Needs Assessment

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**Introduction to paper**

The different health needs and concerns of students are gradually changing in different schools and institutions across the world. The paper is based on a needs assessment aimed at identifying and addressing different opinions of students in the middle school and Towson University concerning different health fair topics. This report identifies and explains the different needs based on health fair topics as identified by Towson university and middle school students which will greatly help them in dealing with different health problems and consequently help different stakeholders of these institutions in identifying that can be improved to ensure students meet their health needs. Students are normally few but quite significant number of people in every society are associated with various health aspects, and specific concerns that are both local and international around different health disorders.

During the past decade, there has been a significant increase in the number of young people especially students in colleges and this has also increased their health concerns cutting across engaging in drug abuse which affects mental health and dealing with depression or stress. The target population considered in this assessment was the middle school students and college students while subjected to different surveys in a bid to collect their perceptions concerning different health issues affecting them.

The goals of this needs assessment include; learning what the students know and think about specific health issues which will help in identifying the most effective educational services or programs needed to address the issues of students. Another goal is to investigate how the different appropriate educational programs or services in relation to the students' issues can be availed for use by the different students.

 **Conducting an NA**

Needs assessment can be defined as a process used in the identification and investigation of different needs or gaps that exist between prevailing conditions and the anticipated or desired needs. Some scholars also define Needs Assessment as a systematic process of understanding different opinions, needs, perceptions and capabilities of a specific group. Most educational institutions normally use Needs Assessment to learn about the behavior of their students and their different needs hence paving a way on how to improve the institution in line with the needs and opinions of students. In this case, the Needs Assessment was being carried out to understand different health issues associated with students and find means on how such issues can be tackled. Furthermore, a needs assessment helps in identifying gaps in different completed programs which consequently gives an educational instructor to undertake proper decisions concerning the different needed additional investments programmed hence leading to more effective outcomes.

A well-completed needs assessment is associated with different positive factors which include (Grant, 2002);

Impact: This helps to provide an overview of how different educational programs may be of great importance to students or any group.

Approaches; These are associated with understanding the different educational strategies that may be more effective in addressing the issues and needs of the target audience

Awareness; Knowledge on the existing programs and identification of gaps that need to be addressed.

Outcomes; Credible information relating to the prevailing situation that can be of great help in documenting different outcomes

Demand; Information on the possible need for future educational programs and services by students.

Credibility; that the educational program is effectively meeting the demands of students which is a very great indicator to different funders of the program that it is effectively solving the health issues affecting students.

**Description of our Needs Assessment**

We carried out a direct needs assessment whereby a survey was used to collect data from the target audience. Research indicates that direct needs assessment is normally accomplished by conducting form research which involves the collection of data from different clientele.

The Needs Assessment about the opinions of students concerning different health fair topics was carried out on two groups, one for the middle school students and the other for Towson university students. Different phases were followed in a bid to have a successful needs assessment report free from errors or bias. These phases included pre-consultation, consultation of the different groups and finally post-consultation.

Pre-consultation involved identifying the different areas that could be focused on in the survey. Different health topics were selected and deemed fit for the survey since our aim was at assessing the opinions of students towards different health fair topics. This could, in the long run, give us a picture on which health issues could be affecting these students.

The other phase was post-consultation which involved assessing and analyzing the different data collected from the survey responses. This analysis was done carefully to ascertain whether our needs assessment had met the most anticipated objectives which included identifying health issues that could be affecting students based on their responses and finding out the best programs that could be used to address such needs.

Primary data was collected from the different students of the middle school and Towson University. The primary data is the surveys and money surveys offered to both middle school and college students. However, only responses from middle school students were considered for the needs assessment. Survey method of primary data collection was used because it helps in collecting the opinions of respondents about different issues, unlike secondary data which does not capture human perceptions about different aspects. (Nardi, 2018).

**Analysis of our NA**

We managed to collect very adequate data that was enough to successfully conduct our direct needs assessment. One of the factors that contributed to the success of the needs assessment was since it was direct in nature. Research indicates that direct needs assessments help researchers to collect data that is more specific to the different demands or needs of the target audience (Grant, 2002).

Regarding to our group’s scope, majority of the middle school students indicated that they were interested in health fair topics associated with eating disorders, health fitness, energy drinks, self-esteem and finally healthy sleeping habits. These responses were in line with the core objectives since they were associated with the health of students.

**Summary of paper**

The paper has clearly identified the needs of students in relation to their responses on what they would choose as the topics for the health fair. The students have majorly focused on health issues concerning eating disorders, energy drinking aspects, health fitness, and different health sleeping habits as well as self-esteem. All these topics are associated with mental health based on the effect that aspects like eating disorders and health fitness could affect the body if not given much attention. Any resulting program by different stakeholders in response to the assessment made on students should be based on addressing different health issues that could be affecting these students. This can be well addressed based on the topics raised for the health fair. Since they are a good representation of what students go through or are experiencing.

There is also a need to broaden the survey in the future needs assessment of the students. More emphasis could be the causes of the different health issues affecting students in the different institutions of learning.