



Merwin Hall

## An Instrument Design to Measure Institutional Support of Transfer Students

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## Abstract

While 60% of US college students have attended multiple institutions, only 10% of institutional services in higher education are transfer specific (Bobbitt et al., 2021). The researchers designed an instrument to investigate the relationship between institutional support and student success for transfer program participants at a mid-sized university in Southwest Florida. Prior to undertaking a larger quantitative study on the relationship of institutional support and transfer student success, a pilot study was conducted to assess the feasibility of the survey questionnaire and data collection processes. The purpose of this study was to describe the pilot testing process, explore feasibility issues, and improve the instrument and methodology before initiating the main research project with a sample of transfer program participants at one university.

## Introduction

To understand the complexities of supporting AA graduates in transition, an instrument modified from the Laanan Transfer Student Questionnaire (L-TSQ) is developed to examine the relationship between institutional support and transfer student success (Laanan et al., 2010). The purpose of this pilot study was to produce a suitable instrument to measure the relationship of institutional support and transfer student success for participants of a transfer program in a university in Southwest Florida.

## Objective

Due to limited research exploring this population, this study explored: 1. What is the relationship between institutional support and transfer student success for participants in a transfer program in Southwest Florida?

## Methods

We designed an online instrument to measure the connection between satisfaction and frequency of institutional support and transfer student success. This fragment of the quantitative approach facilitates the analysis of trends, group comparison, variables association, statistical analysis and the interpretation of results (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Thus, this paper will focus on the instrument pilot study.

Our instrument is a modified version of the L-TSQ, developed to measure various academic and social components of support within the context of the state college and the university. It is important to note that previously validated surveys require the collection of additional reliability and validity in this specific study’s context (Rickards, et al., 2012). The L-TSQ was modified to limit the number of questions with the intent of increasing the response rate.

## Preliminary Results

In this pilot study, we shared our online survey’s link to professional and academic colleagues, and several transfer students (30) at one southwest regional university in the United States to be responded throughout three weeks. At its conclusion, 26 participants had completed it, corresponding to an 86.7% response rate. Of the survey’s respondents, 55% were females 35% were male, 5% non-binary, and 5% not reported. Additionally, 20% were ages 16 to 23, 10% 24 to 31, 35% 32 to 39, and 35% were over 40 years old. A majority of respondents were from the College of Education which can explain the disparity of gender and ages of respondents.

Table 1. The Structure of the Questionnaire Design

	Goals		Number of questions	Types of questions	Question samples
Section 1	Background	Basic demographic and academic information (age, gender, entry term, academic program)	9	Multiple choice, text answer, and sliding scale	What is your academic major at FGCU?
Section 2	Institutional Factors	State/community college factors	12	Likert-scale	I consulted with academic counselors regarding transfer.
		University Factors	12	Likert-scale	Upon transferring, I felt alienated at this 4-year university.
Section 3	Institutional Experiences	Influential experiences	4	Open-ended	Please share any experiences you feel positively influenced your adjustment to the university.

Items’ internal consistency (DeVellis, 2012) was measured using the SPSS software (George, & Mallery, 2003). Cronbach’s alphas were computed for each construct as follows: the institutional satisfaction subscale consisted of 4 items total (.815), the institutional dissatisfaction subscale consisted of 3 items total (.493), the frequency of state college support factors subscale

consisted of 5 items ( $\alpha = .782$ ), the university satisfaction subscale consisted of 6 items ( $\alpha = .854$ ), and the university dissatisfaction subscale consisted of 5 items ( $\alpha = .890$ ).

Table 2. Questionnaire Constructs

Construct		Items	Examples
Institutional Satisfaction	C1	11, 13, 14, 21	I received information from academic counselor(s) was helpful in the transfer process.
Institutional Dissatisfaction	C2	18, 19, 20	I felt overwhelmed about being at a large university with thousands of students.
Frequency of State College Support Factors	C3	10, 12, 15, 16, 17	I consulted with academic counselors regarding transfer.
University Satisfaction	C4	22, 23, 24, 25, 32, 33	I feel (felt) the courses I have taken have been interesting and worthwhile.
University Dissatisfaction	C5	26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31	Upon transferring, I felt alienated at this 4-year university.

The low alpha score in the institutional dissatisfaction construct may be attributed to the phrasing and word choice of the items. Through the initial responses and feedback received, improvements were made to several of the instrument’s items to increase clarity to increase the likelihood that respondents will interpret the items in the manner intended (Rickards, et al., 2012).

## Conclusion

This pilot study provides significant data to help improve our instrument. Following a subsequent pilot study and IRB approval, we will distribute the finalized survey at the same university. Results can act as a catalyst for change in higher education as it can help increase awareness in the need for increased resources and services targeting transfer students.