

Post-Pandemic Analysis on the Factors Affecting Academic Performance of Tourism and Hospitality Management Students During COVID-19 Pandemic: Basis of an Enhanced Learning Continuity Plan

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ABSTRACT

World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General and Committee members declared in 2023 that COVID-19 will no longer constitute a public health emergency (PHEIC). During the pandemic surge in global business, the educational system worldwide, including hospitality education, has been greatly affected by the pandemic crisis. The influence of COVID-19 causes worldwide school closures that have far-reaching implications for students' short- and long-term growth because of the disruption of teacher and student networks, leading to poor performance. Thus, the study aims to analyze the factors that affect the academic performance of Tourism and Hospitality Management students of Far Eastern University Manila, Philippines, enrolled in the academic year 2020-2021 during the COVID-19 surge. The study used a descriptive survey design using a self-administered survey instrument with 342 respondents. The findings of the study showed that different factors in technology and learning management system (LMS), student's environment, study area, delivery of academic subjects offered by the teachers, and the assessment used by the school during the distance learning have impacted the academic performance of students as evidence in the decline of Quality Point Average (QPA) on both programs from the Institute of Tourism and Hospitality Management despite that distance learning is designed to be convenient and easy. The factors influencing academic performance, such as technology and study environment, primarily play a significant and considerable role in how students learn and cope with the distant learning mode. The result of the study will serve as a guide in enhancing the University's continuity plan for flexible learning options, given the factors that need reinforcement to the scholarly performance of the students. The study can be a benchmarking tool among Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Philippines as a basis to further strengthen their learning strategies relative to flexible teaching and learning modalities, refining the scholarly learning assessment tools as well as sustaining the schools' continuity framework and achieving the academic goals and aspiration for the success of students and graduates of the HEIs whether in the new normal or the future global crisis.

Keywords: academic performance, COVID-19, distance learning assessment, school continuity plan, tourism & hospitality students

INTRODUCTION

The influence of COVID-19 on the educational system globally has greatly affected students because of the disruption of teacher and student networks, leading to poor performance. Schools and colleges are moving towards distance learning using educational technologies to avoid strain during the pandemic season (Bridge, 2020).

According to the book jointly documented among 45 education continuity stories by the OECD, the World Bank, Harvard's Global Education Innovation Initiative and HundRED (2022), during the first wave of school closure due to the pandemic, education has different examples of how quickly the government and non-government organizations responded to school closures to continue study by implementing a strategy for learners around the world. While often using digital solutions that target specific solutions aimed at academic

learning, socio-emotional support, teacher professional development, etc., these draw some lessons on the fast-paced responses to reimagine a post-pandemic education worldwide. The Philippine Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) made innovations in alternative learning modes and technologies for delivering education and implemented proactive policies for continuing education. These include improved online learning modalities to facilitate student learning activities (Biana, Dacela & Joaquin, 2020).

Far Eastern University-Manila in the Philippines adopted online education to continue learning for students despite the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Before the quarantine, FEU had established the Canvas platform as the University's official learning management system (LMS). The University implemented three different modes of teaching and learning that allow students to choose a preferred mode of learning. These are MOL (Mixed-Online Learning), AOL (Asynchronous Online Learning), and TAL (Total Analogue Learning). The students can choose among these, but even though students can decide which mode of learning is well suited to them, there are challenging factors that affect their academic performance.

According to the study *"The Impact of Environmental Factors on Academic Performance"* by Vargas et al. (2020), lighting, noise and temperature are the three environmental factors affecting university students' academic performance during online classes. These factors influence students' academic performance, concentration, and comfort, affecting their grades, learning process and motivation to persist with their studies. The study highlights that study area design with uncomfortable and uncontrollable environmental conditions negatively impacts university students' academic performance. In the study of Dabbagh and Fake (2017), the student's ideal personal learning environment includes a platform open for discussions. The study of Kear, Jones, Holden, and Curcher (2016) tackles the concern of using technology in higher education. Although most technologies are designed for communication, educators have embraced them with dedication. Articles on the internet help a community project, photo-sharing apps for reviews, and social bookmarking to help with e-learning. Furthermore, the outcome of using technologies in education depends on the learners, lecturers, and context. With the continuous development of technology, student learning can become more creative and interesting (Bagapova et al., 2020).

The theoretical framing of this study is anchored on the model framework called the Internal-External Model by Zang and Goel (2011), explaining the success of e-learning based on internal and external factors such as general attitudes, personal innovativeness and online experience coupled with the ease of use of technology and the institutional support that leads to generating a higher e-learning outcome of e-learning satisfaction on content and institution, future intentions and efficiency and effectiveness of the continuity plan and framework for HEIs. To depict the study's overall purpose and show the relationships among internal and external factors, figure 1 presents the study's conceptual framework.

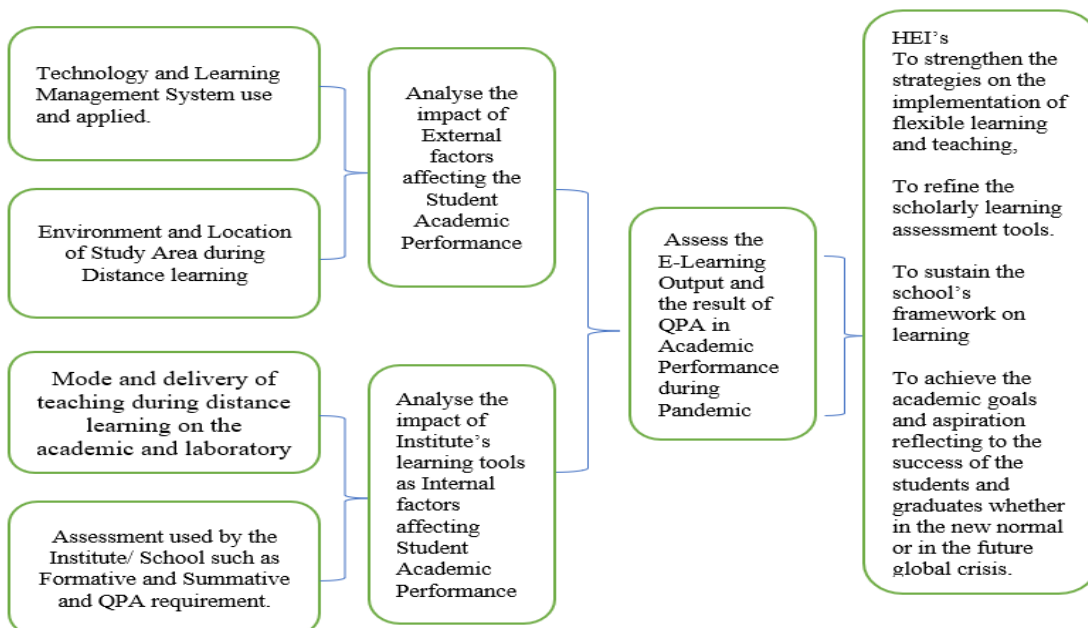


Figure 1. Proposed Framework Model on HEI's Continuous Learning Education Program

Thus, the study aimed to analyze the impact of different factors affecting the academic performance of Tourism and Hospitality Management students of FEU-Manila, Philippines, during the pandemic. These factors were technology and learning management system, student's environment and study area, delivery of academic subjects offered, and the assessment used by the school during distance learning.

METHODOLOGY

The study used a descriptive survey design using a quantitative approach to assess the factors affecting the academic performance of the 2nd year to 4th Tourism and Hospitality Management students of FEU-Manila, Philippines, during the pandemic. The researchers prepared the self-administered survey instrument. The instrument was validated, and the reliability results were very good. A psychometric response method was applied to understand and state respondents' level of agreement using a 4-point Likert scale to primarily calculate the mean scores in assessing the impact of the factors affecting students' academic performance during the pandemic. The researchers gathered data through an online survey among Tourism and Hospitality Management students enrolled in the academic year 2020-2021. The researchers used online social media platforms and Google Forms to gather data. Ethical considerations were implemented in the research to protect the anonymity and confidential information of the respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In answering the overall purpose of the study, the researchers motivated on determining the following: (1) the profile of the students in terms of (a) gender, (b) year level, (c) degree program, (d) alternative mode of learning, (e) QPA (Quality Point Average) in 1st Semester SY 2019-2020 (before pandemic) and (f) QPA (Quality Point Average) in 1st Semester SY 2020- 2021 (pandemic post transformational). (2) Assessing the impact of distance learning on the academic performance of tourism and hospitality students using technology and learning management systems during the pandemic, such as Internet access, Canvas, and online platforms. (3) Assessing the impact of distance learning on the academic performance of tourism and hospitality students in terms of the student's environment and study area. (4) Assessing the impact of distance learning on the Academic Performance of Tourism and Hospitality students regarding the delivery of academic subjects offered during the pandemic. Lastly, (5) the impact of distance learning on the academic performance of tourism and hospitality students in terms of assessment used by the school.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents based on Gender

Gender	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Male	132	38.6%
Female	210	61.4%
TOTAL	342	100%

The table shows that most respondents are female, with 61.4%, while 38.6% or 132 of the respondents are male. The finding implies that the course programs are predominantly female, and the institution plays an important role in advancing gender equity in H&T education because they create the groundwork for future H&T leaders' perceptions, approaches, and responses to gender inequities.

Table 2. Demographic Profile of Respondents based on Year Level

Year Level	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
4 th Year	186	54.4%
3 rd Year	90	26.3%

2 nd Year	66	19.3%
TOTAL	342	100%

Findings reveal that 186, or 54.4%, are from the fourth-year level, 90 or 26.3%, are from the third-year level, and 66 or 19.3% are from the second-year level. The findings imply that the 4th year students were the most affected by online learning modalities, especially affecting their need for exposure to industry practice since trainings were conducted online.

Table 3. Degree Program of Respondents

Degree Program	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
BSHRM	178	52%
BS M	168	48%
TOTAL	342	100%

The table indicates that most respondents are from the BS Hotel and Restaurant Management program, 178 or 52%, while 48% or 168 are from BS in Tourism Management. The finding shows an equal balance of students enrolled in the two programs.

Table 4. Alternative Mode of Learning Enrolled

Mode of Learning Enrolled	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Mixed Online Learning (MOL)	243	71.1%
Asynchronous Online Learning (AOL)	98	28.7%
Total Analog Learning (TAL)	0	0%
TOTAL	342	100%

The table reveals that 243, or 71.1%, enrolled in the MOL, and 98 or 28.7%, enrolled in the AOL, while no one enrolled in the TAL mode of learning. The finding denotes that students wanted to use the MOL because the learner skills and motivation to learn successfully reduced student obstacles to online learning. Keskin and Yurdugül (2019) claim that while institutions' high-cost expenditures are intended to yield high benefit expectations, it is clear that not all learners profit equally from these efforts. According to research on online learning, learner characteristics also significantly affect dropout rates (Hart, 2012; Kizilcec & Halawa, 2015).

Table 5. Comparison of Quality Point Average (QPA) before and during pandemic

QPA	QPA 1 st Sem 19-20 (Before Pandemic)		QPA 2 nd Sem 20-21 (During Pandemic)	
	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
4.0-3.5	69	20.20%	61	17.80%
3.5-2.5	168	49.10%	150	43.90%
2.5-2.0	83	24.30%	99	28.90%

2.0-1.5	16	4.70%	25	7.30%
1.5-1.0	6	1.80%	7	2.00%
TOTAL	342	100%	342	100%

Table 5 shows the comparison of the QPA of students from all degree programs for the SY 2019-2020, where it shows that students who get QPAs of 4.0-3.5 and 3.5-2.5 significantly dropped from 20.20% to 17.80% or 69, down to 61 students and 49.10% to 43.90% or 168 down to 150 students respectively. It also shows the increase in the number of students who get QPAs of 2.5-2.0 with 24.30% to 28.90%, 2.0-1.5 with 4.70% to 7.30% and 1.5-1.0 1.80% to 2.00%. The results denote a drastic decline in the quality point average of students learning during the pandemic. There were dropouts due to family financial issues and mental health issues, among others, during the crisis. However, the good news is that almost all HEIs use a variety of learning-recovery practices to assist kids in getting back on track.

Table 6. Assessing the impact of Distance Learning in terms of Technology and Learning Management Systems

Items	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Availability of internet connection or Wi-Fi access affects my academic performance positively (better grades) in terms of timely submission of assignments and tests in Canvas	3.32	Strongly Agree
2. I communicate with my teachers and classmates during Synchronous meetings in Canvas only	2.87	Agree
3. Canvas is easy to navigate and very helpful to students to further communicate with teachers and classmates during distance learning	3.21	Agree
4. I frequently experienced system glitches in Canvas during distance learning	2.93	Agree
5. I experienced a system glitch in Canvas that hindered my submissions and online tests, resulting in a low grade.	2.71	Agree
6. I experienced internet fluctuations that hindered my submissions and taking of tests, resulting in lower grades.	2.87	Agree
7. I used my mobile or smartphone to access distance learning without difficulty in terms of outputs and submissions of assignments.	2.96	Agree
8. I failed some subjects during distance learning because I'm unfamiliar with using Canvas and other online platforms in the distance learning modality.	1.82	Disagree
9. Technology and Canvas gave me higher grades during distance learning.	2.89	Agree
10. I have a lower grade than during face-to-face class.	2.49	Disagree

The table above shows that the majority of the respondents rated "Agree" in terms of Technology and Learning Management Systems with an obtained mean value of 2.87, 3.21, 2.93, 2.71, 2.87, 2.96 and 2.89, respectively, except for the statement "Availability of internet connection or Wi-Fi access affects my academic performance positively (better grades) in terms of timely submission of assignments and tests in Canvas as the institution's

learning management system with an obtained weighted mean of 3.32 verbally interpreted as "Strongly Agree." However, the statement "I failed some subjects during distance learning because I'm not familiar with using Canvas and other online platforms in distance learning modality" obtained a mean value of 1.82, verbally interpreted as "Disagree." Students' response to using Canvas as the institution's LMS platform did not change their familiarity and learning experience; thus, students are confident enough in the platform's reliability as their learning pathway in online learning. Overall, the results revealed that using technology in distant learning has transformed how students access and interact with educational resources, allowing for greater flexibility and tailored learning experiences. LMS systems have become crucial tools for instructors and students, allowing communication, collaboration, and course material management. These technological improvements have increased access to education for a broader spectrum of learners and enhanced the overall quality of online education.

Moreover, as more educational institutions use online platforms to conduct courses, the system is important in enabling student-teacher contact, organizing course materials, tracking student progress, and delivering a consistent learning experience for all stakeholders. The combination of distance learning and learning management systems has also provided students with increased flexibility and accessibility, allowing them to learn at their own pace from anywhere globally. However, difficulties such as guaranteeing data security, sustaining student interest, and providing enough technical assistance for students and instructors must be addressed when these systems are further developed and implemented. Distance learning has significantly influenced learning management systems, changing how education is offered and accessible in the digital age. The findings corroborated the perspective of Holsapple and Lee-Post (2006, cited by Zhang and Goel, 2011) that e-learning success considers system delivery factors such as the degree of use of the e-learning system and its adoption. We continue this line of research, focusing on a multidimensional view of students' satisfaction with e-learning, and try to understand potential factors that impact students' satisfaction, future intentions, and perceptions of efficiency and eff Zhang & Goel, 2011.

Table 7. Assessing the impact of Distance Learning in terms of Student's Environment and Study Area

Items	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. I have a designated study area in my home, which is exclusive for my use.	2.88	Agree
2. I have difficulty focusing on my performance because I am distracted by family members in my study area.	2.85	Agree
3. My study area made me feel bored with my online class and affected my grades negatively.	2.61	Agree
4. I can establish better study habits during distance learning than in face-to-face classes.	2.50	Agree
5. My academic performance was affected negatively (lower grades) because my environment and study area were not conducive to my learning during the pandemic.	2.58	Agree
6. I share my study area for other activities or business with the rest of my family members.	2.58	Agree
7. I have the same level of tasks at home to attend to while enrolled in distance learning.	3.09	Agree
8. I have had increased involvement in household activities or family projects at home.	3.22	Agree

9. I lost my focus on studying since I became more involved in household activities or family projects at home.	2.77	Agree
10. Having my family around during my class has supported me in achieving better grades.	2.76	Agree

Table 7 shows that the majority of the respondents rated "Agree" in terms of Student's Environment and Study Area with an obtained mean value of 2.88, 2.85, 2.61, 2.50, 2.58, 2.58, 3.09, 3.22, 2.77 and 2.76, respectively. This means that the student's environment and study area significantly influenced the student environment, disrupting the typical classroom setting and providing new difficulties and chances for learning. Distance learning has also allowed students to learn at their speed and schedule, allowing them to manage academic interests with other duties and commitments.

Similarly, students are accustomed to high independence and self-motivation, but distance learning has necessitated even greater self-discipline and proactive study habits. While distant learning has created obstacles for students, it has also improved the educational experience by encouraging self-directed learning and adaptation in a fast-changing digital ecosystem. Distance learning has transformed the study environment by allowing students to access high-quality education at their leisure. With the growth of technology, online platforms and tools have enabled students to participate in interactive learning experiences, communicate with classmates and instructors, and access resources and materials from anywhere globally.

This flexibility in learning has enabled students to manage their education with jobs and other personal responsibilities, resulting in enhanced academic performance and achievement. Distance learning has significantly influenced the study field, allowing students to take control of their education and flourish in a fast-changing global context.

One may argue that remote education's primary goal is to reach unreachable, under-resourced, underprivileged, or inaccessible (Biana, 2013). Distance education, as defined by Guri-Rosenblit (2005), "reaches out to students wherever they live or wish to study." This level of flexibility allows pupils to actively participate in learning (Guri-Rosenblit, 2005; Daniel, 2016). Students learn even when they are away from their teachers by distance and time (Edge & Loegering, 2000). During the COVID-19 pandemic, distance learning became required for learners and educators worldwide (Ali, 2020).

Table 8. Assessing the impact of Distance Learning in terms of Delivery of Academic Subjects Offered

Items	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. The virtual orientation has guided me to fully understand the University guidelines on distance learning modality for lecture and laboratory courses	3.15	Agree
2. Attending the class based on my enrolled learning mode helped me improve my academic performance and get better grades for both Lecture and Laboratory subjects.	3.13	Agree
3. I find the delivery of lectures and presentations similar during face-to-face classes and distance learning modalities.	2.49	Agree
4. I find learning lessons in lecture and class presentation delivery more difficult during distance learning.	2.99	Agree
5. I gained higher grades in performing laboratory and practical activities using available resources at home during the distance learning modality.	2.67	Agree

6. I am more confident and achieved better results in the practical activities during distance learning compared to practical activities during face-to-face.	2.62	Agree
7. It was easier to perform data-gathering activities related to courses with research, case studies and feasibility studies during distance learning because of the technology and use of different platforms.	2.69	Agree
8. Online (synchronous) lectures helped me understand lessons more easily than face-to-face lectures.	2.44	Disagree
9. I find my teachers well-prepared to deliver the different learning modes during the pandemic.	3.10	Agree
10. I learned and achieved the expected output in the Pre-Internship and Internship program by attending the lecture series, certification and advanced program from the industry experts, trainers and speakers.	3.25	Agree

The table shows that the majority of the respondents rated "Agree" in terms of Delivery of Academic Subjects Offered with an obtained mean value of 3.15, 3.13, 2.49, 2.99, 2.67, 2.62, 2.69, 3.10 and 3.25, respectively, except for the statement "Online lectures (synchronous) helped me to easily understand lessons as compared to face-to-face lectures" which obtained a mean value of 2.44 and verbally interpreted as "Disagree."

The finding implies that distance learning influences academic subject delivery, giving students more freedom and access to educational information. With technological improvements, online platforms have allowed students to do courses from anywhere, breaking down physical locations and traditional classroom settings. This has transformed how academic topics are taught and studied, allowing for a more individualized approach to education while incorporating a wider range of student opinions and experiences into the curriculum. However, issues such as digital equality and student engagement and motivation in a virtual learning environment that makes students understand must be carefully explored to fully realize the potential benefits of remote learning for academic topic delivery. According to Bagoava et al. (2020), fifty years of educational research show that media and technology are useful in language acquisition. Both learning "with" and learning "from" improve performance. One of the significant aspects of online and hybrid learning is students' motivational sources (Rosenberg & Ranellucci, 2017; Selim, 2007). For instance, Oblender (2002) and Wojciechowski & Palmer (2005) have found that students do not fully benefit from technology-based online learning practices owing to feelings of loss, isolation, and a lack of online communication skills, among other factors.

Table 9. Assessing the impact of Distance Learning in terms of Assessment Used by the School

Items	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. I am well-adjusted with the new set-up of distance learning because the course information booklet, course module and the designated assessment were discussed on the first day of class orientation.	2.94	Agree
2. I fully understand the formative and summative assessments indicated in the course information booklet (CIB) and their weight in the final grade because the teachers discussed them with us.	3.18	Agree
3. I clearly understand the difference between the Formative and Summative Assessments and the time gaps when the assessment is given.	3.32	Strongly Agree
4. I know that each task has a rubric for evaluation of assessment and that	3.32	Strongly

these rubrics can be negotiated with my teachers.		Agree
5. I regularly access my grades in Canvas online to help me know when to cope with school performance.	3.32	Strongly Agree
6. I have received timely feedback from my professors, which has helped me understand how I should manage my performance.	2.92	Agree
7. I could consult with my teacher/s about my grades virtually or through Canvas.	3.15	Agree
8. I easily complete course activities and requirements before their deadlines.	2.93	Agree
9. I believe that I did not meet the expected outputs of the task because of the distance learning mode of class.	2.65	Agree
10. I am aware of my QPA (Quality Point Average) because it indicates what I have achieved or accomplished or what I have not or failed to accomplish.	3.24	Agree

Table 9 shows that the majority of the respondents rated "Agree" on the assessing the impact of distance learning in terms of assessment used by the school and obtained mean values of 2.94, 3.18, 2.92, 3.15, 2.93, 2.65 and 3.24, respectively, and some rated "Strongly Agree" for the understanding and awareness formative and summative assessment and the time gaps, rubric for evaluation of assessment, and grades in Canvas online regularly with obtained mean of 3.32. The results describe that distance learning has changed education in various ways, including how institutions assess student learning. With the transition to virtual platforms, schools have had to modify their evaluation systems to address the particular problems of online learning. Traditional tests and examinations have been replaced with more inventive and interactive assessment techniques, such as online quizzes, projects, and digital presentations. According to Osali et al.'s study, students agreed that the questions were easy to understand, the exams were fair, and the exam format was better than in-person exams. In contrast, approximately half agreed that grading was fair and better than in-person exams. This was comparable to recent research in the UAE, in which the majority of students thought that online assessments were simple to comprehend and follow and that they received higher results in online exams. Conversely, 68.3% disputed that it was easy to cheat on online examinations, and 61.3% disagreed that proctoring online exams was ineffective. (Osali et al., 2021). Furthermore, distant learning has highlighted the significance of formative evaluation since teachers must routinely check in with students to verify they are understanding the subject and making progress. Overall, the influence of remote learning on school evaluation practices has resulted in a more dynamic and tailored approach to monitoring student progress.

Table 10. Summary result on the impact of the different factors affecting the Academic Performance of students during pandemic

Factors	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Technology and learning management system	2.81	Agree	3rd
2. Delivery of teaching on the academic subjects offered	2.85	Agree	2nd
3. Environment and location of study area during distance learning	2.78	Agree	4th
4. Assessment used by the school	3.10	Agree	1st

Table 10 shows the Summary Result of all factors affecting the Academic Performance of Tourism and Hospitality students during the pandemic. It is profound to note that the two lowest weighted mean scores, though interpreted as "Agree," are the external factors on Technology and LMS. The environment and location of students' study area during distance learning significantly impact the Academic Performance of Tourism and Hospitality students. This signifies that the transition to online learning from face-to-face modality brought students into the wild world of virtual classrooms and exploring how students coped with this sudden shift to online learning that happened to impact mostly the technology used and their study environment (home), such as tech glitches, poor Wi-Fi signals, the struggle was real. This means the technological hurdles students faced during remote learning and how these obstacles impacted their access to essential academic resources. The coping mechanism with the impact of the family issues confounded their study environment, including financial constraints and mental and emotional strain, affects their academic performance.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

The study analyzed the impact of different factors affecting the academic performance of Tourism and Hospitality Management students of FEU-Manila, Philippines, during the pandemic. These factors were technology and learning management system, student's environment and study area, delivery of academic subjects offered, and the assessment used by the school during distance learning. This post-pandemic analysis dives into the many elements impacting the tourism and hospitality management students' educational journeys throughout the global health crisis. From the abrupt shift to remote learning to the profound impact on their academic performance.

The researchers conclude that the result on the factors affecting students' academic performance has greatly impacted the students brought by the significant drop of QPA during the pandemic, and it is evident that the factors identified have significant roles in how the student performs and learns during the crisis. The study's practical implications will serve as a guide in enhancing the University's continuity plan for flexible learning options, given the factors that need reinforcement to the scholarly performance of the students.

The practical implication of the study was for the College of Tourism and Hospitality Management of Far Eastern University Manila to have a continuity plan to navigate further the complexities faced by students and investigate innovative strategies and support systems aimed at improving their academic success in the challenging post-pandemic landscape that will strengthen the implementation of flexible learning and teaching, to refine the scholarly learning assessment tools, to sustain and enhance the schools' framework on continuous learning and to achieve the academic goals and aspiration reflecting the success of the students and graduates whether in the new normal or the future global crisis. Furthermore, the study could be an open view for other HEIs in lobbying the government to formulate a strong policy framework in promoting student-centered learning and technology-training methods in learning infrastructure, support systems, and new methodology in flexible learning environment in crisis.

The limitation of the study was the choice of only one HEI in the Philippines, and future researchers can expand the study through a comparative assessment of private and public higher education institutions. Moreover, future research will have avenues for other higher education institutions to replicate the study in the current trend of the educational landscape in the future of education. For instance, the study can be used as a benchmarking tool among Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Philippines to further strengthen their learning strategies in terms of flexible teaching and learning modalities, refining scholarly learning assessment tools, maintaining the schools' continuity framework, and achieving academic goals and aspirations for the success of HEI students and graduates, whether in the new normal or the future global crisis.

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