(REVIEW ARTICLE)

Student services and the pandemic: Retrospective and prospective

Bryan Eli Bagasin Sadorra [1, 2, *]

[1] Graduate School, Divine Word College of Laoag, Ilocos Norte, Philippines.
[2] Secondary Education, College of Teacher Education, Mariano Marcos State University, Ilocos Norte, Philippines.

Abstract

COVID-19 has challenged everyone. It has caused a lot of changes in all aspects of life – including education. The pandemic has brought education crisis which also affected student development and services - a very important facet and an integral part of the academic system. This paper aims to trace the students' services prior the worldwide health crisis and its development aid and beyond the pandemic. In achieving this, a comprehensive review of different literature shall be done. This paper reveals that student services have been in the academic system even before the pandemic. It is something that has been in place and has been given. However, changes have been observed in the middle of the health crisis most especially that it arrives was so sudden that no one was prepared. The pandemic has affected student development and the offering of its services during the pandemic. Admittedly, it also has been adjusted for its future implementation

Keywords: Pandemic; COVID-19; Education; Student Services; Student Development; Student Development and Services

1. Introduction

The world was shocked because of the COVID-19. It was a sudden, unforeseen event for many which caused abrupt changes. This pandemic has created unprecedented challenges economically, socially, and politically across the globe. Many lives were taken. Sources of income was robbed. Socialization skills deteriorated. Relationships were destroyed. It was this pandemic that caused a lot of brouhahas in the lives of people.

However, more than just a health and societal crisis, it has resulted in an education crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a significant education crisis, affecting millions of students worldwide. The most obvious impact has been the closure of schools, colleges, and universities to reduce the spread of the virus. This sudden shift to remote learning has posed many challenges, particularly in developing countries and low-income households where access to technology and the internet is limited (Alenezi, 2022). This has resulted in an uneven distribution of education, with disadvantaged students falling further behind their peers, thereby widening the already existing achievement gap. The sudden shift to remote learning has also had negative implications on the quality of education. Many teachers and students are not adequately equipped to handle online learning platforms, leading to low engagement and motivation, leading to negative consequences on student performance. Additionally, the lack of social interaction and extracurricular activities has contributed to mental health issues - including anxiety and depression (Campbell, 2021). This, in turn, can negatively impact students' academic performance.

In the world, most countries have temporarily closed child-cares, nursery, primary and secondary schools, colleges, and universities to control the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic (TUAC Secretariat Briefing, 2020). COVID-19 impacts not

---

* Corresponding author: Bryan Eli Bagasin Sadorra.

only students but also it affects teachers and parents across the world. UNESCO reported that over 1.5 billion students in 195 countries are out of school in the world due to the school closures (UNESCO, 2020b).

In the midst of this universal education crisis caused by the pandemic is the affected status of programs and activities relating to student development and services. School offices have been impacted. Many plans have been stopped and many strategies have been changed just for administrators and teachers to cater to students' needs. This paper aims to trace the students' services prior the pandemic and its development aid and beyond the pandemic. Its goal is to trace the growth of the students' services before the pandemic as well as how they changed during and after it.

2. Methodology

A literature review on the different student services before, during and after the pandemic was conducted in this study. A literature review can broadly be described as a more or less systematic way of collecting and synthesizing previous research (Baumeister & Leary, 1997; Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003 as stated by Snyder, 2019). An effective and well-conducted review as a research method creates a firm foundation for advancing knowledge and facilitating theory development (Webster & Watson, 2002 as stated by Snyder, 2019).

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Pre-pandemic student development and student services

Before the pandemic, student development and student services were essential components of the education system, designed to support student success and well-being. These services varied depending on the type of institution, but some of the common ones included:

- Academic Advising: Colleges and universities provided academic advising to help students select courses, develop academic plans, and track progress towards graduation. Academic advisors also helped students navigate academic policies and procedures, choose majors, and explore career options. Academic advising is the process between the student and an academic advisor of exploring the value of a general education, reviewing the services and policies of the institution, discussing educational and career plans, and making appropriate course selections. (The University of Maine, n.d.)
- Career Services: Career centers provided students with career exploration, job search support, and networking opportunities. They offered resources such as resume and cover letter writing assistance, mock interviews, and access to job boards and career fairs. (Panina, 2020)
- Counseling Services: Mental health counseling was available for students to address personal and emotional concerns, including depression, anxiety, and stress. Counseling services were essential in promoting student well-being and academic success. (ASCA, 2022)
- Health Services: Health clinics provided students with access to primary healthcare services such as immunizations, physical exams, and treatment of minor illnesses and injuries. These clinics also offered wellness programs such as nutrition counseling and health education. Health services are vital to every student's welfare while inside the school. In fact, the research of Leroy, et.al. (2016) found out that direct access to school nursing and other health services improved clinical outcomes and reduced absences among children… Across several studies, improvements in clinical symptoms, medication adherence, and health-care utilization were seen when interventions, such as directly observed therapy, access to medications, and active retrieval of action plans from physicians (particularly for asthma), were implemented by school nursing staff.
- Extracurricular Activities: Colleges and universities offered a range of extracurricular activities to provide students with social, leadership, and volunteer opportunities. These activities included student organizations, clubs, sports teams, and community service programs.

Overall, pre-pandemic student development and student services were comprehensive and well-established components of the education system, designed to promote student success and well-being. These services provided students with the necessary support to achieve their academic and personal goals and foster a sense of belonging within the academic community.

3.2. How the pandemic affected student development and services

The pandemic has had a significant impact on student development and services, particularly for those attending colleges and universities. The closure of campuses and the shift to remote learning has caused a lack of social interaction and reduced opportunities for students to engage in extracurricular activities, resulting in a negative impact on student

development. As what Baber (2021) found out that social interaction has a positive significant impact on the effectiveness of online learning. However, this effect is reduced in the presence of social distance norms as people give more importance to continuous learning and to saving lives rather than socializing in the online environment.

The pandemic has also disrupted access to crucial student services, such as career centers, counseling services, and health clinics, which are essential to support student success (Veerasamy & Ammigan, 2022). The closure of these services has made it difficult for students to receive academic, mental health, and career support, leading to increased stress and anxiety, which can negatively impact student academic performance and overall well-being.

Furthermore, the pandemic has also caused significant disruptions to research opportunities and internships, which are critical for students' professional development. The reduction of research funding, the cancellation of conferences, and the decreased availability of internships have limited the opportunities for students to gain practical experience, making it challenging to prepare them for their future careers.

In the research of Sharma and Bhaskar (2020), it was found out that during the transition from conventional in-person or classroom teaching to tele-delivery of educational programs, medical students have to navigate various social, economic and cultural factors which interfere with their personal and academic lives. This is especially relevant for those from vulnerable, underprivileged or minority backgrounds. Students from vulnerable backgrounds are influenced by environmental factors such as unemployment of themselves and family members, lack of or inequity in provision and access to educational technologies and remote delivery-platforms, and increased levels of mental health stressors due to prolonged isolation and self-quarantine measures.

Finally, the pandemic has also caused financial hardships for many students, resulting in a significant impact on their ability to afford basic needs such as food, housing, and healthcare. This has created barriers to accessing educational opportunities and resources and has further contributed to a widening achievement gap.

Overall, the pandemic has had far-reaching and long-lasting effects on student development and services, impacting both academic and non-academic aspects of their lives, and requiring educators and institutions to adapt to meet the evolving needs of students during these challenging times.

3.3. How Student Services have helped during the pandemic

Student Services played a crucial role in supporting students during the pandemic. The pandemic has disrupted many aspects of student life. Student services, including counseling, academic advising, and career services, have been essential in helping students navigate these challenges and continue to succeed in their academic and personal lives.

3.4. In particular, here are some of the ways in which they helped:

- Mental health support: The pandemic has taken a toll on the mental health of many students. Student Services provided counseling and other mental health services to help students cope with the stress and anxiety. In the study of Garson, et.al. (2022), it was found out that the guidance and counseling program ranked second among the SAS services that the students liked the most during the pandemic. The student organization services followed the guidance services. It shows that the students during the pandemic need connection. The guidance services provided online counseling while the student organization regularly conducts leadership and student formation webinars.
- Academic support: With the sudden shift to online learning, many students faced challenges in adapting to the new format. Student Services provided academic support such as tutoring and study resources to help students succeed in their courses. Orientation and information services were provided as well as guidance services Garson, et.al. (2022) found out that the orientation and information services as well as the guidance services were very helpful to the students during the pandemic. In addition, Kelly (2021) found out that online student support became a key issue for higher education institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic and their top priority is providing academic support services such as tutoring or academic advising.
- Financial assistance: Many students were impacted financially by the pandemic, either through job losses or reduced hours. Student Services provided emergency financial assistance to help students with basic needs such as housing, food, and internet access. (Smith, 2021)
- Technology support: With the move to online learning, many students faced technology challenges such as internet access, computer issues, or unfamiliar software. Student Services provided technology support to help students overcome these barriers. (Smith, 2021)

- Community building: The pandemic has been isolating for many students, especially those who live off-campus. Student Services provided virtual events and activities to help students connect with each other and maintain a sense of community. (Smith, 2021)

Overall, Student Services played a vital role in supporting students during the pandemic by addressing their various needs and challenges.

3.5. Student development and services beyond the pandemic

Even though the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on student services, it is crucial to recognize that students' needs and expectations for these services extend beyond the pandemic.

3.5.1. Here are some student services that will continue to be essential even after the pandemic

- Mental Health Services: Many students experience stress, anxiety, and other mental health challenges that can impact their academic performance and overall well-being. Mental health services such as counseling, therapy, and support groups are essential for students, and institutions should continue to invest in these services even beyond the pandemic.
- Career Services: Students rely on career services to help them prepare for the job market, gain practical experience, and connect with potential employers. These services are important for students at all stages of their academic careers and should be continued post-pandemic.
- Academic Advising: Academic advising is critical to students' success and helps them make informed decisions about their academic and career paths. Students will continue to need access to academic advisors who can guide them through their academic journeys, help them select courses, and navigate degree requirements.
- Financial Aid: Financial aid is essential to many students, and institutions should continue to provide a range of financial aid options and support services, including scholarships, grants, and student loans.
- Student Engagement: Students need opportunities to engage with their peers, faculty, and staff members, even outside of the classroom. Student organizations, extracurricular activities, and cultural events are all critical to building a sense of community and enhancing the student experience. (Wu and Teets, 2021). One of the main reasons why student engagement is so important is because the associated skills and habits – motivation, joy of learning, persistence, curiosity – set students up to thrive in college and their careers. (Toth, n.d.)

In summary, while the pandemic has created new challenges for higher education, institutions must continue to prioritize essential student services to support students' academic and personal success.

4. Conclusion

This paper tracks down student services, programs and activities before the onslaught of COVID-19. Also, it narrates how student services offered by education institutions have been affected by the health crisis as well as how student services of schools have helped learners in their struggles. Lastly, it narrates how student services may be in the future, in the new normal.

This study shows that the academic system had student assistance even before the epidemic. It is something that has already been established and provided. Yet, there have been changes noted in the midst of the health crisis, particularly since its arrival was so unexpected that nobody was ready. The epidemic has impacted how students develop and how its services are provided. Undoubtedly, it has also been modified for eventual implementation.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

References

[1] Alenezi, E., Alfadley, A.A. Alenezi, D.F. & Alenezi, Y. (2022). The Sudden Shift to Distance Learning: Challenges Facing Teachers. Journal of Education and Learning, 11(3), 14–26. https://doi.org/10.5539/jel.v11n3p145999.pdf

[2]   American School Counselor Association (2020). The School Counselor and Student Mental Health, Retrieved from https://www.schoolcounselor.org/Standards-Positions/Position-Statements/ASCA-Position-Statements/The-School-Counselor-and-Student-Mental-Health

[3]   Baber, H. (2022), "Social interaction and effectiveness of the online learning – A moderating role of maintaining social distance during the pandemic COVID-19", Asian Education and Development Studies, Vol. 11 No. 1, pp. 159-171. https://doi.org/10.1108/AEDS-09-2020-0209

[4]   Campbell, L. (2021). Impact Of Covid-19 On Children's Social Skills, Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com/sites/leahcampbell/2021/10/31/impact-of-covid-19-on-childrens-social-skills/?sh=546f86882a54

[5]   Garson, C.C., Angel, D.J.R & Decena, C.F. (2022). Evaluation of Student Affairs and Services of PRMSU during Pandemic. American Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research (AJHSSR), 6(10), 75–82.

[6]   Kelly, R. (2022). How Institutions Met Student Needs During the Pandemic, Retrieved from https://campustechnology.com/articles/2021/06/16/how-institutions-met-student-needs-during-the-pandemic.aspx

[7]   J. Chem. Educ. (2021), 98 (12), 3633–3642 https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.jchemed.1c00665

[8]   Leroy ZC, Wallin R, Lee S. The Role of School Health Services in Addressing the Needs of Students With Chronic Health Conditions. J Sch Nurs. 2017 Feb;33(1):64-72. doi: 10.1177/1059840516678909. Epub 2016 Nov 21. PMID: 27872391; PMCID: PMC5654627.

[9]   Panina, S. V., Arkhipova, S. N., Parnikova, T. A., Sergina, E. S., & Sleptsova, M. V. (2020). Student Career Choices before and during Quarantine Measures. Propósitos y Representaciones, 8 (SPE3), e711. Doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.20511/pyr2020.v8nSPE3.711

[10]   Sharma, D. & Bhaskar, S. (2020) Addressing the Covid-19 Burden on Medical Education and Training: The Role of Telemedicine and Tele-Education During and Beyond the Pandemic. Front. Public Health 8:589669. doi: 10.3389/fpubh.2020.589669

[11]   Smith, L. (2021). Retrieved from https://patient.info/news-and-features/how-are-universities-supporting-students-during-the-covid-19-pandemic

[12]   Snyder, H. (2019). Literature review as a research methodology: An overview and guidelines. Journal of Business Research Retrieved from https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0148296319304564#s0070

[13]   Toth, M. (n.d.) Why Student Engagement is Important in a Post-COVID World – and 5 Strategies to Improve It. Retrieved from https://www.learningsciences.com/blog/why-is-student-engagement-important/

[14]   The University of Maine (n.d.). Faculty Handbook. Retrieved from https://machias.edu/academics/faculty-handbook/section-iv-academic-pol/academic-adv-def/#:~:text=Academic%20advising%20is%20the%20process,Goals

[15]   TUAC Secretariat Briefing (2020). Impact and Implications of the COVID 19-Crisis on Educational Systems and Households (pp. 1-9). The Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) to the OECD.

[16]   UNESCO (2020b). UNESCO Rallies International Organizations, Civil Society and Private Sector Partners in a Broad Coalition to Ensure #LearningNeverStops. UNESCO. Retrieved from https://en.unesco.org/news/unesco-rallies-international-organizations-civil-society-and-private-sector-partners-broad

[17]   Veerasamy, Y. S., & Ammigan, R. (2022). Reimagining the Delivery of International Student Services During a Global Pandemic: A Case Study in the United States. Journal of Studies in International Education, 26(2), 145–164. https://doi.org/10.1177/10283153211052779.