



FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT OF AN OUTCOMES- BASED CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

Co-curricular programs are fundamental part in the educational process and are designed to support students' holistic development. The Outcomes-Based Co-Curricular Program (OBCoP) was conceived by a state university in Manila as part of its advocacy for outcomes-based education (OBE). The OBCoP organizes and reviews outcomes-based co-curricular activities to facilitate the development of non-academic and lifelong skills among university students. Henceforth, this study conducted formative assessment to examine the program delivery and the quality of its implementation using both quantitative through survey questionnaire and qualitative approaches through focus group discussions to gather data from students, student leaders, organization/ club advisers, and program implementers. Quantitative data were analyzed by examining the mean rating scores of the respondents in each item while qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis. Findings revealed that the OBCoP has a significant role in student outcomes encompassing both academic and non-academic domains. Across students' assessment of the quality of their respective student organizations, their perception on co-curricular activities, and their perceived impact of co-curricular activities, the findings indicate a positive view of their experiences as student organization members or leaders within the OBCoP. In consonance with the quantitative findings, the role of OBCoP on student development as reflected in the identified themes of OBCoP as enabler of student outcomes and OBCoP as a bridge between student life and professional life, is also indicative of the positive view of students on OBCoP and its contribution to their lifelong learning and holistic development. This study recommends outcomes-based co-curricular programs for universities which adopted outcomes-based education framework. This study further suggests that there must be a more systematic approach in integrating academic and co-curricular learning experiences and that the outcomes-based co-curricular programs undergo internal quality assurance processes.

Keywords: Formative Assessment, Outcomes-Based Co-Curricular Program, Student Activities

INTRODUCTION

One of the key roles of higher education institutions is contributing to the improvement of the social, cultural, political, economic, and environmental aspects of national and global society. In every country in the world, major global efforts to improve the delivery of higher education are being undertaken. There are various initiatives in different fashions depending on the region or institutions. In the case of the

Philippines, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) provide its citizens with a program in line with the government's efforts to produce graduates with academic and technological skills to be productive citizens of the society. Hence, HEIs stakeholders need to promote independent and self-directed students. This would require learning of lifelong skills that would allow graduates of higher education institutions to be globally competent. Lifelong learning crosses

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sectors promoting learning beyond classroom and throughout adult life (Delors, 1996). Lifelong learning can install creativity, initiatives, and responsiveness in people, earning them to do problem solving, manage situations and communicate to different people. Higher education must provide academic programs as a central function to assist students in preparing for their life work, employment, and careers beyond higher education.

Significantly, one important out-of-classroom student service refers to an institution’s co-curricular program. Co-curricular activities aim to prepare students to be holistic in their learning and development. They are integral in the educational program and are part of the students’ holistic development because through them, students are able to discover their potentials and develop their interests. Co-curricular activities also enable students to relate with diverse people as they learn to grow together. In addition, co-curricular activities are also beneficial to the students’ retention rates and educational outcomes (Tan & Pope, 2007).

Philippine Normal University (PNU), one of the eldest state universities in Manila, is the National Centre for Teacher Education (NCTE). In 2014, PNU designed and implemented a curriculum that puts the student at the center of all efforts by supporting students in their academic and co-curricular endeavors and enhancing their personal, social, cultural and cognitive development. The Outcomes-Based Teacher Education Curriculum (OBTEC) is based on an *outcomes-based curricular model* where PNU as an institution has set specific institutional, program, and course outcomes that every student will have to show proof or evidence of performance or achievement. The OBCoP was conceptualized in support of PNU’s commitment to the achievement of quality and relevant education. It aims to strategically improve the connections of the academic and co-curricular activities and provide a systematic design of activities to achieve the program outcomes and impact student learning. These activities may take place inside or outside the classroom and may include membership in student organizations, volunteerism, athletic team

participation, or campus leadership opportunities.

With OBCoP, co-curricular activities will be systematically designed and strategically implemented to improve connections of the academic and co-curricular where it will impact student learning the most. It is also in pursuant to CHED Memo No. 09 s 2013, the Enhanced Policies and Guidelines on Student Affairs and Services, article 2 section 4, “HEIs must provide a set of student centered-activities and services in support of academic instruction intended to facilitate holistic and well-rounded student development for active involvement as future responsible citizens and leaders.” With this, it is important to look into the program delivery and the quality of the implementation of the Outcomes-Based Co-Curricular Program using both quantitative and qualitative approaches to gather data from students, student leaders, organization/ club advisers, and program implementers.

This research used formative assessment as it looked into the delivery of the program and the quality of its implementation. Formative assessment is a change-oriented evaluation approach focused on assessing the program while it is on-going. It is an assessment of efforts prior to the completion of the program to be able to improve these efforts (Nan, 2003). It provides timely feedback about the program services and allows to make program adjustments to help achieve its goals (The Pell Institute, 2015).

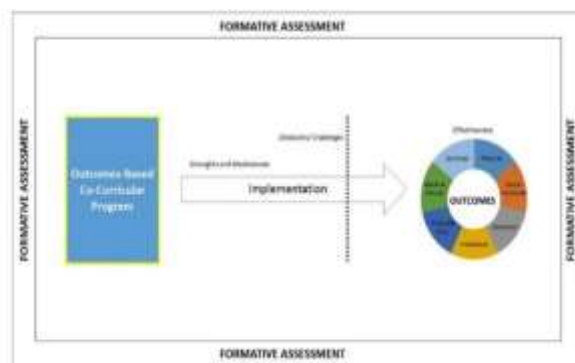


Figure 1. Research Framework of the Study



The OBCoP program is designed for the holistic development of PNU students stirring the different domains of the human person such as the physical, social-emotional, economic, intellectual, cultural/ civic, moral and ethical, and spiritual. It examined the effectiveness of the program as it develops and enhances the different domains. Furthermore, this research defined the impact of OBCoP to the students by finding out if the OBCoP created the PNU brand expected that is of (1) enhanced well-being and quality of life and functioning effectively; (2) ready to serve, lead, and work in a team; (3) independent, lifelong learner with an open mind and inquiring spirit; (4) critical thinker, creative, articulate, and knowledgeable; (5) responsible citizens with an international outlook and a sense of ethics and civility; and (6) information and IT literate and problem-solver.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Using formative assessment, the study aimed to: 1) examine the quality of the implementation of the OBCoP by assessing the quality of student organizations, perception on co-curricular activities, and perceived impact of student activities, 2) identify the strengths and weaknesses of the implementation of the program, and 3) determine the obstacles and challenges encountered, 4) explain the role of outcomes-based co-curricular program on student development.

METHODOLOGY

This study used formative assessment as it looked into the delivery of the Outcomes-Based Co-Curricular Program and the quality of its implementation. It provided a closer look at the program through the use of quantitative-qualitative research design.

Participants of the research were the undergraduate students, program implementers and student activities coordinators, and club/organization faculty advisers of the Philippine

Normal University from the different campuses (Manila, North Luzon, South Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao). A total of 614 undergraduate students responded to the survey questionnaire while total of 66 students, advisers, program implementers, and coordinators participated in the focus group discussion.

To gather quantitative data, a 5-point scale survey questionnaire (1= not at all; 5= to a very great extent) was designed to determine how the students rate their experiences in three areas: (1) their rating as officers and/ or members of student organizations in terms of the club/ organizations' achievement of mission, vision, goals, and objectives, leadership of officers, participation of members, group relationship, utilization of fiscal resources, organization's assessment procedure, and their overall satisfaction as club/ organization member and/ or officer; (2) their rating of the activities facilitated by the different clubs and organizations and by the Office of Student Affairs and Student Services as they created impact in the different areas of their development and the overall impact of their participation in the student activities.

Moreover, this study employed focus group discussion (FGD) to gather qualitative data from the participants. The FGD included the discussion on their perspective of the OBCoP, the strengths and weaknesses on the implementation of OBCoP, how they think participation in student activities contributed in the development of students, and their recommendations for the improvement of the program.

Quantitative data were analyzed by examining the mean rating scores of the respondents in each item. The minimum and maximum rating scores per item, as well as the mean scores per item were obtained to capture an overview or summary of the participants' responses to all items across all areas. Qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis. Data from the focus group discussions were coded and content analyzed to emerge themes that capture the core meanings of the participants' experiences as reflected from their verbal responses.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study purported to examine the effectiveness of the implementation of an outcomes-based co-curricular program in Philippine Normal University using a formative assessment approach. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used to gather data from students, student leaders, organization/club advisers, and program implementers.

Results revealed that OBCoP is viewed as having a significant role in important student outcomes encompassing both academic and non-academic domains. Both qualitative and quantitative data provided preliminary but substantial evidence on the effectiveness of outcomes-based activities that were designed and implemented through the OBCoP. Likewise, the findings highlighted the important role of co-curricular activities in student life and provide some support to the effectiveness of the implementation of the co-curricular program.

1. Quality of the implementation of the OBCoP in terms of quality of student organizations, perception on co-curricular activities, and perceived impact of student activities

1.1 Student Assessment of the Quality of their Student Organizations

The students' assessment of the quality of the student organizations to which they are officers or members tend to be positive as indicated by mean rating scores ranging from 4.11 to 4.48 across indicators. This means that the students, in general, reported that all indicators in all areas are being observed or practiced by their organizations to a great extent. This suggests that the student organizations are adhering to the standards and general guidelines required of student organizations and their members under the OBCoP. Nevertheless, the results also show that some leaders or members reported that their student organizations are not adequately observing or practicing the standards

reflected in the indicators as evidenced by individual ratings of 1 (not at all) and 2 (to a small extent) in all indicators in all areas. This implies that some leaders and members affirm that their student organizations are not adhering to the standards and general guidelines required in the OBCoP. The same pattern is observed in the students' reported overall satisfaction in their organizations. The overall rating is high but some students reported individual satisfaction rating of "to a small extent" or "not at all". This indicates that in the individual level, some students are not satisfied in the organizations to which they belong.

1.2 Students' General Perception of Student Activities

The students' perception of student activities in the OBCOP indicates a positive view and appreciation of student activities. This can be observed in the mean rating scores ranging from 4.39 to 4.48. All mean ratings indicate that the positive statements about student activities can be interpreted as being true "to a great extent". Similar to the students' assessment of the quality of their organizations, some students gave individual ratings of "to a small extent" only. These results indicate that the students have a positive perception on the OBCOP student activities but some students are not fully convinced that the activities are achieving what they are expected to do.

1.3 Students' Perceived Impact of Student Activities

The students' perceived impact of student activities tends to be positive as indicated by mean rating scores ranging from 4.20 to 4.62 across indicators. This means that the students, in general, reported that all indicators in all areas are being observed or practiced by their organizations to a great extent or to a very great extent. This suggests that the students perceived the student activities under the OBCOP, whether facilitated by the student affairs office or by the student organizations, as being helpful and important to the overall development of students



as educators. But similar to the other areas of assessment in this study, the results also show that some leaders or members have a low perception on the impact of student activities as evidenced by individual ratings of “to a small extent” and “not at all” across all indicators.

2. Strengths and Weaknesses of the Outcomes-Based Co-Curricular Program

The participants of this study underwent focus group discussion where they were asked about their impressions of the Outcomes-Based Co-Curricular Program. There, they revealed the program’s strengths and weaknesses as they experienced them being student leaders and members.

Then, the students shared that one of the best features that OBCoP offers is the conduct of workshops which assists them in the organization of the student activities they plan for. These workshops include leadership skills training, technical writing, calendaring of student activities and team building activities. In this connection, since the student leaders are met at the beginning of the school year for the first phase of the workshop, they are encouraged to come-up with well-planned activities.

The students tend to consult their faculty-advisers first before they present their general plan of activities for the whole school year. OBCoP’s integration of the consultation process organizes student activities and assures that the activities are outcomes-based. Since OBCoP systematically assesses and organizes the student activities proposed by students, the students emphasized that OBCoP has been instrumental in setting clear guidelines in the facilitation of student activities. They said that through OBCoP, it is assured that their activities are aligned in the institutional goals of the university.

Further, for the students, OBCoP gave opportunity for the organizations to be known. With the program, the students are able to present their achievements throughout the school year. The students, program implementers, and faculty-advisers highlighted that the best feature of OBCoP is that it fosters collaboration among student organizations and

noted that OBCoP paves way for the student organizations to work together towards the realization of a single goal.

3. Obstacles and Challenges Encountered in the Implementation of OBCoP

In the focus group discussion, the participants were asked of the obstacles and challenges that their clubs and organizations encountered during the period when the outcomes-based co-curricular program was being implemented. The FGD revealed five obstacles and challenges the participants went through. These were grouped into two categories: technical which pertains to the obstacles and challenges encountered in the procedure in the conduct of student activities; fiscal which refers to the obstacles and challenges related to the organization’s resources.

One of the technical obstacles and challenges which the students encountered is the overlapping of scheduled programs, the venues to be used are lacking, conflict in the schedule of activities and lapses in the dissemination of information. When it comes to fiscal obstacles and challenges, the students shared that they encountered members who lack knowledge in the facilitation of activities and insufficient budget.

4. The Role of Outcomes-Based Co-Curricular Program on Student Development

The role of OBCoP in student development is divided between being an enabler of student outcomes and being a bridge between student life and life after PNU. As enabler of student outcomes, OBCoP has been instrumental in bringing out both interpersonal and intrapersonal outcomes among students. On the other hand, being a bridge between student life and life after PNU, OBCoP was able to make connections between the academics and co-curricular experiences of the students and was able to maintain this connection even after the students graduated.



OBCoP as enabler of student outcomes: Enabling intrapersonal outcomes. OBCoP enabling intrapersonal outcomes describes how the program was able to develop various characteristics within the individual. With OBCoP, the students were able to lead the self and others through increased organizational skills, upgraded self-confidence, enhanced leadership skills, improved time management skills, and developed problem-solving skills.

Fundamental to this development is the students' increasing organizational skills. Since the students, as student leaders were able to facilitate activities, their skills in organizing and managing such activities increased. For some students, OBCoP helped them upgrade their level of self-confidence. This is brought about by their participation in student activities as facilitators and in their interaction with different people.

As student leaders, it is expected that they possess leadership skills. Through OBCoP and their increased participation in student activities, the students' leadership skills were enhanced. When asked about how participation in student activities helped them personally and professionally, a student leader shared that being able to handle people or other students enabled her to enhance her leadership skills in the sense that she got to apply several strategies in order to handle people better.

Being a student leader requires time—time for academics, time for co-curricular activities, plus time for other responsibilities. With the students' participation in student activities, they shared that it helped them to improve their time management skills. As student leaders and members of the clubs/ organizations, the participants shared how facilitation of and participation in student activities developed their problem-solving skills. One student leader shared that with her participation in student activities, she was able to learn how to address her personal problems, even the problems of her other members, their organization's clientele, and the problems of the community.

OBCoP as enabler of student outcomes: Enabling interpersonal outcomes. The role of OBCoP as enabler of interpersonal outcomes describes how the program mobilized the students to work well and deal well with other people. It characterizes how the students' interpersonal skills developed with their interaction with others, with their management of people, and with their socialization and creation of networks.

Most of the participants highlighted how OBCoP brought organizations and people to collaborate. Collaborating with groups and with other organizations, for the students has been the main essence of OBCoP. It brought together several organizations to work together and different people to move towards one direction and one goal. Aside from collaboration, the participants, primarily as student leaders, learned helping others in the community through volunteerism. With their leadership, the students were able to reach out to their members and the community. With their interactions with different people, the participants shared that building connections and networks with other stakeholders has been one of the remarkable outcomes that OBCoP had on them. Aside from this, one of the best features of OBCoP that the students described is the ability of the program to have them tap other organizations to help them facilitate and participate in their activities. For the students, such manner fostered camaraderie and cooperation among them.

OBCoP as bridge between student life and life after PNU: Bridging academic and co-curricular learnings. The Outcome-Based Co-Curricular Program served bridge between the participants' lives as students of PNU and the lives they perceive as they graduate for the University. OBCoP bridging academic and co-curricular learnings describes how the students highlighted the role of OBCoP and student activities in establishing connection between the academic and co-curricular learnings and experiences of students. True to its purpose, in this section, OBCoP complemented and responded to the needs of the curriculum.



One of the roles of OBCoP in the curriculum is the responsiveness of student activities to academic needs. As the student leaders design the programs and activities they intend to facilitate, they look into what academic needs do their members have and what does the curriculum lack that they can provide in the form of student activities. Another role of OBCoP in bridging the students' academic and co-curricular learnings is the alignment of activities to the curriculum. Being both outcomes-based, the students described how OBCoP complemented OBTEC. In organizing student activities, the student leaders match their activities with that of what is in the curriculum.

As future teachers, OBCoP was able to make student activities as training ground in preparation for teaching. Most students reported that the skills they acquire from participating in student activities are the same skills they can use as they become future teachers.

OBCoP as bridge between student life and life after PNU: Bridging being a PNU student leader and being a PNU graduate.

Being a PNU student does not end after one graduates. OBCoP was able to bridge the participants' lives as students to their lives when they graduate. In the FGD, the students narrated how they wished to create a legacy in the student activities when they graduate, how being a member and a leader of an organization is a prestige for them and how their alumni supported and participated in their student activities.

The students believed that being part of an organization and being able to contribute to that organization is creating a legacy as a PNUan. In the FGD, the students discussed how they are being supported by their alumni members. Participation and support as alumni was maintained as outcomes of student activities—a proof of a greater impact on student activities on students.

The students revealed in the FGD that their being a member of a student organization brought them prestige. Prestige in being a member of a student organization is characterized by the students' feelings of regard because of other people's perception that being

an active member of officer in one of the organizations deemed more accountability and responsibility. The students shared how much their membership and training in their organizations gave them a sense of pride.

Across students' assessment of the quality of their respective student organizations, their perception on co-curricular activities, and their perceived impact of co-curricular activities, the findings indicate a rather positive view of their experiences as student organization members or leaders within the OBCoP. The findings seem to be congruent with Astin's Theory of Student Involvement (2015) which emphasized that students need to actively engage in student activities and are consistent with the literature indicating the value of co-curricular engagement in learning (Taufik & Fatmawali, 2017; Kolb, 1984; Kuh, 2008) and well-being (Kuh, 2001). These findings collectively provide some support to the argument that learning is most effective when students are able to make meaningful connections across their many educational experiences, both curricular and co-curricular.

In consonance with the quantitative findings, the role of OBCoP on student development as reflected in the identified themes of OBCoP as enabler of student outcomes and OBCoP as a bridge between student life and professional life, is also indicative of the positive view of students on OBCoP and its contribution to their lifelong learning and holistic development. Hence, both quantitative and qualitative findings point to the essential role of an outcomes-based co-curricular program on students' life.

In spite of students' positive views on OBCoP, both the quantitative and qualitative findings also revealed that some students are not satisfied with their specific co-curricular experiences, and weaknesses were identified in terms of procedure (e.g. failure to implement rules set) and engagement (e.g. inability to sustain club membership). These findings imply that certain aspects in the processes and activities in the implementation of OBCoP have problems or limitations that must be addressed. The identified weaknesses of OBCoP must be addressed by determining the factors that



contribute to these weaknesses and what strategies may be used to address these factors. As the findings suggest, the student affairs office must conduct a review of the OBCoP policies and projects, especially in terms of improving promoting and regulating student involvement in co-curricular activities.

Interestingly, the identified strengths of the OBCoP program all pertain to the processes and services of the student affairs office. This finding highlights the important role of a student affairs or student services office in the realization of the goals of an outcomes-based co-curricular program. Needless to say, students' co-curricular activities are more likely to be effective and efficient if it is properly managed by the office assigned to oversee student organizations and their activities. Central to this is the function of such office to effectively communicate and train students in the nature and process of outcomes-based co-curricular activities.

The identified challenges and obstacles in the OBCoP program imply the need for the university and the student affairs office in particular to provide financial literacy to students and student organization advisers. It also seems to be necessary for the student affairs office to have stronger communication and collaboration mechanisms with other units or offices of the university to avoid technical and procedural problems like lack of venue and conflicting schedules of student activities.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following specific conclusions are made:

1. The outcomes-based co-curricular program (OBCoP) of PNU contributes to the goal of the university to promote and facilitate outcomes-based education among students.
2. The effective implementation of an outcomes-based co-curricular program is dependent on the successful coordination and collaboration between different units

and offices of a university, not just between students and the Student Affairs Office.

3. The design and implementation of an outcomes-based co-curricular program are grounded on non-academic student outcomes that are central to their holistic development as current students and future professionals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For the further enrichment of this study, the following recommendations are hereby offered:

1. In universities where an outcomes-based education framework is adopted, their respective co-curricular programs must also be designed and implemented within an outcomes-based education framework.
2. Like an outcomes-based curriculum, an outcomes-based co-curricular program must undergo internal quality assurance processes (monitoring, periodic reviewing, revising, formative and summative assessment) to ensure that the goals of the program are being met and that the policies and procedures that define its processes are being observed and practiced.
3. A more systematic approach to enable a more seamless interaction and integration between academic and co-curricular learning experiences must be implemented to ascertain that students will be able to maximize the learning opportunities provided by both type of educational experiences.
4. There is value and merit in designing and implementing co-curricular activities that are grounded in the principles of outcomes-based education. Thus, it is plausible that an outcomes-based co-curricular program may offer the best mechanism to ascertain that the development of non-academic and lifelong student outcomes that contribute to the holistic development of students is



achieved in the most effective and efficient way possible.

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