

COLLEGE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' NEEDS ASSESSMENT: BASIS FOR A STUDENT WELFARE SERVICES PROGRAM

*Sciroan Torres

**Maria Isabel Guevara

***Filomena De Jesus

****Connie Magsino

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Corresponding Author: Sciroan Torres; **Email:** sciroansantos.torres@email.lcup.edu.ph; doi:10.46360/globus.met.320251013

Abstract

This study examines the needs of college undergraduate students which will be used as a basis for a Student Welfare Services unit program. Through this study, the SWS will be able to construct a program tailored to the needs of the students. This descriptive research utilized the SWS Needs Assessment Survey, based on the ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs, with 0.973 Cronbach alpha. It was administered to 351 students in the college undergraduate department.

The findings indicate a low need for the overall student's concerns in the survey. Majority of the students are not undergoing mental health services outside the school and not interested in attending seminars or programs organized by SWS. However, majority suggested topic for a seminar they would like to attend, which is Stress Management followed by Career Pathways. Lastly, they prefer Social Media as mode of delivery for SWS information.

Based on the other concerns they answered, 4 themes have emerged: mental health and well-being, academic support, learning preferences and delivery, and work-life balance. Through these data, the SWS was able to propose a SWS Program that can be used in the following academic years.

Keywords: Needs Assessment, Guidance Office, Student Welfare Program, College Students.

Introduction

Bruno (2023) discussed the ASCA model for needs assessment, which provides a structured approach for school counselors to address students' needs and create tailored programs. This helps schools evaluate personal, social, and academic concerns. Sheldon (2021) highlights the link between mental health challenges and lower academic performance, urging schools to develop mental health programs to support students' well-being.

In 2021, the Department of Health reported 3.6 million Filipinos experiencing mental health issues, with an annual suicide rate of 5.4 per 100,000. News reports also highlighted incidents of student suicides and violence linked to social and academic pressures (Cleofas, 2020).

Subidyo (2019) emphasized the role of needs assessments in planning guidance and counseling programs, while Choi & Park (2023) noted that needs assessments help identify instructional objectives. Conducting a needs assessment allows universities to better understand students' needs and enhance their well-being.

The Student Welfare Services' needs assessment survey helps design programs tailored to students' needs, improving welfare services and supporting students throughout their academic journey. The findings can inform interventions and adjustments to activities, positively impacting students' academic and career paths.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Alderfer's ERG theory, which identifies three fundamental needs: existence, relatedness, and growth (Kurt, 2023). Unlike Maslow's hierarchy, this theory allows non-sequential progression or regression, enabling individuals to prioritize higher-level needs even if lower-level needs remain unmet (Miller, 2022).

This provides a framework for Student Welfare Services to assess the students' needs and design

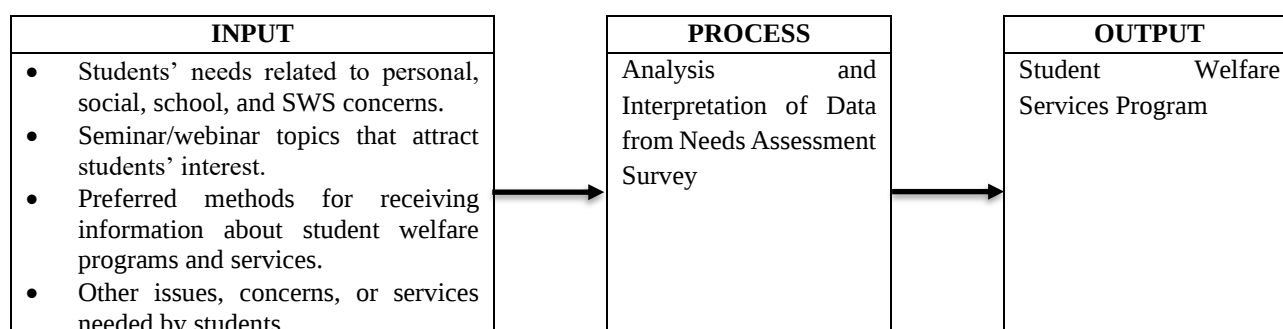
*_****La Consolacion University Philippines.

programs addressing their existence, relatedness, and growth. By identifying specific needs through this framework, SWS can implement targeted strategies, fostering student development in future academic years.

Conceptual Framework

As illustrated in figure 1, the study used the analysis of data collected from respondents through the needs assessment survey. These findings were then used to develop a Student Welfare Services program.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study



Statement of the Problem

The general problem of the study is to identify the needs of college students, which will serve as the basis for developing a student welfare services program. Specifically, the study sought the answers to the following questions:

- What is the level of needs of the students regarding the following areas:
 - Personal concerns
 - Social concerns
 - School concerns
 - Student Welfare Services concerns
 - Other concerns
- What are the particular topics for the seminar/webinar the students are interested in participating?
- What are the students' preferences in getting information about the student welfare services programs and services?
- What are the other issues, concerns, or services that the students' need or suggested?
- Based on the findings, what student welfare services program may be proposed?

Scope and Delimitation

The research aimed to determine the needs of students based on personal, social, school, and SWS concerns. It involved 351 first, second, and third-year college students enrolled in a university in Bulacan. A descriptive method was used to accurately capture the respondents' needs based on data collected through the needs assessment survey. The outcomes of this assessment were valuable for developing a program tailored to their needs for the upcoming academic year, assuming they continue their studies at the university.

Methodology

Research Design

This study used a descriptive method to analyze the needs of undergraduate students based on quantitative data they provided. Descriptive research systematically gathers measurable information to characterize a phenomenon or population (Dovetail Editorial Team, 2023). Using tools like surveys, it reveals patterns and trends through statistical analysis. In this study, a survey questionnaire was used to identify the needs of college students.

Participants / Respondents of the Study

The participants of this study were 351 first, second, and third-year college students enrolled in a university in Bulacan. As shown in Table 1, CAMP had 86 respondents, representing 24.50% of the total. CITHM, CITE, and CBEA each had 86 respondents, accounting for 21.37% each. CASE had 40 respondents, making up 11.40% of the total.

Table 1: Respondents of the Study

Departments	Frequency	Percentage
CAMP	86	24.50%
CITHM	75	21.37%
CITE	75	21.37%
CBEA	75	21.37%
CASE	40	11.40%
	351	100%

Instrument/s of the Study

The LCUP SWS/Guidance Office - Needs Assessment Survey was used to gather data. Part 1 covered personal, social, academic, student welfare, and other concerns, with students rating 34 items on a five-point Likert scale. It also included preferences for seminar topics and information methods about SWS. Part 2 allowed students to suggest services and share additional concerns.

The tool was validated by experts in Student Affairs, Guidance and Counseling, and Psychology. Reliability testing showed a Cronbach's alpha of 0.973 for all 34 items, with subscale reliability as follows: personal concerns (0.937), social concerns (0.918), school concerns (0.912), and SWS/Guidance Office concerns (0.959).

Data Collection and Analysis

The needs assessment survey was administered onsite by groups according to year levels and departments. Means, standard deviation, and frequency counts were used in tabulating the results. For the open-ended questions, thematic analysis was utilized to present the data.

To interpret the mean of the results, the following scale was used:

Table 2: Interpretation of the Results

Mean	Interpretation
1 – 1.49	No Need at this Time
1.5 – 2.49	Low Need
2.5 – 3.49	Moderate Need
3.5 – 4.49	High Need
4.5 – 5	Great Need

Ethical Considerations

The following ethical considerations were considered during the conduct of the study:

1. Ensure the dignity and well-being of students, avoiding any harm or discomfort during the process.
2. Informed consent was obtained, detailing the researchers' names, department, purpose, procedures, risks, benefits, voluntary participation, and confidentiality.
3. Data privacy and confidentiality were strictly upheld, with respondents' identities excluded from the final paper.
4. The researchers declared no conflicts of interest.

Results and Discussion

1. The students' level of needs regarding personal, social, school, SWS/Guidance Office, and other concerns

Table 3 shows the personal concerns of the students. The overall mean is 2.29 which means there is only a low need from the students.

Table 3: Personal Concerns

Personal Concerns	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Indicator			
1. I need help/talk about time management	2.68	1.22	MN
2. I need help/talk about dating or relationship issues	2.03	1.14	LN
3. I need help/talk about improving communication skills	2.98	1.31	MN
4. I need help/talk about conflict management strategies	2.59	1.17	MN
5. I need help/talk about social media/technology usage	2.19	1.16	LN
6. I need help/talk about enhancing my abilities, skills and interests	2.88	1.34	MN
7. I need help/talk about wanting to hurt myself (self-harm) in some way	1.73	1.03	LN
8. I need help/talk about concerns with feeling sad, depressed or anxious	2.21	1.20	LN
9. I need help/talk about concerns with dealing with anger (anger issues)	2.25	1.24	LN
10. I need help/talk about understanding or accepting my strengths and weaknesses	2.47	1.26	LN
11. I need help/talk about concerns with identity, sexual orientation & expression (questioning who I am)	1.65	0.97	LN
12. I need help/talk about concerns with vape/cigarette smoking or drug/alcohol use	1.40	0.90	NN
13. I need help/talk about concerns with helping myself (increasing self-confidence, improved self-esteem, and openly communicating my thoughts and emotions)	2.69	1.38	MN
Overall	2.29	1.18	Low Need

Table 4 shows the social concerns of the students. The overall mean is 1.88 which means there is a low need for social concerns.

Table 4: Social Concerns

Social Concerns	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Indicator			
14. I need help/talk about concerns with parent separation	1.48	0.91	NN
15. I need help/talk about feeling unsafe in my environment	1.77	1.04	LN
16. I need help/talk about anxiety/worrying about home or family	2.02	1.19	LN

17. I need help/talk about making friends/fitting in or peer pressure	1.91	1.13	LN
18. I need help/talk about getting along better with family members	1.78	1.09	LN
19. I need help/talk about dealing with financial problems with my family	2.09	1.23	LN
20. I need help/talk about concerns with sadness over the loss of a loved one or pet	1.85	1.16	LN
21. I need help/talk about concerns with feeling stressed (from home and/or school)	2.42	1.32	LN
22. I need help/talk about concerns with handling teasing, mean-spirited or bullying behaviors	1.59	0.96	LN
Overall	1.88	1.12	Low Need

Table 5 shows the school concerns of the students.
The overall mean is 2.45 which means a low need
for school concerns.

Table 5: School Concerns

School Concerns				
Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation	
23. I need help/talk about career planning	2.80	1.34	MN	
24. I need help/talk about getting low grades	2.21	1.19	LN	
25. I need help/talk about academic workload	2.59	1.32	MN	
26. I need help/talk about getting involved with school activities	2.30	1.22	LN	
27. I need help/talk about improving study skills or learning styles	2.68	1.34	MN	
28. I need help/talk about educational requirements or skills needed for a particular job	2.66	1.36	MN	
29. I need help/talk about how my feelings or environment affect my academic performance	2.31	1.24	LN	
30. I need help/talk about anxiety/worrying about school (ex. relationship with my classmates and teachers)	2.07	1.21	LN	
Overall	2.45	1.28	Low Need	

Table 6 shows the SWS or Guidance Office concerns of the students. The overall mean is 1.78

which means low need regarding the SWS/Guidance Office concerns.

Table 6: Student Welfare Services Concerns

SWS Concerns				
Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation	
31. I need help/talk about Student Welfare Services/Guidance Office services and programs	1.76	1.00	LN	
32. I need help/talk about easy access to the Student Welfare Services/Guidance Office personnel	1.79	1.01	LN	
33. I need help/talk about going to see my counselor (guidance staff) to get help with my concerns	1.71	0.96	LN	
34. I need help/talk about participating in psychological testing such as mental ability or personality tests	1.85	1.10	LN	
Overall	1.78	1.02	Low Need	

Table 7 presents the students' other concerns. The majority, 87.75% (n=308), are not receiving counseling/ mental health support outside of school, while 12.25% (n=43) are receiving support.

Additionally, 59.54% (n=209) are not interested in attending mental health seminars/ training organized by the SWS, while 40.46% (n=142) expressed interest in attending.

Table 7: Other Concerns

Other Concerns				
Indicator		Mean	SD	Interpretation
35. Are you currently receiving any form of counseling or mental health support outside of school?	43	12.25%	308	87.75%
36. Are you interested to attend mental health seminars/ trainings organized by the SWS/Guidance Office?	142	40.46%	209	59.54%

2. The particular topics for seminar/webinar the students are interested participating in various aspects.

Table 8 shows students' preferred seminar/webinar topics. The most popular are stress management (53.85%), career pathways (50.43%), and academic burnout (48.15%). Other topics of interest include self-care (47.01%), self-esteem (40.74%),

leadership development (40.46%), and mental health trends (37.89%). Mental health concerns (35.90%), school-related issues (27.92%), and healthy relationships (27.07%) also rank high. Topics like safe spaces (26.21%), social media addiction (20.51%), LGBTQIA+/Gender and Development (17.38%), and SWS services (5.98%) are less popular.

Table 8: Particular Topics for Seminar/Webinar

Topics	Total	Percentage
Stress Management	189	53.85%
Career Pathways	177	50.43%
Academic Burnout	169	48.15%
Self-care Tips	165	47.01%
Self-esteem/Self-awareness	143	40.74%
Skills or Leadership Development	142	40.46%
Mental Health Trends	133	37.89%
Mental Health Concerns (ex. Mental Disorders)	126	35.90%
School-related (ex. Adjustment, peer pressure, goal setting, etc.)	98	27.92%
Healthy Interpersonal Relationships (family, friends, classmates, etc.)	95	27.07%
Safe Spaces	92	26.21%
Social Media Addiction	72	20.51%
LGBTQIA+ related/Gender and Development	61	17.38%
SWS/Guidance Office Services	21	5.98%

3. The students' preference in getting information about the student welfare services programs and services.

Table 9 shows students' preferred methods for receiving information about SWS programs. Most

respondents prefer social media (55.84%, n=196), followed by the school Website (30.77%, n=108) and email (26.78%, n=94). The least preferred method is phone call or SMS (13.68%, n=48).

Table 9: Students' Preference in Getting Information about SWS Programs & Services

Methods	Total	Percentage
Social Media	196	55.84%
School Website	108	30.77%
Email	94	26.78%
Phone call/SMS	48	13.68%

4. Other issues, concerns, or services that the students' need or they suggested.

Table 10 shows the analysis regarding other needs or concerns of the students. 4 themes have emerged from the analysis: 1) *Mental health and well-being*, 2) *Academic support*, 3) *Learning preferences and delivery*; and 4) *Work-Life balance*.

Mental health and well-being are vital for university students, as mental stability significantly affects physical health. Various factors impact mental

health, highlighting the need for tailored university programs. Academic support is essential, as guiding students prepares them for the future.

Students favor technology for information but find onsite classes more effective than online learning. Maintaining a work-life or social-life balance is crucial, as undergraduates need breaks from academics. While technology aid learning, personal and family circumstances still pose challenges for many students.

Table 10: Matrix on the Different Issues, Concerns, or Services that the Students Suggested

Meaning Unit	Condensed Meaning Unit	Themes
"I need help about my mental health"	They need help about their mental well-being.	Mental health and well-being
"I need mental health awareness campaigns"	They need mental health awareness campaigns.	
"I need mental health kits"	They need mental health kits.	
"I want private counseling"	They need private counseling.	

<i>"I need tips about stress management and academic burnout"</i>	They need strategies for stress management and burnout prevention.	
<i>"I need academic break"</i>	They need a temporary academic break.	Academic support
<i>"I need help on how to participate in class"</i>	They need help in classroom participation.	
<i>"I need help with right decisions about my career"</i>	They need help with his/her career pathways.	
<i>"I need to receive information through email"</i>	They prefer receiving information through their email.	Learning Preferences and Delivery
<i>"I want to attend webinar, with topics like social issues and equal rights"</i>	Students should attend webinars to stay informed about social issues and equal rights.	
<i>"I want to return to full face-to-face classes"</i>	They prefer full face-to-face classes.	
<i>"I need help on how to balance my social and personal life"</i>	They need help about personal and social life balance.	Work-Life Balance

5. Proposed student welfare services program

Rationale

Mental health, academic support, learning preferences, and work-life balance are vital for students' academic success. Mental health significantly impacts performance. Issues like sleep deprivation, unhealthy diets, or emotional instability can lead to absences, poor focus, unfinished schoolwork, or disruptive behaviors. Academic support, such as addressing concerns, providing breaks, and recognizing achievements, helps

students stay motivated and achieve their goals, improving overall well-being. Learning preferences also matter. Students in rural areas often lack access to necessary technology, and full online classes may exclude those without internet access. Schools should use diverse communication methods like SMS, email, or social media to ensure inclusivity. Finally, work-life balance is crucial. Students need time for personal lives, social interactions, and rest, which support their overall development and academic energy.

Table 11: Proposed SWS Program

Themes	Objectives	Metrics for Measuring Progress	Actions for Improvement	Budget
Mental health and well-being	- Enhance students' well-being - Conduct mental health awareness campaign - Spread mental health kits	- Results of psychological tests to be administered - No. of participants in the mental health awareness campaign - No. of mental health kits provided	- Develop programs to enhance students' mental well-being - Purchase psychological tests - Encourage student participation in SWS activities - Identify essential items for mental health kits	Php 100,000
Academic support	- Assist the students in terms of their academic concerns - Suggest short academic breaks - Guide them in their career pathways	- Assessment of student concerns - Percentage of students who are satisfied with the academic break - Percentage of students who attended career-related seminars	- Create peer-mentorship programs - Implement short breaks - Conduct personal career counselling and workshops	Php 100,000
Learning Preferences and Delivery	- Identify other mode of delivery - Suggest full face-to-face classes	No. of students who engage in different modes of delivery	Encourage at least 85 to 90% of onsite classes	Php 200,000

	Organize socio-political awareness webinars	- Satisfaction survey about onsite classes - Evaluation of activities (webinars) conducted	- Utilize all possible medium - Annually conduct socio-political webinars to the students	
Work-Life Balance	- Promote work-life balance and time management - Promote emotional regulation	- Conduct pre- and post-evaluations during short breaks - Develop surveys to identify activities that help students balance personal life and academics - Administer psychological tests	- Strictly implement the CARE Program to promote and enhance student well-being - Encourage faculty to adopt horizontal articulation - Conduct onsite group dynamics per section, allowing SWS to engage directly with students.	Php 50,000

Conclusion

After analyzing the outcomes of the study, herewith are the conclusions drawn:

This study examined the needs of college undergraduates across personal, social, academic, SWS/Guidance Office, and other areas to develop a Student Welfare Services (SWS) program. The findings revealed generally low needs in each dimension, with some moderate and no-need responses. Despite this, students selected seminar topics that can guide SWS in designing targeted programs. Three key themes emerged from students' suggestions: enhancing mental well-being programs, training instructors to provide academic support, and promoting work-life balance. These insights are crucial for SWS to create tailored programs. This study highlights the importance of adaptability and student-centered approaches in shaping the future of education in a digital age.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study the following recommendations were drawn:

First, integrating mental health support into the curriculum is essential to enhance well-being. Providing breaks and academic support can promote mental health and boost classroom performance.

Second, while findings indicate a low need, it remains important to develop beneficial programs, as the limited sample size and scope may not fully capture all students' needs.

Other groups might experience higher demand for these topics. Further research with a larger sample size or across different university levels is recommended to gain deeper insights.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in this manuscript. Results have been deduced objectively; nothing influenced this result by any individual, monetary, or institutional interests. In effect, utmost endeavors were in order to conduct a bias-free operation of gathering and analyzing the data into interpretation and producing a study based on merit, away from research inconsistencies.

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