

## Evaluating Transmitted and vocational programs at Community Colleges at Qassim University

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### Abstract

Community College is an institution with a number of programs and disciplines of study for two or three years of study at the intermediate level between the high school and undergraduate programs this institution and features comprehensive and flexible to fit in with the needs of individuals and society and the needs of the development of human resources plans. It is one of their main objectives to provide a comprehensive and varied programs including rehabilitation of the functions needed by the labor market in the local community.

So it is necessary to conduct the evaluation process on an ongoing basis for all educational programs in the community colleges, whether their goals or methods, or their content or their output in order to improve educational programs, develop and promote it, for that there was a need to conduct an assessment study of the programs provided by Community Colleges in Qassim University, from in order to stand up to reality and thus to identify the strengths and weaknesses, and then contribute to the development and improvement in order to achieve the desired goals.

### Key Words

Community College; Vocational Programs; Higher education Assessment.

### 1. Introduction

Educational systems in various parts of the world is seeking to develop the educational process, and raise efficiency, improve the payback, and address the obstacles they face, according to the educational and scientific modern methods based on the use of measurement and evaluation tools, and to ensure the effectiveness of educational programs and to obtain information about their efficiency is of during an evaluation of her, so that the evaluation focuses on pre-defined themes, form the program objectives, and goals, and their content, and how to achieve the goals.

The aim of the evaluation process is to submit a report on the current situation of the educational process so that supplied this report the decision-makers with information about the program, which is subject to evaluation, using information and data as feedback to re-examine the efficiency of the program (Worth and Sander, 1987).

So it is necessary to conduct the evaluation process on an ongoing basis for all educational programs elements, whether their goals or methods, or their content or their output in order to improve educational programs, development and advancement, and this was confirmed by Stuffel Beam contained in (Worthen and Fitzpatric, 1997) in his model evaluation that the evaluation of the programs educational process must take into account the four basic elements: context, inputs, processes, outputs, must also be concerned with the process of program evaluation environment and educational variables associated as a vessel in which the

educational process, affecting the learning environment are in it, conditions and variables on the quality and efficiency of educational programs (Barak, 1982).

From here there was a need to conduct an assessment study for the programs provided by community colleges in Qassim University, in order to stand up to reality and thus to identify the strengths and weaknesses, and then contribute to the development and improvement in order to achieve their desired goals.

Therefore, this study was to reveal the extent to which the effectiveness and validity of programs, standards, by evaluating various fields from the viewpoint of students, and faculty members, and detect whether there are statistically significant differences in the degree of assessment attributable to the variables of the study differences.

The importance of this study is the lack of analytical and descriptive study - within the limits of science researchers - targeting the programs in the University of Qassim; focused on the strengths and weaknesses, and how to take advantage of them in their current or future. On the other hand, it works on the teaching and training of the beneficiaries of those programs a large number of qualified scientific and academic professors, but for the most part, perhaps forever, not involved in the decision-making or even evaluate those programs and the output of the educational process.

### **Research Objectives**

Our analysis has four primary goals. First, assess the effectiveness and validity of the programs offered by community colleges in Qassim University by checking, the ability to program in its current state to provide graduates meet the needs of the labor market, by knowing the extent to which the program criteria will be derived for this purpose from the standpoint of teaching and student body members. Second, knowledge of the differences between the views of faculty members and students, the extent to which the effectiveness of the program standards. Third, investigate the strengths and weaknesses of the programs, and the diagnosis of the most important problems and obstacles facing the programs and make it unable to achieve the desired goals. Fourth, determine the best ways to develop appropriate programs and methods, and to provide recommendations and suggestions for those in charge of programs to work to improve it and develop it in the light of the fact analysis.

## **2. Methodology**

To achieve the study goals, size and complexity of the Community Colleges at Qassim University, Saudi Arabia, were taken into consideration. Both community colleges at Qassim University, the one in Unaizah and the other in Buraydah, were not and won't most likely have different missions. As a result, quantitative methods were mainly used in the study in which two surveys were digitally distributed to the subjects: one was for faculty members in both colleges and the other targeted students.

Quantitative data were collected focusing on different aspects such as admission, curriculum designed and credits, teaching methods, advising and counseling, access to colleges, academic programs and its relations to the job markets. Moreover, the surveys asked participants responses regarding demographic information and local labor market conditions.

Obtained data were statistically analyzed using SPSS for the two surveys and descriptive analysis of the responses was also provided. In the Community College at Qassim University, there were 40 faculty members teaching in the academic year 2015-2016, and 60 students studying at the same academic year.

### 3. Literature Review

Nationwide, community colleges serve over 11 million students on an annual basis (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). An estimated 1,655 community colleges exist to provide students in the United States with the necessary educational and training opportunities to bridge the gap to further educational careers and economic prospects. However, challenges continue to impact community colleges (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). While enrollments at community colleges continue to rise each year, students are having difficulty completing their programs of study (Derby & Smith, 2004). Minority students, overall, continue to be underrepresented in terms of educational achievement, as opposed to their Non counterparts (Benitez & DeAro, 2004). As a result, community colleges have been often identified as “revolving door” establishments (Derby & Smith, 2004, p. 763).

Various theoretical models of college attrition have been developed by several researchers in order to try to identify the variables that influence students to leave or stay in college (Spady, Tinto, Bean & Metzner cited in Summers, 2003). The findings indicated that students, however, leave college for a combination of reasons. The most common reason for students to drop-out was believed to be for academic difficulties. Summers (2003), however, has asserted that additional factors, such as registering late for classes, poor academic performance, having a full-time job, confusion regarding educational goals, and not utilizing campus resources, have also been found to lead to high attrition rates.

Community colleges attract students from varied family backgrounds, socio-economic status groups, academic abilities, as well as levels of motivation (Medsker & Tillery, 1971; Richardson, 1972). Community colleges, therefore, have a variety of students with different needs. Some are *non-traditional* background in the workforce, as compared to the straight from high school (Healy & Reilly, 1989; U.S. Census Bureau, 2001).

According to Ray & Altekruise (2000), community college students tend to be comprised of predominately single parents who are female, minorities, and in their late 20s. Furthermore, many of these students who attend colleges are first generation college students; thus, they have parents who did not attend college and they represent at least 27 percent of all graduating high school students (Geher & Renstrom, 2004).

Many of the students enrolled in community college are often not academically prepared for college coursework. According to McCabe (cited in Byrd & MacDonald, 2005), “In a national study of community college education, 41 percent of entering community college students and 29 percent of all entering college students are under prepared in at least one of the basic skills of reading, writing, and math” (p. 1). These students thus require some form of developmental coursework in order to get them academically prepared. Remedial programs for high school graduates are the norm in community colleges (Benitez & DeAro, 2004). The aforementioned characteristics indicate that community college students grapple with issues beyond those of traditional students (Haggan, 2000).

The purpose of orientation is to facilitate students in making the transition from high school to the college of their choice. Orientation courses can vary from one hour courses for a couple of weeks that are non-credit to three hour courses, for credit, and that are the length regular college course (Lang-Jones, 2002; O’Banion, 1972; Purnell & Blank, 2004). Orientation sessions provide students with the opportunity to learn more about a variety of services available to them on campus such as student organizations, activities, and campus resources.

Administrators and staff of colleges and universities have made the effort to utilize different strategies to promote student achievement and retention. Research regarding emotional intelligence has indicated that emotional success as well as occupational success as compared to traditional Intelligence Quotient (IQ) tests (Goleman, 1995; Nelson & Low, 2005).

#### 4. Results

Our study focused on 4 angles of the educational process:

Admission rules, program objectives, studying plan, and academic advice. From the view point of the faculty staff member and the students.

First: Faculty staff member

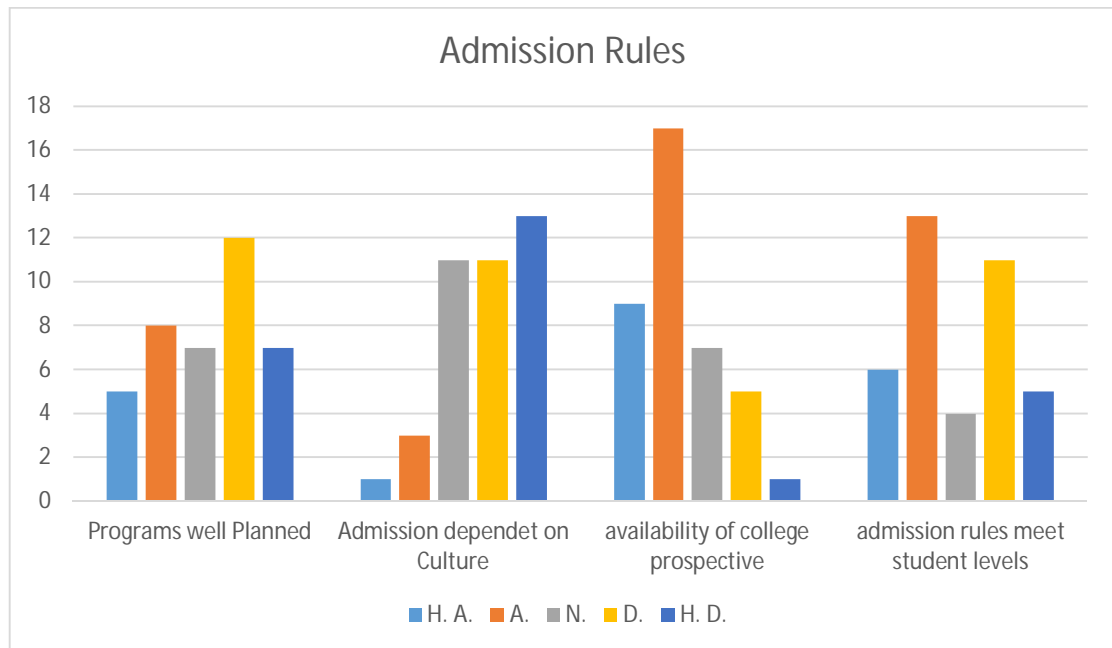


Fig. 1 Admission rules - Faculty staff

The **admission** process for select programs from the view point of the staff is as follow, 30% of the samples do not agree with the admission rules followed by the community colleges in Qassim University, and see that it isn't suitable for the nature of community colleges which differ in its nature from the other colleges in the university.

Almost of the sample see that the culture of the society effect the attendance of their sons due to the bad look for the association degrees in the society. More than 40 % of the sample agree that the admission rules is available for every one and well defined.

The sample divided between agree and disagree for the relation between the education level of the student and the admission rules of the college.

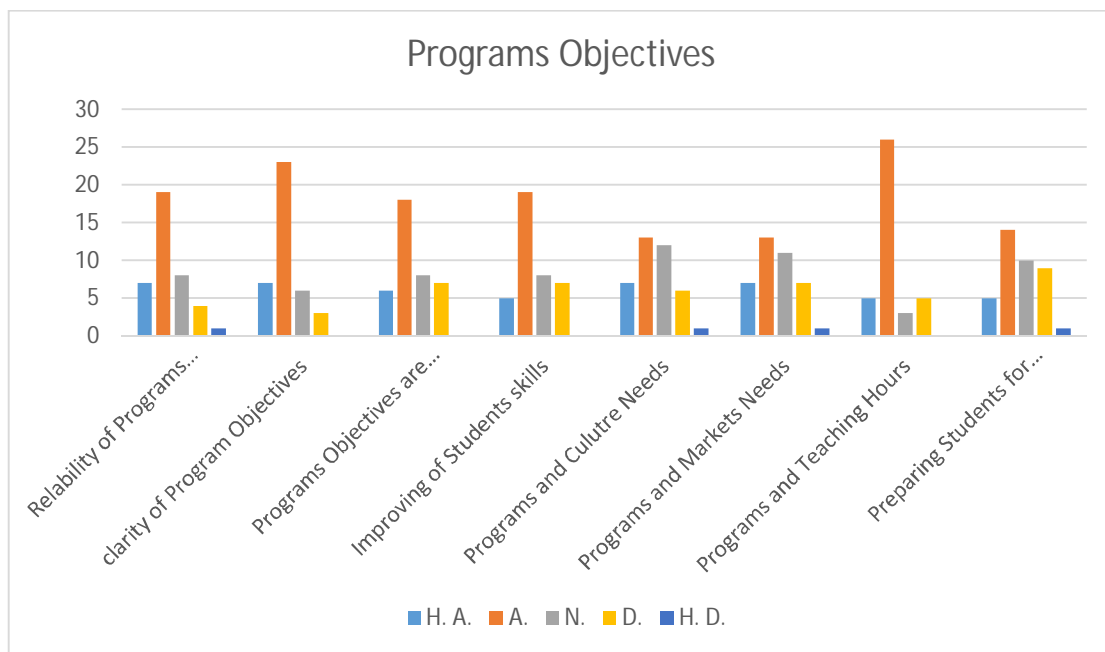


Fig. 2 Programs objectives – Faculty staff

Programs objectives describe the intended purposes and expected results of teaching activities. The sample agreed on the realistic of the educational objectives of the programs provided by community colleges and its clarity for all of the Beneficiaries, and also agreed with the strong relationship between the programs objectives and the goals of the community colleges, beside the goals of the university and the surrounding society, and its contribution for the development of the surrounding society. The staff also agreed that the programs objectives meet the requirements of labor markets and the good preparation of the students to fulfill the markets requirements.

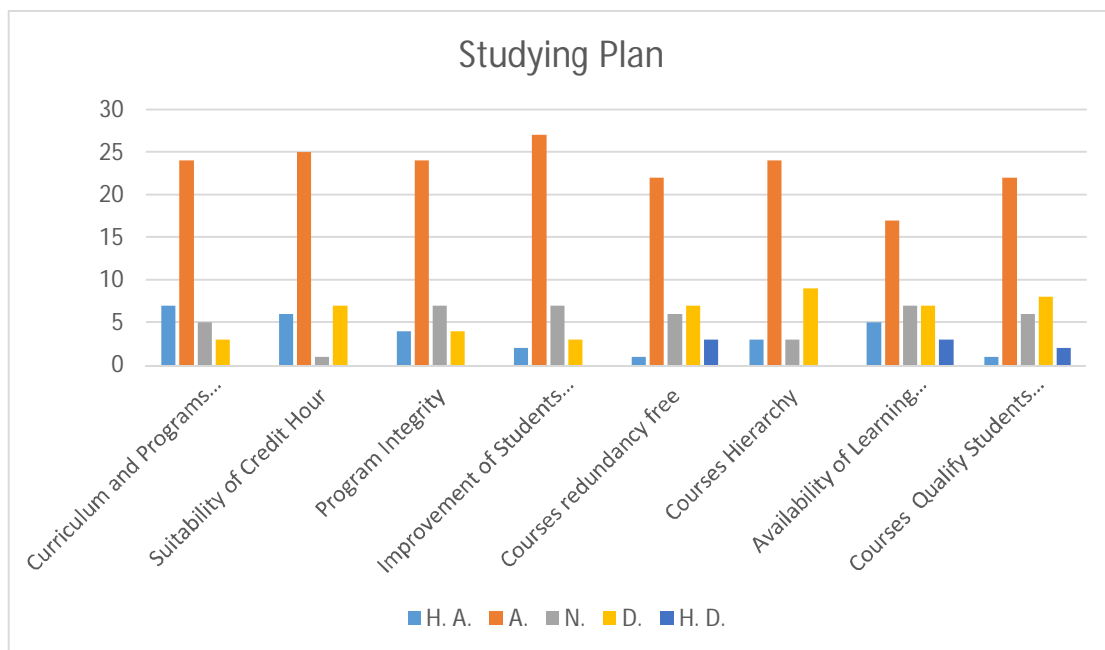


Fig. 3 Studying plan – Faculty Staff.

A **study plan** is an organized schedule that students create that outlines study times and learning goals. The faculty staff members in the community colleges agreed that the courses are will designed and characterized by good hierarchical structure without redundancy, beside that the availability of the learning resources and the facilities which help in delivering the contents of the courses.

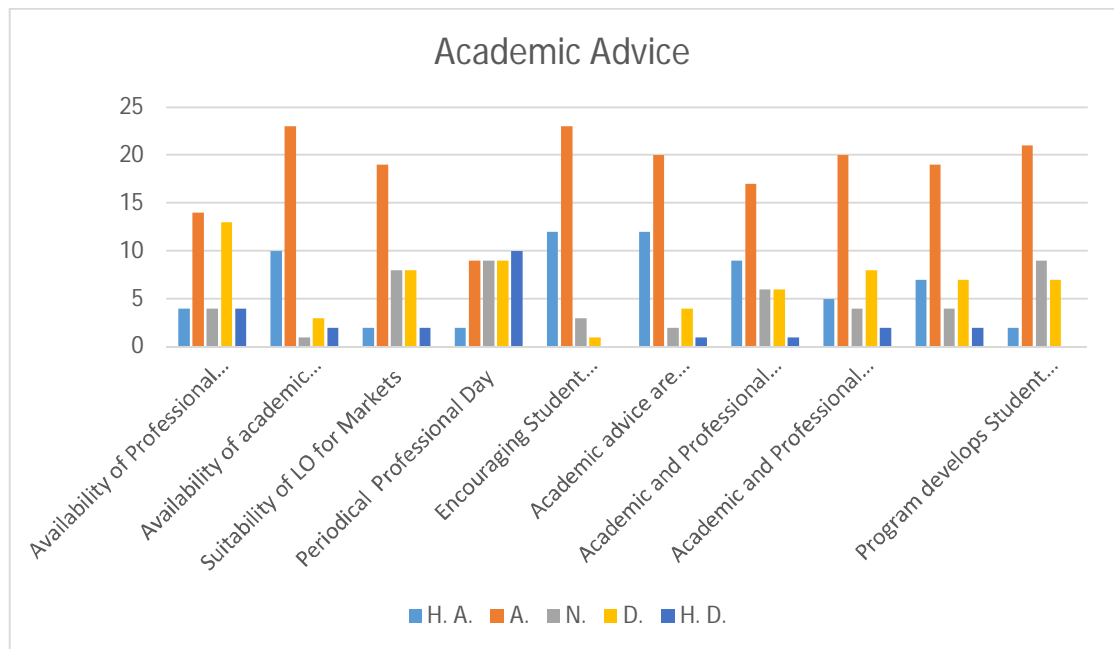


Fig. 4 Academic Advice – Faculty Staff

**Academic Advising** is an opportunity to exchange information designed to help students reach their educational and career goals. The faculty staff in the sample agree that there is a planned academic advice for the student and all the staff member in the colleges participate in it with sufficient way. But the professional advice is not sufficient for the student and the professional day is held only in the university periodically.

Second: Students view point

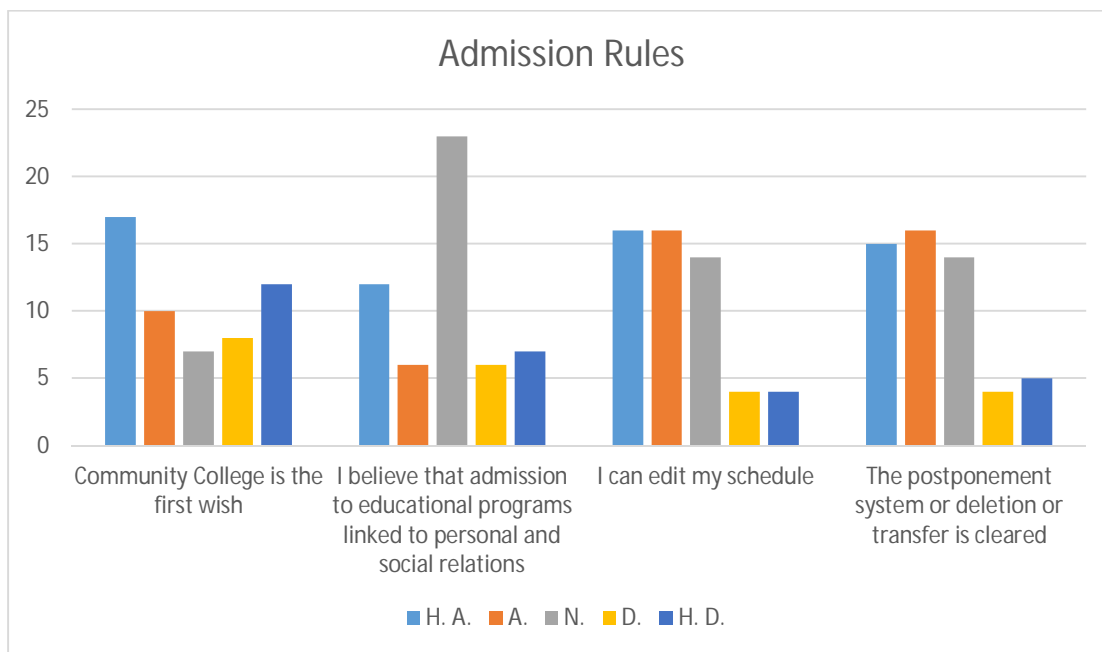


Fig. 5 Admission rules - Students

Figure 5 shows that, almost 30 % of the samples agree that the community college was there first reluctant to be joined. But they confused about the admission procedure that may be affected by the social relation and personal behavior.

They are not knowing about the admission rules, although it is advertised in the web site of the university.

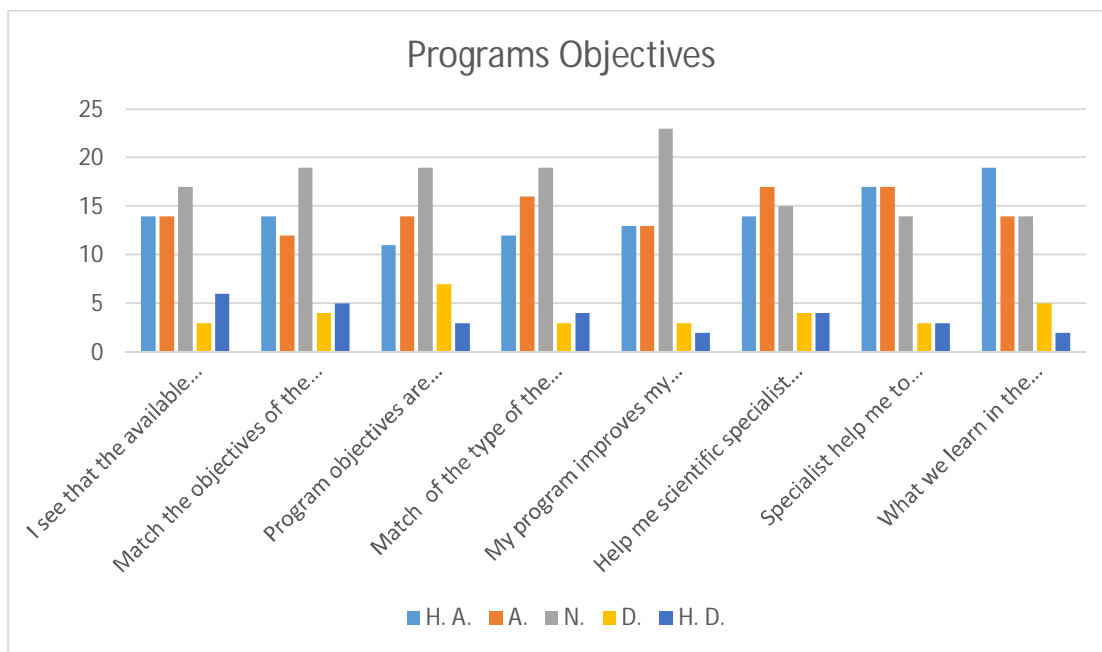


Fig. 6 Programs objectives - Students

From figure 6, the students see the insufficiency of the educational goals with their ambitions and their needs, and its suitability with the labor market. They

agree that the program develop their mental abilities to solve problems and qualifying them to join the labor market and to develop their surrounding society.

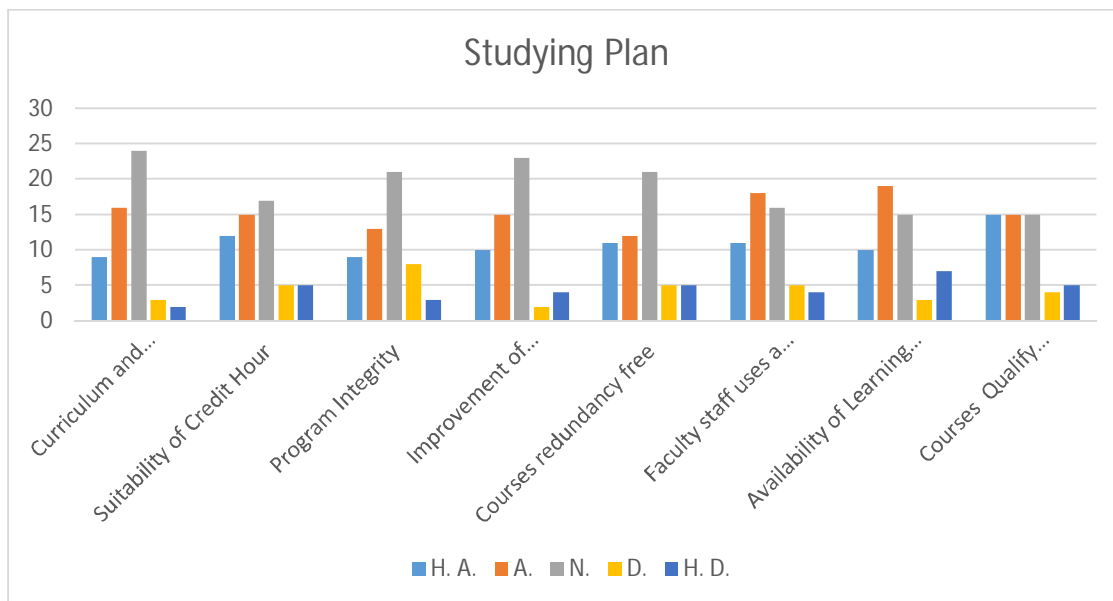


Fig. 7 Studying Plan - Students

In figure 7, the students in the sample are not gathered on agreeing on the suitability of the credit hours of the programs beside the hierarchical structure of the program courses. Also the relation of the courses with each other in the programs are not cleared. But they agree with the staff about the availability of the learning resources and educational facilities in the colleges.

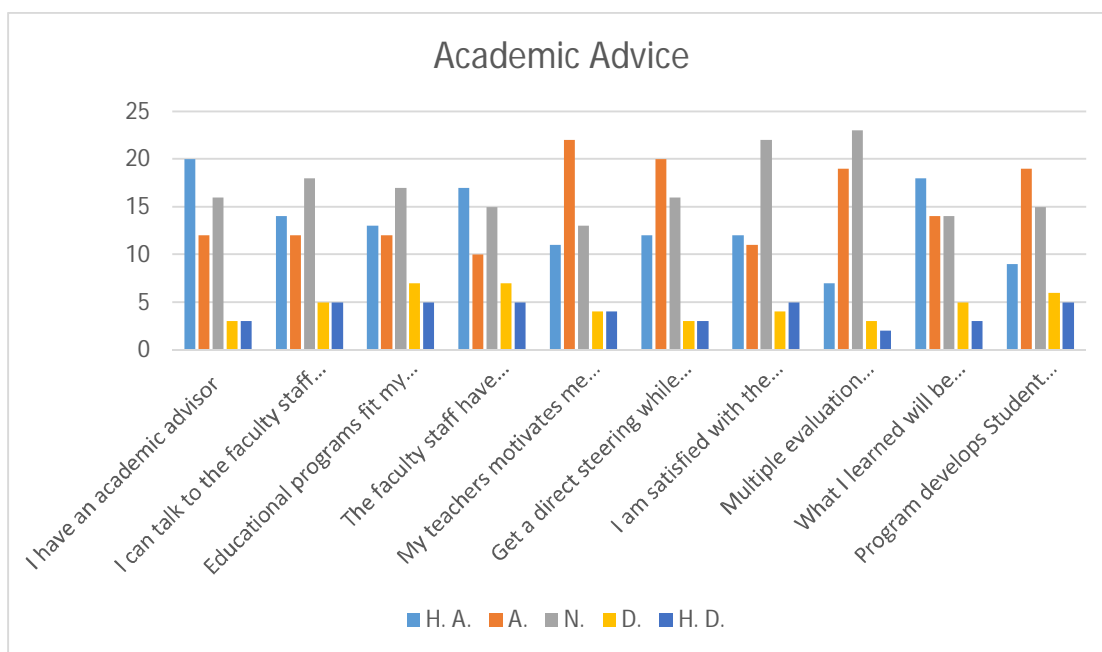


Fig. 8 Academic advice - Students

Figure 8 shows that, they agree about the present of academic advice and there is a staff member responsible for each student but they are not satisfied with the provided advice.



## 5. Discussions

The findings of the study indicated that the community Colleges in Qassim University have a well-defined objectives fulfill the requirements of labor markets and satisfy the students needs. Besides that, the admission rules for the community colleges have to be modified to be in line with the nature of the community college which is differ from the other academic colleges in the university.

The leak of the professional advice in the colleges make a gap between the colleges and the labor markets and also lead to the leakage of the information about the need of a new programs to be a line with the development of the markets and their needs.

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