

In-School Activities and Scholastic Performance of the College Council Officers in the University of Eastern Philippines: Inputs for Policy Formulation

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ABSTRACT

College Student Councils are the forefront of student government that helps institutions on matters related to students' development. The purpose of this study was to describe the in-school activities and scholastic performance of the college student council officers in the University of Eastern Philippines. It covered 57 academically outstanding student leaders who also held key and minor positions in the campus-based and external organizations and have involved their selves in general and specific in-school activities. Data retrieved served as the baseline data for inputs as regards policy formulation. Majority of the respondents held the major positions in the college student councils, members of college-based organizations, and officers in various local clubs/organizations; outstanding in their scholastic performance; and much involved in general in-school activities and very much involved in specific in-school activities.

KEYWORDS: *in-school activities, academic performance, policy formulation*

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1. INTRODUCTION

The College Student Councils are student bodies duly organized and elected at large by the students themselves, with due recognition and authority from the higher education institution (HEI), as the students' official representatives in matters affecting them (CMO No.9, s. 2013). Student government is a special form of proactive, self-directed, responsible social activity of students, aimed at addressing important issues of students' life and activities, at developing students' social activities, at supporting social initiatives (Fatov & Fedoseeva, 2009; Kalimullin, Vlasova & Sakhieva, 2016; Zakirova, Masalimova & Nikoghosyan, 2016).

The aim of establishing students' councils was to support the social and academic achievement of girls and boys in schools that is brought about primarily through such councils (known locally as barazas) (Hannam, 2001; Emily, 2014). In addition, via student councils (barazas), girls and boys develop leadership skills, facilitating their participation in shaping educational policies, practices and beliefs while simultaneously ensuring school management accountability

in delivering quality education. Self-advocacy and accountability were enhanced via the advent of student councils, which are designed to influence policies and practices that affect the quality of educational services in Tanzania. The barazas represent an excellent example of operationalizing democratic, socially responsible and citizenship skills—and not in the abstract—but in real life with deep and direct meaning for the individual students as stipulated in the national strategy for civic education (United Republic of Tanzania, 2011).

Amidst the lofty goals of student councils and their determination and eagerness to serve for genuine service to their fellow students and schools they are confronted with issues on poor academic performance, irresponsibility, and lesser involvement in in-school activities. It is on this light that the researchers conceived this paper to determine if whether these same issues are being confronted by the college student councils in the University of Eastern Philippines.

2. Objectives

This study aimed at determining the in-school activities and scholastic performance of the college councils in the University of Eastern Philippines, Catarman, Northern Samar and layout inputs for policy formulation.

Specifically, it:

- I. Identified the profile of the college student council officers, in terms of:
 - A. Position
 - B. other organizational membership
 - C. positions in other organizations
- II. determined their scholastic performance
- III. determined their involvement in in-school activities
 - A. general activities
 - B. specific activities
- IV. drawn out inputs for policy formulation

3. Review of Literature

Student government is a special form of proactive, self-directed, responsible social activity of students, aimed at addressing important issues of students' life and activities, at developing students' social activities, at supporting social initiatives (Fatov & Fedoseeva, 2009; Kalimullin, Vlasova & Sakhieva, 2016; Zakirova, Masalimova & Nikoghosyan, 2016).

A Student Council is a representative structure through which students in a post-primary school can become involved in the affairs of the school, working in partnership with school management and staff and parents for the benefit of the school and its students. The main role of a Student Council as set out in the Education Act is "to promote the interests of the school and the involvement of students in the affairs of the school, in co-operation with the board, parents and teachers". A Student Council will set its own objectives, which will vary from school to school. Some general objectives could include: (1) to enhance communication between students, management, staff and parents; (2) to promote an environment conducive to educational and personal development; (3) to promote friendship and respect among pupils; (4) to support the management and staff in the development of the school; and (5) to represent the views of the students on matters of general concern to them (Castleknock Community College, 2002).

Enhancing the efficiency of resource allocation to the education system and improving student achievement constitute two overriding goals for the education authorities. Recent evidence seems to suggest that school leaders may play a vital role in accomplishing both objectives (Pont, B.; Nusche, D. and Moorman, H., 2008; OECD 2016). Equipping schools with effective management teams and leadership models, understood as those conducive to improvements in academic performance and other areas, is even more important in a growing framework of autonomy, as in the case of Catalonia.

One aspect of involvement in extracurricular organizations that affects both the quality and quantity of involvement in extracurricular organizations is serving in a positional leadership role. Researchers have found serving as a club officer increased leadership development (Ewing et al., 2009), increased decision-making (Rubin et al., 2002), and resulted in higher levels of developing purpose, educational

involvement, life management, and cultural participation (Cooper, et al., 1994). Positional leaders also scored higher on the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale (SRLS-R2) group values scale and the SRLS-R2 community values scale (Dugan, 2006).

Involvement. Astin (1999) defined involvement as an investment of physical and psychological energy that occurs along a continuum, meaning different students exhibit different levels of involvement at different times. Involvement has both quantitative (how much time a student spends on an activity) and qualitative (how focused the student is on the activity) aspects. Using these principles along with concepts prominent in cognitive structural and psychoanalytic theories, Astin (1999) developed a conceptual framework to explain how educational programs and policies translate into student achievement and development, which are directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement.

The functions and activities of a Student Council should support the aims and objectives of the Council and promote the development of the school and the welfare of its students. In planning and undertaking activities during the course of the school year, the Council should: work closely with school management, teachers and parents; consult regularly with students in the school; and involve as many students as possible in the activities of the Council. There is a wide range of activities of benefit to the school community which a Student Council may wish to undertake, some of which are: (1) representing the views of the student body to the school management; (2) Promoting good communications within the school; (3) Supporting the educational development and progress of students; (4) Assisting with induction and/or mentoring for new first year students; (5) Contributing to the development of school policy; (6) Assisting in school sporting and cultural activities; (7) Assisting with or organising fund-raising events for charity; and (8) Liaising with Student Councils in other schools (Castleknock Community College, 2002).

4. Methodology

This descriptive type of study was conducted to 57 officers from the eight (8) college student councils in the University of Eastern Philippines Main Campus, a progressive state university in Northern Samar, Eastern Visayas, Philippines during the second semester of school year 2018-2019.

The instrument used for this study was composed of three (3) parts. The first part identified the profile of the college student council officers, in terms of, position, other organizational membership, and positions in other organizations. The second part determined their scholastic performance. And, the third part determined their involvement in in-school (general and specific) activities. Based on the findings of the study, the researchers drew out inputs for policy formulation.

5. Results and Discussion

Table 1.1 Positions of the College Student Council Officers

Position	Frequency	Percentage
Executive Position	35	61.4
Representative	22	38.6
Total	57	100

As shown in Table 1.1, of the total college student council officers, 61.4% were holding executive positions, i.e. president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, auditor, business manager, and public information officer. On the other hand, the remaining 38.6% were course representatives.

Table 1.2 Other Organizational Membership

Organization	Frequency	Rank
College-based	50	1
Journalism Guild	21	2
Performing Artists' Guild	16	3
University-based	8	4
Community-based	5	5
National-based Student	3	6

*multiple responses

The data on other organizational membership of the 57 college student council officers are reflected in Table 1.2. As shown, with a frequency of 50, college-based organization ranked first; followed by journalism guild, 21; third, journalism guild, 16; fourth, national-based student organization, 14; fifth, community-based organization, eight (8); and lastly, university-based organization, five (5).

It can be delved from the data that the elected leaders are not only holding positions in their respective college student councils, as they, too are elected officials in various organizations. Although the data suggest that they show consistent involvement in student leadership, a lesser number of them are members of external organizations, as in the case of community-based and national-leg student organizations.

The findings on college-based organizations find support in the study of Moore et al., (2008) who studied the

relationship between university-wide student organizations and college-level student organizations and concluded that more students participated in college-level student organizations.

With a lesser involvement in community-based organizations the officers would also have lesser engagement in programs and opportunities which are designed to develop social awareness, personal internalization, and meaningful contribution to nation building.

Table 1.3 Positions in Other Organizations

Position	Frequency	Rank
Officer	35	1
Member	12	2

Table 1.3 shows that of the 47 respondents who manifested membership in other organizations, majority of them, 35 were officers while 12 were members. It can be revealed from this data that the elected college student council officers are also being trusted by the members of other organizations, hence, they too, are being elected in various posts. Furthermore, the data confirm the results in the study of Ewing et al which revealed that one aspect of involvement in extracurricular organizations that affects both the quality and quantity of involvement in extracurricular organizations is serving in a positional leadership role. Researchers have found serving as a club officer increased leadership development (Ewing et al., 2009), increased decision-making (Rubin et al., 2002), and resulted in higher levels of developing purpose, educational involvement, life management, and cultural participation (Cooper, et al., 1994). Positional leaders also scored higher on the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale (SRLS-R2) group values scale and the SRLS-R2 community values scale (Dugan, 2006).

Table 2 Scholastic Performance

Grade Point Average	Frequency	Percentage	Adjectival Rating
1.00 - 1.21	3	5.3	Very Much Outstanding
1.21 - 1.45	1	1.7	Much Outstanding
1.46 - 1.75	20	35.1	Outstanding
1.76 - 2.00	16	28.1	Good
2.01 - 2.50	17	29.8	Fair
Total	57	100	

As regards scholastic performance, 35.1% of the college student council officers obtained an outstanding 1.46-1.75 grade point average (GPA) and only 1.7% had a much outstanding 1.21-1.45 GPA. The data suggest that outstanding has the highest frequency, it can be noted that 57.9% obtained a GPA which is not within the qualifying bracket for scholastic achievers, hence, fair and good. This means that superb scholastic standing is a non-requisite for student council leadership. Although the CUSOA of the university does not allow any student to run for an electoral post if s/he has obtained a GPA lower than 2.5.

Table 3.1 Involvement in General In-school Activities

Activity	Mean	Adjectival Rating
Participates in all meetings called by the college dean/administration.	4.5	Very Much Involved
Assists in the college for enrolment-related matters.	4.5	Very Much Involved
Participates in regular holding of consultative meetings and discussions among members of the organization.	4.3	Very Much Involved
Participates 100% in the implementation of projects and activities of the organization.	4.3	Very Much Involved
Attends all meetings called by the university/college organization.	4.2	Much Involved
Coordinates with other college council in its implementation of activities.	4.1	Much Involved
Spends beyond office time for the completion of the council program and activities.	4.1	Much Involved

Participates in the campaign platform preparation, campus tour, and candidates' forum.	4.0	Much Involved
Attends regional, national, and international leadership trainings.	3.0	Involved
General Weighted Mean	4.1	Much Involved

On involvement in general in-school activities, Table 3.1 shows that the college student council officers were “very much involved”, 4.5 in participating in all meetings called by the college dean/administration and in assisting the college for enrolment-related matters. This shows how respectful, courteous, and responsible the student leaders are to their superiors. As regards enrolment-related matters, their active involvement justifies the mandate of CMO No. 9, s. 2013 on admission services that take care on the processing of entrance and requirements of students.

With a weighted mean of 4.3, the college student leaders were “very much involved” in the holding of regular consultative meetings and discussions among members of the organization and in the 100% implementation of the projects and activities of the organization. It can be deduced from these data that the student leaders are true their oath as elected officials.

It can be noted however that the college student leaders were “much involved”, 4.0 in the campaign platform preparation, campus tour, and candidates' forum. The college student council officers, with a general weighted mean of 3, were “involved” in attending regional, national, and international trainings. This means that they have lesser access to attendance to seminar-trainings held in the higher levels.

Table3.2 Involvement in Specific In-school Activities

Activity	Mean	Adjectival Rating
Acquaintance Party	4.73	Very Much Involved
Clean-Up	4.67	Very Much Involved
Orientation Program	4.63	Very Much Involved
Intramurals	4.54	Very Much Involved
Oath Taking Ceremony	4.53	Very Much Involved
Christmas Party	4.19	Much Involved
Local Leadership Training	4.15	Much Involved
General Weighted Mean	4.49	Very Much Involved

On involvement in specific in-school activities, with a weighted mean of 4.73, the college student council officers were “very much involved” in acquaintance party. The data suggests that latter is considered as such as it is one of the first activities conducted during the 100 days of the elected officers, hence, their all-time energy, commitment, and most importantly involvement are still high. Also, they are “very much involved”, 4.67 in clean-up activities. This means that the student leaders still consider cleanliness around their respective vicinities as a top priority.

The college student council officers as “very much involved”, 4.54 in intramurals concretize another CHED mandate on institutional student program and services. Intramurals is one component of sports development programs that provides for physical fitness and well-being of students.

However, as reflected in Table 3.2, although still “very much involved” but the 4.21 weighted mean on Christmas Party is not as high as compared to other activities. Said involvement is somewhat affected by the fact that Northern Samar has always been a home to strong typhoons that usually hit around December. Local leadership training has the lowest weighted mean of 4.15. This shows that the UEP college student council officers need to be exposed to such undertakings as these are outlets which would hone their leadership capabilities.

Inputs to Policy Formation

Based on the findings the hereunder data are considered inputs for policy information.

Support to college student councils to benchmark with external student councils. Benchmarking is a good practice

because it helps organizations overcome complacency. It will serve as a platform for the councils to continuously strive to better their performance and involvement standards as they would know their areas of gaps and strengths.

Assist in the drive of the college student councils to forge linkages with student-based organizations in the regional, national, and international entities. This will open up sustainable opportunities for the UEP college student councils for exchange programs, to get support, and/or collaborate with external organizations for common projects and initiatives.

Enhance student development program more specifically in the involvement of the college student council officers to trainings in regional, national, or even international flagship programs. Leadership trainings are programs and opportunities that develop and enhance leadership effectiveness in the personal level and student organizations. Implementation of such will show congruency with the CMO No.9, s. 2013 which mandates all state colleges and universities to ensure that leadership training programs are provided and opportunities for interaction with counterparts from other institutions.

Strengthen the student councils' social and community involvement programs. This will ensure opportunities for meaningful socio-civic involvement of students which include among other volunteerism, environment protection, etc. However, the university should make sure that the officers are insured in their field work days.

Institutionalize sustainable capacity measures for the college student councils. There must be teaching and practical

manuals on the organization of the student government activities, including regulations, concepts, programs, orders should be available at the university. There should also be a system of training for student government members and a system of continuity.

6. Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the hereunder conclusions were derived.

Majority of the respondents hold the major positions in the college student councils, members of college-based organizations, and officers in various local clubs/organizations.

Majority of the college student council officers are outstanding in their scholastic performance.

The college student council officers are much involved in general in-school activities and very much involved in specific in-school activities

As regards inputs to policy formulation, there is strong emphasis in supporting the college student councils for benchmarking, forging linkages, attendance in higher inter/national leadership programs, social and community involvement, and capacity building areas.

7. Recommendation

Grounded on the conclusions, the hereunder recommendations were drawn.

1. The university should provide mechanisms by which the students can become active members in external organizations of various levels.
2. The university must maintain its grade qualifications for students who are assuming for student council posts and may provide more academic-oriented enrichment programs for them.
3. Periodic checking of the student council officers' performance must be done.
4. The inputs forwarded by this study should be considered by the University for policy formation.
5. Future related studies shall be conducted.

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