In Search of Appropriate Admission Criteria for African Students Following Tertiary Agricultural Programs with Special Reference to Technikon Pretoria (South Africa)

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Introduction

The number of students admitted for studies in agricultural programs exceeds the number of students obtaining qualifications every year in the Faculty. Fewer students are completing their studies within the required time, thereby creating administration problems with reference to the limited resources. The study focuses on one of the possible cause of this situation: how to identify candidates with less risk of failing in agricultural studies.

Methodology

A questionnaire consisting of 46 probing questions was designed and interviews were held with 236 students randomly chosen from the 5 agricultural programs followed in the Faculty using systematic sampling technique. Questionnaire required students to provide biographical information, on issues such as the study program they are following, the age and the gender, information on the year of passing matriculation examinations; name and the type of the school and the subjects done were asked. It inquired about socio-economic issues such as were the home is situated, number of family members, the bread-winner at home, ownership of property, payment of fees at Technikon and the residence during studies. Questions on the agricultural practices at home, the purpose production, ownership of land and the financing of the agricultural production, the attitude and feelings about studies and Technikon Pretoria.

Information to Share

The relationship between specific school subjects and some background factors that affect the students’ achievement in agricultural studies at Technikon Pretoria are explained. An important point of emphasis of the study is on the admission criteria model based on performance indicators founded on background factors, which are recommended to used for the selection of students following the agricultural studies.

Conclusion and Educational Importance

The use of matriculation aggregate results only as a selection method is not fair since black South Africans are subjected to significant educational disadvantage, their matriculation cannot be take as a true reflection of their academic potential. There is no correlation between aggregate matriculation results and performance at Technikon.

The use of psychometric tests for admission: in relation to South African disadvantaged students, that it is not only unfair to rely on static measures of intellectual functioning, but also inaccurate, in that the test are invalid for the more modifiable disadvantaged students.

A combination of relevant selection methods, with emphasis on the candidates’ background, result in admission of successful students.