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Impact of COVID-19 on the Nature of Academic Work in Colleges of Education in Ghana

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Abstract. This study investigated the impact of COVID-19 on the nature of academic work in Colleges of Education in Ghana. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. A sample of 346 students was selected for the study. The participants chosen from the Evangelical Presbyterian College of Education, Peki College of Education and the St. Teresa College of Education in the Volta Region of Ghana through purposive, convenience and snowball sampling procedures. Data were gathered using an online questionnaire. Data were received from 270 students resulting in a 78% return rate. The data were analysed using frequencies and percentages as well as means and standard deviations. The results showed that tutors in Colleges of Education mostly taught during the COVID-19 period by sending audio recordings, texts or slide presentations to students. This was however not done in real time. Also, the tutors gave assignments and quizzes and gave feedback on the performance of the students. Finally, it was found that most students' services were not provided satisfactorily when school came to an abrupt end because of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Specifically, student counselling services, student affairs services, organisation of tutorials/seminars and practical classes as well as technical support or IT services and supervisions and mentorships were not satisfactorily provided. It was therefore recommended that authorities in Colleges of Education should liaise with officers in charge of specific services like counselling, student affairs and technical or IT support so that they can effectively and satisfactorily assist students even when they are not on campus.

Keywords. COVID-19, Academic Work, Colleges of Education

Introduction

In December 2019, a new disease was discovered firstly in Wuhan city, Hubei Province, China (Zhu, Zhang, Wang, Li, Yang & Song, 2020). The disease was detected as pneumonia of unknown origin. It was later revealed by the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses (ICTV) that the causative agent of COVID-19 was a novel coronavirus and severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2) (International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses [ICTV], 2020).

Since the first case of COVID-19 was detected in China, the outbreak spread throughout China and rapidly throughout the entire world. As a result, the World Health Organisation (WHO) announced it as pandemic on March 12, 2020 (WHO, 2020). According to Mahdy (2020), globally, several governmental measures have been taken to deal with the risk of the

disease spreading. These measures include travel restrictions, mandatory quarantines for travellers, social distancing, bans on public gatherings, schools and universities closure, business closures, self-isolation, asking people to work at home, curfews and lockdown (Bedford, Gerry, Hatch, Rechner, Young & Watkinson, 2020; Gostin & Wiley, 2020).

During the spike in COVID-19, several countries worldwide either declared lockdown or curfew as a measure to break the fast spread of the virus infection (Paital, Das, & Parida, 2020). These measures have had a negative worldwide effect on business, education, health, and tourism (Pragholapati, 2020). Significantly, the COVID-19 pandemic has overwhelmed the functioning and outcomes of education systems in several forms. This affects all students, though to differing degrees depending on the country/region where they live, their ages, family backgrounds, and access to some “substitute” educational opportunities during the pandemic (García & Weiss, 2020). In most countries, educational institutions around the world have either temporarily closed or implemented online models of learning (UNESCO, 2020a). Some higher level institutions around the world either postponed or cancelled all campus-based activities to minimize gatherings and hence decrease the transmission of COVID-19 virus. However, these measures lead to higher economical, medical, and social implications on students and their families (Esposito & Principi, 2020; Nicola, Alsafi, Sohrabi, Kerwan, Al-Jabir, & Iosifidis, 2020).

Due to the suspension of classroom teaching in many colleges and universities, there has been a switch to the online teaching and learning (Sahu, 2020; Yamin, 2020). This form of learning provides an alternative way to minimize either the contact between students themselves or between the students and lecturers (Pragholapati, 2020). The development of the online learning model positively affects individuals by providing support to easily overcome the break in regular academic work (Duraku & Hoxha, 2020). As a result, if these online models are developed based on factors that can improve the quality of education, this can have a positive long-term effect on the educational futures of students (Gjoshi & Kumi, 2014).

From the forgoing, the use of technology has been considered to be one of the most appropriate alternatives to keep educational systems functional in many parts of the world during this period of COVID-19. However, the levels and methods of using technology that aims to achieve quality online learning are varied and dependent on many factors related to the various stakeholders of education (Duraku & Hoxha, 2020). The teacher, the student and the nature of the home background are all factors which affect the provision of online education. The authors also mention that while the process of shifting learning to online format has already become part of many educational institutions in different parts of the world, a number of factors related to the quality of educational institutions such as teachers, parents and students, in conjunction with changes to their emotional states are assumed to be contributing factors that may affect the quality of online learning.

The concerns of teachers engaged in teaching processes have been observed to be related to their capacities of conducting online learning due to the level of their knowledge and skills in the use of technology, their access to technology, and at-home isolation (UNESCO, 2020b). These issues are common in countries where technology usage is low prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Among students, a major challenge is that most students have no access to the online teaching due to lack of either to acquire the requisite gadgets or due to economical and digital divide (UNESCO, 2020a). Also, online classes can increase mental workload or intellectual fatigue (Pereira, 2014). This is due to the fact that the manner in which classes are taught online is fast and the mode of using some of these technological applications such as Zoom, Google Meet, among others seem unfamiliar to some of the learners.

Despite the challenges in its implementation, several advantages have been acknowledged in the need to resort to online learning, among which stands out the opportunity for rapid progress in the field of digital education (Lurvnik, 2020). Besides the need to shift to the remote learning format has also been assessed as a good opportunity for teachers and students to become stronger, more creative, and innovative (Yokozeki, 2020).

Notably, it is imperative to underscore that the disruptive effects of the COVID-19 outbreak have impacted education greatly across the world (Realyvásquez-Vargas, Maldonado-Macías, Arredondo-Soto, Baez-Lopez, Carrillo-Gutiérrez, & Hernández-Escobedo, 2020). Duraku and Hoxha (2020) revealed that the closure of educational institutions due to preventive measures against the spread of COVID-19 has affected the education, well-being, and functioning of all parties involved. García and Weiss (2020) added that the closure of schools, compounded by the associated public health and economic crises, poses major challenges to students and teachers.

The authors go on to say that even though the exact impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic is not known, it is evidently clear that the academic work of students may deteriorate in the long run if the right systems are not put in place. Also, the ways in which the crisis has widened existing socioeconomic disparities and how these disparities affect learning, educational outcomes and educational inequities are growing (Putnam, 2015; Reardon, 2011; García & Weiss, 2017). In this case students who have already existing difficulties in their learning are going to find it more difficult in the era of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

In Ghana, the education sector was forced to close all school activities in March 2020, when the president of the republic declared upon medical advice that there should be lockdown to prevent the spread of COVID-19. All schools including all tertiary institutions of which colleges of education are not exception had to comply with this directive. It can be realised that the colleges of education were not adequately prepared to cope with this situation due to inadequate technological structures to maintain effective teaching and learning during the lockdown. It is on the basis of this that this study therefore seeks to investigate the impact of COVID-19 on the nature of academic work in Colleges of Education in Ghana.

Specifically, the study aimed at answering the following questions:

1. What are the common media through which students of Colleges of Education learn in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What is the nature of academic work in Colleges of Education in the COVID-19 era?
3. What is the level of satisfaction of students in Colleges of Education with college-related services since the COVID-19 Pandemic?

Literature Review

Theoretical Foundation

The study was based on the ICT Constructivist Theory of Learning.

ICT Constructivist Theory of Learning

The ICT Constructivist Theory of Learning was propounded by Papert (1980). This theory was based on the original constructivist approach to learning pioneered by Piaget. Piaget believed that students construct their own knowledge based on their own experience. In relating the theory to ICT, Papert (1980) noted that students constructed their own knowledge based on their experiences acquired through mobile phone usage. According to Thanasoulas (2002), students construct their own knowledge through investigation and methods based on their prior

understanding and experience, application of these to new situations and integration of the new understanding achieved by an active process of construction. Students, thus, construct new ideas or concepts based on what they currently know (Bruner, 1996).

Within a constructivist learning environment, lecturers are supposed to encourage students to initiate new ideas and find out principles on their own. Students need to make the transformation from a passive role to an active one in constructing knowledge and this is only possible when lecturers provide students with an environment which allows them to make their contributions to the learning process, and by giving them suitable tools to work with that knowledge (Thanasoulas, 2002). In the ICT constructivist theory of learning, students actively construct concepts based on previous and recent knowledge that can be discovered through text, videos, animations and news bulletins with mobile phones. Thus, through technology usage, students are likely to acquire their own knowledge.

This theory speaks of the benefits of using technology in teaching and learning. However, the use of technological means in teaching and learning may not be as effective as in-person face-to-face teaching and learning. Also, there are other services that can only be effectively provided for students when they are in school and may not be effectively provided using technological means. This theory was therefore considered most appropriate for the current study in investigating the nature of academic work in Colleges of Education in the COVID-19 era.

COVID-19 Pandemic in Ghana

On the 15th of March, 2020, the President of the Republic of Ghana ordered the closure of all education institutions in Ghana, affecting some 9.2 million basic school students (kindergarten, primary and junior high schools) and 0.5 million tertiary education students (United Nations, 2020; UNESCO, 2020c). The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the lives of most students, teachers, and parents around the world, with millions now teaching and learning remotely from home.

Although, it is still early days since the outbreak of the pandemic, it is likely to have significant long-term effects on education. The pandemic's impacts on access and quality of education are most severely felt through the tracking closure of schools without adequate alternative education services accessible by all students nationwide (UNICEF, 2020). These measures are likely to exacerbate existing inequities in education in the short and long-terms and worsen existing barriers to access.

Even for students who are able to access distance and online learning programmes, the quality of learning is highly impacted as a result of numerous factors, including learning difficulties at home. This is likely to have negative long-term impacts on learning outcomes. Further evidence is necessary to monitor the pandemic's impact on long-term learning outcomes among students.

Impact of COVID-19 on the Educational System

School closures carry high social and economic costs for people across communities. Education across the world has suffered because of the impact of COVID-19. Schools were closed down for a greater portion of 2020 in most countries. This caused several challenges. Some of these are captured below:

Interrupted Learning: Schooling provides essential learning, however, the closure of schools affected learning among young people and deprived them of opportunities for growth and development (Duraku & Hoxha, 2020). For people living in developing countries,

particularly from poor socio-economic backgrounds, the effect was very huge. This is because they did not have much educational opportunities beyond school.

Challenges Creating, Maintaining, and Improving Online Learning: In the wake of the COVID-19, most countries shifted their in-school activities to online. However, this was challenging since most countries and educational institutions were not prepared for this major change (Adnan & Anwar, 2020; UNESCO, 2020c). This was also a challenge for subjects that demanded practical teaching.

High economic costs: The cost of online learning appears to be challenging for most students. This is very much the case in countries with huge internet costs.

Rise in dropout rates: It is a challenge to ensure that students return and stay in school when schools reopen after closures. This is especially true of protracted closures and when economic shocks place pressure on children to work and generate income for financially distressed families (UNESCO, 2020c).

Social isolation: Schools are places of social activity and human interaction. When schools close, many students miss out of on social contact that is essential to learning and development (Mahdy, 2020; UNESCO, 2020c).

Challenges Measuring and Validating Learning: Calendared assessments, notably high-stakes examinations that determine admission or advancement to new education levels and institutions, are thrown into disorder when schools close (UNESCO, 2020c). Disruptions to assessments results in stress for students and their families and can trigger disengagement.

Empirically, there have been some previous studies on how COVID-19 has affected the education system. For instance, Duraku and Hoxha (2020) explored the concerns of students, parents, and teachers related to the circumstances caused due to social isolation, and the perspectives of teachers and parents with regard to remote or online learning in Kosovo. The findings revealed that the new circumstances created due to the spread of COVID-19, including changes in education, have caused a number of concerns among students, parents, and teachers in Kosovo.

Furthermore, Gonzalez et al. (2020) explored the effects of the COVID-19 confinement on the autonomous learning performance of students in higher education, specifically in the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. The researchers used a field experiment that included 458 students divided into two groups: the control group, and the experiment group. Students in the experiment group were those who took online classes as a consequence of the confinement. The results showed that this confinement had a significant positive effect on the academic performance of students, which helped to improve students' learning strategies to a more continuous habit, improving their efficiency. This study gave a positive outlook about academic work in the COVID-19 era.

Similarly, Demuyakor (2020) explored the satisfaction level of Ghanaian international students in higher educational institutions in China during the COVID-19 pandemic. Data were collected using an online survey focused on level of satisfaction of online learning and how Ghanaian international students were coping with this new situation. The results showed that most of the students showed a positive attitude towards the implementation of online classes, even though they had to pay high costs to access the Internet with very slow connectivity.

Contrary to these studies, Mahdy (2020) conducted a cross-sectional study to find out the impact of COVID-19 lockdown on the academic performance of veterinary medical students and researchers. Data were collected using an online questionnaire from a total of 1,392 participants were from 92 different countries answered the questionnaire with response rate of 94.1%. The data showed that COVID-19 pandemic lockdown affected the academic

performance of most participants (96.7%) with varying degrees. Although online education provided an opportunity for self-study, the main challenge that online education faces in veterinary medical science is how to give practical lessons. Since most of the subjects are practical it was not easy to learn it online. Online education could be improved by making it more interactive, showing medical procedures in real situations, giving concise information, and providing 3D virtual tools to mimic the real situation.

In a similar vein, Adnan and Anwar (2020) studied the attitudes of college students in Pakistan towards online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was revealed by the students that, in underdeveloped countries like Pakistan, online classes cannot produce desired academic performance, since most students were unable to access the Internet. It was added that during the COVID-19 pandemic, students face other problems, such as response time, absence of traditional classroom socialization, and lack of face-to-face interaction with the instructor.

Muthuprasad, Aiswarya, Aditya and Jha (2021) examined the understanding Agricultural students' perception and preference towards the online learning through an online survey of 307 students in India. The results indicated that majority of the students preferred to use smart phone for online learning. Students also preferred recorded classes with quiz at the end of each class to improve the effectiveness of learning. The students opined that flexibility and convenience of online classes made it an attractive option, whereas broadband connectivity issues in rural areas made it a challenge for students to make use of online learning initiatives.

In addition, Mishra, Gupta and Shree (2020) examined online teaching-learning modes adopted by the Mizoram University in India for the teaching-learning process and subsequent semester examinations. It was reported that Mizoram University has developed its own Learning Management System in the wake of the suspension of the formal teaching-learning process due to the imposed lockdown by the government of India. However, teaching was done not only through that medium but through recordings and interactions through WhatsApp, Telegram and Email.

König, Jäger-Biela and Glutsch (2020) explored how teachers maintained social contact with students during lockdown in Germany. They found that majority of teachers reported they managed to communicate with students and parents on a regular basis. However, teachers also reported having contacted and helped students who needed extra support. Also, it was shown that online classes and assignments were provided weekly with regular feedback given. A report by the University of Jyväskylä (2021) in Finland also showed that students preferred receiving recorded lectures along with assignments and regular feedbacks during the period of the COVID-19 lockdown.

Regarding the issue of support for students, Aristovnik, Keržič, Ravšelj, Tomažević and Umek (2020) investigated how students perceived the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as affecting their lives at a global level. The study was a global research using a sample of 30,383 university students from 62 countries. Their study revealed that students were more satisfied with the support provided by teaching staff and public relationships of their universities. However, there were deficiencies regarding IT and Technical skills. Imad (2020) added that due to the lockdown in the wake of COVID-19, there was the need to provide support services that can help students cope.

Generally, because of the peculiarity of the situation of COVID-19 Pandemic, there have been several studies concerning its impact, particular on education. However, its long term effect is yet to be seen since the Pandemic has existed for not even up to two years. However, it appears there is paucity of studies that has been done to find out how COVID-19 has affected the education system in Ghana.

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey design. This design helps to obtain data and information on issues relating to a specific phenomenon and the factors associated with the phenomenon (Kulbir, 2009). The design was suitable on obtaining information on the academic work of College of Education students in the COVID-19 pandemic season. The study focused on students in selected Colleges of Education in the Volta Region of Ghana. These were Evangelical Presbyterian College of Education, Peki College of Education and the St. Teresah College of Education. The sample size for the study was 346. This was based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample determination table. The population of the students in the selected colleges was 3,500. A sample of 346 was considered suitable for a population of 3,500 (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970).

Purposive, convenience and snowball sampling procedures were employed in selecting the sample for the study. According to Degraft-Otoo (2012), purposive also known as judgmental or subjective sampling is a non-probability sampling in which the decision regarding the individuals to be included in the sample will be taken by the researcher basing on a specified criterion. The researcher purposively selected students in three Colleges of Education in the Volta Region of Ghana. These were the Evangelical Presbyterian College of Education, Peki College of Education and the St. Teresah College of Education.

After purposively selecting these colleges, convenience sampling was used in selecting the sample for the study. Convenience sampling involves sampling individuals who are available and willing to participate in the study. Since students were not in schools at the time of the study, the online questionnaire for collecting data was sent out and any student who was available and willing completed it. When the expected sample size was reached, the online portal for completing the questionnaire was disabled. Aside, convenience sampling, snowball sampling was also used. Thus, students were encouraged to forward the link for completing the questionnaires to their mates in their respective colleges so that they could also complete the questionnaire. In using both convenience and snowball sampling techniques, the researcher sent the link for the online questionnaire to some of the college students she knew were available to answer (convenience) after which those college students were encouraged to identify and send same link to their colleagues to also participate in the study (snowball).

The students were given a period of two working weeks to complete the questionnaire. At the end of the two weeks only 270 students fully completed the questionnaires. Since the expected sample size was 346, the return rate was calculated to be 78%. This return rate could be due to varied reasons. However, the major reason why most of the students indicated that they could not complete the online questionnaire was due to the poor internet connectivity in various communities in Ghana. Some students lived in places where even normal phone connectivity to make calls was difficult to get let alone be able to get a stable internet connectivity. The data obtained were analysed using frequencies and percentages as well as means and standard deviations.

Results

Dominant Means through which Students Learn in the Wake of the Covid-19 Pandemic

The study aimed at finding out the dominant means through which students learn in the COVID-19 era. The results obtained are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Means through which Students Learn

Means	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Online in real-time (video-conference)	15	5.6
Online with a video recording (not in real-time)	8	2.9
Online with an audio recording (not in real-time)	148	54.8
Online by sending presentations to students	47	17.4
Written communication (e.g. chats, etc.)	52	19.3
Total	270	100.0

Source: Field survey (2021)

It is shown in Table 1 by more than half of the respondents (54.8%) that lecture was mostly done online with an audio recording (not in real-time). The next means of teaching and learning was through written communication (chats) (19.3%) and online by sending presentations to students (17.4%). From the results, it is clear that teaching and learning was mostly carried out using audio recording but not in-real time. Teaching and learning was rarely done in real-time.

Nature of Academic Work in the Wake of the Covid-19 Pandemic

The study also aimed at finding out the nature of academic work in the era of COVID-19. The respondents were required to indicate their agreement or disagreement with some statements reflecting the nature of academic work in the COVID-19 era. The data were analysed using mean and standard deviation. Mean scores of 3.0 and above were deemed to be high and indicative that the respondents mostly agreed to the specific statement. The results obtained are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Nature of Academic Work in COVID-19 Era

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
Since on-site classes were cancelled, my lecturers/tutors: have provided course assignments (e.g. readings, homework, quizzes) on a regular basis.	3.56	0.76
have provided feedback on my performance on given assignments.	3.32	0.78
have responded to my questions in a timely manner.	2.76	0.98
have been open to students' suggestions and adjustments of online classes.	3.12	0.88
have informed me on what exams will look like in this new situation.	3.05	1.02

Source: Field survey (2021)

It is shown in Table 2 by the respondents that since on-site classes were cancelled tutors have provided course assignments (e.g. readings, homework, quizzes) on a regular basis (M=3.56, SD=0.76). The respondents also indicated that tutors have provided feedback on my performance on given assignments (M=3.32, SD=0.78). There was also an indication that the tutors have been open to students' suggestions and adjustments of online classes (M=3.12, SD=0.88) and have informed them on what exams will look like in this new situation (M=3.05, SD=1.02). From the results in Table 2, it is clear that tutors provide regular assignments and quizzes, give feedback on the performance in these assignments, are open to suggestions from students and have made students aware of how examinations would be like.

Satisfaction with Student-Related Services since COVID-19 Pandemic

Finally, the study aimed at finding out the satisfaction of students with student-related services since the COVID-19 pandemic. The data were analysed using frequencies and percentages. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Satisfaction with School-Related Issues since COVID-19 Pandemic

Statement	Dissatisfied		Satisfied	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Since in school classes were cancelled, how satisfied have you been with?				
The organization of lectures.	148	54.8	122	45.2
The organization of tutorials/seminars and practical classes.	173	64.1	97	35.9
Supervisions (mentorships)	162	60.0	108	40.0
The support of teaching staff.	131	48.5	139	51.5
Technical support or IT services.	171	63.3	99	36.7
The support of student affairs office.	175	64.8	95	35.2
The support of student counselling services.	191	70.7	79	29.3
The support of student leaders	159	58.9	111	41.1

Source: Field survey (2021)

Table 3 shows that more than half of the respondents (51.5%) were satisfied with the support of teaching staff. Aside this, majority of the respondents disagreed with the rest of the statements in Table 3. Specifically, about 71% were dissatisfied with the support of student counselling services. Also, about 65% of the respondents were dissatisfied with the support of student affairs services. In the same vein, 64% of the respondents were dissatisfied with the organization of tutorials/seminars and practical classes. Majority of the respondents were also dissatisfied with technical support or IT services (63.3%) and supervisions and mentorships (60%).

Discussion

The results showed that teaching and learning was mostly done online with an audio recording (not in real-time). The other means of teaching and learning was done through written communication (chats) and online by sending presentations to students. However, teaching and learning was rarely done in real-time using video. The results connote that tutors taught during the COVID-19 period mostly through sending audio recordings, chats and slide presentations of lectures. In Ghana, the internet services are not good and so it is difficult to provide online teaching in real time. This could explain the findings of the study.

These results confirm the findings of Muthuprasad, Aiswarya, Aditya and Jha (2021) that majority of the students preferred to use smart phone for online learning. Students also preferred recorded classes with quiz at the end of each class to improve the effectiveness of learning. The students opined that flexibility and convenience of online classes made it an attractive option, whereas broadband connectivity issues in rural areas made it a challenge for students to make use of online learning initiatives. Mishra, Gupta and Shree (2020) also revealed that Mizoram University has developed its own Learning Management System in the wake of the suspension of the formal teaching-learning process due to the imposed lockdown by the government of India. However, teaching was done not only through that medium but through recordings and interactions through WhatsApp, Telegram and Email.

The results revealed also that since on-site classes were cancelled tutors have provided course assignments such as readings, homework and quizzes on a regular basis and have provided feedback on my performance on given assignments. Also, tutors had been open to students' suggestions and adjustments of online classes and had informed students on what exams will look like in the era of COVID-19. From these results, it can be inferred that in spite of the online system of studying, students were given assignments and given feedback by the tutors. In terms of how the online system of learning should be like, tutors were opened to suggestions from students. This is likely because tutors discussed with students which mode of teaching will benefit them. Therefore, tutors made changes in the mode of teaching and learning to suit the students. Students were also made aware of the examination structure during COVID-19 period.

The results are in line with the findings of König, Jäger-Biela and Glutsch (2020) that majority of teachers reported they managed to communicate with students and parents on a regular basis. Also, König et al. revealed that online classes and assignments were provided weekly with regular feedback given. A report by the University of Jyväskylä (2021) in Finland also showed that students preferred receiving recorded lectures along with assignments and regular feedbacks during the period of the COVID-19 lockdown.

In terms of satisfaction with school-related issues, more than half of the respondents were satisfied with the support of teaching staff. However, majority of the respondents were dissatisfied with the support of student counselling services, the support of student affairs services and the organisation of tutorials/seminars and practical classes. There was also dissatisfaction with technical support or IT services as well as supervisions and mentorships. The implication is that these services were not provided satisfactorily during the COVID-19 era.

These findings confirm the findings of Aristovnik, Keržič, Ravšelj, Tomažević and Umek (2020) that students were more satisfied with the support provided by teaching staff and public relationships of their universities but not with support from technical or IT staff. In a similar vein, Imad (2020) revealed that in the era of lockdown because of COVID-19, there was the need to provide support services that can help students cope. However, this was lacking. König et al. (2020) also reported that teachers contacted and helped students who needed extra support. The implication of these is that even though teachers supported students through their teaching, other student-support services were lacking.

Conclusions

From the results of the study, it is concluded tutors in Colleges of Education mostly taught during the COVID-19 period by sending audio recordings, texts or slide presentations to students. This was however not done in real time. In essence, tutors did not have to wait till everyone was online at a specific scheduled time before teaching.

It was also concluded that academic work still took place in spite of the break in physical face-to-face teaching and learning. The tutors gave assignments and quizzes and gave feedback on the performance of the students. Online classes were adjusted to suit suggestions given by students and the students were made aware of how examinations would take place.

Finally, it is concluded that most students' services were not provided satisfactorily when school came to an abrupt end because of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Specifically, student counselling services, student affairs services, organisation of tutorials/seminars and practical classes as well as technical support or IT services and supervisions and mentorships were not satisfactorily provided.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study:

1. To ensure that students fully participate in online learning, tutors should arrange specific times where they can engage students online and answer the questions they may have concerning the information they have been given through the recordings, chats and slides.
2. Authorities in Colleges of Education should liaise with officers in charge of specific services like counselling, student affairs and technical or IT support so that they can effectively and satisfactorily assist students even when they are not on campus.
3. Supervisions and mentorships were indicated by the students to not have been satisfactorily provided. Therefore, it is recommended that tutors effectively carry out their roles as mentors and provide supervision to students as expected of them.

Limitations

Since data were collected online, there is difficulty trusting completely that the responses were given by the actual students of the various colleges. Even though the link for responding to the questionnaire was sent to them through both e-mail and text messages, it is possible the students may not have responded by themselves. To reduce the extent to which this could happen, the demographic data questions were such that students had to provide personal information about the programmes they study in the colleges. This helped reduce the incidence of 'proxy' answering of the questionnaire.

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