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The Effect of Class Suspension Alternatives as Disciplinary Action for Minor Student Offenses in LPU – Batangas: Basis for Policy Improvement

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Abstract

This study was conducted in order to determine the effect of class suspension alternatives as disciplinary action for minor student offenses in LPU – Batangas. Specifically, this study compared the percentages of minor student offenses per college and assessed the perception of former student violators and university personnel about the effects of these alternatives on behavior and academics. It tested the difference on the perceived effects of these alternatives between student violators and university personnel, and the differences of students' perceived effects of class suspension alternatives when grouped according to level of discouragement to commit more serious offenses. Results revealed that the existing class suspension alternatives served as effective deterrents of student misbehavior. The findings also showed that university personnel have a higher perception of the effects of these alternatives. Moreover, student violators who are not discouraged to commit more serious offenses are less perceptive to the effects of these alternatives.

Keywords: Class Suspension, Class Suspension Alternatives, Disciplinary Action, Student Offenses, Student Discipline.

Bionotes

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Introduction

Educational institutions play a significant role in society because they uphold and advocate the very foundations of character, knowledge, and skills of future professionals who will exude influence in the world at large. As such, the fulfillment and realization of every university's vision and mission is of utmost importance. This necessitates the monitoring of various factors that are contributory to the achievement of the aforementioned.

One of the factors that can affect the realization of a university's vision and mission is the maintenance of peace and order, which includes student discipline. It is undeniably a vital part of this subject since student population forms the largest portion of the academic community and student behavior tends to have an impact on the university's image.

Disciplinary practices for student misbehavior have long been dominated by the use of class suspensions. However, as researchers and educational experts delve more into the topic, the effectiveness of these disciplinary consequences has been placed in a shadow of doubt, especially for students with specific behavioral conditions and skill deficits. In a behaviorist and socio-ecological perspective, class suspensions are deemed inappropriate and ineffective in the promotion of behavioral compliance (Chinet et al., 2012).

Interestingly, the use of class suspensions has been found to have detrimental effects on the sociological, emotional, and academic domain. The use of suspension has very little impact on improvement of student conduct and it even results to missing a lot of learning hours (Robinett, 2012). It is also alarming that high rates of suspensions are associated with increased tardiness, increased absences, low passing rates in examinations, and decreased likelihood of graduation (Chu, 2014). There is a strong relationship between out-of-school suspension and subsequent detention among the youth (Vanderhaar, Munoz, & Petrosko, 2014).

Presently, it is being proposed that the punitive and exclusionary nature of school discipline must be changed into proactive alternatives. It is suggested that schools should carefully review and evaluate their respective discipline policies in order to come up with better and more productive disciplinary measures (Fenning et. al., 2011). Among the methods being explored, community service shows great potential in improving academic performance and behavior, especially within public school settings (May, Stokes, Oliver, & McClure, 2015).

In Lyceum of the Philippines University (LPU) – Batangas, the Office of Student Affairs (OOSA) implements the rules and guidelines concerning student discipline. Guided by the university's Student Manual, particularly Article XIV - Offenses and Penalties, the said office enforces the stipulated disciplinary actions for student misbehavior. The most common disciplinary action used is class suspension, which varies from one day to one year depending on the gravity of the offense committed.

LPU – Batangas recognized many issues as the provisions of the university's student manual were implemented through the years. As a result of the university's insatiable hunger for continuous improvement and dedication to excellent student services, the LPU Student Manual has undergone amendments. Last June 2011, Article XIV has been modified to give more consideration to the students. An additional section, Section 11 – Conversion of Disciplinary Action, was implemented. This considers alternatives to suspension like community service, attendance in a seminar and/or workshop, additional academic requirements, and such other activities depending on the degree or severity of the violation as may be deemed by the Director of the Office of Student Affairs or his duly authorized representative. The said modification was

a brainchild of the university's administrators who sought to implement discipline with less severe penalties, especially for the minor offenses which are more rampant. This also seeks to prevent the disruption of the students' learning hours brought about by class suspensions. Moreover, the implementation of this new policy was strengthened last academic year 2013 – 2014 as the Office of Student Affairs included in its Annual Operational Plan the increased use of office duty as a disciplinary action for student violators.

Since the new policy is now on its third academic year, the researchers, being the proponents and advocates of the same, were compelled to evaluate whether the new disciplinary alternative has been a more effective deterrent of student misbehavior. Research literature has revealed suspensions to cause precarious results but there is no strong evidence yet which can prove that the suggested alternatives have had specific effect on behavior and academic performance. As such, research on this particular field is warranted in order to come up with the best solution to the predicaments faced by both students and school administrators when it comes to disciplinary practices.

Objectives of the Study

This study was conducted in order to determine the effect of class suspension alternatives as disciplinary action for minor student offenses in LPU – Batangas. Specifically, this study seeks to compare the percentage of minor student offenses from year 2011 to 2014 per college with records of improvement, to assess the perception of former student violators and university personnel about the effects of class suspension alternatives on behavior and academics, to test the difference on the perceived effects of class suspension alternatives between student violators and university personnel, to test the differences of students' perceived effects of class suspension alternatives when they are grouped according to level of discouragement to commit more serious offenses, and to propose an action plan to improve the disciplinary practices used in LPU – Batangas.

Literature Review

Out-of-school suspension, as what is used in the LPU Student Manual, is part of a disciplinary system collectively known as zero tolerance policies. These policies mandate specific and rigid punishments, which include suspension, exclusion, and expulsion, for both major and minor violations in order to let students know that any misbehavior shall not be tolerated (Skiba, 2010). Contrary to the usual case-to-case basis in hearings about student misconduct, these policies prescribe out-of-school suspension or expulsion on the first offense committed by the involved students (Kang-Brown et al., 2013).

Brownstein (2010) supported the premise that the use of zero tolerance policies should be lessened. She emphasized that these policies are failed approaches to student discipline. Results of the study revealed that class suspension is not an effective deterrent of student misbehavior because of several reports about the increased frequency of the same erring students being subjected to the penalty repeatedly.

Wettach and Owen (2014) dubbed the effects of suspension as questionable despite its prominence among other disciplinary techniques. They affirmed that there is no evidence which can prove that suspension produces concrete improvement in student behavior. Furthermore, its use has triggered lots of unintended consequences like deterioration of the school

environment and students' academic achievement, as well as increases in instances of antisocial behavior and dropouts. Zero tolerance policies also affect the school climate and have negative effects on mental and emotional health of students (Evenson et al., 2009; Olley, Cohn, & Cowan, 2010).

Meanwhile, Kupchik and Catlaw (2014) found out that young adults who have a history of school suspension have a propensity not to participate in elections and other civic activities on the succeeding years. They concluded that suspension dissuades the development of attributes essential in upholding democracy in society. Hence, they strongly recommend school governance reforms and the use of more constructive disciplinary methods.

Many researchers have their respective views on the alternative discipline methods. For instance, Brownstein (2010) pointed out that some alternatives to class suspension like behavior contracts, community service, after-school detention, loss of privileges, one-on-one meetings with a teacher, and in-school suspension coupled with assignments would be more effective. Moreover, she affirmed that these interventions are more productive for both the students and the school.

On the other hand, Sprick (2009) highlighted two models of discipline that schools can adopt in order to boost the school climate and inculcate discipline to the students. The said models are referred to as positive behavior support (PBS) and response to intervention (RTI), which contributed to the reduction of misbehavior among students. He added further that the said methods influence students to become more responsible, motivated, and academically excellent.

Olley et al. (2010) supported the use of positive discipline and the integration of its core principles to the school system. According to them, these principles serve to sustain and maintain a safe academic environment which is conducive to learning, thus promoting the positive development of students in the social, emotional, and behavioral domains.

Policy makers are also attempting to address these issues. According to a news article by Moody (2014), two legislators from Albany, New York – Pat Fahy and Senator Hugh Farley – proposed a bill that will enable schools to employ the use of community service as an alternative punishment for school suspension.

Similarly, Lutton (2014) reveals that Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel and School Chief Barbara Byrd-Bennett intend to resort to restorative justice practices which will turn “troublemakers” to student leaders instead of keeping them away from the learning environment. They planned to revise the Chicago Discipline Code which was too strict that students are sanctioned with class suspensions even for minor violations.

Methods

Research Design

Descriptive research design was utilized in this study. Descriptive research describes certain phenomena, characteristics, or functions. It can focus on one variable or on two or more variables at the same time (Mooi & Sarstedt, 2011). Descriptive research is a quantitative research design that focuses on understanding the current state of affairs in a given setting. It also attempts to illustrate an interest or point about a specific state or condition (Matthews & Kostelis, 2011).

Participants

The participants of the study included 860 former student violators (100% of the total population of former student violators from year 2011 to 2014) who have rendered office duties, counseling, or community service as their disciplinary action. Excluded from this study are those former student violators who already graduated, those who are not enrolled, and those who are not in the campus during questionnaire distribution because of on-the-job training. The study also included 2 university personnel from each of the 10 departments where student violators are commonly assigned namely the College of Business Administration (CBA), College of Computer Studies (CCS), College of Education, Arts, and Sciences (CEAS), College of International Tourism and Hospitality Management (CITHM), College of Criminology (CRIM), University Medical and Dental Clinic (UMDC), Registrar's Office (REGO), SHL Learning Resource Center (SLRC), Community Extension Office (COMEX), and the Counseling and Testing Center (CATC).

Instrument

Analysis of the violations recorded in the Student Violation Monitoring System used by the LPU – Batangas Office of Student Affairs was done in order to compare the percentage of minor offenses committed by students from year 2011 to 2014.

Similarly, a prepared questionnaire composed of 15 questions which are formulated based on various related literature that discuss topics pertinent to student discipline was duly approved to be used as a data-gathering instrument. Two sets of questionnaires were prepared. The first set was formulated for student respondents, while the second set was prepared for university personnel. These questionnaires underwent validation and pilot testing prior to their usage.

Procedure

This research proposal has been subjected to evaluation. After its approval, distribution of the questionnaires to the respondents proceeded. The data collected then underwent statistical treatment. Results were interpreted and analyzed. Conclusions and recommendations were formulated after the analysis of findings.

Data Analysis

After the collection of the questionnaires, the answers were tallied, tabulated, and analyzed. Consequently, the answers to the survey questions were recorded, with different statistical treatments used. Frequency count and percentage were used to compare the records of minor offenses from 2011 to 2014. Weighted mean and ranking were used to interpret the results of the survey on the effects of class suspension alternatives on behavior and academics. T-test was used to determine the difference on the effect of class suspension alternatives between student violators and university personnel.

Results and Discussion

Table 1
 Percentage Distribution of Students Who Committed Minor Offenses
 Based on College Population

College	A.Y. 2011-2012	A.Y. 2012-2013	A.Y. 2013-2014	A.Y. 2014-2015
College of Allied Medical Professions (CAMP)	9.59%	13.82%	5.48%	1.74%
College of Business Administration (CBA)	13.52%	16.28%	8.11%	1.97%
College of Computer Studies (CCS)	18.27%	13.82%	10.46%	4.48%
College of Education, Arts, and Sciences (CEAS)	11.19%	21.91%	6.36%	4.70%
College of International Tourism and Hospitality Management (CITHM)	19.16%	19.71%	12.32%	3.93%
College of Criminology (CRIM)	11.19%	10.36%	4.57%	4.07%
College of Dentistry (DENT)	18.07%	9.09%	6.49%	1.61%
College of Engineering (COE)	7.86%	22.22%	10.36%	8.39%
Lyceum International Maritime Academy (LIMA)	7.07%	16.57%	3.36%	5.63%
College of Nursing (CON)	10.42%	9.07%	1.64%	0%

Table 1 shows the percentage distribution of LPU – Batangas students per college who committed minor offenses for the last four academic years. Highest percentages were observed during the first two academic years that class suspension alternatives are still being tested and not fully implemented yet. However, upon strengthening the enforcement of these measures last academic year 2013-2014, it is apparent that the number of student violators committing minor violations have been remarkably reduced. On the last academic year, 8 out of 10 colleges registered percentages below 5% of their population. This is highly indicative that the increased use of class suspension alternatives (community service, counseling, and office duty) has been effective in reducing the incidences of minor student offenses among students to a very great extent.

Similar results have been observed in Bald Creek Elementary School of Yancey County, North Carolina as revealed by the manual designed by Owen, Wettach, and Hoffman (2015). After using positive behavior intervention and support (PBIS) instead of class suspension last 2003, the school received 60% less discipline referrals for the succeeding two years.

Likewise, the study of Power (2012) in a large urban high school showed that the same measures lessened the school’s received discipline referrals and tardiness referrals. These decreases are attributed to the increased school engagement seen in the said interventions, which promotes productive student experiences and enhanced relationship with the school (Losen, 2015).

Table 2
 Perceived Effects of Class Suspension Alternatives on Behavior and Academics of Former Student Violators and University Personnel

Effects of Class Suspension Alternatives	WM	VI	Rank	WM	VI	Rank
1. teach students how to become more responsible.	3.52	VM	2	3.65	VM	2
2. enable students to understand the significance of helping others.	3.42	M	10	3.55	VM	7
3. encourage students to observe proper decorum and behavior.	3.52	VM	3	3.80	VM	1
4. do not reduce a student's number of attended class hours.	3.23	M	15	3.40	M	13
5. provide additional learning experiences for students.	3.45	M	8	3.60	VM	4
6. motivate students to maintain positive behavior.	3.55	VM	1	3.60	VM	4
7. teach students how to manage and solve problems by collaborating with other people.	3.39	M	12	3.45	M	12
8. discourage students to commit the same minor offenses repeatedly.	3.44	M	9	3.65	VM	2
9. teach students to become more productive members of the academe and the community.	3.46	M	7	3.60	VM	4
10. increase student motivation and academic achievement.	3.39	M	11	3.40	M	13
11. enable students to become more productive and flexible in handling duties and responsibilities.	3.48	M	4	3.50	VM	10
12. have a positive effect on students' participation in co-curricular activities.	3.36	M	14	3.55	VM	7
13. improve students' relationship with school officials.	3.38	M	13	3.50	VM	10
14. increase students' self-worth and self-confidence.	3.47	M	6	3.40	M	13
15. discourage students to commit more serious offenses.	3.47	M	5	3.55	VM	7
Composite Mean	3.43	M		3.55	VM	

Table 2 reveals that the effects of class suspension alternatives on behavior and academics are much perceived by the former student violators as shown by the composite mean of 3.43. Conversely, these effects are very much perceived by university personnel, having a composite mean of 3.55. The entire items yielded high to very high scores ranging from 3.23 to 3.55 for students and 3.40 to 3.80 for university personnel, all interpreted as "Much" to "Very Much".

For former student violators, the behavioral effect of motivating students to maintain positive behavior obtained the highest rank, having a weighted mean of 3.55. It is followed by teaching students how to become more responsible and encouraging students to observe proper decorum and behavior, both with a weighted mean of 3.52. This implies that students tend to

perceive the behavioral effects of class suspension alternatives more than their effects on academics. The students primarily appreciate the direct effect of the interventions on how they behave as individuals as compared to the general impact of the said disciplinary measures in their full academic experience.

These findings are consistent with the study of Sprick (2009), who emphasized that the combined use of different class suspension alternatives can significantly improve student motivation towards positive behavior and their ability to handle responsibilities. Likewise, Olley et al. (2010) believed that by using these positive methods, positive behaviors and self-discipline may be reinforced in students.

Meanwhile, the lowest ranking item for student respondents is the undiminished number of their attended class hours with a weighted mean of 3.23. It is followed by having a positive effect on students' participation in co-curricular activities and improving students' relationship with school officials, with the weighted means of 3.36 and 3.38 respectively. These items may have yielded low results because students use considerable amounts of time in serving the disciplinary actions for their violations that may have been used otherwise in studying lessons or doing club activities. Their relationship with school officials may have improved, albeit minimally, more likely because of the busy environment in the offices where they are serving their disciplinary actions. Students may have been more focused on completing their tasks rather than enhancing their relationships with the university personnel.

This is consistent with the study of Caldarella et al (2011) who revealed that even after employing alternatives to class suspension, referrals of student misbehavior still take a considerable amount of the students' time. However, upon using the aforementioned methods, the number of referrals received was decreased, thereby reducing the inadvertent use of students' hours.

According to Brock University Student Development Centre (2011), alternatives to suspension can improve student participation in extra-curricular activities because they teach useful social and leadership skills. Upon implementing their Alternative to Academic Suspension (AASP) Program, significant improvements were noticed among their students, particularly in the areas of motivation, initiative, navigation, direction, study skills, expectations, and time management.

Conversely, Lambert and Reese (2015) shared some opinions of students who have experienced class suspension alternatives for their minor infractions. Students affirmed that they have gained more respect from their teachers because of the said interventions, thus enhancing their relationships with them.

For university personnel, the effect of encouraging students to observe proper decorum and behavior got the highest rank, with a weighted mean of 3.80. Second in line was discouraging students to commit the same minor offenses repeatedly, with a weighted mean of 3.65. This is immediately followed by providing additional learning experiences for students, motivating students to maintain positive behavior, and teaching students to become more productive members of the academe and the community, all having a weighted mean of 3.60. This implies that the university personnel perceive both behavioral and academic effects of class suspension alternatives more evenly compared to students. University personnel recognized the development of students' learning and productivity as influenced by the said disciplinary measures.

These findings are consistent with the study of Rosch and Iselin (2010), which advocated a policy brief for positive behavior interventions and support. These methods noticeably inculcated, exemplified, and reinforced appropriate behaviors among students. At the same time, these interventions are being carried out early so as to deter inappropriate behaviors and/or their recurrence.

On the other hand, Mergler, Vargas, and Caldwell (2014) found out that the existing alternatives to suspension promote student learning. They discovered that these interventions are largely intended to preserve the presence of students in the academe and equip them with new knowledge and support systems to address the root causes of their misdemeanor.

Moody (2014) revealed that various school district superintendents and local government officials have advocated the use of community extension activities in place of class suspension. This is because they ensure the preservation of students' academic engagements while building in them the value of service, thereby being much productive for the students, schools, and communities.

The effect of class suspension alternatives are undiminished number of attended class hours, increased student motivation and academic achievement, and increased students' self-worth got the lowest rank, acquiring a weighted mean of 3.40. Second lowest was teaching students how to manage and solve problems by collaborating with other people, obtaining a weighted mean of 3.45. This is followed by improving students' relationship with school officials and enabling students to become more productive and flexible in handling duties and responsibilities, both having a weighted mean of 3.50. This implies that university personnel perceived less on the effects of class suspension alternatives in students' intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships as compared to their perception of the academic effects and the other more apparent behavioral effects.

This is consistent with the study of Massey (2012), which revealed that using positive behavior interventions and supports instead of suspension have reduced the frequency of student misbehaviors. However, data analysis revealed that the implementation of the said measures had only minimal effects on student achievement parameters.

Conversely, Olley et al. (2010) supported the premise that using alternatives to suspension will minimize the usual lost learning time of students. In addition, using these measures help schools build a caring environment which in turn decreases the instances of misbehavior and increases the academic achievement of students. Moreover, this same notion was supported by Dufresne, Hillman, Carson, and Kramer (2010), attributing these effects to the development of the students' social skills following the interventions done.

Rosch and Iselin (2010) explained that class suspension alternatives teach students cooperative tasks and problem-solving skills. They also promote a sense of responsibility and collaborative relationships with the students' families, teachers, school personnel, and even community partners. These interventions are known to be based on a holistic framework created in order to understand the connections between the students and the academic community ("Stopping Suspensions", 2012).

Table 3
 Difference on the Perceived Effects of Class Suspension Alternatives
 Between Former Student Violators and University Personnel

Effects of Class Suspension Alternatives	t- value	p- value	Interpretation	Decision
1. teach students how to become more responsible.	-0.85	0.395	NS	Accept
2. enable students to understand the significance of helping others.	-0.85	0.395	NS	Accept
3. encourage students to observe proper decorum and behavior.	-2.05	0.040	S	Reject
4. do not reduce a student's number of attended class hours.	-0.94	0.349	NS	Accept
5. provide additional learning experiences for students.	-0.96	0.340	NS	Accept
6. motivate students to maintain positive behavior.	-0.38	0.704	NS	Accept
7. teach students how to manage and solve problems by collaborating with other people.	-0.41	0.682	NS	Accept
8. discourage students to commit the same minor offenses repeatedly.	-1.30	0.193	NS	Accept
9. teach students to become more productive members of the academe and the community.	-0.98	0.328	NS	Accept
10. increase student motivation and academic achievement.	-0.07	0.941	NS	Accept
11. enable students to become more productive and flexible in handling duties and responsibilities.	-0.16	0.873	NS	Accept
12. have a positive effect on students' participation in co-curricular activities.	-1.17	0.243	NS	Accept
13. improve students' relationship with school officials.	-0.77	0.442	NS	Accept
14. increase students' self-worth and self-confidence.	0.42	0.671	NS	Accept
15. discourage students to commit more serious offenses.	-0.48	0.633	NS	Accept

Table 3 reveals that there are no significant difference on the effects of class suspension between student violators and university personnel as denoted by the computed p-values which are greater than the 0.05 level of significance, therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted except on statement number 3 which is less than the 0.05 level of significance. The rejected null hypothesis in statement number 3 indicates that there is indeed an existence of varying opinions between administrative personnel and former student violators regarding the capacity of class suspension alternatives to encourage proper decorum and behavior among students.

This signifies that university administrative personnel have a significantly higher level of perception compared to the students in terms of the effect of class suspension in encouraging students to observe proper decorum and behavior. As persons in authority who supervise and

provide guidance to the students, it is expected that the university personnel will readily observe any changes in students’ behaviors, making them more perceptive to these phenomena.

Bryant and McCamish (2015) affirmed that the most widely used class suspension alternatives, collectively known as positive behavior interventions and support (PBIS), are used by schools for solving problems related to behavioral challenges in students. These measures describe societal norms, and accentuate obedience, helping to identify expected behaviors in different scenarios and reinforce them in students.

The study of Caldarella et al. (2011) showed that the schools using alternatives to class suspension experienced a remarkable decline in the number of tardiness, unexcused absences, and office discipline referrals. Analysis of the results revealed that the area which improved the most because of the applied interventions involve the students’ ability to discern and apply apposite social behaviors.

Likewise, the study of Nocera, Whitbread, and Nocera, (2014) found out that the incidence of student infractions have decreased by an average of 40% in schools that used alternatives to class suspension for a period of two years. Faculty members of the participant schools have affirmed that they have witnessed the change in the students’ behavior after the interventions. They also attested that the decreased use of suspensions seem to make students feel that they were being more recognized for their positive behaviors and that they were truly being taken care of.

Table 4
Difference on the Perceived Effects of Class Suspension Alternatives
When grouped according to Level of Discouragement
To Commit More Serious Offenses

Indicators	No effect (n=22)	Less (50)	Much (288)	Very Much (500)	f-value	p-value	interpretation	Decision
Statement								
1	2.91	2.96	3.30	3.74	55.51	0.00	Significant	Reject
2	2.95	2.86	3.19	3.64	54.16	0.00	Significant	Reject
3	2.95	2.92	3.32	3.72	59.73	0.00	Significant	Reject
4	2.59	2.76	2.98	3.46	40.42	0.00	Significant	Reject
5	2.77	2.88	3.22	3.67	55.79	0.00	Significant	Reject
6	2.77	2.92	3.35	3.75	66.64	0.00	Significant	Reject
7	2.77	2.72	3.22	3.58	47.63	0.00	Significant	Reject
8	2.18	2.50	3.12	3.78	177.96	0.00	Significant	Reject
9	2.73	2.94	3.21	3.68	67.68	0.00	Significant	Reject
10	2.50	2.94	3.15	3.61	58.05	0.00	Significant	Reject
11	3.00	2.90	3.23	3.70	62.14	0.00	Significant	Reject
12	2.32	2.86	3.14	3.58	55.47	0.00	Significant	Reject
13	2.27	2.82	3.16	3.61	71.11	0.00	Significant	Reject
14	2.41	2.88	3.23	3.71	73.33	0.00	Significant	Reject

Table 4 reveals that there are significant differences on the perceived effects of class suspension when grouped according to level of discouragement to commit more serious offenses as denoted by the computed p-values which are all less than the 0.01 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This signifies that those students with high to very high levels of discouragement to commit more serious offenses due to class suspension alternatives have significantly higher level of assumption on the positive effects of class suspension alternatives to them as former student violators, while those students with low to very low levels of discouragement in committing more serious offenses have also significantly low levels of perceived positive effects of the OOSA’s initiative. There is a significant difference between these two groups because those students who are discouraged to commit more serious offenses were more likely to grasp and understand the rationale behind the implementation of class suspension alternatives, thereby perceiving the positive effects of the process. Conversely, those who were not discouraged to commit more serious offenses perceived less of these effects since they may have viewed the disciplinary practices as forms of punishment for their misbehavior.

The study of Pas, Bradshaw, & Mitchell (2011) revealed that the frequency of students’ referrals for discipline is moderately valid as indicators of problems in student behavior. Since the students who are less discouraged to commit violations are possibly encountering behavioral challenges, they may have more difficulty in seeing the rationale behind the implemented disciplinary actions.

Meanwhile, Way (2011) offered a different perspective when she discovered that students tend to comply with rules when they see the school as being committed to authority and when they perceive disciplinary practices to be fair and legitimate. Interestingly, her study also revealed that if students perceive existing disciplinary practices as too strict, they tend to incur higher rates of misbehavior.

Conversely, Mitchell and Bradshaw (2012) analyzed the opinions of student offenders on both the use of zero-tolerance policies (suspension, exclusion, and expulsion) and alternatives to class suspensions. Results showed that students consider class suspension alternatives to inculcate more order and discipline as compared to the usual exclusionary practices. Students also affirmed that these measures somehow improve their relationships with teachers. In addition, students favor these alternatives over the traditional practices when it comes to the context of fairness.

Table 5

Proposed Plan of Action to Improve Disciplinary Practices

Key Areas of Improvement	Objective(s)	Proposed Activities/ Strategies	Persons Responsible
Preventive Measures for Student Misbehavior	To teach and reinforce moral values and concepts of appropriate social behavior among students	Conduct a seminar on moral values and proper behavior at least once a year	Office of Student Affairs and Lyceum Supreme Student Council (LSSC)
	To remind students about the significance of observing responsible behavior and avoiding violations	Post simple reminders or images depicting responsible behavior in strategic areas of the campus	

Conclusions

Based on the aforementioned findings, the researchers have drawn the following conclusions:

1. The alternatives to class suspension (office duty, community service, and counseling) served as effective deterrents of student misbehavior as evidenced by the decreasing percentage of minor student offenses committed by LPU – Batangas students since the strengthened implementation of the said disciplinary actions.
2. University personnel have a higher perception of the effects of class suspension alternatives as compared to former student violators. From the given roster, university personnel perceived mostly the effects on students' behavior, learning, and productivity. On the other hand, former student violators perceived mostly the effects of class suspension alternatives on their behavior and their sense of responsibility.
3. There is a significant difference between the perception of university personnel and former student violators on the capacity of class suspension alternatives in encouraging students to observe proper decorum and behavior. This can be largely attributed to the fact that the university personnel can readily observe changes in student behavior as they are the ones who guide and supervise students.
4. Student violators who are not discouraged to commit more serious offenses are less perceptive to the effects of class suspension alternatives compared to those who are discouraged to commit graver violations. This indicates a deeper root cause of their misbehavior, necessitating both preventive and corrective interventions.
5. The strategies discussed in the proposed action plan can possibly improve the disciplinary practices used in LPU – Batangas since they are designed to address misbehaviors before they occur, after they occurred, and after they were managed. Implementing the said plan will promote flexibility, making disciplinary actions tailored to meet specific student needs.

Recommendations

1. The Office of Student Affairs should continue and intensify the implementation of class suspension alternatives to deter student misbehavior. The office should implement the multi-tiered approach stated in the proposed action plan in order to adapt to the students' varying needs and ensure positive learning experiences for students.
2. Staff members of the Office of Student Affairs should continue and enhance their routine explanation of the rationale for the given disciplinary actions when conversing with student violators in order to make them thoroughly comprehend the basis for such interventions.
3. University personnel should regularly coordinate with the Office of Student Affairs to report any observed occurrence of student misbehavior for proper referral and management. The university personnel should constantly serve as the role models of positive behavior among students.
4. Students who commit repetitive violations should be properly referred to the Counseling and Testing Center (CATC) in order to assess the possible root causes of their behavior and to address them accordingly.
5. The OOSA should conduct a similar study with student violators, their parents, and their teachers as respondents. Since the parents and teachers interact more with the students,

they can be better judges on changes in student behavior and study habits of these students.

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