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THE STUDENT PERCEPTION OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES PROVIDED BY CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY OF SAN BERNARDINO (CSUSB) ON SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS' OUTCOMES AT CSUSB

Michael Times
California State University - San Bernardino

Denise Darling
California State University - San Bernardino

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A Project

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

————————————————

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Social Work

————————————————

by

Denise Rachelle Darling

Michael Jeffrey Times

May 2022

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Approved by:

Dr. Carolyn McAllister, Faculty Supervisor, Social Work

Dr. Laure Smith, M.S.W. Research Coordinator

ABSTRACT

Student supportive services assist students by providing academic and mental health support. Overall success fulfills academic requirements and supports mental well-being by providing students with techniques to maintain healthy social relationships during rigorous academic programs. The purpose of this research explores the benefits of student support services for social work students at California State University San Bernardino (CSUSB). The research conducted concluded if supportive services had a direct impact on overall success. Office of Institutional Research as CSUSB has conducted student surveys to assess student satisfaction with supportive services; however, prior research has never been completed per academic program. This research utilized qualitative studies with current and former social work students who attended the social work program at CSUSB. This research provides critical information to institutions on whether social work program students utilize their supportive services and if the services helped students with both academics and mental health processes.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Problem Formulation

Obtaining higher education is desirable for many students and parents alike. Prospective students consider various factors when choosing a university of choice. Some factors include specific program of study availability, universities close to home, scholarship opportunities, and tuition rates (Drewes, et al., 2006). Student supportive services are fundamental to the college experience, thus ancillary when selecting a college of choice. The purpose of Student Support Services Program (SSS) is to increase the number of disadvantaged low-income college students, first-generation college students, and college students with disabilities in the United States who complete a program of study at the postsecondary level (*United States Department of Education*, 2011, Figure 1). Student supportive services exist to aid students during the academic journey. For example, in academic, social work programs, diverse opportunities to improve students' quality of life coincide with social work practice. Student learning objectives provided in course syllabi set clear expectations by indicating the importance of learning outcomes without considering the students learning process (*Creating-learning-outcomes-stanford*, 2017). In CSUSB Executive Summary report, CSUSB defined student success among three categories: Conceptual knowledge, Workforce skills, and Career success (Montgomery, 2020). The researchers conducting this study define student success among

social work students in overall outcomes as academic success and healthy social relationships. True to the nature of social work practice of providing services to clients, access to supportive services may impact the overall outcomes.

The macro assessment of supportive services affects the mezzo- and micro social work student needs. Consideration for the university of choice is viewed through the lens of economic models, sociological models, and creative marketing strategy (Tamtekin Aydın, 2015). The characteristics of the economic model consider the university's overall benefits. The secondary sociological model embodies complex factors such as worldview, culture, socioeconomic status, and social capital. A combination of both models must be considered for all social work students. California State University San Bernardino (CSUSB) Social Work program encompasses diverse students that embody characteristics from each model to varying degrees. A survey among 274 institutions concluded that 88 % of counseling center directors reported an increase in "severe" psychological problems over the previous five years, including learning disabilities, self-injury incidents, eating disorders, substance use, and sexual assaults justify the inherent need for supportive services among students; however, the question of the impact of these services remains (Pedrelli et al., 2014, 4 section).

CSUSB diverse services include student health and wellness, counseling and psychological services, career services, students with disabilities services, children's center, veterans center, access to scholarships, and resource

centers. Social work practice is relevant to this study due to the impact of supportive student services on student outcomes. Quality assurance measures of supportive student outcomes vary in each institution. Qualitative and quantitative data in each institution analyzes student satisfaction with the service; however, it is unknown if this data has been comparable to direct success. Start writing your text here. First-level headings are centered and have an extra double-spaced line before them. Hit the "enter" key to create the extra space.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to understand a clear distinction of how impactful supportive services are for the students' overall success for social work students at CSUSB. Students are a highly valuable source of information in order to identify which would be the most significant changes at institutions and services offered (Rodríguez-González et. al., 2016).

According to the Office of Institution Research and Analytics at CSUSB, the Social Work program was ranked number one in leading enrollment for 2018-2019 among graduate programs. Student enrollment among the Social Work program comprises 404 students (BSW:216; MSW 188) out of the 19,096-student body population. CSUSB implemented over twenty surveys among CSUSB students, such as campus quality outcomes, graduating student surveys, and student academic challenges with learning outcomes. Surveys have yet been completed per program for student success outcomes.

Methods utilized for this research involved qualitative data. The rationale for qualitative methods aimed to obtain students' narratives of their experience with the service and their overall success. The researchers will identify reoccurring themes by applying coding methods that best identifies the human experience for student outcomes.

Significance of the Project for Social Work

By having a better understanding of whether support services benefit students' success in the Social Work program, this research will help identify critical ways to improve the social works students' overall success. Clarification on whether offered services is beneficial to students or is more research needed to identify services that social work students need and want. With the consideration that CSUBS's social work program has top enrollment, it is worth understanding what factors contribute to student success

The research findings may improve the supportive student experience on macro, mezzo, and micro levels. Institutions compete for higher admissions rates each year. Many of which advertise programs and services to appeal to potential students. The inherent needs for students are subject to change, which is contingent upon societal changes. As a result of beneficial student support services, institutions can experience an increased number of applicants and enrollments. Additionally, this could provide more state and federal support to these institutions due to increased enrollment. More students will apply to the social work program, and perhaps the recently added dual graduate program;

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Social Work and Public Administration. From the mezzo perspective, communities would feel empowered to further their education, knowing that student support services' quality impacts the overall student success as CSUSB. Lastly, qualifiers in understanding which student support services' characteristics are most beneficial to student success's overall quality can create a tailored experience per student.

Considering the Generalists Intervention Model, this study implicates the assessment phase. The concluding findings of assessing independent and dependent variables provide a solution regarding supportive student services at CSUSB and social work students' overall success. CSUSB values diversity and implementing diverse practices through student support services. Recognizing the differences among student populations is critical for student success, and not adopting a "one size fits all" approach. Again, aligning supportive services to social work, the social work generalist model is conceptualized by assessing, implementing, and evaluating critical services. The research assessment identifies a lack of knowledge for CSUSB social work student success and whether supportive services are responsible. Therefore, this study will address the following topic: The student perception of student support services provided by California State University of San Bernardino (CSUSB) on social work students' outcomes at CSUSB.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter examines the relevant research on the topic of supportive student services regarding overall social work student success. Eight subsections in this chapter will include: a synopsis of supportive services CSUSB offers, theoretical frameworks applied to previous research for each type of supportive service, identifying gaps and barriers to these services, and the guiding conceptualization theory utilized for the present study. The six CSUSB supportive student services analyzed are Student Health and Wellness, Career Center, Counseling and Psychological Services, Students with Disabilities Services, Children's Center- Family Support, and the Veterans Center.

Theories

Each CSUSB student supportive service offers a unique service delivery. The subsections below will provide the service delivery functions specifically at CSUSB. Also, previous theoretical research for each service provides implications regarding the purpose of further exploration conducted in this study.

Student Health and Wellness

This program provides students with first aid support and basic outpatient care. The program's services are as follows: body physicals, emergency contraception, birth control, vaccinations, lab and x-ray, and limited psychiatric

services. Institutions strive for the wellbeing of their students by incorporating health and wellness services. This ideal does not account for students' direct relationships with their professors, such as when a student surpasses an assignment due date in the event of illness or injury. Due to differences in service delivery among institutions, issues arise when Student Health and Wellness centers intervene between professor's expectation and student relations (Cox et al., 2010).

A study conducted by a midwestern university psychology program composed of 203 undergraduate students (140 women and 63 men) concluded that although academic success increased utilizing various supportive services, so did risky behavior, *i.e.,* excessive alcohol and tobacco use (Ruthig et al., 2011). It is critical to note gender differences and outcomes concluded in this study. Regardless of successful academic grades, women experienced higher rates of physical health symptoms from stress than men due to societal stigma pressures to seek help, consequently engaging in risky behavior. The theory presented a collaborative approach among university administration and student wellness centers to create a program to decrease risky behavior. The demographics of CSUSB are vastly different from the midwestern state where this study took place which prompts further exploration to gauge the social work students at CSUSB.

Career Center

The CSUSB Career Center offers services that help students advance their career opportunities by bridging the gap between employers and students. The strategy for optimizing career advancement is through employer partnerships. Organizations can increase recruitment and students are given the opportunity to engage with potential employers. Career fairs at CSUSB enhance employer-student engagement and provide a networking resource.

The ideological practice of organizational theory implies human behavior from institution(s) players towards one common goal- increasing the workforce with current students and alumni. The Career Center's partnerships with outside organizations fulfill the common goal - increase professional workforce numbers with CSUSB students and graduates (*Career Center | CSUSB*, n.d.). Career Center operations differ among higher educational institutions. The partnerships between organizations are viewed through the lens of becoming corporate clients, which entices students. Thus, students become commercialized pawns to reinforce partnerships and universities experience higher admission and tuition rates each year promoting these partnerships (Davis, et al., 2016). The relationship between organizations becomes less about the students' interests and strengths and more about strengthening university portfolios due to these partnerships. Students' pressure to succeed needs to be understood and not overlooked when considering career choices during enrollment or post-graduation (Andrews et al., 2004). The shifting role of the Career Center service

efforts warrants further examination through the perspective of the social work students at CSUSB.

Counseling and Psychological Services

The Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) mission at CSUSB strives to provide services that promote student mental-wellbeing (*Counseling & Psychological Services | Csusb*, n.d.). CSUSB CAPS mission statement does not clearly define mental wellbeing in the context of mental health. Common concerns addressed by CAPS professionals are aiding students through traumatic events, eating disorders, grief counseling, depression, anxiety, and balancing academics and social needs.

A recent study of 26,000 students at 70 different universities revealed more than half of those students had experienced at least one episode of suicidal ideation, and students experience higher rates of anxiety and depression as opposed to their non-student counterparts (Drum et al., 2009). CAPS counselors must have an in-depth understanding of their students' needs by utilizing the ecological perspective theory. Internal and external factors such as financial instability, relationship issues, life goals, and academic stress perpetuate students' anxiety and depression, making it critical for them to receive counseling services (Bewick et al., 2010). Cultural diversity and program employees who have significant cultural awareness are highly regarded when applying service delivery. Employing therapists who are well versed in social issues, can demonstrate cross-cultural skills, and have gender-inclusive knowledge

potentially creates a more potent therapeutic alliance (Cabral et al., 2011). Otherwise, barriers such as inadequate service delivery and weaken therapeutic relationships exist when assisting the student population.

Veterans Success Center

The Veterans Success Center (VSC) at CSUSB first offered its services May 2012. The resource center operates out of a 1500 square-foot facility and has eight computers for military members and veterans to work on homework. In addition, the VSC has programs that encompass service members' unique needs, including orientation for new students, weekly mental health support meetings, tutoring, Graduation celebration, free printing, free test materials, referral and advocacy services, and a military writing group. The VSC's mission is to support past, current, and future service members of the Armed Forces and their dependents while they successfully navigate academia and through to a career (*Veterans Success Center*, n.d.).

Veterans who attend college arrive on campus with a unique set of experiences, needs, knowledge, and skills. With the expansion of education benefits for veterans since 2011, there is an influx of college students; In 2019 alone, there were 909,320 beneficiaries and $12 billion paid towards education benefits (*Veterans Benefits Administration Annual Benefits Report Fiscal Year 2019*, 2019). With such a large number of veterans enrolled in academia, it is worth exploring the number of students who utilize VSC services and its impact on student outcomes. Furthermore, with access to services conveniently

positioned on campus, there is a greater probability that veteran students will participate in services that will contribute to success in academia (McCaslin et al., 2013). This study will focus on students within the social work cohort that utilize these services.

<u>Services to Students with Disabilities</u>

The Services to Students with Disabilities (SSD) mission is to work collaboratively across the campus to ensure that opportunity for an enriching academic learning experience is accessible and promoted. The SSD strives to further develop the skills of students such as independence, resourcefulness, and self-advocacy. These skills assist the clients in pursuing development and academic goals with greater self-sufficiency. Furthermore, the SSD is committed to providing students with equality in access, learning, and academic success (*Services to Students with Disabilities*, n.d.).

With more students with disabilities enrolling in college and with less favorable outcomes than those students who have no disabilities, it is essential to understand the types of barriers students encounter (Abreu et al., 2016). One study of 16 Students reported that students with disabilities have been recognized to lack self-advocacy and more likely not to communicate need, lack of self-regulation means that there is less likelihood of evaluating one's performance, and students with disabilities also present with a shortage of focus of control and lack of self-knowledge (Hong, 2015). Another study done at the University of Massachusetts Lowell measured students' experiences and

opinions who have utilized supportive services. 51 percent of students found the student services helped sort out accommodations for the semester. Students in this study reported using the services nearly five times a semester (Abreu et al., 2016).

Children's Center- Family Support

The Children's Center's mission is to support university and community students and families by offering excellent childcare and learning experiences. The Children's Center's educational experience segment is achieved through developmentally suitable exercises, building relationships, and capitalizing on the client's strengths and principles (*Children's Center*, n.d.).

Students with children account for approximately one-third of American college students (Cox & Sallee, 2018). With such high numbers of college students with dependent children, it is useful to understand the available resources and the areas of resources that may need to be improved. Furthermore, one obstacle to on-campus childcare is the restricted accessibility (Long, 2017).

Theories Guiding Conceptualization

Two theories guiding the framework for this research are ecological perspective theory and organizational theory.

The foundational ecological model utilizes people in the context of social systems, places, and points in time in social interactions. Implications for this model conceives building supportive environments through various systems in

the client(s) life and improving necessary life skills to maintain healthy relationships. A strong relationship exists between the individual and social supports that encourage psychological health and functioning (Turner & J., 2017).

Utilizing the ecological model aided the researchers in developing critical frameworks to establish exploratory questionnaires for the participants. The basis of this research is to establish the student's overall well-being and success as a result of receiving student support services. Analyzing social systems includes the utilization of the ecological model. The qualitative research process revealed detrimental factors within the ecological model that would be eligible for student support services *i.e.* mental health issues, career guidance, struggles within academia, veterans needs and childcare barriers. Also, the study indicated if those students utilized supportive services.

Various delineations of organizational theory exist to examine different systems within an organization. Organizational behavior perspective focus on people, groups, and relationships among them and the organizational environment (Shafritz et al., 2015). For this research, the organizational behavior perspective theory applied to the supportive student systems within CSUSB is to understand human behaviors within operational systems. Understanding the relationships between the leadership, teams, and networks within each student supportive service program from an operation perspective indicates the level of service delivery to the student population.

Applying the organizational theory helped researchers gain perspective on student supportive service delivery to the student population. The researchers analyzed how each supportive student service operated within leadership, motivation among staff, work environments, power and influence, and the causes of organizational change. As discussed, each student supportive service program operates differently per CSU campus. Optimal working environments among staff and substantial networking contracts with outside organizations allow high-quality service delivery to the student population.

Summary

This study explores the impact of CSUSB student support service programs on social work students' overall impact. Gaining a better understanding of the overall impact means gaining a better understanding of the student's needs. The literature review explored theories applied to this study, explaining the importance of applying an ecological model to gauge the student's needs; and utilizing a supportive service. The organizational behavior model dissects the operations and organizational behaviors in each support service that impacts service delivery. This study's basis relies on the exploratory model, and its findings may help service delivery outcomes within each support service program at CSUSB.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

This study explores the factors and barriers concerning overall student

success in conjunction with student support services among the CSUSB social

work student population. This chapter identifies the structure of how this study

took place. Chapter three explores the following eight sections in reviewing the

study design, sampling, data collection, procedures, human subjects' protections,

and data analysis. Lastly, concluding comments are provided to summarize the

process of the research methods.

Study Design

This exploratory research project provides exposure to the overall impact

of supportive student services on the specific population due to the lack of

research addressed in this topic. This study's findings may reveal areas of

improvement with student support services through qualitative analysis collected

from research subjects. The researchers utilized a voluntary anonymous

interview process containing fifteen one on one interviews with research

subjects.

An exploratory qualitative approach with one-on-one interviews allows the

subjects to describe their experience with student support services and their

benefits. This approach permits researchers to identify recurring themes within

each student's account of their experience. The qualitative approach is the most efficient way to get subjects to respond because of the convenience factor. The interviewing process relies on a personalized student account of their experience in measuring students' happiness and grade point average while utilizing student support services to analyze their overall success findings.

Limitations of the research exist in various forms. By applying the qualitative measures in the research project, the researchers are intruding on participants' direct experience, thus making the research experience less anonymous. Moreover, a global pandemic surge during this research prohibited normal business operations, including supportive student services on campus. The data analyzed for this research is based on participants' previous experience, thus compromising an accurate portrayal of supportive service experience and accurate grade point average (GPA) during utilization. Lastly, the sample size does not provide a precise analysis of the entire social work student population that utilizes supportive services. However, the subject sample size did not hinder the identification of a relationship between variables.

Sampling

This study utilized a delineation of non-probability sampling for this research among social work students at CSUSB. The specific sample strategy for this research was identified as availability sampling, otherwise known as convenient sampling. The sampling technique utilized for this research is among all social work students at CSUSB with the following characteristics: Bachelors of

social work 1st-year full time, 2nd-year full time, Masters of Social Work students 1st-year full time, 2nd-year full time, 1st year part-time, 2nd year part-time, 3rd year part-time, and the Concurrent Master of social work and Master of Public Administration students 1st-year full time, 2nd-year full time, 1st year part-time, 2nd year part-time, 3rd year part-time. Due to the global pandemic, limited subjects participated in the research during the sampling period. A total of 15 subjects participated in the research process. The target participant number is 45 subjects, and as described, 15 subjects participated in the interview process with researchers via online correspondence.

<div align="center">Data Collection</div>

Qualitative data collection among subjects proceeded via online web camera remaining off, interviews, which proceeded in March 2021. Each interview was recorded with the consent of the subjects to analyze in the coding process. Interviews began with an introduction and description and purpose of the study. The researchers structured the questions exploring if the independent variable (IV); student support services impact the three dependent variables (DV); happiness, GPA, and supportive relationships. Each variable is under the 'umbrella' of overall success, as defined by the researchers. The topics analyzed among the qualitative questions for subjects are regarding the experience with student support services, if the student attributes the experience to maintain healthy social relationships, maintain successful academic grades, and feel a significant change among overall happiness. The demographic information

<div align="center">17</div>

collection was completed before the qualitative process. The information gathered within the demographic inquiry consisted of gender identification, identifying ethnicity, age, achieved education level, GPA, and supportive student service(s) utilized by the subject while completing their academic program.

Barriers to the qualitative data collection process exist as interview biases. For example, the subject's responses towards interview questions swayed to what they feel the researcher wants to hear. Moreover, this process minimizes the anonymous elements of the research process, thus compromising results. The facilitators among the qualitative process can gather additional information needed to understand the student perspective for this research. Additional barriers existed in the quantitative data collection process. Barriers identified in this questionnaire process include the description of each item on the questionnaire. Subjects may have different definitions of happiness and have opposing views of their experience than those offered on the questionnaire provided by the researchers. The identified barriers may compromise the validity of results gathered in the analytic process. The participants' account of their experience is an efficient way to gather quick results for this research.

Procedures

A composed email describing the purpose and the goals of the study aimed for the participation of subjects. The email was sent to the social work students asking for cooperation in this research. The email will allow potential respondents to choose for themselves, without pressure, if they would like to

participate in the research. The contents of the email identified two dates with times and a zoom link for potential participants to join in on the zoom to ask questions about the research. The email indicated the zoom session can be done without the camera being on, which was clearly explained in the initial email.

A Zoom account was set up and used solely for the previously mentioned question and answer sessions. Each zoom question and answer session was anticipated to last up to one hour. Denise Darling facilitated one in the evening during the week, and Michael Times facilitated one on a weekend day. Offering two moderators allowed participants to choose to meet with a female or a male, depending on their comfort level. Also, facilitating one zoom session during the week and one on the weekend offered the participants flexibility.

Informed consent was thoroughly discussed at the beginning of each zoom qualitative research session letting participants know that confidentiality is of the utmost importance and that we will be protecting their identity. Participants can remain anonymous during the zoom session. After the facilitation of the Zoom qualitative research sessions, the participants were thanked for their time.

Protection of Human Subjects

Anonymity is essential to participants' willingness to answer questions honestly posed in this research; therefore, the participants' identity in the study will be kept confidential and private. An informed consent form (Appendix A) will be read and signed by each participant that has identified that they are willing to partake in the qualitative process of the research. This qualitative process is

interview-based, and a pseudonym will be assigned to participants instead of using names. The interview was recorded and transcribed using a given number for each alias so that there is no identifying participants' information. Informed consent (Appendix A) will explain the audio recording policy. All digital data was stored on an encrypted hard drive with a password requirement. When not in use, all-digital information and hardcopy written information will be kept in a locked file cabinet with the two keys being held by Denise Darling and Michael Times. One year after completing the study, all documentation, either digital or hardcopy, will be destroyed.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process concludes with one type of research process. The process concludes through the qualitative process; online interviews. Post online interviews are transcribed, then coded to uncover themes. All subjects' identities will remain anonymous, thus being assigned specialty coding to protect all identifying information. Specific coding categories are identified per abbreviations within SPSS which corresponds with a master code list. Findings from the transcription, coding, and SPSS input will identify the overall success student support services implicates on social work students at CSUSB.

Summary

This study examines whether social work program students utilize supportive services at California State University San Bernardino and help

students with academics and mental health processes. The interview

components of this research allow social work students to provide a unique look

and understanding of the role that supportive services play in college students'

success. Therefore, this research will utilize qualitative practices to determine the

findings of this research.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter provides the data collected through interviews with social work students on the impact of student support services on social work students' success at the California State University of San Bernardino. The participants' responses were gathered from individual interviews.

Qualitative Data

This qualitative study consisted of fifteen participants in the MSW program at California State University, San Bernardino. Participants were asked what year in the MSW or MSW/MPA program they were. The results indicated that 100% of the participants were in the 2nd year part-time program. Thirteen participants were enrolled in the MSW program, and three were enrolled in the MSW/MPA concurrent program. The participants' ages ranged from 22 to 55 years old, with a mean of 28.1%. Of the fifteen participants, thirteen identified as female, and two identified as male indicating 87% of the participants as female and 13% of the participants as male. Of the fifteen participants, 53% identified as Hispanic/Latino, 0.2% identified as Black, 0.2% identified as White/Caucasian, 0.06% identified as Vietnamese.

The following table listed below displays the demographic information gathered on this study.

Table 1: Demographics

Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Education
Female	23	Hispanic/Latino	Bachelor's Degree
Female	22	Hispanic/Latino	Bachelor's Degree
Female	24	Hispanic/Latino	Bachelor's Degree
Female	55	Black	Master's Degree
Male	48	White	Bachelor's Degree
Female	53	White	Bachelor's Degree
Male	32	Black	Bachelor's Degree
Female	36	Vietnamese	Bachelor's Degree
Female	31	Hispanic/Latino	Bachelor's Degree
Female	40	Hispanic/Latino	Bachelor's Degree
Female	30	Black	Bachelor's Degree
Female	30	Hispanic/Latino	Bachelor's Degree
Female	28	Hispanic/Latino	Bachelor's Degree
Female	22	White	Bachelor's Degree
Female	26	Hispanic/Latino	Bachelor's Degree

The participants were asked a total of sixteen open-ended questions. The interviews were approximately six to fourteen minutes. Participants were asked about their experiences with student support services at the California State University of San Bernardino and the impact of the student support services on their success at the California State University of San Bernardino.

After providing the Informed Consent (APPENDIX B), all participants agreed to continue with the recorded interview, with the camera off, pseudonyms, and Zoom application. Participants were asked 16 questions on the interview guide (APPENDIX A). Participants were asked about their experiences utilizing CSUSB support services and any impact the utilization may have had on the participant.

Participants were informed that if the questions they were asked to respond to make them uncomfortable, we would skip it without any question. However, no participants during the interviews indicated any concern with responding to any of the questions posed. During the interview, the researchers took notes, and upon completion of the interview, the recorded interview was then transcribed onto a document. Next, the researchers completed several reviews of the interview transcripts to identify themes that arose in the discussions. Finally, the researchers utilized the Constant Comparative Method of Qualitative Analysis (Dye et al., 2000) to deliver an in-depth analysis of the information presented in the interview process.

Themes

The researchers concluded, through the analysis of the data presented, that the following themes emerged from the interviews that explained the impact that student support services have on social work students' success at California State University of San Bernardino: 1) Impact on relationships, 2) Motivated by services, 3) Impact on academia, 4) and Impact on happiness.

Changes Post Service: Improved Relationships

Through the Interview process, the researchers asked how accessing supportive services has impacted their overall lives. The participants reported that one thing that was affected due to utilizing support services at California State University, San Bernardino, is relationships. For example, participant 3 explains how the therapist's access through the school impacted her relationships:

> A lot of the things that I discussed with my therapist when it came to our sessions had to do with a lot of, how do I put this, the turbulence that I was facing in my personal relationships. And so, I did feel like I had guidance. And as a result, I was able to either improve or move about. So, I guess growing the relationships that I spoke to him about, so yeah. (Participant 3, personal communication, March 2021).

When discussing supportive services further, participant 7 added to the relationship improvement theme by stating, "I think it's more of bringing the

relationship closer. Yeah, it just kind of brings the relationships closer and tighter knit." (Participant 7, personal communication, March 2021).

Many participants discussed how important it was to complete their education at California State University, San Bernardino, and the need to have support to deal with the stress of the social work program, internship, family, relationship, and other things. Participant 11 adds to this theme:

Well, remaining in the program was very important to me, a very important part of it. Another thing that it did help, like I said before, just the emotional support that I was given and then basically impacted the relationships I had with friends, with family, even with members of my cohort, just basically having overall just a positive view of it. Yeah. (Participant 11, personal communication, March 2021).

Changes Post Service: Motivated Due to Services

Through the interview process, participants discussed the various ways that the supportive services at California State University, San Bernardino motivated them to continue and improve in different ways, as illuminated by participant 1:

Yeah, I feel it allowed me to, I guess, just have a support system, which then, in turn, allowed me to be a better student. Meaning I was more present, or I felt more motivated to, one, take care of myself and to be able to do the tasks that I needed as an intern and as a social work student (Participant 1, personal communication, March 2021).

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Participants highlighted the impact of emotional support on their academic journey and the effect that accessing supportive student services has on their outcomes, specifically with staying motivated to continue with school. In addition, participant 5 added further insight into the theme of motivation:

> I think just the fact that they were able to support me emotionally allowed me to continue to be a better student period, during moments that were really difficult for me. So, I was able to continue the program. (Participant 5, personal communication, March 2021).

Changes Post Service: Improved Academia

Through the interview process, participants were asked if they felt that the utilization of student supportive services at California State University, San Bernardino, impacted their educational outcomes. Although a pattern arose that many students felt that the services did positively impact them and their education, most of the interviewees felt that the services offered them various types of supports that affected their ability to be a better student and have better skills to manage the school workload and different other responsibilities that can impact their academic journey and therefore improved educational outcomes. Participant 4 illuminates the improved academia theme:

> Well, I went to the student health and Wellness Center. I think I needed some type of medical; I don't know if it was a shot, I forget what it was, immunization records, something that I need to get done in order to continue or start classes.   So, it benefited me in that way. Like if I weren't

able to go to campus to give what I needed, then I would have to wait until

I could schedule an appointment with my primary. And I would have to,

you know, that would be weeks out, and that would have prevented me

from starting my program on time. (Participant 4, personal communication,

March 2021).

Participants highlighted the services received at California State University, San

Bernardino, as offering them resources and skills to be better students and

manage their emotions, feelings, and actions. Which, in turn, is cited as providing

improved academic outcomes. Participant 12 discusses the skills obtained

through various services they participated in:

I've just been able to kind of use some of the interventions and coping

techniques that I've been able to go over with my therapist and apply them

to not only the school setting but my setting outside of school. So, it's just

been beneficial in those two forms. (Participant 12, personal

communication, March 2021).

Changes Post Service: Increased Happiness

Although we did not define what "increased Happiness" meant to each

participant, the participants were asked what impact, if any, have student support

services have had on their life overall. This question brought many responses,

and many of them had to do with increased happiness in the participants.

Through the utilization of supportive services, participant 9 states:

I did notice an increase in happiness. I was absolutely concerned about

going; I really can't recall what I needed to be done. But the fact that I

didn't have to worry about, you know, getting an appointment. Oh, that

decreased my stress level, which I would say increased my happiness.

Now, I was looking forward now to starting a program because it wasn't

anything that was stressed enough (Participant 9, personal

communication, March 2021).

Participant 2 adds to the happiness theme by discussing the overall impact with

mental health services:

In the sense that I feel happier, I mean, I already mentioned I felt

supported by the service. There was relief a lot of times when I did receive

the mental health services, but also having gone to the clinic, the health

clinic also provided relief for me because they were able to see me

quickly. And I felt like I got the results that I needed pretty quickly as well.

(Participant 2, personal communication, March 2021).

Finally, participant 6 adds to the understanding of the overall impact of student

services has had on their life and the level of happiness:

Probably something like being able to communicate better with others

about how I feel, as opposed to keeping it inside and being able to

manage my obsessive compulsion to get things done earlier than I need

to. I've been able to kind of work on those with my therapist and, you

know, fix those kinds of areas. I typically feel happier after services

(Participant 6, personal communication, March 2021).

Participant 10 offered insight into the level of happiness due to utilization of the

supportive services of the financial aid department, "Yes, I received a thousand

dollars. I was very happy" (Participant 10, personal communication, March 2021).

Summary

The chapter provided a presentation of the findings from individual

interviews with MSW students at California State University, San Bernardino, and

the impact that student support services offered. The data collection consisted of

audio recordings utilizing the Zoom application and analyzed using with Constant

Comparison Method. The themes that emerged from the data collection included:

Impact on relationships, 2) Motivated by services, 3) Impact on academia, 4) and

Impact on happiness. Using the qualitative approach allowed the researcher to

gather an in-depth understanding of the experiences and perceptions of

California State University, San Bernardino students and the impact that

supportive services have on students.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This concluding chapter will provide a synopsis of the significant results that address the research topic: The student perception of student support services provided by California State University of San Bernardino (CSUSB) on social work students' outcomes at CSUSB. The participants in this study indicated an improvement in various areas as identified through significant themes. As described, the themes identified throughout the participants' testimonies are as follows: 1) Improved Impact on relationships, 2) Motivated by services, 3) Improved Impact on Academia, 4) Improved Impact on Happiness. The results established throughout this study will be further elaborated and concluded in the sections of discussion, limitations, and further research.

Discussion

Student supportive services exist to aid students during the academic journey. For review, the purpose of the Student Support Services Program (SSS) is to increase the number of disadvantaged low-income college students, first-generation college students, those impacted by various levels of intersectionality, and college students with disabilities with a desire to obtain a Master of Social Work to complete as a program of study at the postsecondary level (*United States Department of Education*, 2011, Figure 1). By understanding whether

support services benefit students' success in the Social Work program, this research assisted in identifying themes that showed improvement in the social works students' overall success. The six CSUSB supportive student services analyzed are Student Health and Wellness, Career Center, Counseling and Psychological Services, Students with Disabilities Services, Children's Center-Family Support, and the Veterans Center.

As described, the researchers utilized the foundational ecological model, which indicates people in the context of social systems, places, and points in time in social interactions. Implications for this model conceives building supportive environments through various systems in the client(s) life and improving necessary life skills to maintain healthy relationships. A strong relationship exists between the individual and social supports that encourage psychological health and functioning (Turner & J., 2017). In addition, the organizational behavior perspective theory applied to the supportive student systems within CSUSB is to understand human behaviors within operational systems. From an operation perspective, understanding the relationships between the leadership, teams, and networks within each student supportive service program indicates the level of service delivery to the student population. The researchers wanted to gain more insight into the operations of these services to gain perspective on a gap in service delivery. However, this information desired was not available for public viewing upon research.

The concluding findings of assessing independent and dependent variables provide a solution regarding supportive student services at CSUSB and social work students' overall success. CSUSB values diversity and implements diverse practices through student support services. Recognizing the differences among student populations is critical for student success, and not adopting a "one size fits all" approach for service delivery. Social work professionals are always balancing creativity and evidence-based practices. The same recommendations and techniques are recommended for service delivery among all the student support services.

Limitations

Limitations presented in this study exist within the minimal sample size. The limited sample size presents restrictions for accuracy due to differences in age, ethnicity, and the effectiveness of the questions presented during the interviews. The limited sample size of fifteen participants is not an accurate representation of the CSUSB Social Work Program population. As mentioned, Student enrollment among the Social Work program comprises 404 students (BSW:216; MSW 188) out of the 19,096-student body population. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic was a barrier to getting accurate perceptions of the services provided due to temporary closures of student support services. The closures were due to minimal staffing and virtual connections. Many student support services were modifying services to continue their work with the student population, which left a gap in service delivery.

The interview questions developed by the researchers posed limitations due to the inability to accurately test the instrument's validity and reliability due to the study's scope. The questions were composed to establish an understanding of the effectiveness of student support services concerning overall happiness and utilizing appropriate literature. A recommendation of further research on how to properly measure and compose a questionnaire would benefit this study in the future. Lastly, the study would benefit from having an increased number of participants complete two data collection modes: qualitative and quantitative data collection. By doing so, the researchers can analyze arising themes and their causes accurately.

<u>Further Research</u>

Considering there are no precise performance measurements, surveys and data not readily available for the publics' view prompted this research topic by the researchers. Even though services were deemed beneficial based upon the identifying themes, general information about student support services performance, I.E., data, and student testimonies, would be helpful for current and future students. Additional research on this topic would assist students and CSUSB in potential gaps in service delivery in the future. It would assist prospective students in choosing the exemplary student support service for them.

Concerning social policy, CSUSB does not have a current policy on providing data among performance measurements within student support service delivery for students. Policies would involve students more on what programs

would be beneficial for them and their experience during their academic journey. In addition, it would involve and prompt more students to utilize the services to which a considerable amount of their tuition contributes to. Lastly, it would reduce the stigma in using these services regarding mental health and needs among the additional services offered.

Conclusion

This research aimed to identify the effectiveness of student support services at CSUSB among Social Work students. The researchers wanted to gain insight into students' perspectives on whether utilizing student support services impacted their overall happiness, considering social relationships, improved academia, and improved motivation due to services. Researchers found overall satisfaction with services provided but noted considerable hindrances in service delivery due to COVID-19. Lastly, researchers noted a possible policy change for student support services to create a policy indicating their performance measurement indicators and results for future students. Students will continue to fulfill their academic journeys while utilizing effective services to improve their overall needs during a challenging time.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE-INTERVIEW GUIDE

Qualitative Questionnaire

1. What program are you enrolled in?

    a. Responses should include one of the following:

        i. Bachelor of Social Work Full Time

        ii. Master of Social Work Full Time

        iii. Master of Social Work Part Time

        iv. Concurrent Master of Social Work and Master of Public Administration

2. Over the past 12 months, have you received any services in-person or through zoom at any of the following support services?

    a. Responses may include:

        i. Children's Center- Family Support

        ii. Services to Students with Disabilities

        iii. Veterans Success Center

        iv. Career Center

        v. Student Health and Wellness

        vi. Other services

3. What was/is your GPA?

4. What is the circumstance that led you to seek support from student services?

5. How did you find out about these services?

6. Any problems locating the services you utilize?

7. How did you access these services? In-person, zoom, phone?

8. How long have/did you utilize these services?

9. How was your experience with the services?

10. What is the impact, if any, have these services have had on your educational outcomes?

11. What is the impact, if any, have these services have had on your life overall?

12. Are you satisfied with your experience while utilizing the support service?

13. Will you recommend these services?

14. What, if anything, do you wish the services utilized would offer or do differently

15. Do you have people in your life that you feel are supportive of you?

16. Do you feel that you emotionally support others?

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

INFORMED CONSENT

The study in which you are asked to participate is designed to examine the Impact of Student Support Services on Social Work Students' Success at California State University of San Bernardino. The study is being conducted by Denise Darling and Michael Times, both are graduate student, under the supervision of Dr. McAllister, Director and Associate Professor in the School of Social Work at California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB). The study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at CSUSB.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the study is to examine the impact of student supportive services on students' at CSUSB in order to examine if supportive services have a direct impact on overall student success.

DESCRIPTION: Participants will be asked to take a short survey, and then, if willing, answer several questions on the usage of student support services at California State University of San Bernardino via Zoom.

PARTICIPATION: Your participation in the study is totally voluntary. You can refuse to participate in the study or discontinue your participation at any time without any consequences.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your responses will remain confidential and data will be reported in group form only. **DURATION**: It will take roughly 30 minutes to complete the interview.

RISKS: Although not anticipated, there may be some discomfort in answering some of the questions. You are not required to answer and can skip the question or end your participation.

BENEFITS: There will not be any direct benefits to the participants. However, findings from the study will contribute to our knowledge in this area of research.

CONTACT: If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Dr. McAllister at (909) 537- 5559.

RESULTS: Results of the study can be obtained from the Pfau Library ScholarWorks database (http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/) at California State University, San Bernardino after July 2022.

****

I agree to have this interview be audio recorded: _____ YES _____ NO

I understand that I must be 18 years of age or older to participate in your study, have read and understand the consent document and agree to participate in your study.

X_____   Date _____

APPENDIX C

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

April 29, 2021

CSUSB INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Administrative/Exempt Review Determination
Status: Determined Exempt
IRB-FY2021-107

Carolyn McAllister Denise Darling, Michael Times
CSBS - Social Work
California State University, San Bernardino
5500 University Parkway
San Bernardino, California 92407

Dear Carolyn McAllister Denise Darling, Michael Times:

Your application to use human subjects, titled "The Student Perception of Student Support Services Provided By California State University of San Bernardino (CSUSB) on Social Work Students' Outcomes at CSUSB" has been reviewed and determined exempt by the Chair of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of CSU, San Bernardino. An exempt determination means your study had met the federal requirements for exempt status under 45 CFR 46.104. The CSUSB IRB has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk and benefits of the study to ensure the protection of human participants. Important Note: This approval notice does not replace any departmental or additional campus approvals which may be required including access to CSUSB campus facilities and affiliate campuses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Visit the Office of Academic Research website for more information at https://www.csusb.edu/academic-research.

You are required to notify the IRB of the following as mandated by the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) federal regulations 45 CFR 46 and CSUSB IRB policy. The forms (modification, renewal, unanticipated/adverse event, study closure) are located in the Cayuse IRB System with instructions provided on the IRB Applications, Forms, and Submission webpage. Failure to notify the IRB of the following requirements may result in disciplinary action. The Cayuse IRB system will notify you when your protocol is due for renewal. Ensure you file your protocol renewal and continuing review form through the Cayuse IRB system to keep your protocol current and active unless you have completed your study.

Important Notice: For all in-person research following IRB approval all research activites must be approved through the Office of Academic Research by filling out the Project Restart and Continuity Plan.

- Ensure your CITI Human Subjects Training is kept up-to-date and current throughout the study.
- Submit a protocol modification (change) if any changes (no matter how minor) are proposed in your study for review and approval by the IRB before being implemented in your study.
- Notify the IRB within 5 days of any unanticipated or adverse events are experienced by subjects during your research.
- Submit a study closure through the Cayuse IRB submission system once your study has ended.

If you have any questions regarding the IRB decision, please contact Michael Gillespie, the Research Compliance Officer. Mr. Michael Gillespie can be reached by phone at (909) 537-7588, by fax at (909) 537-7028, or by email at mgillesp@csusb.edu. Please include your application approval number IRB-FY2021-107 in all correspondence. Any complaints you receive from participants and/or others related to your research may be directed to Mr. Gillespie.

Best of luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Nicole Dabbs

Nicole Dabbs, Ph.D., IRB Chair
CSUSB Institutional Review Board

ND/MG

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ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITIES

Denise Rachelle Darling and Michael Jeffrey Times separated the workload in half, thus making it a collaborative approach. Denise Rachelle Darling completed the written proposal format and the first two sections of chapter one, the first three sections of chapter two, the first three sections of chapter three, and the summary. Additionally, Denise Rachelle Darling assisted Michael Jeffrey Times with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Human Subjects Application and submitted it. Michael Jeffrey Times completed the remaining sections on chapters one, two, and three. Lastly, Michael Jeffrey Times took ownership of reviewing our collaborative answers and submitted the completed application to IRB.