



A Study on Awareness of Academic Probation Among Students Community with Reference to Nizwa College of Technology- Department of Business Studies, Sultanate of Oman

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Abstract

Academic probation is the most sought after means to indicate students to improve their performance. This study aims to find out the level of awareness and evaluate the degree of academic support offered by the institution through academic advisors for students under academic probation. This study aims at finding short term positive effects of a student being in academic probation on results in the following semester. The study also aims at evaluating course tutor guided and student-developed plans to exit/probation. A student being in academic probation serves as indicator to improve their performance.

Key words: Academic Advisor, Academic probation, Course tutor, Student community

1. Introduction to the study:

Academic probation indicates a level of students' academic performance is below what is required for successful progress towards the completion of a students' degree program. It is an advisory warning that requires a student to take actions to raise his/her level of achievement to an acceptable level of performance.

At Nizwa College of Technology there are three groupings of academic probation students that are reflected on the academic record or transcript of each student. They are as follows:



- Academic Probation 1
- Academic Probation 2
- Dismissal

A student will be placed on academic probation 1 if he/she earns a trimester grade point average of less than 2.00. If the student fails to clear/exit probation (*refer clearance/exiting probation*) in the forthcoming trimester, he/she falls into academic probation 2. However, the student has a relaxation of not falling into further probation during the summer trimester if he/she fails to clear academic probation but he/she enjoys the benefit of clearance/exiting probation if he/she secures a summer trimester Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of 2.00 or more.

Clearance/Exiting of academic probation is assigned to the trimester record of any student with a trimester and CGPA of 2.00 or above 2.00 at the close of the trimester.

A student may remain on probation for two (ref: college bylaws article 51 and 52) consecutive terms before being dismissed (ref: article 72 of the college bylaws) in the event of the student failing to secure a CGPA of 2.00 or more at the end of the trimester with academic probation 2.

A student has the right to appeal against a dismissal decision vide article 91 of the college bylaws.

2. Review of literature:

The program structure at Colleges of Technology (CoT) in Sultanate of Oman typically is a credit hour system and minimum CGPA requirement is the determinant for a student to progress to the next level. The system followed at CoT is student centered, however the sanction is that a student under academic probation can only register four courses in the first and the second, in trimester two courses; as against five courses in the first and the second trimester for a student that is not under probation. According to Jason M. Fletcher, (2010) students under probation are termed as “at risk” students. There have been many studies conducted to compare students who



are under academic probation with students who are not. This study finds short term positive effects of a student being in academic probation on results in the following semester.

According to Jason M. Fletcher, (2010) positive effects disappear over time and perseverance level of the student is low. Scalice et al, (2000) in their research conclude that the effects of academic probation are correlational, where the average performances of students under academic probation are compared with the average performance of students that are not under probation.

Habley (2005) and Gordon-Starks (2015) defines academic advising as “relationship-building” in which the academic advisor acts as a mentor, guide, and positive influence throughout the academic journeys of his or her students.

Ann Lieberman Colgan, practicing intentional advising from West Chester University (2016) study says that advising permits advisors to rediscover students.

Loretta Zost, (2012) says that students who were formerly on academic probation reported it had a positive impact on their self-concept.

Observing these models Nizwa College of Technology applied a concept called PCPF (Probation Clearance Plan Form) for staff and students which practically experimented and resulted in a positive change.

2.1 Statement of the problem:

The students under probation are not aware of the implications of academic probation on their academic progress.

2.2 Objective of the study:

- a. To find out the level of awareness of academic probation among student community.
- b. To evaluate the degree of academic support for students under academic probation:
- c. To evaluate self-developed plans to exit/clear academic probation.



- d. To find out short term positive effects of being in academic probation on outcomes in the following semester.

3. Methodology of the study:

This study was conducted at Department of Business Studies at Nizwa college of Technology in Sultanate of Oman. A sample of size of 140 was chosen for the study and the questionnaires were distributed, of which 125 responses were collected. It was found that only 121 responses were valid for data analysis. The sample respondents from both the gender falling under various levels of academic probation were selected at random. The period of study was from September 2015 to April 2016. Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire. Analysis of data was carried out by rating scales. The statistical tools used to analyze the data were Mean, Standard deviation and Co-efficient of correlation.

4. Analysis and Interpretation:

Table 4.1. Attributes on the level of awareness of academic probation.

Characteristics/Attributes	Frequency	Mean	Standard Deviation
a) Awareness of academic probation among student community	121	2.53	1.00
b) Regularly advised by my advisor	121	2.51	0.78
c) Meeting the course tutors continually for academic progress	121	2.48	0.76
d) Understand the course, but have difficulty in writing examinations	121	2.56	0.89

- The table 4.1 shows that the mean value of awareness on academic probation among student community is 2.53 which conveys that the level of awareness among is only 63.25 %. This gives the scope of improving awareness level by the Probation Students Monitoring Team.
- The related attributes that contributes to the level of awareness of academic probation due to regular advise provided by the academic advisors is found to be 2.51 i.e., 62.75 %.
- Of the sample respondents taken up for the study, the mean value of students that regularly meeting course tutors for academic progress is found to be 2.48 i.e., 62 %.



- An important attribute that does not favor the students under academic probation to clear/exit probation is in scripting the answers in the examination and its relative mean value is found to be 2.56 i.e., 64 %

Table 4.2. Attributes on the degree of academic support for students under academic probation.

Characteristics/Attributes	Frequency	Correlation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advisee regularly advised by the advisor• My advisor taught me to calculate CGPA	121	0.543115
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advisee regularly advised by the advisor• Registration and progression in each semester	121	0.363328
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advisee regularly advised by the advisor• Discussed possible involvements for prospective grade achievement with my advisor	121	0.514223

- Table 4.2, shows that there is a positive correlation between advisees regularly advised by the advisors and the consequent knowledge on the calculation of CGPA. The correlation is found to be 0.54 which positive. However, there is a scope of improvement through more such interactions between advisees and advisors.
- From the above table it is found that there is a weak positive correlation of 0.36 between advisees regularly advised by the academic advisors and progression of students in academic probation in each semester.
- The study also reveals that the students' involvement for prospective grade achievement is positively correlated on an average to the academic advice provided by the advisor and the correlation figure stands at 0.51.



Table 4.3. Self-development plans to exit/ clear probation.

Characteristics/variables	Frequency	Correlation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advisee regularly advised by the advisor• I have prepared probation clearance plan form to clear/exit probation.	121	0.635061
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advisee regularly advised by the advisor• I am working out solutions to clear my probation according to the guidance from my course tutors and advisors.	121	0.523085
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advisee regularly advised by the advisor• I evaluate my study skills every week.	121	0.484577
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advisee regularly advised by the advisor• I evaluate my study skills most effectively.	121	0.625178
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advisee regularly advised by the advisor• I attend tutorial classes initiated by PSMT	121	0.436908
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advisee regularly advised by the advisor• I am interested in extra activities and assignments to improve my grade.	121	0.440003
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advisee regularly advised by the advisor• I help myself to improve my grade to clear/ exit probation.	121	0.426335

Table 4.3, shows that there is a positive correlation between advisees regularly advised by the advisors and:

- Students' preparation of probation clearance plan to clear/exit probation. The correlation is found to be 0.64* (positive).
- Students' evaluating their study skills on a weekly basis and the relative correlation is found to be 0.48 (positive).
- Effectively evaluating the study skills and the relative correlation is 0.63* (positive).
- Tutorials classes initiated by Probation Students Monitoring Team and the relative correlation stands at 0.44* (positive).
- Students' interest in extra activities and assignments to improve students' grade and its relative correlation is 0.44 (positive).



- Students' self-help to improve grades to clear/exit probation and the correlation coefficient is 0.43* (positive).

Note: * The figures mentioned in the interpretation are rounded to two decimal precision.

5. Findings:

1. The awareness on academic probation among student community is only 63.25 %.
2. The related attribute that contributes to the level of awareness of academic probation due to regular advice provided by the academic advisors is found to be 62.75 %.
3. Students that regularly meet course tutors for academic progress is found to be 62 %.
4. An important attribute that does not favor the students under academic probation to clear/exit probation is in scripting the answers in the examination is 64 %
5. A positive correlation between advisees regularly advised by the advisors and the consequent knowledge on the calculation of CGPA is found to be $r = 0.54$.
6. A weak positive correlation of 0.36 is found between advisees regularly advised by the academic advisors and progression of students in academic probation in each semester.
7. The study also reveals that the students' involvement for prospective grade achievement is positively correlated on an average to the academic advice provided by the advisor.
8. There is a positive correlation between advisees regularly advised by the advisors and the following attributes under study.
 - Students' preparation of probation clearance plan to clear/exit probation.
 - Students' evaluating their study skills on a weekly basis.
 - Effectively evaluating the study skills.
 - Tutorials classes initiated by Probation Students Monitoring Team.
 - Students' interest in extra activities and assignments to improve students' grade.
 - Students' self-help to improve grades to clear/exit probation.



6. Recommendations:

- Early identification and support of students under probation or suspension would be helpful prior to the semester in which students enter probation.
- Involvements with the students that are likely to fall in probation may include:
 - Learning the progression of first year students and based on that experience academic development activities may be planned.
 - The students under probation face difficulty in scripting answers in the examination. Therefore, it is recommended to provide them activities on writing skills in various courses.
- There is immense scope for improvement in handling students under probation through more frequent interactions between advisees and advisors.
- Supporting students on academic probation may consider the factors of academic problems and academic needs.
- Focusing on achieving a good rapport between advisors and advisees, the advisee's confidence would improve and consequently, it shows on the improvement of the students under probation make persistently.

6. Conclusions:

This study gives ample opportunities for improving awareness on a continuous basis among student community on probation by Probation Students Monitoring Team (PSMT) as the set of students under probation keep progressing to higher levels or exit the college and new set of students would be in probation. Researchers also opine that there is tremendous potential for further research into this segment of student community to offer tailor made services to the students under probation by the institution in the upcoming years.



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