

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Challenges and Coping Strategies of Campus Advising in the Post-Pandemic

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Abstract

Student organizations have a significant role in preparing students for real-world experiences. However, due to the effects of COVID-19 on various institutions, including schools, students, especially campus advisers, have faced challenges and opportunities in facilitating these organizations. This study used qualitative descriptive research design to describe the challenges and coping strategies of campus advisers in advising student organizations in the post-pandemic. Using criteria, five campus advisers from different organizations at the college were selected. The semi-structured instrument guide constructed by the researchers was utilized to gather data. Informants were personally provided with a printed interview questionnaire to serve as a guide during the interviews. Smartphones and audio-voice recording were utilized to accurately capture informants' responses. Thematic data analysis was conducted on the collected data. The results included two significant themes such as challenges and coping strategies. Further, seven meaningful categories emerged from the analyzed data. The findings revealed that campus advisers before, during and after the pandemic encountered challenges such as competing priorities, resource constraints, pandemic induced issues and administrative and logistical challenges. Regardless, coping strategies were used including self-management, social support and adaptive coping. Despite the promising career prospects and opportunities in advising, advisers face significant challenges that impact their well-being. Yet, they employ diverse strategies to overcome these obstacles as resilient individuals.

Keywords: Covid-19 Pandemic; Campus Student Advisers; Student Organizations; Challenges; Coping Strategies

Introduction

Student organizations play a huge role in equipping students for the real world. However, as a result of the changes brought about by COVID-19, which have had an impact on a variety of institutions, including schools, students, in particular campus advisers, have encountered difficulties as well as opportunities when it comes to facilitating student organizations.

Advisers are crucial in ensuring students' success (Harris, 2022). They assist students in building and sustaining a healthy environment where they can study and grow, develop leadership abilities, and form relationships with other students. They offer direction and support to students as they navigate the collegiate world. As the head, they drive student organizations to the right path of leadership (Maglipas, 2019). Campus advisers may find this work

rewarding, but just as students struggled with the unexpected change brought on by the pandemic, advisors too had to adjust to the new setting with limited face-to-face interaction. This allowed them to take on their roles virtually, which posed various challenges and profound opportunities (Burelison, Chaille, Christ, Klosterman, Huff, & Rust, 2021).

Before the onset of the pandemic, educational activities handled by student organizations were often held in person, however, those procedures taken by organizations to carry out a project or present an event were modified by the COVID-19. As a result, online engagement activities such as webinars and social media platforms have replaced in-person events (Pridmore, 2021). From figuring out how to hold virtual meetings to navigating the complex logistical

challenges of organizing events online, campus advisers have had to adapt quickly to ensure that student organizations can continue to operate effectively in a virtual environment. Considering that most of the older generation of educators is not tech-savvy, unlike the younger generations (Adams et al., 2022), this use of technology helped them develop ICT skills and adapt to the modern age. In spite of this benefit, the transition to remote teaching or advising of student organizations increased the workload of teachers by adding to their responsibilities at home, resulting in an increased level of stress and demands that negatively affect their wellbeing (Kraft & Simon, 2020). With the bombardment of tasks, cases of mental health issues increased not just in the younger population but also among the professionals, in particular, the educators. As a result of these challenges that hampered the productivity and effectiveness of teachers, most used coping strategies to adapt to the new setting. This includes seeking social support, engaging in physical activities such as aerobic and anaerobic exercises, as well as getting involved in leisure activities (Andrade, Bosano, & C, 2021). Being optimistic and prepared (Ashok et al., 2022) was also one of the effective coping mechanisms for teachers. Nevertheless, with the decreasing cases of COVID-19, the shift to post-pandemic followed, ensuing new adjustment strategies to take in view of the transition to blended learning.

Several studies were conducted on the challenges and opportunities faced by teachers during the pandemic (Burelison, et.al., 2021, & Dahlgren, 2015). Though these studies may have tackled the various experiences of educators, little research has been conducted focusing on the experiences of campus organization advisers in handling student organizations, their struggles, and their coping mechanisms in particular. Drawing on these perspectives, this study aims to describe the experiences of campus advisers' in advising student organizations in the post-pandemic. Specifically, this paper intends to describe the challenges encountered by campus advisers while advising student organizations in the post-pandemic and the coping strategies they utilized in order to adjust to the new setting. Anchored on the Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1988), which explains how external and internal factors such as the environment, personal ability, and past experiences influence the behavior of an individual (LaMorte, 2022). The outcomes of this study may also aid the school administration and educational sectors in administering and implementing programs for campus advisers or educators in

general that will help them take their roles to a higher level while supporting their needs and well-being.

Review of Related Literature

Campus organization is one of the essential components of school culture, enabling students to develop their full potential and become better-functioning members of society. However, like any educational setting, campus organizations cannot function effectively without the support of an advisor. Highlighting the growing significance of education in our society, Miller (2022) emphasized the role of student organizations and academic advisors in achieving institutional mission and student success. In addition, given the increasing global political issues and the emphasis on developing more reliable leaders of the future, there is a growing role for student organizations and leadership programs, considering that through this, there's a probability of developing multinational leaders (Alajmi & Kalitay, 2019) who have the power to speak, solve problems, and confront challenges.

In the campus setting, with the increasing number of student organizations, academic advisors stand at the peripheral, continuously promoting leadership development for students. As a career counselor, mentor, teacher, and coach, academic advisors assist students in developing their decision-making, planning, goal-setting, and problem-solving skills (McClellan, 2013), which is one of the essential characteristics of a leader. The advisor's impact is seen as critical, not only for the success of the group but also for the successful transition of students into professional employment after graduation (Osta, Amadoro, & Bakrania, 2022). This is also highlighted in journalism organizations, where advisors are a valuable factor in the level of attachment of the organization and its members to the university, as well as the overall enhancement of college experiences (Filak & Pritchard, 2007). Though academic advisors may not often involve themselves in formal leadership within the campus, considering their hectic schedule, they are still powerful advocates of leadership behind student leaders (Gomez & Hintz, 2021). For some, leadership activities such as being an advisor to an organization may be daunting, yet they can also be rewarding. Not only does it allow them to develop professionally, but for educators, it is also fulfilling to see their students excel.

In spite of the growing practices within student organizations, with the proclamation that the world has been hit by COVID-19, pre-pandemic leadership efforts were put on hold. Due to the limitations of social interaction, face-to-face classes in educational institutions were temporarily suspended (Ahmed, Haq, & Saha, 2023). Eventually, this resulted in the modification and adjustment of organizational activities. Campus organization members highlighted the significant challenges that they had never expected to encounter during their time serving their organizations. Campus advisors, in particular, held greater responsibility for navigating these changes. Considering the number of studies focusing on the experiences of students, little is known about the perceptions of advising among institutional leaders who shape advising structure and practice (Menke et al., 2020). McGill (2021) argues that the role of academic advising in higher education is often misunderstood. Which is why, during the pandemic, the amount of stress accumulated by advisors is concerning. During the pandemic, the number of individuals who are susceptible to emotional distress increased, and this does not only include the students but also the adults, in particular the advisors (Gewartz, 2021). As “first responders”, academic advisors became responsible for addressing students’ stress, anxiety, and urgent situations (Flaherty, 2020). With this, beyond the traditional tasks of handling coursework and scheduling, the advisor’s role has expanded (McCarthy et al., 2022), requiring them to maintain composure and quality while managing additional responsibilities. Nevertheless, with the strenuous workload that advisors carry, balancing their professional and personal lives is a huge struggle (Ding, 2021). The pressure to perform their role as advisors and educators eventually leads to burnout that has become detrimental to their own mental and emotional well-being (Aljawarneh et al., 2022). In most cases, this results in the inability of advisors to connect with their students, losing their chance to help them the way they want.

The approach to academic advising varies across college campuses to cater to each institution’s unique needs. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has posed challenges, particularly in a virtual context, hindering advisors from effectively serving students (Yoder, 2021). Moosa’s (2021) case study at a South African university emphasized how advising during the pandemic differs greatly from the pre-pandemic era. The results of their study also indicated dissemination of information as one of the major obstacles

in their advising career during the pandemic. Taking into consideration the need to transfer to online modes, both synchronous and asynchronous (Osta et al., 2022), this highlighted social inequalities when it comes to students’ access to necessary sources such as good internet connectivity, electronic devices, and electricity (Naughton, 2021). Additionally, the unpreparedness of teachers for distance teaching and learning contributed greatly to their substandard performance (Atiles, Almodovar, Dias, & Vargas, 2021). Their knowledge and skills in using technology also contribute to this issue. Considering the teachers’ and students’ generation gap, educators are in need of time to adjust and prepare for these changes (Rosalina, Elyani, Nasrullah, 2020).

To add to that, financial transactions are one of the significant factors in the success and effectiveness of an organization (Diaz et al., 2020). However, considering the tight budgeting within some institutions, funding is often an issue (Baillieul & Crowder, 2021). With the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the world economy, the school system faced significant challenges in allocating its resources (Chambers et al., 2021). Student organizations in particular faced inadequate funding, which often resulted in receiving no support at all. Money and funding are linked with organizational success, but with decreasing support, this often results in the postponement of organizational activities and projects (Wikibooks, 2021). Most often, student organizations would resort to grant writing and fundraising activities to achieve their goals. At some point, members of the organization, particularly the advisors, would risk their own pockets for the attainment of their objectives and for the betterment of the organization.

For educators, it is common for them to undergo challenges that will continuously test their heart and passion for teaching (Ghasemi et al., 2022). Yet, despite all that, some teachers would still choose to serve their institution and, most of all, the students. Campus student organization advisors, for example, have issues that they seldom talk about. In spite of the struggles, they faced in maintaining their professional lives as educators, club advisors, and personal lives, they tried to put up with them using various methods (Mommers, Schellings, & Van der Want, 2018). With the problems faced by advisors during the pandemic, Messineo & Tosto (2022) highlighted the significance of cognitive reappraisal and positive attitudes in lowering perceived stress. This is also supported by the study conducted by Nazari et al. (2023), which stated that

approach-coping strategies are one of the most effective ways to maintain a positive state of mind. With the burden that they carry as an advisor in the new setting where their profession and personal life co-exist, adjustment methods are needed.

Aside from expressing themselves, advisors also began to understand the role of their mentoring relationships with other teachers as a source of mutual support (Mosley et al., 2022). Sharing their experiences and struggles and asking for advice on what to do when problems arise will help them have a more positive outlook. Their competence and perceived efficacy in managing and teaching their students also contributed to their adaptation (Herman, Huang, & Sebastian, 2021). Environmental factors such as conducive advising space with adequate facilities contribute to their adjustment processes (Fox & Walter, 2022). Advisors also emphasized how exercising, do-it-yourself activities, and meditation help them take a break as they engage in heavy tasks (Asbury, 2021).

With the everyday challenges as advisors, the best way that they could do it is to face these problems and adapt for their own well-being (Ciuhan, Iliescu, & Nicolau, 2022). When it comes to technological challenges, although it has been a struggle for advisors to navigate it for communication purposes, they are highly willing to learn if they could benefit from it (Cailin, 2021). Despite the challenges, campus advisors perceived the changes as another way to learn something new and be more confident in using online teaching tools (El-Din et al., 2021). With this, we can infer that, in spite of the struggles experienced by campus advisors in their advising career from the pre-pandemic to the post-pandemic era, they are willing to go against the odds equipped with personal and external support.

Methodology

Research design

This study used qualitative descriptive research design which aims to describe the challenges and coping strategies of campus advisors in advising students' organizations in the post-pandemic. Qualitative descriptive research design is appropriate to use in the study since this method is a useful way to utilize when your goal is to describe a specific event that takes place, the who, what, and the how (Lambert & Lambert, 2012).

Participants and Sampling

In selecting the informants, the researchers utilize purposeful sampling to allow the researchers in selecting informants based on a specific criterion or purpose (Nikolopoulou, 2022). Five (5) campus advisers from different organizations at the college were selected using this method. The inclusion criteria include (a) a student organization adviser, (b) male or female, and (c) experienced at least four (4) years of advising student organization; at least one (1) year before the pandemic, two (2) years during the pandemic, and at least two (1) year in the post pandemic. Additionally, (d) they should be an adviser of the same organization all throughout the required years of experience.

Instrument

This study used a semi-structured instrument guide duly validated by three (3) experts in qualitative research to gather data surrounding the challenges and coping strategies of student organization campus advisers in the post-pandemic period. To ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument, it underwent consultation and was validated by three (3) experts in qualitative research. Voice recording was also utilized to record the interview discussions, which is essential in analyzing the data. The validated instrument is divided into three (3) sections which includes; (1) the letter of consent to participate in the study; (2) the information sheet, which contained data about the informants, such as their name, sex, age, the student organization that they are spearheading, and years of experience in advising the student organizations; and (3) the research question, specifically designed to gather information of the challenges and coping strategies of campus advisers in advising student organizations in the post-pandemic.

Data collection

Prior to the data collection, selected informants were provided a copy of a letter asking for their consent to participate in the study and explaining that their participation is highly optional. Furthermore, the scheduling of interviews took into consideration the informants' availability and preferences.

As part of the data collection process, informants were personally provided with a printed interview questionnaire to serve as a guide during the interviews. Smartphones and audio-voice recording were utilized in order to accurately capture informants' responses. It is noteworthy that while some informants choose to provide their responses through a written questionnaire considering their hectic schedule, others prefer the interview format. Additionally, the researchers communicated with the informants directly to verify their consent and utilized Messenger for further clarification. Throughout the study, the research data were kept confidential, and pseudonyms were also utilized for privacy and anonymity.

Data analysis

In analyzing the collected data, the researchers utilized Braun and Clarke's (2006) stages on thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a qualitative method of analysis that interprets patterns that will answer the research questions (Chawla & Wood, 2021, as cited by Pedroso et al., 2022). The process involved transcription of the recordings and written responses, examination of the data to identify patterns and recurring elements related to campus advisers' challenges and coping strategies, categorization of the data based on these identified patterns, and generating themes. Further, each theme was then evaluated in order to gain a better understanding of the participants' experiences.

Results and Discussion

Results

To describe the challenges and coping strategies of student organization advisers, two (2) significant themes were generated. These were (1) Challenges and (2) Coping Strategies that were utilized in order to cope up with the challenges perceived.

Challenges

Campus organization advisers have identified significant barriers or challenges in their advising experiences prior to the pandemic, during, and in the post pandemic. Divided into four (4) sub-themes, this category includes (1) competing priorities, (2) resource constraints, (3) Administrative and Logistical Challenges, and (4) Pandemic Induced Issues.

Competing Priorities

As a learning facilitator in a physical or virtual classroom, teachers are expected to perform different roles (Ong & Quek, 2023). And just like students who have several responsibilities aside from studying, educators too have other tasks to fulfill. The struggle to manage and balance the demands and expectations of both academic requirements and responsibilities associated with being an adviser, and member of an organization often results in role overload and role strain (Robinson et al., 2023).

Competing priorities include (1) balancing work-life responsibilities and (2) recognized students' struggles.

Balancing Work-Life Responsibilities

In the Philippines public-school teachers often undergo work overload as a result of demanding teaching and non-teaching-related tasks (Geronimo & Olegario, 2020). Bombarded with paperwork and non-teaching activities, they frequently experience stress and headaches, and other health issues (Huang et al., 2022). Additionally, as organization advisers, they face perceived challenges in harmonizing work and personal life on another level. Grace, one of the informants, tells about her struggles while juggling motherhood and advisory roles.

"Being a mother of a toddler and at the same time being an adviser of an organization is one of the challenges that I've experienced prior to the pandemic. It was somehow difficult but I was able to manage."

Recognized Students' Struggles

Students' competing priorities as learners and members of the organization also plays a part in the working process within the organization. Considering that each member is crucial for running the team (Bunteng, 2022), acknowledging their challenges in juggling multiple tasks is important.

One of the informants, Amber states:

"Submissions of articles were delayed because the staff had a backlog in their academics", as she identified the struggles of the members in keeping up with various assigned tasks."

Resource Constraints

Inadequate resources can have a significant impact on the efficiency of organizing events, projects, and acquiring necessary equipment (Issa, Patterson, & Tu, 2023). The lack of sufficient funding for example, availability of manpower, experience, facilities, and participation, are equally vital for the overall success and sustainability of the organization. Resources constraints, as experienced by campus organization advisers, include (1) insufficient funding, and (2) lack of facilities.

Insufficient Funding

Most organizations are dependent on the assistance of universities or the government, (Unit4 Communications, 2023). However, when funding falls short, it can significantly impact the organization's ability to meet its objectives, deliver valuable programs, and provide necessary resources for its members.

Based on the responses provided by the informants before the pandemic, campus advisers, specifically Jake, and Adeline, mentioned the lack of sufficient budget for programs which resulted in challenges when implementing projects and events.

Renee supported this by emphasizes:

“Before, during and after the pandemic, the number one problem faced by the organization was insufficient funding, considering that some student organizations don't receive financial support from the university unlike other organizations such as the publication.”

She added, “We have a lot of activities that students would like to implement, but due to the financial restraints, we were not able to push through”

Adeline also tells:

“Organization relies on fundraising from events they held, but due to classes being online, there was no capital for future projects.

Furthermore, in the post pandemic, the financial issue has been heightened. Adeline stated that as they shifted back to a face-to-face setting, they encountered even worse financial issues. On the other hand, Jake states:

“It is difficult to come up with a budget since we have a lot of programs and plans such as conducting workshops, concerts and joining competitions”.

Lack of Facilities

Apart from lack of funding, lack of facilities can also have an influence on the performance of an organization (Moaiad, 2022). Without appropriate facilities, communication, decision-making, and productivity may suffer, limiting the organization's overall effectiveness.

Before the pandemic, Jake pointed out that lack of practice and training areas was one of the difficulties that they have encountered. Considering that their organization specializes in performances such as dances, the absence of adequate training areas posed a significant challenge.

Adeline also stated that in the post-pandemic, there was “no area for organization or bulletin board” highlighting the scarcity of spaces for effective organization of information and collaboration.

Pandemic Induced Issues

As a result of the pandemic, various challenges have risen that are either new to the society or were heightened, and among the prevalent issues tackled and experienced by individuals, campus advisers in particular, are issues related to technology and the restrictions on movement and social interaction. This includes (1) technological constraints and (2) social constraints.

Technological Constraints

The transition to remote learning led to the introduction of various technologies and educational applications (He, Li, & Zhang, 2021) to address the learning barriers that occurred as a result of the restrictions. Despite its contribution in continuing education, various constraints are experienced by teachers, students (Suci et al., 2021), and campus organizations. One of these challenges is the issue of low internet connectivity and technical problems. Renee tells:

“...when we have webinars, we had a hard time gathering audiences considering their connectivity, and as for the facilitators, we also struggled with the preparation due to the varying level of internet connectivity.”

She also added that if they really want to have a tech run, they need to stay up late where the connection is much better. The fear of technical errors often caused worries about the success of the program. Similar concerns were also expressed by

“Technical issues such as internet and device failure were a barrier for proper communication”

“Meeting online was hard because some were living in far places with poor connectivity or no Wi-Fi.”

Social Constraints

Social constraints during the pandemic forced face-to-face events to be canceled as a precaution. With this, individuals were isolated (Hoessinzadeh et al., 2022), and student organization activities were either postponed or canceled. For student organizations, this presents one of the greatest challenges in managing the club.

As stated by one of the informants, “meeting the officer in person and cancellation of all in person activities” was one of the changes that they must face during the transition. This experience resonated with Renee and Jake as well. They tell: “...we find it hard to implement those activities (community engagement) considering the limitations in social interaction.”

“There’s so much fire with the officers and members but quite overwhelming due to the changes in schedule and adjustments in the new normal.”

Furthermore, with the lack of social interaction and reliance on online learning, several problems were identified in terms of member relationships and engagement. Amber shares:

“The staff were used to being isolated...they were not close to each other because of the pandemic so the new staff did not have any personal connections with the older staff and thus got in the way of work.”

Adeline continues:

“There is a lack of interest and participation from students. They were used to online classes”, she also added that “first year officers struggle with organization responsibilities due to lack of experience.”

Administrative and Logistical Challenges

Administrative and logistical challenges include (1) permit processing difficulties and (2) conflicting schedules.

Permit Processing Difficulties

In the post-pandemic the student organization advisers have identified new obstacles that hinders them in implementing their planned activities. Among these is the rising difficulty and complexity of processing permits. Due to the number of

papers needed for the approval, student organizations faced difficulties in obtaining the necessary permits from relevant campus authorities for organizing events (Kelbaugh, 2020). Consecutively, Renee and Adeline share:

“One of the challenges that we currently face is the processing of permits for the implementation of our activities. We need to prepare a lot of documents for approval and it’s a huge struggle especially when it’s an outside activity.”

“Events have to happen late or not at all due to the difficulty of getting signed permits from the University.”

Conflicting Schedules

Scheduling is one of the most effective ways to manage everyone’s time (Profit.co, 2022). Not only does it make things efficient, but it also enables individuals to perform well on their daily tasks. However, in the context of student organization, scheduling conflicts can still arise despite efforts to plan activities.

Adeline, one of the informants, expressed difficulty in scheduling events proposed by the organization due to conflicts with university events.

The school’s calendar is often packed with university events, making it challenging to determine the appropriate timing for project implementation. Additionally, the availability of guests, speakers, or students involved can also contribute to these scheduling challenges. Amber says: “Synchronizing schedules for face-to-face meetings are hard because the staff came from different majors whose classes ended differently”

Coping Strategies

In light of the challenges that have emerged as a result of diverse circumstances, the campus advisers have employed coping strategies to facilitate adaptation and resilience. These coping strategies are identified into three (3) categories, namely, (1) self-management, (2) social support, and (3) adaptive coping.

Self-Management

Self-management, include (1) time management and prioritization, and (2) motivation and positive mindset.

Time Management and Prioritization

Individuals who practiced time management were able to prevent procrastination and did not necessarily spend more time on their personal tasks, but rather allocated their time more evenly across different tasks. Moreover, their time management efforts resulted in a more balanced distribution of work time leading up to deadlines (Häfner, Oberst, Stock, 2014). Grace and Amber share:

“I always apply my principle of structure allot of time to all the tasks needed to be accomplished and stick to it.”

“Good time management and self-discipline, focus, thinking about love life.”

Motivation and Positive Mindset

Motivation attracts individuals to take action based on various factors such as instrumental values, obligations, rewards, performance, competition, and external evaluation. The combination of internal and external motivations greatly impacts an individual's ability to self-regulate (McClain, 2023).

Grace stated that as she struggled with the challenges related to her responsibilities as an educator, mother, and organization adviser, she continued to provide time for her family and self as a way to cope. She tells:

“Self-care is very important as well as family bonding”, she says. Additionally, during the pandemic, she also stated that: “One way to handle the cancellation of in-person events and activities for the organization is to accept it and not dwell much on it.”

On the other hand, Amber’s statement also coincides with Grace by stating “Que sera sera” which means what will be, will be.

Amber also emphasizes the importance of self-discipline and focus, while Jake and Grace state that:

“Purpose and passion should come together.” and “...having a positive mindset and sticking with a good vibes mantra helps in coping up with the stress and struggles in handling issues in the organization.”

“The students were very eager and motivated, so as an adviser, I have to perform my duties as expected so I can guide them to implement the planned activities.”

Social Support

Social support includes (1) effective communication, and (2) guidance network.

Effective Communication

Communication is one of the significant elements in running an organization. It not only contributes to maintaining high-quality performance (Agyeiwaa & Arboh, 2022) but also fosters a harmonious environment (Azevedo et al., 2022). Campus advisers have recognized the importance of effective communication before, during and after the pandemic as a means to address challenges within their respective organizations.

Renee and Adeline expressed similar sentiments, stating that in order to cope up with challenges they have faced, they maintained “Open communication using various mediums such as social media”.

Adeline also utilizes words and encouragement to “empower officers and let them gain more experience”.

Guidance Network

When an individual perceives social support, there are only two things that could happen: improved quality of life and having a positive outlook despite adversities (Bakken, 2023). In the context of being an educator, sufficient social support can significantly help in managing stress, effectively utilize social support resources, and develop more positive behavior towards challenging situations (Jing, Li, & Sheng, 2022). Renee and Jake tell:

“When I see that the university is supporting the organization, it motivates me to continue serving and provide guidance to our students.”

“There are times WVSU has given us a budget with our programs, and our activities have been well received by our community and people around us. It gave me a lot of motivation to continue reaching our goals and purpose. Still working with a more positive impact and attitude of gratitude.”

Adaptive Coping

Facing various challenges, campus advisers have developed adaptive strategies that aids them in navigating and managing challenging situations. Adaptive coping, namely (1) digital adaptation, and (2) lifelong learning.

Digital Adaptation

COVID-19 had changed the old-ways of implementing organization activities upside down (Wijaya, 2023), and

with the deepening integration of technology in the life of every individual, specifically in the education sector, every individual had no other choice but to embrace it. Grace stated that in order for her to cope up and continue serving her organization. She tells;

“.... just went with the flow and used whatever technologies that can help with my advising work.”

Renee also stated the significance of technology during remote advising, thus, despite the challenges that she faced in relation to technology she still used various social media platforms to communicate with the officers.

Lifelong Learning

Another way for them to cope is by considering the situation as an opportunity to learn and improve their skills, particularly in advising and utilization of technology, regardless of the setting they are in (Elyakim, McHaney, Reyachav, 2023).

In relation to the difficulty in processing the documents or permits needed for implementing the projects, Renee shares: “When it comes to the processing of the papers, I just remind the students to acknowledge the fact that all activities need approval from the university in case there will be any problems that occur during the implementation of the project.”

This allowed her and the students to view the complexity of processing the papers as a positive one instead of dwelling on the negative aspect that will contribute to their struggles.

On other hand Jake stated that in order to cope up, he often involved himself and the members in “online meetings and learning”, which help the members active while continuously improving their skills.

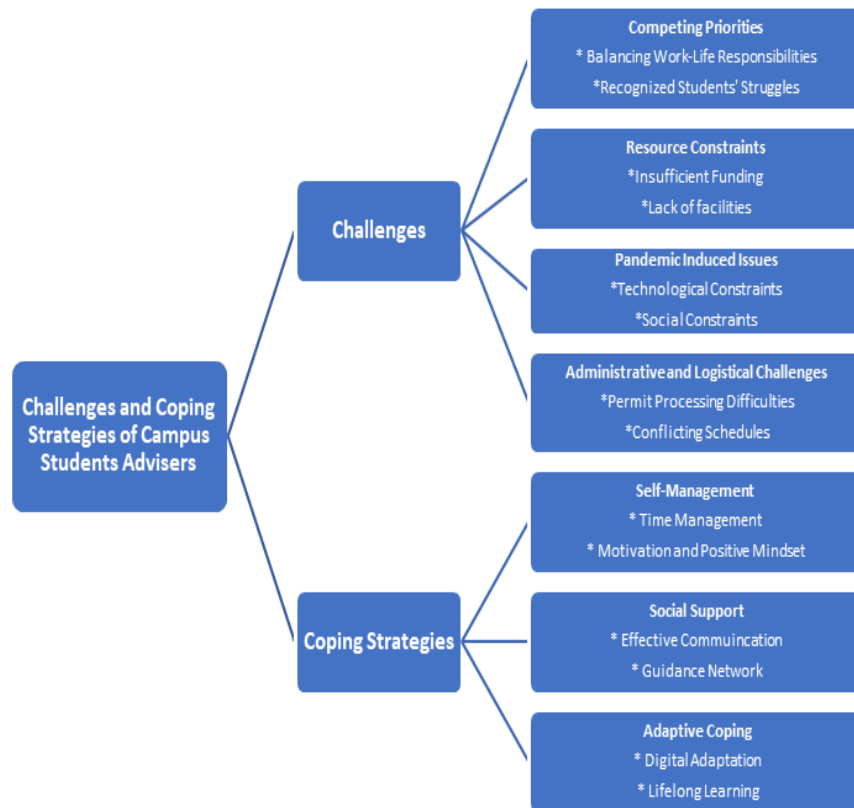


Figure 1. Demonstration of meaningful categories of the study

Discussion

This study aims to describe the challenges and coping strategies of campus advisers' in advising student organizations post-pandemic. Specifically, this paper intends to describe the challenges perceived by campus advisers while advising student organizations in the post-pandemic period and the coping strategies they utilized in order to cope with the challenges they've faced. The campus adviser's experiences were elaborated into two (2) significant themes, which are perceived obstacles and coping techniques. Seven (7) major categories were then identified after careful examination of the informants' data. Academic advising is undeniably one of the most challenging professions out there. It encompasses a wide range of roles, including being a facilitator of learning, a guidance counselor, a friend, and perhaps most importantly, a second parent. With these various roles, it is not difficult for advisors to feel exhaustion and stress (Zang et al., 2022). Nevertheless, they persist in fulfilling their tasks because they understand the immense value of their role. As per Alagappan et al. (2021), academic advising is tightly linked to achieving academic goals, career ambitions, and the overall development of a student. In the context of student organizations, advisors serve as the pioneers who empower and motivate students as they develop leadership and interpersonal skills (Student Organizations, 2023). While advising can be a fulfilling career that presents professional and personal opportunities (Bird, 2023), encountering challenges in the teaching profession is inevitable (Mommers et al., 2018). Additionally, with the eruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, the constant shift from face-to-face to remote learning and vice versa led to an increase in the difficulty of running student organizations.

Throughout the pandemic, both before and after it, campus student organization advisers have encountered numerous challenges while providing assistance to their organization. One of these is achieving balance between personal and professional life which proves exceedingly difficult for advisors (Lynch, 2022). The informants' testimony clearly reflects the struggles they experienced while juggling their roles as educators, student organization advisers, and parents. The demanding workload often results in fewer breaks, increased stress, and role strain among advisors (Abarintos & Marinella, 2021). Additionally, advisors express concern over students' engagement in the organization, considering that students face similar

challenges in balancing their various responsibilities both within and outside the organization (Yadav, 2023). Based on the results of the study, campus advisers' identified students' academic backlogs as one of the reasons that influence their participation, resulting in delayed work progress within the organization.

Consequently, another issue that plays a huge role in running the organization is limited resources. Many schools, and public schools in particular, are dependent on government funding (Allegretto, Garcia, & Weiss, 2022). However, with restricted funding and specific budget allocations, student organizations often face scarcity. Receiving little to no financial support from the university, which often depends on the decision of the administration (LSU, 2023), this results in the obstruction of planned activities and projects (Kalola & Kavale, 2017). Campus advisers highlighted that, among the challenges that they have encountered in their advising experience, financial problems stay on top of everything. To accomplish their objectives and perform their duties, they most often rely on fundraising activities. Sometimes, campus groups also encounter difficulties in their fundraising activities (Wang, 2023), which results in the last option: utilization of their own pockets. In accordance with this issue, a lack of facilities also follows. With the limited funding received by the school, a lack of physical facilities is common (Yangambi, 2023), and the production of additional spaces for organization is unlikely. This scarcity also impedes the overall productivity of the organization; specifically, it influences collaboration among the members and the organization of information.

When the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak occurred, everything changed for running a student organization (Cobb, 2021). The closure of universities resulted in isolation (Leal et al., 2021), modification, or cancellation of gatherings (Tallo, 2020). Lockdowns and restrictions on social interaction forced a shift to remote interactions or a transition to a virtual setting for work or education. The findings of the study illustrated how the pandemic immensely impeded their organizational duties as a result of social constraints. Unable to continue community engagements and other activities, this led them to modify their approaches and rely heavily on technology to continue their tasks. However, despite the aid provided by various social media platforms and technological devices, technological issues are more prevalent. Both teachers and students experienced technical difficulties such as poor

internet connections and a lack of necessary equipment (Belyakova et al., 2022). This results in difficulty in implementing programs and events online and a barrier to proper communication, as stated by the informants.

After the pandemic, as the transition back to face-to-face settings took place, campus advisers identified new issues within the organizations. While many organizations, including the Pakistani Student Association, are facing challenges in recruiting new members (Roessler, 2022), the informants specifically highlighted difficulties related to permit processing and scheduling as their main concerns. Considering the number of papers needed for approval, the campus advisers and the members of the organization are having a hard time completing the necessary documents, especially when organizing activities outside the campus premises. Furthermore, scheduling activities becomes a struggle due to the frequent overlap with university events. Consequently, the campus student advisers stated that due to the scheduling issues, some of their activities have been postponed or rescheduled. Additionally, the busy schedules of the members, guests, and speakers also contribute to these delays and the productivity of the organization.

In response to the challenges faced by campus advisers in advising student organizations before, during, and after the pandemic, they employed a range of coping strategies. Among these are self-management, social support (Andrade et al., 2021), and adaptive coping.

Academic advising services frequently emphasize the importance of time management as a valuable strategy for managing stress. Those who failed to establish effective time management skills during the pandemic experienced a decline in motivation and tended to engage in academic procrastination (Kalman, Macias Esparza, Weston, 2022). Furthermore, this study corresponds to the responses given by the informants, who emphasized the role of effective time management in allowing them to allocate more time to personal pursuits, family, and various non-work-related activities.

Additionally, this study found that academic advisers harness motivation as a coping strategy to navigate their own challenges and maintain their professional well-being. By staying motivated, advisers are able to inspire and guide their students effectively, creating a positive cycle of support and achievement. This finding aligns with McClain's study (2022), where academic advisers recognized the exceptional resilience exhibited by their African American male students as a powerful source of

motivation. Despite facing various difficulties in their academic, career, financial, and personal lives, these students showcased unwavering determination. The advisers were motivated to gain a deeper understanding of their students' unique characteristics and expressions of resilience. Moreover, when advisers receive support from people around them and from the university, it reinforces their sense of purpose and value in their role. This support fosters a positive work environment and boosts advisers' morale, inspiring them to go above and beyond their duties. They also used adaptive coping strategies, where despite the technological issues in remote settings, advisers embraced technological tools and platforms to stay connected with the students (Junco, 2016), acknowledging the importance of effective communication within the organization. They also utilize technology to assist students in achieving their academic goals and enhance accessibility for both students and advisers, promoting relationship-building and personalized student learning (Cass & Hammond, 2015).

In periods characterized by elevated stress and excessive demands, academic advisers employ coping strategies to prevent burnout and maintain manageable workloads. These strategies involve implementing measures such as reducing one-on-one time with students and establishing standardized procedures for their services. Essentially, when advisers encounter limited resources and lack supportive supervisors, they tend to rely on behaviors that distance them from their students to effectively handle their workload (Survase, 2022). However, the informants in this study provided contrasting responses, with some advisers viewing challenging situations as an opportunity for personal growth and skill enhancement.

Indeed, campus student advisers had faced numerous challenges throughout their experience in advising student organizations. However, despite these challenges, they continue to uphold their duties, and face these obstacles equipped with various coping strategies. With these findings in mind, the researchers recommend that the university where the informants have affiliated implement interventions that would address their struggles, specifically when it comes to the lack of financial support and facilities. This current study has limitations that should be considered by future researchers. Firstly, it is Qualitative Descriptive Research with a limited number of campus student organization advisers, which limits the experiences shared by the informants. Secondly, the researchers utilized a mixed-methods approach involving interviews and written

questionnaires, which may be susceptible to self-reported bias. Lastly, due to the limited literature related to this study, future researchers could provide more relevant resources to improve the study's reliability. However, despite these limitations, this paper provides adequate findings that shed light on the challenges faced by campus student advisers and the coping strategies they employed. The discoveries from this study could be significant in addressing the identified challenges.

Conclusion

Campus advisers are important members of student organizations because they serve as leaders, facilitators, guides, and sources of support for members and officers. They are critical to the success of both learners and the organization as a whole. Despite the rewarding career opportunities that advising provides, they face numerous challenges that have a significant impact on their overall well-being, both personally and professionally. Nonetheless, campus advisers are resilient people who are always willing to help.

Flexibility and adaptability are one of the characteristics that campus advisors make use the most to adjust with the changes in their workplace. During stressful times, campus advisers changed their coping strategies depending on the problems that they are facing. This shows their ability to come up with creative solutions even when resources are limited, and there's not much supervision. With this, as a crucial part of an educational community, it is important for universities to understand the challenges faced by every advisor and take steps to help them. This could include providing financial support, better facilities to improve advisers' productivity, and finding ways to decrease their workload for the sake of their well-being. Recognizing the role they play, and supporting them does not only contribute to their own development but for the entire educational community.

While this study gives insights into advisers' challenges and how they cope, it doesn't cover everything, and there's more to explore. Future research could look deeper into the experiences of advisers in different educational settings, with a larger and more diverse group. Long-term studies could also give a better understanding of how campus advisor's experiences change overtime, especially in the ever-changing world of higher education.

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