Innovations

Pandemic Era (Covid-19) and Higher Education in the Philippines Against The World Perspective: A Literature Survey Analysis

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Abstract

The objective of the study is to analyze the situation of Higher Education during the Pandemic Era of Covid-19 in the Philippines from the World perspective. The literature survey analysis is limited to published articles and studies. Literature survey analysis is a type of literature review aimed as broadly described, more or less systematic, way of collecting and synthesizing previous chosen researches supposed identified in accordance to a chose focus. Popular search engines were used browsing through ScienceDirect, Research Gate, and Web of Science were used to generate the information. This health emergency of Covid-19 raised to a pandemic level had changed and kept on affecting millions of lives of astounding magnitude with multidimensional implications. The pandemic placed the whole world into a standstill, interventions putting countries into a shutdown as most if not all nation's leaders chose strict quarantine restrictions to all social and economic activities. Higher education is one social institution affected just the same as others. The safety of students, teachers and administrators were put at a priority thus forcing the entire educational system into a challenge of continuing the teaching-learning process without compromising the health conditions of everyone involved in the process. Alternatives were identified towards the more impersonal and indirect methodology of continuing the learning process. Online education, distance education, e-learning, and other alternative modes of learning delivery by any means necessary just to be able to continue on with the "new normal" in the academic institutions. Technology were more than welcome into this alternative models. The internet, social media applications, and even the more traditional television and radio were utilized to supplement the more popular ones. There were also revisions made in the curriculum being implemented to suit the "new needs" as required by the restrictions and challenges of students and teachers being safely tucked in their home environments. Teachers and learners were also made to adopt the more "impersonal" means of communicating and connecting making the most of the present strategies to work into their own advantages. New competencies for teachers to teach online and students developing new skills to survive the virtual learning models made available by most schools and universities.

Keywords: 1.Pandemic Era 2. Covid 19 3. Higher Education 4.World Perspective

Introduction

On the 7th day of March 2019, DOH (Department of Health) confirmed the presence of "localized transmission in the Philippines and immediately raised the Health Alert Level to Code Red Sub-Level 1 all covered and publicized by both local media and official government news agency (Santos, 2020;

Parracho, 2020). On the same news outfits, additional reports were disseminated about declarations issued one after another starting with Proclamation No. 922 S. 2020 that formalized the "Public Health Emergency" status (Official Gazette, 2020) in the entire Philippines recognizing the Pandemic Level status caused by Covid-19 virus. National down to the local level government institutions were mandated to act in accordance with the proclamation in an attempt to curb if not manage spread the said respiratory virus that started in Wuhan, China (Phelan et al, 2020).

The said pandemic started affecting and crossing state boundaries, the international community has experienced the worst since the 1918 Flu Pandemic caused by H1N1 Influence A Virus that led to as high as 100 million death tolls (Rosenwald, 2020; Spreeuwenberg etal, 2018). The Covid-19 Pandemic has resulted to numerous effects becoming worst everyday as the morbidities and fatalities continually rise. Brought altogether by the virus spread and the different interventions to combat the spread, the following came about as a matter of iteration just to highlight some of them, ie. travel restrictions (Chinazzi etal, 2020), economic recessions (Fernandez, 2020), educational institutions' closure (Viner et al, 2020), political conflicts and legislative priority clashes (Barrios & Hochberg, 2020), misinformation controversies and fake news (Enitan et al, 2020) just to name a few.

Prior to the Presidential Proclamation No. 922, CHED (Commission on Higher Education) had that initiative to put HEIs (Higher Education Institutions) following this "Guidelines for the Prevention, Control and Mitigation of the Spread of the 2019-Novel Corona Acute Respiratory Disease (201-nCoV ARD) in Higher Education Institutions" issued 12th of February 2020 (CHED, 2020a). Though technically and officially, CHED does not have the power to cancel or suspend HEI's classes (CHED, 2020b) it has always supported and implemented the related and relevant proclamations from the Executive Department and discretions of the Local Chief Executives. As this was stated clearly, CHED supported the total shut down of universities and colleges in the Philippines and effectively putting a stop to the face-to-face traditional classroom scenario on all undergraduate and post graduate levels.

Since March 2020 closure and shut down of all educational institutions including HEIs, about 27.2 million students were affected (Allego, 2020) in the hope of the strict implementation of varying community quarantine put into action by a newly created and unified government body called IATF-IED (Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases). Specific to Higher Education, CHED seemed to have had supporting pronouncements aimed at generally implying a "continuance of learning" as determined by Presidents/OICs of HEIs (Juaquin et al, 2020). Certain problems and challenges have risen as part of the ever-worsening condition of this pandemic. All factors within the Teaching-Learning process shall have their own issues and difficulties of varying degrees including the financial burden to be able to cope with the so-called required "continuance of learning" according to CHED.

Philippines' neighboring countries had their strategies in place focused on the installation of online learning facilities in both government and private education institutions (Mulvanti et al, 2020). The same has been happening to the rest of the world implementing their own preparations in the transition from traditional to Digital Learning facilities (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020; Mulenga & Marban, 2020). On all mentioned references, these countries or nations had the same health crisis situation and were not on an indefinite shut down closing their own borders for travel and movement both local and international. Just the same, these countries had their challenges on keeping education all levels continue despite the unfortunate situation and thus suffering continually with the pandemic of Covid-19.

Having known the current situation, this simple academic activity will review published articles from reputable sources and references looking into Higher Education in the Philippines during the Pandemic Era of Covid-19. Just the same, parallelism of conditions present and found within the

country (Philippines) will just the same be annotated alongside neighboring countries and nations of the same status and condition in other parts of the world.

Objective of the Study

To analyze the situation of Higher Education during the Pandemic Era of Covid-19 in the Philippines from the World perspective .

Scope and Limitation

And because the Covid-19 Pandemic had just started around March 2020, conditions that changed around this period and onwards up to the present with reference to Higher Education and the experiences of Higher Educations institutions will be the focus of the analysis.

Other countries were mentioned acting as point of comparison to know situation differences based on the available articles and studies found online via different search engines. These published articles and studies shall have been sifted generally for more professionally reliable sources and publication dates of 2020 to consider a more updated information except for those articles used as references for discussion of academic concepts from books or exemplary articles to explain academic concepts.

Review of Related Literature

December 2019 will be remembered by all as international news introduced the Covid-19 Virus affecting not just China but was spreading all throughout the world (Ndhlovu, 2020). Succeeding studies gave so much details needed for different governments to assume control of the "normal" daily lives of every person regardless of age and gender, ethnicity or cultural background, third-world citizen or residents of highly industrialized countries. The decision was for a major international shutdown of social and economic activities to control potential victims and actual carriers from freely moving about, further aggravating such volatile situation (Fong et al, 2020; Viner et al, 2020).

By about April of 2020, effectively there were already 186 countries affected by the pandemic virus and had instituted school closures (Li & Lailani, 2020; Chang et al, 2020) in all levels of their own educational systems and for some countries to control international students' movements (Bairagi 2020) again in the hope safeguarding them all from this malady. According to UNESCO in one of their reports, there were about 1.2 billion learners worldwide and about 28 million in the Philippines alone instructed to go home and around the month of March 2020 as there were a steady rise in the total number of cases, especially those that included death statistics (DOH, 2020). The multidimensional implications of the pandemic were not just but especially involving educational, social, and economic aspect of every person either positive or negative to the dreaded virus (Radwan & Radwan, 2020; Usak et al, 2020).

Higher education took a different thrust in the hope of continuing on academic development of the future (undergraduate and post graduate level student) effectively discontinuing the more traditional face-to-face teaching-learning approach and shifted to online educational system alternatives (Setiawan 2020; Blankenberger & Williams, 2020). Naciri et al (2020) study mentioned of the mobile learning alternative emphasized to be an unavoidable alternative that allowed learning anytime, anyplace and anywhere. Curriculum must be changed. Strategies must be changes as well. Higher Education Academy (2018) in their presented study towards this specific flexible learning approach, virtual learning and online class activities will require the necessary digital literacies and that ability

to work independently and autonomously as while complying with the different academic requirements demandable from them.

As there were so many changes that occurred in just a short span of time, certain issues were also identified to becoming sort of apprehensions like a possible deterioration of education quality in general as presented by one specific study by Usak et al (2020). There were also questions about the teacher's competencies and readiness to teach and manage online-driven curriculum and classroom management according to Tuquero (2020). He also mentioned the necessity and the necessary changes in the teaching "tools" to abide by this new approach of teaching-learning system thrust to them (both teachers and students including the school administrators) without much question on readiness much so of appropriate and relevant trainings. Dalky & Gharaibeh (2018) had also that point that because mental health and wellbeing are directly connected to academic success, it could also be an issue that needed to be answered as regards their current condition as the onslaught of the pandemic continues.

Methodolody

Research Design

Literature survey analysis is a type of literature review aimed as broadly described, more or less systematic, way of collecting and synthesizing previous chosen researches supposed identified in accordance to a chose focus (Tranfield, Denver & Smart, 2003). According to Webster & Watson (2002), if an effective and well-conducted review was made a research method, "it might create a firm foundation for advancing knowledge and facilitating theory development".

Data Gathering Procedure

As the focus and topic of the study had been decided clearly, the right characteristics of articles and studies that shall be included or be considered for inclusion were listed to form the inclusion-exclusion criteria. These criteria (Table 1.Inclusion-Exclusion Parameters) specified that articles must be as updated as possible with publication date as 2020, published in reputable publication outfits mostly ISI-indexed bearing the focus or topic about higher education in the Philippines and other countries during the present pandemic era. Popular search engines were used browsing through Science Direct, Research Gate, and Web of Science. With the limited time, the succeeding part on results and discussions will show these chosen published article of research studies relevant and related to the topic set.

Data Analysis

After conducting the literature survey of those chosen and included articles, data analysis would entail abstraction into descriptive information or themes (Snyder, 2019). These themes were identified and accumulated during the entire survey process as such resulted to and were identified as shown in Figure 1. Higher education in the Philippines and other countries suffering the on-going expansion of Covid-19 virus infection all had common issues or more appropriately termed as "areas of comparison" in the framework. These issues were as follows: teacher and teaching support staff, students and learners, parents and family situation, educational resources and technology, educational assessment and evaluation activities, over-all mental and physical, and general adaptation of education during the pandemic.

On the eventuality, summary observations on the higher education status in the Philippines as compared with those of the other countries would have been identified in accordance with the pre-set areas of comparison as common themes or descriptive information.

Results and discussion

Current pandemic situation

In the early part of March 2020, the world was astounded of the degree by which the so-called "Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) now known simply as CoVid19 (Corona Virus Disease 2019) has swept across borders and affected people from difference country (WHO, 2020). It was found to have started from Wuhan, China had been considered as "ground zero" and that the international spread might have started as early as December 2019 (Shereen et al, 2020; Ndhlovu, 2020; Phelan et al, 2020; Burke, 2020; Anjorin, 2020; Gates, 2020).

The global shutdown of about 91% of all international and transnational activities (UNICEF, 2020) resulted into a myriad of after effects and was remarked as having "multidimensional implications (Sintema, 2020). About 186 countries by April of 2020 (Li & Lalani, 2020) all started to implement different measures to control the spread of the virus. Quarantine restriction was the choice of most countries as near the neighboring countries of the Philippines like Thailand and as far as countries like Iran in the Middle East and New Zealand and Spain in other continents (Secon et al, 2020). Trade, tourism activities, travel both domestic and international were put to a halt affecting generally macroeconomics just to ensure control of the pandemic (Herron & Hajric, 2020; Chang et al, 2020). As this started as a health concern that evolved into pandemic proportion, it did not just affected economy but went to touch negatively even the very basic elements of any person, i.e., emotional, mental, and physical health (Niranjan, 2020). Different scientific initiatives were done to understand the nature of this spreading virus (Bender, 2020; Meng et al, 2020) as it was hoped to be controlled in the most immediate certainty.

When WHO (World Health Organization) took the center stage to facilitate and coordinate international crisis management, the organization's Director General even remarked that the condition was "not just a public health crisis but a crisis that shall touch every sector and every individual must be involved in the fight" (WHO, 2020). In the Philippines alone in the process of the conduct of the survey , there were 433,000 total cases with fatalities at 8,400 individuals; Metro Manila, Calabarzon (Region 4A) and the Central Luzon became the hotspot for leading areas of diagnosed Filipinos (DOH, 2020).

Teacher & Teacher-Administrator issues

At the time of the study just like all other countries including the Philippines, educational institutions like universities and colleges remained indefinitely closed still because of the different governments' initiatives to control the pandemic (Sintema, 2020). This, thus, introduced the "new normal" implying a situation that all must adjust into in order to claim normality despite the multidimensional implications of Covid-19 to everyone infected and affected.

In an instant, educators needed to acquire "online-driven competencies" in planning, implementing, and assessing performance of students (Tuquero, 2020) through different means with immediacy in order cope with the situation. There were even that notion, academics (novice to expert level) were "were not prepared to face the challenges of virtual learning (Hodges et al, 2020). Questions were even raised on the issue of instructors demonstrating an acceptable level of competency on its approach to the online education environment (Huss & Eastep, 2013). In the

Philippines, higher education was guided by an advisory (CHED, 2020d) from CHED instructing educators and institutions to deploy available flexible learning and other alternative modes of delivery in lieu of on-campus learning. These included online platform and blended learning like google classroom, messenger, zoom communications, including popular social media applications like Facebook and YouTube. Certain prominent universities like Ateneo De Manila University (ADMU) suspended the synchronous instead implemented the asynchronous model of distance education giving students that opportunity to "learn on their own pace", while University of santo Tomas (UST) employed flexible synchronous and asynchronous online learning model (Villarin, 2020; UST, 2020). There were others, mostly State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) even resorted to modules.

There were clamors on the manner of how Higher Education Institution (HEIs) responded through their academic administrators that they must be fast in decision-making and reactive to fast changing scenarios (Murphy et al, 2020). The challenge to them, educators and administrators, was to make virtual education "more humane" while creating some semblance of balance between technology use and humanity in education (Hung & Wati, 2020). In the international front, distance education was viewed to have some disadvantages like limited choice of faculty, module, and inadequate contact and personal communication (student-teacher) (Mirkholikovna, 2020).

Student-related issues

When school closures were implemented, student safety was poised as the priority concern (Bao, 2020). Of the different types of students, the most vulnerable of them all were the poor and indigenous peoples (Bayod & Morante, 2020) who had not much to cope with in the situation they were subjected to because of the pandemic. Generally speaking, the social distancing measures and isolation standards were known to eventually produce multidimensional implications in terms of psychological effect (Sintema, 2020) like anxiety, stress, insomnia, confusion, boredom, and even anger to most (if not all) students when distance education were put in place.

In one study (Dalky & Gharaibeh, 2018), it was found out that mental health or wellbeing (or the lack thereof) of students are actually connected to academic success (or failure in some cases). With the different early studies, basic demographic features including the characteristic features of the Covid-19 virus (Ndhlovu, 2020) resulted to produce the selected group of individuals called the "vulnerable group" and one of those tended to point out that schools having so much large young crowd in a confined space surely will be a haven for viral transmission, hence the school shut down and the introduction of distance learning, home schooling, e-learning of the likes.

Students and learners even in higher education level were hastily put into this form of academic or teaching-learning model (referring to e-learning, distance education). What could be student-related challenges we can identify? The most immediate concern came with having (or not having) computers at home including internet services (Mirkholikovna, 2020). Philippines was once included in the lowest ranked countries in Asia considering internet connectivity or internet service in general (Akamai, 2017). On a more technical aspect, necessary digital literacy will require abilities to work independently and autonomously (Higher Education Academy, 2015) which should have been checked as well. In some other countries, distance education was identified to having disadvantages like limited faculty or module, and limited communication or contact with teachers and educators for guidance and consultations (Mirkholikovna, 2020). Lastly, the pandemic along with all of the known and presently implemented guidelines following isolation, distancing, closures, and the likes had experts reminded educators that "…lack of social interaction or participation… can minimize motivation and worsen discipline…" (Ainoutdinova et al, 2017) among students.

Instructional Resources and Technology

In the Philippines when schools were closed, it was to ensure student safety from the negative health effects of Covid-19 Pandemic. As a response, the appropriate agency (CHED, 2020c; CHED, 2020d) issued Advisory No.6 by the CHED strongly suggesting the immediate institution of different and available online platforms and other flexible learning models.

There were learning institutions in the higher level that immediately responded with the use of different online learning software (Hanaku, 2020) and had to improve their organization's infrastructure (Lee, 2020) to cope with the demand of the online learning models available to them. Despite major challenges like Philippines having been ranked the lowest in terms of internet connectivity in Asia, there were innovations that came to fruitions like the use of mobile devices and social media to aid the online learning programs (Al-Emran et al, 2016; Sha et al, 2012).

Even in the international front, the use of online platforms (Mulenga & Marban, 2020; Caciri et al, 2020) seemed to have gained popularity based probably on practicality and availability. Online learning facilities were supported and made available to both government and private HEIs found in the neighboring ASEAN nations (Mulvanti et al, 2020) especially on the adoption of massive online learning programs (Basilaia & Kyayadze, 2020). In some other developing countries like Ethiopia, the use of enhanced broadcast teaching coupled with the online and virtual class infrastructure were erected (Tadesse & Muluye, 2020).

Curriculum-related issues

Safety was made a priority by all governments not just for some but for all especially students and learners from the different levels of the academic system. School closure has actually resulted into a shift from personal to impersonal means of educational approach (Tuquero, 2020; Bayod & Morante, 2020), and one example is the online modality (Cahapay, 2020). Doing all these actually had to identity strategies that can be used in virtual classes (Murphy et al, 2020) to ensure not just the continuity of education and learning but the assurance of student success in their classes despite the change from face-to-face traditional approach (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020). In some perspective, the development of preparedness among the stakeholders (students, parents, teachers, administrators) in their transition from the traditional to the virtual platform was made a focus or concern (Cahapay, 2020). The bigger challenge posed was the aligning of competencies both for the students leaning their subjects and courses on the online format (Tuquero, 2020), and coincidingly with those of the teacher's teaching competencies to bring about the right approach and assured teaching-learning success in that process.

In a peculiar situation of Morocco, the use of mobile was instituted to allow learning to take place "anytime, anyplace and anywhere" (Naciri et al, 2020). This approach made it possible to the adoption of "massive online learning programmes" (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020). And in all of these efforts and challenges, still it begs the question of that possible "deterioration of education quality" as an after effect of the pandemic (Usak et al, 2020).

Conclusions

Nearing a whole year of experiencing the Covid-19 pandemic, so much changes happened. The transition from the traditional face-to-face academic strategies to indirect or virtual-online platforms proved to be the right decision to secure safety of all involved in the teaching-learning process, i.e., students, teachers, administrators, and family. Innovations not just in strategies but also in the technology aided so much in the said transition serving students and learners in general. Though

there were actual "multidimensional" effects and implications to all, sturdy as humanity since the beginning… humanity will still prevail and continue to learn more.

Recommendations

Health emergencies like the present Covid-19 situation had been with history visiting from time to time. Just as health management would entail disruption of academic activities and school-based events, there must be a semblance of readiness in every Higher Institution's academic arsenal just in case its needed.

Readiness therefore comes a matter of foresight and planning. Academic managers and administrators must have those to prepare not just students but also and specially teachers on the much-needed competencies to implement online and virtual-based curriculum.

As far as the governments are concerned, the same must be expected from them. Highly industrialized countries showed maturity in terms of distance education in the light of its need as an alternative for the continuance of education and academic activities.

Appropriate government agencies must be expected more to manifest expertise handling this type of situation through the budget and policy-related readiness.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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List of acronyms

ADMU – Ateneo De Manila University
CHED – Commission on Higher Education
Covid-19 – Corona Virus Disease in 2019
DOH – Department of Health
HEI – Higher Education Institution
SUC – State Universities and Colleges
UNESCO – United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF – United Nations Children's Fund
UST – University of Sto. Tomas

Table 1. Inclusion-Exclusion Parameters

Criteria	Inclusion - Exclusion Parameters
Publication Year	Publication Date: October 2019 onwards
Language of Publication	Primarily English and/or with English translations
Research Locale	Philippines and other countries affected by the pandemic
Study Type	Primary studies, including reports, and reviews
Nature of Study	Higher Education during the pandemic period
Authorship	Filipinos and foreign authors are included