. Conduct, Ethics, and Professionalism (47 references);
5. Deliberate Negative Attitudes Toward Students (20 references);
6. Email Responses with Excessive Delays (13 references).







Conclusions



-  Increasing response rates are warranted (Pilot Study, 3.2%, Final Dataset, 1%);
-  Merge the Student Abilities With the Requirement of the SIT Model Factors via “methods, materials, and manpower”;
-  Actual Practice and Academic Preparation Findings Are Suspect;
-  Work Ethics Findings Correlated With Work Force Studies and “Faculty Conversations”;
-  Institutional Support Findings Are Consistent With Experience in the Two-Year College;
-  Without an effective organizational infrastructure to **bridge** academic preparation practices and work ethics practices to maximize student achievement, serious consequences lie on the horizon for community colleges.



Recommendations






-  Sub-Group Analysis; e.g., full-time, part-time, first-time, etc;
-  Study the ten work ethics for a best predictor (or predictors) to promote student success;
-  Institutional practices identified and evaluated in terms of specific impact on student success, e.g., Orientation;
-  Further Develop the *Strategic-Impact-Triad Model Coefficient Equation*; (Model for Community College Student Achievement)

$$xAP + yWE + zIS = a\text{Level of Student Success}$$

-  Compare students, faculty, administrators, staff, community, etc.;
-  Further Develop Survey Instrument as a Viable Instrument of Institutional Research :
 - Exploratory Factor Analysis
 - Confirmatory Factor Analysis



Implications

-  Leadership is the key component to implementation of the findings in this study;
-  “Research on community colleges has been conducted for many decades, and for just as many years it has been ignored by community college practitioners.” (Cohen, 2005, p. 51)
-  Without a culture of inquiry and faculty buy-in, the success of students will remain a practice of status quo;
-  Failure to understand practices impacting student success leaves student achievement at the potential mercy of mediocrity;
-  The Future of the Nation Rests in Part Upon a Community College Educational System:
 - ✓ 1) Motivated to Improve Life-Skills for students and faculty;
 - ✓ 2) Motivated to Create Life-Long Learners and Skill Seekers;
 - ✓ 3) Replete with Institutions of Higher *Caring and Learning*.



Thank You and Questions?

Dr. Linda Lujan (2006), describing her encounter with a community college after years of misgivings:

“Fortunately, I found wonderful instructors, good advisers, and an environment that supported and encouraged me” (p. B21).

DNA of the Study: “An Exact Match”

Dr. Lujan’s comment is precisely the intended impact of the Strategic-Impact-Triad Model throughout the community college.

$xAP + yWE + zIS = a$ Level of Student Success