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University Professors' and Department Directors' Perceptions Regarding Support for Freshman Academic Performance

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Karen Sauer

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2017

Abstract

University Professors' and Department Directors' Perceptions Regarding Support
for Freshman Academic Performance

by

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MA, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, 1997

BS, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, 1993

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

Walden University

July 2017

Abstract

In Chile, 50% of students who enroll in Chilean colleges do not graduate, negatively impacting their families' economic situations as well as national development. The purpose of this qualitative bounded case study was to gain a deeper understanding of the perceptions held by math, English, and general education professors regarding the support provided to freshman students in a program at 1 campus of a private Chilean university. Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory emphasizing internal and external motivations and social constructivism theory emphasizing development as a process comprised the conceptual framework. Both theories provide meaningful understanding of the drivers that support students in their learning process. The research questions focused on understanding the support that math, English, and general education professors and directors might provide to freshman students. A purposeful homogeneous sampling was used to identify 9 professors and 3 directors. Data collection involved semistructured interviews, peer debriefing, and member checks to triangulate the data. The findings revealed that the university could benefit from implementing a seminar program to acclimate conditionally admitted students to university studies. A 1-week seminar was developed. This study may contribute to positive social change by influencing professors' and directors' perceptions regarding possibilities for supporting students in improving their academic performance, thereby raising student passing and graduation rates to positively impact national development in Chile.

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Dedication

This doctoral study is dedicated to my beloved family, who urged me to never give up and showed me their unconditional patience. Thank you to my husband, Ben, who encouraged me to take the time I required to dedicate to my qualitative research project, ensuring that our family and house were functioning while I was working to obtain this degree. I do appreciate your unselfish commitment with my challenge. I love you and respect you for the enormous support you expressed. I am also grateful for the kind words and affection expressed by my children, David, Ariel, Gabriel, and Dana, who helped me to face this challenge. My hope is that the four of you will be able to realize that perseverance and effort are essential in all you choose to pursue in life. To my parents, Rosa and Norberto, who raised me with the conviction that I can make my dreams come true if I work hard, and who encouraged me to pursue the doctoral degree. And to my grandparents in heaven, who did not have the opportunity to study but whose example taught me the value of becoming a lifelong learner. I love and respect you all, and I am grateful that you accompanied me, physically or spiritually, throughout this academic journey. I will forever be grateful for all the support and confidence you gave me, which were fundamental in enabling me to pursue this degree and to focus on my qualitative doctoral study.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

In Chile, nearly 50% of students who enroll in higher education programs do not graduate, and 30% of freshman students drop out after their first year of postsecondary education (Mineduc, 2012). Of those who drop out after the first year, 13.4% eventually re-enter the system in the next 3 years. However, 17.2% simply withdraw (Rolando, Salamanca, & Lara, 2012). These trends concern Chilean governmental officials, higher education leaders and educators, as well as the Chilean population in general, because many students who withdraw from the university carry a debt burden they are unable to pay (Blanco, Jerez, & Rolando, 2015; Rojas, Fonseca, & Silva, 2011). Additionally, there are implications for the government, the students, and their families, given that the investment in higher education proved unsuccessful (Mineduc, 2012). Students develop frustration toward education, leading to an outlook that can become a barrier for future learning. Failure to graduate may impede students from achieving social mobility, which would facilitate improvement of their economic conditions (Chen & Wiederspan, 2014) and enhance their social life (Miranda, 2014).

The Local Problem

The local problem addressed in this qualitative case study was how professors and directors of math, English, and general education (MEGE) classes perceive that they can support the freshman students of the economics and business program (EBP) of a private Chilean university (PCU) to improve their academic performance in MEGE courses. This study was conducted at the PCU's largest campus, where 1,850 students studied in the

EBP during the 2015-2016 academic year (AY). At this campus, 50% of the students who enrolled in March 2010 completed their program of study in December 2014 or July 2015 in order to graduate in the December 2015 ceremony. The 2015 *graduating* cohort was composed of 372 students, of whom 255 (68.54%) were from this campus. The 2015-2016 AY *freshman* cohort was composed of 260 freshman students. According to the director of the EBP from that class, 252 freshman students enrolled in March, and eight students enrolled in August. University officials, administrators, and academic staff need to understand MEGE professors' and MEGE directors' opinions and thus improve graduation rates. Furthermore, this qualitative case study may support initiatives to close the knowledge gap between faculty and university leaders concerning the most effective strategy for assisting EBP freshmen on one PCU campus in improving their academic performance in MEGE classes.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

For Chilean university freshmen, satisfactory academic performance is of paramount importance, because those who cannot afford their postsecondary education (Mineduc, 2012; Universia, 2009) are supported by government-guaranteed loans (Ingesa, n.d.; Rojas et al., 2011) that are contingent on their academic achievement. Government officials determined that the appropriate measure to control the allocation of state resources to higher education students was students' academic performance (Mineduc, 2014). Accordingly, to retain their loans, students must have passed 70% of the courses in which they were enrolled in the previous year (Mineduc, 2014). The

Chilean government's policy implies that to maintain their loans, students need to commit to their higher education and be willing to make sacrifices to become professionals.

In recognition of the enormous increase in the number of students who were applying for postsecondary education and the changes in their income profiles, the Chilean government improved its strategy for funding allocations. Consequently, the government developed a system to support those students who cannot afford enrollment or tuition fees. According to Blanco et al. (2015), 52% of the students who were enrolled to study at institutions of higher learning in 2014 received some tuition benefits. Nevertheless, 30% of freshman students drop out after their first year of postsecondary education. Of those students who forsake their university studies, 13.4% re-enter the system within the next 3 years, whereas 17.2% never return (Rolando et al., 2012). According to Chilean laws, students who receive loans guaranteed by the state must be able to repay their loans, regardless of whether they re-enroll.

Chilean higher education students face many challenges that may negatively affect their academic development and delay the completion of their professional degrees. The most significant challenges these students must overcome include inadequate academic preparation, scarcity of economic resources that compels them to work while attending university courses, and lack of knowledge regarding appropriate strategies for learning and studying. All of these factors prevent students from fully committing to their studies.

PCU faculty realized the importance of identifying, assessing, and understanding the primary factors that prevent students from graduating on time. An understanding of the significant obstacles that prevent students from graduating enabled PCU administration to develop appropriate strategies to support students in their learning process. Consequently, Chilean higher education students may have the possibility of minimizing the time required to obtain their degrees (Flynn, 2014; Meulenbroek & van den Bogaard, 2013; Zelkowski & Goodykoontz, 2013).

According to the director of the EBP the PCU faculty leaders became aware of the need for assessing and understanding MEGE professors' perceptions of how they can support freshman students in achieving successful academic performance in MEGE courses. Furthermore, the data provided by this study may spur university administrators and academics to develop important tools to enable students to improve their academic performance in MEGE courses.

Evidence of the Problem From the Professional Literature

The development and growth of a country's economy hinge, to a great extent, on the spread of knowledge that occurs in institutions of higher learning (Christofides, Hoy, Milla, & Stengos, 2015). Postsecondary students should internalize higher education knowledge and develop the skills required to improve quality of life in their communities. Higher education students' new behavior of responsibility and commitment should provide social benefits to their countries (Mishra, 2015). The number of students enrolling in Chilean postsecondary institutions has grown steadily over the last 25 years (Blanco et al., 2015), yet education officials are concerned because each student cohort

exhibits weaker preparation than the ones before (Sandoval-Lucero, 2014). Therefore, higher education officials should strive to improve the development of each student's learning process (Basitere & Ivala, 2015; Schnee, 2014).

Much of the literature on the students' academic weaknesses subject advocates for ways in which university freshmen can improve their own academic performance and calls for faculty to support the development of each student to minimize dropout and withdrawal rates (Datray, Saxon, & Martirosyan, 2014; Núñez-Peña, Bono, & Suárez-Pellicioni, 2015; Sandoval-Lucero, 2014). The major challenges and the efficiency indicators of postsecondary institutions are retention and graduation on time (Ilgan, 2013; Summers, Acee, & Ryser, 2015). However, one additional concern for postsecondary institutions appears to be student withdrawal or nonattendance due to negative social, economic, and personal factors (Blanco et al., 2015).

Attendance improves students' learning opportunities and is key to achieving successful academic performance (Núñez-Peña et al., 2015; Termos, 2013). Additionally, increased attendance rates improve completion rates (Flynn, 2014; Zelkowski & Goodykoontz, 2013). Altogether, a negative relationship is also noted regarding class absenteeism (Arulampalam, Naylor, & Smith, 2012), student anxiety, and student performance (Amiri & Ghonsooly, 2015). As nonattendance rises, performance falls. The literature reviewed for this study supports the observation that Chilean freshman students face significant challenges in pursuing higher academic degrees.

Definitions

The following terms and definitions are used throughout this study.

Academic performance: This is the measure of students' knowledge (Basitere & Ivala, 2015).

Absenteeism: The measurement of the number of classes a student skips; an “indicator of student motivation” (Summers et al., 2015, p. 149).

Attendance: Student presence and participation in face-to-face classes, which “allows students to obtain information that is not contained in textbooks or lecture materials presented online but also allows students varied contact with material (lectures, review of notes, demonstrations, etc.)” (Crede, Roch, & Kieszczyńska, 2010, p. 273).

Failing grade: The grade evaluation that indicates a student did not learn the required topics during the semester. In Chile, grades are ranked from 1.0 to 7.0 (1.0 is the worst, and 7.0 is the best), and a failing grade is under 4.0 (Unab, 2012).

Class sections: The “center of the student's college academic experience” (Zumbrunn, McKim, Buhs, & Hawley, 2014, p. 662).

Freshman students: Students who are enrolled in and attending their first academic year at university (Summers et al., 2015).

Completion time: The amount of time that students need to pass all of the courses of the curriculum (Blanco et al., 2015).

Passing grade: The grade required for students to pass a class. In Chile, grades are ranked from 1.0 to 7.0 (1.0 is the worst, and 7.0 is the best), and the passing grade is above 4.0 (Unab, 2012).

Peer mentors: According to D'Angelo and Epstein (2014), these are select trained students who assist faculty by supporting fellow students.

Persistence: Behavior of a student who remains “in the courses through the final exam” (Zelkowski & Goodykoontz, 2013, p. 208) or in the university until graduation.

Retention rate: This is defined as the ratio between students entering college and the number of those same students who remain as students at the institution in the following years (Rolando et al., 2012).

Successful academic performance: Results of the continuous quality improvement students implement in their learning processes (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 2014), defined by grades ranging from 4.0 to 7.0 (Unab, 2012).

Students: Undergraduate learners enrolled at the university to study and earn a professional degree (Unab, 2012).

Withdrawal rates: The proportion of students who leave courses or the university (Núñez-Peña et al., 2015, p. 81).

Significance of the Study

Currently, Chileans require university degrees in order to improve their economic standards of living. Furthermore, Chilean government officials state that students need to pass 70% of the courses in which they were enrolled during the previous year in order to retain the financial support that the Chilean government allocates to higher education students. Additionally, higher education generates the aspiration of social mobility in Chilean students (Blanco et al., 2015).

The gap between theory and practice addressed by this qualitative case study was EBP officials’ lack of knowledge concerning the perceptions of MEGE professors and MEGE directors concerning support for EBP freshman students at one PCU campus in

order to improve students' academic performance in MEGE classes. A qualitative research approach was an appropriate methodology to provide the necessary detailed data.

The results of this qualitative case study may be applied to improve the academic performance of EBP students at this specific PCU campus. Additionally, PCU faculty leaders may employ the results of this study to develop new strategies to enhance student attendance, persistence, and retention rates. Finally, the PCU may employ the results of this study to develop and promote the use of teaching and learning methodologies and pragmatic activities that enhance students' learning processes, improve students' class attendance rates, and improve the university's retention rates (Summers et al., 2015).

Research Questions

This qualitative case study addressed the support that freshman students require in order to improve their academic performance in MEGE courses. Closing the gap between theory and practice may provide key data to assist EBP freshman students in building greater confidence in their capacity to improve their grades in all of the classes in which they are enrolled and should be attending.

The research questions guiding this case study were as follows:

- RQ1: What are the perceptions of the MEGE professors and MEGE directors at one PCU campus regarding how they can support the freshman students in the EBP to improve their academic performance in MEGE courses?
- RQ2: What are the perceptions of the MEGE professors and MEGE directors at one PCU campus regarding the additional academic support services the

university might provide EBP freshman students to improve their academic performance in MEGE courses?

The following subquestion supported RQ2:

SQ: What academic knowledge will EBP freshmen need to improve their academic performance and be successful in MEGE courses?

The first goal of this case study was to identify whether the MEGE professors and MEGE directors were willing to assist freshman students. In pursuing this first purpose, I sought to appraise whether the MEGE professors felt prepared to support the EBP freshman students in improving their academic performance in MEGE courses and to assess their level of enthusiasm for such support. The second goal was to explore whether professors and directors believed that the university provided them with the necessary tools to support freshman students. Understanding how to improve students' performance in MEGE courses and identifying which academic support tools students prefer may enhance university students retention and graduation rates.

Review of Literature

For the literature review, I examined the perceptions that professors hold regarding the major challenges that impact freshman students' academic performance at a university. I searched ERIC, Education Research Complete, SAGE Premier, ProQuest Central, and Thoreau, using the following terms: *attendance rates*, *freshmen*, *university*, *professors' perceptions*, *absenteeism*, and *improving academic performance*. I also used Boolean searches on related words such as *millennial*, *students*, *college*, *higher education*, and *academics*. These terms supported the data gathering process.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this case study was based on two theories: social constructivism and self-determination. These are discussed below.

Social constructivism. One of the theories upon which the conceptual framework was based was Vygotsky's social constructivism theory. This theory emphasizes development as a process, characterized by periodicity and irregularity in the development of different functions that transform the interrelationship between internal and external factors, creating evolutionary and revolutionary changes (Vygotsky, 1930). From Vygotsky's perspective, development is based on the relationship between elemental biological processes and sociocultural, psychological higher education functions. Accordingly, development "proceeds here not in a circle but in a spiral, passing through the same point at each new revolution while advancing to a higher level" (Vygotsky, 1930, p. 47).

Vygotsky identified both the actual development and the zone of proximal development of students. Actual development is the developmental level a student's mental functions acquire when certain development cycles have been completed. The zone of proximal development allows for the identification of "what already has been achieved developmentally" (Vygotsky, 1930, p. 80), as well as what is in the course of maturing (Vygotsky, 1930). It is important to understand both constructs for two reasons. First, the mental development of a student can be diagnosed when these constructs are identified. Second, the current proximal development zone will become

tomorrow's development level. "That is, what a child can do with assistance today she will be able to do by herself tomorrow" (Vygotsky, 1930, p. 80).

The constructivist approach is a building block of the transformation that professors hope students will experience as a result of their learning process, even though many different resources may serve as the cornerstones for the students' learning process (Sharma, 2014). Those who adopt the constructivist approach understand learning as a transformative process that guides students to gain knowledge and change their points of view, abilities, and attitudes through the discoveries they make (Mishra, 2015). Accordingly, the lived transformative experience is the basis upon which to construct knowledge (Sharma, 2014).

Self-determination theory. The conceptual framework for this study was also based on the self-determination theory (SDT) of Deci and Ryan (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Salkind, 2008). SDT identifies intrinsic or autonomous motivation and extrinsic or controlled motivation as the origins of human behavior. Intrinsic motivation is a more potent driver of learning than extrinsic motivation because individuals voluntarily choose to execute an action (Salkind, 2008). In the case of extrinsic motivation, the motivation is an external reward that can be gained or avoidance of punishment (Furlich, 2014; Guiffrida, Lynch, Wall, & Abel, 2013). When people perform an activity because they find it interesting, intrinsic motivation is the driver that motivates them to act. In contrast, when people work under pressure, extrinsic motivation is the driver that guides their behavior (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Because motivation is a concern with Chilean

university students, I decided to use Deci and Ryan's SDT to provide an understanding of the primary motivators for academically successful students.

Both social constructivism and self-determination theories were pertinent to the issue addressed by this case study because they provide meaningful understanding of the drivers that support students in their learning process.

Review of the Broader Problem

Students who pursue higher education degrees must develop appropriate learning and studying strategies in order to be successful (Trigwell, Ashwin, & Millan, 2013). The first step that students can take to develop appropriate learning and study strategies is to identify the significant value of having a degree and achieving a high level of competence in the labor market (Miranda, 2014). Having the aspiration to pursue higher education is as important as cognitive ability, because that is what motivates students to keep studying in pursuit of high academic performance (Christofides et al., 2015). When the consequence of freshman students' learning efforts is improvement in their academic performance, they experience a positive appraisal of the value of their learning task through their grades (Ilgan, 2013; Villavicencio & Bernardo, 2013). The improvement of freshmen's academic performance (as evidenced by improved grades) can motivate them to continue studying, thereby starting a virtuous cycle and leading to improved overall performance (Kaba & Talek, 2015; Zumbrunn et al., 2014). Then the positive relationship between students' efforts and their achievement contributes to persistence (Strom & Savage, 2014), thereby improving retention rates (Pekrun, Hall, Goetz, & Perry, 2014) and increasing student completion rates.

Favorable attendance rates and academic engagement increase students' skills and knowledge, thereby positively impacting students' grades (Flynn, 2014; Meulenbroek & van den Bogaard, 2013; Núñez-Peña et al., 2015; Zelkowski & Goodykoontz, 2013). Furthermore, Crede, Roch, and Kieszczynka (2010); Ilgan (2013); and Mearman, Pacheco, Webber, Ivlevs, and Rahman (2014) found that attendance has a positive impact on students' engagement, performance, and retention rates. Students who attend classes learn more than students who skip classes, as they may ask their professors to clarify issues until they understand the topics. According to Reisel, Jablonski, Munson, and Hosseini (2014), student participation in classes is beneficial, as it gradually supports improvement of their grades. In contrast, as Arulampalam et al. (2012), Cafarella (2014), and Miranda (2014) identified, student absenteeism has a substantial negative impact on academic performance and thwarts success.

Students should commit to their higher education and become active participants in their learning process (Douglass & Morris, 2014). Factors such as a student's confidence in grades, independence, goals, motivation, empowerment, autonomy, enjoyment, and pride, as well as supportive family and friends, are predictive of success for higher education students (Bowman & Denson, 2014; Martin, Galentino, & Townsend, 2014; McEwan, 2013; Nicholson, Putwain, Connors, & Hornby-Atkinson, 2013; Raelin et al., 2014; Simon, Aulls, Dedic, Hubbard, & Hall, 2015; Strom & Savage, 2014; Villavicencio & Bernardo, 2013). Trigwell et al. (2013) underscored the fact that students who are confident of their academic ability handle challenges with stronger motivation and experience learning tutorials as supportive tools to improve their learning

skills and their knowledge. However, Siegle, Rubenstein, and Mitchell (2014) and Yun-Chen and Shu-Hui (2014) realized that students also appreciate teachers who are passionate and humorous, use different methods to teach, hold students responsible for their own learning, are charismatic, and are knowledgeable. Professors who exhibited the aforementioned qualities become the foundation of the students' learning experience. Bowman and Denson (2014) and Raelin et al. (2014) identified institutional fit as another important topic, noting that a student's higher education fit positively influences college satisfaction, persistence, and resiliency. Bowman and Denson (2014) described a positive relationship between persistence and college contentment and a negative correlation between isolation and persistence. Finally, McEwan (2013) and Strom and Savage (2014) established that the freshmen's social environment influences their educational process and decisions regarding degree attainment.

Additionally, Bush and Walsh (2014); Johnson et al. (2014); Stillisano, Waxman, Brown, and Alford (2014); and Termos, (2013) found that attendance and active learning behaviors, such as collaboration and teamwork, do have positive impacts on student academic performance. Flynn (2014) and Spittle (2013) recognized that improving student engagement may increase retention rates. Moreover, Martin et al. (2014) and Reeder and Schmitt (2013) established that those students who were clear about their postsecondary goals showed higher academic motivation and willingness to work diligently, which allowed students to develop resilience and improved their academic decisions (Martin et al., 2014). In summary, motivational variables have a significant

impact in supporting students to improve their academic performance and achieve academic success.

Ching-ning Chien (2014) noted that learning occurs when students trust their teachers' teaching methods. Teachers may help students to solidify their commitment and develop an active learning approach in regard to new challenges. Tovar (2015) established that interactions with institutional agents affect students' success and persistence. These studies point to the fact that students who do not develop appropriate behaviors are likely to fail (Meyer & Marx, 2014).

Gagné and Deci (2005) and Sundre, Barry, Gynnild, and Ostgard (2012) highlighted that students' learning expectation changed during the semester, based mainly on academic performance. Midsemester grades enable professors to predict a student's academic success or failure (Jensen & Barron, 2014). If those predictions indicate unacceptable academic performance, Faulconer, Geissler, Majewski, and Trifilo (2014) proposed that higher education institutions develop and adopt early warning systems that may support students' efforts to improve their academic performance. The warning system's goal would be to encourage freshman students to develop realistic expectations. The requirement of early warning systems arises because students who take responsibility for their learning in the university achieve higher academic marks than other students who apportion that responsibility to external factors such as faculty members and part-time academics (Garces-Ozanne & Sullivan, 2014; Nicholson et al., 2013).

Professors have the potential to serve as the building block that supports postsecondary students in improving their educational efforts (Johnson et al., 2014; Simon et al., 2015) and performance. The influence of professors can be decisive because students' positive perceptions of faculty members or academics who monitor their academic performance and support their learning processes motivate them to keep studying (Faulconer et al., 2014).

Basitere and Ivala (2015) and Schnee (2014) identified the responsibility that higher education authorities have to identify deficiencies in their students' knowledge and to determine appropriate strategies to support them in developing a successful learning process. Applicable strategies, which are analyzed below, include the following: (a) counseling, (b) peer mentoring, (c) active learning strategies, and (d) deep learning approach.

Counseling

The first strategy involves student counseling based upon the implications of academic failures. Counseling may also support students who are not comfortable, for whatever reason, at the university (Bowman & Denson, 2014). Stuart, Rios-Aguilar, and Deil-Amen (2014) noted that postsecondary professors and higher education leaders can assist in the development of tools that may help students to grasp the significance of completing their degrees on time. The goal of the counseling strategy is to inspire students through career counseling and career exploration courses to realize what is possible and to understand how each class can become a vital tool leading to faster progress when they enter the labor market (Brickman, Alfaro, Weimer, & Watt, 2013).

Peer Mentoring

The second strategy involves peer mentoring (Hodgson, Chan, & Liu, 2014). First, peer mentoring supports professors who work with peer mentors in the classroom, who then assist freshmen in developing better study habits and identifying appropriate learning strategies. The peer mentoring approach also supports the peer mentors themselves, as their leadership development is enhanced, their soft abilities are improved, and their preparedness for working life is increased (D'Angelo & Epstein, 2014). The approach implies that to improve students' understanding of the course topics, professors should organize “teacher guide peer assessment group projects” (Hodgson, Chan, & Liu, 2014, p. 171). In addition, peer mentoring can encourage students to make a real commitment to their education and help them to deepen their learning. Finally, peer mentors are required to develop specific evaluative skills to be able to offer constructive comments to their classmates (Hodgson et al., 2014).

Learning Strategies

The third strategy entails the implementation of active learning strategies (Renzulli, 2015; Richards & Velasquez, 2014). Renzulli (2015) and Richards and Velasquez (2014) found that professors who implemented active learning strategies, such as constant communication and feedback to students, motivated their students' learning process. Additionally, learning strategies are significant because these strategies enhance the scholarly communication between professors and students, supporting the development of students' learning abilities as they learn the essential topics for each class (Pineda-Báez et al., 2014). Specifically, those professors who provide learning

opportunities for their students introduce them to different perspectives, which can deepen their knowledge (Pineda-Báez et al., 2014). On the other hand, Wong (2015) observed that some students choose to avoid working in groups because there is not an objective way to measure the work, commitment, and engagement of each group member, as professors are not always able to establish the exact contribution of each student to the final work.

Support Strategy

The fourth strategy, according to Prosser and Trigwell (2014) and Trigwell et al. (2013), involves the concept of supporting students to internalize the significance of a deep learning approach. Students who employ a learning strategy centered on deep learning tend to obtain better final grades than their classmates who focus only on surface learning (Trigwell et al., 2013). In this regard, Prosser and Trigwell (2014) realized that students' tendency to adopt a deep learning approach depends on their teachers' approach to teaching. According to the EBP's dean If students perceive that their professors think that they have essential abilities and encourage a learning process with a student-focused approach, students will be motivated and will adopt the deep learning approach. However, if students perceive that their professors' purpose is simply to transmit information by focusing on teaching and discouraging conceptual change, then students may develop a surface learning approach (Prosser & Trigwell, 2014).

Sandoval-Lucero (2014) emphasized that postsecondary hierarchic leaders need to recognize that professors are the primary motivation sources for students at higher education institutions. Other sources may be the student affairs unit (Gansemer-Topf,

Zhang, Beatty & Paja, 2014) or the student peers (Artz & Welsch, 2014; McEwan, 2013). The students' affair unit and student peers may provide postsecondary students with support to face the challenges while they are pursuing their degrees. Furthermore, Fuentes, Ruiz Alvarado, Berdan, and DeAngelo (2014) identified that the university's relationship with students and professors also impacts student development and academic performance. Specifically, Fuentes et al. (2014) established that students who engage with faculty at early stages in their education, may reap significant benefits of mentorship by the end of their postsecondary education. Artz and Welsch (2014) identified a synergetic relationship between teaching and learning styles and gender. Female professors successfully teach female students, while male professors more successfully teach male students (Artz & Welsch, 2014).

Chilean freshman students have faced, and continue to face, enormous challenges in pursuing their professional degrees (Blanco et al., 2015; Rojas et al., 2011). Accordingly, university administration, faculty members, MEGE directors and MEGE professors should be aware of the significance of supporting freshman students until these students understand they possess, or can develop, the required tools to finish their programs, graduate, and become professionals who may contribute to improving the quality of life of national and international communities.

The PCU's MEGE professors may support freshman students to realize, develop, and implement learning strategies that will help them successfully manage the challenges that accompany their postsecondary education. Moreover, the supportive backup approach enables faculty members, MEGE professors, and MEGE directors to develop a

better educational practice by improving the institution's competitive standing in the Chilean postsecondary education market.

Implications

The literature review provided a rationale for evaluating the MEGE professors' perceptions of how they can support freshman students of the EBP at one campus of the PCU to improve academic performance. Based on the data collected, the findings of this qualitative case study may prompt university officials to develop a comprehensive strategy that fosters the implementation of appropriate supportive measures to improve freshman student academic performance. One condition established by the Chilean Accreditation Agency is the requirement to help the students to improve their learning process. Students deserve to receive the necessary guidance to improve their academic performance at the university. Accordingly, once PCU officials accepts freshman students, these leaders became the institution's representatives to provide the required academic structure that will enhance student academic performance and develop academic success at the university.

The findings of this study could be used to establish supportive learning strategies that may help freshman EBP students to improve their academic performance in MEGE courses. The insights of this study will support the EBP of the PCU firstly, to enhance the syllabus of the freshman courses and the curriculum of EBP, and secondly, to develop and implement the required supportive strategies that may guide the freshman students in their learning processes.

The initial purpose of this study project is to assist faculty officials to develop an active learning strategy that may help the students to realize their responsibility in the learning process. The second purpose is to support the faculty leaders and academics to create a learning environment in which students may understand the relevance of developing a deep learning attitude, by providing the students with the necessary skills to improve their academic performance at the university.

Summary

The arrival of new student cohorts to Chilean universities compels Chilean postsecondary institutions to face a significant number of challenges. Institutional officials came to the realization that the characteristics of the new students --a lack of academic preparedness, financial and economic situations, their need to balance study and work, and their social life-- required new strategies by which to support their learning processes. Those strategies aim to support freshman students from their initial postsecondary stage until they develop the appropriate skills to study and learn at higher education institutions.

To identify the students' behavior, their commitment, their successes, their failures, and the support they require to improve their academic performance, it is important to understand the perceptions of the MEGE professors who taught these students. Additionally, it would also be helpful to document the MEGE directors' perceptions of the 2015 EBP freshman student cohort. The data I compiled may facilitate the postsecondary institution in identifying and implementing improved teaching strategies to help freshman students to improve their academic performance.

Section 2 will describe the qualitative case study approach employed in conducting this study project. First, I will discuss the design and the research approach. Next, I will explain the criteria for selecting participants and describe the procedures for gaining access to them. Additionally, I will establish the number of MEGE professors and MEGE directors that participated in this study, including measures taken to protect the participants' rights, including confidentiality, anonymity, informed consent, and protection from harm. I will explain how and when the data were gathered, recorded, and analyzed. Moreover, I will describe the procedures that ensure the accuracy and credibility of the findings and the methodology to deal with discrepant cases. Finally, I will explain the limitations.

Section 3, will describe the proposed study project, the process and procedures for implementing the study project, as well as the implications for social change. Finally, Section 4 will include my reflections as a scholar, as a practitioner, and as a project developer. I will also explain the project's strengths, the recommendations for rectifying the project's limitations, the project's potential impact for bringing about social change, the implications, applications, and possibilities for future research and the conclusion.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to deepen the understanding of how math, English, and general education professors perceive that they can support freshman students in the economics and business program at one campus of a private Chilean university, which may improve student academic performance in math, English, and general education classes, as well as completion rates. Section 2 outlines the methodology that was used in this study.

First, the design and the research approach are discussed, as well as the criteria for selecting the participants and the procedures for gaining access to them. Additionally, the number of MEGE professors and MEGE directors who were asked to participate in this study is established. Confidentiality, anonymity, informed consent, and protection from harm are explained, and the data collection and analysis procedure is justified. Finally, discrepant cases and limitations are addressed.

Background

Chilean students who finish high school during the academic year must take national standardized college admission tests in order to apply to different universities. These tests are taken during the last days of November or early December, depending on the year. The high school students who take the tests receive their scores a month later and then apply to Chilean universities. During the second week of January, Chilean universities publish lists of the students who were accepted and need to enroll in the programs for which they applied.

The EBP enrolls all of the students who were accepted into the program in the first five classes for their first semester: Math 1, Business Administration, Fundamentals of Economics, Computer Workshop, and General Education 1 (Unab, n.d.b). If the freshman students pass every class, they can then enroll in the five courses of the second semester: Math 2, Microeconomics, Accounting, General Education 2, and English 1. However, if a student fails one course (e.g., Math 1), the student will need to re-enroll in the failed class for the following term while advancing in the other areas of the curriculum (e.g., Accounting and English 1). Only when students pass their first-semester year classes are they permitted to proceed to the second course of the curriculum sequence. For example, if students fail the Math 1 course, they are not authorized to enroll in Math 2 or Microeconomics until they pass Math 1. Under this logic, if EBP freshman students pass General Education 1, they can enroll in General Education 2.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this qualitative research project study were as follows:

- RQ1: What are the perceptions of the MEGE professors and MEGE directors at one PCU campus regarding how they can support the freshman students in the EBP to improve their academic performance in MEGE courses?
- RQ2: What are the perceptions of the MEGE professors and MEGE directors at one PCU campus regarding the additional academic support services that the university might provide freshman students of the EBP to improve their academic performance in MEGE courses?

The following subquestion supports Research Question 2:

SQ: What academic knowledge will EBP freshmen need to improve their academic performance and be successful in MEGE courses?

The findings of this qualitative case study were used to develop the Economics and Business Conditionally Accepted Students Academic Support Program (EBPCASAS). The goal of the program is to support the EBP's conditionally accepted students to improve their academic knowledge, to pass the EBP Summer Immersion Program and to be accepted as EBP students.

Research Design and Approach

To study perceptions regarding support of EBP freshman students' efforts to improve their academic performance in MEGE courses, a qualitative research model was the appropriate methodology to generate the detailed data this study required.

The qualitative approach is an interpretative one (Merriam, 2009) that relies on human perceptions (Stake, 2010). Within this approach, "reality is socially constructed" (Merriam, 2009, p. 8) and is shaped by an inductive format based on personal perspectives from which broader patterns and understandings are discerned (Creswell, 2012). Accordingly, there may be multiple interpretations of the same event, given the experiences and perceptions of the observers (Stake, 2010). Within this qualitative descriptive approach, researchers work to understand "how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (Merriam, 2009, p. 14). A qualitative design requires that researchers use an inductive format, beginning from the participants' personal perspectives and proceeding

to broader patterns and understandings (Creswell, 2012). Researchers strive to understand the participants' realities from their perspectives, as the process, rather than the outcomes, is the focus (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Merriam, 2009). Collection methods such as interviews, focus group sessions, observations, live stories, videos, and pictures, allow a researcher to gather relevant data (Merriam, 2009).

A significant concern for qualitative researchers is ensuring that they are capturing participants' perspectives accurately (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Qualitative researchers seek to understand perceived experiences, rather than to establish cause-and-effect relationships (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010).

The designs of qualitative research projects emerge in the course of accommodating the purpose and the questions of the study. Consequently, new questions may appear that narrow the focus of the central question (Creswell, 2012). This qualitative study was a case study. In a case study, researchers pursue in-depth descriptions of a bounded system (Merriam, 2009), which means that the case is limited to an extension of time or a place defined by physical boundaries (Creswell, 2012). Accordingly, within this design, researchers examine the setting in detail to identify a feasible location in which to conduct their study and the potential participants of their study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

Alternative methods were considered for this study. In quantitative studies, researchers seek to understand the behavior of selected populations. To accomplish this, researchers choose and study a representative sample of a population and summarize "data using numbers" (Lodico et al., 2010, p. 11). Furthermore, researchers establish

research objectives and dependent and independent variables, and they test hypotheses or theories (Creswell, 2012). Finally, researchers project examined outcomes of those hypotheses or theories to entire populations. A quantitative study would not have provided the data that were sought.

Mixed methods design studies use both quantitative and qualitative data. The methodology requires the definition of hypotheses that will be tested (quantitative) and then qualitative data gathering to explain the quantitative information. At the same time, the methodology allows researchers to collect, analyze, and mix qualitative and quantitative data collection procedures. In mixed methods research studies, researchers need to establish whether the priority will be the qualitative or the quantitative approach. The study I conducted did not employ hypotheses, nor did I intend to generalize the findings as a whole. For this reason, the quantitative and mixed method designs were not appropriate for this study.

Ethnography, grounded theory, and phenomenological qualitative methods were also considered but were not appropriate for this study. Such designs focus on the experience of the individual or a group of people and may seek to develop a theory that is compiled (Merriam, 2009). Due to the qualitative nature of the research project, the use of a case study allowed me to understand better MEGE professors' and MEGE directors' perceptions about how they may support freshman students of the EBP to improve their academic performance in MEGE courses.

Participants

Population and Sampling Procedures

The EBP that was studied is part of a PCU located in a large, urban city in South America. At the university, 45,000 students studied in 65 different undergraduate programs (Unab, n.d.a) during AY 2015-2016. According to the EBP's director 5100 of those 45,000 students, attended the EBP at five campuses. This qualitative case study took place at the university's largest campus, where 1,850 students were studying in the EBP during AY 2015-2016. Specifically, the required data were compiled from the professors who taught MEGE courses to the 2015 freshman cohort of the EBP, as well as MEGE directors' perceptions about the 2015 EBP freshman student group.

A purposeful homogeneous sampling procedure was employed to identify the participants. Within this approach, professors who exhibited similar characteristics were chosen to be part of the sample (Lodico et al., 2010).

Criteria and Selection of Participants

The definition that framed the selection of potential participants for this qualitative case study was all professors who taught MEGE courses to the 2015 freshman cohort, in addition to MEGE directors.

A purposeful homogeneous sampling was employed to identify the participants. Within this approach, professors who exhibited similar characteristics were chosen to be part of the sample (Lodico et al., 2010). I chose the study participants from among the professors who taught MEGE courses to freshman students of the EBP at one campus of a PCU and also among the MEGE directors. The purposeful homogeneous sampling

process was used to identify the participants. Within this approach, the professors who exhibited similar characteristics (taught MEGE courses to freshman students of the EBP 2015 cohort or were MEGE directors) were chosen to be part of the sample (Lodico et al., 2010). Therefore, in the case of the MEGE professors, I established a performance grade within each freshman class section of the MEGE disciplines. The performance grade allowed me to identify the class sections where the students learned more, through their grades. My goal was to appraise whether those professors implemented some specific strategies that might have supported their students in improving their academic performance at the university. Additionally, the MEGE directors participated in the study.

This study was bounded in one EBP campus. Specifically, data were compiled through interviews with nine MEGE professors who taught the 2015 EBP freshman student cohort. Three MEGE directors also agreed to be interviewed.

Procedures to Access Participants

Gaining access to the study participants required four levels of consent. The first level of consent involved obtaining permission from the Walden Internal Review Board (IRB) to conduct this case study. Walden's IRB approval was required to ensure that my research plan met the ethical standards of Walden University and addressed U.S. federal regulations (Walden University for Ethical Standards in Research, 2017). Specifically, the IRB application process was intended to ensure that informed consent forms were used, procedures were equitable, risks were minimized and reasonable, and the potential benefits of the research outweighed the potential risks (Walden University IRB for Ethical Standards in Research, 2017).

Following approval from Walden's IRB, the second level of consent involved seeking permission to conduct this study from the PCU's IRB (see Appendix B). I submitted a formal request to the PCU's IRB to conduct my research project within the boundaries of the biggest campus of the PCU.

The third level of consent that was required was permission from the PCU MEGE departments to conduct this case study. Specifically, permission was sought from the MEGE departments of the PCU to interview the professors who taught MEGE courses to the 2015 cohort of freshman students of the EBP (see Appendix C).

The fourth level of consent was permission from the potential participants (see Appendices D and E). Potential participants were provided informed consent forms explaining my role and responsibilities as the researcher, my regular role as campus director of the undergraduate EBP of the PCU, and the significant aspects of my qualitative case study (Creswell, 2012; Lodico et al., 2010; Merriam, 2009).

After receiving the PCU's IRB approval, I asked the MEGE departments for permission to identify the professors who taught MEGE courses to freshman students of the EBP at one campus of a PCU during AY 2015-2016. In addition, I asked them to allow me to download the archival contact data (email address and cell phone number) of those professors.

Initially, potential participants were reached by cell phone and invited to participate in the qualitative research project. Those academics and directors whom I was unable to contact by phone were emailed with an invitation to participate in the qualitative research project (Appendix F). In both cases, the invitation stated the purpose

of the study, as well as the informed consent. Potential participants were also told that there was no reward for taking part in this study.

To select the number of MEGE professors interviewed in this study, performance grade clusters were established. This allowed me to identify the class sections where the students learned more, based on their grades. The goal was to determine whether those professors implemented any specific strategies to support student academic performance in MEGE courses.

The performance grade was based on the average class score of all of the students who belonged to one particular class. To calculate the average class score, I used a weighted average score. The weighted average score was 50% attendance and 50% grades. The procedure allowed me to identify three clusters. In Chile, grades are ranked on a continuous scale from 1.0 to 7.0 (1.0 is the lowest, 7.0 is the highest, and 4.0 is a passing grade). Thus, the class sections that received an average class score equal to or above 5.6 comprised the first segment. The second segment consisted of the class sections that received an average class score between 5.5 and 4.0. Finally, the last cluster consisted of the class sections that received a score equal to or below 3.9. It is important to note that currently, the passing grade at the EBP of the PCU is above 4.0, but this was not considered for the purposes of this study. Furthermore, a class section can get a weighted average score below 4.0 even though many students passed the class.

Through this process, nine MEGE performance grade clusters (three for each MEGE discipline) were identified. One professor from each of the three groups within each of the three subjects (math, English, and general education) was interviewed, for a

total of nine MEGE professors, in order to understand the MEGE professors' perceptions in depth (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). In addition, the three MEGE directors were interviewed. Consequently, a total of 12 participants were interviewed for this study.

Ethical Protection of Participants

Measures were taken to protect participants from harm in compliance with the guidelines established by Walden University and the PCU. Accordingly, after the IRB's approval (number 07-08-16-0447407) was received, the consent form, which included anonymity and confidentiality, was developed. To protect participants, names and any information that might enable identification of the MEGE professors and MEGE directors who participated in the qualitative research project were removed (Lodico et al., 2010; Ogden, 2008a). Pseudonyms were used to protect confidentiality (Creswell, 2012; Lodico et al., 2010; Ogden, 2008b), and I worked to ensure that the data would not embarrass or harm the participants in any way (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). At the beginning of the initial interviews, the significance of the consent form was explained, and participants were asked to sign the document (Appendices G and H).

Data Collection

Data Collection Procedures

The methodology of this qualitative case study involved individual face-to-face, semistructured interviews with open-ended questions. With this approach, researchers ask questions of participants and record their answers, allowing the interviewees to express their opinions, perceptions, and ideas with privacy (Lodico et al., 2010). My goal was to encourage the participants to articulate their responses comfortably (Creswell, 2012;

Dialsingh, 2008). The disadvantage of this approach is the fact that the data that interviewees share may be biased by the interviewees' perspectives, experiences, and knowledge (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

Semistructured Interviews

The data collection process entailed semistructured interviews employing a list of open-ended questions (Carley-Baxter, 2008). Each interview was scheduled to last 60 minutes. Before initiating any interviews, an interview protocol was established (see Appendix I and Appendix J), with a list of the open-ended questions. The open-ended questions were developed with the assistance of the EBP dean, the EBP director and a group of full-time EBP professors who have worked with freshman students for more than three semesters. Even though the faculty directors changed the curriculum of the EBP in the 2015-2016 AY, the relevance of the three semesters experience is the knowledge the professor gained teaching EBP freshman students.

The interview protocol included instructions for the interview and the appropriate space for writing the interviewees' answers. Furthermore, in the course of the interviews, clarifying and probing questions were asked, to elicit more and significant data (Creswell, 2012). The goal of the personal face-to-face interviews is to encourage an open dialogue with the interviewees. Therefore, follow-up questions were added to spur the interviewees to share their experiences, allowing the respondents to describe, in detail, their perceptions (Creswell, 2012). The interviews allowed me to generate meaning and realize how the MEGE professors and MEGE directors perceive they can support EBP freshman students to improve their academic performance in MEGE courses.

Participants were interviewed in a mutually convenient location and at a time agreed upon by both of us. The interview site was an office of the professors' meeting room. Before each interviewee arrived, I first confirmed that my iPhone was working. I ensured the temperature of the room by setting the thermostat, and provided beverages and snacks to make interviewees more comfortable. When the interviewee arrived, s/he was kindly thanked for coming, and permission to record was sought. The consent form was signed, and participants were reminded that the meeting would last approximately 60 minutes.

All interviews were audio-taped using the voice notes recorder app of my iPhone. In addition, self-reflective notes were taken during the interviews to help me recall potential themes that might emerge. After the interviews, I manually transcribed the gathered data, and then read the transcripts to check the accuracy of my work. Finally, I coded the interviews, allowing themes to emerge using an inductive method of data analysis (Lodico et al., 2010) to develop a code list, and then to collapse the coded themes into categories (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

Role of the Researcher

Bogdan and Biklen, (2007) and Merriam, (2009) identified the researchers as the first and most significant instrument for collecting and analyzing qualitative data, in case study projects. Researchers establish the questions and the themes for the study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). In this qualitative case study, I served as the primary instrument for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the data. Furthermore, I was open to unexpected opportunities that might arise and was prepared to take into account any contradictory

evidence. At the same time, I engaged in the interpretation of the qualitative data gathered from the interviews, and I was aware of potential evidence that might contradict my preconceptions or the study's conceptual framework ideas.

Within this qualitative case study, I used an active listening approach, meaning that I was aware of my presuppositions and I listened to the perceptions of the MEGE professors and MEGE directors carefully during the interviews (Lodico et al., 2010). I asked probing questions to elicit more and significant data (Creswell, 2012) regarding the MEGE professors and MEGE directors' perceptions as to how they could or did support EBP freshman students to improve their academic performance.

I kept the manually transcribed data in a research log (see Appendix M), and developed both descriptive and reflective field notes to document my thoughts and perceptions during the interviews. The research log allowed me to document the opinions, attitudes, ideas, and events that arose during the interviews (Lodico et al., 2010). Descriptive field notes allowed me to "record the details of what" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 120) happened during the interviews with the MEGE professors and the MEGE department directors. Descriptive field notes included the physical appearance of the interviewees, conversations between the participants and the researcher, descriptions of the physical setting where the interview took place, and the researchers' behavior (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Finally, the reflective field notes provided me a way to describe my feelings and thoughts about what I observed. Additionally, these notes allowed me to reflect on my points of views and values, increasing my awareness of how these may influence and bias my perceptions of the data gathered (Lodico et al., 2010).

One of my duties is to establish the semester class timetable for all the students who attend the program on campus. However, I do not have any formal hierarchic relationship with the professors of the MEGE courses. I coordinate the schedules with the MEGE department directors. The hierarchic line goes from the MEGE directors to the MEGE professors.

Data Storage

Upon concluding each interview the research log and the reflective field notes were stored in a locked drawer of my desk at the office to ensure security. Then, data were transferred to a password-protected file on my personal computer, in my Dropbox, and my password pen drive backup. The collected data will be kept for 5 years, at which point it will be deleted.

Data Analysis

After I interviewed the MEGE professors and directors, I made a copy of the digital audio records, and I stored that copy in a locked drawer of my desk at the office. After completing all the interviews, I created a folder on my personal computer for each participant, and I manually transcribed the data gathered during the interviews to my computer. Each folder and each file were password protected. Additionally, I created and still maintain two backups for my folders. My first backup was my Dropbox and my second backup was a password protected pen drive. Also, I established a password to protect each file of the password protected pen drive. I will keep the password backup pen drive in a locked drawer of my desk at the office for five years.

Transcription, Coding Process, and Theme Development

After transcribing the audio files, they were converted into text data. I read the transcripts and the reflective notes several times, analyzing the data to check the accuracy of my work. The process allowed me to more fully understand the information the interviewees provided during the interviews and to develop a general sense of the data and to ensure I did not miss significant qualitative data the MEGE professors and MEGE directors may have provided during the interviews .

Then, I analyzed, interpreted and hand-coded the descriptive qualitative data the respondents had provided when we met to establish coding descriptions and to identify themes (Creswell, 2012) from an inductive approach. Some of the codes I used were: INM immaturity, IB improper behavior, LBK lack of basic knowledge, IF intolerance to frustration, IISG inadequate identification of students' gaps, LR lack of resilience, and US university support. Consequently, the qualitative data were examined searching for patterns and the identified ideas were written in the margins of the interviews' transcribed pages. The coding process was developed using an individual ideas level coding process allowing the ideas of the data to emerge and identifying the themes that became the common categories. The process enabled me to organize the data into chunks or segments of text establishing a general meaning from each segment (Creswell, 2012). I analyzed the qualitative data collected from the MEGE professors' and MEGE directors' interviews to establish patterns and topics to identify the coding categories. Every time I recognized a pattern or topic, I wrote down words or sentences that would allow me to

represent the identified items. Then I examined the codes to discern possible redundancies; the goal was to collapse the codes and to determine general themes.

First, I united all the related paragraphs related to a single code. Then, similarly coded items were collapsed into broad common categories identifying the themes. These categories became the means to consider the qualitative data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Finally, once I had finished coding my text, I established the themes that reflected the major categories of data. Based on the fact that I focused on few themes, this method allowed me to identify between five and seven themes (Creswell, 2012). Specifically, I identified six themes.

Limitations

Any case study may have specific limitations. First, as a result of the study's qualitative nature, the findings are not be generalizable. Second, the study was bounded at the EBP of a PCU. Consequently, if a researcher were to conduct the same study at a different private or public university, or within a different academic program the, findings may differ. Third, the study documented the opinions of nine MEGE professors who taught one cohort of freshman students of the EBP, and three MEGE department directors who coordinate the MEGE professors. For this reason, if a researcher was to conduct the same study with a different sample of MEGE professors or with a different group of MEGE directors, the findings may differ. Fourth, the study included academics who taught MEGE courses of one cohort of freshman students, and so the perceptions of professors who may have resigned, were fired, did not instruct that cohort, or choose not to participate were not collected.

Further research should be carried out to establish the perceptions of other MEGE academics, professors or directors, from other disciplines; at private or public Chilean universities on the extent they support freshman students to improve their academic performance at MEGE courses. Additionally, future research may benefit from including the freshman students' opinions on how their MEGE professors have encouraged them to improve their academic performance. Although this study lacked quantitative data, such as GPA and retention rates, the knowledge the study provided will enable the PCU to develop interventions and implement strategic policies that may support the EBP freshman students in improving their academic performance in MEGE courses.

Results of the Study

The data were organized into themes that were directly related to the three guiding research questions. Table 1 describes the specific interview questions that addressed each qualitative project research questions and the subquestion

Table 1*Research Questions Addressed by Interview Question*

Research questions and Subquestion	Interview question(s)
RQ1	Do you think you could help freshman students to improve their academic performance in MEGE courses? Do you think your department could help freshman students to improve their academic performance in MEGE courses?
RQ2	Do you think the PCU might provide academic support to freshman students of the EBP to improve their academic performance in MEGE courses? Do you think the PCU might provide academic support to freshman students of the EBP to improve their academic performance in MEGE courses?
SQ	What academic knowledge do you think freshman students need to improve their academic performance and be successful in MEGE courses?

Twelve participants were interviewed to gather the required data for this qualitative case study. Nine interviewees were MEGE professors (75%), and three were MEGE directors (25%), which may be significant because the MEGE professors' perceptions may differ from the MEGE directors' perceptions. All the participants were white, and eight participants (66.66 %) were women, evidence of the non-discrimination commitment the university has with female professors. Of the professors and directors interviewed, eight (66.66%) had studied to be professors of the disciplines they teach, three (25%) had a bachelor's degree in the discipline they teach, and one was a

sociologist with an MBA in Education. These facts reflect the interest and commitment of the MEGE professors and MEGE directors in relation to their work. Of the interviewed participants, eight (66.66%) were part-time equivalent professors, three (25%) were full-time professors, and one (8.3%) was a part-time equivalent professor who worked at the university 11.25 hours a week. The interviewees had worked in the Economics and Business Program (EBP) of the Private Chilean University (PCU) from 1 to 8 years.

The MEGE professors were asked 14 questions in the interviews, and the MEGE directors were asked 12 questions. Although 60 minutes were planned for the interviews, the actual interviews varied from 40 to 60 minutes in duration, depending on participants' years of experience and the amount of information they elected to share.

Once informed consent had been received, the interviews were recorded with the voice notes recorder application located on my iPhone. In every interview, descriptive field notes were also taken, to capture the details of the participants' perspectives and perceptions. I also wrote a research log after each interview to register essential points, my impressions and the probing questions I asked the respondents in order to clarify my doubts. During the interviews, the participants shared a significant amount of rich descriptive data, and, as a consequence, it was not necessary to convene the participants for follow-up interviews. I transcribed the digital audio files and then printed the documents to use in the analysis. The documents were also saved in a password-protected file on my personal computer, and added to the password files on my Dropbox and my password pen drive.

To ensure validity and credibility of the findings, the strategies used were member checking, transferability, and peer debriefing. After I had transcribed the qualitative data from the interviews, an email with the transcription of his/her interview was sent to the participant, and that person was asked to verify my interpretation of the information that had been provided (Given, 2008; Stake, 2010). Within three weeks, all participants had answered my email; all confirming that my interpretation of the data they shared during their interview was accurate.

After I received the participants' email confirmations that my interpretation of the gathered data was correct, and after the peer debriefer signed the confidentiality agreement (Appendix N) I met with the peer debriefer in a biweekly meeting during two months. Those meetings allowed me, first, to discuss the qualitative gathered data, second, to identify new data that I had not registered before, and, finally, to interpret the information (Mertens & McLaughlin, 2004) from different perspectives.

Using an inductive method to analyze the collected data (Lodico et al., 2010) and with the peer debriefer support I re-read my descriptive field notes analyzing the gathered data, coding the interviews, and allowing the themes to emerge. The use of descriptive data allowed me to enlighten the data gathered during the interviews. I developed a code list and collapsed it into categories (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Afterward a protracted analysis of the data gathered during the interviews supported by the encouragement of the peer debriefer to identify new or different perspectives to interpret the information, I established the emergent themes. Words were analyzed first, followed by ideas and then sentences. Major themes were noted when more than 50% of interviewees mentioned an

idea. Using the same method, minor themes were established when 49% or fewer professors or directors mentioned a specific idea. An Excel spreadsheet was used to sort and organize the coded data. I used the codes to identify the patterns and relationships within the codes to identify the themes. Finally, I grouped the codes formulating the themes and developed a code frequency matrix. In the horizontal axis of the matrix I registered the themes and the codes. Instead, in the vertical axis of the matrix I registered the participants' opinions (Appendix O). I assigned a rank to each code reflecting the appearance frequency of each code. Table 2 provides a list of the codes I used in this study with a description of each code.

Table 2*Codes and Descriptions*

Code	Description
INM	Immaturity
IB	Improper behavior
IR	Irresponsibility
LBK	Lack of basic knowledge
IF	Intolerance to frustration
ASH	Absence of study habits
LKSP	Lack of knowledge of the student profile
IISG	Inadequate identification of students' gaps
SLS	Study and learning strategies
ETM	Efficient time management
LR	Lack of resilience
US	University support
LC	Lack of confidence
LIM	Lack of internal motivation
NSC	Numbers of students per class
LP	Learning procedures
SCD	Students class diversity
T	Transition
NE	New environment
AT	Adjustment time
A	Accompaniment
NAE	No academic effort
IG	Instant gratification

After the transcript had been coded, I calculated each code's frequency and ranked them according to the relative frequency of occurrence in the interview data (Appendix O). With the peer debriefer help I coded the descriptive notes and the reflective notes. I combined the codes that were related to topics and established a category according to the frequency of the codes, grouping together the codes related to various emergent themes. From the grouped data, six themes emerged: three major themes and three minor ones. The three major themes that emerged were: (a) lack of commitment, (b) students' academic weaknesses, and (c) remedial courses. The three minor themes that emerged were (d) classroom environment, (e) knowing the university, and (f) ethical behavior. Table 3 provides a list of the codes related to the major theme denominated lack of commitment.

Table 3

Lack of Commitment

Code	Description
INM	Immaturity
UB	Improper behavior
IR	Irresponsibility
IF	Intolerance to frustration
R	Lack of resilience

Under the third theme, *lack of commitment* the following codes were grouped: immaturity, improper behavior, irresponsibility, intolerance to frustration, and lack of

resilience, because these are important constructs that negatively impact the freshman students' academic performance. Behavior commonly displayed by freshman students is their customary high school conduct. EBP students may fail to improve their academic performance because they do not know or have the tools to change their behavior and thus, their academic performance.

Students' academic weakness is also an important theme, according to the high frequency of the codes related to the subject. Table 4 provides a list of the codes related to the major theme students' academic weaknesses.

Table 4

Students' Academic Weaknesses

Code	Description
LBK	Lack of basic knowledge
ASH	Absence of study habits
LKSP	Lack of knowledge of the student profile
IISG	Inadequate identification of students' gaps
LIM	Lack of internal motivation

MEGE professors and MEGE directors indicated that the university leaders bore a major measure of responsibility for the codes related to Students' Academic Weaknesses. Their view arises because the higher education institution allows the freshman students to enroll without analyzing their profiles or their knowledge weaknesses. If higher education institution officials were fully aware of students' deficiencies, this would generate a

commitment to provide the freshman students with workshops to enable them to overcome their academic deficiencies. Furthermore, identifying the students' knowledge weaknesses implies that students may be furnished with the opportunity to fill their learning gaps by developing appropriate learning and studying strategies.

A remedial course is another important theme, according to the high frequency of the codes related to the subject. Table 5 provides a list of the codes related to the major theme Remedial Courses.

Table 5

Remedial Courses

Code	Description
SLS	Study and learning strategies
EMT	Efficient management of time
US	University support
LC	Lack of confidence
A	Accompaniment

MEGE professors and MEGE directors indicated that the higher education institution has an important responsibility in regards to remedial courses. The goal of university support is to assist the EBP freshman students to develop the correct behavior, in order to be able to overcome the academic learning challenges they will face while pursuing their degrees. The EBP freshman students require that the higher education

institution administration and professors make a commitment to help them minimize their completion time.

In reviewing the minor themes, classroom environment emerged as one, on the basis of the lower frequency of the codes related to the subject. Table 6 provides a list of the codes related to the minor topic Classroom Environment.

Table 6

Classroom Environment

Code	Description
NSC	Numbers of students per class
LP	Learning procedures
SCD	Students class diversity

MEGE professors and MEGE directors indicated that university administration and directors need to shoulder the responsibility for the institution's environment and its consequences. Accordingly, if professors were informed regarding student diversity and if the classes were smaller, the professors could develop and implement learning procedures that may support the EBP freshman students to improve their academic performance.

A second minor theme, knowing the university, was identified on the basis of the lower frequency of the codes related to the subject. Table 7 provides a list of the codes related to Knowing the University.

Table 7*Knowing the University*

Code	Description
T	Transition
NE	New environment
AT	Adjustment time

MEGE professors and MEGE directors indicated that the university needs to become aware of the challenges that EBP freshman students currently face. Accordingly, the university should take responsibility for supporting freshman students in their transitional process, giving them the required adjustment time to help them adapt to the new environment they will face while pursuing their degrees. Ethical Behavior was identified as a minor theme based on the lower frequency of the codes related to the subject. Table 8 provides a list of the codes related to Ethical Behavior.

Table 8*Ethical Behavior*

Code	Description
NAE	No academic effort
IG	Instant gratification
EA	Ethical aspects

Not only does the university have responsibilities to students, but students must also be responsible for their own success. One MEGE professor indicated that EBP freshman students need to be aware of their responsibility in the ethical behavior theme. The EBP freshman students need to come to terms with the fact that they must commit to their university learning. The instant gratification, the lack of academic effort, and the ethical aspects they were accustomed to in high school are not compatible with the higher education environment. The postsecondary education environment requires students' engagement, to guarantee they are learning the essential topics while they are pursuing their degrees.

Relationship Between Research Questions and Themes

With regard to the three major themes and the three minor themes that emerged from the participants' responses to the interview questions, it is important to understand how the information gained may support EBP freshman students in improving their academic performance in MEGE courses. Additionally, delineating the relationship between the major and the minor themes and the research questions is also essential. The themes and related findings for the two research questions and the subquestion are as follows:

RQ1. What are the perceptions of the MEGE professors and MEGE directors at one PCU campus regarding how they can support the EBP freshman students in improving their academic performance in MEGE courses?

Theme 1: Lack of commitment. Theme 1 emerged when the MEGE professors were asked: Do you think you could help freshman students improve their academic

performance in MEGE courses? The MEGE directors were asked the following related question: Do you think your department could help freshman students to improve their academic performance at MEGE courses?

RQ1 Finding 1. The first major theme identified was the lack of commitment demonstrated by freshman students of the EBP. Eleven of the 12 MEGE professors and directors interviewed suggested that the immaturity and improper behavior of the freshman students, their irresponsibility, their inability to tolerate frustration, and their lack of resilience hinder the development of an appropriate learning environment. Consequently, the students do not learn the information and skills required to advance with a strong academic foundation. Some MEGE professors and directors reported they were compelled to teach some topics from a previous prerequisite course again, because the students did not understand the subject when they attended the classes the first time. Participant 8 mentioned that he became tired of repeating the themes class to freshman students. As a result, he established a new policy concerning class attendance, in order to support student commitment and to improve student motivation to review the subjects before every class. He announced the following to the freshman students of his Monday and Wednesday class:

The new rules of this class are: I will give you a list of five exercises every Monday class session. To be present in Wednesday's attendance list, you will have to bring the solutions to those exercises. If you do not bring the answers, you will be marked as absent.

The expectations were that the new strategy would support the students' learning process and that their formative and summative assessments would reflect subject comprehension. A few students did improve their academic knowledge, but as Participant 8 acknowledged,

The vast majority of the students did not show the appropriate learning behavior that semester. Many students came to classes, but they did not come to study.

These students did not have the correct learning behavior, and the vast majority of students were not disciplined or responsible with their learning process.

Furthermore, they did not follow the rules. EBP freshman students currently do not study, they do not recognize their doubts or weaknesses, and, consequently, they are not inclined to seek guidance until they start struggling academically, when it's too late. However, the few students who did their work properly during that semester, completed their exercises, asked questions in classes, and were present in the attendance list 80% of the time did improve their academic knowledge and passed the course.

Participant 3 mentioned that many EBP freshman students were immature, lacked structure, had weak study habits, and little engagement with their postsecondary education. Those attitudes exacerbated their lack of commitment by impeding them from understanding the appropriate behavior they needed to implement in order to have a successful higher education. In her words:

In general, EBP freshman students are immature, have little structure and few or no study habits at all. Most are not committed to their postsecondary education.

However, a fewer number of students do understand this is their effort, their job, their responsibility, their challenge, and their future. Those students did accept the new rules, and their resiliency pushes them to develop an appropriate behavior. Consequently, they do learn.

Participant 12 pointed out that many EBP freshman students were poorly prepared to enter the university, or have significant personal problems that deter them from developing a real commitment to their higher education. Awareness of these students' lack of commitment should motivate postsecondary education institutional administration to develop a teaching-learning commitment strategy that enables students to grasp the importance of more appropriate behavior. As she said:

A private university like ours that receives an immense diversity of students knows that some students not only have great academic deficiencies due to inadequate secondary preparation, but also serious personal problems. It needs to be cognizant of students' lack of commitment and therefore develop a teaching-learning commitment strategy for those students.

RQ1 Finding 2. To MEGE professors and directors was important to know and understand the freshman profile because the freshman students' backgrounds impact their academic performance. The MEGE professors and directors acknowledged that many freshman students exhibit weak critical thinking and logical reasoning skills.

RQ1 Finding 3. Of the 12 MEGE professors and directors interviewed, eight thought the lack of commitment on the part of most students was most obvious. On the other hand, one MEGE professor said that only about 50% of the students lacked

commitment. Two other MEGE professors and one MEGE director thought that students' lack of resiliency negatively impacted their academic performance. Their behavior is an obstacle that impedes freshman students from developing appropriate learning strategies and committing to their studies. In addition, two MEGE professors and two MEGE directors stated that the lack of critical thinking and logical reasoning skills were the major weaknesses affecting freshman students and undermining their academic commitment. Finally, the last four MEGE professors and two MEGE directors indicated that the educational gap generates a substantial adverse effect, as it prevents the students from forming a strong foundation upon which to build their knowledge and their academic performance.

RQ2. What are the perceptions of the MEGE professors and MEGE directors at one PCU campus on the additional academic support services the university might provide EBP freshman students to improve their academic performance in MEGE courses?

Theme 2: Student academic weaknesses. Theme 2 emerged when MEGE professors and MEGE directors were asked: Do you think the PCU might provide academic support to EBP freshman students to improve their academic performance in MEGE courses.

RQ2 Finding 1. The MEGE professors and directors perceived that most EBP freshman students exhibited academic weaknesses. The freshman students' knowledge gaps, the absence of study habits, the higher education leaders' insufficient awareness of the students' profiles, the inadequate identification of students' academic gaps, and the

lack of students' internal motivation, all combine to block the development of a healthy atmosphere where learning can flourish. Many MEGE professors expressed concern that the only way to advance in-class topics was by re-explaining to the students the subjects they should have learned in high school.

MEGE professors emphasized that, if they did not spend significant amounts of time in their classes reinforcing the previous subject matters, students were unable to internalize course subjects. The MEGE directors added that, as a consequence, MEGE professors frequently spent their class time explaining previous topics and did not have enough time to explain all the subjects contained in the current course' syllabus. As Participant 6 underscored:

Students have a fundamental problem. Most come with an appalling academic foundation, so it is tough to build knowledge upon the previous knowledge the students bring. I have to go back, teach the basics (which should have been made clear in high school) and only then I can start with the topics to be taught in the course.

Participant 1 mentioned that professors' lack of awareness of the EBP freshman students' profiles was the reason it had not occurred to them to organize the class session in a different manner, so as to enable students to overcome their weaknesses. In her words:

Not knowing the students' profiles prevents the teacher from identifying the students' weaknesses and developing, to the extent that is possible, the class in a manner the students require to learn. Maybe the appropriate tool is discussion or

an exercise. What the professor needs to teach depends on the required class topics and the student's weaknesses. Every teacher needs to know their students' profiles to support them. Professors should be aware of all the students even those who do not want to be seen because they come from a different background and are descended in the required topics to learn the subjects of the class.

Participants 5 and 11 pointed out that many EBP freshmen who enroll at the university, enter with academic weaknesses brought from high school, that complicate their learning process because they have not acquired an adequate foundation to internalize the new knowledge. In this regard, Participant 5 expressed the following:

The majority of freshmen enrolled and started attending the university with serious problems in basic knowledge. The vast majority of these students had attention problems in high school. The gaps created by those school learning problems generated fears in students' minds and they were afraid of the new knowledge because they did not acquire the necessary prior knowledge in high school. Learning has become more difficult for many students, and as a consequence, they are afraid of their teachers. The problem is that many freshmen students lack the academic knowledge they need. In the last few years, the intellectual knowledge foundation of EBP freshmen has dropped considerably, and it shows clearly when the students feel they cannot do what the professor is asking because they do not know how to do it.

Participant 11 described the following:

Some freshmen students arrive with an adequate academic background because they went to demanding schools which leads them to believe they know how to study, when in reality they have not acquired appropriate learning strategies. These students think if they memorize what the professor taught and repeat it when they have to take an exam, they will show that they have absorbed the lessons imparted in class. But to be successful in higher education, they need to connect theories to practice. In the exams, the professors will require them to show their learning through analysis. These students need to identify a learning strategy and use it to improve their academic learning process.

Participant 12 noted the importance of the institution's directors and professors awareness of students' entry profiles and academic weaknesses. She also remarked on the relevance of recognizing the need to support the students by creating an appropriate environment for improving their academic learning process. This, she emphasized, will minimize their completion time and instill ethical behavior that will be fundamental when they enter the Chilean labor working force. In her words:

By identifying students' entry profiles and their academic weaknesses, the university can maintain diversity and inclusivity to allow many students from different socio-economic segments of the population to enter the academic community. This will also assure that the institution maintains itself as an accredited university with a satisfactory level of professional graduates.

The institution must help students overcome their deficiencies by providing them the foundation they need in order to improve their academic learning process,

minimize their completion time, and become ethical participants of the Chilean labor force.

Of the 12 MEGE professors and directors interviewed, six professors and two directors identified academic students' weaknesses as a major issue that thwarts the learning process due to the lack of appropriate tools to internalize the knowledge the professors impart.

SQ. What academic knowledge will EBP freshmen need to improve their academic performance and be successful in MEGE courses?

Theme 3: Remedial courses. The third major theme emerged from the responses to the question: What academic knowledge will EBP freshmen need to improve their academic performance and be successful in MEGE courses?

SQ Finding 1. Three MEGE professors and all MEGE directors affirmed that most EBP freshman students required remedial courses to enhance their learning outcomes. Many MEGE professors and all MEGE directors said remedial courses could be part of the supportive strategy that may lead the EBP freshman students to improve their academic performance. The MEGE professors and directors mentioned remedial courses as valuable tools the university may provide the freshman students to recognize and employ learning strategies, implement an efficient time management focus, and develop confidence. The MEGE professors and directors hypothesized that the support the university can provide EBP freshman students could become the building block upon which students may rely until they are able to improve their academic performance. As Participant 1 pointed out:

Each student needs to identify a learning and study strategy suitable for him or her. For example, some students learn by writing. These students should learn to highlight the papers they read, to write outlines and to compose summaries.

Whereas other students may learn by hearing material. The advice to this last group would be to read papers out loud.

Participant 9 mentioned that EBP freshman students indicated that they had not learned how to study in high school. In addition, students did not have a concept of learning; they did not realize that they had, in fact, learned when they internalized the theories and could answer the questions and problems the professors give them. In the words of Participant 9:

EBP freshmen students do not know what it is to learn and study. These students believe that learning entails memorizing or reciting a topic without understanding it. These students believe that studying consists of completing many exercises, when in fact, a student practices when he/she is working on the tasks he/she did in class or assigned by the professor. Doubts should arise at that moment, not when taking a test. Students should know they understand a topic when they can explain it in their own words. I think remedial courses are needed because EBP freshmen students need to learn how to think specifically, logically and abstractly. They also have to learn how to organize their time. Those are the areas in which the EBP freshmen students are more prone to fail.

Participant 10 stated the university had a responsibility and that the directors of an institution of higher learning must make a commitment to support students by providing

remedial courses to overcome their learning gaps. For example, writing skills are essential tools to express students' ideas and are the foundation for achieving successful learning outcomes. As she said:

Faculty leadership, professionals, and academic staff should support EBP freshmen students to increase their interest in subject matters related to their profession. Remedial courses should be offered as first semester classes. The goal should be to encourage freshmen students to improve their knowledge through classes on basic disciplines to learn the core subjects. Such remedial courses should be hands-on learning workshops where students can learn the subjects by doing many exercises. Freshmen students need to learn language and methods of study. These students also need to mature in regards to academic content. On the other hand, the issue is how the university can finance the challenge of implementing remedial courses. Above all, I can tell you I am sure that the long-term investment in remedial courses will be worth it because the strategy can provide a foundation for university implementation of a strategy to reduce the attrition and dropout rates.

Participant 11 noted that freshman students of the EBP require remedial leveling courses in oral and written expression, in reading comprehension, and in the use of information technology. All the subjects are related to the program they are studying.

Participant 9 mentioned that she thinks the freshman students of the EBP do not need more support because they were provided ample assistance yet do not use it. She said:

These students have enough academic support; they do not need more. For example, we gave them an exercise book, but if you ask them to express their doubts, they never speak up. They simply do not open the book. And they do understand that they need to learn how to study and how to organize their time.

Of the 12 MEGE professors and directors interviewed, five professors and one director identified the absence of remedial courses as a major issue that frustrates students' learning processes because they do not know or use the correct learning and study strategy to incorporate the knowledge professors taught in class sessions.

RQ1. What are the perceptions of the MEGE professors and MEGE directors at one PCU campus regarding how they can support the EBP freshman students in improving their academic performance in MEGE courses?

Theme 4: Classroom environment. The first minor theme emerged when participants were asked the question: Do you think freshman students know how to study and learn?

RQ1 Finding 4. Two MEGE professors and the three MEGE directors interviewed described the number of students per class (60, on the average), the learning procedures students used, and the enormous diversity of students in each class as obstacles to the development of a healthy learning environment. The confluence of these factors obstructed professors' efforts to support each student in identifying and improving his/her weaknesses. As Participant 9 said:

The students' attitudes in the classroom suggest they are used to thinking they can develop abstract knowledge like a formula. These students always search for a

formula to apply the copy-paste method, instead of identifying the need to develop a new learning approach.

Participant 4 added that many freshman students of the EBP were waiting to get all the instructions from the professors and did not realize that the goal of teachers is to support students in learning to think. In his word:

Many freshmen students of the EBP came to class expecting to receive a magical recipe they can always apply even without thinking, but they have to understand and learn that the university is a place to learn methods of analysis, not mechanical knowledge. Here first-year students are required to think deeply and demonstrate through formative and summative evaluations that they made the correct decision. Additionally, the diversity and number of students per class complicate the dynamics.

Participant 11 said:

With smaller class sections the professor can work and support the students in improving their learning processes because it requires the teacher invest time and dedication.

Of the 12 MEGE professors and directors interviewed, three professors and one director affirmed that classroom environment was an issue that discourages the freshman student learning process, because professors are unable to devote enough time to support the learning process of each freshman student.

RQ2: What are the perceptions of the MEGE professors and MEGE directors at one PCU campus regarding the additional academic support services the university might

provide freshman students of the EBP to improve their academic performance in MEGE courses?

Theme 5: Knowing the university. The second minor theme arose when the MEGE professors and MEGE directors were asked the question: Do you think the PCU might provide academic support to EBP freshman students to improve their academic performance in MEGE courses?

RQ2 Finding 2. One MEGE professor and one MEGE director argued that freshman students faced a challenging transition from the high school environment, where the students knew all the rules and someone always told them what to do. However, at the university, students encounter complete freedom and must organize their time and studies on their own. Accordingly, the EBP freshman students need an adjustment period upon entering the university, in order to learn these new responsibilities and devise a method for organizing and fulfilling those duties. As Participant 2 said:

The EBP freshman students came with a different mindset. They knew how to drive themselves in high school, and they try to use the same strategies when they enter the university. But at this stage, students require more time to realize this is an entirely different environment, and that they must develop different or new skills to be successful academically at the university. The adaptation period may be not so easy for many students, so I think the university bears the principal obligation of supporting the freshmen students until they adapt to this new environment.

Participant 11 mentioned that many freshman students of the EBP did not appear interested in becoming familiar with the university, its procedures, or its environment. In his words:

EBP freshmen students seem to arrive at the university perceiving this is the last year of high school. Many freshmen students become disoriented during their first year. They fail to accept the responsibility their university enrollment implies and they don't understand the importance of engagement in their learning process.

These students have to realize they need to learn and understand the rules of the new academic environment they are facing. As professor you perceive that they hope someone will tell them what to do at every educational step they take.

Freshmen students of the EBP need to know the university environment and understand that professors are here to foster the learning process and to teach them. But that does not mean they can rely on the teachers' thoughts; they have to develop their thinking process in accordance with the knowledge the teacher gave them in class. EBP freshmen students should realize that if they commit to their studies and make an effort, they will learn the required subjects, and they will pass the courses. I think that's the biggest problem freshmen students of the EBP face.

Of the 12 MEGE professors and directors interviewed, two MEGE professors identified knowing the university as a minor issue that obstructs the development of a successful learning process for freshmen. These respondents point to the fact that EBP freshman students did not know, but needed to learn, the rules of the new academic environment they face so they could become successful, academically.

RSQ. What academic knowledge will EBP freshmen need to improve their academic performance and be successful in MEGE courses?

Theme 6: Ethical behavior. The third minor theme emerged when MEGE professors and department directors were asked the question: Do you think freshman students of the EBP are committed to their studies?

SQ Finding 2. One of the twelve MEGE professors interviewed considered the idea of ethical behavior of great importance. Participant 10 said she had felt that some students did not want to make an effort to learn, yet demanded immediate positive learning outcomes. She expressed concern for the ethical consequences such behavior can generate in the students when they enter the labor market. In her words:

Many students do not write or copy from the board during classes, study, or exercise on their own. These students do use not correct methods to pass the courses. These students are cheating, and life will teach them that is wrong because they will fall. Students need to be aware of the future consequences of their current behavior.

Once I finished gathering the required data through the one-on-one, semistructured interviews, I manually transcribed and analyzed the evidence I collected from the MEGE professors and MEGE directors. To report the data, I developed two matrix comparison tables (Creswell, 2012) and two hierarchical tree diagrams. The matrix comparison tables allowed me to identify the major themes (Table 9) and minor themes (Table 10) that emerged from the data analysis (Creswell, 2012).

Table 9*Major Themes*

Participants	Lack of commitment	Students' academic weaknesses	Remedial courses
1	Immaturity, Improper behavior, Intolerance of frustration	Lack of basic knowledge, Lack of knowledge on the student profile	Efficient management of time, Lack of students' confidence
2	Improper behavior, Irresponsibility		Study and learning strategies, Lack of confidence
3	Immaturity, Improper behavior		
4	Improper behavior, Irresponsibility, Lack of resilience		
5	Improper behavior, Intolerance of frustration	Lack of basic knowledge, Absence of study habits	
6	Immaturity, Improper behavior, Irresponsibility, Lack of resilience	Lack of students' profile knowledge, Inadequate identification of student gaps	
7	Improper behavior	Lack of internal motivation	Study and learning strategies, University support
8	Immaturity, Improper behavior, Irresponsibility	Lack of basic knowledge	
9			Study and learning strategies
10	Improper behavior		University support
11	Improper behavior, Irresponsibility, Lack of resilience	Inadequate identification of students' gaps, Lack of internal motivation	Study and learning strategies, University support
12	Immaturity, Improper behavior, Irresponsibility, Lack of resilience	Lack of student's profile knowledge	

Table 10*Minor Themes*

Participants	Classroom environment	Knowing the university:	Ethical behavior
2		Transition, adjustment time	
4	Numbers of students per class, Student class diversity		
7	Learning procedures		
10			No academic effort, Instant gratification, Ethical aspects
11	Numbers of students per class, Learning procedures	New environment, Adjustment time	

The hierarchical tree diagrams allowed me to visually recognize the major and minor themes that emerged. Also, the hierarchical tree diagrams enabled me to organize the themes in order ranging from the general to the particular (Figure 1 and Figure 2).

The major themes that emerged from the data gathered through the one-on-one interviews conducted with the MEGE professors and directors is exhibited in Figure 1. Figure 1 also displays the codes that comprise those themes. The first major theme that emerged was *Lack of Commitment*. The codes that comprise the first theme are: (a) Immaturity, (b) Improper behavior, (c) Irresponsibility, (d) Intolerance of frustration, and (e) Lack of resilience. The second major theme that emerged was *Students' Academic Weakness*. The codes that comprise the second major theme are: (a) Lack of basic knowledge, (b) Absence of study habits, (c) Lack of student's profile knowledge, and (d)

Inadequate identification of students' gaps. The third major theme that emerged was *Remedial Courses*. The codes that comprise the third major themes are: (a) Study and learning strategies, (b) Efficient time management, (c) University support, (d) Lack of Confidence, and (e) Accompaniment.

The minor themes that emerged through analysis of the data gathered in the one-on-one interviews conducted with the MEGE professors and directors are exhibited in Figure 2. Additionally, Figure 2 displays the codes that comprise those themes. The first minor theme that emerged was *Classroom Environment*. The codes that comprise the first minor theme were: (a) Number of students per class, (b) Learning procedures, and (c) Student class diversity. The second minor theme that emerged was *Knowing the University*. The codes that comprise the second minor theme are: (a) Transition, (b) New environment, and (c) Adjustment time. The third minor theme that emerged was *Ethical Behavior*. The codes that comprise the third minor theme are: (a) No academic effort, (b) Instant gratification, and (c) Ethical aspects.

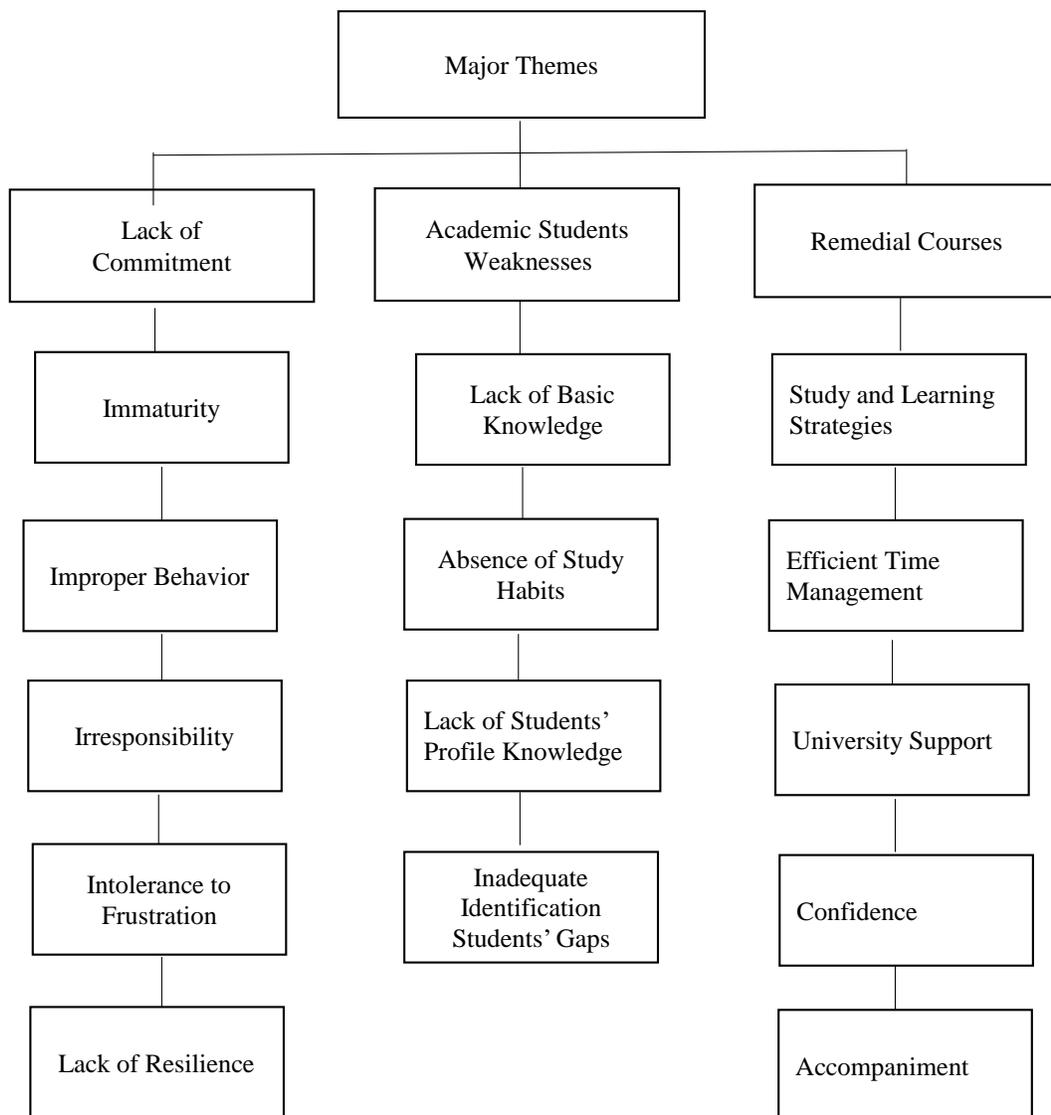


Figure 1. Major themes identified from the data.

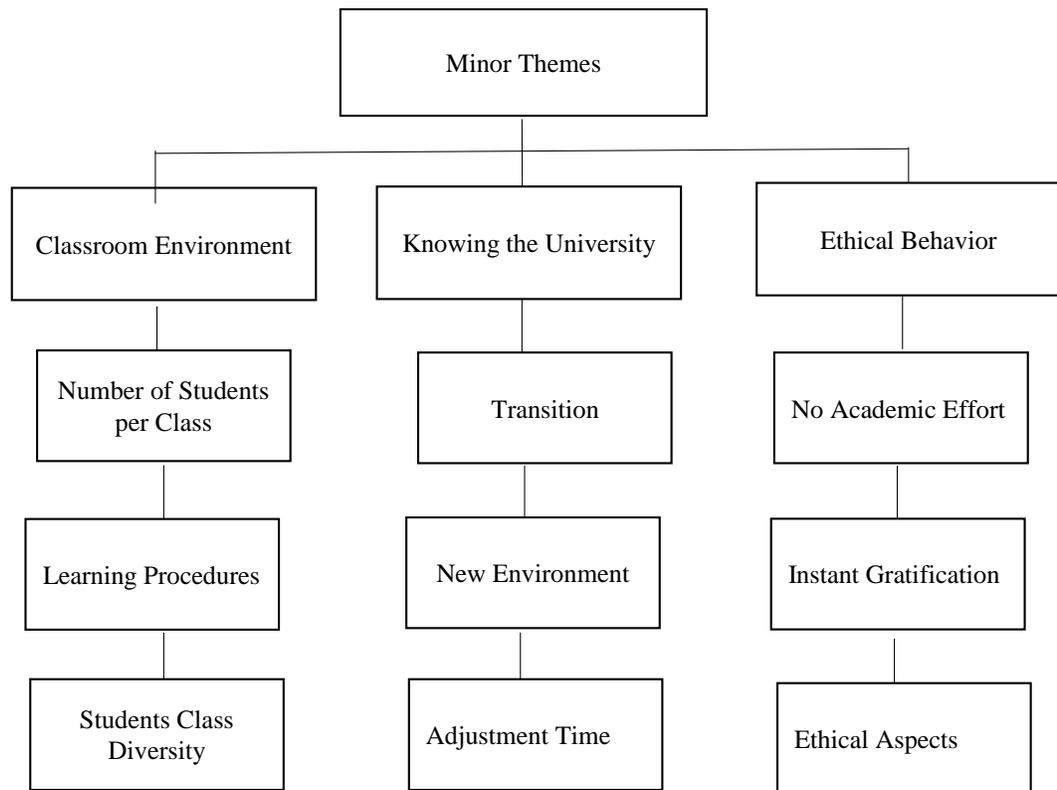


Figure 2. Minor themes identified through data analysis.

Validity and Credibility

The study's validity and its credibility were established by demonstrating that the methods used to conduct this qualitative research project generated authentic and detailed descriptions of the interviewees' perceptions. A central aspect was to ensure that the findings and their interpretation also were accurate throughout the course of the data-gathering and analysis stages.

The strategies used to validate the accuracy and credibility of my findings were peer debriefing, triangulation, and member checking. As Lodico et al. (2010), and Mertens and McLaughlin (2004) explained, peer debriefing means that a researcher meets with a colleague on a regular basis to examine assumptions and to identify new and different perspectives to analyze the gathered data. Due to the significance of my work to the study, I asked the peer debriefer to also sign a confidentiality agreement.

Triangulation is the process through which researchers compare various sources of data or the participants' perspectives (Whittemore et al., 2001). The process allows them to test the "quality of the evidence" (Stake, 2010, p. 132). Lastly, member checking is the process researchers employ to ensure the accuracy of the evidence they gather (Given, 2008; Stake, 2010). Researchers send the transcription of the interviews or their conclusions to the participants to ensure the accuracy of their interpretation of data that were gathered (Lodico et al., 2010).

As I began the participant interviews, the first strategy I used to validate the accuracy and credibility of my findings was the peer debriefing approach. Accordingly, I met with a colleague on a regular basis to discuss the data I gathered. My goal was to

identify new or different perspectives to interpret the information. After I finished reviewing the qualitative data I had collected during the individual face-to-face interviews, I organized and analyzed it, discerning the codes as they emerged. The second strategy I used to validate the accuracy and credibility of my findings was triangulation. I asked the directors of the MEGE departments about their opinion, and I compared their points of view with the perspectives of the MEGE professors I interviewed. Also, I searched the Walden library to identify any peer-reviewed article that might support or discount the MEGE academics' perceptions. I also used member checking procedures. Hence, when I finished transcribing the data I had collected during the interviews, I emailed each participant the transcription of his/her interview. Additionally, I asked them to confirm that my interpretation was correct, ensuring that my perspective reflected their points of view. None of the interviewees answered with a request to change any document data. Rather, within a month, each participant had sent an email approving the data interview transcription. Finally, the qualitative data gathered during the participants' interviews was supported by triangulation (Lodico et al., 2010).

Contrary Evidence

Data gathered “that does not support or confirm the themes and provides contrary information about a theme” (Creswell, 2012, p. 251) is termed contrary evidence. It is important to keep records of this evidence because the data ensures the researchers have acquired an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Lodico et al., 2010).

Information that contradicts research projects is classified as discrepant data and is indicated by a comment regarding the reasoning that demonstrates the case does not qualify (Lodico et al., 2010). Specifically, the data for this qualitative case study was gathered through individual face-to-face semistructured interviews, a method that can produce discrepant information. However, this qualitative case study did not present discrepant data. As Creswell (2012) has found, discrepant cases may explain the incompatible data by contributing credibility to the research. For example, a presumption of recent literature was that freshman students always require additional academic support; however, professor 9 stated, “These students have enough academic support, they do not need more. For example, we gave them an exercise book, but if you ask them to express their doubts, they never answer. They do not even open the book.” Although professor 9 described her perception and it was identified in the coding process, this was a unique case and therefore does not confirm the findings of this qualitative case study. Furthermore, my literature review did not reflect her view.

Interpretation of the Findings

The findings of this qualitative case study were interpreted on the basis of the social constructivism approach. The conceptual framework of this qualitative research study is based on the self-determination theory of Deci and Ryan (1985) and Salkind (2008) and the social constructivism theory of Vygotsky (1930). Higher education professors and students share responsibility for developing and maintaining higher education environments where the students' learning processes may flourish (Christofides et al., 2015; Johnson et al., 2014; Miranda, 2014; Simon et al., 2015; and Trigwell et al.

2013). The data collected and analyzed in this study corroborates the idea of the shared responsibility of both parties.

The answers and suggestions from MEGE professors and MEGE directors led to the development and implementation of a 1-week seminar to help students acclimate to university life. During the interviews, it seemed that the participants' answers to questions also contained ideas hinting at an immersion program that might help the students adapt to the EBP. MEGE professors and directors referred to freshman students' characteristics and their need for a more solid foundation to guide them in facing the challenges of pursuing their degrees. Some of these characteristics were: (a) immaturity, (b) improper behavior, (c) irresponsibility, (d) lack of basic knowledge, (e) intolerance for frustration, (f) absence of study habits, (g) study and learning strategies, (h) efficient time management, (i) lack of resilience, (j) lack of confidence, (k) lack of internal motivation, (l) learning procedures, (m) transition, (n) new environment, (o) adjustment time, (p) no academic effort, and (r) instant gratification.

MEGE professors and MEGE directors also referred to some aspects of the freshman student challenge that they consider to be the responsibility of university authorities. These aspects include: (a) lack of knowledge of student profile, (b) inadequate identification students' gaps, (c) university support, (d) number of students per class, (e) students class diversity, and (d) accompaniment.

The data analysis revealed three major themes and three minor themes. The major and the minor themes provided insight into the research questions. The themes focused on the perception held by the MEGE professors and MEGE directors concerning the

support they might provide freshman students of the EBP to improve their academic performance in MEGE courses. The three major themes were: (a) lack of commitment, (b) students' academic weaknesses, and (c) remedial courses. The three minor themes were: (a) classroom environment, (b) knowing the university, and (c) ethical behavior.

Finally, this study's findings support the idea that freshman students require supportive academic programs. Such programs may provide higher education students the tools they need in order to improve their academic performance in MEGE courses. Also, such support programs may shorten the length of time students spend completing their programs (Blanco et al., 2015; Johnson et al., 2014; Martin et al., 2014) and contribute to positive social change.

Outcomes of the Study

The main outcome of this qualitative case study is a project developed to address EBP freshman students' need for academic support to improve their academic performance in MEGE university courses. The project genre selected was a Professional Development Seminar Program in the form of EBP's Conditionally Accepted Students Academic Support Program (EBPCASAS). The EBPCASAS takes place during the last week of January, before the conditionally admitted students are accepted into the EBP Summer Immersion Program of the University (EBPSIP). The EBPCASA is a 1-week program that addresses academic and nonacademic themes that may affect EBP's conditionally admitted students' academic performance in the university.

As the participants mentioned during the interviews, supportive academic programs may help the EBP freshman students to improve their academic performance in

MEGE courses. Furthermore, the data presented in the supportive academic program may enhance the capacity of conditionally admitted students to improve their academic performance in MEGE courses as they minimize their knowledge gaps before entering the EBP.

Summary

A qualitative case study is the appropriate approach for studying the MEGE professors' and MEGE directors' perceptions regarding support for EBP freshman, to improve their academic performance in MEGE courses. Within the qualitative approach, reality is constructed (Merriam, 2009) with an inductive format, beginning with the personal perspectives and including extended patterns (Creswell, 2012). In addition, researchers engaged in qualitative studies try to identify and understand relationships by searching for an in-depth description of a limited system (Lodico et al., 2010; Merriam, 2009).

Section 2 described the methodology of this qualitative research project. Section 3 will address the proposed project study, the process and procedures to implement the project study, and the implications for social change. Section 4 will discuss my reflections as a scholar, as practitioner, and as project developer. The project strengths, recommendations for rectifying the project's limitations, and the project's potential social impact will also be explained.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

This section contains a detailed explanation of the Professional Development Seminar Program project that arose from the study of the MEGE professors' and MEGE directors' perceptions of how to best support EBP freshman students in improving their academic performance in MEGE courses. The project methodology was designed to ascertain whether the initial goals were being achieved.

To conduct this qualitative case study and establish the project study, 12 participants were interviewed: nine professors who taught MEGE courses to the freshman students of the EBP at the largest campus of the PCU during AY 2015-2016, and the three directors of the MEGE departments who coordinated the MEGE professors.

Project Description and Goals

Presented in this section is the Professional Development Seminar Program project. Entitled EBP's Conditionally Admitted Students Academic Support (EBPCASAS), this project is specifically designed for conditionally admitted students before they are accepted into EBPSIP. The EBPCASAS is a 1-week program that addresses academic and nonacademic themes that may affect freshman students' academic performance in the university (see Appendix A).

The EBPCASAS will take place 1-week before the SIPEBP begins, in order to provide support for conditionally accepted students, so that they may have a more successful experience at the SIPEBP. There are four goals for the EBPCASAS:

- Goal 1: academic and nonacademic issues that may affect conditionally accepted students' academic performance.
- Goal 2: conditionally accepted students' identification of the university resources available that may enhance student support
- Goal 3: help conditionally accepted students to minimize or eliminate their knowledge gaps
- Goal 4: enable conditionally accepted students to identify the appropriate learning behavior
- Goal 5: provide conditionally accepted students the academic tools and the required knowledge to pass the EBSIP

The first goal describes the academic and nonacademic issues that may affect conditionally accepted students' academic performance, when and if they are accepted as EBP students. The second goal of the EBPCASAS is to help these conditionally accepted students to determine the university resources available to them that may enhance student support. The third goal of the EBPCASAS is to help the EBP's conditionally accepted students minimize or eliminate their knowledge gaps. The fourth goal is to enable these conditionally accepted students to identify the appropriate university learning behavior, and the last goal is to provide EBP's conditionally admitted students the academic tools and the required knowledge to pass the EBPSIP. Accordingly, during the second week of January, conditionally admitted students are invited to attend the EBPCASAS, which incorporates presentations that display the outcomes of the data analysis and literature.

The project is content-specific and reflects the research problem. Furthermore, the EBPCASAS includes components of the themes that arose from the MEGE professors' and MEGE directors' perceptions of how best to support EBP freshman students in improving their academic performance in MEGE courses.

The EBPCASA goals are based, first of all, on the requirement to deepen the understanding of how MEGE professors and MEGE directors perceive that they can help EBP freshman students at one campus of a PCU to improve their academic performance in math, English, and general education classes. Second, the project's goals are formulated to address the strategies that may be developed and established to assist first-year university students in improving their academic performance in MEGE courses. Finally, the project goals reflect recognition of the need to foster new teaching and learning strategies to encourage the PCU EBP freshman students to modify their behavior and attitudes concerning the importance of commitment and active participation in their learning process.

The most significant goals of the EBPCASAS are, first, to allow the EBP's conditionally admitted students to identify the academic and nonacademic topics that may impact their academic performance, when and if they are accepted as EBP students. The second goal is to help these conditionally accepted students determine the university resources available to them that may enhance student support. The third goal is to help the EBP's conditionally accepted students to minimize or eliminate their knowledge gaps. The fourth goal is to enable these conditionally accepted students to identify appropriate university learning behavior, and the last goal is to provide EBP's conditionally admitted

students the academic tools and the required knowledge to pass the EBPSIP.

Consequently, the EBPCASAS might favor the acceptance of the students in the EBP, the improvement of the EBP's freshman passing rates, the improvement of EBP students' retention rates by minimizing EBP students' withdrawal rates, and improving the EBP students' completion rates. Enhancement of the retention rates is relevant because, according to the EBP's dean, the retention rate of the EBP freshman student 2015 cohort was 77.31%, whereas the retention rate of the 2013 junior student cohort was 69.8%. In addition, the 2015 on-time completion rate was 47.5.

The EBPCASAS project includes pertinent components developed from the themes that emerged from the MEGE professors' and MEGE directors' perceptions of what support EBP freshman students require to improve their academic performance in MEGE courses. It is hoped that the contents of the EBPCASAS might help the conditionally admitted students respond to the challenges that higher education presents and work to minimize their knowledge gaps.

Project Rationale for Genre and Content

Chilean higher education institutions face a widespread problem as freshman students start their postsecondary academic education without adequate academic preparation or the learning strategies they need to be successful in their post-high-school education. A significant number of freshman students behave inappropriately and do not understand, or come to understand too late, the commitment they need to acquire a postsecondary education. Many of these students withdraw (Rolando et al., 2012) with debts they are unable to pay (Blanco et al., 2015; Rojas et al., 2011). Consequently, the

MEGE professors' and MEGE directors' perceptions became a significant source of data with which to develop a foundation on which a professional development seminar program project could be developed. Furthermore, the approach might improve EBP freshman students' completion rates and help students to develop better study and learning strategies.

The project aligns with the data analysis completed in Section 2 because many of these students face significant challenges when they start their postsecondary educational period. For example, many freshmen are first-generation university students or are required to balance work and study to pay their college expenses and to support their family obligations.

Project Genre

A 1-week professional development seminar program is recommended for the EBP's conditionally accepted students (EBPCASAS) based on the findings of the case study. The professional development seminar's main goal is to assist conditionally admitted EBP students in identifying the academic and nonacademic issues that may impede their academic performance at the university. The secondary goals of the EBPCASAS are to support the EBP's conditionally accepted students to minimize their knowledge gaps and to pass the Economics and Business Program Summer Immersion Program (EBPSIP).

Among the academic topics that the EBPCASAS addressed, the most significant refers to an initiative that would provide the conditionally admitted students the academic knowledge they require to pass the EBPSIP. In the literature review, I documented the

positive relationship between students' academic efforts and their academic performance (Kaba & Talek, 2015; Zumbrunn et al., 2014). Improvement of students' academic performance motivates them to continue studying by contributing to student persistence (Strom & Savage, 2014), raising retention rates, avoiding student boredom in the classroom (Pekrun et al., 2014), and improving student completion rates. The appropriate behavior described above is a core aspect of which conditionally admitted students have access and adequate guides to learn and understand how to maneuver their university experience.

In January, the conditionally admitted students will be invited to participate in the EBPCASAS 1-week program. On the program's first day, the dean, the vice dean, and the director of the EBP will introduce the EBPCASAS. Additionally, the campus stakeholders will present relevant information concerning the key areas that may support students' efforts to handle academic and nonacademic topics. Additionally, the MEGE directors might introduce their departments and the schedules developed for the EBPCASAS. According to Tovar (2015), interactions with institutional agents positively affect student success and persistence.

The EBPCASAS project will include content reflective of the six themes that emerged from the data analysis. These themes include (a) students' lack of commitment, (b) students' academic weaknesses, (c) remedial courses, (c) classroom environment, (d) knowing the university, and (d) ethical behavior.

The schedule for the first day of the EBPCASAS will be as follows:

- Knowing and understanding the higher education environment

- Challenges encountered by higher education freshmen
- Coffee break
- How to have a smooth beginning
- Tour of the university facilities
- Lunch
- MEGE directors' presentations:
 - Math director's presentation
 - English director's presentation
 - General education director's presentation
- Coffee break
- Student affairs unit presentation
- Library presentation
- Financial assistance office presentation

The schedule for the second, third, and fourth days of the EBPCASAS will be the following:

- Students will attend MEGE classes in the morning
 - 8:30 to 9:50 Math class
 - 10:00 to 11:20 English class
 - 11:30 to 12:50 General education class
- Lunch
- Students will attend workshops in the afternoon (second day, math workshop; third day, English workshop; and fourth day, general education workshop)

- 15:00 to 16:20 Workshop theory session, academic advice
- 16:30 to 16:50 Refreshment break
- 17:00. 18:20 Workshop practice session, peer mentors session, and group mentors work.

On the fifth day of the EBPCASAS, students' learning gains will be evaluated through online summative tests.

- 8:30 to 9:50 Math test
- 10:00 to 11:20 English test
- 11:30 to 12:50 General education test

The findings of this qualitative case study demonstrated that EBP freshman students require support to improve their academic performance at the university. As Douglass and Morris (2014) propounded, students should commit to their higher education and become active participants in their learning process. Moreover, Basitere and Ivala (2015) and Schnee (2014) established that higher education administration and staff have the responsibility to identify their students' knowledge gaps and to determine appropriate strategies to support them in developing a successful learning process. Furthermore, Reisel et al. (2014) established that student participation is beneficial, as it gradually enables them to improve their knowledge and grades.

Despite such recommendations from education experts, the postsecondary institution did not previously furnish conditionally accepted students with academic support programs. The consent to implement the EBPCASAS within the university setting is an indication of the importance of providing essential support to the EBP's

conditionally accepted students to minimize their learning gaps, allow them to be admitted to the EBP, and encourage them to identify and develop an appropriate learning strategy.

The results of this qualitative research case study exhibited evidence that MEGE professors and directors perceive that they can support freshman students of the EBP in improving their academic performance, with fundamental involvement by higher education leaders. The literature review on the topic also produced pertinent data that corroborate that view. Additionally, the findings foster a proper understanding of the challenges that higher education students face and the complexities that affect their completion time. As a result of the research, EBP arranged and scheduled a week-long academic support program to introduce EBP's conditionally admitted students to their first university experience. This project may enhance the ability of EBP's conditionally admitted students to take an active role in their learning process as they come to understand the importance of developing an appropriate academic behavior while attending the EBPSIP. In addition, EBP students are more likely to improve their passing rates and consequently minimize their completion time.

Review of Literature

A comprehensive literature review was related to the particular genre of this professional development seminar program project. Multiple databases were searched to find necessary evidence focused on strategies that may support freshman students in improving their academic performance in university courses. Specific databases included Education Source, Education Research Complete, Taylor & Francis, SAGE Premier,

ProQuest Central, Academic Search Complete, Thoreau, and Dissertations and Theses at Walden Library. The keywords used in my search included topics such as *attendance rates, freshmen, university, professors' perceptions, absenteeism, and improving academic performance*. The participant interviews produced the following new topics that were added to my search: *accompaniment, study habits, and remedial activities*. Boolean searches using related words such as *millennial, students, college, higher education, and academics* were also used.

Support for Project Genre

Prevailing literature specific to student academic support programs in universities is limited to the topics studied, even though the research was consistent with the findings and supports the genre that was chosen for the project. The results of this qualitative case study substantiate the vital need for the EBP to provide academic support programs for its students, in order to meet their knowledge requirements and minimize or eliminate their knowledge gaps. Specifically, the data analysis resulted in a significant proposal for the institutional support that EBP conditionally admitted students require, and the university leadership needs to provide. For example, Participant 10 mentioned that students need workshop training to improve their writing skills, because such abilities are essential tools that enable students to express their ideas and to achieve successful learning outcomes.

Higher education students must develop learning strategies to succeed in their academic process. These students need to study diligently on a regular schedule, should take advantage of class time to clarify their doubts and misunderstandings, and should

responsibly take their examinations on time (Mouraz & Sousa, 2016; Perger & Takács, 2016). The requirement is to help student establish effective study and learning habits that may be based on collaborative relationships with their professors and with their peers. According to Paul and Fitzpatrick (2015) and Turner (2016), an important prerequisite for the successful implementation of a learning strategy is the higher education student's perception of an active professor-student relationship and a supportive institution. This means that, first, students perceive that professors can provide them appropriately available support. Second, that professors must have extensive academic experience and the faculty quality must be appropriate (Carter & Yeo, 2016). Third, that the higher education institution must provide adequate academic and social environments where students can identify personnel who are genuinely concerned about them (Bir & Myrick, 2015; Paul & Fitzpatrick, 2015; Turner, 2016). Finally, Cox and Lemon (2016), identified the rapport between students and their professors as an essential factor for improving freshman student academic performance.

Other significant preconditions for successful postsecondary students are the existence of peer mentoring strategies (Asgari & Carter, 2016), the presence of an active academic advisory approach (Vianden & Barlow, 2015; Walters & Seyedian, 2016), and the number of students per class (Beattie & Thiele, 2016). Students who attended a mentored group program exhibited significant improvements in their grades during the semester (Asgari & Carter, 2016). According to Beattie and Thiele (2016), as well as Mouraz and Sousa (2016), postsecondary institutional class size expansion reduces the interaction between the students and their professors, thus also negatively impacting

student academic performance and engagement in their academic program. Furthermore, Nakai and O'Malley (2015) established the relevance of providing feedback tailored to each student's particular profile and needs. These authors encouraged professors to refine their feedback report system and process, depending on the learning characteristics of the students that are being evaluated. Walters and Seyedian (2016) established the importance of clarifying and documenting the expectations of the students and their mentors.

On the other hand, higher education institutions need to encourage active participation of freshman students in professional and social events because freshman students' persistence and retention are influenced by the support the postsecondary institutions provided during the initial years (Turner, 2016). Russell, Van Horne, Ward, Bettis, Sipola, Colombo, and Rocheford (2016) found that when students develop an active learning behavior, organize their work, and prepare for classes, they grasp the importance of a commitment to their learning process, and consequently, adopt more appropriate learning strategies. The outcome of these new learning strategies is a virtuous cycle because as the students adopt improved learning strategies, they come to realize this new approach will provide a solid foundation that will result in improved grades (Dumford, Cogswell, & Miller, 2016).

Al-Hilawani (2016) found students with higher GPAs had developed superior learning habits and competencies than students with lower GPAs, and the correlation between students with better GPAs and reaction time is negative. Gallardo-Echenique, Bullen, and Marqués-Molias, (2016); Jozwiak (2015) established that higher education

students prefer face-to-face communication in class activities, as this solidifies and strengthens their learning process. Gallardo-Echenique et al. (2016) also identified that students chose to work independently and learn by themselves.

Baier, Markman, and Pernice-Duca (2016); Cholewa and Ramaswami (2015) noted another significant topic is the support higher education institutions should provide freshman students. Moreover, supportive approaches reduce the odds of attrition by helping postsecondary students to improve their passing rates. Some supportive strategies may include mentoring (Baier et al., 2016), counseling (Cholewa & Ramaswami, 2015), academic feedback from the class professor (Pereira, Flores, Simão, & Barros, 2016) and remedial courses (Cantrell, Clouse, Creech, Bridges, & Owens, 2013; MacArthur, Philippakos, & Graham, 2016).

These supportive strategies may improve freshman students' academic performance, minimizing their completion time. Kiyama and Luca (2014) established a mentoring plan as a supportive educational approach, considering that peer mentors may exert a positive influence on the freshman students they mentor, and support postsecondary institution retention efforts. Metcalf, Neill, R. Simon, Dobson, and Davis (2016) observed that peer mentors favored the students' learning process by supporting their engagement and helping them to learn by experience. Furthermore, Pereira et al. (2016) recognized that academic feedback provided by the professors at the appropriate juncture during the semester, facilitates the learning process by allowing students to acknowledge their weaknesses and improve their learning strategy at the opportune moment. Finally, Cantrell et al. (2013); MacArthur et al. (2016) described how remedial

courses improved student academic performance, increasing their self-esteem and motivating them to pursue topic mastery.

Cholewa and Ramaswami, (2015) found that freshman students exhibited different academic behaviors the first and the second terms they attended postsecondary institutions. The first semester is a stressful transitional period for freshman students. They must adapt to new life experiences, become acquainted with university organization and procedures, and only just begin to understand the challenges they will face in pursuing their academic degree (Cholewa & Ramaswami, 2015). Pruett and Absher (2015) emphasized that developmental students' engagement is a major factor that impacts retention. Freshman students who do not engage quickly can be overwhelmed and feel unsupported, if the higher education institution does not provide an adequate foundation to support their learning process (Pruett & Absher, 2015).

Bonet and Walters, (2016), Branson, Loftin, Hadley, Hartin, and Devkota, (2016), Khong, Dunn, Lim, and Yap, (2016) and Sanders, Daly, and Fitzgerald, (2016) identified a positive relationship between class attendance and the final grades the students earn. Moreover, the authors recognized that a pertinent academic advising strategy benefits the students much more than a mandatory attendance policy (Branson et al., 2016). However, Khong et al. (2016) established the main reason for encouraging class attendance should be that it would lead students to improve their grades. Class attendance allows students to identify the topics that professors consider most important, receive guidance for exams, and to learn to take lecture notes (Khong et al., 2016). Furthermore, Sedden and Clark, (2016) contend that one factor that should be considered is that students value their

personal time and need to see that assignments support their learning process and are related to their future professional development.

Ensign and Woods (2014) noted that when faculty foster appropriate learning environments, students develop their strengths and minimize their weaknesses. Such healthy learning environments provide students with the confidence required to overcome the learning challenges they may face (Ensign & Woods, 2014). Gajewski and Mather (2015) identified that when professors used diagnostic assessments, students' learning outcomes increased. At the same time, the educators' caring and supportive behavior were important characteristics that supported the students' learning outcomes (Gajewski & Mather, 2015). Besides, Hieb, Lyle, Ralston, and Chariker (2014) and Swail (2014) illustrated how remedial courses could be an essential cornerstone to assist students in identifying appropriate learning strategies and useful approaches for implementing time management strategies.

Accordingly, the most important and effective tool a university can offer, is academic supportive services to enable the freshman students to improve their academic performance at the higher education institution. The university's goal should be to support freshman students in sustaining a path for academic progress in pursuit of an undergraduate degree, and until completion of that degree (Cholewa & Ramaswami, 2015).

McMahon (2016) established that retention efforts also need to be part of the postsecondary institution strategy. Students' persistence should be the concern of every employee at postsecondary institutions, but above all, for postsecondary faculty

members, both full-time and part-time professors. Accordingly, the leaders of higher education institutions should accept as their challenge, the creation of a cultural environment that fosters freshman students development of appropriate learning strategies (Bir & Myrick, 2015; Paul & Fitzpatrick, 2015; Turner, 2016). After all, the constructivist approach establishes that the learner's role is to construct new knowledge, integrating the new content to existing knowledge (Dumford, Cogswell, & Miller, 2016). The approach also highlights the relationships students and professors develop, that stimulate the creation of learning environments for academic training (Morreale & Staley, 2016).

In conclusion, full-time and part-time employees need to carefully monitor unprepared students' first year at the university. Again, the key is to provide academic supportive services that enable the freshman students to improve their academic performance at higher education institutions; this in turn will elevate academic standards (Sanacore & Palumbo, 2016). The university's goal should be to support freshman students to sustain the path of their academic progress until they complete their undergraduate programs and achieve their degrees (Cholewa & Ramaswami, 2015).

Support for the Project Content

The EBP's provisionally admitted students who participated in this qualitative case study wanted, acquired, and acknowledged the support from the university. According to Bir and Myrick (2015); Paul and Fitzpatrick, (2015); Turner, (2016), students value the existence of personnel within the higher education institutional community who are concerned about their welfare. In addition, Cox and Lemon (2016)

identified the importance of the rapport between students and their professors as a way to improve the freshman students' academic performance.

The positive relationship developed with the professors of the EBPCASAS, supportive unit managers, and their classmates helped students to navigate through the EBPCASAS, acquire the required knowledge to be successful at the EBPSIP, and to be accepted in the EBP. The EBPCASAS's content project is meticulous and will provide essential support for the EBP's provisionally admitted students.

The EBPCASAS's project contributes to improved academic achievement by imparting relevant issues of the university life to EBP's partially admitted students. The EBPCASAS may support the EBP's conditionally accepted students by minimizing their knowledge gaps, acquainting them with the university academic support unit specialists, and introducing students to the EBP's dean, vice dean, director and the MEGE directors. Allowing conditionally admitted students to identify these professionals is important because these higher education authorities and experts may provide these students relevant information not available from other sources.

The 1-week design of the EBPCASAS has the potential of supporting the conditionally admitted students by acquainting them with the university students support units, allowing them to experience university student life, and helping them to realize the responsibility students hold for their own postsecondary education. Accordingly, the conditionally admitted students should understand from the beginning, that they are required to study on a regular schedule, raise questions in class, and take exams on time (Mouraz & Sousa, 2016; Perger & Takács, 2016). As Gallardo-Echenique et al., (2016)

and Jozwiak, (2015) established, the best approach for consolidating and strengthening the learning process of higher education students is face-to-face communication and in-class activities, because both enhance the students' learning process.

The EBPCASAS participants' needs, as well as program literature and content of the program, are attached. The project findings identified unique and explicit themes that were included in the EBPCASAS project content. For example, some participants shared that they have difficulty with calligraphy and spelling. In response, the library administrators developed a remedial course (half online and half face-to face) and the EBPCASAS will feature workshops that address those needs of EBPCASAS students.

The EBPCASAS professors will aim to help the EBP's conditionally accepted students to be prepared to attend the EBPCASAS, to pass the SIPEBP, to apply to the EBP and be accepted in the EBP. As Johnson et al. (2014), Sandoval-Lucero (2014), and Simon et al. (2015) underscored, academics are the professionals who sustain students' learning process foundation.

Project Description and Implementation

The effective implementation of the EBPCASAS necessitates a deep commitment from many university officials. Although the project will require funds, and a strategy for implementing the first stages will require an investment, the project outcomes will support the EBP's conditionally admitted students in passing the SIPEBP. The first expectation is that the learning approaches the EBP's conditionally admitted students may gain while they attend the EBPCASAS, could allow the EBP's conditionally admitted students to be accepted as EBP students. The second expectation is that the

learning strategies the EBP conditionally accepted students might gain while attending the EBPCASAS will support their efforts in improving their passing rates when they are accepted into the EBP, while also enhancing university retention rates. As more EBP freshman students cohorts receive support and improve their academic performance, other faculty deans will become aware of the success of the EBPCASAS and will be motivated to implement the EBPCASAS in other university programs.

To determine the steps to implement this project I will schedule several meetings with university officials, in order to develop a strategy for developing an implementation plan for the EBPCASAS program, and to tap into the knowledge, expertise, and experience that university officials can provide. Officials I plan to meet with include the director of EBP, the director of the Student Integral Support Center, the Teaching CEO, deans of EBP and MEGE departments, the general director of Innovation and Technology Transfer, and finally, the provost.

Each university official can play an important role in EBPCASAS implementation. First, from the director of the Student Integral Support Center and the Teaching CEO, I expect time to hold biweekly meetings that may enhance the development of the appropriate strategy for implementing the EBPCASAS. Second, the dean of the EBP has the key role of providing funding to hire the professors who will teach the EBPCASAS classes and workshops and to hire the professionals of the EBP Academic Support Unit (EBPASU). Third, from the directors of the MEGE department, I expect help to identify the professors with the special sensitivity to teach, guide and support the EBP's conditionally admitted students who will attend the EBPCASAS.

Additionally, from the MEGE directors, I expect time to meet with the EBPASU's professionals and develop the EBPCASAS syllabi. Fourth, I expect the general director of Innovation and Technology Transfer will support the implementation of the EBPCASAS by developing the online tests the EBPCASAS's students will be required to take. Finally, from the provost I expect time to hold monthly meetings to apprise him of the advancements of each EBPCASAS development stage while also allocating the necessary funding to implement the EBPCASAS project.

Potential Resources and Existing Supports

University internal policy requires the calling of bids to attain the necessary funds to develop and implement the EBPCASAS. Accordingly, I will apply to the competition to gain the necessary funds to finance the implementation of the EBPCASAS. The funds will be used to establish, develop, and finance the EBPCASAS, in light of the goal to support the EBP's conditionally accepted students to pass the EBPSIP. The goal is to hire (Cantrell et al., 2013; Hieb et al., 2014; Swail, 2014) or train (Ensign & Woods, 2014; Pereira et al., 2016) the professors who will teach the EBPCASAS's classes and workshops.

Potential Barriers

There are potential barriers that may negatively impact the successful implementation of the strategy to support the EBP's conditionally accepted students to improve their academic performance. Those potential barriers are diagnosed as (a) an inadequate funding level; (b) EBP conditionally accepted students' inequitable access to the EBPCASAS; (c) the absence of, or an inadequate policy for, identifying the EBP's

conditionally accepted students who need academic support; (d) unwillingness of the EBP's provisionally admitted students to participate in the support process; (e) difficulty in identifying the professors most suitable for teaching the EBPCASAS's classes and workshops; (f) unwillingness of the university to implement the EBPCASAS.

These barriers must be minimized or eliminated. University directors and professors have the responsibility to provide the EBP's provisionally admitted students with a learning environment conducive for minimizing their knowledge gaps, maximizing their learning, and providing study strategies that will help them achieve success (McMahon, 2016). In addition, the provisionally admitted students could come to understand the commitment that they must also bring to the university, in order to support their own success.

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

The project's genre is a Professional Development Seminar Program that arises from the study conducted on the MEGE professors' and MEGE directors' perceptions regarding support of EBP freshman students to improve academic performance in MEGE courses, and, ultimately, improve retention and graduation rates.

The proposed timetable for EBPCASAS implementation is the last week of January, the week before the EBPSIP begins. The recruitment process to hire the professors who will teach the EBPCASAS classes and workshops will start in July and the professors' hiring process will be complete in November. Furthermore, the professors who are hired will be required to attend a week-long training and orientation program

during December, and the EBPCASAS for EBP's conditionally accepted students will begin on January 22th.

Each year, in late November or early December, Chilean students who finished high school during the academic year take national tests to apply to different Chilean universities. The scores that students receive dictate not only the Chilean higher education institutions to which they may apply but also, to a great extent, what they will study. Approximately six weeks later, during the second week of January, Chilean universities announce the lists of the students who were accepted and may enroll in the academic programs to which they applied. The same week, in January 2018, the EBPASU professionals will contact all the students who were conditionally accepted in the EBP and will invite the conditionally accepted students, because these students are required to come to the university campus to take online tests in math, English, and general education topics before they are allowed to enroll as freshmen. Conditionally admitted students who fail those tests will need to attend the 2018 EBPCASAS the last week of January 2018, and the 2018 SIPEBP during February 2018, before they will be allowed to start their higher education freshman year at the university (Olson-McBride et al., 2016).

The EBPCASAS and the SIPEBP programs will include experimental and control groups. The experimental group will be the EBP's conditionally accepted students who performed below the required score in the online tests. The control group will consist of the students who performed above the required score in the online tests, and will not need to participate in the EBPCASAS or the SIPEBP. The goal of this procedure is to diagnose

persistent behavioral differences between the students of the experimental group and those of the control group (Claybrooks & Taylor, 2016). The conditionally accepted students who will participate in the EBPCASAS and the SIPEBP will have the opportunity to receive academic support from the EBPASU's professionals until they complete their degree. The 2018 version of the EBPCASAS will be a pilot version.

The EBP's conditionally accepted students will receive a manual explaining the reasons for attendance at the EBPCASAS and the SIPEBP. The manual will also clarify the milestones that must be achieved at the end of the EBPCASA and the SIPEBP, in order to apply and be accepted in the EBP. The EBP's conditionally accepted students will be advised to participate in all the EBPCASAS classes and workshops and to study daily.

Weekly, during the first three weeks of the SIPEBP 2018, the students will take one formative online evaluations (each one representing 20% of the final grade). At the end of the last week, students will be required to complete a face-to-face summative assessment, which will represent 40% of the final grade. The students who attend the SIPEBP will need a weighted average above 4.0 to pass. Students who pass the 2018 SIPEBP will be allowed to enroll in the EBP's first semester classes. However, students who did not meet the SIBEBP minimum grade will be required to re-enroll in the remedial courses they failed. Students who attend the SIPEBP for the second time without passing will not be allowed to enroll in the EBP. Instead, the university will give them the option to register in an easier program, and then internally transfer to the EBP once they complete their freshman year, if they passed all the first-year courses of the

program with an average grade above 5.0. Additionally, the EBPCASAS's students will have the responsibility to attend the MEGE classes and workshops, to study on a daily basis, to do the exercises, to ask the EBPCASAS professors their doubts, and to take the tests on time.

The EBPASU's professionals will keep in close contact with the students who attend the EBPCASAS and the SIPEBP and who ultimately enroll in the EBP. In both cases, the follow-up will include regular analysis of the students' academic performances by holding two face-to-face meetings each semester, to review grades. Furthermore, if any student feels he/she is struggling academically, he/she will be able to ask for academic support from EBPASU professionals, before he/she gives up.

At the end of the first and the second semesters of 2018, the EBPASU's professionals will compare the academic performance of the students who participated in the EBPCASAS and the SIPEBP experimental group, with the traditional students who were part of the control group, to assess the academic knowledge gained by the students who attended the EBPCASAS and EBPSIP. The EBPASU will review the students' learning outcomes to establish if the EBPCASAS and the SIPEBP should be maintained. Furthermore, the EBPASU analysis of the data gathered will provide a basis for faculty officials to decide if only 2019 EBP freshman cohort who earn low scores should be included in the experimental and control group strategy or if the entire 2019 EBP freshman student cohort will be required to attend the EBPCASAS and the SIPEBP.

Roles and Responsibilities of Students and Others

The primary responsibility of the EBP's conditionally admitted students will be to attend the EBPCASAS 5-day program and learn the required knowledge to pass the SIPEBP and be accepted as EBP's students. The responsibilities of the EBPCASAS' class and workshop professors will be to patiently teach the EBP's conditionally accepted students various subjects, allowing the students sufficient time for questions. Also, these professors will be asked to schedule special office hours to meet with students who have doubts/questions regarding the topics that were taught in class or a workshop.

Many university units will have responsibilities related to ensuring the efficient implementation of the EBPCASAS and the SIPEBP. It is imperative that unit managers have adequate knowledge regarding all the EBPCASAS and the SIPEBP topics. Accordingly, the managers of those units will organize working teams (Academic Support Unit) to provide EBPCASAS and EBPSIP the required support. The dean of faculty and the director of the EBP (Unab, n.d.b) will launch the EBPCASAS and the SIPEBP. The campus director (Unab, n.d.d) will organize the infrastructure, primarily by providing the classrooms where the EBP's conditionally accepted students will attend the EBPCASA's classes and workshops and where the conditionally accepted students will study the SIPEBP. The general director of Innovation and Technology Transfer will develop the online support mechanisms for the appropriate implementation and assessment of the EBPCASAS and the SIPEBP. At the end of the first three weeks of the EBPSIP, the students will take one formative test to assess the learning they acquired

during the classes they attended that week. The last week of February the students will take the exam that will be a summative evaluation of the courses.

The responsibility of the EBP Academic Supportive Unit will be to gather the required data and establish the topics of the EBPCASAS's classes and workshops. In addition, the unit, in conjunction with MEGE directors, will develop the syllabi of the 2018 SIPEBP courses the students will attend. Also, the unit will hire and train the professors who will teach the EBPCASAS workshop, as well as the 2018 SIPEBP classes.

Finally, as researcher, my responsibility will be to assure the EBPCASAS implementation is carried out appropriately and the presenters are confirmed, including the EBP dean, EBP vice dean, and the EBP director. Additionally, I will be responsible for ensuring the logistics are scheduled and carried in a timely manner. Furthermore, as researcher, I will be responsible for preparing and conducting the project evaluation to determine the sustainability of the EBPCASAS.

Project Evaluation Plan

The implementation of the EBPCASAS project requires a program evaluation. Lodico et al. (2010) established that program evaluation is a requirement for identifying a program's usefulness and to propose recommendations, changes, and adjustments. The project evaluation enables the researchers to identify what functions and what did not. Furthermore, the project evaluation encompasses recommended activities for assessing the program's goals and objectives (Spaulding, 2014). The evaluation of the EBPCASAS will take place at the end of day 5. Participants will be asked to respond to five evaluation

questions using a scale of 1 through 5, where 1 is none and 5 outstanding. Two additional evaluation questions will be open-ended questions that invite participants to share their opinions. The evaluation will utilize a 5-point Likert-scale survey that also permits open-ended answers, to gather current feedback, which may help me to establish the need to adapt the EBPCASAS contents.

Type of Evaluation

The program evaluation envisioned for this project would employ two qualitative forms: formative and summative evaluations. Formative evaluations were chosen because these allow the identification of accurate “just-in-time” feedback of student learning, and can suggest modifications in the program that might be needed, in real time (Lodico et al., 2010). The rationale for choosing this type of evaluation is that formative evaluation facilitates the ongoing gathering and communication of the data and provides immediate feedback. The EBP's conditionally admitted students will be asked to share their opinions through a formative evaluation concerning each presentation, the knowledge they gained, and, above all, the evaluation conducted on at the end of the EBPCASAS's first day, which will provide me substantial feedback as the project evaluator and coordinator (Spaulding, 2014). Additionally, the EBP's conditionally admitted students will be asked to share their opinions, through a summative evaluation, concerning the classes, the workshops and especially the evaluation of the program at the end of the EBPCASAS's last day.

The rationale for using summative evaluations is the option to measure the long-term outcomes of the EBPCASAS and to establish whether the EBPCASAS project is

feasible and likely to prosper. The summative evaluation will be conducted when the EBP's conditionally accepted students complete the EBPCASAS program and will assess the students' awareness and understanding of the math, English, and general education knowledge they gained while attending the EBPCASAS. The final data will be organized and published in an evaluation report. The evaluation report will be presented to all stakeholders, including senior university leadership. Furthermore, the final evaluation report will note the program changes, which occurred during and at the end of the EBPCASAS's implementation.

Additionally, at the conclusion of the EBPCASAS, the EBPASU's professionals will analyze the knowledge of EBP's conditionally accepted students. The unit will compare the learning outcomes of the on-line tests the provisionally admitted students took before they began the EBPCASAS with the results of the summative online evaluation they took the last day of the EBPCASAS. Additionally, the EBPASU's professionals will analyze the learning acquired by EBP's conditionally accepted students who attended the EBPCASAS to measure the EBPCASAS learning outcomes and "how those outcomes relate to the overall judgment of the program and its success" (Spaulding, 2014, p. 9). Moreover, the goal of the EBPASU unit will be to identify the learning the EBP's conditionally accepted students gained while these students attended the program. Furthermore, the specific goals will be as follows:

- To ensure that EBP's conditionally accepted student are familiar with the university and its support units.

- To minimize or eliminate the EBP's conditionally accepted students' knowledge gaps.
- To support the EBP's conditionally accepted students to pass the EBPSIP.

Finally, once the AY 2018-2019 ends, the EBPASU's professionals will download the archival data from the university platform and will compare the final grades of freshman students who attended the EBPCASAS and the SIPEBP (the experimental group) with those of the traditional students (the control group) to see how the two compared. Such a comparison can help university officials and faculty determine the success of the EBPCASAS and SIPEBP programs.

Goals of the Project

The primary goal of this project is, first, to enable the EBP's conditionally admitted students to identify the academic and nonacademic topics that may impact their academic performance in the university. Support from faculty leaders and higher education professors is a key factor in the academic success of EBP's conditionally accepted students. The EBPCASAS project aims to raise awareness among the EBP's conditionally admitted students regarding the services the university students support units offers that can minimize their learning gaps and provide them the educational tools and the required knowledge they need to pass the EBPSIP.

To assess the goals of the research study in light of the EBP's objective of improving the academic performance of EBP conditionally accepted students by ensuring an effective implementation of the EBPCASAS, university and faculty leaders need to allocate the monetary investment the project requires. The EBPCASA will be developed

and implemented by the coordinated work of different university units. Accordingly, expenses related to the training of professors who will teach the EBPCASAS as well as the computer and technology development expenditures will be determined.

Evaluation of the Goals

The program evaluation goals seek to establish the extent to which the EBPCASAS project accurately identified the academic and nonacademic aspects that may impact the academic performance of conditionally accepted students. It also seeks to determine the effectiveness of the EBPCASAS in assisting students to pass the EBPSIP. Ultimately, there is a need to identify the feasibility of the EBPCASAS and whether it will be adopted in the future. Accordingly, the program will be considered as successful if conditionally accepted students who attended the EBPCASAS, pass the EBPSIP.

Stakeholders

The key stakeholders are the university and faculty leaders, university administrators, part-time and full-time professors, the EBP's conditionally accepted students, and their families. The EBPCASAS presenters will inform participants about the services provided by the student affairs unit, the library, the student financial assistance unit, as well as the MEGE class and workshop schedules. The auxiliary services encompass such aspects as general premises, parking lots, transportation, dining facilities, and campus security.

After the implementation and the EBP's conditionally accepted students initial evaluation, I will review the program implementation three times a day. The first review will be at 7:30 am, to ensure that everything is properly prepared to start at the required

time. The second review will be at 13:15 pm to analyze the morning EBPCASAS implementation, and the last one will be at 18:45 to evaluate the evening EBPCASAS implementation. The purpose of these reviews will be to determine whether any adjustment is required.

Project Implications

Chilean society recognizes that their higher education students face enormous challenges while pursuing degrees (Blanco et al., 2015; Cholewa & Ramaswami, 2015; Rojas et al., 2011). Accordingly, the Chilean population demanded that posteducation institutions increase their academic support to boost students' learning opportunities.

Professors have a relevant role to play in the freshman students' academic success (Paul & Fitzpatrick, 2015; Turner, 2016). Accordingly, learning outcomes may be enhanced if higher education institutions implement peer mentoring strategies (Asgari & Carter, 2016), academic advising approaches (Vianden & Barlow, 2015; Walters & Seyedian, 2016) and mentored group programs (Asgari & Carter, 2016). Additionally, McEwan (2013); Strom and Savage (2014) established that the freshman social environment influences their educational process and their decision to pursue a degree.

In Chile, many students who enrolled in higher education programs do not finish (Mineduc, 2012) or simply withdraw (Rolando et al., 2012). Furthermore, many freshman students leave the university with debts they will be incapable of paying (Blanco et al., 2015; Rojas et al., 2011). These students make ineffective use of the limited resources provided by their families, and the investment the government made in higher education (Mineduc, 2012). Leaving college prematurely can negatively impact a student's life and

horizons in terms of the social, economic, and personal consequences the disengagement creates for the students, their families, the higher education institution, and society as a whole (Blanco et al., 2015).

Social Change

A consequence of this qualitative research case study is the social capital administered by the MEGE professors and MEGE directors as a means to help the EBP freshman students to improve their academic performance in MEGE courses. The study focused on the support these professionals may provide the students to improve their academic performance, and considers this support a cornerstone for successful university achievement. The purpose of this study is to help the EBP freshman students to improve their academic performance in MEGE courses, and, consequently, improve their passing rates, minimize their completion time, and increase positive contributions to social change.

This study impacts social change by positively influencing the perception of MEGE professors and MEGE directors regarding their possibilities for supporting EBP freshman students to improve their academic performance. This is accomplished by raising student passing and graduation rates and, subsequently, producing individuals with the skills required to positively impact national development. The data generated from this study confirmed that the MEGE professors and directors perceive that they are able to support EBP freshman students, with backing from the university leaders. Accordingly, the goals were achieved, and the EBPCASAS project may inspire other university departments as well as other universities to consider the implementation of

conditionally accepted student academic support programs. A supportive educational environment met the needs of the EBP's freshman students; therefore, the instructional design of the 2018 SIPEBP may prove to be a useful tool that helps freshman students improve their academic performance, allowing them to contribute to their communities.

Local Community

The implementation of the EBPCASAS may support EBP's conditionally accepted students in four ways. First, to identify and use learning strategies and processes that minimize their knowledge gaps. Second, the EBPCASAS will help students identify learning strategies they can use to improve their learning outcomes. Third, it will reduce or eliminate the barriers and frustration created by academic failure. Finally, it will augment and strengthen students' social life (Miranda, 2014). Moreover, completion time may be reduced, and may advance student entry into the Chilean labor market, thus bettering their economic life standard (Chen & Wiederspan, 2014).

In addition, the EBPCASAS also enables faculty leaders to identify, develop, and maintain a learning environment that will facilitate the ability of the EBP's conditionally accepted students to realize the relevance of using appropriate learning strategies and habits to enhance their educational experience and increase their knowledge. As a consequence, the EBPSIP pass rates of EBP's conditionally accepted student would improve, allowing them to accelerate their completion time. The importance of this project for the students' families is that they will see their sons and daughters improving in academic performance and minimizing their university completion time. Finally, the project is also important for the community partners, because the students who enter the

labor force will contribute to the economic growth of their communities and the Chilean economy.

Far-Reaching

Chilean government officials support students who cannot afford their postsecondary education (Mineduc, 2012; Universia, 2009) with college loans guaranteed by the state of Chile (Ingesa, n.d; Rojas et al., 2011). A few years ago, Chilean government officials recognized that its measure to allocate and control state financial resources intended to support higher education students, needed to be conditional on the students' academic performance (Mineduc, 2014). Accordingly, government officials established that students would need to pass 70% of the courses in which they were enrolled during the prior year as a condition for keeping their loans (Mineduc, 2014). Government education officials determined that the most effective approach for gauging higher education students' academic commitment is through their successful academic performance at the university.

The interviews I conducted with the nine MEGE professors and the three MEGE directors provided sufficient information to confirm the perception that those academics have the ability to support the EBP freshman students to improve their academic performance at MEGE courses, with the assistance of university leaders. The literature reviews I described in Section 2 and Section 3 confirmed that the university might successfully develop and implement mechanisms to support EBP freshman students to improve their academic performance at MEGE courses. Those strategies may include peer mentoring (Asgari & Carter, 2016), academic advisory (Vianden & Barlow, 2015;

Walters & Seyedian, 2016), mentored group programs (Asgari & Carter, 2016), and remedial courses (Bir & Myrick, 2015; Bonet & Walters, 2016).

The EBPCASAS project introduces the EBP's conditionally admitted students to campus life in a non-intimidating manner before they start the EBPSIP. Involvement from university leaders, administrators, full-time, and the part-time professors is fundamental to help the EBP's provisionally admitted students to attend the EBPCASAS successfully and to pass the EBPSIP. When the EBP's conditionally accepted students who attended the EBPCASAS and passed the EBPSIP enroll in the EBP and start attending their regular classes, they must be equipped with capacities that exhibit enhancements of their learning outcomes. If the approach proves successful, it may be extended to other programs, and to sophomore and junior students.

The project's design and content may result in increased EBP enrollments. The primary goal of the university leaders is to provide freshman students with the abilities they need to be academically successful. The first successful outcome of the project may be a rise in the EBP freshman enrollment rates. The project's second successful outcome may be reinforcement of those student pass and retention rates as they become sophomores and juniors. The project's last successful outcome may be that it minimizes university completion time for these students.

As a consequence of the implementation of the EBPCASAS, students should pass the EBPSIP. Accordingly, first, the EBP conditionally accepted students would enroll in the EBP. Due to the knowledge these students gained and the opportunity they had to identify an appropriate learning strategy, these students' passing rates should increase,

improving the university's overall student retention rates. Second, the higher education resource allocation process established by the Chilean government will favor the university because students will pass more than 70% of the classes in which they were enrolled the previous year and will be able to keep their loans. Finally, the improvement in student passing and retention rates will minimize the student completion rates, allowing these students to obtain their degrees in less time.

Conclusions

This section presented an explanation of the Professional Development Seminar Program project, conducted to explore the extent to which the MEGE professors and directors perceived they could support freshman students of the EBP to improve their academic performance in MEGE courses. The project provided the university leaders with relevant findings to design and implement different procedures with which to support EBP freshman students in developing learning strategies that may help them improve their academic performance in MEGE courses.

The section first described the project and how it addressed the problem and then outlined the project's goals. This was followed by the rationale for the project and its literature review, which covered concepts such as attendance rates, freshmen, university, professors' perceptions, absenteeism, accompaniment, study habits, and remedial activities. Finally, I determined that project goals addressed the project findings, and included the components required for the project implementation and evaluation.

The purpose for this Professional Development Seminar Program project was to introduce the EBP's conditionally accepted students into the university and to support

them to pass the EBPSIP. The program proposed here is called Economics and Business Program Conditionally Accepted Students Support (EBPCASAS). The project contains the themes from Section 2, which originated from the MEGE professors' and MEGE directors' in-depth perceptions of the academic support they may provide to freshman students of the EBP to improve their academic performance in MEGE courses. The program's goal was to provide the EBP's conditionally accepted students with professional development and training to allow the students to pass the EBPSIP. The review of literature sustained the project genre and the contents of the program. University leaders, MEGE classes, and MEGE workshops were vital to the EBP's conditionally admitted students to pass the EBPSIP. The data analysis established that the EBPCASAS participants perceived they could have not passed the EBPSIP without the support from the university leaders and MEGE classes and workshops provided during the EBPCASAS. Therefore, this points to the need to address and overcome the challenges and develop support systems for conditionally accepted students to acquire the knowledge they need to be prepared when they enroll in the EBP.

The first stage of the project implementation will require institutional approval. Furthermore, a project evaluation will be necessary to establish the feasibility of EBPCASAS and the prospects for its application into the future, as well as proposed adjustments. The project considers formative and summative evaluations. I detailed the implications of the EBPCASAS for social change, the local community and its far reaching scope.

As a result of the EBPCASAS, the university EBP enrollment, passing, and retention rates may increase; whereby, the students' completion time indicator may improve. Consequently, these students can share their experience contributing to social change while they pursue their degrees and also, they will be able to advance their entry into the labor market, supporting their local and national economy.

In Section 4 I will discuss my reflections as a scholar, as a practitioner, and as a project developer. I also explain the project's strengths, recommendations for rectifying the project's limitations, the project's potential impact on social change, the implications, applications, and directions for future research and the conclusion.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

In Section 4, the project's strengths and recommendations for rectifying the projects' limitations are discussed. Additionally, I reflect on scholarship, the project's potential impact in terms of social change, as well as implications, applications, and directions for future research. Included in this section is an analysis from my perspective as scholar, as practitioner, and as project developer.

Project Strengths and Limitations

Project Strengths

The EBPCASAS project has distinct strengths. The first strength of the EBPCASAS is that the program supports the EBP's conditionally admitted students in realizing their internal motivation to study (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Salkind, 2008) by helping them improve their academic performance while attending the EBPCASAS; this support motivates and inspires them to study (Christofides et al., 2015). The program motivates students, and their improved grades reinforce the value of their learning (Ilgan, 2013; Villavicencio & Bernardo, 2013). A consequence of the students' appropriate study and learning behavior is that they persist in studying and perceive the positive relationship between their academic efforts and their academic performance (Kaba & Talek, 2015; Zumbrunn et al., 2014). The positive association of an appropriate learning strategy with learning achievement contributes to student persistence (Strom & Savage, 2014), thus improving students' passing rates and university retention rates. For students,

a successful studying approach averts boredom (Pekrun et al., 2014) and minimizes completion time (Johnson et al., 2014).

The project's second strength is that it underscores the partnership between institution leaders and conditionally admitted students as they jointly address the challenge of students realizing the learning behaviors required (Paul & Fitzpatrick, 2015; Turner, 2016) to achieve positive learning outcomes. Postsecondary institution officials, administrators, and professors should form a solid foundation on which conditionally admitted higher education students can rely until they have identified the appropriate approach for learning and studying (Basitere & Ivala, 2015; Schnee, 2014). Furthermore, higher education institution officials and professors should enhance the development of academic and social environments so that students feel that these university representatives are concerned about their ability to prosper academically (Bir & Myrick, 2015; Paul & Fitzpatrick, 2015; Turner, 2016).

The project's third strength is that it reveals that higher education institution leaders and conditionally admitted students are partners in the challenge of helping the latter realize the learning behavior they require (Paul & Fitzpatrick, 2015; Turner, 2016), to achieve positive learning outcomes. Postsecondary institution leaders, administrators, and professors should create a foundation upon which conditionally admitted higher education students can rely until they identify an appropriate approach (Basitere & Ivala, 2015; Schnee, 2014) for learning and study. Moreover, higher education institution officials and professors should enhance the development of academic and social environments in which students perceive that university representatives are concerned

about their ability to thrive academically (Bir & Myrick, 2015; Paul & Fitzpatrick, 2015; Turner, 2016).

This project's fourth strength is that it indicates the importance of counseling sessions (Bowman & Denson, 2014; Cholewa & Ramaswami, 2015), peer mentoring activities (Asgari & Carter, 2016; Baier et al., 2016; Kiyama & Luca, 2014), active academic advising meetings (Vianden & Barlow, 2015; Walters & Seyedian, 2016), remedial courses (Cantrell et al., 2013; MacArthur et al., 2016), and academic support programs (Slade et al., 2015; Wernersbach et al., 2014) for conditionally admitted students. The strategies mentioned above may allow conditionally admitted students to close their knowledge gaps, to become acquainted with the university academic environment, and to identify the expected and required behaviors that will allow them to be successful in the postsecondary environment.

The fifth strength of this project is that it demonstrates that postsecondary professors are the most significant element of the university foundation structure, in that these academics actively support the learning process of students, including those who have been conditionally admitted (Johnson et al., 2014; Sandoval-Lucero, 2014; Simon et al., 2015).

This project's sixth strength is that it confirms the need for conditionally admitted students in higher education to become active participants in their own learning process (Douglass & Morris, 2014). These students have to motivate themselves to attend classes (Branson et al., 2016; Khong et al., 2016), complete all learning activities, and take evaluation exams on time (Slade et al., 2015; Wernersbach et al., 2014).

Finally, the last strength of this project is the development of collaborative working teams among the stakeholders. The EBPCASAS requires the participation and support of many players: university and department leaders, administrators, and full-time and part-time professors, all combining their efforts toward student success.

Limitations of the Project Study

As a new project implementation, the EBPCASAS has limitations that need to be identified and addressed. Four limitations are associated with this project study: (a) funding, (b) required volunteer time, (c) when the EBPCASAS will be implemented, and (d) confirmation of the presenters.

The first major limitation of the EBPCASAS is the challenge of securing financial resources to cover the expenses associated with project development and implementation. Those expenses include the cost of developing the project, meal service during the program, transportation, supplies, and presentation materials.

A second limitation may be the time required of university leaders to develop the project, which will occur on a strictly voluntary basis. The director of the Student Integral Support Center, the teaching CEO, and the general director of innovation and technology transfer are full-time university employees. Specifically, work will be added to these CEOs' existing work in order to support the development of the EBPCASAS. Furthermore, work on the EBPCASAS may delay other projects in which these CEO are engaged.

A third limitation may be the timing for the implementation of the EBPCASAS. Difficulty may arise because January and February are southern hemisphere summer

vacation months for many people in Santiago, Chile. This may hinder efforts to identify and hire appropriate professors for teaching in the EBPCASAS project. In addition, EBPCASAS attendance by conditionally admitted students may depend on the possibility of rescheduling students' vacations or family vacations.

A fourth limitation may be securing presenters who are willing to participate on a volunteer basis. These university professionals will need to use their time and resources to prepare and deliver their presentations during EBPCASAS's first day. The time and resources for this activity may demand extra work above and beyond the current workload of these university employees.

Recommendations for Surmounting the Limitations of This Project Study

The project was developed with the volunteer support of the director of the Student Integral Support Center, the teaching CEO, and the general director of innovation and technology transfer. The first approach to surmounting the funding limitation may involve participating in the university competition process for project financing and hiring an external company to develop the EBPCASAS. The second alternative approach for overcoming the funding limitation may be to change the meal options from a la carte items to a set menu.

The approach to surmounting the limitation of professors' availability to teach the EBPCASAS in January may involve contacting and hiring the professors in October, recording the EBPCASAS classes and workshops, and teaching these classes and workshops online. Additionally, the strategy for surmounting the student attendance dilemma may be to schedule the EBPCASAS's classes and workshops online.

The results of this project indicate that participants genuinely believed that the EBPCASAS supported them in passing the EBPSIP. The key themes that EBPCASAS is built upon are aspects that helped the EBP's conditionally admitted students to realize that their commitment is the single most important asset that will support them in improving their academic performance, enhancing their passing rates, and minimizing their completion time.

The EBPCASAS professors met the challenge of encouraging the conditionally accepted students to acquire learning and study skills in a professional manner. EBP's conditionally accepted students were also successfully enrolled in the EBP. Over the long term, results may include the creation of positive social change for the students through minimizing their completion time, improving their life quality, and fostering future social mobility.

Scholarship

My experience conducting this professional development seminar program taught me the importance of analyzing qualitative research data based on credible sources and writing in a scholarly manner. In addition, I learned the value of research studies disseminated in peer-reviewed journals that meet rigorous standards and principles and require thousands of working hours before they are accepted for publication. I have acquired immense respect for researchers who gather and use qualitative data in their studies.

The desire to acquire new knowledge through professional development seminar program projects was a driving force that motivated me to increase my appreciation for

scholarship. Specifically, the process of seeking information regarding the strategies that may support freshman students in improving their university academic performance was a crucial factor in developing my commitment to scholarship. My research skills were augmented in the process of selecting a research approach, a methodology, a design, and a sampling method. Data collection and data analysis methods that were used to complete this qualitative research study added to my growth as a researcher. I also developed the skills to conduct a program evaluation and determine the feasibility of the EBPCASAS and its prospects for future implementation.

As an education practitioner with 6 years' experience teaching in a Chilean undergraduate institution, my purpose is to continuously gain knowledge. Moreover, as a researcher, I am able to create new knowledge by using methodological approaches that help me to understand the academic support needs of freshman students who should be successful in the university. I grew professionally by serving the EBP higher education students at a PCU. Further, as a practitioner, I learned about the unique needs of EBP freshman students at one campus of a PCU. As soon as I understood the first relevant issues that negatively affected the learning process of freshman students, I began putting that knowledge into practice to improve some learning practices. I also applied the knowledge I gained to solve complex problems of junior or sophomore students of the EBP. Finally, I shared my knowledge with EBP colleagues, professors, and PCU leadership. Vast amounts of knowledge concerning freshman students remain to be discovered and studied. I will continue to conduct research to expand my understanding of and expertise in the learning strategies that may support university EBP freshman

students at a PCU in improving their academic performance at the postsecondary institution. I am also motivated to remain abreast of changing trends in higher education.

Project Development and Evaluation

The first step in developing this professional qualitative case study was to establish the guiding questions. A literature review was conducted, and the design for the qualitative research study was selected. Data were gathered through 12 interviews that were conducted with the MEGE professors and the MEGE directors. The data were then analyzed, and the findings were described. Specifically, the Professional Development Seminar Program project was established on the basis of the findings/themes that emerged from the data analyses. Some research stages were challenging and complex; the most arduous—as well as the most rewarding—was drafting the findings report. I now respect and value research to a great extent.

The findings indicate that the various ways in which MEGE professors and MEGE directors support students to improve their academic performance represent a cornerstone of a university. This is consistent with the conclusions of Johnson et al. (2014), Sandoval-Lucero (2014), and Simon et al. (2015), who noted that postsecondary professors are the foundation that supports higher education students in their learning process.

The findings also suggested the need to develop a 1-week academic support program to increase the EBP's conditionally accepted students' knowledge of academic and nonacademic aspects that may affect their academic performance in the university. The development of this project needed to reflect the outcomes of the data analysis to

ensure that the project design and content respond to the research question and address the qualitative research problem. Moreover, the EBPCASAS must be subject to evaluation to determine its feasibility and whether it is a program that can be projected into the future. Additionally, the use of the correct evaluation method is a crucial aspect of measuring the project's effectiveness. Accordingly, formative and summative assessments were employed to evaluate the study. These types of evaluations enabled me, in my role as program coordinator, to establish whether the EBPCASAS fulfilled the long-term goal of helping EBP's conditionally accepted students to pass the EBPSIP, to enroll in the EBP, and to improve their academic performance at the university.

Leadership and Change

Change is a constant in higher education institutions. On an ongoing basis, postsecondary leaders need to assess and adjust their strategies for supporting freshman students to improve their academic performance in the university. Furthermore, it is especially important to identify new strategies for implementing the EBPCASAS in a department that employs the traditional lecture mode as a teaching method. The study corroborates the importance of higher education professors' support, and Section 3 cites scholarly research that establishes the significant support a postsecondary institution can provide to freshman students to help them minimize their knowledge gaps and successfully face their learning challenges.

Furthermore, the very purpose of postsecondary institutions is to provide higher education students with the tools they need to be successful in their personal and working lives and to contribute to the betterment of their communities (Peppers, 2016). Therefore,

higher educational professors, administrators, and leaders need to commit to a proactive teaching approach that instills in their students flexibility and a vocation as lifelong learners. These leaders also need to empower their students and collaborators to voice their opinions and take into account students' points of view in decision-making processes. The working team approach brings together higher education leaders, students, and professors and produces a cohesiveness that motivates the group members to work and achieve the goals they set (Peppers, 2016). Finally, when leaders and their teams have the option to learn by doing with their partners, they can transform their environment and overcome obstacles (Fullan, Cuttress, & Kilcher, 2005).

During the period of this qualitative case study, I read many peer-reviewed papers and spoke with many university stakeholders. I learned that effective leaders use proactive team strategies to encourage their team members to share their points of view on issues related to freshman students. These conversations supported the development of the EBPCASAS and led to many adjustments to ensure the correct implementation of the project, given the goal of helping the EBP's conditionally accepted students to pass the EBPSIP.

However, conducting my qualitative project put me into a leadership role. My EBP colleagues, the director of the EBP program, and even members of other departments started to ask my advice, and, increasingly, they appreciated my guidance as a leader. I exercised a responsible leadership role by expressing my opinions while encouraging others to share their points of view on issues related to freshman students, guiding the research study, and developing this program.

As Self Scholar

My involvement in the doctoral process was an enormous and incredible challenge that encouraged me to identify my strengths and weaknesses as a scholar. The experience as academic scholar changed the way I think, and I came to view the educational and research environment from a different perspective. Before facing the challenge of conducting this qualitative research project, I thought being a scholar meant the pursuit of academic excellence. However, this research experience opened my eyes to the real and fundamental contributions a scholar makes to the local, national and worldwide community. My experience as the campus director of the EBP of a CPU helped me realize the urgent need for EBP freshman students to be supported in their learning process. Furthermore, as I advanced in my qualitative case study, the research became my passion.

My personal learning strategy is to comprehend, incorporate, evaluate, and synthesize information to establish potential solutions to the problems identified. While working on my qualitative research project study, I realized that team work results in better alternatives, as it incorporates the different points of view of many professionals, related or not related to the problem, who share the common mission and vision of addressing a need within the bounds of the university, faculty or program.

As the qualitative research project moved forward, I reflected on the challenges in defining the design of my project. The qualitative research project required many modifications and revisions. Moreover, at times I felt frustrated because the intensity of my project deprived me of time shared with my children, husband, family, and friends.

Nevertheless, the outcome made the effort worthwhile. The project process led me to develop a tremendous admiration for research, researchers, and research methods.

As Self-Practitioner

My higher education role provides me the opportunity to effect positive social changes and support the student learning process, bettering faculty retention rates at my campus. As a practitioner, I strive to deepen my knowledge and understanding of the supportive strategies higher-education institutions can implement to help their freshman students to improve their academic performance, by attending national and worldwide conferences related to the topic. My participation in these meetings will allow me to stay informed and prepared to help in the development of future strategies that minimize the student knowledge gaps, foster their passing rates, improve the university retention rates, and support the students in reducing their completion time.

As Self-Project Developer

As EBPCASAS project developer, I considered many different options before settling on the design for the final project. Initially, I focused on freshman students as the problem, when the results of the data analysis should have been my focus. This I came to understand because the data analysis established that higher-education institution leaders and professors, in conjunction with freshman students need to be partners in the development of the appropriate learning environment where students can improve their academic performance. The fact that postsecondary officials, higher education professors, and freshman students benefit from an established partnership was recognized in this study, as well as the literature review. My challenge was to convince university leaders

and faculty directors to support the project implementation. The endeavor led me to realize that projects cannot be implemented in the PCU without the assistance, commitment and backing from key stakeholders.

This project demanded searching and reading many peer-reviewed articles and books to learn the appropriate strategies for conducting research. Another source I searched was the Walden Library, where I located the most significant part of the resources used for this study project. I also reviewed the PCU library for articles that described the local situation. I utilized these readings and invested many hours of comprehensive writing in developing this qualitative project study, because I sought to design a study with a practical and applicable dimension. At this point in time, I carried out a project that may be used to help conditional students in the university setting, to pass the EBPSIP.

Reflections on the Importance of the Work

In Chile, almost half of freshman students who enroll in postsecondary institutions do not graduate, and almost a third drop out after their first year (Mineduc, 2012). However, 30% of the students who drop out re-enter the system in the next three years. Altogether, 17.2% of the freshman students who enrolled in postsecondary learning eventually withdraw (Rolando, Salamanca, & Lara, 2012). This situation is a source of concern for Chilean government officials, post-education institutional leaders, professors, higher education administrators, undergraduate students, as well as the higher education students' families, because many students withdraw with a heavy debt burden that they are unable to repay (Blanco, Jerez, & Rolando, 2015; Rojas, Fonseca, & Silva,

2011). In addition, these statistics signal that the investment the government, students, and their families made in higher education was futile (Mineduc, 2012). Ultimately, the frustration students associated with education became a barrier that impeded a healthy learning process.

This qualitative case study will enable postsecondary freshman students to improve their academic performance and will add to the growing body of research on the support higher education professors may provide to postsecondary freshman students on this matter (Johnson et al., 2014; Sandoval-Lucero, 2014; Simon et al., 2015). The number of Chilean students entering postsecondary education has risen steadily in the last 25 years (Blanco et al., 2015), yet, each student cohort exhibits weaker preparation (Sandoval-Lucero, 2014). Accordingly, the requirement that freshmen enter EBPCASAS programs will be a core aspect of an initiative to equip these students with better tools in pursuit of their college degrees.

One implication for social change resulting from this qualitative research project will be improved graduation rates and the subsequent incorporation into Chilean society of citizens with the skills to contribute to their country's development. This points to the importance of supporting EBP's conditionally accepted students to discover appropriate learning strategies that may be employed to improve their academic performance and increase passing/retention rates (Dumford, Cogswell, & Miller, 2016; Pruett & Absher, 2015; Russell et al., 2016). The approach allows the students to accelerate their completion time (Johnson et al., 2014; Martin et al., 2014) which may improve retention rates (Johnson et al., 2014; Martin et al., 2014; Pekrun et al., 2014; Slade et al., 2015;

Summers et al., 2015). To the extent that freshman students minimize their completion time, they will advance their entry into the Chilean labor market, achieve social mobility, and better their economic life standard (Chen & Wiederspan, 2014) while also strengthening their social condition (Miranda, 2014).

The outcomes of this Professional Development Seminar Program project indicated a positive impact of social change as EBPCASAS supported EBP's conditionally accepted students to pass the EBPSIP and to enroll in the EBP. The conclusions reached through this analysis led me to deduce that postsecondary institution leaders may establish academic support programs to conditionally accepted students before they enter the university, to minimize their knowledge gaps and to identify the required behavior to be academically successful. The knowledge students gain helps higher education community constituents to raise passing rates, enhance retention rates, and improve completion rates. The upgraded academic achievements contribute to social change as these students advance their entry into the Chilean labor market achieving social mobility, and bettering their economic life standard (Chen & Wiederspan, 2014) at the same time they augment and strengthen their social life (Miranda, 2014).

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

Once this Professional Development Seminar Program has concluded, and in light of the findings of this qualitative research study project, I plan to promote the implementation of the EBPCASAS in other programs of the PCU in my city and throughout my country. I strive to develop interesting strategies to inform the national

higher education community and encourage the implementation of the conditionally accepted student academic support programs that may allow these students to minimize their knowledge gaps and identify the appropriate behavior to improve their academic performance in university. My aspiration is that this qualitative research project will be employed by postsecondary institution officials to support conditionally accepted students to manage their learning challenges with the appropriate tools they need to become successful students, from the moment they begin their posteducational journey. This Professional Development Seminar Program project may support social change at other Chilean universities as well.

My initial focus was to assist the EBP's conditionally accepted students to improve their academic performance in MEGE courses at one specific university. However, this qualitative research project may be used to help sophomore and junior students of other Chilean universities, depending on the willingness of higher education officials to fund the development of Conditionally Accepted Students Academic Support (CASAS) programs. The project framework of this qualitative research project can be employed as a prototype for the creation of other conditionally accepted student academic support programs.

This Professional Development Seminar Program project can be developed, implemented, adjusted, and improved in response to the participants' feedback. Although this project should not be considered the sole resource to support conditionally admitted students, it may serve as a model for future research projects that study the impact of conditionally accepted student academic support programs.

Higher education professors currently seek approaches to help postsecondary students improve their academic performance in Chilean universities. It is important to note that professors require support from higher education directors, in developing and implementing such programs. In funding and implementing conditionally accepted student academic support programs, higher education leaders offer significant support to freshman students who desire academic success. My hope is that the Professional Development Seminar Program project will positively impact the freshman student learning environment, and that students will have a successful academic experience.

This Professional Development Seminar Program project shows that potential solutions for higher educational problems may emerge by diagnosing local issues, gathering data to study the situation, and establish the appropriate approach for resolving the problem. Teamwork may provide a new perspective for overcoming the difficulties, as it takes into account the points of view of those affected by the problem or are closely associated to the challenges. Forthcoming research projects may study conditionally accepted student academic support programs to ascertain how these programs could bring about positive social change in other programs and universities, incorporating sophomore or junior postsecondary students as well. This qualitative research project can provide a point of departure for future research projects within similar settings or with populations with comparable needs. The conditionally accepted student academic support programs could be developed, revised, adjusted and implemented for sophomore and junior students.

Finally, this qualitative research project generated questions beyond the scope of this study. These questions for future research concern two areas: (a) Is a conditionally accepted student academic support program the most appropriate learning approach to improve higher education student academic performance beyond the freshman year? and, (b) Are there more suitable strategies than peer mentoring, academic advising procedures, mentored group programs, remedial courses, and summer immersion programs to support postsecondary students to improve their academic performance? Quantitative or mixed research methods may prove more useful than qualitative work to address these issues, because survey data yield rich quantitative data unavailable through interviews.

Conclusion

The research project studied academic support to EBP's conditionally admitted students and demonstrates the value and importance of investing in the conditionally admitted students' academic success. The implementation of the EBPCASAS at the EBP of a PCU reflects the commitment of higher education leaders and key stakeholders to assist the EBP's conditionally admitted students to minimize their knowledge gaps, to pass the EBPSIP and to enroll in the EBP.

Conducting this qualitative project study helped me to understand that conviction, endurance, and persistence comprise the foundation for the efforts needed to acquire the desired and necessary changes to create a higher education environment that academically supports first-year students to improve their academic performance in university prior to enrollment. Freshman students of the EBP urgently require support to improve their academic performance in MEGE university courses. This immediate need

inspired the development of this qualitative project and provided the program officials, faculty and university leadership with data for implementing the EBPCASAS that may support the EBP's conditionally accepted students to improve their academic performance in the university.

As a Walden EdD student, I am honored that in my role of scholar, practitioner, and developer, I was able to contribute to the scholarly research concerning the academic support higher education institutions can provide conditionally admitted freshman students. The EBPCASAS project offers an ideal research setting by providing the EBP's provisionally accepted students the option to attend a 1-week program and minimize or eliminate their knowledge gaps with the goal of passing the SIPEBP and enroll in the EBP. Finally, the objective of the EBPCASAS is to support these students to identify their appropriate learning strategy, and consequently improve their passing and completion rates, while also enhancing the higher education institution's retention rates.

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Appendix A: The Project

The EBPCASAS Project

Conditionally Accepted Student Academic Support Program of the EBP

Introduction

As a commitment to the EBP's conditionally accepted student academic success, the university decided to implement the EBPCASAS to support the EBP's conditionally accepted students to minimize their learning gaps, to improve their academic knowledge in math, English, and general education courses, and to pass the SIPEBP. The EBP's conditionally accepted students were offered the option of enrolling as freshmen students of the Economics and Business Program (EBP) once they pass the EBPSIP.

Program Purpose

The purpose of the EBPCASAS is to introduce the EBP's conditionally accepted students into university life and to support them in their efforts to pass the EBPSIP.

Program Goals

The program's first goal is to assist the EBP's conditionally admitted students in identifying academic and nonacademic issues that may affect their performance in the university, by closing any knowledge gap they might have before entering the EBPSIP.

The second goal of the EBPCASAS is to clarify the EBP conditionally accepted students' expectations and to help these students to identify the abilities they require or must develop to be successful in the program attendance and pass the EBPSIP.

The third goal of the EBPCASAS is to support the EBP conditionally accepted students to enhance their academic performance, to help them to pass the EBPSIP and to be accepted as EBP's freshmen students.

The fourth goal of the EBPCASAS is to minimize the EBP conditionally accepted students' knowledge gaps in math, English, and general education topics.

The long-term goal of the EBPCASAS is to support EBP conditionally admitted students to identify and apply an appropriate learning strategy that will improve their academic performance in the university and to raise the EBP student retention, graduation and completion rates (Slade, Eatmon, Staley, & Dixon, 2015).

Learning Outcomes

The expected learning outcome of the EBPCASAS is an improvement of the EBP conditionally accepted students' knowledge, which may allow these students to be accepted in the EBP.

Target Audience

After the university announces the roster of EBP conditionally accepted students, the EBP Academic Support Unit will contact these students and invite them to participate in the EBP Conditionally Admitted Students Academic Support Project (EBPCASAS) during the last week of January. Also, the EBPASU's professionals will inform the EBP's provisionally accepted students that they are required to come to campus to take online tests in math, English, and general education topics before the EBP allows them to enroll as freshmen students. The conditionally admitted students who fail those tests shall attend the 2018 EBPCASAS during the last week of January 2018 and the 2018 SIPEBP

during February 2018, before initiating their higher education freshmen year at the university (Olson-McBride et al., 2016). Accordingly, the target audience of the EBPCASAS will be the EBP's conditionally admitted students who failed the math, English, and general education tests.

The EBPCASAS is a free program for the EBP's conditionally accepted students who took the online tests in math, English, and general education topics.

Program Duration

The EBPCASAS is a 1-week program. Classes will be taught January 22-26, 2018. EBP's conditionally admitted students who attend the program will have theoretical and practical math, English, and general education classes and workshops from Monday to Thursday. Each Friday, the EBP's conditionally accepted students will take required summative tests (online) to assess the knowledge that was gained during the program week.

Participants

The EBP conditionally admitted students will be invited by the EBPASU's professionals to participate in EBPCASAS. On the EBPCASAS opening day, the dean and the vice dean of the faculty, the director of the EBP, Representative of different university units and the MEGE directors will present information pertinent to their respective areas.

The EBP conditionally admitted students will receive a copy of each presentation and power point slides.

Cost

The EBPCASAS is a free program for EBP's conditionally accepted students.

Implementation Plan

To implement the EBPCASAS I will reserve the hall for the first day, as well as the classrooms where the classes and the workshops will be taught. I also will confirm the availability of the Dean, the Vice Dean, the EBP's director, the MEGE directors, the student affairs unit presenter, the library presenter, and the student finance assistance unit presenter. Additionally, I will confirm that the PC, the audiovisual equipment and the air conditioning system are in good working order for the hall, and the classrooms where the classes and the workshops will be held.

Evaluation Plan

After conclusion of the EBPCASAS and after the EBP's conditionally accepted students complete the formative and summative evaluation forms on the first and the fifth day I will analyze them to identify participants perceptions' of the EBPCASAS's strength and the weaknesses. My goal is to ascertain the potential adjustments I need to implement to improve the EBPCASAS project.

Professional Development Seminar Program for EBP Conditionally Accepted Students

EBP conditionally accepted students will receive a workshop agenda and handouts for each day. The training time will total 38 hours. The first session will be 6 hours, the second, third, and fourth session will be 9 hours and the last session will be 5 hours.

Agenda for Day 1

1. Presentations
2. Smooth Beginning
3. University Tour
4. Lunch
5. Math Director's Presentation
6. English Director's Presentation
7. General Education Director's Presentation
8. Student Affairs Unit Presentation
9. Library Presentation
10. Financial Assistance Unit Presentation
11. Evaluation Day 1

Program for Day 1

Presentation and Program Description: 90 minutes

Describe the benefits of the EBPCASAS.

Describe the Goals of the EBPCASAS.

Describe the desired outcome and length of the EBPCASAS.

Describe the challenges higher education freshmen students encounter.

Coffee Break: 15 minutes

How to have a smooth beginning: 30 minutes

Appropriate and Inappropriate behavior, what to do and what not to do.

Organizing your time

Class attendance

Learning schedule

Tour: 60 minutes

Tour of the university facilities

Lunch: 60 minutes

Lunch will be served on the first floor.

Math Director's Presentation: 30 minutes

Math Syllabi

Math classes and workshops schedules

English Director's Presentation: 30 minutes

English Syllabi

English classes and workshops schedules

General Education Director's Presentation: 30 minutes

General Education Syllabi

General Education classes and workshops schedules

Coffee Break: 15 minutes

Students Affair Unit: 30 minutes

Support options

Workshops

Library: 30 minutes

Books

Databases

Search Engines

Student library policies

Finance Unit presentation: 30 minutes

Support options

Scholarships

Loans

Evaluation Day 1: 15 minutes

Evaluation

Agenda for Day 2

1. Math Class
2. English Class
3. General Education Class
4. Lunch
5. Math Theory Workshop
6. Math Practice Workshop

Program for Day 2

Math Class: 90 minutes

Students will attend and participate in an Algebra class. The topics of the first

Algebra class will be: (a) natural numbers, (b) decimal numbers, and (c) fractions.

Break: 10 minutes

English Class: 90 minutes

Students will attend an English introductory class to introduce and describe the basis for acquisition of linguistic competences of the Common European Framework of Languages Level A1.

Break: 10 minutes

General Education Class: 90 minutes

Students will attend and participate in an oral expression class. The goal of the first general education class is to develop the students' oral and written skills.

Break Lunch: 120 minutes

Lunch will be served in the first floor

Math Theory Workshop: 80 minutes

Math Academic guidance

Break: 20 minutes

Coffee and snacks will be served in the first floor.

Math Practice Workshop: 80 minutes

Math peer mentors sessions

Math mentored groups work

Agenda for Day 3

1. Math Class
2. English Class
3. General Education Class
4. Lunch

5. English Theory Workshop
6. English Practice Workshop

Program for Day 3

Math Class: 90 minutes

The class will begin by reviewing the topics the students learned in the previous class. Students will attend and participate in the second Algebra class. The class topics will be: (a) Logic and (b) sets.

Break: 10 minutes

English Class: 90 minutes

The second English class will begin by reviewing the topics by the students learned in the previous class. Students also will attend the English class to start learning effective oral and written communication.

Break: 10 minutes

General Education Class: 90 minutes

The second general education class will begin by reviewing the topics the students learned in the previous class. Students also will attend a class to develop the skills to understand oral and written speech.

Break Lunch: 120 minutes

Lunch will be served on the first floor.

English Theory Workshop: 80 minutes

English Academic guidance

Break: 20 minutes

Coffee and snacks will be served on the first floor.

English Practice Workshop: 80 minutes

English peer mentors sessions

English mentored groups work

Agenda for Day 4

1. Math Class
2. English Class
3. General Education Class
4. Lunch
5. General Education Theory Workshop
6. General Education Practice Workshop

Program for Day 4

Math Class: 90 minutes

The third math class will begin by reviewing the topics the students learned in the previous classes. In the third Algebra class students also will study analytic geometry.

Break: 10 minutes

English Class: 90 minutes

The third English class will begin by reviewing the topics the students learned in the previous classes. Students also will reinforce effective oral and written communication skills.

Break: 10 minutes

General Education Class: 90 minutes

The third general education class will start with a review of the topics learned by the students the prior classes. Additionally, students will attend a class to learn the appropriate approach to develop consistent and logic discourses with the required tone and mode depending on each situation.

Break Lunch: 120 minutes

Lunch will be served in the first floor

General Education Workshop Theoric: 80 minutes

General education Academic advice

Break: 20 minutes

Coffee and snacks will be served in the first floor

General Education Workshops Practice: 80 minutes

General education peer mentors sessions

General education mentored groups work

Agenda for day 5

1. Math Summative Evaluation
2. English Summative Evaluation
3. General Education Summative Evaluation
4. EBPCASAS Evaluation

Program for Day 5

Math Summative Evaluation: 80 minutes

English Summative Evaluation: 80 minutes

General Education Summative Evaluation

EBPCASAS Evaluation

**EBP's Conditionally
Accepted Students Seminar
Training Program
Handouts and Materials**

Please use the following materials throughout the EBPCASAS's first day presentations. These materials will guide you through the EBPCASAS's first day presentations.

Student Seminar Training Program Day 1 Handout

Program Description

1. Welcome

- Successful higher education institutions develop close relationships with postsecondary students. These organizations work to establish alert systems to enable immediate identification of each student's characteristics. The purpose is to provide each student with the required academic and nonacademic support to be successful in higher education. Accordingly, the university developed the EBPCASAS because higher education leaders are concerned about every EBP conditionally accepted student. University leadership wants to support the EBP's provisionally admitted students in passing the EBP Summer Immersion Project, to be accepted as EBP students, and to graduate.

2. Challenges

- Challenges encountered by higher education first-year students: Higher education students encounter many problems that may negatively affect their academic development and delay the completion date to earn their professional degrees. These students find that inadequate academic preparation, and lack of economic resources force them to reconcile study and

work. They also may lack an appropriate strategy to learn and study, which may prevent them from a full commitment to their education.

3. Smooth Beginning

- *Benefits of the EBPCASAS:* The EBPCASA is a 1-week program that addresses academic themes that may affect EBP's conditionally admitted student academic performance in the university. The EBPCASAS supports the EBP's conditionally accepted students to identify the appropriate learning behavior.
- *Goals of the EBPCASAS:* The first goal of the program is to support the EBP's conditionally admitted students to identify academic and nonacademic themes that may affect the EBP's conditionally accepted students' performance in the university, closing any knowledge gap they may have before attending the EBPSIP. The second goal of the EBPCASAS is to clarify EBP's conditionally accepted students' expectations and to help these students identify the abilities they need to have or develop to be successful and pass the EBPSIP. The third goal of the EBPCASAS is to support the EBP's conditionally accepted students to be accepted as EBP freshmen students. The fourth goal of the EBPCASAS is to minimize the EBP's conditionally accepted students' knowledge gaps in math, English, and general education topics. The long-term goal of the EBPCASAS is to support EBP's conditionally admitted students to identify and use the appropriate learning strategy to improve their academic performance in the university and raise the EBP's students' retention rates

(Slade, Eatmon, Staley, & Dixon, 2015), and EBP's conditionally admitted student completion time.

- *EBPCASAS's expected outcomes:* The expected learning outcome of the EBPCASAS is an improvement of the EBP's conditionally accepted students' knowledge, which may allow these students to be accepted in the EBP.

4. University Tour:

- Tour of the university facilities. Take a 60 minute tour to show the students the campus buildings, the EBP faculty, the classrooms, the pool, the student parking lots, and the dining hall.

5. Math Director's Presentation:

- Provide the EBP's conditionally accepted students with relevant knowledge of the EBPCASAS's classes and workshops. Explain to the students the importance of math in the EBP program. The knowledge the EBP's conditionally accepted students will gain will allow them to learn to organize their thinking process.

6. English Director's Presentation

- Provide the EBP's conditionally accepted students with relevant knowledge of the EBPCASAS's classes and workshops. Explain to the students the importance of English to the EBP program. English is the worldwide language of the business. EBP's conditionally accepted students require to learn to read, speak and hear English correctly to become part of the business world.

7. General Education Director's Presentation

- Provide the EBP's conditionally accepted students with relevant knowledge of the EBPCASAS's classes and workshops. Explain to the students the importance of General Education to the EBP program. General education studies provide the EBP's conditionally accepted student with awareness of the environment they habit. These students need to be aware of their social environment.
8. Student Affairs Unit Presentation
- Provide the EBP's conditionally accepted students with relevant knowledge of the support the Students' Affairs unit offers the university's students.
9. Library's Presentation
- Provide the EBP's conditionally accepted students with relevant knowledge of the support the library offers the university's students. Tour the library facilities and show the EBP's conditionally accepted students how the databases search engines work.
10. Financial Assistance Unit Presentation
- Provide the EBP's conditionally accepted students with relevant knowledge of the support services the Student Financial Assistance unit offers the university's students. Explain to the EBP's conditionally accepted students the loans the university offers and the passing requirements to keep the loans.
11. Evaluation Day 1

- Provide the EBP's conditionally accepted students the EBP's first day program evaluation form and invite the EBP's conditionally accepted students to share their points of view and experiences of the first EBPCASAS day.

Student Seminar Training Program Days 2, 3, and 4 Handout

Program Description

1. Classes

- EBPCASAS professors will teach math, English, and general education classes according to the schedule.
- Math theory classes reinforce the Algebra contents of: (a) natural numbers, decimal numbers, and fractions, (b) logic and sets, and (c) analytic geometry
- English classes: (a) introduce and provide a foundation for the acquisition of linguistic competences of the Common European Framework of Languages Level A1, and (b) support the students' learning of effective oral and written communication.
- General education classes: (a) support the students ability to develop oral and written skills, (b) develop the students ability to understand oral and written speech, and (c) learn an appropriate approach to develop consistent and logical discourses with the required tone and mode depending on each situation.

2. Workshops

- EBPCASAS professors will teach the math, English, and general education workshops according to the schedule.
- Math workshops reinforce the Algebra contents of: (a) natural numbers, decimal numbers, and fractions, (b) logic and sets, and (c) analytical geometry
- English workshops: (a) introduce and provide a foundation for the acquisition of the linguistic competences of the Common European Framework of Languages Level A1 and (b) support the students' learning of effective oral and written communication.
- General education workshops: (a) support the students' ability to develop oral and written skills, (b) develop the students' skills to understand oral and written discourses, and (c) learn the appropriate approach to develop consistent and logical discourses with the required tone and mode depending on each situation.

Student Seminar Training Program Day 5 Handout

Program Description

1. Tests

- EBPCASAS professors will accompany the students when they take the EBPCASAS courses tests.

2. EBPCASAS Summative Evaluation

- EBPCASAS students will complete the EBPCASAS summative evaluation.

Student Welcome Invitation Letter

January 22th, 2018

Dear [Insert students' name]:

You are cordially invited to participate in the EBPCASAS; a new program designed to improve the academic performance in math, English, and general education courses of the EBP's conditionally accepted students. There is no participation fee for the EBPCASAS.

The purpose of the program is to introduce you to the university environment and to support you in passing the EBPSIP, by providing you the academic knowledge you need to be accepted as a freshmen student of the EBP.

Even though we are a university where 45,000 students pursue degrees, each one of you is our concern and we are here to assist you in facing your academic challenge. We are a team, we want you to succeed, and we will provide you with all of the tools you will need to be successful, but ultimately it depends on you.

Participants are required to be on campus January 22 - 26, 2018, from 8:30 to 12:50, and from 15:00 to 18:20, to attend math, English, and general education classes and workshops to minimize or eliminate knowledge gaps prior to entering the EBPSIP. If you have any questions, please contact me or email me during the EBPCASAS.

Sincerely,

Undergraduate
School
of
Economic and Business

EBP's Conditionally Accepted
Students Academic Support
Program Presentation

- Please silence your cell phones.
- Restrooms are on the first floor

Welcome to the EBP's
Conditionally Accepted
Students Academic Support
Program (EBPCASAS)
January 2018

The EBPCASAS addresses
academic and non-academic
themes that may affect freshmen
students' academic performance
in the University

(Slade, J., Eatmon, D., Staley, K., & Dixon, K. G. (2015); Wernersbach, Crowley, Bates, & Rosenthal, 2014).

EBPCASAS presentation

- Purpose
- Goals
- Presentations

EBPCASAS presentation

- First, Second, Third, and Fourth day schedules
- Fifth day schedule

EBPCASAS Purpose

- Introduce the EBP's conditionally accepted students into the University and support them to pass the EBPSIP

EBPCASAS Goals:

- Support the EBP's conditionally accepted students' to identify academic and non-academic themes that may affect their academic performance in the University.

EBPCASAS Goals:

- Clarify the EBP's conditionally accepted students' expectations and help them to identify the abilities they require to have or develop to be successful while they attend and

EBPCASAS Goals:

(Cont.)

pass the EBPSIP, and in higher education
(Jacobs, 2016) .

EBPCASAS Goals:

- Support the EBP's conditionally accepted students to enhance their academic performance, to pass the EBPSIP and allow them to be accepted as an EBP's freshmen student.

EBPCASAS Goals:

- Minimize the EBP's conditionally accepted students' knowledge gaps in math, English and general education topics.

EBPCASAS Long Term Goal

- Support EBP's conditionally admitted students to identify their appropriate learning strategy, to use it to improve their academic performance in the University and to

EBPCASAS Long Term Goal (Cont.)

better the EBP's students' retention, graduation rates (Slade, Eatmon, Staley, & Dixon, 2015), and their completion time.

EBPCASAS presentation

- Knowing and Understanding the Higher Education Environment.
- Higher Education Freshmen students Challenges.

EBPCASAS presentation

- How to have a Smooth Beginning.
- Tour of the University Facilities.
- Coffee Break

EBPCASAS presentation

- Math Directors' Presentation.
- English Directors' Presentation.
- General Education Directors' Presentation.

EBPCASAS presentation

- Students Affairs Unit Presentation.
- Library Presentation.
- Finance Students' Support Unit Presentation.

EBPCASAS Library Presentation

- Books and online books
- Databases
- Workshops

EBPCASAS Students Affairs' Presentation

- Workshops
- Psychologist support

EBPCASA Classes' Schedule

Tuesday to Thursday

8:30 to 9:50 Math

10:00 to 11:20 English

11:30 to 12:50 General Education

EBPCASA Workshops' Schedule

Tuesday to Thursday

- 15:00 to 16:20 Workshops theoric part, academic advise
- 16.30 to 16.50 Break with snacks and beverage

EBPCASA Workshops' Schedule

Tuesday to Thursday

- 17:00 to 18:20 Workshops practice part, peer mentors sessions and mentored groups work.

EBPCASA Tests' Schedule

Friday

8:30 to 9:50 Math

10:00 to 11:20 English

11:30 to 12:50 General Education

EBPCASAS Program

- We Want to support you to face your higher Academic Journey.
- We want you to succeed.

EBPCASAS Program

- WE ARE GLAD YOU ARE HERE

EBPCASAS Program

- Questions and Answers

EBPCASAS Program Presentation's References

- Slade, J., Eatmon, D., Staley, K., & Dixon, K. G. (2015). Getting into the Pipeline: Summer Bridge as a Pathway to College Success. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 84(2), 125–138.

EBPCASAS Program Presentation's References

- Wernersbach, B. M., Crowley, S. L., Bates, S. C., & Rosenthal, C. (2014). Study Skills Course Impact on Academic Self-Efficacy. *Journal of Developmental Education*, 37(3), 14–16,18–23,33

The EBPCASAS Program Welcome Day Participants

(First Day)

Session Time	Activity
8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.	Coffee, Juice, Water, fruits
9:15 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.	Official Welcome to EBP's conditionally accepted students. Dean of the Faculty
10:00 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.	Program Presentation 1: Higher education freshmen student challenges. Vice Dean of the Faculty
10:45 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.	Coffee Break
11:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.	Program Presentation 2: How to have a smooth beginning Director of the EBP's program
11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.	Tour of the University facilities. Director of the EBP
12:30 p.m. to 13:30 p.m.	Lunch
13:30 p.m. to 14:00 p.m.	Math Director's presentation
14:00 p.m. to 14:30 p.m.	English Director's presentation
14:30 p.m. to 15:00 p.m.	General Education Director's presentation
15:00 p.m. to 15:15 p.m.	Coffee Break
15:30 p.m. to 16:00 p.m.	Students Affair unit presentation
16:00 p.m. to 16:30 p.m.	Library presentation
16:30 p.m. to 17:00 p.m.	Finance Students Support unit's presentation
17:00	Evaluation Day 1

The EBPCASAS Program Second Day

8:00 a.m. to 8:25 a.m.	Coffee, Juice, Water, fruits
8:30 a.m. to 9:50 a.m.	Math Class
10:00 a.m. to 11:20 a.m.	English Class
11:30 a.m. to 12:50 p.m.	General Education Class
13:00 p.m. to 15:00 p.m.	Lunch
15:00 p.m. to 16:20 p.m.	Math Theory Workshop, academic advise
16:30 p.m. to 16:50 p.m.	Coffee Break
17:00 p.m. to 18:20 p.m.	Math Workshops practice part, peer mentors sessions and mentored groups work.

The EBPCASAS Program Third Day

8:00 a.m. to 8:25 a.m.	Coffee, Juice, Water, fruits
8:00 a.m. to 9:50 a.m.	Math Class
10:00 a.m. to 11:20 a.m.	English Class
11:30 a.m. to 12:50 p.m.	General Education Class
13:00 p.m. to 15:00 p.m.	Lunch
15:00 p.m. to 16:20 p.m.	English theory Workshop part, academic advise
16:30 p.m. to 16:50 p.m.	Coffee Break
17:00 p.m. to 18:20 p.m.	English Workshops practice part, peer mentors sessions and mentored groups work.

The EBPCASAS Program Fourth Day

8:00 a.m. to 8:25 a.m.	Coffee, Juice, Water, fruits
8:30 a.m. to 9:50 a.m.	Math Class
10:00 a.m. to 11:20 a.m.	English Class
11:30 a.m. to 12:50 p.m.	General Education Class
13:00 p.m. to 15:00 p.m.	Lunch
15:00 p.m. to 16:20 p.m.	General Education Theory Workshop part, academic advise
16:30 p.m. to 16:50 p.m.	Coffee Break
17:00 p.m. to 18:20 p.m.	General Education Practice Workshops part, peer mentors sessions and mentored groups work.

The EBPCASAS Program Fifth Day

8:00 a.m. to 8:25 a.m.	Coffee, Juice, Water, fruits
8:30 a.m. to 9:50 a.m.	Math Evaluation
10:00 a.m. to 11:20 a.m.	English Evaluation
11:30 a.m. to 12:50 p.m.	General Education Evaluation
13:00 p.m. to 13:30 p.m.	Evaluation of the EBPCASAS

THE EBP CONDITIONALLY ADMITTED STUDENTS ACADEMIC SUPPORT
PROGRAM EVALUATION FORM

Day one

Thank you for attending to the EBP Conditionally Admitted Students Academic Support Program. We value your feedback regarding your attendance to the EBPCASAS.

Please take a moment to provide us your perception of this pilot program. The important data you may share can support us to improve the EBPCASAS

Instructions

Please rate the academic and non- academic themes you learned will you attended to the EBPCASAS on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 poor and 5 outstanding)

How would you rate the registration and check in process?

1 2 3 4 5

How would you rate the Dean's presentation?

1 2 3 4 5

How would you rate the Vice Dean's presentation?

1 2 3 4 5

How would you rate the Director's presentation?

1 2 3 4 5

How would you rate the facilities?

1 2 3 4 5

How would you rate the math Director's presentation?

1 2 3 4 5

How would you rate the English Director's presentation?

1 2 3 4 5

How would you rate general education Director's presentation?

1 2 3 4 5

How would you rate the Students Affair unit presentation?

1 2 3 4 5

How would you rate the Library presentation?

1 2 3 4 5

How would you rate the Student Financial Assistance Unit presentation?

1 2 3 4 5

How would you rate the knowledge you gained?

1 2 3 4 5

Do you have any suggestion that may improve the next versions of the EBPCASAS?

Is there any other data you would like to share?

THE EBP CONDITIONALLY ADMITTED STUDENTS ACADEMIC SUPPORT
PROGRAM EVALUATION FORM

Day Five

Thank you for attending the EBP Conditionally Admitted Students Academic Support Program. We value your feedback regarding your attendance to the EBPCASAS.

Please take a moment to provide your opinions of this pilot program. The important data you may share can support us to improve the EBPCASAS

Instructions

Please rate the academic and non- academic themes you learned will you attended to the EBPCASAS on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 nothing and 5 outstanding)

How would you rate the registration and check-in process for the classes and the workshops?

1 2 3 4 5

How would you rate the academic preparedness of your math class and workshop professor?

1 2 3 4 5

How would you rate the academic preparedness of your English class and workshop professor?

1 2 3 4 5

How would you rate the academic preparedness of your general education class and workshop professor?

1 2 3 4 5

How would you rate the knowledge you gained?

1 2 3 4 5

Do you have any suggestion that may improve the next versions of the EBPCASAS?

Is there any other data you would like to share?

Appendix B: PCU Request Letter

PCU Request Letter to ask the PCU's Provost for permission to conduct the qualitative case study within the boundaries of the largest campus of the University.

Subject line of the email message: Permission requests to conduct a qualitative case study within the largest campus of the University.

Dear Provost

I am sending you this letter to request for permission to conduct a projects study within the boundaries of the largest campus of the University. The purpose of my work is to deepen the understanding of how math, English, and general education professors perceive how they can support freshmen students of the Economics and Business program at one campus of a private Chilean university, which may improve their academic performance in math, English, and general education classes.

The approach to this study will be a qualitative one. Specifically, the design of the study will be a case study. Accordingly, I am planning to interview nine professors who taught math, English, and general education courses to 2015 freshmen students' cohort of the Economics and Business Program.

Measures will be taken to protect participants from harm in compliance with the guidelines established by Walden University and the University. I will develop a consent form including the statement of anonymity and confidentiality. Accordingly, I will remove the participants name and any information that may allow anyone to identify the MEGE professors who will participate in my qualitative case study. Additionally, I will ensure the MEGE professors who participate in the qualitative case study that nobody

will be able to identify them because I will use pseudonyms. Finally, all the information the participants will provide will be kept confidential.

The findings may lead to increased government resource allocation and improved student learning outcomes, leading to improved student retention. This study may contribute to positive social change through improved graduation rates and develop for the country.

Please call me at XX X XXXXXXXXX or send me an email to karen.sauer@Waldenu.edu, to let me know your opinion about letting me conduct the qualitative case study within the boundaries of the largest campus of the University,

Karen Sauer

Walden University Doctoral Student

XXXXX Campus Director of the Undergraduate Economics and Business Program

Appendix C: Request Letter for Professors

Request Letter for Professors to ask the math, English, and general education departments for permission to conduct the qualitative case study interviewing the professors who taught the AY 2015 freshmen students of the EBP at the largest campus of the University math, English, and general education classes.

Subject line of the email message: Permission request to conduct a qualitative case study interviewing the professors who taught math, English, and general education courses to 2015 cohort's freshmen students of the Economics and Business Program at the largest campus of the University.

Dear Director of Department

I am sending you this letter to request for permission to interview the professors who taught math, English, and general education courses to 2015 cohort's freshmen students of the Economics and Business Program at the largest campus of the University. The purpose of my work is to deepen the understanding of how math, English, and general education professors perceive how they can support freshmen students of the Economics and Business program at one campus of a private Chilean university, which may improve their academic performance in math, English, and general education classes. The approach to this study will be a qualitative one. Specifically, the design of the study will be a case study. Accordingly, I plan to interview nine professors who taught math, English, and general education courses to 2015 freshmen students' cohort of the Economics and Business Program.

Measures will be taken to protect participants from harm in compliance with the guidelines established by Walden University and the University. I will develop a consent form including the statement of anonymity and confidentiality. Accordingly, I will remove the participants' names and any information that may allow anyone to identify the MEGE professors who will participate in my qualitative case study. Additionally, I will ensure the MEGE professors who participate in the qualitative case study that no one will be able to identify them because I will use pseudonyms. Finally, all the information the participants will provide will be kept confidential.

The findings may lead to increased government resource allocation and improved student learning outcomes, leading to improved student retention. This study may contribute to positive social change through improved graduation rates and develop for the country.

Please call me at 56 9 98885595 or send me an email to karen.sauer@Waldenu.edu, to let me know your opinion about letting me interview the professors who taught math, English, and general education courses to 2015 cohort's freshmen students of the Economics and Business Program at the largest campus of the University.

Karen Sauer

Walden University Doctoral Student

XXXXX campus Director of the Undergraduate Economics and Business Program

Appendix D: Participants' Email Invitation

Subject line of the email message: You are invited to participate in a study of perceptions

Dear (professor Name)

As professor of math, English or general education of the Economics and Business Program cohort 2015, you are invited to participate in a study to deepen the understanding of how the math, English, and general education professors, at one campus of a Private Chilean University, perceive they could support freshmen students of the Program and to improve their academic performance in math, English, and general education courses.

You are invited to participate in a one-on-one, face-to-face interview that will be settled at a mutually convenient location at a mutually convenient time.

Your perception is needed to help me understand how do you think you may support freshmen students of the Economics and Business Program and to improve their academic performance in math, English, and general education courses.

All information you provide will be kept confidential, and refreshment will be supplied. I will contact you within two weeks to ask you whether or not you will be able to participate in the study

Sincerely,

Karen Sauer

Walden University Doctoral Student

XXXXXX campus Director of the Undergraduate Economics and Business Program

Appendix E: Directors of MEGE Departments' Email Invitation

Subject line of the email message: You are invited to participate in a study of perceptions

Dear (Director Name)

As Director of math, English or general education departments of this campus, you are invited to share your opinion in a study to deepen the understanding of how do you think the math, English, and general education professors, at one campus of a Private Chilean University, perceive they could support freshmen students of the Economics and Business Program and to improve their academic performance in math, English, and general education courses.

You are invited to participate in a one-on-one, face-to-face interview that will be settled at a mutually convenient location at a mutually convenient time.

Your perception is needed to help me understand how do you think the professors of your department may support freshmen students of the Economics and Business Program and to improve their academic performance in math, English, and general education courses.

All information you provide will be kept confidential, and refreshment will be supplied. I will contact you within two weeks to ask if you would be interested in participating in the study.

Sincerely,

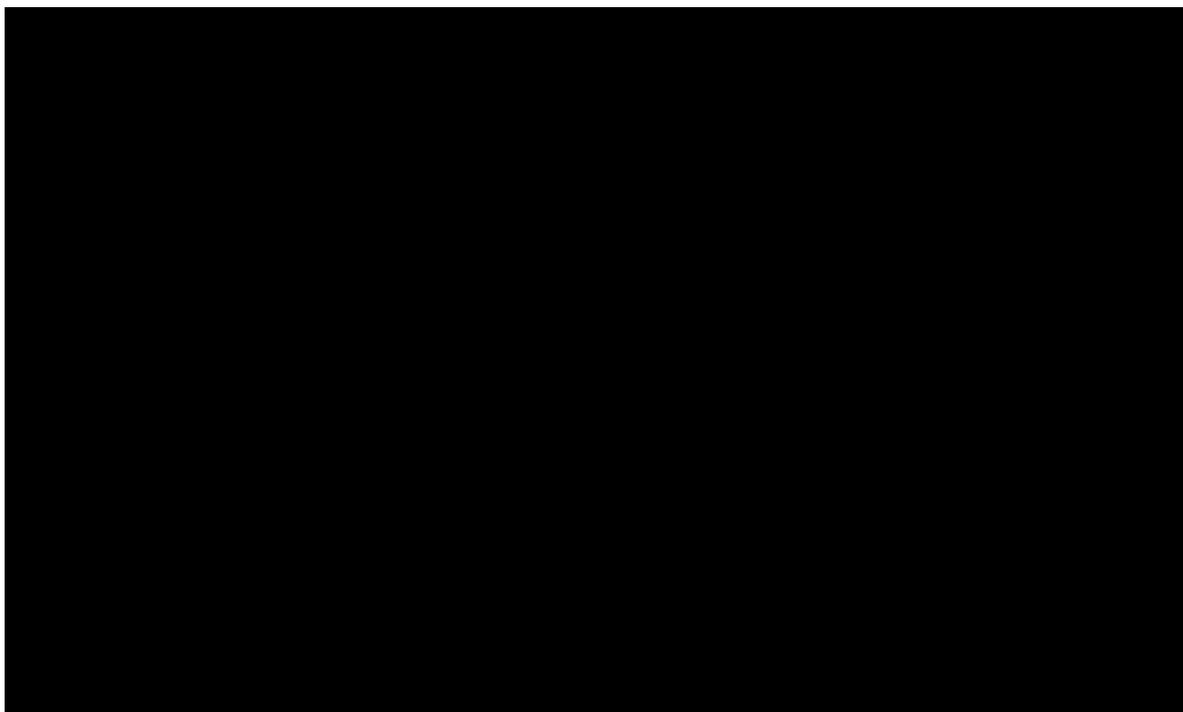
Karen Sauer

Walden University Doctoral Student

Appendix F: Data of Potential Participants

Professors' Archival Data

Last Name	Name	Cell Phone	Phone	Email Address	math	English	general education
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Appendix G: Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research study to deepen the understanding of how math, English, and general education professors perceive how they can support freshmen students of the Economics and Business program at one campus of a private Chilean university, which may improve their academic performance in math, English, and general education classes. The researcher is inviting the math, English, and general education professors who taught who taught the AY 2015 freshmen students of the EBP at one campus of a PCU.

This form is part of a process called “informed consent” to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Karen Sauer who is a doctoral student at Walden University. You may already know the researcher as the Undergraduate Director of the Economics and Business Program at Campus Casona, but this study is separate from that role.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to deepen the understanding of how the math, English, and general education professors perceive how they can support freshmen students of the Economics and Business program at one campus of a private Chilean university, which may improve their academic performance in math, English, and general education classes.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to attend to an interview that will last approximately 60 minutes.

Here are some sample questions:

- 1.- Could you please describe yourself, education, years of experience as a teacher, and how long you have been teaching at the Economics and Business Program of the Private Chilean University?
2. - Could you please tell me if you work as a full-time or part-time teacher at the Economics and Business Program of the Private Chilean University?
3. - Could you please describe your perception of the Private Chilean University PCU?
4. - Do you think the Economics and Business Program of the Private Chilean University is successful? If so why?
5. - Could you please tell me the course(s) you teach?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at the Private Chilean University will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Please note that not all volunteers will be contacted to take part of this study. Within two weeks I will email you if you were selected as a participant of this study.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as sadness and fatigue. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing.

The findings may lead to increased government resource allocation and improved student learning outcomes, leading to improved student retention. This study may contribute to positive social change through improved graduation rates and develop for the country.

Payment:

As participant of this study you will not receive any reward or payment.

Privacy:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. I will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, I will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. To protect your privacy I will use pseudonyms.

The data will be kept secure by a password-protected file on my personal computer, in my Dropbox and in my password pen drive backup. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact me by my email karen.sauer@waldenu.edu or by my cell phone XX X

XXXXXXXX. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 00 1 612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is IRB 07-08-16-0447407 and it expires on July 7, 2017.

The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Obtaining Your Consent

If you feel you understand the study well enough to make a decision about it, please indicate your consent by signing below

Printed Name of Participant

Date of consent

Participant's Signature

Researcher's Signature

Appendix H: Directors' Consent Form

As Director of math, English or general education Departments of this campus, you are invited to share your opinion in a study to deepen the understanding of how the math, English, and general education professors, at one campus of a Private Chilean University, perceive they could support freshmen students of the Economics and Business Program and to improve their academic performance in math, English, and general education courses.

This form is part of a process called “informed consent” to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Karen Sauer who is a doctoral student at Walden University. You may already know the researcher as the Undergraduate Director of the Economics and Business Program at Campus Casona, but this study is separate from that role.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to deepen the understanding of how the math, English, and general education professors perceive how they can support freshmen students of the Economics and Business program at one campus of a private Chilean university, which may improve their academic performance in math, English, and general education classes.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to attend to an interview that will last approximately 60 minutes.

Here are some sample questions:

1.- Could you please describe yourself, education, years of experience as a Director, and how long you have been the Director of math, English or general education Department in this Campus of the Private Chilean University?

Could you please describe your perception of the PCU?

Do you think the EBP of the PCU is successful? If so why?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at the Private Chilean University will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as sadness and fatigue. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing

The findings may lead to increased government resource allocation and improved student learning outcomes, leading to improved student retention. This study may contribute to positive social change through improved graduation rates and develop for the country.

Payment:

As participant of this study you will not receive any reward or payment.

Privacy:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. I will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, I will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. To protect your privacy I will use pseudonyms.

The data will be kept secure by a password-protected file on my personal computer, in my Dropbox and in my password pen drive backup. Data will be kept for a period of at least five years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact me by my email karen.sauer@waldenu.edu or by my cell phone XX X XXXXXXXX. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 00 1 612-312-1210. Walden University’s approval number for this study is IRB 07-08-16-0447407 and it expires on July 7, 2017.

The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Obtaining Your Consent

If you feel you understand the study well enough to make a decision about it, please indicate your consent by signing below

Printed Name of Participant

Date of consent

Participant’s Signature

Researcher’s Signature

Appendix I: Interview Protocol

Dissertation Study, July 2016

Site: XXXX University

Protocol

Before the session starts:

Set out refreshments

Set up the iPhone as recorder (have an extra battery and the wire to plug into the electricity supply in any case)

Check the required materials: Interview protocol sheets, consent forms, interview questions

Greetings and Consent Forms (10 minutes)

Greet the participant, offer water, coffee, or tea, and ask him/her to be seated

Ask the participant to sign the consent form and save it in a particular folder.

Make a copy of the consent form and give the copy to the participant

Welcome the Participant

Welcome: Introduce myself

Purpose: The purpose of my work is to deepen the understanding of how math, English, and general education professors perceive how they can support freshmen students of the Economic and Business program at one campus of a private Chilean university, which may improve their academic performance in math, English, and general education classes

You were invited here because you taught math, English or general education courses to freshmen students' of the EBP cohort 2015

Your answers will allow me to identify your perception of how you, as MEGE professor, think you may support freshmen students of the EBP to improve their academic performance in MEGE courses. Accordingly all your responses are correct, meaning that there are no right or wrong answers

I will record because my idea is to capture your opinion, perceptions, and comments

Additionally, I will take notes to capture my point of view

Please feel free to get more water, tea or coffee during the interview.

Questions/ Conversation: (60 minutes approximately)

Ask the interview questions

Record my field notes (perceptions, point of view and impressions)

Maintain the conversation

Pause if required to deepen the information I am gathering

Ask the participant if she/he may want to add anything

Avoid assent or verbally agree.

Conclusion (5 minutes)

Make a summary

Check accuracy

Thank the participant

Ask the participant if he/she will be able to meet again if I require clarifying any doubt.

After the session

Check to confirm if the iPhone recorded the conversation

Write a brief summary of the most significant topics immediately after the interview session ends.

Appendix J: Directors' Interview Protocol

Dissertation Study, July 2016

Site: XXXX University

Protocol

Before the session starts:

Set out refreshments

Set up the iPhone as recorder (have an extra battery and the wire to plug into the electricity supply in any case)

Check the required materials: Interview protocol sheets, consent forms, interview questions

Greetings and Consent Forms (10 minutes)

Greet the participant, offer water, coffee, or tea, and ask him/her to be seated

Ask the participant to sign the consent form and save it in a particular folder.

Make a copy of the consent form and give the copy to the participant

Welcome the Participant

Welcome: Introduce myself

Purpose: The purpose of my work is to deepen the understanding of how math, English, and general education professors perceive how they can support freshmen students of the Economic and Business program at one campus of a private Chilean university, which may improve their academic performance in math, English, and general education classes

You were invited here because as MEGE director you coordinate math, English or general education courses to freshmen students' of the EBP cohort 2015

Your answers will allow me to identify your perception of how you, as MEGE director, think you may support freshmen students of the EBP to improve their academic performance in MEGE courses. Accordingly all your responses are correct, meaning that there are no right or wrong answers

I will record because my idea is to capture your opinion, perceptions, and comments

Additionally, I will take notes to capture my point of view

Please feel free to get more water, tea or coffee during the interview.

Questions/ Conversation: (60 minutes approximately)

Ask the interview questions

Record my field notes (perceptions, point of view and impressions)

Maintain the conversation

Pause if required to deepen the information I am gathering

Ask the participant if she/he may want to add anything

Avoid assent or verbally agree.

Conclusion (5 minutes)

Make a summary

Check accuracy

Thank the participant

Ask the participant if he/she will be able to meet again if I require clarifying any doubt.

After de session

Check to confirm if the iPhone recorded the conversation

Write a brief summary of the most significant topics immediately after the interview session ends.

Appendix K: MEGE Professors' Interview Questions

The list of the proposed questions for the interview is as follows:

Could you please describe yourself, education, years of experience as a teacher, and how long you have been teaching at the EBP of the PCU?

Could you please tell me if you work as a full-time or part-time teacher at the EBP of the PCU?

Could you please describe your perception of the PCU?

Do you think the EBP of the PCU is successful? If so why?

Could you please tell me the course(s) you teach?

Have you have worked with freshmen students of the EBP in this PCU?

Do you think the freshmen students show the appropriate learning behavior?

Do you think freshmen students of the EBP are committed to their studies?

Do you think freshmen students do know how to study and learn?

Do you have stories of academic successful freshmen performance?

Do you think freshmen students require support to improve their academic performance at MEGE courses?

Do you think you could help freshmen students to improve their academic performance at MEGE courses?

Do you think the PCU might provide academic support to freshmen students of the EBP to improve their academic performance in MEGE courses?

What academic knowledge, do you think freshmen students need to improve their academic performance and be successful at MEGE courses?

Appendix L: MEGE Department Directors' Interview Questions

Could you please describe yourself, education, years of experience as a Director, and how long you have been the Director of math, English or general education Department in this Campus of the Private Chilean University?

Could you please describe your perception of the PCU?

Do you think the EBP of the PCU is successful? If so why?

Have you have worked with freshmen students of the EBP in this PCU?

Do you think the freshmen students show the appropriate learning behavior?

Do you think freshmen students of the EBP are committed to their studies?

Do you think freshmen students do know how to study and learn?

Do you have stories of academic successful freshmen performance?

Do you think freshmen students require support to improve their academic performance at MEGE courses?

Do you think your department could help freshmen students to improve their academic performance at MEGE courses?

Do you think the PCU might provide academic support to freshmen students of the EBP to improve their academic performance in MEGE courses?

What academic knowledge, do you think freshmen students need to improve their academic performance and be successful at MEGE courses?

Appendix M: Sample Research Log

The following is a research log used for one interview. A similar research log was used for each interview with MEGE professors and MEGE directors. To maintain confidentiality and anonymity, the participants' name was blacked out.

Participant: [REDACTED]
 Date: July 19 2016
 Place: meeting room of professors

The participant was talkative. She turned off her cell phone and arrived 5 minutes earlier.
 She engaged and shared her thoughts providing respectful details such as English leader.

③ beg university, big concepts
 → planning
 → support strategies → students' profile

④ responsibility → professors → scaffolds
 → students → involvement
 → University authorities → work → a component ⑤

⑥ students' profile: university of students, effective → effective
 to identify it

students learning scaffolds
 gaps → support

many do not want to be seen

Appendix N: Confidentiality Agreement

Name of Signer:

During the course of my activity in collecting data for this research: Examining
University Professors' Perception Supporting Freshmen Academic Performance

I will have access to information, which is confidential and should not be disclosed. I
acknowledge that the information must remain confidential, and that improper disclosure
of confidential information can be damaging to the participant.

By signing this Confidentiality Agreement I acknowledge and agree that:

I will not disclose or discuss any confidential information with others, including friends
or family.

I will not in any way divulge, copy, release, sell, loan, alter or destroy any confidential
information except as properly authorized.

I will not discuss confidential information where others can overhear the conversation. I
understand that it is not acceptable to discuss confidential information even if the
participant's name is not used.

I will not make any unauthorized transmissions, inquiries, modification or purging of
confidential information.

I agree that my obligations under this agreement will continue after termination of the job
that I will perform.

I understand that violation of this agreement will have legal implications.

I will only access or use systems or devices I'm officially authorized to access and I will not demonstrate the operation or function of systems or devices to unauthorized individuals.

Signing this document, I acknowledge that I have read the agreement and I agree to comply with all the terms and conditions stated above.

Signature:

Date:

Appendix O: Frequency Matrix

Themes	LC	LC	LC	ASW	LC	ASW	ASW	ASW	RC	RC	LC	RC	
Codes	INM	IB	IR	LBK	IF	ASH	LKSP	IISG	SLS	EMT	LR	US	
Participants													
1	1	1		1	1			1			1		
2		1	1							1			
3	1	1	1									1	
4		1	1									1	
5		1		1	1	1							
6	1	1	1					1	1			1	
7		1			1						1		
8	1	1	1				1					1	
9										1		1	
10		1											1
11		1	1	1				1			1		1
12	1	1	1					1					

LC Lack of Commitment
ASW Academic Students Weaknesses
RC Remedial Courses
CE Classroom Environment
KU Knowing the University
EB Ethical behavior

Themes Codes	RC LC	ASW LIM	CE NSC	CE LP	CE SCD	KU T	KU NE	KU AT	RC A	EB NAE	EB IG	EB EA
Participants												
1	1								1			
2	1					1		1				
3												
4			1		1							
5												
6												
7		1		1								
8												
9												
10										1	1	1
11		1	1	1			1	1				
12												

LC Lack of Commitment
ASW Academic Students Weaknesses
RC Remedial Courses
CE Classroom Environment
KU Knowing the University
EB Ethical behavior