Satisfaction-Priorities Surveys

Interpretive Guide Addendum:
Priorities Survey for Online Learners™

Contents

Addendum: The Priorities Survey for Online Learners™

The Priorities Survey for Online Learners (PSOL) is appropriate for students in online learning programs. The PSOL is similar in structure and design to the Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL) Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) but the items have been modified and crafted to be appropriate for online learners.

The PSOL gives the institution an opportunity to examine the priorities of its online learning students as a unique group. The data help you to identify what matters to your online learners and how satisfied these students are. With this information, institutions can target areas most in need of improvement in order to retain these students.

The Priorities Survey for Online Learners asks students to respond with a level of importance and a level of satisfaction. A performance gap is calculated by subtracting the satisfaction score from the importance score.

Versions of the PSOL

There is only one version of the Priorities Survey for Online Learners. It is appropriate for administrations to students who are completing online programs as their primary interaction with an institution, or as a supplement to on-campus courses. It is also appropriate for undergraduate or graduate-level online learners. The norm group includes online learning students who have completed the PSOL.

Item Structure on the PSOL

- There are 26 standard items rated for importance and satisfaction on the PSOL.

- The PSOL includes ten items which may be defined by the institution and rated for importance and satisfaction. The text of the campus items is included in the reporting.

- The survey includes seven items that assess sources of information for the student. These items only ask for an importance rating and do not include satisfaction or performance gap scores.

- The survey includes 11 items that assess pre-enrollment factors. These items only ask for an importance rating and do not include satisfaction or performance gap scores.

- There are 13 standard demographic items on the PSOL.

- The PSOL includes two optional demographic items with up to fifteen responses (students may only select one response). The text for these items utilized by your institution is included in the reporting.

- The survey also includes an optional demographic item to capture the student's major or program with a four-digit numeric code. The responses are included in your results.

The Scales

The items on the PSOL have been analyzed statistically and conceptually to form comprehensive scales. A description of the scales follows.

PSOL: 5 scales

- Institutional Perceptions
- Academic Services
- Instructional Services
- Enrollment Services
- Student Services

Description of Scales

Institutional Perceptions: Assesses how students perceive your institution.

Academic Services: Assesses the services students utilize to achieve their academic goals. These services include advising, course offerings, technical assistance, online library resources, and tutoring services.

Instructional Services: Measures students' academic experience, the instructional materials, the faculty/student interactions, evaluation procedures, and the quality of the instruction.

Enrollment Services: Assesses the processes and services related to enrolling students in the online program, including financial aid, registration, and payment procedures.

Student Services: Measures the quality of student programs and services, including responses to student requests, online career services, and the bookstore.

The items that contribute to each scale can be viewed within your results. Use the filter in the upper left on the Item Report segment to see the items within each scale.

Reliability and Validity

The PSOL was derived from the RNL Student Satisfaction Inventory™, which has shown significant reliability and validity over time. In statistically valid terms, student satisfaction can be associated readily with numerous measures of institution success, including retention, graduation rates, and loan default rates. In a pilot study using 1,315 students, the scales for the PSOL show acceptable reliability, with a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.77.

A prior study on the validity of the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) demonstrated convergent validity by correlating satisfaction scores from the SSI with satisfaction scores from the College Student Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSSQ), another statistically reliable satisfaction instrument. The Pearson correlation between these two instruments ($r=.71$; $p<.00001$) is high enough to indicate that the SSI's satisfaction scores measure the same satisfaction construct as the CSSQ's scores, and yet the correlation is low enough to indicate that there are distinct differences between the two instruments.

Like its sibling inventories, the PSOL demonstrates significant statistical reliability.

The Inventory Development

The Priorities Survey for Online Learners was modeled on the Student Satisfaction Inventory. The text of the items was modified and crafted by RNL to be appropriate for online learning student responses.

The PSOL was piloted in 2001 and became available that same year.

Contact us

For general questions about reviewing your results or to order materials for a future administration, please contact:

- Shannon Cook, Executive Consultant, Student Success Solutions, Shannon.Cook@RuffaloNL.com

To schedule an in-depth report discussion at **no charge** or to explore opportunities to have a consultant come to campus to present your results (additional fees apply), please contact:

- Julie Bryant, Vice President for Student Success, Julie.Bryant@RuffaloNL.com

For questions regarding the raw data, or any additional assistance, please contact:

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