FOREIGN STUDENTS' PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSTRUCTS AND EDUCATIONAL MILIEU: CHALLENGES TO GLOBAL EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This descriptive research aimed to determine students' psychological constructs specifically self-esteem, self-efficacy and motivation as well as their perceived educational milieu. The data gathered were from the responses of 242 purposively sampled participants through the Rosenberg's Self-Esteem, General Self-Efficacy, Student Motivation, Dundee Ready Education Environment Measure, Intention Certainty and Student Adaptation scales. Frequency and mean distribution, ANOVA and Pearson r were utilized in the analysis of data. The results revealed that participants were mostly aged 19, dominantly males and Indians, mostly firstborn and stayed in the current school for at least 3-12 months. Results show that participants' self-esteem and self-efficacy are "high," motivation level are "very high" and their perceptions of educational milieu, are "positive." They were found to have "strong" intention certainty to remain and obtain their degrees in their current school and that they have "high" level of adaptation. Further, it was found that age affects psychological constructs, and birth order influences participants' perception of educational milieu. Also, the psychological constructs and educational milieu correlate significantly with student retention and adaptation. As a result, a triadic complimentary function of personal, educational learning, and perception development was proposed to help address challenges of global education.

Keywords*: foreign students, psychological constructs, educational milieu, global education*

INTRODUCTION

The issue of globalization has become a trend in the educational settings as the ASEAN integration road shows went full blast. As a response to globalization, the Philippine educational system particularly the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) has created a "Policy Framework and Strategies on the Internationalization of Philippine Higher Education" (CMO 55 s. 2016) in order for Higher Educational Institutions (HEI) in the country to be at par with HEIs worldwide.

As HEIs in Region 02 aspired for equal recognition in the global setting, they took the overseas perspective of macro planning for increasing enrollment. Accepting international students has been an emerging challenge but eventually became a reality. Foreign students are now part of Region 02's HEI enrollment profile particularly at St. Paul University Philippines and Cagayan State University.

Many variables studied are straightforward and simple to measure. However, there are variables studied by a majority of the psychologists that are not easy to measure, and these are referred to as psychological constructs (Price, 2017). Psychological constructs can be referred to the traits and qualities of a person that cannot be concretely identified by observation (reference.com, 2016). These necessitate psychological assessment. On the other hand, Kelly in the 1950s (Engler, 2012) has introduced the Personal Construct Theory (PCT) which became a premise in understanding how a person construe events and experiences in life.

As education advanced in modern times, the concept of educational milieu has become an area of interest. There is a need to distinguish educational area and educational milieu (Listvina, 2014). According to Leonora (2008), the former is a "result of a potential integration of the present educational components; the social space (including economic, political and cultural space); a phenomenon in social relations of the countries; as specific quality of unity; and as a result of constructive activities." For educational milieu, Bekker and Zhuravchik (2009) remarked that it "includes affection on all the senses and organs of the learner, availability of the main and peripheral

information, symbolical and psychological meaning, adaptive and socializing functions, the influence as a unit." Educational milieu puts the learner on the center stage as it emphasizes precise "presentation and structuring of materials, as well as learner psychological state formation (Listvina, 2014)."

To help modelling an educational milieu, it is necessary to highlight vital thrust and cultivate challenging conduit for the learners to get along in order to gain the "specific knowledge and simultaneously with this perceiving the mental foundations of culture within which the educational process is carried out" (Podzorova, 2011; Listvina, 2014). As such, educational milieu has to be assessed to help educational system adjust to the trends of global education.

On the other hand, the person's behavior, i.e., decision or certainty of intention to remain enrolled in the school is anchored on several theories. Foremost is the Theory of Triadic Influence (TTI). Synder and Flay (2012) described that intentions, the most proximal affective/cognitive predictor of behavior, are explained by the Theory of Triadic Influence as all streams end in affective/cognitive factors.

Landry (2003) made use of a new variable called "intention certainty" which is derived from the concepts of intention and decision certainty. She stated that this definition is not the same with the decision making in the context of decidedness or undecidedness and that decidedness alone is not essentially a good outcome if the decision was made in a rush or for motives that do not align with the student's characteristics.

Intention certainty has an impact on student retention. Tinto's Theory in 1975 (Student Integration Model of Attrition) on student retention paved the way to several researches along student dropouts and the like in universities worldwide. The theory works on the concepts of academic and social integration. Draper (2008) outlined some extensions beyond the original theory such as social capital (Braxton, 2000); and Bordeiu's "habitus" (Thomas, 2002). Tinto (2006) has identified three areas for further exploration, i.e., institutional action, program implementation, and the continuing challenge of

promoting the success of low-income students.

Adaptation to the school is very important for the students to stay. Adaptation is a process and outcome where people use conscious awareness and choice to create human and environmental integrations (Philips, 2010). It further refers to how well students become accustomed to the new environment as they begin an academic program (Rajab et al., 2014).

The school has to ensure that the students, particularly the foreign or international students have gained an appreciation of their environment and that they have lived comfortably and happily adjusted to their learning situations. Foreign students' retention is as significant as the retention of local students in every HEI. At St. Paul University Philippines and Cagayan State University, it has become a priority need to maintain their respective status as premier universities in the region - the first recognized institutions with a permit to accept foreign students.

With all these, the researcher went through determining the prevailing psychological constructs of the foreign students specifically their self-esteem, their self-efficacy, and their motivation; how these students perceived the educational milieu of their chosen institutions; have determined whether these students have the intention to remain enrolled in their chosen school; and verified whether they have adapted to the challenges of Philippine educational environment with the hope of helping them and the future students make proper adaptation and graduate successfully. Towards the end, it is hoped that the participating schools in Region 02 will improve their promotional initiatives in accepting and taking care of foreign students.

Purpose and Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to determine the differences and interrelationship of foreign students' psychological constructs, perceived higher institution's educational milieu and identified variables to address challenges to global education. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following:

1. What is the profile of the participants when grouped according to:
    1.1 Age;
    1.2 Sex;
    1.3 Citizenship/Nationality;
    1.4 Birth Ordinal Position; and
    1.5 Length of Stay in the Current School?
2. How do the participants fare in the following psychological constructs:
    2.1 Self-esteem;
    2.2 Self-efficacy; and
    2.3 Motivation?
3. How do the participants assess their educational milieu regarding the following factors:
    3.1 Students' Perception of Teachers;
    3.2 Students' Perception of Learning;
    3.3 Students' Academic Self-perception;
    3.4 Students' Perception of the Atmosphere; and
    3.5 Students' Social Self-perception?
4. What is the level of intention certainty of the participants to remain enrolled in their respective schools?
5. What is the level of adaptation of the participants in their current educational environment?
6. Is there a difference in each of the following when grouped according to profile variables:
    6.1 Students' Psychological Constructs; and
    6.2. Perception of Educational Milieu?
7. Is there a relationship in each of the following:
    7.1. Students' Psychological Constructs and Perception of Educational Milieu;
    7.2. Students' Psychological Constructs and Level of Intention Certainty and Adaptation;
    7.3. Educational Milieu and Level of Intention Certainty and Adaptation?
8. What framework can be proposed to address the challenges of global education (student retention and student adaptation)?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study made use of the descriptive research design. This method was employed to determine the psychological constructs specifically self-efficacy, self-esteem, and motivation, perceived educational milieu as well as the intention certainty and adaptation of the foreign students. It likewise described the differences in the psychological constructs and educational milieu when grouped according to profile variables. It further described the relationships of the variables under study. With this, a framework was conceptualized to address student retention and adaptation of foreign students in the Philippine education milieu.

Participants of the Study

This study employed purposive sampling method in selecting the 242 participants coming from St. Paul University Philippines (87) and Cagayan State University – Carig Campus (155).

Instrumentation

A checklist was used to obtain the participants' school, age, sex, nationality/citizenship, length of stay in their current school and birth ordinal position. The standardized instruments in gathering the needed data were the following:

Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale presented high ratings in reliability areas; internal consistency was 0.77, minimum Coefficient of Reproducibility was at least 0.90 (Rosenberg, 1965).

General Self-efficacy Scale. This was developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995). Different studies have shown that the GSE has high reliability, stability, and construct validity. Cronbach alpha ranges from 0.75 to 0.94 across a number of different language versions (Luszczynska et al., 2005). Relations between the GSE and other social

cognitive variables (intention, implementation of intentions, outcome expectations, and self-regulation) are high and confirm the validity of the scale (Luszczynska et al., 2005).

Student Motivation Scale adapted from Landry (2003). The standardized Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficients is at .72 (Landry, 2003).

Dundee Ready Education Environment Measure adapted from Roff et al. (1997). It is a 'cultural-free tool' to measure the educational climate at educational institutions (Yusoff, 2012). The variables had an internal consistency reliability of .91 (Cronbach's alpha) based on the original instrument. The validity and reliability were established in different languages. In this study, the researcher has utilized the adaptation in the Philippine setting by Bay Jr. and Subido (2014) with some modifications.

Intention Certainty Scale adapted from Landry (2003). The standardized Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficient is .75 (Landry, 2003).

Student Adaptation Scale. A researcher-made supplemental research instrument with a Cronbach's alpha of .834.

Data Analysis

The statistical tools utilized to treat the data gathered included the frequency count, percentage, mean, mean scores, ANOVA and Pearson r.

Test of differences and relationships was interpreted based on p<.05 in each analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The 242 participants' age ranged from 17 to 27 years old. Most are aged 19 (32.20%). The majority are males (55%). They belong to five (5) different nationalities with Indians as dominant group (92.60%). Most

are firstborn (38.40%) children, and they are staying in the Philippines for at least 3 to 27 months. The majority are within 3-14 months of stay in the current school.

They manifest "high" psychological constructs: high self-esteem (18.93), high self-efficacy (31.07), and very high motivation (19.67). High self-esteem of the participants denotes high self-respect and feelings of satisfaction, positive attitude and success in life while having high self-efficacy connotes that they have high optimistic self-belief in their ability to succeed in spite of a variety of difficult demands in their respective schools. Further, having very high motivation proves that they have a very strong driving force to succeed in their chosen career. The findings of Baumeister et al. (2013) showed that high self-esteem facilitates persistence after failure. Conversely, a person with high in self-esteem claims to be more likable and attractive; to have better relationships; and to make better impressions on others. The research finding has asserted that self-esteem has a strong relation to happiness and that high self-esteem does lead to greater happiness. Also, high self-esteem leads to happier outcomes regardless of stress or other circumstances. It mentioned that the benefits of high self-esteem are enhanced initiative and pleasant feelings. Thus, to boost self-esteem, the use of praise as a reward for socially desirable behavior and self-improvement was recommended. The current finding is likewise supported by the point of view of Bandura (2005) on self-efficacy and self-regulation of motivation because as described it is cognitively generated and that self-efficacy beliefs contribute to motivation in determining the goals people set for themselves and how much efforts and resiliency they will put forth in order to attain their goal. The participants of the current study are very much aware of their goal – that is to finish their studies, and because of that they are very highly motivated. Hence, it can be inferred that the higher the self-efficacy, the higher the motivation.

On the perception of educational milieu, the participants perceived their teachers as "Moving in the right direction (becoming a model teacher) (32.96); their learning as "A more positive perception of teaching strategies/approaches" (36.57); their academic self-perception as "Feeling more on the positive side of learning outcomes"

(24.96); the atmosphere as "A more positive attitude of school climate" (35.14); and social self-perception as "Not so bad social relationship" (20.47). Hence, the total perception is "more positive than negative educational milieu."

As to the level of intention certainty and adaptation, the participants have strong intention certainty (2.73) and high adaptation (3.01). The strong intention certainty is supported by their disagreement to the thought of dropping out of school (1.99), and not quitting school even when offered a high paying job (1.95) or won the lottery (1.85). Nevertheless, the collective response of "agree" to the items in the adaptation scale indicates that there are still areas for improvement to gain a "strongly agree" response. Crucial to the institution are the following: the feeling of belongingness, immersion in socio-cultural activities, and friendship with the local students as these three (3) areas gained the lowest means. In the study of Adolfo (2017), it was concluded that for the foreign students to function effectively in their new academic environment, they have to go through socio-cultural adjustment which involves cognitive and behavioral processes. Also, she concluded that the processes include psychological, social, cultural, emotional and financial.

Table 1

Test of difference between psychological constructs and profile variables

Variables	Wilks' Lambda	F	df	Error df	p-value	Decision
Age	.93	5.50*	3	238	.001	Reject Ho
Sex	.98	1.14	3	228	.330	Accept Ho
Nationality	.99	0.83	3	238	.478	Accept Ho
Birth order	.96	1.38	6	474	.218	Accept Ho
Length of stay	.98	1.07	3	238	.362	Accept Ho

Legend: *significant at 0.05 level of significance

The results show that age has something to do with self-esteem, self-efficacy, and motivation. The significant difference lies in the adult age (20-27 years old). People on this stage who were highly motivated have high hopes to become successful one day, and this hope boosts their self-esteem and self-efficacy. Also, it can be deduced that as one gets older, the higher is the self-esteem, self-efficacy, and motivation.

Accordingly, self-efficacy belief sets the footing for motivation, and personal accomplishment in all areas of life and this starts from an early stage of life and further develops as the child grows older Pajares (2005). Schwarzer and Luszczynska (2008) likewise affirm that self-efficacy increases when individuals move on to the later stages of life. On self-esteem, Robins et al. (2002) confirm that during childhood self-esteem levels were high, it will drop in adolescence and will rise gradually throughout adulthood. Research findings of Gegenfurtner and Vauras (2012) pointed out that age was positively associated with motivation to learn and with the relationship between motivation to learn and transfer of learning. On the other hand, Bandura (1994) has always contended that human motivation and behavior influence each other reciprocally.

Table 2

Test of significant difference between perception of educational milieu and profile variables

Variables	Wilks' Lambda	F	df	error df	p-value	Decision
Age	.96	1.65	5	236	.146	Accept Ho
Sex	.97	1.23	5	236	.295	Accept Ho
Nationality	.96	1.90	5	236	.094	Accept Ho
Birth Order	.92	1.94*	10	470	.038	Reject Ho
Length of stay	.98	.56	5	236	.728	Accept Ho

Legend: *significant at 0.05 level of significance

Table 2 shows that age (.146), sex (.295), nationality/citizenship (.094) and length of stay (.728) have probability value higher than the .05 level of significance. This means that the null hypothesis is accepted. This signifies that the participants with their identified variables (age, sex, nationality/citizenship and length of stay) do not differ regarding their perception of their educational milieu. Hence, the 17-year-old has a similar perception as the older ones; the same is true with both males and females, with different nationalities/citizenships, and with duration of stay in the Philippines.

However, birth order has a probability value of .038 which suggests that the null hypothesis on birth order and perception of

educational milieu is rejected. This denotes that there is a significant difference in the perception of the firstborn, middleborn, youngest and only child in the educational milieu. The above finding is supported by the view of Adler (Encyclopedia.com, 2017) on the differences of personality as manifested by birth order and nurtured by the support they gained from their family as well as from previous experiences with people (teachers, friends, peers, etc.). Hence, it is imperative that the educational institutions have to continue adopting differentiated learning/teaching strategies and student engagements; keeping faculty members who are tactful/undiscriminating, skilled/competent in handling different types of students; and providing a relaxed and stress-free atmosphere with facilities that can be used for recreation in order to gratify students.

Table 3

Correlation between participants' psychological constructs and perception of educational milieu

Psychological constructs	Educational milieu				
	Perception of teachers	Perception of learning	Academic self-perception	Perception of the atmosphere	Social self-perception
	r (P-value)	*r* (P-value)	*r* (P-value)	*r* (P-value)	*r* (P-value)
Self-esteem	.138* (.032)	.272** (.000)	.300** (.000)	.229** (.000)	.201** (.002)
Self-efficacy	.332** (.000)	.473** (.000)	.495** (.000)	.324** (.000)	.402** (.000)
Motivation	.361** (.000)	.468** (.000)	.535** (.000)	.317** (.000)	.353** (.000)
	Decision: Reject Ho				

Legend: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
       *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 3 shows that the probability values in all the variables correlated are lower than the levels of significance (.05 & .01). This means that the null hypothesis on students' psychological constructs and perception of educational milieu is rejected. There exists a significant relationship between the two (2) variables. The participants' high self-esteem and high self-efficacy as well as the very high motivation results

contributed to the positive perception of the educational milieu. That is to say that the perception of educational milieu is viewed positively by people endowed with high self-regard and high self-beliefs in their capabilities. In like manner, people who are motivated to study would have a positive perception of the learning environment.

As cataloged in EduNova (2012), several researchers have found that student's confidence (which is a by the result of self-esteem and self-concept) is a significant factor in educational success. It was mentioned that developing confidence in students is one of the most important steps educators and parents must take to guarantee an atmosphere of learning. There was a contention that when a child loses self-esteem, he/she may lose motivation in learning. It was affirmed that by enriching confidence in students, parents and educators would be able to preserve the most salient ingredient to success and that is motivation.

Conversely, recent researches on student motivation have provided substantiation for the development of vital constructs and generalizations that have direct application to the classroom. One of these many motivational constructs is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is crucial to promoting students' engagement and learning (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2010).

In the study of Lunenburg (2011) as cited in Redmond & Slaugenhop (2016), self-efficacy has power over people's ability to learn, their motivation and their performance, because people will often engage to learn and perform only those undertakings for which they believe they will be successful. Also, it is believed that a person with a high level of self-efficacy in a responsive environment will become successful. Their positive attitude toward their abilities together with environmental change upholds success and develops long-term motivation.

The present study found higher self-efficacy. Hence, it is beneficial to address the issue of declining self-efficacy to help the students in the school maintain this level of self-efficacy.

Table 4

Correlation between psychological constructs and level of intention certainty and adaptation

Psychological constructs	Level of intention certainty and adaptation					
	Intention certainty			Adaptation		
	r	p-value	Decision	r	p-value	Decision
Self-esteem	.056	.382	Do not reject Ho	.338**	.000	Reject Ho
Self-efficacy	.224**	.000	Reject Ho	.473**	.000	Reject Ho
Motivation	.224**	.000	Reject Ho	.511**	.000	Reject Ho

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

Table 4 shows that the p-value for intention certainty and self-esteem (.382) is higher than the level of significance (.01) which denotes that the null hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant relationship between the two (self-esteem and intention certainty). Self-esteem has nothing to do with intention certainty and vice-versa. This signifies that general self-regard does not in any way influence how a person makes choices and decisions in life – the decision to stay and obtain the degree in the current school is not influenced by self-esteem. The other constructs – self-efficacy and motivation have p-values (.000) which denote that intention certainty, self-efficacy and motivation are significantly correlated. Hence, the null hypothesis on psychological constructs (self-efficacy and motivation) and level of intention certainty are rejected. It indicates that optimistic self-belief to succeed and driving force to succeed positively relate to intention certainty. Self-belief and personal drives interact certainly with one's choices and decisions in life – particularly to stay and obtain the degree in the current school.

According to Schwarzer (2014), there is abundant evidence that self-efficacy is an influential determinant of behavioral intentions as well as actual behavior. As acclaimed by other researchers particularly Zimmerman (2000), self-efficacy is a highly effective predictor of students' motivation and learning. It has shown convergent validity in forecasting diverse forms of motivation which include students' choice of activity, effort, persistence, emotional reactions and students' learning method. It also predicts achievement outcomes.

Regarding adaptation, the p-values (.000) indicate that there is no significant relationship between psychological constructs and adaptation. Thus, there exists a relationship between self-esteem, self-efficacy, motivation, and adaptation. This is evident because it was found that the participants are high on self-esteem and self-efficacy and very high on motivation. It follows that they have high adaptation. It further means that one can adapt depending on the self-regard, self-belief and driving force and the level of adaptation depends on the level of psychological constructs. It is believed that people with high self-esteem were emotionally stable, somewhat agreeable and open to experience; thus, they can adapt positively. In like manner, a person who believes optimistically in his capabilities and who has a strong drive to succeed is usually inspired and can bend constructively to his surroundings.

Table 5

Correlation between educational milieu and level of intention certainty and adaptation

Educational milieu	Level of intention certainty and adaptation			
	Intention certainty		Adaptation	
	r	p-value	r	p-value
Perception of teachers	.343**	.000	.532**	.000
Perception of learning	.325**	.000	.691**	.000
Academic self-perception	.320**	.000	.629**	.000
Perception of the atmosphere	.394**	.000	.563**	.000
Social self-perception	.405**	.000	.528**	.000

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

Table 5 shows that the probability values are zero in all the variables correlated (educational milieu and intention certainty and adaptation). This conveys that the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between educational milieu and intention certainty and adaptation is rejected. There is a connection among the three (3) variables. The perception that teachers are moving in the right decision towards being a model, a more positive perception of learning, a feeling of more often on the positive side in terms of academic perception, a more positive attitude toward the atmosphere and a not so bad social self-perception has influenced the

participants' strong intention to remain re-enrolled and to obtain their degree in their current school. The more positive than the negative perception of the total educational milieu has contributed to the high adaptation of the participants.

The above finding is vital to educational institutions because it reveals that perceptions of educational milieu influence the students' intention certainty to remain re-enrolled and obtain their degree in their current school. Likewise, the students' perception of the educational milieu affects how they settle with the total learning environment. It also reflects the kind of adaptation a student has with his/her perception of the educational milieu. Hence, if one wants to improve student retention, one must address student adaptation, and student adaptation depends on the educational environment and institutional experience that contributed/formed the perception of students positively or negatively. This is the greatest challenge in this emerging globalization of education.

The triadic complimentary functions are the proposed framework to help address student retention and adaptation. It is presented as a development program concerning personal, educational learning and perception. Likewise, it is presented as a cycle because each area of development contributes to each other's success. As the student is accepted into the educational institution, personal development starts. Psychological constructs such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, and motivation must be determined as a self-assessment. This is in addition to the usual psychological assessment given by the school. Once the areas for improvement and personal characteristics to be maintained are identified, programs are prepared and will be infused in the educational learning development program. The psychological/personal constructs will be further developed as one is nurtured in the educational institution. The experience one has in the educational institution will affect one's perception, and perception will influence the personal constructs of the person.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that foreign

students can adapt to Philippine Higher Educational Institutions. Further, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and motivation are influential to student retention and adaptation; and that the proposed framework helps HEIs to address global education issues on student retention and adaptation.

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