



Excelsior Community College

Transforming Lives, Nurturing Global Citizens.

Excelsior Community College Journal of Institutional Research

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of Institutional Research (ECCJIR)

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College**

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2025 VISION STATEMENT

Excelsior Community College is an innovative, learner-centric, community-focused Methodist institution catering to lifelong learning while achieving excellence in education and training.

MISSION STATEMENT

Excelsior Community College contributes to National and Global Development by providing an enabling and research-driven environment that enhances learners' lifelong development and provides solutions for the Public and Private sectors.

JOURNAL OVERVIEW

The Excelsior Community College Journal of Institutional Research (ECCJIR) documents all institutional research conducted each academic year by the Research and Innovation Division (RID). It presents detailed research reports on students and staff issues. The journal also features stakeholder perceptions related to their ECC experiences which have been instrumental in institutional management decisions. The research reports presented in this journal publication outlines findings for the major studies conducted at Excelsior Community College during the academic year 2017-2018.

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

The inaugural publication of the Excelsior Community College Journal of Institutional Research (ECCJIR) solidifies the College's mission to continue its stellar track record in innovation and contribution to the further development of society. This peer review journal seeks to foster and enable a research driven environment which will contribute to the lifelong development of our graduates.

In fulfillment of this mission, the College's Research and Innovation Division (RID) was actualized following the formation of the Research and Corporate Development Division in 2008 by then Principal, Dr. Dahlia Repole.

In furtherance of this culture of research, an annual ECC Research Day was introduced. The annual staging of ECC Research Day has demonstrated research findings presented by faculty, students, guests and industry players in both oral, poster and booth presentations. The activities on Research Day also include training seminars and workshops that illustrate the reliance of research to individual, organizational, community and national development.

In 2017, the Dean of Research and Innovation position was established and this resulted in the development of the Research and Innovation Division (RID). The RID has primary responsible for the development and execution of institutional research to foster institutional effectiveness; as well as the monitoring and strengthening of academic research through an Institutional Review Board (IRB).

It is significant that having received Candidacy for Institutional Accreditation from the University Council of Jamaica in March 2019, the College is able to produce this noteworthy publication. This considerable milestone on our quest towards Institutional Accreditation must be applauded.

I must congratulate, the Editor-in-Chief, the editorial team, the RID team, faculty and students for taking up the gauntlet and making sure this step on our academic journey is fully realized. It is my desire that the ECCJIR will become an annual publication that serves as a conduit for groundbreaking research.

Philmore McCarthy

Principal, Excelsior Community College

CHIEF EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Over the last ten years ECC has taken a strategic approach towards the development of a research-driven environment which drives programme development, institutional strategic planning and general decision-making. Therefore in an effort to realize this institutional mandate the Research and Innovation Division conducts institutional research studies at different points in the academic year. These studies are utilized at various levels of the institution to guide decision-ranging from the Academic School level, Support Unit level, Executive Level and Board levels of the institution.

The Lecturer Course Feedback Survey seeks to inform the Academic Division of the college in determining the factors contributing to the successful facilitation of courses. In so doing a multi-stakeholder approach is undertaken with both students and staff to determine the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process.

The New Student Survey uses a twenty-two (22) item questionnaire design to establish the profile of new students and to assess their perceptions and assessment of Excelsior Community College as a tertiary institution. It also explores their interests and intentions for study and why ECC was their choice for tertiary education. This survey was contracted by the management team of ECC to inform marketing decisions and how best to tailor academic and social development programs to better meet students' needs.

The Management of ECC considers the professional and personal development of its staff members as optimal to organizational success. As such, the Employee Motivation and Engagement Survey (EMES) was contracted to better understand the factors influencing employees' levels of motivation, satisfaction and engagement as well as the factors contributing to their current state of being within the work environment.

Student retention and completion is integral to any tertiary institution accounting for levels of student success. Given observed levels of low completion rates, particularly at the associate level, the College executive considers an annual study on Student Retention integral to understanding factors influencing students' retention within the college. This information is used to inform best practices in strengthening the retention efforts of the institution.

The Graduate Tracer Study (GTS) is conducted annually to give the College Executive and Academic Schools an overview of graduates' educational experiences during their course of study. More specifically, it explores the personal and professional activities undertaken since completion of their program of study at Excelsior Community College (ECC). In so doing management uses the information to develop institutional student support services related to career development and placement services amongst others in an effort to help graduates transition to higher education pursuits or professional development goals.

A tertiary institution must be guided by institutional research and the studies presented in the ECCIRJ provide a snapshot of the efforts undertaken by ECC in their commitment to this effort. Undoubtedly through the recommendations, implications and lessons learned highlighted in the articles it will provide similar institutions with a guideline for such explorations in their own environments.

**EXCELSIOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE RESEARCH AND
INNOVATION DIVISION (ECC RID)****RID VISION**

The vision of the (RID) is to be the leading research unit in the Caribbean that contributes to the transformation of ECC through the design and execution of novel research inquiries guided by ethical standards to inform institutional decision making, effectiveness and efficiency.

RID MISSION

The Research and Innovation Division through a competent, motivated and ethical team will provide world class research consultancy services to internal and external stakeholders aimed at fostering personal and professional development for staff and students; reliable, valid and timely research reports; thus, building a healthy and rigorous research culture at Excelsior Community College.

The Research and Innovation Division enables informed decision-making anchored on research by providing accurate and timely empirical data to guide sound institutional teaching and Management.

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The New Student Survey

Excelsior Community College Research and Innovation Division

Excelsior Community College

Abstract

Understanding students' perception of a course not only provides insight to students' attitudes towards the course content and facilitator but also provides insights to the students' level of engagement in the learning process. The focus of this study is to evaluate students' perception of the Research Methods course. This study was a pilot aimed at understanding students' attitudes, feelings and perceptions about the Research Methods course. The data gleaned from this study can be used to provide useful insights to facilitators of Research Methods in relation to course delivery and assessment. The study will also seek to garner from students recommendations for improvement and relevance to their field of specialization. A quantitative approach was used to collect data from 41 students enrolled in a Research Methods course in two academic schools. The data revealed that students generally agreed that Research Methods was relevant and facilitated their personal development. The findings were discussed and recommendations for future research were made.

Keywords: student perception, course perception, research methods, course relevance

INTRODUCTION

The Students' Perception of Courses Pilot Study is an initiative that was undertaken by the Research and Innovation Division to understand students' perceptions of the different courses that they engage in at Excelsior Community College. It has been observed that there are some courses at the institution that have high failure rates while there are others that have very high pass rates. Based on this observation the Division decided to carry out the study starting with the course Research Methods.

In tertiary education research activity is perceived as one of the high-impact educational practices. This is particularly so as the vital skills and attitude for lifelong learners can be cultivated through scientific inquiry (Healey & Jenkins, 2009).

Undergraduate research has been defined as any teaching and learning activity in which undergraduate students are actively engaged with the research content, process or problems of their discipline (Zimbardi & Matt, 2012). Research therefore, is not limited to the pursuit of academic career and advancement of knowledge; but rather, encapsulates an important aspect of the learning process (Brew & Ginns, 2008). Development of research skills is also important in professional development for bachelor students.

Research activities by undergraduates are a powerful way of enhancing undergraduate students' basic skills and attitude necessary for future professional practice. Inquiry and evidence-based approaches are increasing becoming complimentary processes in that they include recognition of important questions, search for the best research evidence, critical appraisal of the evidence, and application of the evidence to practice in various disciplines (Imafuku, Saiki, Kawakami, & Suzuki, 2015). Participation in the research activity promotes students' active and reflective learning which inadvertently impacts possible application to professional practice (Imafuku, Saiki, Kawakami, & Suzuki, 2015).

PURPOSE

The purpose of the pilot study is to find out what are students perceptions of the Research Methods course at Excelsior Community College. The study is particularly keen on understanding the challenges experienced with Research Methods course as well as improvement that could be made to the pedagogical approaches employed by facilitators. The perceived relevance and applicability of Research Methods to professional practice will also be explored.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The aim of the study was to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the challenges that students have with Research Methods?
2. Do ECC students consider Research Methods to be relevant?
3. What recommendations can be made to improve the teaching/learning of Research Methods at ECC?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study will help lecturers to have an idea of how students view the different courses, their likes and dislikes. This will help the lecturers to better prepare for their classes in finding more innovative ways to teach the courses that students have a challenge with. This study will help the institution to understand the reasons for the high failure rates in some subjects and this information will help inform decisions at the macro-level. The Curriculum Unit will benefit from this study as it will enable more intense evaluation of the courses that are being offered at the institution as sometimes the organization of the courses creates a difficulty for students to pass. The Caribbean Council of Community Colleges will benefit from the study as a number of the courses taught in the community colleges were developed by this institution. It will provide insight into the courses that they need to evaluate.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

A quantitative approach was used for the pilot study with the use of a survey design. Data was collected with the use of a questionnaire.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The sample consisted of students from four different groups. Two of the groups consisted of third year students from the School of Tourism Hospitality and Entertainment and the other two groups consisted of students from the School of Business Management and Entrepreneurial Studies. A convenience sampling technique was used. Two of the Research Methods classes are taught by members of the Research and Innovation Division and the other two by colleagues. The study included only students that were present at class on the days when the survey was administered.

INSTRUMENTATION

The instrument that was used to gather data consisted of 11 Likert items and took

an average of 3-5 minutes to complete. The items for the questionnaire were adapted or created by the members of the RID. The instrument has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.39. This means that the instrument is unacceptable. The Cronbach's alpha ranges from 0-1 and the higher the value is the more reliable the instrument is. With such a low Cronbach's alpha it means that the items are not correlating with each other. The length of the instrument will also affect the Cronbach's alpha. If the instrument is too short then the Cronbach's alpha will be low.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

Each lecturer was given a set of questionnaires which was administered to the students within their scheduled Research Methods class time. The students were instructed about the pilot study and the relevance of the data that is being collected. The students completed the questionnaires and returned them to their lecturers. The data was entered and analysed using the SPSS 21 software.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

All ethical considerations were adhered to as the researcher explained to every group of potential participants the purpose of the study and the purpose of the findings. It was explained that their participation was voluntary and that their identity was confidential. The participants were exposed to no more than minimal risks similar to that experience on a daily basis. Anonymity was assured as the completed questionnaires were kept in a safe location and incinerated at the end of the research. In addition, it was explained that they had no obligation to complete the survey after starting, and they could withdraw at anytime without any form of penalty.

LIMITATIONS

1. The information gathered is only relevant to Research Methods as the sample of students used only completed the questionnaires for that course.
2. The class turnout for each lecturer was poor and this affected the sample size that was used.
3. Only lecturers that agreed to the collecting of data from their Research

Methods class were used. Therefore, the data does not reflect information for all research classes that were taught in the semester when the pilot was done.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Table 1
Manageability of Course Assignments

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Valid Strongly Disagree	3	7.3	7.3	7.3
Disagree	7	17.1	17.1	24.4
Neutral	15	36.6	36.6	61.0
Agree	14	34.1	34.1	95.1
Strongly Agree	2	4.9	4.9	100.0
Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 shows that 34.1% of the respondents agree that the course assignments for Research Methods are manageable while 36.6% are neutral.

Table 2
Course Related to Daily Life

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Valid Strongly Disagree	6	14.6	14.6	14.6
Disagree	6	14.6	14.6	29.3
Neutral	12	29.3	29.3	58.5
Agree	11	26.8	26.8	85.4
Strongly Agree	6	14.6	14.6	100.0
Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 shows that 41.4% of the respondents agree that the course is related to their daily lives.

Table 3
Relevance of Course to Future Career

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Valid Strongly Disagree	5	12.2	12.2	12.2
Disagree	5	12.2	12.2	24.4
Neutral	10	24.4	24.4	48.8
Agree	9	22.0	22.0	70.7
Strongly Agree	12	29.3	29.3	100.0
Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 shows that 49.3% of the respondents agree that the course was of relevance to their future career.

Table 4
Relevant to Other Courses

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Valid Strongly Disagree	4	9.8	10.0	10.0
Disagree	6	14.6	15.0	25.0
Neutral	8	19.5	20.0	45.0
Agree	17	41.5	42.5	87.5
Strongly Agree	5	12.2	12.5	100.0
Total	40	97.6	100.0	
Missing System	1	2.4		
Total	41	100.0		

Table 4 shows that most (53.7%) of the respondents agree that Research Methods was relevant to other courses in their area of study.

Table 5
Course Facilitating Personal Development

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Valid Strongly Disagree	2	4.9	5.1	5.1
Disagree	5	12.2	12.8	17.9
Neutral	10	24.4	25.6	43.6
Agree	13	31.7	33.3	76.9
Strongly Agree	9	22.0	23.1	100.0
Total	39	95.1	100.0	
Missing System	2	4.9		
Total	41	100.0		

Table 5 shows that 53.7% the respondents agree that the course facilitates their personal development.

Table 6
Course Irrelevant

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Valid Strongly Disagree	14	34.1	35.9	35.9
Disagree	10	24.4	25.6	61.5
Neutral	8	19.5	20.5	82.1
Agree	4	9.8	10.3	92.3
Strongly Agree	3	7.3	7.7	100.0
Total	39	95.1	100.0	
Missing System	2	4.9		
Total	41	100.0		

Table 6 shows that 58 % of the respondents disagree that the course was totally irrelevant.

Table 7

Course Predictability/Repetitiveness

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Valid	Strongly Disagree	11	26.8	28.2	28.2
	Disagree	15	36.6	38.5	66.7
	Neutral	8	19.5	20.5	87.2
	Agree	5	12.2	12.8	100.0
	Total	39	95.1	100.0	
Missing	System	2	4.9		
Total		41	100.0		

Table 7 shows that 63.4% of the respondents disagree that the course was predictable or repetitive.

Table 8

Enjoy Doing Course

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Valid	Strongly Disagree	7	17.1	17.9	17.9
	Disagree	8	19.5	20.5	38.5
	Neutral	13	31.7	33.3	71.8
	Agree	4	9.8	10.3	82.1
	Strongly Agree	7	17.1	17.9	100.0
	Total	39	95.1	100.0	
Missing	System	2	4.9		
Total		41	100.0		

Table 8 shows that the majority (36.6%) disagree that they enjoy doing the course while 31.7% are neutral.

Table 9

Enjoy the Content of the Course

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Valid	Strongly Disagree	6	14.6	15.4	15.4
	Disagree	3	7.3	7.7	23.1
	Neutral	13	31.7	33.3	56.4
	Agree	10	24.4	25.6	82.1
	Strongly Agree	7	17.1	17.9	100.0
	Total	39	95.1	100.0	
Missing	System	2	4.9		
Total		41	100.0		

Table 9 shows that the majority (41.5%) of the respondents are in agreement that they enjoy the content of the course.

Table 10

Content Material is Boring

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Valid	Strongly Disagree	6	14.63	15.38	15.38
	Disagree	13	31.71	33.33	48.72
	Neutral	10	24.39	25.64	74.36
	Agree	4	9.76	10.26	84.62
	Strongly Agree	6	14.63	15.38	100.0
	Total	39	95.12	100.0	
Missing	System	2	4.88		
Total		41	100.0		

Table 10 shows that the majority (46.34%) of the respondents disagree that the content material was boring.

Table 11

Pre-requisite Knowledge to Learn Course Concepts

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	5	12.2	12.8	12.8
	Disagree	5	12.2	12.8	25.6
	Neutral	6	14.6	15.4	41.0
	Agree	14	34.1	35.9	76.9
	Strongly Agree	9	22.0	23.1	100.0
	Total	39	95.1	100.0	
Missing	System	2	4.9		
Total		41	100.0		

Table 11 shows that the majority (56.1%) of the respondents agree that they possess the prerequisite knowledge to learn the concepts of the course.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

From the sample of 41 respondents it was found that most agreed that the assignments that were given in the Research Methods course were manageable however, nearly the same amount of respondents were neutral. In addition, it was agreed by the majority that the course was irrelevant to their daily lives and their future careers. The study also found that most of the respondents agreed that Research Methods was relevant to the other courses that they are doing and facilitated their personal development.

The pilot study found that most of the respondents disagreed that the course was irrelevant, predictable, and repetitive and that the course material was boring. It was also found that the respondents disagreed that they enjoyed doing the course however; most agreed that they enjoyed the course content. This is a little contradictory in terms of most of them do not enjoy doing the course but they enjoy the course content. Most of the respondents agreed that they had the pre-requisite knowledge needed to learn the concepts that are taught in Research Methods.

The findings of this study validate the finding postulated by (Imafuku, Kawakami and Suzuki, 2015). Their phenomenographic study reported that undergraduate students appreciated the research course primarily because the perceived value of the learning outcomes. Professional skills learning outcome which referred to the management of resources and time, self-directed learning, and communication skills were viewed as valuable to the students, thus expressing appreciating for the course (Imafuku, Kawakami and Suzuki, 2015). The second learning outcome that was deemed of value was the research skills learning which include competences critical appraisal and synthesis of evidence, formulating a research question and study design, data analysis and research project management (Imafuku, Kawakami and Suzuki, 2015).

The learning outcomes emanating from research course is fundamental not only to pursuing a research career but also to the behavioural practice and scholarly activity of many professionals. Therefore, introduction of research-based education into the early undergraduate curriculum enables students to cultivate both research-

specific skills and transferable skills, which are essential for continuing professional development (Wijnveen, van der Rijst, & van Driel, 2016). It could therefore be inferred that research participation as an educational practice provides undergraduates with an opportunity not only to understand how the research process can contribute to the advancement of knowledge but also to enhance their research skills and active learning participation (Imafuku, Kawakami and Suzuki, 2015; Wijnveen, van der Rijst, & van Driel, 2016).

Given the findings presented, the factors of motivation, reflection and participation together capture students' perception of research (Visser-Wijnveen, van der Rijst, & van Driel, 2016) which has a direct and indirect impact on the students' attitude towards the course as well as their performance. Positive perceptions of educational opportunities have a beneficial impact on student performance and, similarly, the inverse is found as well. It could therefore be concluded that the integration of an applied research experience into undergraduate curriculum has the potential for numerous educational benefits and professional outcomes (Pearson, Crandall, Dispennette, & Maples, 2017).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It may be concluded that the study provided insight into students' perception of the course Research Methods. It would be beneficial given the findings to examine students' perception of other courses within their programme structure. For future research it would be important that the instrument be modified to increase the Cronbach's alpha. The correlation for each item will have to be looked at and those that have values that are too low will have to be deleted. However, additional items will have to be adapted, adopted or created as one factor that can result in the low Cronbach's alpha is that there were too small a number of items on the survey instrument.

Lecturers will need to evaluate how the course is taught to the students as this can be a reason students do not enjoy doing the course, or perceive the course as relevant. More innovative methods will need to be used as well as the teaching of the course using more hands on approaches.

After the modification of the instrument another pilot will be done using one class to ascertain the Cronbach's alpha for the instrument and if acceptable then the official study will commence to find out what are students' perceptions of selected courses that are taught at the institution. Future studies could seek to explore the differences of students' perception between courses that have a high failure rate and those that consistently have a high pass rate. Student centered approaches to teaching Research can further enhance students' deeper approach to learning and cultivate their basic skills necessary to continuing personal and professional development. The evidence from this pilot study can be a catalyst for making more elaborative exploration of students' learning processes and their perceptions of the teaching learning process in undergraduate research courses (Imafuku, Kawakami and Suzuki, 2015).

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Student Retention Survey

Excelsior Community College Research and Innovation Division

Excelsior Community College

Abstract

Students' completion of a programme of study is the priority of reputable educational institutions. As such executives are keen on understanding the factors influencing students' retention within various programmes, in order to inform best practices in strengthening the retention efforts of the institution. At Excelsior Community College (ECC), it has been observed that the number of students completing an academic year is typically lower than the enrollment number. Consequently, the Research and Innovation Division was given the mandate to investigate the factors influencing the retention rates of students within the 2017-2018 academic year. The information gleaned from the Student Retention Survey (SRS) will inform strategy development necessary to increase retention of students within the various programmes in the college. A quantitative approach was adopted for this study. The findings revealed that financial constraint was the main reason for discontinuing their studies.. The body of the report captures the details of the findings and recommendations for strengthening ECC's student retention initiatives.

Keywords: student retention, student completion, student enrolment, community college.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of student retention has become a growing phenomenon in institutions of higher learning across the world. Empirical evidence suggests that retaining students is a fundamental role of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) particularly as it pertains to the execution of its mission. A high rate of attrition (the opposite of retention) is not only a fiscal problem for HEIs, but a symbolic failure of an institution to achieve its sole purpose (Bean, 2001). In fact, in the United Kingdom, institutions of higher learning are measured by their progression and completion rate and the degree to which this performance indicator is achieved will determine their

level of funding. A similar situation exists in Australia where student retention is among the seven performance indicators of quality teaching and learning so much so that funding allocation is hinged on attaining this target (Cosling, Thomas & Heagnay, 2008). Student retention is often aligned to quality assurance processes and teaching learning strategies; consequently, Excelsior Community College (ECC), through the Research and Innovation Division (RID), conducts an annual Student Retention Survey (SRS) to examine the factors that influence students' decision to continue or withdraw from their programme of study. Student retention, as defined by Hagedorn (2005) as an institutional-level measure of success, characterized by the HEIs' ability to maintain the number of students enrolled through to completion of program of study

Student retention has been defined based on three levels or dimensions: Level 1 – Normal progression: typically characterized as a retained student or stayer. At such a level, the student who enrolls in a programme of study progresses steadily throughout the course of study until graduation (Bean, 2001; Wild & Ebberts, 2002). Level 2 – Transfers refer to the students who enroll in one programme of study within an institution but transition to another programme of study within the same institution. At the Level 3– dropout or leaver refers to a student who enrolls in a programme of study but decides to leave the programme and institution before graduations and typically do not return to the institution (Bean, 2001; Wild & Ebberts, 2002). According to Bean (2001) “A leaver or dropout is a student who enters a college or university with the intention of graduating, and, due to personal or institutional shortcomings, leaves school and, for an extended period of time, does not return to the original, or any other, school” (p. 2). This Student Retention Survey will focus on the students who have satisfied the criteria for a dropout.

INCREASING STUDENT RETENTION

The literature suggests that there is no one strategy that strengthens retention as such an integrated multi-disciplinary approach might be most effective. The strategies that have been employed range from student focused to institution focused

initiatives. According to Martinez (2001), institution focused initiatives such as: improving and extending advice and guidance services as well as recruiting with integrity are potential ways to reduce student attrition. Consequently, strengthening students' attrition, to a large extent, is hinged on the institution's ability to communicate programme design and requirements and to provide quality continuous academic advisement (Grebennikov, & Shah, 2012). Additionally, institutions can implement mechanisms to maintain or improve student motivation through parental and/or spouse involvement, peer support, reward and recognition initiatives such as prizes and ceremonies, goal setting allied with formative assessment and feedback as well as deliberate improvements to student centered teaching and learning initiatives (Martinez, 2001). In fact, Davis (1999) found that teaching quality and support have been found to significantly influence students' motivation to complete programme of study.

On the other hand, student focused initiatives that will increase student retention include making a deliberate attempt to invest the early stages of programmes of learning. This deliberate effort is achieved by focusing on student induction – orientation in their programmes of study, initial assessment – both social and academic and the establishment of group ethos and identity for each cohort. Additionally, establishing a close relationship with students through mentoring and “tutoring which is focused on student progress, closer monitoring and follow up of poor attendance early identification of under-performing students or students” will inform the development and provision of additional learning support embedded within student learning programmes (Martinez, 2001, p. 20 Grebennikov, & Shah, 2012).

Furthermore, while it has been found that factors such as “personal problems, financial hardship, insufficient financial assistance, and conflict between job and studies, as being amongst the most important causes of withdrawal” these factors were not unique to such students and were common for those who chose to continue (Davis, 1999; Habley, & McClanahan, 2004). What then is the defining characteristic that influences students' decision to continue or discontinue their course of study?

It could be concluded that the true reasons for withdrawal were often complex, with a web of interlocking factors contributing to the decision to discontinue studies. Davis (1999) postulated that withdrawal behaviours tend to be prevalent when “the occurrence of a personal, financial, or employment related problem coincided with a relative lack of confidence in the quality of support at classroom level” (p. 34) as well the perceived lack of robust support mechanisms that empowered students to address academic and non-academic problems. It has been found that a high level of satisfaction and confidence in the quality of teaching, then the college appeared to represent a powerful support mechanism which allowed external problems to be handled without withdrawal (Davis, 1999; Habley, & McClanahan, 2004).

PROBLEM

Student records indicate that student drop-out rate at ECC is approximately 11-13% annually. Students' withdrawal from a programme of study has significant implications on a personal, institutional and macro level. As an individual, the students is likely to be affected in terms of his/her earning potential as “a person who lacks a college degree will have diminished lifetime earnings compared to college graduates” (Bean, 2001, p. 1). The institution will be affected through loss of tuition for the institution, a loss of a major in some departments. Society, specifically the labour force suffers as a “loss of human capital—that is, the loss of highly trained individuals to enter the workforce or perform civic duties” (Bean, 2001, p. 1). Thus, this survey is an initiative that has been undertaken by the institution to monitor the trajectory of students at all levels.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Student Retention Survey is to monitor the trajectory of students from first semester to second semester at the institution and to ascertain the reasons for their discontinued attendance to the institution.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The Student Retention Survey will benefit ECC by providing information on the reasons for students discontinuing their education. This information will enable the institution to implement strategies that can minimize the dropout rate as well as help students enrolled to finish their programme of study.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the reasons for students not continuing their studies in second semester at ECC?
2. What strategies can be implemented to assist students to continue their study at the institution?

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

A quantitative approach was used for the study with the use of a survey design. Data was collected with the use of a questionnaire.

SAMPLE PARTICIPANTS

The target population for this study comprised of students who were registered for first semester of the academic year 2017-18 but were not registered for the second semester up to the May, 2018. A purposive sampling technique was adopted to identify and select students who satisfied the criteria for the study. A list of participants who satisfied the criteria was provided by the Enrolment Officer, consisting of 500 students. This list was generated through Aeorion and consisted of students who had enrolled in the first semester of the academic school year 2017-2018 but were found to be unregistered in the second semester.

All 500 identified students were contacted via phone; however, only approximately 200 of the students were successfully reached. Three attempts were made to contact the remaining 300 students but all attempts proved futile. Of the 200 participants who were successfully contacted approximately 100 indicated that they were still actively

engaged in school; while, 57 students indicated that they had either completed their course of study or were not interested in participating in the study. From the list of 500 students provided, only 43 participants were confirmed as registered in Semester 1 but did not return for Semester 2 and were willing to participate in the study. The remaining 457 participants were either unwilling to participate in the study, were not able to make contact with them or did not meet the criteria to be included in the study. The sample consisted of students from all year levels at the institution.

INSTRUMENTATION

A questionnaire was used to gather data for the research. The instrument consisted of eight items. Six of these items were closed ended questions and two were open ended questions. The instrument examined the reasons ECC students discontinued their course of study and the factors that would encourage or discourage them to pursue their studies at the institution.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

Data was collected by the staff at the ECC's Customer Service Centre via telephone calls. The respondents were called by a representative and informed about the survey and its importance. The respondents were asked the questions and the representatives completed the questionnaire for each respondent that was called. The questionnaires were then coded and entered into the PSPP software. The data was analysed using the SPSS 21 software.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

All ethical considerations were adhered to as the representatives from the ECC's Customer Service Centre explained to participants the purpose of the study and the purpose of the findings. It was explained that their identity was confidential. In

addition, it was explained that their participation in the study was voluntary and they had no obligation to complete the survey after starting. Also, they were reassured that they could withdraw from the study at any point in time.

LIMITATIONS

There were several limitations that were experienced in conducting this research.

These included:

1. A few of the respondents thought that it was a scam when they were called by the representatives from the ECC's Customer Service Centre; especially, when they were asked the questions about their date of birth and the amount of income that they were earning monthly. Some of the respondents were reluctant in answering these questions. This may have resulted in them not accurately stating their monthly income.

2. The list that was generated from the institution with the names of the students that have discontinued their course of study in the second semester had several errors. Some of the students on the list when they were called were active in the second semester as they had not discontinued their course of study. However, the Aeorion system had them as being inactive for one reason or the other. There were those who completed their course of study as they were only doing CSEC/CAPE subjects and the system flagged them as being inactive for the second semester. In addition, the list had duplication of students' names and contact information. This resulted in the wasting of time and resources.

3. There were several students that could not be reached to participate in the study as the telephone number that was on file was inactive or there were errors with the email addresses that were available. This affected the sample size for the research.

4. There are a number of students who have entered the institution but never registered on Aeorion and discontinued their course of study in the second semester. These students would not have been captured in the sample hence; this report is unable to provide an accurate measure of the institution's dropout rate.

PRESENTATION OF DATA

Table 1

<i>Programmes Respondents were Enrolled In</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>Percentages</i>
AS Information Technology	1	3%
Applied Science	1	3%
Architecture & Construction Technology	1	3%
Business Studies Management	11	29%
CAP Cosmetology	1	3%
Cosmetology	5	13%
CSEC	6	16%
CAPE	6	16%
Electrical Technology	1	3%
Hospitality and Tourism Management	2	5%
Management Information Systems	1	3%
Law Programme	1	3%
Post Graduate Diploma	1	3%
Total	38	100%

Table 1 shows that of the 38 participants who answered this question, the highest number of respondents (29%) were enrolled in the programme Business Studies Management.

Table 2

<i>Year of study last enrolled</i>		<i>Cumulative</i>			
		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Valid	Year 1	28	65.1	71.8	71.8
	Year 2	8	18.6	20.5	92.3
	Year 3	3	7.0	7.7	100.0
	Total	39	90.7	100.0	
Missing	System	4	9.3		
Total		43	100.0		

Table 2 shows that 71.8% of the respondents that did not continue their course of study at the institution were enrolled in year 1.

Figure 1

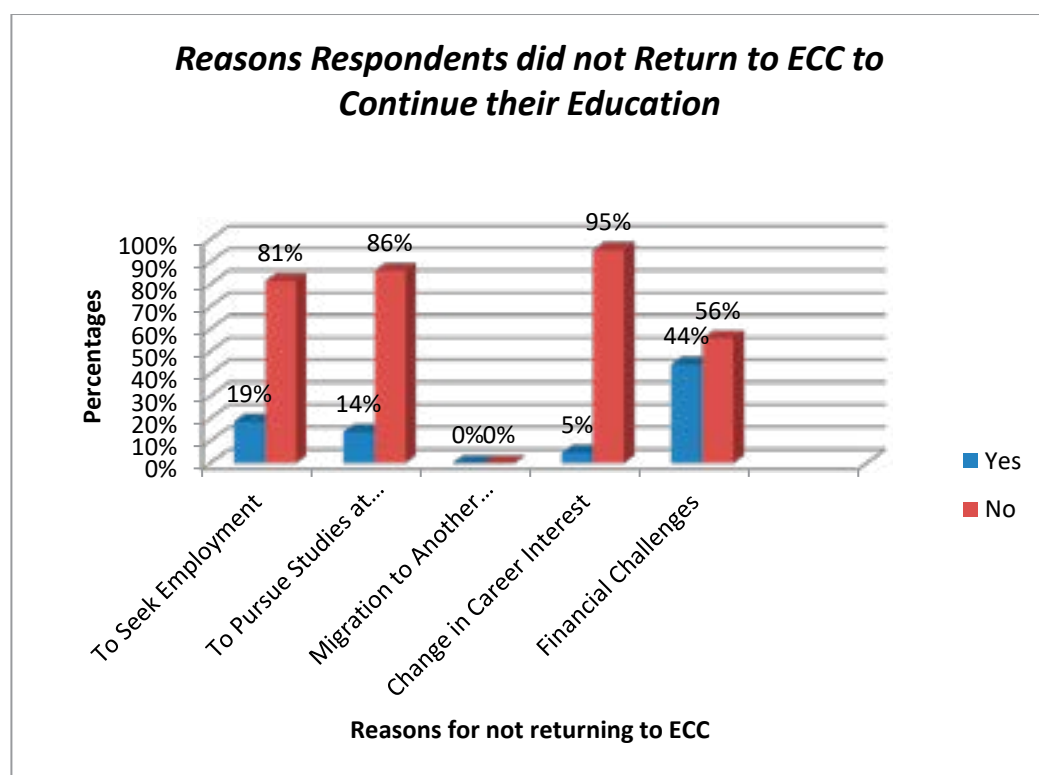


Figure 1 shows that 44% of the 43 respondents stated that the main reason they did not return to ECC was because of financial challenges that they experienced.

Table 3

<i>Other Reasons for not Returning to ECC to Continue Studying</i>	<i>Number of Respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Finished Course of Study	4	27%
Complicated	1	7%
Failed a Course	1	7%
Family Emergency	1	7%
Frequent out of the Country Travel	1	7%
Lateness so Exams could not be Completed	1	7%
Personal Issues	1	7%
Pregnant	3	20%
Too Challenging	1	7%
Total	15	100%

Table 3 shows the other reasons respondents did not return to the institution. The main reasons were that 27% had finished their course of study –however this was not reflected on the Student Management System- while 20% were pregnant.

Figure 2

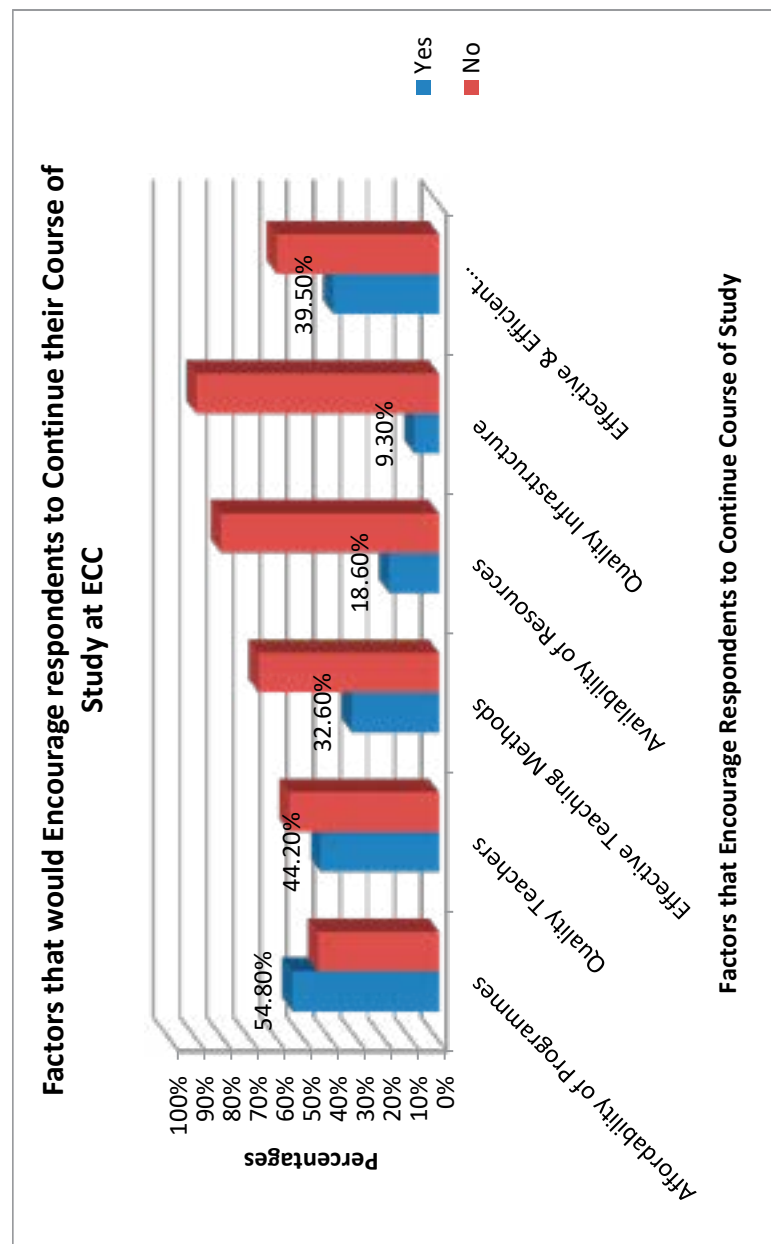


Figure 2 shows that from the sample of 43 respondents the two main factors that would encourage them to continue their course of study at ECC are the affordability of programmes (58.8%) and the quality teachers (44.2%).

Table 4

Other Factors that would Encourage Students to Continue Studying at ECC

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		36	83.7	83.7	83.7
	Get a chance to do over the exams	1	2.3	2.3	86.0
	Flexible class times for employed Students	1	2.3	2.3	88.4
	If they had an AS. Degree in Cosmetology at the school at St. Thomas	1	2.3	2.3	90.7
	Change to have interest in academic Achievements	1	2.3	2.3	93.0
	Offer short courses for more specified areas	1	2.3	2.3	97.7
	Improve quality of services offered	1	2.3	2.3	100.0
	Total	42	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 shows that the other factors that would encourage respondents to continue their course of study at ECC were: the chance to do over exams (2.3%), flexible class times for employed students (2.3%), have an Associate Degree in Cosmetology at Wesley Grove, (2.3%) the offering of short courses in specific areas (2.3%), improved quality of service at the institution (2.3%) and for the respondent to have a change in attitude with regards to academic accomplishments (2.3%).

Figure 3

Factors that would Discourage Respondents from Continuing their Education at ECC

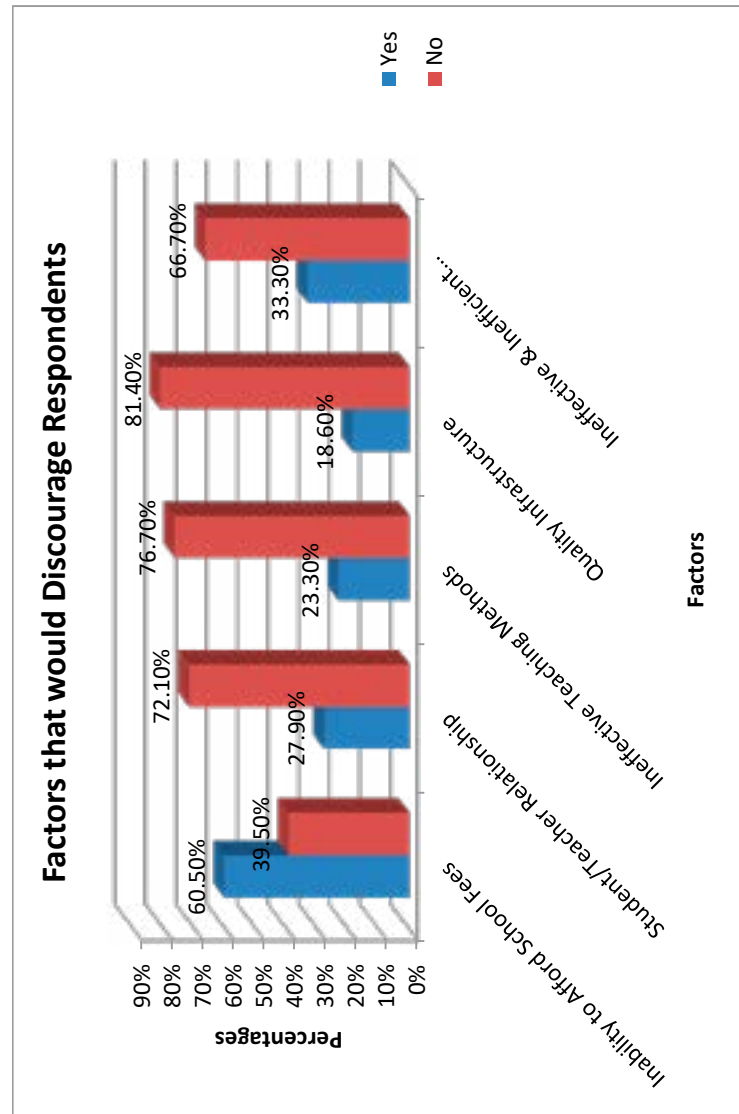


Figure 3 shows that, from the sample of 43 respondents, 60.5 % stated that the main reason that would discourage them from continuing their education at ECC is the inability to afford school fees.

Table 5

Other Factors that Discourage Participants in Continuing their Education at ECC

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	38	88.4	88.4	88.4
Course I want to do is not offered here	1	2.3	2.3	93.0
Fact that you couldn't sit the exam	1	2.3	2.3	95.3
Lunch system. Snail was found in food	1	2.3	2.3	97.7
Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 5 shows the other factors that would discourage respondents from continuing their education at ECC. Two point three percent of the respondents each stated: that the course that they want to do is not offered at the institution, the fact that they were unable to complete their exams and the experience of finding a snail in the lunch that was purchased at the canteen.

Figure 4

Ways ECC can Assist Respondents to Complete their Course of Study

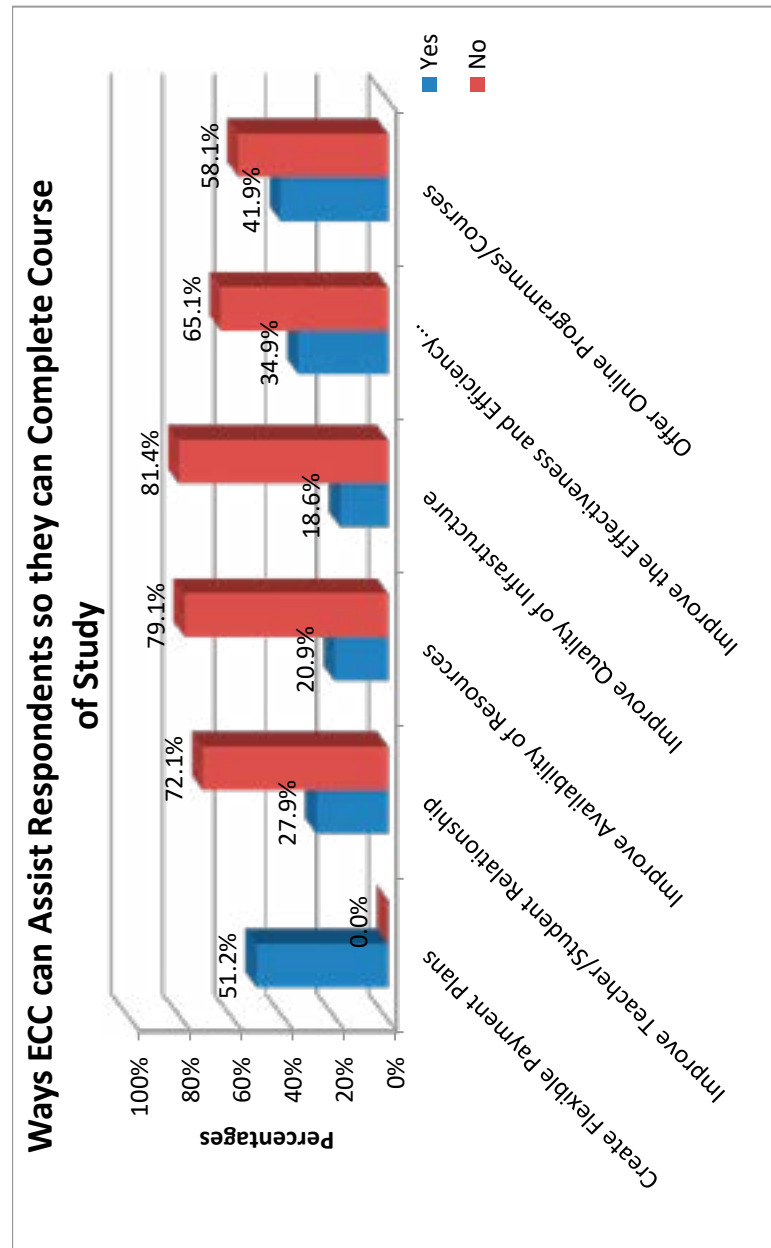


Figure 4 shows that, of a total of 43 respondents, the two main strategies that ECC can implement to assist students in completing their course of study are: creating flexible payment plans (51.2%) and offering courses and programmes online (41.9%).

Table 6

Visited the Student Financial Aid Office

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	7	16.3	22.6	22.6
	No	24	55.8	77.4	100.0
	Total	31	72.1	100.0	
Missing	System	12	27.9		
Total		43	100.0		

Table 6 shows that 77.4% of the respondents have not visited the Student Financial Aid Office.

Table 7

Awareness of the Student Financial Aid Office

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	28	65.1	65.1	65.1
	No	15	34.9	34.9	100.0
	Total	43	100.0	100.0	

Table 7 shows that majority (65.1%) of the respondents were aware of the Student Financial Aid Office.

Table 8

<i>Support ECC can Offer to Respondents for them to Successfully Complete Course of Study</i>	<i>Number of Respondents</i>	<i>Percentages</i>
Provide financial assistance & more scholarship opportunities	5	42%
Check up on Students in timely manner	1	8%
Offer additional courses	2	17%
Teachers need reality check to know they are here to do a job and not to make friends	1	8%
Lower cost for CAPE subjects	1	8%
Make class times more flexible to accommodate students who are employed	1	8%
More flexible payment plan	1	8%
Total	12	100%

Table 8 shows that most (42%) of the respondents stated that ECC can help them to successfully complete their course of study by providing more financial assistance and scholarship opportunities.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

From a sample of forty-three (43) respondents the ECC Student Retention Survey found that most of the respondents that discontinued their course of study in the second semester were in their first year of study and enrolled in Business Studies Management programmes. It was uncovered that the main reason why the respondents having to discontinue their course of study at the institution was as a result of them having financial challenges. Consequently, the factors that would encourage respondents to continue studying at ECC were affordability of programme offerings as well as creating more flexible payment plans, providing financial assistance and providing more scholarship opportunities. This is congruent with Davies (1999) as well Grebennikoy and Shah (2012) who found that financial and personal challenges affect students' decisions to prematurely exit their course of study.

Other factors for participants not returning were: programme completion (sitting CSEC subjects) and pregnancy. Consequently, respondents indicated that improving the quality of teachers at the institution would influence their decision to continue their studies. This suggestion is supported by Martinez, 2001; Grebennikoy & Shah 2012 who posit that strategies inclusive of providing academic and non-academic support to students make a significant difference in the retention of students with such challenges.

On the other hand financial challenge is the main area of concern for the respondents and would determine their decision as it is the main factor that would encourage or discourage them from pursuing their course of study at the institution. Consequently, the respondents believe that ECC could help in the successfully completion of their course of study by creating more flexible payment plans, providing financial assistance and providing more scholarship opportunities. This is congruent with Davies (1999) as well Grebennikoy and Shah (2012) who found that financial and personal challenges do affect students' decisions to prematurely exit their course of study.

Despite financial challenges representing the main reason for the non-trajectory of students, the majority (77.4%) have never visited the Student Financial Aid

Office to get assistance although 65% are aware of the Office. The institution has developed this Office to assist students experiencing financial challenges; however, few students are benefiting from this service to complete their studies. The 65% of the respondents who indicated their awareness of the Office but have not been using it; consequently, the findings suggest that there is need to increase the promotion of such services to the student cohorts repeatedly. Additionally, as proposed by Martinez (2001), an integrated approach is eminent that is characteristic of assessment, close monitoring and follow-up initiatives to guide the students to the appropriate support service.

The research highlighted other factors that would encourage respondents to continue their course of study at ECC. These include: the chance to resit exams, flexible class times for employed students, the implementing of an Associate Degree in Cosmetology at Wesley Grove, the offering of short courses in specific areas, improved quality of service at the institution and for the respondent to have a change in attitude with regards to academic accomplishments. The suggestions, outlined by the respondents, are supported by Grebennikoy & Shah 2012 who noted that the provision of relevant and applicable programs that are tailored to the needs of the students are critical in determining their decision to complete a course of study.

CONCLUSION

The Student Retention Survey is important in any institution to monitor the trajectory of students and to help the institution implement strategies to assist students that are encountering challenges in completing their course of study. The Student Retention Survey for the 2017-2018 academic year uncovered that most of the students that discontinued their course of study were in year one and were enrolled in the School of Business Management and Entrepreneurial Studies. Financial challenge is the main reason for them discontinuing their course of study as they were unable to pay their tuition. The participants established that they can be helped to finish their course of study if ECC implemented manageable payment plans and offered more financial assistance and scholarship opportunities. On the other hand, the institution has a Financial Aid Office/ Student Financial Aid Office that a number of these participants have never visited or accessed to see what assistance they could acquire.

Evaluating attrition trends through systematic feedback from withdrawing students have been instrumental in providing ECC with key indicators which are critical to the mandate of increasing student retention. The findings have been instrumental in narrowing down the list of such issues to academic and financial support (Habley & McClanahan, 2004; Grebennikoy & Shah 2012). Essentially, the steadiest factor behind student attrition at ECC would appear to be more so related to the quantity and quality of information provided to current and prospective students about the support mechanisms for financial assistance and the lack of a rigorous monitoring and follow-up system to student before they drop-out. If this issue is appropriately addressed, and provided all other important attrition factors are closely monitored, ECC can significantly increase the likelihood of student retention and success (Habley & McClanahan, 2004; Grebennikoy & Shah 2012).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. ECC needs to update its Aeorion Student Management system with the required features so that it can better track student enrolment data and generate accurate information on those students that have discontinued their course of

study in the second semester.

2. Provide training for responsible personnel in the use of the system parties to facilitate the effective and efficient use of the system.
3. The institution needs to do more advertising /promoting of the Financial Aid Office/Student Financial Aid Office so that students can be aware of its importance and the assistance that they can acquire especially when encountering financial challenges.
4. It was found that a number of the participants did not return to ECC as the programme that they wanted to do was not offered especially at the Wesley Grove Campus. The institution can look at the feasibility of offering some of these courses
e.g. an Associate Degree in Cosmetology.
5. Most participants who discontinued their course of study, was as a result of financial challenges. The institution needs to implement more flexible and manageable payment plans to assist students experiencing financial challenges.
6. The small sample size of the students who discontinued their training is a reflection of the difficulties experienced in identifying the at risk students. It is important that a mechanism be employed to document all students who sit in classes in order to accurately track who is missing during the course of their study.

INSTITUTION POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Wild and Ebbers (2002) postulated that to understand student retention issues in community colleges, it is necessary to identify the retention goal of the institution, the criteria, definitions, and data needed to monitor progress toward the retention goal. It is only at that point that an effective student retention program can be designed and implemented. The way forward for ECC therefore is to formulate a student retention framework that will outline the retention targets, criteria and strategies to address the issues identified in this study.

Habley and McClanahan (2004) postulated that given the fact that student retention and completion of studies in a timely manner have been recognized as

critical elements in institutional effectiveness and accountability it is important to ensure that strategies include the following:

1. Designation of a visible individual to coordinate a campus-wide student retention planning team.
2. Conduct a systematic analysis of the characteristics of ECC students. Although attrition decisions involve the complex interplay of many variables, two fundamental questions must be addressed for a college to design effective strategies to improve student persistence: demographics, academic performance, academic plans and self-reported needs as well as student opinions and attitudes about academic and non-academic programs/services.
3. Develop an integrated plan that encapsulates academic support, financial support and academic advisement for all year groups and a “freshman program to build new students’ identity with and commitment to the institution.
4. Ensure that the implementation plan has a phased approach, delineating a short term, medium term and long term intervention and evaluations.
5. The change process should be systematic and timely as it is integral to the process.
6. The final stages involve the implementation and measurement of the student retention initiatives which can therefore inform the way forward for continuous improvement.

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Graduate Tracer Study

Excelsior Community College Research and Innovation Division

Excelsior Community College

Abstract

Annually, the Graduate Tracer Study (GTS) is conducted to assess graduates' educational experiences during their course of study, personal and professional activities undertaken since the completion of their programme of study at Excelsior Community College (ECC). The GTS was contracted by the management team of ECC to inform the development of student support services such as; career development and placement among others, which are geared towards assisting the graduates in making the transition to further education and or the world of work. Findings from the GTS also provided meaningful insights to the relevance and quality of the programmes that are offered at the institution. The information gathered can be used to minimize deficits in academic programmes as it relates to the content, delivery and relevance, which will lead to quality assurance development of the college. A survey design was used to collect data from graduates using a questionnaire, where the data was collected through telephone interviews. Descriptive frequencies were used to analyze the data using SPSS version 21. The findings revealed that 6 months after graduation, the majority of graduates (77%) were employed and this employment was primarily in the Business and Services industry. The detailed findings were presented in the body of the study and recommendations were made for future decision making.

Keywords - graduates, tracer study, programme evaluation, professional development, career choice, community college

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, Excelsior Community College hosts its annual graduation ceremony in November. Many of these graduates transition to the world of work or continue their studies at another educational institution. The academic year 2016-

2017 produced 558 graduates. A Graduate Tracer Study was initiated and undertaken by the Research and Innovation Division in order to assess graduates' educational experience during enrolment as well as their academic and/or professional pursuits after graduation.

An effective and purpose driven Higher Education Institution (HEI) embodies a tertiary education and training system that is strategically positioned to generate competent and essentially high level skills and knowledge critical for the socio-economic development of a country (Harvey, 2000). The 21st century employer seeks a highly skilled workforce which will act as a catalyst for improvement, innovation, leadership and management (Oseifuah & NovisiKwado, 2014). In an effort to gain and sustain relevance to a dynamic global market HEIs are constantly assessing their effectiveness through assessing graduates' perceptions and experiences.

To satisfy the increasing demands of flexible organizations which demand malleable and increasingly empowered employees, HEIs need to engage students in transformative and empowered learning. The increasing labour market needs may be satisfied through the context of lifelong learning, a mandate of the Excelsior Community College.

Empirical evidence suggests that tracer studies, are considered a suitable approach to evaluating the output of HEIs, particularly as it relates to the quality education and training provided (AAU, 2002, as cited by Oseifuah & NovisiKwado, 2014, p. 291). The International Labour Organisation (ILO) Thesaurus conceptualizes a tracer study as an impact assessment instrument that is used to evaluate the impact that specific elements of a programme have on target groups in an effort to identify the effective and ineffective project components. Essentially, the objective of a tracer study is to enable tertiary institutions to garner information from graduates regarding the adequacy of educational programmes in preparing them for life after college.

Information emanating from tracer studies is useful in establishing basis for future institutional planning activities. In a knowledge economy, one of the critical objectives of tertiary education and training is to prepare students for future employment; hence, a vital and essential connection between tertiary education and

employment (Harvey, 2000).

HEIs effectiveness is mediated by teaching quality, program/course content and the knowledge gained by its students that inadvertently contributes to personal and professional development. Researchers have found that graduates who indicated satisfaction with the educational training provided by HEIs in terms of quality teaching and learning, program design as well as the knowledge and skills gained (Oseifuah & NovisiKwado, 2014) were more likely to return for continued education, or refer others to the HEI to pursue further studies. In addition, respondents rated the use of professional knowledge and skills acquired during studies as a very important factor in job satisfaction (Oseifuah & NovisiKwado, 2014) and job performance (Harvey, 2000). Areas of dissatisfaction can therefore be inferred as processes that need improvement that can strategically be addressed by the HEI.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Graduate Tracer Study is to evaluate the demand for ECC's programmes, the transition of graduates into the world of work and their progress 6 months after leaving the institution.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are graduates perceptions of the programmes that they were enrolled in at ECC?
2. What is the employment status of ECC's graduates after 6 months?
3. Are ECC graduates employed in their area of training from the institution?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study will provide valuable information about graduates' perception of the courses and programmes that are offered. This will enable the institution to evaluate these programmes and make improvements where necessary. In addition, the college will also gain knowledge of the relevance and quality of the programmes that are offered at the institution and if students are able to acquire jobs in these areas. The information gathered can be used to minimize deficits in particular programmes as it

relates to the content, delivery and relevance, which will lead to further development of the college in terms of quality assurance. This will assist the institution in the accreditation of the programmes of study. Furthermore, this study will provide information that will help ECC better prepare its students for the job market and society.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

A quantitative research approach was employed for this research using a survey design. The research targeted graduates representing all programmes and academic schools who left the institution November, 2017 and were presented with diplomas, certificates, associate degrees and bachelor of science degrees.

PARTICIPANTS

The sample consisted of ECC graduates, who left the institution in November, 2017. The institution had 558 graduates however; the sample consisted of 173 participants. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample. Twenty seven of the respondents completed the survey via Survey Monkey and the rest completed the survey via telephone calls from representatives from the ECC Customer Service Centre. The sample comprised of graduates from the Faculty of Business Management, Faculty of Pure and Applied Science, Faculty of Computer Science and Engineering and the Faculty of Humanities and Education.

INSTRUMENTATION

The instrument that was used to collect data for the research was a questionnaire. The instrument consisted of 19 items. Fourteen of the items were closed ended questions and 5 were open ended questions. The questionnaire addressed the following variables:

- Demography
- Employment Status
- Education

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

The data for the survey was collected using two different media. The instrument was emailed to 98 participants via Survey Monkey on May 30, 2018 and they were prompted periodically throughout the month of June to provide a response. The

instrument was also sent to the participants from Survey Monkey via a Web link. Data was also collected from participants via telephone calls. The telephone calls were made by summer employees at the newly developed ECC's Customer Service Centre. The employees called the participants, asked them the questions and then completed the questionnaires.

The information from Survey Monkey was exported to the PSPP software programme and the rest of the data that was gathered, coded and entered using the PSPP software. The data was analysed using the SPSS 21 software.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

All ethical considerations were adhered to as the representatives from the ECC Customer Service Centre explained to participants the purpose of the study and the purpose of the findings. It was explained that their identity was confidential. In addition, it was explained that their participation in the study was voluntary and they had no obligation to complete the survey after starting. Also, they were reassured that they could withdraw from the study at any point in time without any form of penalty.

LIMITATIONS

1. A number of the respondents seemed to have misinterpreted some of the questions based on their responses. This was evident in the questions that asked participants about the programme of study they were enrolled in while attending ECC and the current program of study enrolled in if they are still studying.
2. Some participants did not complete the entire instrument. This affected the quality of the data as some of the responses could not be included for analysis.
3. A number of the respondents misinterpreted item 16 of the survey instrument and wrote the institution that they are currently enrolled in instead of the programmes. This resulted in the difference for the figures for tables 10-12. In addition, some of the graduates stated that they are enrolled in completing CAPE subjects. Graduates would have passed this level as they would have associate degrees, diplomas, bachelor's degrees and post-graduate diplomas

4. One method of gathering the data for the research was through the newly established ECC Customer Centre via telephone calling. A number of the respondents thought that the call was a scam and were very reluctant to answer some questions, in particular the question about their gross monthly income.

5. Only a portion of the 2017 graduates from ECC were included in the study as some could not be reached using the telephone numbers that the College had on file for them. The research mostly captured the graduates who came to graduation rehearsals. At these rehearsals the Research and Innovation Division had created a database with the recent contact information for these individuals so that they could be contacted 6 months after graduation. In addition, the institution does not have an updated database of its graduates.

6. The department had requested a list of the graduates and their contact information from the Registrar. This proved onerous as the personal files of the students would have to be retrieved from the school's vault to acquire their contact information and the Office of Students' Affairs did not have the manpower to do so. This affected the sample size for the study.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Figure 1
Faculties of Enrolment

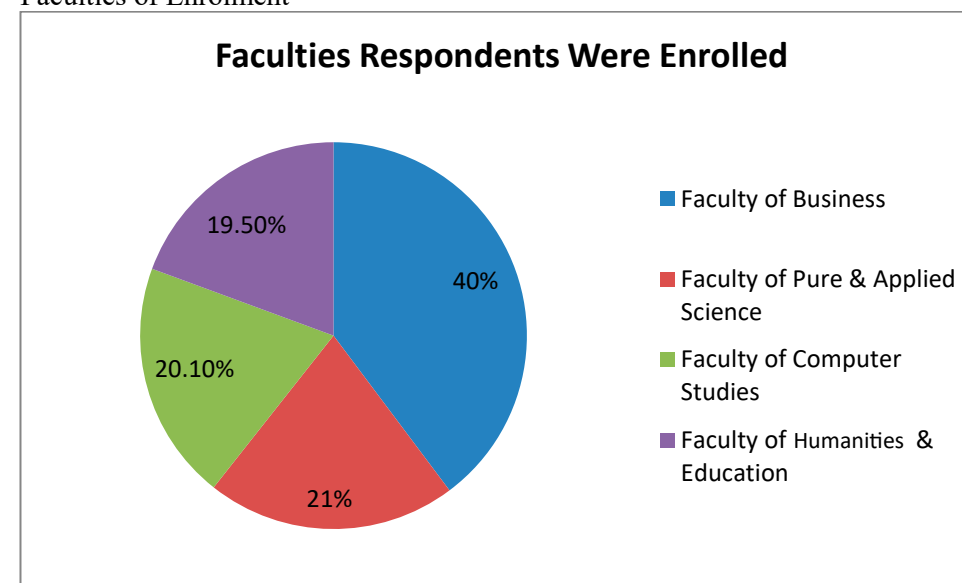


Figure 1 shows that most (40%) of the 173 graduates were from the Faculty of Business.

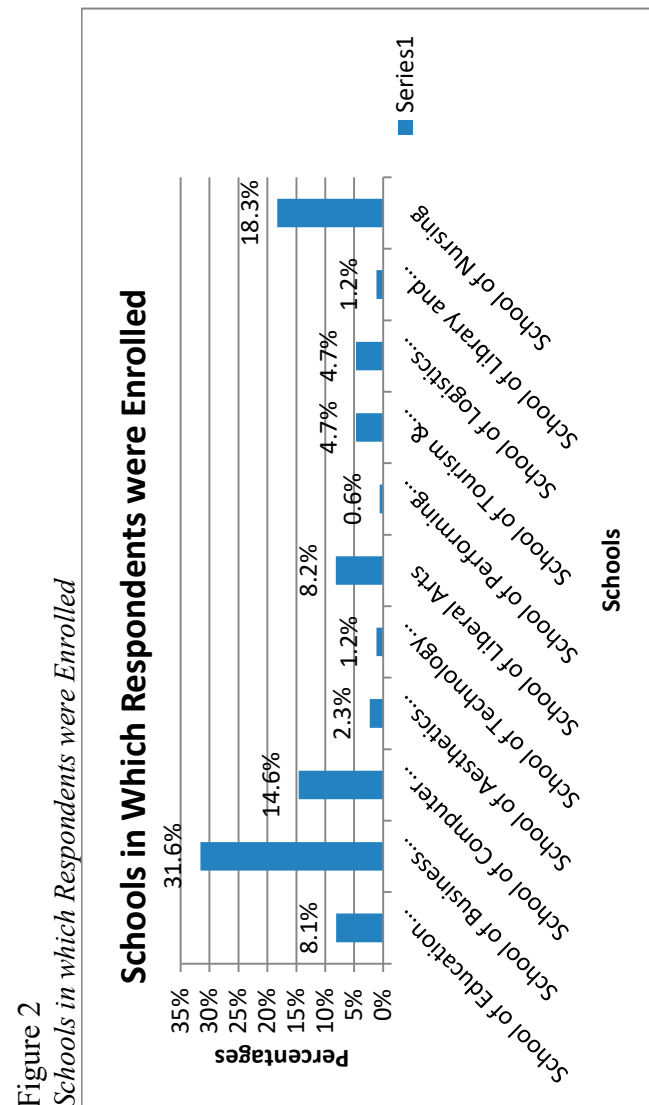


Figure 2 shows that most (31.6%) of the 173 graduates were from the School of Business and Entrepreneurial Studies.

Table 1

Specific Programmes in which Respondents were Enrolled at ECC

<i>Programmes in which Graduate were Enrolled</i>	<i>Number of Respondents</i>	<i>Percentages</i>
AS Criminal Justice	1	1%
AS Architecture & Construction Technology	3	2%
AS Computer Science	17	12%
AS Library Technical Education	3	2%
AS Social Work	3	2%
AS Automobile Repair & Engineering Tech	2	1%
AS Performing Arts	1	1%
AS Business Studies	18	12%
AS Cosmetology	4	3%
AS Psychology	1	1%
AS Early Childhood Education	1	1%
AS Animation	1	1%
AS Liberal Arts	2	1%
BSc. Tourism Hospitality & Entertainment Management	15	10%
BSc. Business Studies	18	12%
BSc. Nursing	24	17%
BSc. Computer Studies	7	5%
CAP	7	5%
CAPE	14	10%
Certificate in Electrical Technology	1	1%
Diploma in Business Logistics	2	1%
Total	145	100%

Table 1 shows that most of the respondents were enrolled in the following programmes: BSc. Nursing (17%), AS in Computer Studies, AS in Business and BSc. Business each had 12%

Table 2

Years Respondents Enrolled in Programmes at ECC

<i>Years Respondents Started Programmes</i>	<i>Number of Respondents</i>	<i>Percentages</i>
2008	1	0.6%
2009	2	1.0%
2010	4	2.4%
2011	3	2%
2012	16	10%
2013	35	21%
2014	16	10%
2015	48	29%
2016	28	17%
2017	8	5%
2018	3	2%
TOTAL	164	100%

Table 2 shows that most (29%) of the respondents enrolled in their programmes in 2015 followed by 21% that enrolled in 2013.

Table 3

Schools	Number of Graduates by Schools	%	Number of Respondents by Schools	%
School of Education and Workforce(SEWD)	38	7%	14	8%
School of Business & Entrepreneurial Studies(SOBES)	154	28%	54	32%
School of Computer Studies (SOCS)	51	9%	25	15%
School of Aesthetics and Cosmetology (SOAC)	4	1%	4	2%
School of Liberal Arts and Humanities(THEM)	38	7%	14	8%
School of Performing Arts(SOPA)	3	1%	1	1%
School of Tourism Hospitality and Entertainment Management(THEM)	111	20%	13	8%
School of Nursing(SON)	68	12%	31	19%
School of Engineering Logistics and Built Environment (SELBE)	13	2%	8	5%
School of Library and Technical Education(SLTE)	8	1%	2	1%
School of Technology Engineering and Mathematics(STEM)	10	2%	2	1%
CAP	60	11%	0	0%
Total	558	100%	168	100%

Table 3 shows that the majority (32%) of the respondents were from the School of Business & Entrepreneurial Studies.

Table 4
Highest Level Education of ECC Graduates

Highest Level Education	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Post-graduate Diploma	1	2	1.16	1.20	1.20
Master's Degree	2	1	.58	.60	1.80
Bachelor's Degree	3	79	45.66	47.31	49.10
Associate Degree	4	51	29.48	30.54	79.64
Diploma	5	12	6.94	7.19	86.83
Certificate	6	22	12.72	13.17	100.00
Missing	.	6	3.47		
Total		173	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 shows that the highest level qualification for majority (47.3%) of the graduates was a bachelor's degree.

Table 5
Graduates Working in Discipline Studied at Excelsior Community College

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	74	42.8	43.5	43.5
	No	96	55.5	56.5	100.0
	Total	170	98.3	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.7		
Total		173	100.0		

Table 5 shows that majority (56.5%) of the graduates were not employed in the discipline that they studied at Excelsior Community College (ECC).

Figure 3
Reasons Respondents are not Working in Field of Study

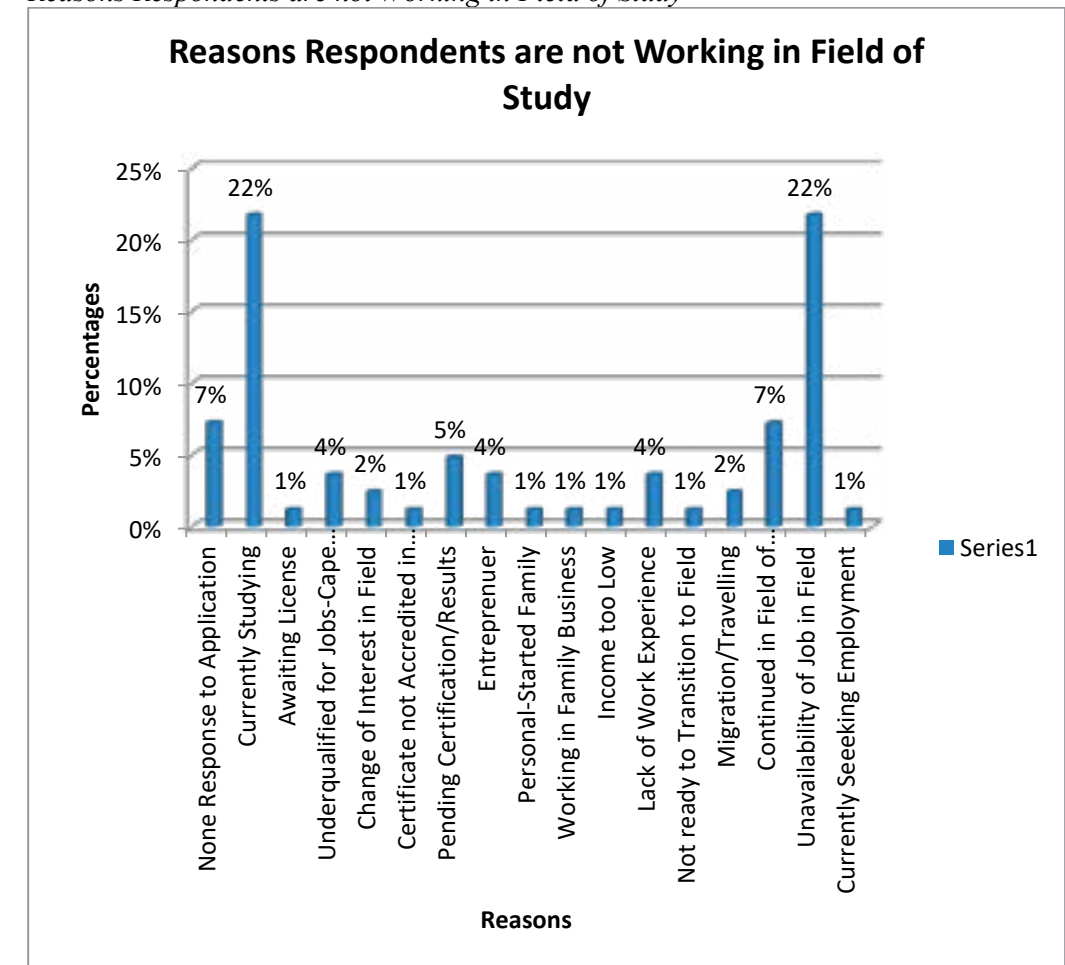


Figure 3 shows that of a total of 83 respondents, majority (22%) stated that the main reason they were not working in the discipline in which they studied was because they are currently pursuing further studies while another 22% stated that it was because of the unavailability of jobs in the discipline/field in which they studied.

Figure 4
 Graduate Employment by Industry

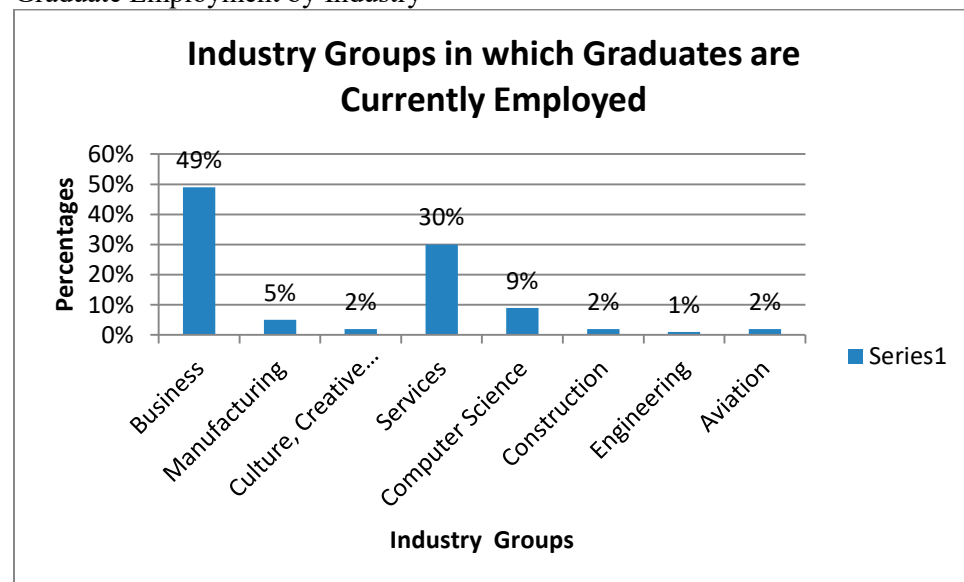


Figure 4 shows that of the 100 graduates who responded to this question, the majority (49%) were employed in the business industry.

Table 6
 Gross Monthly Income of Graduates

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than \$60,000	65	37.6	46.4	46.4
	\$60,000-\$80,000	19	11.0	13.6	60.0
	\$80,000-\$100,000	18	10.4	12.9	72.9
	Over \$100,000	38	22.0	27.1	100.0
	Total	140	80.9	100.0	
Missing	System	33	19.1		
Total		173	100.0		

Table 6 shows that most (46.4%) of the respondents were earning less than \$60,000 per month.

Table 7
 Employment Status of Respondents before Attending ECC

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	85	49.1	51.2	51.2
	No	81	46.8	48.8	100.0
	Total	166	96.0	100.0	
Missing	System	7	4.0		
Total		173	100.0		

Table 7 shows that the majority (51.2%) of the respondents were employed before they enrolled at ECC.

Figure 5

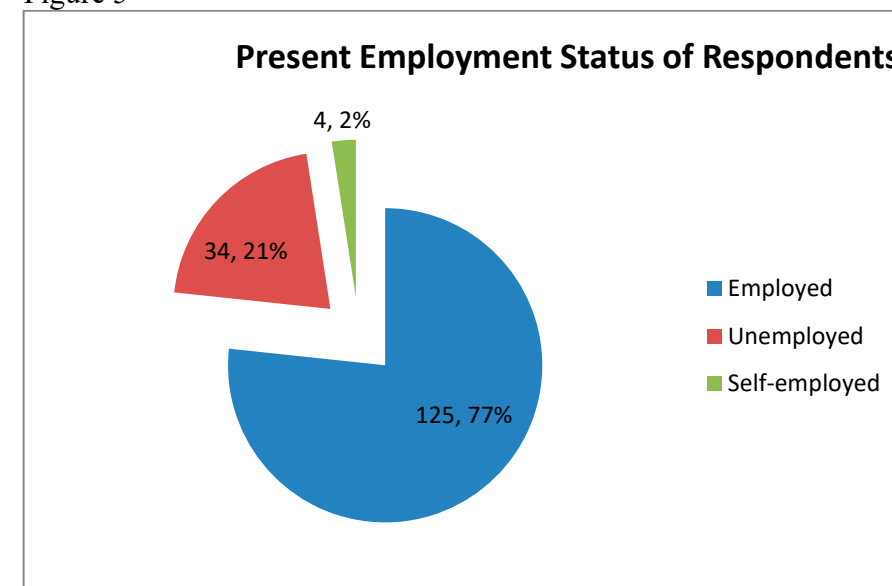


Figure 5 shows the present employment status of the graduates; indicating that of a total of 125 participants, the majority (77%) were employed.

Table 8
Number of Jobs Graduates Have

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Valid	One job	121	69.9	74.2	74.2
	Two jobs	2	1.2	1.2	75.5
	Three jobs	2	1.2	1.2	76.7
	Unemployed	34	19.7	20.9	97.5
	Self-employed	4	2.3	2.5	100.0
	Total	163	94.2	100.0	
Missing	System	10	5.8		
Total		173	100.0		

Table 8 shows that the majority (74.2%) of the respondents had only one job

Table 9
Strategies ECC can Implement to Assist Graduates in Gaining Employment

<i>Things ECC can Implement in System to Assist Graduates in Gaining Employment</i>	<i>Percentages</i>
Help students gain adequate work experience through the implementing of internship/work experience programmes	44%
Have agreements with Companies to provide employment for students who excel at ECC	9%
Implement Job Placement Programme	31%
Give Students Jobs	3%
School should do continued feasibility study to know what is happening in the job market	3%
Help students with the fixing of resumes and develop website where employers can access resumes of graduates	3%
Implement Bachelor's Degree in Geometrics	3%

Table 9 shows that 44% of a total of 32 respondents stated that the main thing that ECC can implement in its system to help students gain employment after graduation is to ensure that they have work experience which can be acquired through internship and work experience programmes. This was followed by 31% stating that the institution should implement a Job Placement Programme.

Table 10

Graduates Enrolled in a Programme to Further Academic Training

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	64	37.0	38.3	38.3
	No	103	59.5	61.7	100.0
	Total	167	96.5	100.0	
Missing	System	6	3.5		
Total		173	100.0		

Table 10 shows that the majority (61.7%) of the respondents were not enrolled in a programme to further training/academic studies after graduating from ECC.

Table 11

Relation of Current Programme of Study to Past Course of Study.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	42	24.3	56.0	56.0
	No	33	19.1	44.0	100.0
	Total	75	43.4	100.0	
Missing	System	98	56.6		
Total		173	100.0		

Table 11 shows that the majority (56%) of the graduates who were currently studying was enrolled in programmes that are related to their previous area of study at ECC. The missing value represents those respondents who were not currently studying.

Table 12

Programmes in which Graduates are Currently Enrolled

Programmes in Which Respondents are Currently Enrolled	Number of Respondents	Percentage
ACCA	1	2%
Animation & Design	2	3%
AS Business	2	3%
AS Architecture & Construction	3	5%
AS Automobile Repairs & Engineering	2	3%
AS In Computer Science	3	5%
AS Renewable Energy	1	2%
Bachelor in Business	16	26%
Bachelor in Computer Science	2	3%
Bachelor in Social Work	2	3%
Bachelor in Library Technical Education	2	3%
BPO Training	2	3%
BSc. Hospitality Management	3	5%
BSc. Psychology	1	2%
CAPE	2	3%
CCNA	2	3%
Certificate in Computer	1	2%
Certificate in Paralegal	1	2%
AS in Special Education	2	3%
Dental Assistant	1	2%
Diploma in Warehouse Logistics	1	2%
Forensic & Cyber Crime	1	2%
Nursing	2	3%
Political Science	1	2%
Post-Graduate	2	3%
Shipping and Logistics	2	3%
Sociology	1	2%
Vamaram Mobile Development	1	2%
Total	62	100%

Table 12 shows that the majority (26%) of the 62 respondents were enrolled in the Bachelor in Business Degree Programme.

Table 13

Institutions at which Graduates are Pursuing Programmes

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Other	8	4.6	25.0	25.0
	University of the West Indies(UWI)	17	9.8	53.1	78.1
	University of Technology(UTECH)	7	4.0	21.9	100.0
	Total	32	18.5	100.0	
Missing	System	141	81.5		
Total		173	100.0		

Table 13 shows that the majority (53.1%) of the respondents were pursuing the current programmes that they were enrolled in at the University of the West Indies.

Table 14

Other Institutions where Graduates are Pursuing Programmes

<i>Other Institutions at Which Graduates are Pursuing Current Programmes</i>	<i>Number of Respondents</i>	<i>Percentages</i>
Canadian University	1	2%
Caribbean Maritime(CMU)	3	7%
Excelsior Community College(ECC)	27	63%
HEART	3	7%
MICO University College	3	7%
Online	1	2%
Teacher's College	2	5%
University of the Commonwealth (UCC)	3	7%
Total	43	100%

Table 14 shows that most (63%) choose to continue their education at ECC.

Table 15

Graduates Interested in being a part of the Alumni Association

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	103	59.5	70.5	70.5
	No	43	24.9	29.5	100.0
	Total	146	84.4	100.0	
Missing	System	27	15.6		
Total		173	100.0		

Table 15 shows that the majority (70.5%) of the graduates were interested in being a part of the ECC Alumni Association.

Figure 6

Reasons for Lack of Interest in ECC Alumni Association

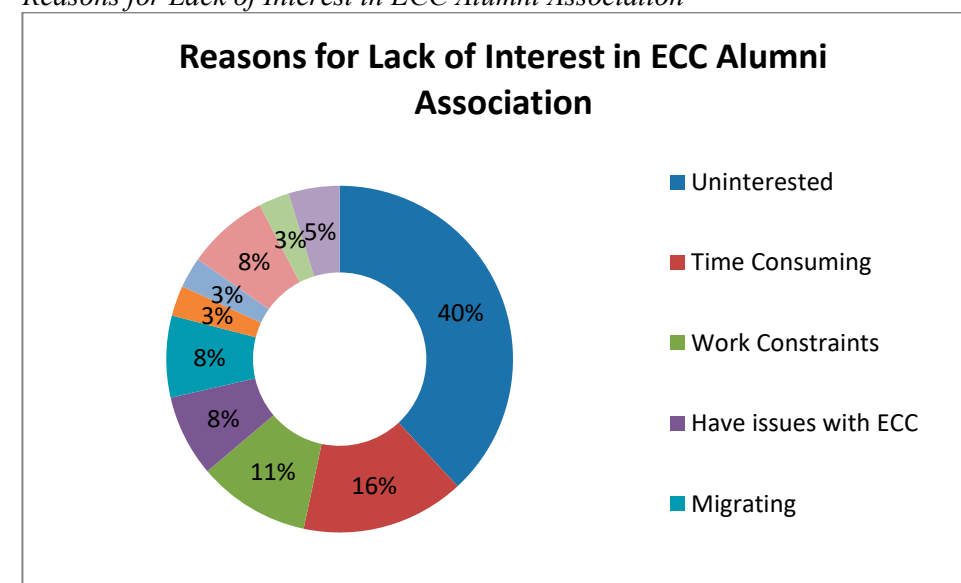


Figure 6 shows that of a total of 38 respondents, 40% did not want to be a part of the ECC Alumni Association because they were not interested in doing so.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The Graduate Tracer Study gathered information from a sample of 173 participants. The results show that majority of the graduates were from the Faculty of Business and the School of Business and Entrepreneurial Studies and had pursued an associate degree or bachelor's in Business Studies. Most were enrolled in the year 2015. The School of Business and Entrepreneurial Studies is the largest school at Excelsior Community College. This would explain why most of the respondents would have been enrolled in this school and faculty. The majority of the respondents have not done any additional training or further studies since leaving ECC. For those doing further studies most are enrolled in business programmes. It can be assumed that ECC is the institution of choice for graduates to do further studies, as most that continued studying after graduation were enrolled at the institution. This finding is critical to ECC as a HEI as it suggests that the program design, delivery and service provision supported the learning needs of the students. This finding was consistent with Oseifuah and NovisiKwado, (2014) who reported that graduates were satisfied with the training provided by their institution in terms of teaching quality, course content and the knowledge gained. Levels of satisfaction contributed to graduates rating the use of professional knowledge and skills acquired during studies as a very important factor in securing a job and contributed positively to their levels of job satisfaction (Oseifuah & NovisiKwado, 2014).

The majority of the graduates were not employed in the discipline in which they pursued their studies at ECC. The main reasons outlined for this were that a number of them were furthering their studies and there were those that are unable to find a job in the area that they studied. Most of these graduates have the qualification of a bachelor's degree with the next highest qualification being an associate degree. A majority of the respondents were employed before they were enrolled at the institution. This trend continued after graduation as most of the respondents are currently employed. However, with further education there was a marked increase in the number of those employed. It may be inferred that commitment to continued education and inability to find jobs in specified skilled areas were the two salient

factors for graduates who were not employed.

Graduates enrollment in higher level programs is an indication of ECC realizing its lifelong learning mandate focused on contributing to national and global development. Essentially, the findings support Harvey (2000) postulations of life-long learning encapsulating a well-educated and trained population equipped with the requisite competencies for “future economic prosperity, promotion of innovation, productivity and economic growth, cultivation of community life, social and political cohesion and the achievement of genuinely democratic societies with full participation” (p.5).

Most of the employed graduates were working in the business industry. This connects to the fact that most of the graduates from the cohort did their studies in the area of business. Their monthly income is less than \$60,000.00. This figure may not truly reflect their monthly salary as some of the respondents had thought that the telephone call from the ECC Customer Centre was a scam and were reluctant to state their monthly income. This may have influenced them not accurately stating the amount that they earn. In addition, it was found that most that are employed are only actively occupied in that one job.

Unemployment or underemployment of ECC graduates is not unique to ECC but is concurrent with existing statistical data globally. Empirical evidence suggests that graduate unemployment or underemployment has been a recurring phenomenon that researchers have sought to explain. According to Abel, Deitz, and Su (2014) examination of the data on the employment outcomes for recent graduates over the past two decades implies that such challenges are not new realities. The empirical evidence argues that individuals just beginning their careers often require time to transition into the labor market. Abel, Deitz, and Sua (2014) postulates that “the percentage that are unemployed or “underemployed”—working in a job that typically does not require a bachelor's degree—has risen, particularly since the 2001 recession” (p. 2). The data revealed that graduates between the ages of 20 and 27 years are likely to be underemployed, with today's recent graduates increasingly accepting low-wage jobs or working part-time (Abel, Deitz & Sua, 2014) in fields

that are at times unrelated to their areas of certification.

The empirical evidence suggests that both good and bad economic eras have seen relatively high rates of unemployment and underemployment which is not uncommon among college graduates just beginning their careers. Those rates can be expected to decline considerably as graduates reach their late twenties. A considerable note made however, is that while it appears that the labor market has become more challenging for recent college graduates, young people without college certification find it increasingly more difficult to find jobs compared to their peers with a college education (Abel, Deitz & Sua, 2014).

There are ways to foster better employment outcomes for college graduates. These may include information literacy particularly: providing timely information on: the fields in which jobs are available, differing salary scales for different jobs, and the career paths new workers can expect over their lifetime that would provide a compass for parents and students investing in a college education (Abel, Deitz & Sua, 2014). Research suggests that HEIs can facilitate such knowledge sharing through forging partnerships with industry players. Such partnerships could develop a fuller understanding of the relationship between HEIs' curriculum design, program design, the needs of employers, and the specializations undertaken by students (Vedder, Denhart & Robe, 2013).

Graduates would like ECC to implement in their system the opportunity for them to get adequate work experience whether through internship programmes or work experience programmes. This would suggest that one of the challenges that is affecting graduates getting jobs is that they lack the required work experience for available jobs. It is also the belief of some graduates that if the school implemented a Job Placement Programme then it would help them to gain employment more easily. ECC graduates would like to remain connected to the institution as 70.5% were interested in being a part of the Alumni Association. For those that did not want to be a part of the Alumni their main reason was that they were uninterested.

CONCLUSION

The business programmes at ECC seem to be very viable as most of the graduates were enrolled in the School of Business and Entrepreneurial Studies; most of those that are employed are employed in this field as well as those furthering their studies. It should be noted that the majority of those that are furthering their studies are doing so at the institution. This would signify that the institution's offerings are of such a standard that graduates view it as the institution of choice to do further studies.

Graduates are faced with the challenges of having inadequate work experience after leaving the institution as well as the unavailability of jobs in some of the disciplines that they pursued at ECC. The institution should examine how it can better prepare graduates for the job market by ensuring that they acquire some experience in their field of study and evaluate their programme offerings to ensure they are in line with the needs of the market place.

Lastly it may be concluded that the graduate tracer studies can obtain both intrinsic and extrinsic results and benefits for HEIs (Badiru, & Wahome, 2016) and by extension current and prospective students. As proposed by Badiru and Wahome (2016) future graduate tracer studies at ECC could explore graduate characteristics, such as: socio-biographic characteristics of graduates, education and work before college admission; study conditions, provisions and experiences. Other factors that could be explored could include: the job search and transition to work experience, employment and work, work demands and graduate competencies that could indicate the relationships between study and work. If future graduate tracer studies are designed with rigor and inherent uniqueness, tracer study methodologies can provide simple and consumable results that can be utilized (Badiru, & Wahome, 2016) appropriately at individual, group and institutional level. Intrinsic results from GTS can be used to point at areas for improvement in programmes of study and service delivery by HEIs such as ECC.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. ECC needs to do an assessment of the programme offerings of the institution to ensure that they are facilitating the needs of the wider society. From this assessment, the institution may need to revamp some programmes, remove, or introduce new programmes based on the changes that are occurring in the wider society.
2. ECC presently has an internship programme to help students gain work experience. The system should be monitored to ensure that there is a match of area of study and industry and not that students are placed at organizations to complete the programme to facilitate them graduating. The experience should be of value to the students and their future career.
3. The institution should look into the establishment of a placement and career services office that would help graduates with preparing for and finding employment.
4. ECC should continue to promote itself as the institution of choice to encourage repeat business from graduates. The findings from a research such as this that reveals the percentage of graduates returning to do further studies should be placed on the college's website as well as short videos of students explaining why ECC is their institution of choice and why they have returned to do further studies.
5. To develop a strong ECC Alumni Association there needs to be more promotion of the association and its benefits. There were some respondents who outlined that they needed more information about the association.
6. In light of the importance of the Graduate Tracer Study, ECC needs to better manage the data of students so that they can be easily contacted after six months after leaving the institution. There may be the need for better utilization of the Student Management System at the institution. This would have individuals that would be responsible and accountable for the updating of students information and there would be better security of this vital and sensitive personal information.

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Lecturer Course Feedback Survey

Excelsior Community College Research and Innovation Division

Excelsior Community College

Abstract

As a part of Excelsior Community College's quality assurance practice the Research and Innovation Division is tasked with designing and executing course evaluations. In order to fully assess the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process, a multi-stakeholder approach is adopted where both students and staff are involved in the process. This current study captures lecturers' assessment of students' readiness, attitude and performance in the courses of study within a given semester. The purpose of the Lecturer Course Feedback Survey is to inform the Academic Division of the factors contributing to the successful facilitation of courses. The study is quantitative in nature as lecturers provided feedback through a self-administered questionnaire. The data is analyzed using SPSS version 21. The findings indicated that generally students had a positive attitude towards course content and most grasped the content being taught and developed core employability skills related to the course content. The detailed findings of this study are presented, recommendations and future research directions are discussed.

Keyword: lecturer, course feedback, course evaluation, students' performance, students' attitude, community college

INTRODUCTION

Course evaluations are conducted during first and second semesters at Excelsior Community College. The course evaluations are two fold whereby both students and lecturers are given the opportunity to evaluate the courses. These course evaluations provide feedback on the quality of courses offered at the institution, allow for improvement of courses for future students, facilitate improvement in instructors' effectiveness and enable the college to implement relevant support systems. This

report serves to provide information on the lecturers' perspectives of the different courses that they teach. A self-administered instrument was completed by each lecturer. The instrument consisted of 17 Likert scale items. The first 12 items examined students' general attitude and behaviour with regards to the courses. The rest of the items examined the availability and adequacy of resources for the courses. The instrument had a Cronbach Alpha of 0.696, which means it has questionable reliability (Gliem & Gliem, 2003).

The evaluation process is conducted by the Research and Innovation Division. The Course Evaluation data was collected over a period of three weeks from March 26, 2018- April 20, 2018. Data was collected for over 300 courses and approximately 200 lecturers, however only 180 of the courses were evaluated by the lecturers.

PRESENTATIONS OF FINDINGS

The presentations of findings reflect the responses of those lecturers that completed the course feedback forms. There are variations with regards to completion. Some lecturers completed the feedback form for all their courses while others completed for some of their courses. The sample of 180 does not reflect individuals but the different courses that were evaluated.

Table 1

Dept/School of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	School of Business Management & Entrepreneurial Studies	39	21.7	22.0	22.0
	School of Computer Studies	12	6.7	6.8	28.8
	School of Aesthetics & Cosmetology	8	4.4	4.5	33.3
	School of Education and Workforce Development	33	18.3	18.6	52.0
	School of Engineering Logistics Built Environment	35	19.4	19.8	71.8
	School of Liberal Arts & Humanities	12	6.7	6.8	78.5
	School of Nursing	6	3.3	3.4	81.9
	School of Performing Arts	5	2.8	2.8	84.7
	School of Hospitality and Entertainment Management	8	4.4	4.5	89.3
	Mixed	6	3.3	3.4	92.7
	CAP	3	1.7	1.7	94.4
	School of Technology Engineering & Mathematics	9	5.0	5.1	99.4
	Princess Margaret EAN	1	.6	.6	100.0
	Total	177	98.3	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.7		
Total		180	100.0		

Table 1 shows that most of the courses that were evaluated were from the School of Business Management & Entrepreneurial (22%), School of Engineering Logistics Built Environment (19.8%) and School of Workforce Development (18.6%).

Table 2

Attendance to Class on Time

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	11	6.1	6.2	6.2
	Disagree	27	15.0	15.3	21.5
	Neutral	22	12.2	12.4	33.9
	Agree	82	45.6	46.3	80.2
	Strongly Agree	35	19.4	19.8	100.0
	Total	177	98.3	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.7		
Total		180	100.0		

Table 2 shows that there is a 66.1% agreement that the students attended classes on time with 46.3% agreeing and 19.8% strongly agreeing.

Table 3

Demonstrate Pre-requisite Knowledge

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	2	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Disagree	22	12.2	12.4	13.5
	Neutral	22	12.2	12.4	25.8
	Agree	103	57.2	57.9	83.7
	Strongly Agree	29	16.1	16.3	100.0
	Total	178	98.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	1.1		
Total		180	100.0		

Table 3 shows a 74.2% level of agreement that students come with the pre-requisite knowledge and skills required to pursue the courses with 57.9% agreeing and 16.3% strongly agreeing.

Table 4

Readily Grasp Lessons

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Valid	Disagree	15	8.3	8.6	8.6
	Neutral	38	21.1	21.7	30.3
	Agree	95	52.8	54.3	84.6
	Strongly Agree	27	15.0	15.4	100.0
	Total	175	97.2	100.0	
Missing	System	5	2.8		
Total		180	100.0		

Table 4 shows a 69.7% agreement that the students readily grasp the lessons that were taught with 54.3% agreeing and 15.4% strongly agreeing.

Table 5

Met Assignment Deadlines

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Valid	Strongly Disagree	8	4.4	4.5	4.5
	Disagree	30	16.7	16.9	21.3
	Neutral	28	15.6	15.7	37.1
	Agree	83	46.1	46.6	83.7
	Strongly Agree	29	16.1	16.3	100.0
	Total	178	98.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	1.1		
Total		180	100.0		

Table 5 shows a 62.9% agreement that the students met assignment deadlines with 46.6% agreeing and 16.3% strongly agreeing.

Table 6

Completed Required Assignments

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Valid	Strongly Disagree	4	2.2	2.3	2.3
	Disagree	15	8.3	8.5	10.7
	Neutral	29	16.1	16.4	27.1
	Agree	93	51.7	52.5	79.7
	Strongly Agree	36	20.0	20.3	100.0
	Total	177	98.3	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.7		
Total		180	100.0		

Table 6 shows a 72.8% agreement that the students completed the required assignments with 52.5% agreeing and 20.3% strongly agreeing.

Table 7

Responsive to Instructions Given

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Valid	Strongly Disagree	1	.6	.6	.6
	Disagree	4	2.2	2.2	2.8
	Neutral	19	10.6	10.6	13.3
	Agree	113	62.8	62.8	76.1
	Strongly Agree	43	23.9	23.9	100.0
	Total	180	100.0	100.0	

Table 7 shows an 86.7% agreement that the students were responsive to instructions that were given with 62.8% agreeing and 23.9% strongly agreeing.

Table 8
Readily Participate in Classroom Discussions

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	1	.6	.6	.6
	Disagree	11	6.1	6.2	6.7
	Neutral	13	7.2	7.3	14.0
	Agree	97	53.9	54.5	68.5
	Strongly Agree	56	31.1	31.5	100.0
	Total	178	98.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	1.1		
Total		180	100.0		

Table 8 shows an 86% agreement that the students readily participated in class discussions with 54.5% agreeing and 31.5% strongly agreeing.

Table 9
Motivated to Learn New Concepts

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	2	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Disagree	10	5.6	5.6	6.8
	Neutral	31	17.2	17.5	24.3
	Agree	89	49.4	50.3	74.6
	Strongly Agree	45	25.0	25.4	100.0
	Total	177	98.3	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.7		
Total		180	100.0		

Table 9 shows a 75.7% agreement that the students were motivated to learn new concepts, with 50.3% agreeing and 25.4% strongly agreeing.

Table 10
Demonstrated Enthusiasm to Learning Course

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	2	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Disagree	21	11.7	11.8	12.9
	Neutral	37	20.6	20.8	33.7
	Agree	74	41.1	41.6	75.3
	Strongly Agree	44	24.4	24.7	100.0
	Total	178	98.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	1.1		
Total		180	100.0		

Table 10 shows a 66.3% agreement that the students demonstrated enthusiasm to learning the different courses with 41.6% agreeing and 24.7% strongly agreeing.

Table 11
Demonstrated Employability Skills

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	2	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Disagree	9	5.0	5.1	6.2
	Neutral	39	21.7	21.9	28.1
	Agree	96	53.3	53.9	82.0
	Strongly Agree	32	17.8	18.0	100.0
	Total	178	98.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	1.1		
Total		180	100.0		

Table 11 shows a 71.9% agreement that students demonstrated the targeted employability skills with 53.9% agreeing and 18% strongly agreeing.

Table 12

Achieved Targeted Course Objectives

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	10	5.6	5.6	5.6
	Neutral	25	13.9	14.1	19.8
	Agree	110	61.1	62.1	81.9
	Strongly Agree	32	17.8	18.1	100.0
	Total	177	98.3	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.7		
Total		180	100.0		

Table 12 shows an 80.2% agreement that students achieved the targeted course objectives with 62.1% agreeing and 18.1% strongly agreeing.

Table 13

Maintained Appropriate Deportment

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	1	.6	.6	.6
	Disagree	6	3.3	3.4	3.9
	Neutral	17	9.4	9.5	13.4
	Agree	107	59.4	59.8	73.2
	Strongly Agree	48	26.7	26.8	100.0
Total		179	99.4	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.6		
Total		180	100.0		

Table 13 shows an 87.6% agreement that the students maintained appropriate deportment with 59.8% agreeing and 26.8% agreeing.

Table 14

Adequate Time to Achieve Course Objectives

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	5	2.8	2.8	2.8
	Disagree	19	10.6	10.8	13.6
	Neutral	19	10.6	10.8	24.4
	Agree	95	52.8	54.0	78.4
	Strongly Agree	38	21.1	21.6	100.0
Total		176	97.8	100.0	
Missing	System	4	2.2		
Total		180	100.0		

Table 14 shows a 75.6% agreement that there was adequate time to achieve course objectives with 54% agreeing and 21.6% strongly agreeing.

Table 15

Adequate Materials are Available

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	9	5.0	5.2	5.2
	Disagree	27	15.0	15.5	20.7
	Neutral	50	27.8	28.7	49.4
	Agree	63	35.0	36.2	85.6
	Strongly Agree	25	13.9	14.4	100.0
Total		174	96.7	100.0	
Missing	System	6	3.3		
Total		180	100.0		

Table 15 shows a 50.6% agreement (48.9%) that there were adequate available materials for the different courses with 36.2% and 14.4% strongly agreeing.

Table 16

Adequate Equipment are Available

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	10	5.6	5.8	5.8
	Disagree	32	17.8	18.5	24.3
	Neutral	33	18.3	19.1	43.4
	Agree	70	38.9	40.5	83.8
	Strongly Agree	28	15.6	16.2	100.0
	Total	173	96.1	100.0	
Missing	System	7	3.9		
Total		180	100.0		

Table 16 shows a 56.7% agreement that adequate equipment was available for the teaching of the courses with 40.5% agreeing and 16.2% strongly agreeing.

Table 17

Physical Environment Conducive to Learning

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	8	4.4	4.7	4.7
	Disagree	31	17.2	18.1	22.8
	Neutral	23	12.8	13.5	36.3
	Agree	70	38.9	40.9	77.2
	Strongly Agree	39	21.7	22.8	100.0
	Total	171	95.0	100.0	
Missing	System	9	5.0		
Total		180	100.0		

Table 17 shows a 63.7% agreement that the physical environment was conducive to learning with 40.9% agreeing and 22.8% strongly agreeing.

Table 18

Adequate Support from Head of School

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	1	.6	.6	.6
	Disagree	1	.6	.6	1.2
	Neutral	16	8.9	9.3	10.5
	Agree	86	47.8	50.0	60.5
	Strongly Agree	68	37.8	39.5	100.0
	Total	172	95.6	100.0	
Missing	System	8	4.4		
Total		180	100.0		

Table 18 shows an 89.5% agreement that lecturers get adequate support from the heads of the different schools with 50% agreeing and 39.5% strongly agreeing.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The research found the following with regards to the evaluation of the different courses.

SCHOOLS FROM WHICH MOST COURSES WERE EVALUATED:

It was found that most of the courses that lecturers provided feedback on were from the School of Business Management & Entrepreneurial (22%), School of Engineering Logistics Built Environment (19.8%) and the School of Workforce Development (18.6%).

ATTENDANCE TO CLASSES:

It was found that there was a 67.1% agreement that the students attended their classes on time.

DEPARTMENT OF STUDENTS:

It was agreed (86.6%) that the students maintained appropriate department.

PREREQUISITE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS:

It was found that there was a 74.2% agreement that the students have the pre-requisite knowledge and skills to learn the courses.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS COURSES:

It was found that there was an 86% agreement that the students readily participated in classroom discussions and there was a 75.7% agreement that they were motivated to learn new concepts. In addition, there was a 66.1% agreement that the students demonstrated enthusiasm about learning the courses.

TEACHING AND LEARNING:

The study showed that there was a 69.7% agreement that students readily grasp the lessons that were delivered. It was also agreed (86.7%) that the students were responsive to the instructions that were given and an 80.2% agreement that the students were able to achieve the targeted course objectives. In addition, there was 75.6% agreement that the time allotted for the achievement of course objectives was adequate.

DEMONSTRATED EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS:

There was a 61.3% agreement that the students demonstrated the targeted employability skills.

COMPLETION OF ASSIGNMENTS:

There was agreement of 62.4% that the students met assignment deadlines and 72.3% agreement that they completed the required assignments for the various courses.

RESOURCES AND MATERIALS:

It was found that there was only a 50.6% agreement that there were adequate

materials available for the teaching of the courses while there was a 56.6% agreement that there was adequate equipment available for the delivery of the courses e.g. lab equipment, software, and internet connectivity.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT CONDUCIVE TO LEARNING:

There was a 63.7% agreement that the physical environment where classes were held was conducive to learning.

ADEQUATE SUPPORT FROM HEADS OF SCHOOL:

The study showed that there was an 89.5% agreement that there was adequate support from the heads of the school/course leaders.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Lecturers need to understand the benefits of the Course Feedback Survey and hopefully this will increase the response rate. New staff should be educated about the Course Evaluations during orientation while seasoned staff should be refreshed in staff meetings or staff development activities leading up to the collection period. There should be an increase in the reminders via eagle mail and posters sent to the lecturers with regards to their need to participate in the process.
2. ECC needs to examine the availability of adequate resources and equipment that are needed for the different courses. There was a little above half of the courses that were evaluated where it was agreed that there was adequacy of resources and equipment.
3. The College needs to do an assessment of the different activities and systems that are in place to ensure that students learn employability skills. From this assessment there may be a need for strengthening in some areas and the inclusion of additional programmes and activities.
4. Improvements should be made to the research instrument to increase its reliability. Questions that are impacting the reliability should be deleted or replaced with questions that would increase the internal consistency.

REFERENCE

Gliem, J. A., & Gliem, R. R. (2003). Calculating, interpreting, and reporting Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient for Likert-type scales. Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing, and Community Education.

Employee Motivation, Engagement and Satisfaction Survey

Excelsior Community College Research and Innovation Division

Excelsior Community College

Abstract

The motivation, satisfaction and engagement of employees are the underpinning factors to the success of any business or organization. The management team of Excelsior Community College (ECC) has recognized this fact; thus, contracting the Employee Motivation Engagement and Satisfaction Survey (EMES) to better understand the factors influencing employees' levels of motivation, satisfaction and engagement as well as the factors contributing to their current state of being within the work environment. The findings of this study are critical to inform staff development initiatives so as to strengthen the camaraderie, work climate and work culture of the institution. A quantitative research approach was adopted to conduct the study, where data was collected using questionnaire via Survey Monkey and individual face to face administration. A major limitation of the study was the low participation across administrative and academic staff. Due to the small sample size the study was deemed a pilot to inform future studies among ECC employees. The findings revealed that good working conditions, job security and opportunities for advancement were the top three factors influencing employees' level of motivation. The details of the findings are presented and recommendations were made for future research and staff development.

Keywords: *employee, employee engagement, motivation, employee motivation, employee satisfaction, organization climate, organizational culture, community college*

INTRODUCTION

“With a student population of between 10,000 and 12,000 in any given year, Jamaica's community colleges have become a game changer in the tertiary

landscape” (The Gleaner, 2017). Excelsior Community College is one of the leading community colleges that is facilitating this game change. The institution however, cannot accomplish its goals and visions without its employees and these employees have to be motivated, satisfied and engaged. Therefore, the main aim of the Employee Motivation Engagement and Satisfaction Survey is to understand the level of motivation, satisfaction and engagement of Excelsior Community College’s employees. In addition, determine the factors that contribute to their motivation and satisfaction. This study was contracted by the management of ECC and was conducted by the institution’s Research and Innovation Division.

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

Excelsior Community College is a Government aided Public Educational Institution owned by the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas. As a tertiary educational institution the main focus is on providing post-secondary training. For the academic year 2017-2018 the institution has a total population of 2986 students and approximately 350 staff inclusive of both full-time and part-time staff members employed to the institution.

ECC’S VISION

Excelsior Community College is an innovative, learner-centric, community-focused Methodist institution catering to lifelong learning, while achieving excellence in education and training.

ECC’S MISSION

Excelsior Community College contributes to National and Global Development by providing and enabling a research-driven environment that enhances Learners’ lifelong development and provides solutions for the Public and Private sectors.

The institution is guided by the core values of dedication, collaboration entrepreneurship, compassion, accessibility and integrity.

PURPOSE

The study was carried out at Excelsior Community College (ECC) with the aim of finding out the level of satisfaction and motivation of the employees of the institution. In addition, the research seeks to determine how engaged the employees are in the affairs of the institution and the factors that contribute to their motivation and satisfaction. In order to ascertain information on employee motivation, engagement and satisfaction the research will address the following research questions:

1. What are the factors of motivation for staff at ECC?
2. How engaged are ECC staff members?
3. How satisfied are ECC staff members?
4. What is the relationship between the various factors affecting employee motivation, satisfaction and engagement?
5. What recommendations can be made to improve employee motivation, satisfaction and engagement?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The information gathered from this research is significant as it will highlight the levels of motivation and satisfaction of the employees which will facilitate the institution implementing strategies to improve employee satisfaction and motivation. In addition, it is imperative for the institution to be knowledgeable of the factors that drive the employees to perform and those that deter them. With this knowledge strategies can be implemented to strengthen these areas thus enhancing employee productivity. It is important for the Board of Governors and Executive Body’s expectations to be in sync with those of the employees and vice versa. If this is not so it creates a challenge for the organization to accomplish its desired goals. The information from this study will enable the executive and board members to know if their expectations are aligned with those of the staff.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study employed a quantitative research design. The research targeted all employees of the institution from all four campuses. A convenient sampling technique was utilized to engage the participants of the study. As a result a true random selection of participants was not achieved by the research team.

SAMPLE PARTICIPATION

An online questionnaire was emailed to 345 members of staff whereby 110 started the instrument but only 51 completed it. A self-reported questionnaire was issued to 27 ancillary workers. A convenience sampling technique was used to select the individuals that participated in the research.

INSTRUMENTATION

Data was gathered by using an online questionnaire and a self-reported questionnaire that were specifically developed for ECC's employees. Questions for the instrument were developed by adopting: Kovach's (1995) 10 factors of motivation, six items were adopted from the JRA Employee Engagement Index taken from Arunkuman and Renugadevi (2013) study, 12 items were adopted from Alqusayer (2016) study, seven items were adopted from SHRM (2016), four questions were adapted from Question Pro (n.d), three items from Employee Connect (n.d), three items were adapted and one adopted from Business Companies Group (n.d). The rest of the items were created by the Research and Innovation Division. The online survey and the questionnaire consisted of five sections. Section 1 consisted of eight demography questions, Section 2 consisted of 10 Likert scale items measuring important motivational factors, Section 3 consisted of 30 Likert scale items measuring the variable satisfaction, Section 4 consisted of 16 Likert scale items measuring the variable engagement and Section 5 consisted of five additional demographic questions. The questionnaire seeks to measure the following constructs:

- Staff Demography
- Staff Motivation
- Staff Satisfaction
- Staff Engagement

RELIABILITY OF THE INSTRUMENTS

To determine how reliable the instrument is the Cronbach's alpha was calculated. According to Waldeck (2014), the Cronbach's alpha is used to measure the internal consistency of a measurement instrument. The Cronbach's alpha ranges from 0-1 and the higher the value is the more reliable the instrument is. The instrument examined three scales: motivation, satisfaction and engagement. The Cronbach's alpha for the motivation scale is 0.823, satisfaction scale is 0.946 and for the engagement scale is 0.878. The Cronbach's alpha for the survey instrument is 0.76 which means it has acceptable reliability (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). The higher the Cronbach's alpha the more reliable the instrument is. It is recommended that instruments that are used for data collection should have a minimum reliability between 0.65 to 0.8 or even higher. Instruments with a lower Cronbach's alpha are usually unacceptable (Goforth, 2015).

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

The online survey was sent to the members of staff via Survey Monkey on January 31, 2018. The survey remained opened until May 8, 2018. The staff was sent an email to sensitize them about the survey and follow up emails were sent to remind the staff about the survey and the significance of completing it.

One member of the Research and Innovation Unit and two interns administered the questionnaire to the ancillary staff. Three members were able to complete the instrument by themselves while the rest were assisted by the team. The ancillary staff took an average of 10-15 minutes to complete the instrument.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

All ethical considerations were adhered to as it was explained to participants the purpose of the study and the purpose of the findings. It was explained that their

participation was voluntary and that their identity was confidential. The participants were not exposed to more than minimal risk that was experienced from day to day. Anonymity was assured as the completed questionnaires were kept in a safe location and incinerated at the end of the research. In addition, it was explained to participants that they had no obligation to complete the survey after starting and that they could withdraw from the study at any point in time without any form of penalty.

LIMITATIONS

1. A number of the participants complained of the instrument being too long hence, some of them started but did not complete the instrument or they perused the document and did not attempt to complete it. This affected the sample size.
2. The instrument was modified slightly for the ancillary staff but further modification was needed. Although the questions were read to them the items had to be further broken down into 'lay man' terms for some to understand.
3. Only 78 members of staff completed the research. For a staff of 350 a suitable sample would be about 184 persons. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized. Therefore, this research has to be treated as a pilot which will give insight into future research.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Table 1
Gender of Participants

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Valid	Male	20	25.6	26.0	26.0
	Female	57	73.1	74.0	100.0
	Total	77	98.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.3		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 1 shows that the majority (74%) of the respondents were females.

Table 2
Staff Category

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Valid	Academic	37	47.4	47.4	47.4
	Administrative	17	21.8	21.8	69.2
	Ancillary	24	30.8	30.8	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 shows most (47.4%) of the respondents were academic staff. The other respondents were ancillary (30.8%) and administrative staff (21.8%).

Figure 1
Participants' Departments

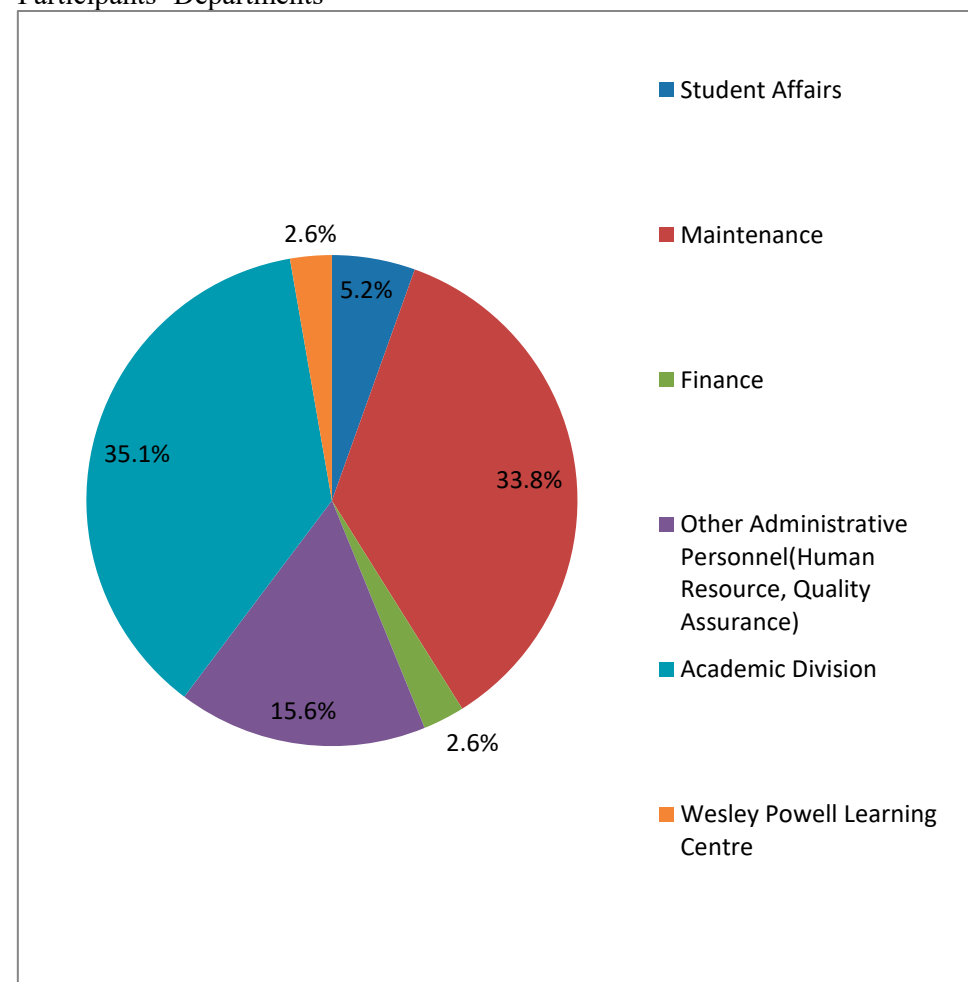


Figure 1 shows that most of the respondents were employed at Student Affairs (35.1%) followed by Maintenance with (33.8%).

Table 3
Participants Assigned Academic School

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	School of Education and Workforce(SEWD)	3	3.8	8.3	8.3
	School of Business & Entrepreneurial Studies(SOBES)	4	5.1	11.1	19.4
	School of Computer Studies(SOCS)	1	1.3	2.8	22.2
	School of Aesthetics and Cosmetology(SOAC)	4	5.1	11.1	33.3
	School of Liberal Arts and Humanities(THEM)	1	1.3	2.8	36.1
	School of Performing Arts(SOPA)	4	5.1	11.1	47.2
	School of Tourism Hospitality and Entertainment Management(THEM)	7	9.0	19.4	66.7
	School of Nursing(SON)	3	3.8	8.3	75.0
	School of Engineering Logistics and Built Environment	1	1.3	2.8	77.8
	School of Library and Technical Education	8	10.3	22.2	100.0
	Total	36	46.2	100.0	
Missing	System	42	53.8		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 3 shows the schools at which the respondents were assigned. Majority of the respondents were assigned to the School of Library and Technical Education (22.2%) and School of Tourism, Hospitality and Entertainment Management (19.4%). The missing value represents those persons employed at the institution but are not assigned to a school.

Figure 2

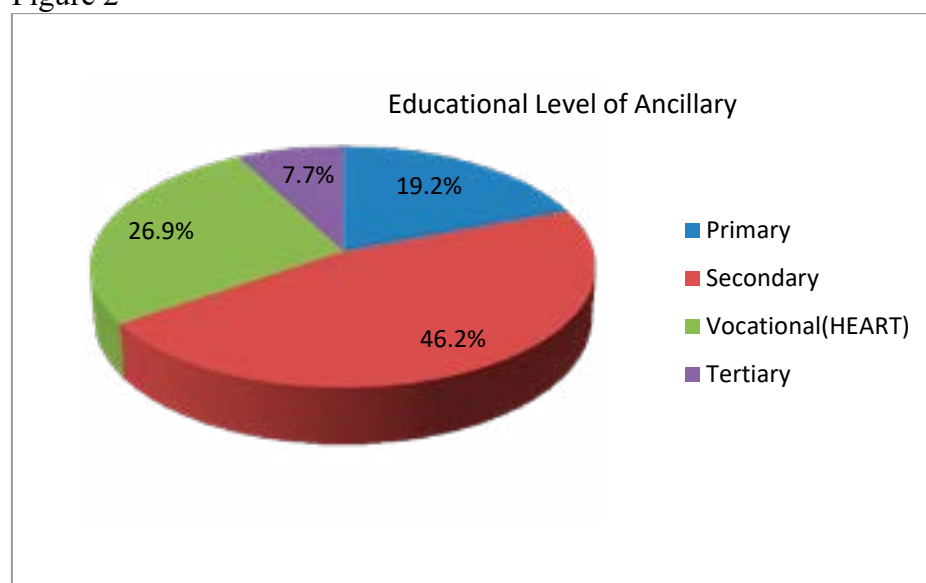


Figure 2 shows that the majority (46.2%) of the respondents that were ancillary staff had a secondary level education.

Figure 3

Educational Level of Academic and Administrative Staff

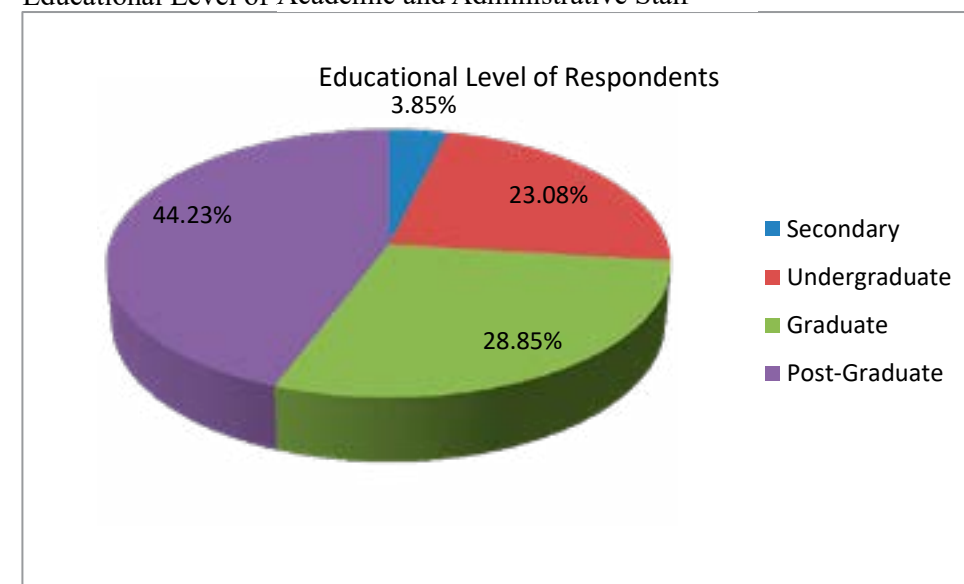


Figure 3 shows the educational level of respondents who were academic and administrative staff. Most (44.23 %) had post-graduate qualification.

Table 4

Years of Employment at ECC

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Valid	Under 1 year	10	12.8	12.8	12.8
	2-5 years	31	39.7	39.7	52.6
	6-10 years	19	24.4	24.4	76.9
	11-15 years	7	9.0	9.0	85.9
	16-20 years	5	6.4	6.4	92.3
	21-25 years	2	2.6	2.6	94.9
	26-30 years	2	2.6	2.6	97.4
	31 years and over	2	2.6	2.6	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 shows that most (39.7%) of the respondents have been employed at the institution for 2-5 years.

MOTIVATION

Figure 4

Factors that Motivate Respondents

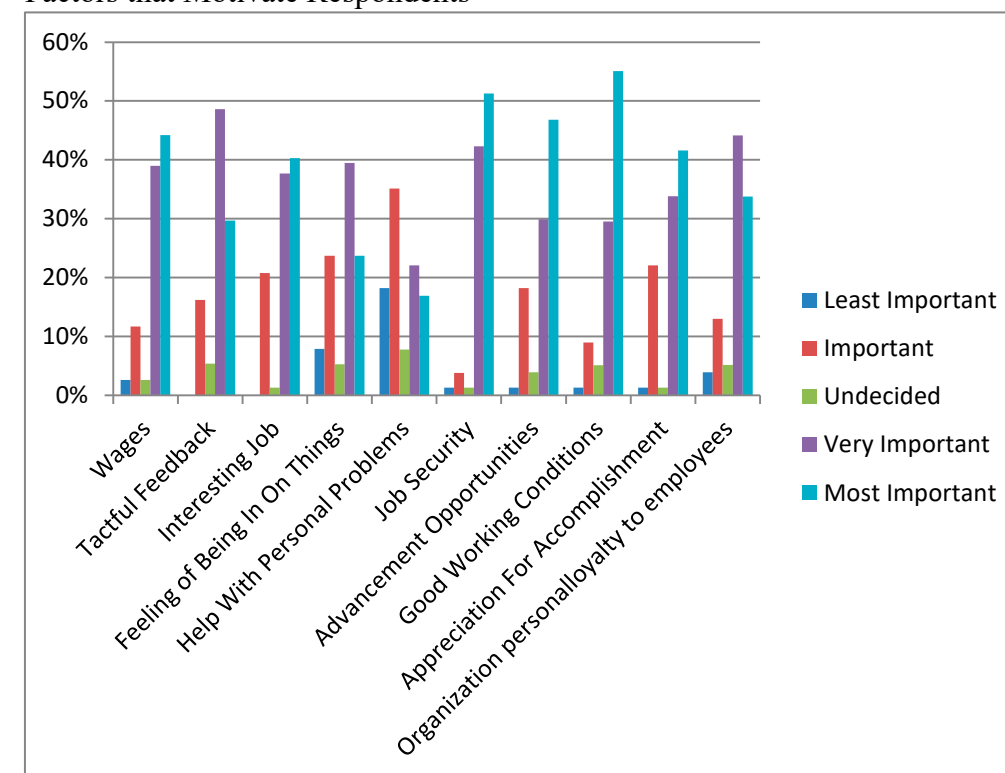


Figure 4 shows the ranking of motivational factors from the least important to the most important. The motivational factors were ranked by the respondents as follows: (1) good working conditions (55.1 %), (2) job security (51.3%), (3) advancement opportunities (46.8%), (4) wages (44.2%), (5) appreciation for accomplishments (41%), (6) interesting job (39.7%), (7) organization personal loyalty to employees (33.77%), (8) tactful feedback (28.2%), (9) feeling of being 'in' on things and (10) help with personal problems (16.9%) .

Table 5

Employee Satisfaction with Security

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	5	6.4	6.4	6.4
	Dissatisfied	10	12.8	12.8	19.2
	Undecided	12	15.4	15.4	34.6
	Satisfied	39	50.0	50.0	84.6
	Very Satisfied	12	15.4	15.4	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

Table 5 shows that 65% of the respondents were satisfied with security at ECC.

Table 6

Employee Satisfaction with Number of Work Hours

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	3	3.8	3.8	3.8
	Dissatisfied	4	5.1	5.1	9.0
	Undecided	8	10.3	10.3	19.2
	Satisfied	43	55.1	55.1	74.4
	Very Satisfied	20	25.6	25.6	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

Table 6 shows that 80.7% of the respondents were satisfied with the number of hours that they worked at the institution.

Table 7

Employee Satisfaction with Camaraderie in Department

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	5	6.4	6.4	6.4
	Dissatisfied	12	15.4	15.4	21.8
	Undecided	8	10.3	10.3	32.1
	Satisfied	30	38.5	38.5	70.5
	Very Satisfied	23	29.5	29.5	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

Table 7 shows that 68% of the respondents were satisfied with the camaraderie in their departments.

Table 8

Employee Satisfaction with Quality of Interaction with Co-Workers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	4	5.1	5.2	5.2
	Dissatisfied	6	7.7	7.8	13.0
	Undecided	8	10.3	10.4	23.4
	Satisfied	45	57.7	58.4	81.8
	Very Satisfied	14	17.9	18.2	100.0
	Total	77	98.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.3		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 8 shows that the majority (76.6%) of the respondents were satisfied with the quality of interaction with their co-workers.

Table 9

Employee Satisfaction with Collaboration with Co-workers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	6	7.7	7.7	7.7
	Dissatisfied	6	7.7	7.7	15.4
	Undecided	9	11.5	11.5	26.9
	Satisfied	43	55.1	55.1	82.1
	Very Satisfied	14	17.9	17.9	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

Table 9 shows that 73% of the respondents were satisfied with the collaboration among co-workers at the institution.

Table 10

Employee Satisfaction with Supervisor's Technical Skills

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	8	10.3	10.4	10.4
	Dissatisfied	5	6.4	6.5	16.9
	Undecided	10	12.8	13.0	29.9
	Satisfied	37	47.4	48.1	77.9
	Very Satisfied	17	21.8	22.1	100.0
	Total	77	98.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.3		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 10 shows that 70.2% of the respondents were satisfied with the technical skills of their supervisors.

Table 11

Employee Satisfaction with Supervisor's Inter-personal Skills

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	7	9.0	9.0	9.0
	Dissatisfied	10	12.8	12.8	21.8
	Undecided	12	15.4	15.4	37.2
	Satisfied	25	32.1	32.1	69.2
	Very Satisfied	24	30.8	30.8	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

Table 11 shows that 62.9% of the respondents were satisfied with their supervisor's inter-personal skills.

Table 12

Employee Satisfaction with Level of Supervisor Support

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	8	10.3	10.4	10.4
	Dissatisfied	9	11.5	11.7	22.1
	Undecided	9	11.5	11.7	33.8
	Satisfied	27	34.6	35.1	68.8
	Very Satisfied	24	30.8	31.2	100.0
	Total	77	98.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.3		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 12 shows that 66.3% of the respondents were satisfied with the support that they received on the job from their supervisors.

Table 13

Employee Satisfaction with Supervisor's Constructive Feedback

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	3	3.8	3.9	3.9
	Dissatisfied	14	17.9	18.2	22.1
	Undecided	11	14.1	14.3	36.4
	Satisfied	26	33.3	33.8	70.1
	Very Satisfied	23	29.5	29.9	100.0
	Total	77	98.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.3		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 13 shows that 63.7% of the respondents were satisfied with the constructive feedback provided by their supervisors.

Table 14

Employee Satisfaction with Supervisor's Management of Unit/Division

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	9	11.5	11.5	11.5
	Dissatisfied	7	9.0	9.0	20.5
	Undecided	14	17.9	17.9	38.5
	Satisfied	31	39.7	39.7	78.2
	Very Satisfied	17	21.8	21.8	100.0
Total		78	100.0	100.0	

Table 14 shows that 60.5% of the respondents were satisfied with how their supervisors managed their units/divisions.

Table 15

Employee Satisfaction with Supervisor Creating a Positive Work Environment

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	7	9.0	9.0	9.0
	Dissatisfied	12	15.4	15.4	24.4
	Undecided	14	17.9	17.9	42.3
	Satisfied	25	32.1	32.1	74.4
	Very Satisfied	20	25.6	25.6	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

Table 15 shows that 67.7% of the respondents were satisfied that their supervisors created a positive work environment.

Table 16

Employee Satisfaction with Supervisor Creating New Ways of Improving Work Performance

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	9	11.5	11.5	11.5
	Dissatisfied	11	14.1	14.1	25.6
	Undecided	15	19.2	19.2	44.9
	Satisfied	27	34.6	34.6	79.5
	Very Satisfied	16	20.5	20.5	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

Table 16 shows that 55.1% of the respondents were satisfied that their supervisors often explore new ways of improving their work performance by listening and using their ideas.

Table 17

Employee Satisfaction with Supervisor's Dedication to Developing Skills and Abilities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	8	10.3	10.3	10.3
	Dissatisfied	10	12.8	12.8	23.1
	Undecided	17	21.8	21.8	44.9
	Satisfied	28	35.9	35.9	80.8
	Very Satisfied	15	19.2	19.2	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

Table 17 shows that 55.1% of the respondents were satisfied that their supervisor was dedicated to developing their skills and abilities by providing ongoing performance feedback.

Table 18

Employee Satisfaction with Supervisor's Level of Care about Quality of Life

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	11	14.1	14.3	14.3
	Dissatisfied	8	10.3	10.4	24.7
	Undecided	17	21.8	22.1	46.8
	Satisfied	24	30.8	31.2	77.9
	Very Satisfied	17	21.8	22.1	100.0
	Total	77	98.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.3		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 18 shows that 52.6% of the respondents were satisfied that their supervisors cared about their quality of life outside of work.

Table 19

Employee Satisfaction with Support from other Units

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	10	12.8	13.2	13.2
	Dissatisfied	12	15.4	15.8	28.9
	Undecided	16	20.5	21.1	50.0
	Satisfied	30	38.5	39.5	89.5
	Very Satisfied	8	10.3	10.5	100.0
	Total	76	97.4	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.6		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 19 shows that 48.8% of the respondents were satisfied with the support from other units. Twenty point five percent (20.5%) of the respondents were undecided while 28.2% of the respondents were dissatisfied.

Table 20

Employee Satisfaction with Receiving Information to Perform Job

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	6	7.7	7.7	7.7
	Dissatisfied	9	11.5	11.5	19.2
	Undecided	18	23.1	23.1	42.3
	Satisfied	31	39.7	39.7	82.1
	Very Satisfied	14	17.9	17.9	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

Table 20 shows that 57.8% of the respondents were satisfied with the information received to perform their jobs effectively and efficiently.

Table 21
Employee Satisfaction with Job Security

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	9	11.5	11.5	11.5
	Dissatisfied	6	7.7	7.7	19.2
	Undecided	19	24.4	24.4	43.6
	Satisfied	28	35.9	35.9	79.5
	Very Satisfied	16	20.5	20.5	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

Table 21 shows that 56.4% of the respondents were satisfied with their job security at the institution.

Table 22
Employee Satisfaction with Communication at ECC

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	14	17.9	17.9	17.9
	Dissatisfied	17	21.8	21.8	39.7
	Undecided	13	16.7	16.7	56.4
	Satisfied	28	35.9	35.9	92.3
	Very Satisfied	6	7.7	7.7	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

Table 22 shows that 43.6% of the respondents were dissatisfied with communication at the institution. Thirty seven point six percent had some level of satisfaction with communication and 16.7% were undecided.

Table 23
Employee Satisfaction with Sharing Ideas

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	5	6.4	6.5	6.5
	Dissatisfied	9	11.5	11.7	18.2
	Undecided	10	12.8	13.0	31.2
	Satisfied	41	52.6	53.2	84.4
	Very Satisfied	12	15.4	15.6	100.0
	Total	77	98.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.3		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 23 shows that 68.8% of the respondents were satisfied with sharing their ideas.

Table 24
Employee Satisfaction that Ideas are Heard

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	7	9.0	9.2	9.2
	Dissatisfied	15	19.2	19.7	28.9
	Undecided	23	29.5	30.3	59.2
	Satisfied	23	29.5	30.3	89.5
	Very Satisfied	8	10.3	10.5	100.0
	Total	76	97.4	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.6		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 24 shows that 30.8% of the respondents had some level of satisfaction that when they shared their ideas that they were heard while 30.3% were undecided and 28.2% were dissatisfied.

Table 25

Employee Satisfaction with on the Job Training

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	9	11.54	11.54	11.54
	Dissatisfied	10	12.82	12.82	24.36
	Undecided	18	23.08	23.08	47.44
	Satisfied	33	42.31	42.31	89.74
	Very Satisfied	8	10.26	10.26	100.0
	Total	78	100	100.0	
Missing	System	0	0		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 25 shows that there is a 52.57% satisfaction with the on-the-job training that staff members receive to accomplish daily tasks.

Table 26

Employee Satisfaction with Level of Involvement in Decision Making

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	7	9.0	9.2	9.2
	Dissatisfied	9	11.5	11.8	21.1
	Undecided	12	15.4	15.8	36.8
	Satisfied	36	46.2	47.4	84.2
	Very Satisfied	12	15.4	15.8	100.0
	Total	76	97.4	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.6		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 26 shows that 53.2% of the respondents were satisfied with their involvement in decision making.

Table 27

Employee Satisfaction with Different Work Duties

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	2	2.6	2.6	2.6
	Dissatisfied	10	12.8	12.8	15.4
	Undecided	13	16.7	16.7	32.1
	Satisfied	43	55.1	55.1	87.2
	Very Satisfied	10	12.8	12.8	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

Table 27 shows that 67.8% of the respondents were satisfied with the different work duties they get on their job daily.

Table 28

Employee Satisfaction with Career Advancement and Development Training

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	9	11.5	12.0	12.0
	Dissatisfied	7	9.0	9.3	21.3
	Undecided	23	29.5	30.7	52.0
	Satisfied	29	37.2	38.7	90.7
	Very Satisfied	7	9.0	9.3	100.0
	Total	75	96.2	100.0	
Missing	System	3	3.8		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 28 shows that 48% of the respondents were satisfied with the career advancement and development training they received.

Table 29

Employee Satisfaction with Working Conditions

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	12	15.4	15.6	15.6
	Dissatisfied	21	26.9	27.3	42.9
	Undecided	14	17.9	18.2	61.0
	Satisfied	25	32.1	32.5	93.5
	Very Satisfied	5	6.4	6.5	100.0
	Total	77	98.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.3		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 29 shows that 42.9% of the respondents were dissatisfied with the working conditions at the institution while 39% were satisfied.

Table 30

Employee satisfaction with Equitable Opportunity for Promotion

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	13	16.7	16.9	16.9
	Dissatisfied	13	16.7	16.9	33.8
	Undecided	23	29.5	29.9	63.6
	Satisfied	19	24.4	24.7	88.3
	Very Satisfied	9	11.5	11.7	100.0
	Total	77	98.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.3		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 30 shows that 36% of the respondents were satisfied that there were equitable opportunities for promotion while 33% were dissatisfied and 29.9% were undecided.

Table 31

Employee Satisfaction with the Level of Autonomy

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	4	5.1	5.3	5.3
	Dissatisfied	5	6.4	6.6	11.8
	Undecided	12	15.4	15.8	27.6
	Satisfied	38	48.7	50.0	77.6
	Very Satisfied	17	21.8	22.4	100.0
	Total	76	97.4	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.6		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 31 shows that 72.4% of the respondents were satisfied with the level of autonomy/independence that they were afforded at the institution.

Table 32

Employee Satisfaction with Pay

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	22	28.2	29.7	29.7
	Dissatisfied	24	30.8	32.4	62.2
	Undecided	13	16.7	17.6	79.7
	Satisfied	12	15.4	16.2	95.9
	Very Satisfied	3	3.8	4.1	100.0
	Total	74	94.9	100.0	
Missing	System	4	5.1		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 32 shows that 62.1% of the respondents were dissatisfied with their salary.

Table 33

Employee Satisfaction with Workload Compared with their pay

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	22	28.2	29.3	29.3
	Dissatisfied	19	24.4	25.3	54.7
	Undecided	11	14.1	14.7	69.3
	Satisfied	19	24.4	25.3	94.7
	Very Satisfied	4	5.1	5.3	100.0
	Total	75	96.2	100.0	
Missing	System	3	3.8		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 33 shows that majority (54.6%) of the respondents were dissatisfied with their workload in comparison to their pay.

Table 34

Employee Satisfaction with Work Accomplishment

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	1	1.3	1.3	1.3
	Dissatisfied	6	7.7	8.0	9.3
	Undecided	8	10.3	10.7	20.0
	Satisfied	43	55.1	57.3	77.3
	Very Satisfied	17	21.8	22.7	100.0
	Total	75	96.2	100.0	
Missing	System	3	3.8		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 34 shows that 80% of the respondents were satisfied with their work accomplishment monthly.

Table 35

Employee Satisfaction with ECC's Flexibility with Respect to Family

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	7	8.97	9.46	9.46
	Dissatisfied	1	1.28	1.35	10.81
	Undecided	21	26.92	28.38	39.19
	Satisfied	34	43.59	45.95	85.14
	Very Satisfied	11	14.10	14.86	100.0
	Total	74	94.87	100.0	
Missing	System	4	5.13		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 35 shows that 57.69% of the respondents are satisfied with ECC's flexibility with respect to their families.

Table 36

Employee Satisfaction that the College Cares about Them

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	9	11.5	11.8	11.8
	Dissatisfied	8	10.3	10.5	22.4
	Undecided	22	28.2	28.9	51.3
	Satisfied	29	37.2	38.2	89.5
	Very Satisfied	8	10.3	10.5	100.0
	Total	76	97.4	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.6		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 36 shows that 48.7% of the respondents were satisfied that the College cares about its employees.

Table 37

Employee Satisfaction with Resources to do Job

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	19	24.4	24.7	24.7
	Dissatisfied	18	23.1	23.4	48.1
	Undecided	13	16.7	16.9	64.9
	Satisfied	19	24.4	24.7	89.6
	Very Satisfied	8	10.3	10.4	100.0
	Total	77	98.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.3		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 37 shows that the majority (48.1%) of the respondents were dissatisfied with the available resources to do their jobs.

Table 38

Employee Satisfaction of Achieving Career Goals

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	8	10.3	10.7	10.7
	Dissatisfied	9	11.5	12.0	22.7
	Undecided	20	25.6	26.7	49.3
	Satisfied	25	32.1	33.3	82.7
	Very Satisfied	13	16.7	17.3	100.0
	Total	75	96.2	100.0	
Missing	System	3	3.8		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 38 shows that 40.6% of the respondents were satisfied that they can achieve their career goals while at ECC.

Table 39

Employee Satisfaction with Alignment of Job Function to Career Goals

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	7	9.0	9.2	9.2
	Dissatisfied	6	7.7	7.9	17.1
	Undecided	11	14.1	14.5	31.6
	Satisfied	40	51.3	52.6	84.2
	Very Satisfied	12	15.4	15.8	100.0
	Total	76	97.4	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.6		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 39 shows that 68.4% of the respondents were satisfied that their job functions were aligned with their career goals.

Table 40

Employee Overall Satisfaction

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	5	6.4	6.5	6.5
	Dissatisfied	5	6.4	6.5	13.0
	Undecided	16	20.5	20.8	33.8
	Satisfied	43	55.1	55.8	89.6
	Very Satisfied	8	10.3	10.4	100.0
	Total	77	98.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.3		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 40 shows that the majority (66.4%) of the respondents were satisfied with their job at ECC.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Table 41
Look for ways to do Job more Effectively

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat true	4	5.1	5.2	5.2
	True	16	20.5	20.8	26.0
	Very True	57	73.1	74.0	100.0
	Total	77	98.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.3		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 41 shows that the majority (73.1%) of the respondents said that it was very true that they looked for ways to do their jobs effectively.

Table 42
Motivated to see ECC Achieve Strategic Goals

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all True	1	1.3	1.3	1.3
	Somewhat True	4	5.1	5.2	6.5
	True	17	21.8	22.1	28.6
	Very True	52	66.7	67.5	96.1
	Total	77	98.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.3		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 42 shows that most (94.8%) of the respondents said that there was some degree of truth that they were motivated to achieving the strategic goals of the institution with 67.5% stating it was very true.

Table 43
Informed of Important Decisions

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all True	17	21.8	22.4	22.4
	Somewhat True	17	21.8	22.4	44.7
	True	24	30.8	31.6	76.3
	Very True	18	23.1	23.7	100.0
	Total	76	97.4	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.6		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 43 shows that 77.7% of the respondents said that there was some degree of truth that they were informed of important decisions of the institution with 31.6% stating it was true.

Table 44
Understand ECC Mission as Envisioned by Leadership

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all True	3	3.8	3.9	3.9
	Somewhat True	8	10.3	10.4	14.3
	True	18	23.1	23.4	37.7
	Very True	48	61.5	62.3	100.0
	Total	77	98.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.3		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 44 shows that 94.9% of the respondents outlined that there was some degree of truth that they understand ECC mission as envisioned by leadership with 61.5% stating it was very true.

Table 45
Trust Leadership of College

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all True	8	10.3	10.4	10.4
	Somewhat True	12	15.4	15.6	26.0
	True	36	46.2	46.8	72.7
	Very True	21	26.9	27.3	100.0
	Total	77	98.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.3		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 45 shows that 89.7% of the respondents agree that there was some degree of truth that they trust the leadership of the college with 46.8% saying it was true.

Table 46
Comfortable Interacting with those in Leadership

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all True	10	12.8	13.0	13.0
	Somewhat True	12	15.4	15.6	28.6
	True	25	32.1	32.5	61.0
	Very True	30	38.5	39.0	100.0
	Total	77	98.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.3		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 46 shows that 87.1% of the respondents stated that there was some degree of truth that they were comfortable interacting with the leadership of the college with 39% stating that it was very true.

Table 47
Confidence in Leadership of the Institution

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all True	6	7.7	7.9	7.9
	Somewhat True	12	15.4	15.8	23.7
	True	33	42.3	43.4	67.1
	Very True	25	32.1	32.9	100.0
	Total	76	97.4	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.6		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 47 shows that 91.9% of the respondents stated that there was some degree of truth they have confidence in the leadership of the institution with the majority 43.4% stating that it was true.

Table 48
Active Interest in What Happens at the Organization

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all true	3	3.8	4.1	4.1
	Somewhat True	12	15.4	16.2	20.3
	True	19	24.4	25.7	45.9
	Very True	40	51.3	54.1	100.0
	Total	74	94.9	100.0	
Missing	System	4	5.1		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 48 shows that 91.1% of the respondents stated that there was some level of truth that they have an active interest in what happens in the organization.

Table 49
Extra mile to see Organization Succeed

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all True	3	3.8	3.9	3.9
	Somewhat True	11	14.1	14.3	18.2
	True	18	23.1	23.4	41.6
	Very True	45	57.7	58.4	100.0
	Total	77	98.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.3		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 49 shows that 94.9% of the respondents stated that there was some degree of truth that they will go the extra mile to see the organization succeed, with 58.4% stating that it was very true.

Table 50
Committed to the Organization

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all True	1	1.3	1.3	1.3
	Somewhat True	6	7.7	7.8	9.1
	True	20	25.6	26.0	35.1
	Very True	50	64.1	64.9	100.0
	Total	77	98.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.3		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 50 shows that 98.7% of the respondents stated that there was some degree of truth that they feel a sense of commitment to the organization with majority 64.9% stating it was very true.

Table 51
Job is Important to Students' Success

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all True	2	2.6	2.6	2.6
	Somewhat True	1	1.3	1.3	3.9
	True	16	20.5	21.1	25.0
	Very True	57	73.1	75.0	100.0
	Total	76	97.4	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.6		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 51 shows that 97.4% of the respondents stated that there was some degree of truth that they believe their jobs are important to students' academic success at the institution with 75% stating that it was very true.

Table 52
Belief that it is Important to Participate in Activities and Events

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all True	2	2.6	2.6	2.6
	Somewhat True	5	6.4	6.5	9.1
	True	15	19.2	19.5	28.6
	Very True	55	70.5	71.4	100.0
	Total	77	98.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.3		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 52 shows that 97.4% of the respondents stated that there was some degree of truth that they believe that it was important to participate in activities and events of the institution with 71.4% stating it was very true.

Table 53

Participation in Events and Activities at ECC

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all True	9	11.5	11.7	11.7
	Somewhat True	11	14.1	14.3	26.0
	True	9	11.5	11.7	37.7
	Very True	48	61.5	62.3	100.0
	Total	77	98.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.3		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 53 shows that 88.3% of the respondents stated that there was some degree of truth that they participate in events and activities that are held at the institution with 62.3% stating that it was very true.

Table 54

Important to Serve on Committees of ECC

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all True	5	6.4	6.5	6.5
	Somewhat True	9	11.5	11.7	18.2
	True	13	16.7	16.9	35.1
	Very True	50	64.1	64.9	100.0
	Total	77	98.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.3		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 54 shows that 93.5% of the respondents stated that there was some degree of truth that it was important to serve on the committees of ECC with majority 64.9% of them stating that it was very true.

Table 55

Recommend Organization as Great Place of Work

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all True	5	6.4	6.5	6.5
	Somewhat True	11	14.1	14.3	20.8
	True	25	32.1	32.5	53.2
	Very True	36	46.2	46.8	100.0
	Total	77	98.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.3		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 55 shows that 93.6% of the respondents stated that there was some degree of truth that they would recommend ECC as a great place to work with the majority 46.8% stating that it was very true.

CORRELATIONS

Table 56
*Correlations of Employee Satisfaction, Motivation,
Engagement and Age Range of Respondents*

		Age Range of Participants			
		Motivation	Satisfaction	Engagement	
Motivation	Pearson	1	.159	.146	-.238*
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.164	.206	.036
	N	78	78	77	78
Satisfaction	Pearson	.159	1	.382**	.089
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.164		.001	.438
	N	78	78	77	78
Engagement	Pearson	.146	.382**	1	-.037
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.206	.001		.751
	N	77	77	77	77
Age Range of Participants	Pearson	-.238*	.089	-.037	1
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.036	.438	.751	
	N	78	78	77	78

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 56 shows that there is no significant relationship between satisfaction and motivation ($r = 0.159$, $p=0.164$). However, there was a significant positive relationship between employee satisfaction and engagement ($r=0.382$, $p=0.001$). This means that as employee satisfaction increases so will their engagement within the institution. There was significant negative relationship between the age range of the respondents and motivation where ($r = -0.238$, $p=0.036$). This means as there was an increase in age there was a decrease in motivation and vice-versa. There was no significant relationship between age range of participants and engagement where ($r=-0.037$, $p=0.751$) and age range and satisfaction where($r=0.089$, $p=0.438$).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The research was carried out at Excelsior Community College (ECC) using a sample of 78 employees from various departments. From the research the following findings were ascertained.

DEMOGRAPHY

The research found that the majority of the respondents were females, were academic staff, and were from the Student Affairs and Maintenance departments. For the respondents that were assigned to a school it was found that most were from the School of Library and Technical Education (SLTE) and the School of Tourism Hospitality and Entertainment Management (THEM). The research further found that most of the ancillary staff had secondary level education while the rest of the staff, the majority had post-graduate level training. In addition, most of the respondents were employed at the institution for 2-5 years.

STAFF MOTIVATION

Employees that are motivated are instrumental for the longevity of any organization. In addition, if employees are motivated it impacts the level of productivity within the organization. It is then imperative for organizations to understand the factors that motivate employees. The research found that the ECC employees ranked the motivational factors based on the degree of importance to their jobs as follows:

MOST IMPORTANT MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS TO EMPLOYEES AT ECC

1. Good Working Conditions
2. Job Security
3. Opportunities for Advancement and Development
4. Wages
5. Appreciation for Accomplishments
6. Interesting Job

7. Organization's Personal Loyalty to Employees
8. Tactful Feedback
9. Feeling of Being 'in' on Things
10. Sympathetic Help with Personal Problems

Numerous researches have been done over the years on the motivational factors that are important to employees or factors that impact their motivation. According to Harpaz (1990), these were ranked as the motivational factors for employees: interesting work, good wages and job security. However, Safiullah (2015) noted that as society changes and becomes more technologically advanced there are changes with regards to the motivational factors. Olcer as cited in Safiullah (2015) outlined the following ranked motivational factors: job security, good relations with supervisors, wages, appreciation based on fair performance, perceptions of trust and cooperative relations with workmates, appropriate working environment, ensuring opportunities of social development, doing group work, giving important and appropriate work in accordance with employee's skills and work rotation. However, the main finding according to Seniwobola's study (2013), is that salary, working conditions, incentives, medical allowance, security, recognition, achievement, growth, students' discipline, school policy and status were found to be the ten most important factors of motivation to teachers. He found that these motivational factors could lead to educators remaining on the job or finding greener pastures. There are differences in the findings as a result of the motivational factors that were used, the differences in the organizations and time periods when the researches were done. However, from the review of previous studies it is noted that job security, working conditions, wages and appreciation for accomplishment are among the top factors influencing employees' motivation and levels of engagement which is similar for ECC staff.

STAFF SATISFACTION

AREAS OF SATISFACTION

The staff at ECC is satisfied with the level of security at the institution. If employees feel that they are working within an environment where they are comfortable and safe then they will be more focused on the tasks that they have to accomplish rather than being perturbed about being in danger. According to Fairbrother and Warn (2003), when employees are within a positive work environment where they are not fearful it results in the reduction of stress and the achieving of job satisfaction.

The employees at ECC are very satisfied with the number of hours that they work at the institution. In organizations where workers have long work hours it can be tedious and leads to stress. This can impact job satisfaction and productivity.

According to Wanger (2017), employees that are within an organization where there is a good work atmosphere and relation with colleagues will lead to the improvement in job satisfaction. The research found that at ECC the employees were satisfied with the quality of interaction with their co-workers but they are merely satisfied with the camaraderie in their departments. In addition, they are satisfied with the level of collaboration with their co-workers.

The research found that the ECC employees were satisfied with their supervisor's performance in several areas. They were satisfied with their supervisors' technical skills displayed on the, the level of support that they receive from their supervisor on the job and the constructive feedback about their work that they receive from their supervisor. In addition, they were satisfied with their supervisor's management of their units by using resources effectively and efficiently. They were also satisfied that their supervisors created a positive work environment by building good relationships. Furthermore, there was satisfaction that their supervisors often explore new ways of improving their work performance by listening to and using their ideas. However, there was mere satisfaction that their supervisors were dedicated to developing the skills and abilities of staff by providing ongoing feedback and their supervisors' level of care about their quality of life. The level of satisfaction was just above 50%. A

supervisor, especially the one that is immediate for the employee plays a major role in job satisfaction as he provides the employee with intrinsic motivators, career development and tangible assistance (Singh & Jain as cited in Satpathy, Mishra & Mohapatra, 2014). The supervisor effectively and efficiently providing these things increases the job satisfaction level for the employee.

The research found that the employees at ECC were somewhat disappointed with the support they should receive from other units within the organisation that is necessary for the completion of tasks. There was only a 48.8% level of satisfaction while the rest of the employees were undecided or dissatisfied. It is of concern that 28.2% were dissatisfied with the level of support that they receive. In addition, they were merely satisfied that they received adequate information that helps them to complete their work assignments efficiently and effectively.

It was found that the employees were comfortable with the sharing of their ideas but there was low satisfaction level with them feeling as if their ideas are heard. Only 30.8% were satisfied that their ideas are heard while 28.2% were dissatisfied. In addition, there was low satisfaction with the level of involvement in decision making within their departments or units. The participation of employees in decision-making is important as it brings about individual benefits and organizational effectiveness (Kim, 2002). In organizations where managers implement participatory decision making it leads to the empowerment of the employees as they feel included. In addition, with the giving of rights to the employees to participate in decision making they are also assigned matching amount of responsibility. Therefore, participatory decision making enhances job satisfaction within the organization (Kim, 2002).

The ECC staff is merely satisfied with the on-the-job training that they receive and there is low satisfaction with the advancement and development training that they receive. The rest of the staff is undecided or dissatisfied. Organizations exist within a global society where there is dynamism. As changes take place employees have to be trained to measure up and remain relevant to ensure the prolonged existence of the organization and for it to effectively function within the competitive arena of today's society.

There was low satisfaction with regards to equitable opportunity for promotion at the College. There is just a marginal difference between those that are satisfied and those that are dissatisfied. According to Odeku (2013), promotion and incentives are used within organizations to acknowledge the hard work of employees and to propel the employees on the path of continuously giving their best to the organization. If the promotional system is equitable then it will act as a motivation for employees as they will have hope that in the event of similar opportunities there is the chance for their selection (Adebayo, 2005). As promotion is a very sensitive issue within organizations it should be treated with high levels of professionalism and those in charge of administering it must ensure fairness (Odeku, 2013). However, it should be noted that fairness is subjective and aggrieved persons within an organization may view the system as being unethical.

The research found that the staff was satisfied with the level of autonomy or independence that they are afforded at the institution. Further, there is high satisfaction with the work accomplishment that they get done monthly. Austin as cited in Satpathy et al, (2014) found from his study that self-fulfillment, independence and job environment were key reasons for job satisfaction. These are key areas ECC should pay attention to, because when employees are comfortable, it can lead to them being satisfied with their jobs.

The research found that there was low satisfaction with regards to the belief that ECC cares about its employees. Less than 50% of the employees are satisfied that the institution cares about them. There was mere satisfaction that the college is flexible with respect to the families of the employees. The education system is highly feminized and a number of these women have families. It is a plus when employees work in an organization they believe cares about their well-being and is flexible when it comes to the needs of their families.

The research found that less than half of the employees were satisfied that they can achieve their long term goals at ECC while 22.7% are dissatisfied. Employees want to work at a place where they can self-actualize. Where this is not plausible they will eventually leave and for those that remain it can result in de-motivation

and dissatisfaction with their job. A majority of the employees felt that their present job functions were aligned with their career interest. Overall, the majority of the employees are satisfied with their job at the institution. It is integral that employees are satisfied with their job as this leads to an increase in employee work performance, customer service, profitability and retention (Singh & Jain, 2013).

AREAS OF DISSATISFACTION

The study showed that most of the respondents were dissatisfied with communication at the institution. Communication is essential for the effective and efficient functioning of an organization. If employees are dissatisfied with communication then there needs to be an evaluation of the tools of communication that are used and the involvement of employees in the communication process. Clutterbuck (2000), states that cooperation among colleagues is integral for the smooth running of an organization. This co-operation is achieved through effective communication among colleagues. In addition, communication plays an important role in the development of staff morale. When feedback is solicited from employees they feel that they are valued by their employers and that they are essential in the ongoing improvement of the organization (Conrad, 2014).

A majority of ECC employees are dissatisfied with the working conditions at the college. This is an area that requires grave focus by any organization. The employees were also dissatisfied with their pay and their workload compared to their pay. According to Seniwobola (2013), within organizations employees' salaries and working conditions play an integral role in job satisfaction and hence, it is imperative that organizations deliberately focus on improving these areas. This also has implications with regards to motivation as the employees at ECC believe that working condition is the most important motivational factor for them.

The employees of ECC are satisfied with the amount of work that they accomplish monthly but they are dissatisfied with the availability of resources to perform their jobs. Although the employees do not have all the necessary resources that they need they look for innovative ways to accomplish their job functions.

STAFF ENGAGEMENT

The research found that all the ECC employees in the sample agreed that staff constantly explored ways to do their jobs more effectively, with the majority indicating that this was very true. They perceived their jobs as being important to the success of the students and agreed that this statement was very true. The employees of the institution agreed that it was true that they feel a sense of commitment to the organization and take an active interest in what happens at the organization. Most of the employees agreed that it is very true that they will go the extra-mile to see the organization succeed.

It was found that employees of the institution agreed that there is some degree of truth that they are motivated to see ECC achieve its strategic goals with the majority agreeing that it is very true. In addition, the employees agreed that it was very true that they understand the mission of the institution as envisioned by leadership.

The research showed that most of the respondents stated that there was some degree of truth that they trust and had confidence in the leadership of the college. In addition, the employees agreed that there was some degree of truth that they felt comfortable interacting with those in leadership. Though most agreed that there was some level of truth that they were informed of important decisions, there were some employees that stated that this was not true at all.

The research found that most of the respondents agreed that there was some degree of truth that they believe it was important to participate in events and activities at the institution while the majority agreed that it was very true that they participated in events and activities at the college. Furthermore, they agreed that it was very true that it was important to serve on committees at the college. Overall, most of the respondents agreed that it was true to some degree that ECC is a great place to work.

CORRELATIONS

The research found that there is no significant relationship between employee

motivation and satisfaction. However, there is a significant relationship between job satisfaction and job engagement which would indicate that if employees of ECC are satisfied with their jobs then they would be engaged in the institution. In addition, if there is an increase in job satisfaction then there would also be an increase in employee engagement and vice versa. The study further found that there is a significantly negative relationship between the age of the employees and how motivated they are. The younger the employees are the more motivated they are but as they increase in age within the organization their motivational level decreases. This may be as a result of the difference in motivational factors as one gets older as well as the changes in life and experiences.

CONCLUSION

The sample size for the research was 78. Most of the respondents were females and were academic staff. The research found that the ECC's employees ranked the motivational factors that were important to their jobs as follows : good working conditions , job security, advancement opportunities , wages, appreciation for accomplishments , interesting job , organization personal loyalty to employees , tactful feedback , feeling of being 'in' on things and help with personal problems. The most important is good working conditions and the least is help with their personal problems.

The employees had high satisfaction in areas such as work hours and job accomplishments for each month. They are satisfied with the performance of their supervisors in several areas, camaraderie in their departments, their job security and the level of security at the institution. Although they were satisfied in these areas they were dissatisfied with the pay that they received, their workload in comparison to their pay, communication and resources available to do their jobs at the institution.

It can be concluded that for the most part the employees were engaged in the institution. They believe that their services are important for the success of the students, are committed to the organization and will go the extra mile to ensure that the organization is successful. If the institution improves job satisfaction then the

engagement of the employees will also improve. On the other hand keen attention has to be paid to employees as they age as their level of motivation will decrease.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The institution will have to put measures in place to improve the working conditions at the institution. Working conditions is the most important motivational factor to the employees and this is one area that they were dissatisfied with at the institution. According to the International Labour Organization (2018), working conditions would include work hours, remuneration, physical conditions and mental demands within an organization. The employees at ECC are highly satisfied with the number of work hours. Therefore, the institution needs to examine the areas of remuneration, physical conditions and the mental demands of the employees' jobs.

2. The employees of the institution are dissatisfied with communication within the organization. Communication does not only involve the different tools of conveying information but also the sharing of ideas and the input of employees within the decision making process. There was low satisfaction with the sharing participation of employees in the decision making process and sharing of their ideas. The organization needs to examine the effectiveness of the tools of communication that are used to disseminate information to all categories of staff and the means of participation in decision making. The policies and procedures of communication should be clearly communicated to all staff so that they understand the avenues available for sharing ideas and information outside of meetings. In addition, there can be the use of suggestion boxes and other means of allowing for anonymity.

3. There is low satisfaction with career advancement development training. There needs to be a formal needs assessment so that the programmes that are designed for career development will be in line with the needs of the employees and the institution.

4. The employees are dissatisfied with the availability of resources to do their jobs. Although the employees look for different ways to ensure they accomplish their duties the continued lack of adequate resources can become very stressful. The institution will need to do an assessment of the resources of the college. The college

needs to seek assistance from the alumni, engage in fund raising where possible and seek more grant-funding to provide needed resources.

5. There is low satisfaction when it comes to getting support from other units in completing different job functions especially when one unit/ department has to get information from another to complete some of its core functions. The heads of the different units/departments need to have a meeting and establish deadlines. There should be an increase in or the establishing of accountability systems that would result in the use of rewards, motivation and sanctions where needed.

6. The institution needs to ensure that there is a high level of transparency in how promotion is done within the organization. When individuals are promoted it should be outlined to staff on what merit the person is promoted, the standards that are used and the responsibilities with the promotion.

7. ECC will need to pay keen attention to the staff members as they age and research what are the factors that motivate them. This will give the institution an indication of some of things that can be implemented to keep them motivated.

8. In light of the fact that the members of staff complained about the length of the EMES, the research will be carried out in phases. The instrument consisted of three different scales and each scale will be measured over the three semesters. First semester the staff will complete the motivation scale, second semester the satisfaction scale and in the final semester the engagement scale.

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Student Engagement Survey

Excelsior Community College Research and Innovation Division

Excelsior Community College

Abstract

Student engagement studies are critically important to understanding the factors that influence students' levels of engagement in the teaching and learning process. The information garnered from such studies are typically used by academic institutions to inform decision making particularly as it relates to fostering and sustaining positive attitudes and behaviours among students towards academic and non-academic programs ; thus, strengthening students' performance. The purpose of this study was to investigate Excelsior Community College's (ECC) students' levels of participation in the learning process and the non-academic programs such as: clubs and society as well as college activities such as College Hour. A quantitative approach was adopted for this study. A quota sampling method was used to conveniently select 544 students proportionately from all academic schools. The findings generally, revealed that students across all faculties were more motivated and engaged in teaching and learning activities compared to non-academic activities. The following report details the factors influencing such behaviours and presents recommendations for strengthening student engagement at ECC.

Keywords: *student, student engagement, academic programs, non-academic programs, engagement, student behaviours.*

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT BACKGROUND

Student engagement often refers to students' interest and enthusiasm for school related activities, which has a direct or indirect impact on their academic attitude, behavior and performance (Gallup, 2013). Empirically, research has indicated that student engagement involves positive student behaviors, such as attendance, cognitive attentiveness, and participation in scheduled class and learning activities, as well as the psychological experience of school identification; perception of

belongingness to the school environment, sensing care from service providers and feeling respected” (Anderson, Christenson, Sinclair, & Lehr, 2004, p.97)

“In education, student engagement refers to the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught, which extends to the level of motivation they have to learn and progress in their education. Generally speaking, the concept of “student engagement” is predicated on the belief that learning improves when students are inquisitive, interested, or inspired, and that learning tends to suffer when students are bored, dispassionate, disaffected, or otherwise “disengaged.” Stronger student engagement or improved student engagement are common instructional objectives expressed by educators.” (Student Engagement, 2014, para. 1)

Skinner, Furrer, Marchand, and Kindermann (2008) postulate that students who are engaged in school achieve greater academic success as such student engagement should be prioritized by administrators. Student engagement in addition to predicting grades and learning; it also forecasts attendance, retention, school completion, and academic resilience (Jimerson, Campos, & Greif, 2003). It is for this reason why the design and execution of such a study was pertinent at Excelsior Community College.

COMPONENTS OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Three distinctive classifications of student engagement identified by Archambault, Jamosz, Morizot and Pagani (2009) specified: 1. behavioral engagement, 2. affective engagement, and 3. cognitive engagement. Behavioral engagement is the first type of student engagement that refers to a student’s compliance to rules and involvement in the learning activities in and out of the classroom inclusive of extracurricular activities.

The second type of student engagement, affective engagement, includes the experience, feelings, attitudes, and perceptions a student has towards school, particularly the student’s sense of belonging, interest, willingness to learn, and general sense of liking school.

The third type of engagement is cognitive engagement, refers to the cognitive

functions involved in a student’s learning process. Considering the fact that behaviors, emotions, and cognitions are all a part of the holistic psychological development of the human, it is important to consider all three categories (i.e., behavior engagement, affective engagement, cognitive engagement) in designing and implementing a student engagement programme (Archambault et al., 2009). Studies have revealed that students’ perceptions of the school environment influence their motivation for academic achievement, which can be influenced by all three types of engagement (Wang & Peck, 2013).

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study was to understand students perceived levels of participation in teaching and learning, school activities and students’ attitude to higher learning. According to empirical evidence some students may be at risk of disengagement during and beyond transitional periods such as progressing from one year of study to another (Stout & Christenson, 2009). As such the timeliness of this study is suitable and should yield valid data for the following research questions:

1. To what extent do students perceive teaching methodologies of lecturers as active learning engagement?
2. To what extent do students engage in college activities?
3. To what extent do students perceive their ECC experience as contributing to their personal and professional development?
4. What are students’ assessment of their competence and attitude towards studying?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Understanding psychosocial engagement of students and the contributing factors to disengagement can provide tactical and strategic direction of the planning to meet the needs of ECC students. Understanding the risk factors of our students as it pertains to their cognitive, behavioural and attitudinal responses to the student-centered initiatives of ECC.

METHODOLOGY

The current study sought to capture students' level of engagement at Excelsior Community College (ECC) using a self-report questionnaire developed specifically for ECC students. A quantitative approach was adopted in the design of this study where students of all four faculties were targeted, particularly second, third and fourth year students enrolled in both day and evening programs.

A quota sampling technique was adopted for this study where students were proportionately selected from all academic schools in the college using a convenient sampling method. There was an attempt to conduct a census; however, due to a number of limitations with students' willingness and availability a true random selection of participants was not achieved by the research team. This accounts for the use of a non-probability approach to the sampling of the students. There were a total of 544 participants sampled from the Faculties of Humanities and Education, Business Management, Pure and Applied Science and Computer Science & Education. Majority of the students were enrolled in either the associate or bachelor degree programmes. Students enrolled in short programmes of a year or less were not included in this study as they would not have met the selection criteria of being enrolled in their second year of study.

The instrument was comprised of 44 closed ended questions categorized in 5 sections: Student Demography, Engagement in Classroom Activities, College Activities and Students' Assessment of Personal Attitudes and Competencies. Data was collected by four research assistants for the first two weeks in October, 2016. The data was entered into PSPP statistical analysis software. Descriptive and frequency analyses were conducted for each item on the questionnaire. The analyzed data is presented below.

LIMITATIONS

The students who were invited to participate in the study were reluctant or refused to participate in the study because they thought the instrument was too long and time consuming. This affected the response rate of the students which may limit the extent

to which the results of the study may be generalized to the ECC student populous. Furthermore, the students enrolled in short term programs are not captured in this study as such; the findings of this study would not capture their level of engagement.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

All ethical considerations were adhered to as the researcher explained to every group of potential participants the purpose of the study and the purpose of the findings. It was explained that their participation is voluntary and that their identity was confidential. The participants were exposed to no more than minimal risks similar to that experience on a daily basis. Anonymity was assured as the completed questionnaires were kept in a safe location and incinerated at the end of the research. In addition, it was explained that they had no obligation to complete the survey after starting, and they could withdraw at anytime without any form of penalty.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

PERSONAL DATA: AGE AND NATIONALITY

Of the 544 participants all were Jamaican except two students who were of American and British nationality. The gender distribution indicated that 157 participants (28.86%) participants were male; while the majority 370 students representing (68.01%) were female. There were 17 students (3.13%) participants who did not indicate their gender. The age distribution revealed that 9 participants (1.66%) did not state their age group. Ten of the participants were over 40 years of age, which represented 1.84%. Most of the students, 237 (43.57%) participants were 16-20 years of age; while, 152 (27.94%) were 21-25 years old; 13.79% of the participants were 26-30 years old (75 participants); 7.35% were 31-35 years of age (40 participants) and 21 (3.86%) participants were 36-40 years old.

FACULTY OF STUDY

The analyses revealed that the distribution of the participants were representative of the students enrolled in each Faculty. Of a sample of 544 participants the majority of 285 students representing (52.39%) were in the Faculty of Business Management; while, 97 (17.83%) of the participants were in the Faculty of Computer and Engineering; however, Humanities and Education was represented by 49 (9.01%) participants and Pure and Applied Sciences had 96 (17.65%) participants. Approximately 3% (totalling 17 participants) did not indicate their faculties of study.

MODE OF STUDY & EMPLOYMENT STATUS

There were 544 participants, out of which 12 (2.21%) participants did not state their mode of study, 357 participants were full-time day students (65.63%), 6 (1.10%) participants were day release, 31 (5.70%) were weekend students, 126 (23.16%) were full-time evening students and 12 (2.21%) of the participants were modular students. There were 121 (22.24%) participants who were full-time workers, 59 (10.85%) of the participants were part-time workers, 29 of the participants are self-employed (5.33%). the remaining 289 participants were unemployed (53.13%). Forty six (8.46%) of the participants did not state if they were employed or unemployed.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The data was analyzed by combining the negative and positive responses to represent students' levels of agreement to the items of the questionnaire. The responses 'not at all' and 'very little' were combined to represent little agreement and the responses 'somewhat' and 'very much' to indicate agreement. The 'undecided' response represented participants who neither agreed nor disagreed.

Table 1
Table Showing Students' Engagement in Active Learning Initiatives

Classroom Activities	Not at all/ little		Undecided		Somewhat/ very much		Missing		Total
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Teacher Lectures	59	10.85	43	7.90	413	75.92	29	5.34	544
Discussion and Debates	68	12.5	50	9.19	405	74.45	21	3.86	544
Individual writing	57	10.48	54	9.93	405	74.45	28	5.15	544
Writing Projects	62	11.4	59	10.85	389	71.51	34	6.24	544
Research Projects	71	13.05	48	8.82	394	72.43	31	5.7	544
Group Projects	98	18.02	58	10.66	362	66.54	26	4.78	544
Oral Presentations	80	14.7	57	10.48	384	70.59	23	4.23	544
Artistic Activities	138	25.37	62	11.40	318	58.46	26	4.78	544
Activities using Technology	62	11.4	42	7.72	410	75.37	30	5.52	544

Table 1 outlines students' participation in and perception of various active learning activities. Majority of the students indicated that teaching methodologies including: lectures, discussions, projects and presentations accounted for 58-76% of their participation in active learning. Students perceived artistic activities such as drama/role-playing, and group projects were used less to engage them in the learning process. Seventy percent and more of the participants indicated that all other teaching and learning approaches engaged them in active learning.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN COLLEGE ACTIVITIES

Table 2

Table showing Students Participation in Various College Activities

College Activities	Not at all/ Very little		Sometimes/ Most times		Missing		Total		Percent	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
College Hour Sessions	326	59.92	191	<u>35.11</u>	27	4.96	544		544	100
Student Union Activities	417	<u>76.65</u>	99	18.2	28	5.15	544		544	100
Sporting Activities	407	<u>74.81</u>	113	20.77	24	4.41	544		544	100
Club and Societies	358	<u>65.85</u>	155	28.49	31	5.7	544		544	100
College Functions	387	71.14	120	22.06	37	6.8	544		544	100
Campus events	335	61.58	185	34	24	4.41	544		544	100
College Week Activities	336	61.77	182	<u>33.46</u>	26	4.78	544		544	100
Field Trips	360	66.18	112	20.59	72	13.24	544		544	100

Table 2 represents the data that outlines the number and percentage of students who engage in college activities. Majority of the students (60-77%) indicated that they participated either “not at all” or “very little” in a range of college activities. Therefore, there was an approximate 18-35% of students reported participating in college activities, college week activities and college hour sessions. This was a minority if the participant who did not answer some of the items (4-13%). The college activities that students participated in the least were: student union, sporting activities as well as club and societies. College week activities, campus events such as graduation, award ceremonies etc. and college hour sessions were the main activities that student engaged in throughout the academic year.

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF ECC SUPPORT IN GARNERING PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES

Table 3

Showing Students' Perceived Professional Competencies Acquired at Excelsior Community College

Professional Competencies	Not at all/ Very little		Somewhat/ Very much		Missing		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Acquiring job or work related knowledge and skills	122	22.43	366	67.28	56	10.3	544	100
Writing effectively	101	18.57	391	71.88	52	9.56	544	100
Speaking effectively	105	19.3	390	71.69	49	9.01	544	100
Critical Thinking & Reasoning	83	15.26	409	75.18	52	9.56	544	100
Development of Creative Ideas	88	16.17	405	74.45	51	9.38	544	100
Reading and Understanding Challenging Materials	98	18.01	392	72.06	54	9.93	544	100
Using technology to collect and communicate information	98	18.02	397	72.98	49	9.01	544	100
Working effectively with others to complete a task	95	17.46	395	72.61	54	9.93	544	100
Learning Effectively	73	13.42	421	77.39	50	9.19	544	100
Applying school-based knowledge to solve complex real world problems	114	20.96	378	69.49	52	9.56	544	100
Learning and contributing to life of others	138	25.36	350	64.34	56	10.3	544	100
Developing career goals and a personal code of values and ethics	96	17.64	396	72.79	52	9.56	544	100
Understanding importance of academics in life after college	69	12.69	424	77.94	51	9.38	544	100
Understanding yourself	100	18.38	393	72.24	51	9.38	544	100
Treating people with respect	88	16.17	405	74.45	51	9.37	544	100
Developing a deepened sense of spirituality	201	36.95	293	53.86	50	9.19	544	100

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF ECC'S CONTRIBUTION TO PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Table 3's over leaf outlines number and percentage of students' perception of ECC and its contribution to the personal and professional development. Majority of the students, representing 64% to 78% of the students agreed that their experience at ECC has resulted in personal and professional development evidenced by increased critical and creative thinking, learning effectively and applying knowledge to real world situations among other indicators indicated in the table. Only 53% of the participants indicated that they experienced or developed an increased sense of spirituality.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDE AND COMPETENCIES

Table 4
Table Showing Students' Assessment of Personal Attitude and Competencies for Higher Learning

Statements of Attitude and Competence	Strongly Disagree & Disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree & Agree		Missing	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
I have the skills and ability to do my work	19	3.49	37	6.80	443	81.43	45	8.27
I put forth a great deal of effort when doing my school work	18	3.31	74	13.60	407	74.82	45	8.27
I am motivated by desire to learn	17	3.13	84	15.44	400	73.53	43	7.91
I am motivated by desire to get good grades	21	3.86	47	8.64	428	78.67	48	8.82
I am motivated by teachers who encourage me	40	7.35	118	21.69	334	61.4	52	9.56
I am motivated by my desire to succeed in the world outside of school	15	2.76	41	7.54	441	81.07	47	8.64
I take pride in the quality of my school work	14	2.57	48	8.82	434	79.78	48	8.83
I have worked harder than I expected to in school	35	6.43	116	21.32	334	61.4	59	10.84
I like discussions in which there are no clear answers	158	29.04	124	22.79	203	37.32	59	10.85
I enjoy being creative in school	29	5.33	135	24.82	328	60.29	52	9.56
I enjoy working on tasks that require a lot of thinking and mental effort	49	9	134	24.63	310	56.99	51	9.38
My school work makes me curious to learn things	34	6.25	105	19.30	357	65.63	48	8.82
In general, I am excited about my classes	85	15.63	157	30.70	243	44.67	49	9.01
I see how the work I am doing now help me after college	26	4.78	106	19.49	365	67.1	47	8.64
I feel good about who I am as a student	19	3.49	87	15.99	393	72.25	45	8.27

STUDENT ATTITUDE AND COMPETENCIES

Table 4 overleaf outlines students' assessment of their attitude and competencies towards studying. Most of the students (73-81%) indicated that teachers as well as self determination was the impetus behind their engagement in the learning process; thus, motivating completion of their studies. Other motivating factors that students indicated included: desire for good grades, desire to succeed after school and the desire to learn. The remaining 19-27% of the participants indicated that they were not motivated by the factors identified. Eighty-one percent (81%) of the students indicated that they had the skills and ability to complete their studies; this is further supported by the 72% of the students who indicated that they felt good about being a student.

A lower percentage (57%) of the students were interested in activities that required a lot of mental effort. This is further supported by the 37% of the students who indicated that they enjoyed discussions that are subjective based on logic and reasoning. Only 47% of the students indicated that they were excited about their classes; however, 65% indicate that school at ECC makes them curious about school. Lastly, 61% of the students indicated that they felt as though they had control over their learning experiences at ECC which contributed to their development.

OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH THEIR ECC EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Fifty three percent evaluated their educational experiences at ECC as good or excellent; while another 33% rated their experience as fair. This totals an 86% satisfaction from the sample population.

CONCLUSIONS

- Engagement in Active Learning: lecturers, discussions, projects and presentations accounted for 75% of students' participation in learning
- Students' Engagement in College Activities: 33%-35% of students reported participating in college activities, college week activities and college hour sessions.

- ECC's Contribution to Student Development: 67% to 77% of the students agreed that their experience at ECC has resulted in personal and professional development evidenced by increased critical and creative thinking and learning effectively on their own.
- Student Motivation: Most of the students indicated that teachers as well as self determination was the impetus behind their engagement in the learning process
- Students' Perception of Control: 61% of the students indicated that they felt as though they had control over their learning experiences at ECC.
- Overall Satisfaction with their ECC Educational Experience: 53% evaluated their educational experiences at ECC as good or excellent; while another 33% rated their experience as fair. This totals an 86% satisfaction from the sample population.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

It may be concluded that the students who participated in this study were relatively engaged in active learning initiatives and were generally motivated; thus, possessing a positive attitude towards completing their studies. The majority of the students reported no participation in college activities. The findings would imply that the students of ECC are cognitively, behaviourally and attitudinally engaged (moderate to high engagement) in the academic activities; however, physical/behavioural engagement in college activities was low.

Research has revealed that educational institutions can proactively work to increase student engagement by encouraging and strengthening increased teacher support and active student engagement in their respective classrooms. Empirical evidence presented by Bryson and Hand (2007) found that students were more likely to engage in school activities if their teachers engage with them and engage them in the materials being taught. Furthermore, it is important to articulate the value of activities to students' academic, personal and professional development. Teachers who are engaged are those who show enthusiasm, were concerned with students' success, and provide academic support for students even beyond the classroom experience (Bryson & Hand, 2007).

Morrison (2003) suggested that student engagement protects against behaviours that are not a part of the school environment, such as substance abuse, risky sexual behaviours, and delinquency. It could therefore lead to reason that the students engage in various learning and social activities. Other research has illustrated that students' sense of belonging at school, which may be a result of facilitating student engagement in institutional activities, gatherings, and access to other professional experts, influences students' psychological and academic results in a positive way (Kortering & Braziel, 2008).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the findings discussed, cognitive, attitudinal and behavioural engagement is imperative to the development of students and their successful completion of their programme of studies. Student engagement may be further facilitated by adequately promoting the college activities and engagement to communicate the value of the activities to their personal and professional development. Secondly, student engagement may be facilitated by teachers continuing to improve and refine teaching methodologies to ensure that they cater to all their students learning styles. While the data indicated that students are likely to avoid cognitively difficult tasks, it is imperative to design creative activities that are likely to improve their level of engagement. Thirdly, in addition to the scheduled college activities it is important to ensure that the activities are designed to meet the interests and needs of students; thus, motivating participation.

Further engagement studies may be executed towards the end of the academic year to target the students who enrolled in the short term programmes. Future studies could explore providing a type of incentive to students for participating in the study. Lastly, the findings of the studies should be made available to the students so they understand the value of the data collected. It may be concluded that student engagement at ECC may be improved through a myriad of initiatives key of which is teacher involvement and enthusiasm. As Excelsior Community College seeks to strengthen students levels of engagement, a culture change programme needs to be

developed that targets the holistic development of the students, which will contribute to psychological growth and development.

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Students' Evaluation of Support Services

Excelsior Community College Research and Innovation Division

Excelsior Community College

Abstract

The Students Evaluation of Support Services Study (SES) was designed and executed in October of 2016 by the Excelsior Community College (ECC) Office of Research and Development (ORD). The purpose of this study was to understand students' awareness, level of usage and satisfaction with the various student support services of Excelsior Community College (ECC). In order to adequately meet the needs of students it is imperative to understand if the current support mechanisms of the college are adequate in doing so. The study used a quantitative approach where a total of 544 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year students registered to various programmes in both the day and evening college were engaged. The data was captured using a questionnaire and the data was analyzed using SPSS version 20. The research findings suggest that, student support services are being sufficiently provided by the institution. Generally, students were moderately satisfied with the support services offered at all the student support offices. Overall, the participants' responses suggested that there is a high level of awareness of the existence and availability of student support services; however, access to services was low. Recommendations for development were presented for consideration.

Keywords: *students' evaluation, support services, student awareness, level of usage, satisfaction*

SUPPORT SERVICES BACKGROUND

This research examines students' awareness and use of, as well as satisfaction with the students' support services provided by the Excelsior Community College (ECC). Tertiary education involves the provision of a support system by the institution to fulfill the diverse range of learner needs thus ensuring accessibility to learning resources and services that can inspire and encourage the total growth and development of the students (Simpson, 2000; Tait, 2000).

Ukpo (2006) postulated that student support services focus on providing learners with the assistance they need to achieve their desired outcomes in the education environment. The success of any education system (completion rates, educational achievement etc.) hinges on the effectiveness of its student support services. Besides the role of such services in students' success is also important from the emotional perspective as these services contribute to the psychosocial development of students.

Simpson (2000) defined student support services as all activities beyond the production and delivery of course materials that assist students' progression in their studies. These include the academic support which deals with supporting students with the cognitive, intellectual and knowledge issues of specific courses or sets of courses.

Empirical evidence articulated that in distance education support is concerned with a range of human and non-human resources tailored to guide and facilitate the educational transaction which may include resources such as: library facilities, ICT support systems, or various socio- economic variables such as students' financial, self- sufficiency and capacity to cope balancing students and other responsibilities (Garrison, 1989). The role of the educator in providing guidance and direction is also at the core of students' academic attainment and compliments that student support mechanisms of the institution.

ECC has outlined in its mission and vision that it is committed to the holistic development of all its' students, and in an effort to realize this mandate the student support structure is comprised of sixteen core units/departments, namely: Student Affairs, Financial Aid, Wellness Centre, Counseling, Internship/Job Placement; Sporting, Library Services, Career Placement, Academic Advising, Student Union, Clubs and Societies, Examination Centre, Canteen Services, International Work Experience, Scholarship and Placement, and ICT Support Services (printing, computer labs, Aeorion, etc). Collectively the 16 units provide a holistic student support system to cater to the myriad of psychological, psycho-social and socio-economical needs of all students enrolled.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study was to understand students' awareness, level of use and satisfaction with the various student support services of Excelsior Community College (ECC). In order to adequately meet the needs of students it is necessary to understand if the current support mechanisms are adequate in doing so. The research questions that guided this inquiry were:

1. Are students aware of the various student support units of ECC?
2. What are the students' levels of usage for each support service unit/department?
3. What are the students' levels of satisfaction with the support services that they use?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Understanding students' awareness, use and satisfaction of the student support services is important in guiding the process of improving the student support division of the college. This data is important in driving the promotional and communication efforts to students or to inform the re-design and improvement of existing systems to ensure adequate support for student success within the college.

METHODOLOGY

The current study employed a quantitative approach using a self-report questionnaire developed specifically for ECC students. The participants targeted were second to fourth year students of all programmes across all four faculties. A convenient sampling method was used to engage the participants of the study. As a result a true random selection of participants was not achieved by the research team. There were a total of 544 participants sampled from the Faculties Humanities and Education, Business Management, Pure and Applied Science and Computer Science & Engineering. The majority of the students were enrolled in either the associate or bachelor's degree programmes.

The instrument was comprised of 54 closed ended questions categorized in two sections: student demography and student services assessment (awareness, usage and satisfaction). There were 16 student support units and there were three questions

for each unit to assess students' awareness, usage and satisfaction. Data was collected by four research assistants for the first two weeks in October, 2016. The data was entered into PSPP statistical analysis software. Descriptive and frequency analysis were conducted for each item on the questionnaire. The analyzed data is presented below.

LIMITATIONS

Most of the students who were invited to participate in the study were reluctant or refused to participate in the study because they thought the instrument was too long and time consuming. This affected the response rate of the students which may limit the extent to which the results of the study may be generalized to the ECC student populous.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

All ethical considerations were adhered to as the researcher explained to every group of potential participants the purpose of the study and the purpose of the findings. It was explained that their participation was voluntary and that their identity was confidential. The participants were exposed to no more than minimal risks similar to that experience on a daily basis. Anonymity was assured as the completed questionnaires were kept in a safe location and incinerated at the end of the research. In addition, it was explained that they had no obligation to complete the survey after starting, and they could withdraw at anytime without any form of penalty.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

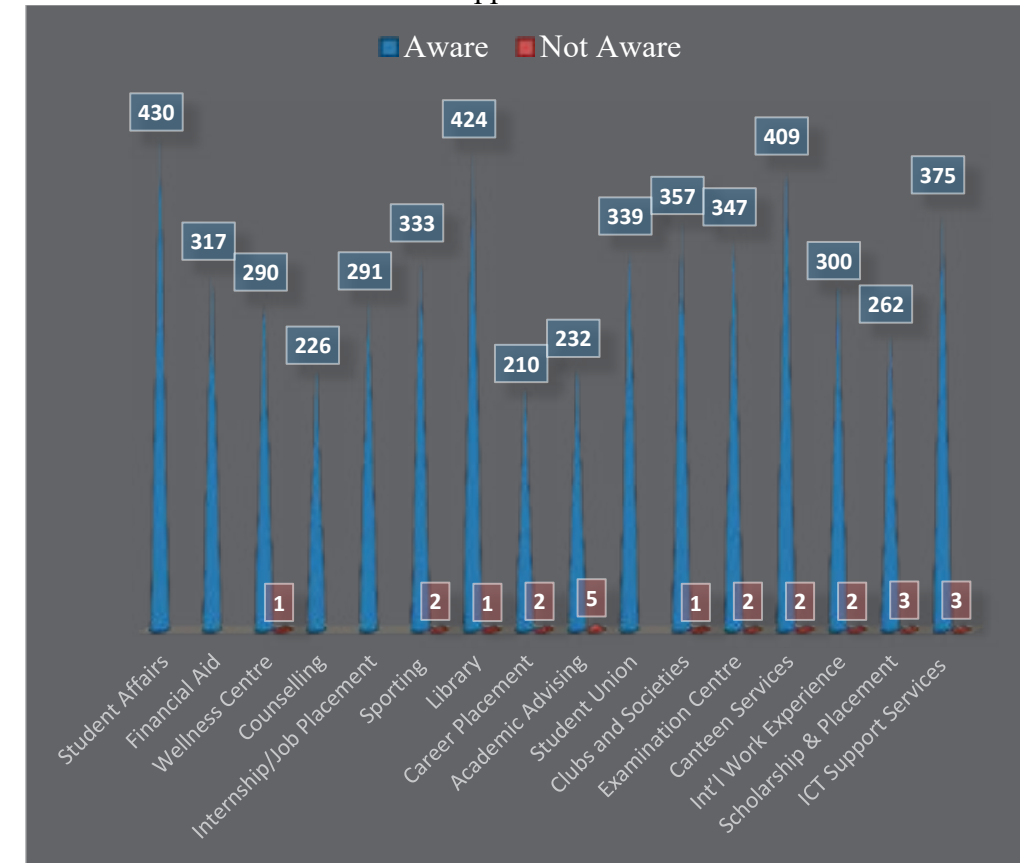
The findings of the study revealed that there was some variance in participants' responses to various items on the questionnaire. Non-response may be due to questionnaire fatigue or indicative of other factors that would need further exploration.

RESEARCH QUESTION 1

ARE ECC STUDENTS AWARE OF THE STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES?

As depicted in Chart 1a. below, the majority of the respondents in the population sample (actual respondents) ranging from 210 of 212 respondents (99.1%) – 430 of 430 respondents (100%) indicated that they were aware of all 16 student support services provided by the college. While only 6 (1.4%) indicated that they were not aware of at least one service provided. It is also important to note that the 10 support services students are most aware of are: student affairs 430 of 430 respondents (100%); Library 424 of 425 respondents (99.8%); Canteen Services 409 of 411 respondents (99.5%); ICT Support 375 of 378 respondents (99.2%) ; Clubs and Societies 357 of 358 respondents (99.7%); Examination Centre 347 of 349 respondents (99.4%); Student Union 339 of 339 respondents (100%); Sporting 333 of 335 (99.4%); Financial Aid 317 of 317 respondents (100%) and International Work Experience 300 of 302 respondents (99.3%).

Chart 1a: Student Awareness of Support Services Provided.



RESEARCH QUESTION 2

HOW OFTEN DO STUDENTS USE ECC SUPPORT SERVICES?

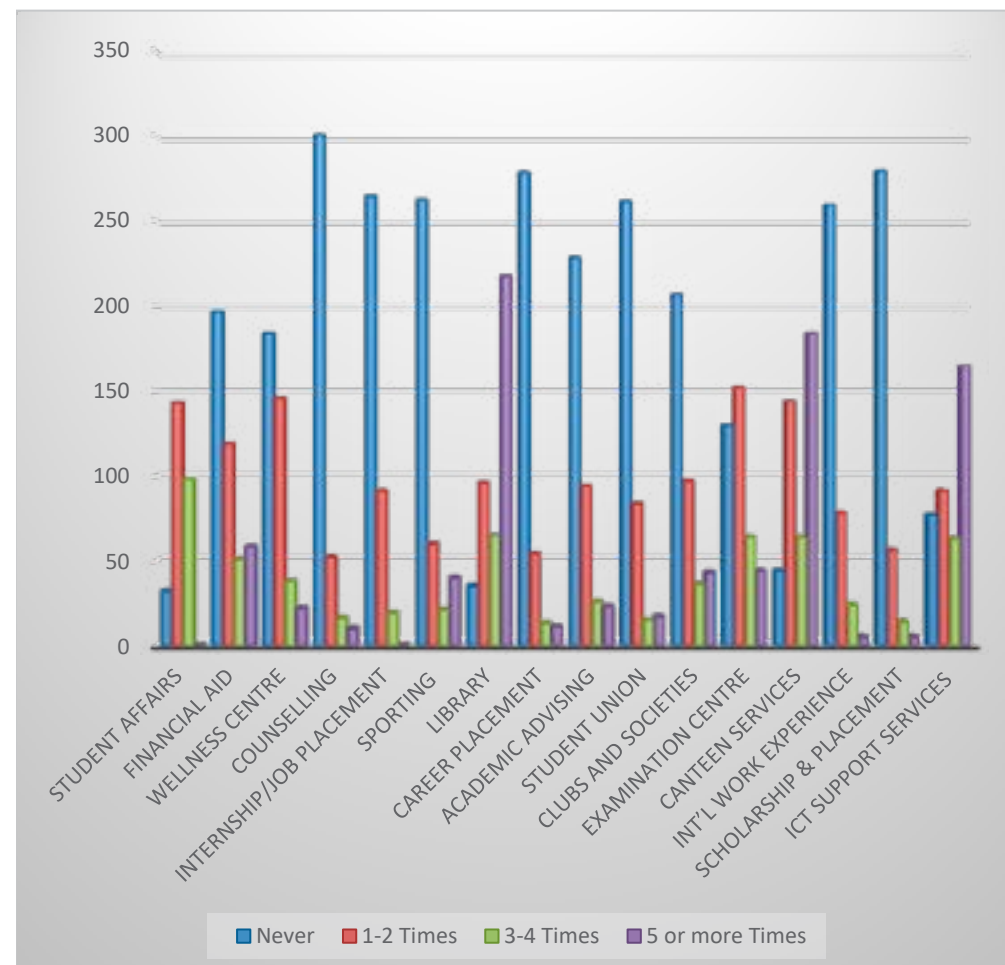
Cross tabulation was done to assess the levels of uptake of at least one support service by persons who were aware of the service offerings. Uptake range of 210 of 212 respondents (99.1%) – 430 of 430 respondents (100%) specified that they were aware of all 16 student support services provided by the college. Thirty two of 237 respondents (13.8%) – 301 of 379 respondents (79.4%) never accessed both student affairs and Counselling Services.

Services most accessed are Canteen Services 392 of 436 respondents (89.9%),

Library Services 379 of 414 respondents (91.5%), ICT Support 319 of 396 respondents (80.6%), Student Affairs 241 of 273 respondents (88.3%) and Examination Centre 260 of 390 respondents (66.7%). Participants accessed the services between 1 - 5 or more times,

Services least accessed are Scholarship and Placement 75 of 355 respondents (21.1%), Career and Placement 78 of 357 respondents (21.8%), International Work Experience 107 of 367 respondents (29.1%), Internship and Job Placement 110 of 375 respondents (29.3%) and Student Union 116 of 378 respondents (30.7%). See Chart 1b. for further statistical illustration of support services uptake.

Chart 1b: Usage of Support Services

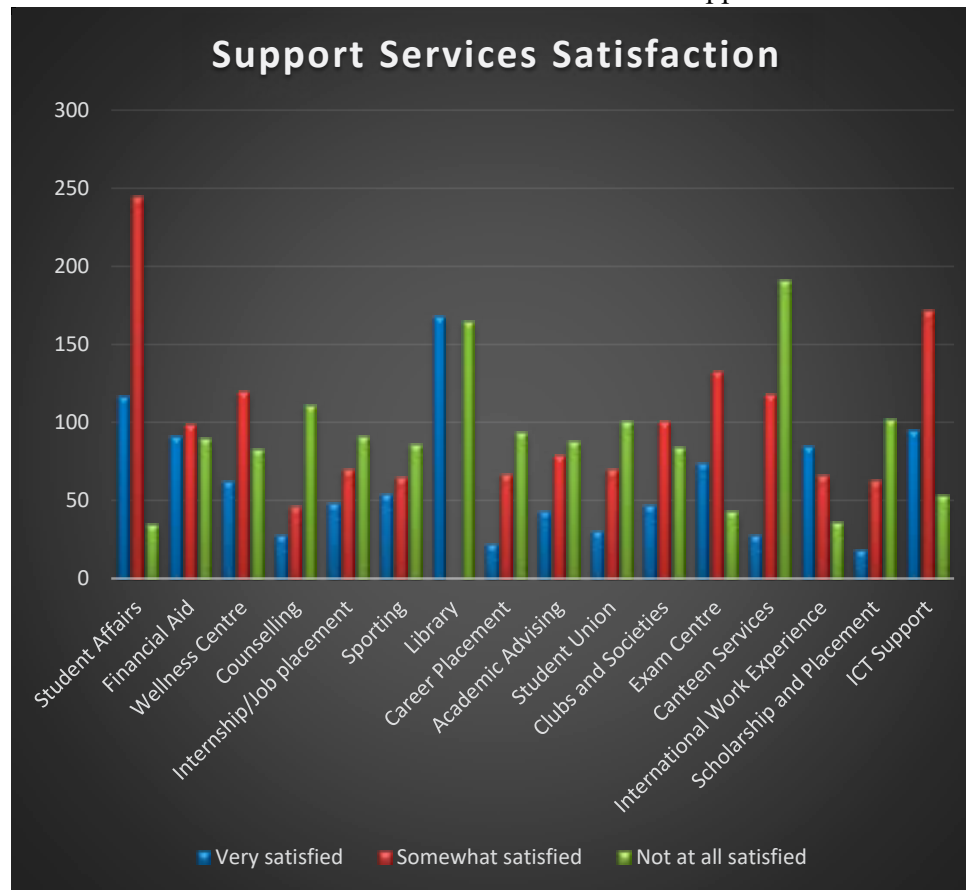


RESEARCH QUESTION 3

What are students' levels of satisfaction of student support services?

Chart 1c presents the information on the students' levels of satisfaction with the specific support services identified. The chart indicates that 18 of 183 respondents (9.8 %) were very satisfied with Scholarship & Placement Services which is the lowest ranked service on the very satisfied rating scale. While 168 of 333 respondents (50.5%) are very satisfied with Library Services which is the highest ranked service on the Likert-scale which participants are very satisfied with. Conversely, participants who are somewhat satisfied with the services offered ranged between 46 of 185 (24.9%) - 245 of 397 respondents (61.7 %). Services which ranked the lowest and highest for this value are counselling and student affairs respectively. Correspondingly, 35 of 397 respondents (8.8%) and 191 of 337 respondents (56.7%) are not at all satisfied with Students Affairs and Canteen Services. It is worthy to note also that of the 333 respondents who stated their satisfaction level with the Library Services offered 165 respondents (49.5%) were not at all satisfied with the level of services offered. Additionally, 111 of 185 respondents (60%), 102 of 183 (55.7%) and 101 of 201 respondents (50.2%) were not at all satisfied with the services of Counselling, Scholarship and Placement and Student Union Services.

Chart 1c: Students' Levels of Satisfaction of Student Support Services



SUMMARY

The research findings suggest that, student support services are being sufficiently provided by the institution. Generally students were moderately satisfied with the support services offered at all the student support offices. Overall, the participants' responses suggested that there is a high level of awareness of the existence and availability of student support services. However, access remains low.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There needs to be some assessment to determine whether there are barriers which prohibit ease and universal access by all students. A clear relationship also needs to be established between the quality and availability of support services. Communication

systems must also be reviewed to ensure that awareness improves opportunities for increased use of the services provided. ECC may implement strategies to increase students' awareness of the student services and their core functions. Accessibility to some of these services may also be facilitated via ECC student management system (SMS). ECC may design and implement a feedback mechanism for the various student support services that would engage students in sharing/specifying additional services that could be offered to more adequately meet their needs.

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Students' Perception of Research Methods Course

Excelsior Community College Research and Innovation Division

Excelsior Community College

Abstract

Understanding students' perception of a course not only provides insight to students' attitudes towards the course content and facilitator but also provides insights to the students' level of engagement in the learning process. The focus of this study is to evaluate students' perception of the Research Methods course. This study was a pilot aimed at understanding students' attitudes, feelings and perceptions about the Research Methods course. The data gleaned from this study can be used to provide useful insights to facilitators of Research Methods in relation to course delivery and assessment. The study will also seek to garner from students recommendations for improvement and relevance to their field of specialization. A quantitative approach was used to collect data from 41 students enrolled in a Research Methods course in two academic schools. The data revealed that students generally agreed that Research Methods was relevant and facilitated their personal development. The findings were discussed and recommendations for future research were made.

Keywords: *student perception, course perception, research methods, course relevance*

INTRODUCTION

The Students' Perception of Courses Pilot Study is an initiative that was undertaken by the Research and Innovation Division to understand students' perceptions of the different courses that they engage in at Excelsior Community College. It has been observed that there are some courses at the institution that have high failure rates while there are others that have very high pass rates. Based on this observation the Division decided to carry out the study starting with the course Research Methods.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the pilot study is to find out what are students perceptions of the Research Methods course at Excelsior Community College.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study will help lecturers to have an idea of how students view the different courses, their likes and dislikes. This will help the lecturers to better prepare for their classes in finding more innovative ways to teach the courses that students have a challenge with. This study will help the institution to understand the reasons for the high failure rates in some subjects and this information will help inform decisions at the macro-level. The Curriculum Unit will benefit from this study as it will enable more intense evaluation of the courses that are being offered at the institution as sometimes the organization of the courses creates a difficulty for students to pass. The Caribbean Council of Community Colleges will benefit from the study as a number of the courses taught in the community colleges were developed by this institution. It will provide insight into the courses that they need to evaluate.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the challenges that students have with Research Methods?
2. Do ECC students consider Research Methods to be relevant?
3. What recommendations can be made to improve the teaching/learning of Research Methods at ECC?

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

A quantitative approach was used for the pilot study with the use of a survey design. Data was collected with the use of a questionnaire.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The sample consisted of students from four different groups. Two of the groups consisted of third year students from the School of Tourism Hospitality and

Entertainment and the other two groups consisted of students from the School of Business Management and Entrepreneurial Studies. A convenience sampling technique was used. Two of the Research Methods classes are taught by members of the Research and Innovation Division and the other two by colleagues. The study included only students that were present at class on the days when the survey was administered.

INSTRUMENTATION

The instrument that was used to gather data consisted of 11 Likert items and took an average of 3-5 minutes to complete. The items for the questionnaire were adapted or created by the members of the RID. The instrument has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.39. This means that the instrument is unacceptable. The Cronbach's alpha ranges from 0-1 and the higher the value is the more reliable the instrument is. With such a low Cronbach's alpha it means that the items are not correlating with each other. The length of the instrument will also affect the Cronbach's alpha. If the instrument is too short then the Cronbach's alpha will be low.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

Each lecturer was given a set of questionnaires which was administered to the students within their scheduled Research Methods class time. The students were instructed about the pilot study and the relevance of the data that is being collected. The students completed the questionnaires and returned them to their lecturers. The data was entered and analysed using the SPSS 21 software.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

All ethical considerations were adhered to as the researcher explained to every group of potential participants the purpose of the study and the purpose of the findings. It was explained that their participation was voluntary and that their identity was confidential. The participants were exposed to no more than minimal risks similar to that experience on a daily basis. Anonymity was assured as the completed questionnaires were kept in a safe location and incinerated at the end of the research.

In addition, it was explained that they had no obligation to complete the survey after starting, and they could withdraw at anytime without any form of penalty.

LIMITATIONS

1. The information gathered is only relevant to Research Methods as the sample of students used only completed the questionnaires for that course.
2. The class turnout for each lecturer was poor and this affected the sample size that was used.
3. Only lecturers that agreed to the collecting of data from their Research Methods class were used. Therefore, the data does not reflect information for all research classes that were taught in the semester when the pilot was done.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Table 1
Manageability of Course Assignments

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	3	7.3	7.3	7.3
	Disagree	7	17.1	17.1	24.4
	Neutral	15	36.6	36.6	61.0
	Agree	14	34.1	34.1	95.1
	Strongly Agree	2	4.9	4.9	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 shows that 39% of the respondents agree that the course assignments for Research Methods are manageable while 36.6% are neutral.

Table 2
Course Related to Daily Life

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	6	14.6	14.6	14.6
	Disagree	6	14.6	14.6	29.3
	Neutral	12	29.3	29.3	58.5
	Agree	11	26.8	26.8	85.4
	Strongly Agree	6	14.6	14.6	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 shows that 41.4% of the respondents agree that the course was related to their daily lives.

Table 3
Relevance of Course to Future Career

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	5	12.2	12.2	12.2
	Disagree	5	12.2	12.2	24.4
	Neutral	10	24.4	24.4	48.8
	Agree	9	22.0	22.0	70.7
	Strongly Agree	12	29.3	29.3	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 shows that 49.3% of the respondents agree that the course was of relevance to their future career.

Table 4
Relevant to Other Courses

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	4	9.8	10.0	10.0
	Disagree	6	14.6	15.0	25.0
	Neutral	8	19.5	20.0	45.0
	Agree	17	41.5	42.5	87.5
	Strongly Agree	5	12.2	12.5	100.0
	Total	40	97.6	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.4		
Total		41	100.0		

Table 4 shows that most (53.7%) of the respondents agree that Research Methods was relevant to other courses in their area of study.

Table 5
Course Facilitating Personal Development

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	2	4.9	5.1	5.1
	Disagree	5	12.2	12.8	17.9
	Neutral	10	24.4	25.6	43.6
	Agree	13	31.7	33.3	76.9
	Strongly Agree	9	22.0	23.1	100.0
	Total	39	95.1	100.0	
Missing	System	2	4.9		
Total		41	100.0		

Table 5 shows that 53.7% the respondents agree that the course facilitates their personal development.

Table 6
Course Irrelevant

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	14	34.1	35.9	35.9
	Disagree	10	24.4	25.6	61.5
	Neutral	8	19.5	20.5	82.1
	Agree	4	9.8	10.3	92.3
	Strongly Agree	3	7.3	7.7	100.0
	Total	39	95.1	100.0	
Missing	System	2	4.9		
Total		41	100.0		

Table 6 shows that 58 % of the respondents disagree that the course was totally irrelevant.

Table 7
Course Predictability/Repetitiveness

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagreement	11	26.8	28.2	28.2
	Disagree	15	36.6	38.5	66.7
	Neutral	8	19.5	20.5	87.2
	Agree	5	12.2	12.8	100.0
	Total	39	95.1	100.0	
Missing	System	2	4.9		
Total		41	100.0		

Table 7 shows that 63.4% of the respondents disagree that the course was predictable or repetitive.

Table 8
Enjoy Doing Course

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	7	17.1	17.9	17.9
	Disagree	8	19.5	20.5	38.5
	Neutral	13	31.7	33.3	71.8
	Agree	4	9.8	10.3	82.1
	Strongly Agree	7	17.1	17.9	100.0
	Total	39	95.1	100.0	
Missing	System	2	4.9		
Total		41	100.0		

Table 8 shows that the majority (36.6%) disagree that they enjoyed doing the course while 31.7% are neutral.

Table 9
Enjoy the Content of the Course

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	6	14.6	15.4	15.4
	Disagree	3	7.3	7.7	23.1
	Neutral	13	31.7	33.3	56.4
	Agree	10	24.4	25.6	82.1
	Strongly Agree	7	17.1	17.9	100.0
	Total	39	95.1	100.0	
Missing	System	2	4.9		
Total		41	100.0		

Table 9 shows that the majority (41.5%) of the respondents were in agreement that they enjoy the content of the course.

Table 10
Content Material is Boring

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	6	14.63	15.38	15.38
	Disagree	13	31.71	33.33	48.72
	Neutral	10	24.39	25.64	74.36
	Agree	4	9.76	10.26	84.62
	Strongly Agree	6	14.63	15.38	100.0
	Total	39	95.12	100.0	
Missing	System	2	4.88		
Total		41	100.0		

Table 10 shows that the majority (46.34%) of the respondents disagreed that the content material was boring.

Table 11
Pre-requisite Knowledge to Learn Course Concepts

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	5	12.2	12.8	12.8
	Disagree	5	12.2	12.8	25.6
	Neutral	6	14.6	15.4	41.0
	Agree	14	34.1	35.9	76.9
	Strongly Agree	9	22.0	23.1	100.0
	Total	39	95.1	100.0	
Missing	System	2	4.9		
Total		41	100.0		

Table 11 shows that the majority (56.1%) of the respondents agree that they possess the prerequisite knowledge to learn the concepts of the course.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

From the sample of 41 respondents it was found that most agreed that the assignments that were given in the Research Methods course were manageable however, nearly the same amount of respondents were neutral. In addition, it was agreed by the majority that the course was irrelevant to their daily lives and their future careers. The study also found that most of the respondents agreed that Research Methods was relevant to the other courses that they are doing and facilitated their personal development.

The pilot study found that most of the respondents disagreed that the course was irrelevant, predictable, and repetitive and that the course material was boring. It was also found that the respondents disagreed that they enjoyed doing the course however; most agreed that they enjoyed the course content. This is a little contradictory in terms of most of them do not enjoy doing the course but they enjoy the course content. Most of the respondents agreed that they had the pre-requisite knowledge needed to learn the concepts that are taught in Research Methods.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It may be concluded that the study provided insight into students' perception of the course Research Methods. It would be beneficial given the findings to examine students' perception of other courses within their programme structure. For future research it would be important that the instrument be modified to increase the Cronbach's alpha. The correlation for each item will have to be looked at and those that have values that are too low will have to be deleted. However, additional items will have to be adapted, adopted or created as one factor that can result in the low Cronbach's alpha is that there were too small a number of items on the survey instrument.

Lecturers will need to evaluate how the course is taught to the students as this can be a reason students do not enjoy doing the course, or perceive the course as relevant. More innovative methods will need to be used as well as the teaching of the course using more hands on approaches.

After the modification of the instrument another pilot will be done using one class to ascertain the Cronbach's alpha for the instrument and if acceptable then the official study will commence to find out what are students' perceptions of selected courses that are taught at the institution. The study will include courses that have a high failure rate and those that consistently have a high pass rate.

NOTES ON THE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION DIVISION TEAM



Dr. Malcolm is a Fulbrighter who earned her PhD. in Higher Education Administration with minor in Qualitative Methodology from the University of Florida. She also holds a Bachelor's and Master's Degree from the University of the West Indies, Mona Jamaica. Currently, Dr. Malcolm holds the position of Vice Principal of Academic Affairs & Institutional Advancement at the Excelsior Community College, Jamaica. In her current post she has responsibility for institutional partnerships, academic quality assurance, strategic planning, accreditation and institutional research and overall leadership of the institution's academic division. Her research agenda focuses on diversity issues with special focus on international education issues, in addition to a focus on qualitative methodology-based research. She is specifically interested in focusing on higher education issues affecting the Caribbean education system and stakeholders directly and indirectly associated with such.

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Cynanie Sawyers-Haylett is the Dean of the Research and Innovation Division (RID) at the Excelsior Community College (ECC). As Dean, she has core responsibility for coordinating research initiatives aimed at influencing institutional

decision making and policy development. Mrs. Sawyers-Haylett is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of the West Indies where she is pursuing her PhD in Organizational Behaviour. She is a 2015 SOL scholar –an academic scholarship awarded by SOL Petroleum Ltd and a participant in the Canada-CARICOM Faculty Leadership Programme in 2017. She holds a Master of Science Degree in Counseling and Consulting from International University of the Caribbean (IUC), a First Class Honors Bachelor of Science Degree in Psychology from University of the West Indies (UWI) and a Diploma in Secondary Visual Arts Education from The Mico Teachers' College. Mrs. Sawyers-Haylett has presented at the Qualitative Inquiry Conference (QIC) at the University of the West Indies in 2009 and the 2017 and 2019 Council of the Community Colleges of Jamaica (CCCJ) Conferences. As a mixed-methodologist, her research interests includes: Art Therapy, Skin Colour Perception in Jamaica, Skin Colour Modification Behaviours, Organizational Culture, Industry 4.0 Organizational Change and Training Motivation.

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Tamecia Adams-Robinson has been an Educator for over 15 years. She is presently the Research Officer and a Lecturer at Excelsior Community College. She holds a diploma in Secondary Education from The Mico Teacher's College, a B.Sc. in Management Studies and an M.Ed in Education Measurement from the University of the West Indies.

As an educator, she views her job as a ministry and therefore not only seeks to convey knowledge to students but to facilitate their all-round development. Mrs. Adams-Robinson is an avid researcher who has presented her research findings at: Council of the Community Colleges of Jamaica (CCCJ) Conference 2019 and

the International Council on Education for Teaching (ICET) Conference 2016. Her research interests involve educational measurement and higher education institutional development. She believes that anything that one wants to achieve in life, all one needs to do is to make a start, and thus she lives by the quote “The journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step.”

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