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SK (Sangguniang Kabataan) Chairpersons' Academic and Leadership Struggles

Ma. Toni Elisse R. Piolo [a], Maria Theresa A. Celajes [b], Trizia Marie Margarett A. Palmes [c], Amiel John D. Navarra [d], Royce L. Noquilla [e], John Erwin P. Pedroso, PhD [f]

[a,b,c,d,e, f] West Visayas State University, Iloilo City 5000, Philippines

A B S T R A C T

Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) Chairpersons in the Philippines face significant challenges in balancing their leadership roles and academic responsibilities. As community leaders, they manage projects, perform administrative duties, and advocate for youth involvement while striving to maintain good academic performance. This demanding workload requires resilience and effective time management. A qualitative descriptive study was conducted to explore these struggles, utilizing a semi-structured, researcher-made interview guide administered both online and face-to-face. Eight SK Chairpersons were selected through purposeful sampling techniques, and their responses were analyzed using thematic analysis. The study identified four major struggles: struggling to be available for both responsibilities, having difficulty with time and task management, experiencing burnout, and experiencing internal and external problems. These findings highlight the need for support systems to help SK Chairpersons effectively navigate their dual roles.

Keywords: Leadership, Student leader, Sangguniang Kabataan

1. Introduction

There has been a notable rise in youth engagement and interest in leadership, with student leaders aspiring to exemplify self-discipline, perseverance, passion, and resilience (Balahadia, 2020). Leadership is a dynamic and complex process that involves numerous interpersonal interactions between individuals across various societal contexts (Zavala, 2023). The growing interest in leadership among young people, particularly students, has been documented (Tackett, 2023). However, it is acknowledged that student leaders face various challenges that may hinder their ability to fulfill their responsibilities as students (Murage, 2019). Striking a balance between academic and leadership duties is essential in today's evolving and competitive global landscape (Neratchara, 2023). In this regard, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasize quality education (Goal 4) and the promotion of peace, justice, and strong institutions (Goal 16), which are pertinent to this examination. The impact of leadership roles on academic performance has been widely investigated (Setiawati, 2022), with recent studies focusing on leadership within academic institutions (Anthony, 2017). Youth leaders express a strong desire to engage in community governance at the local level (Hawkins, 2012), yet the relationship between youth involvement in such governance and their academic responsibilities remains insufficiently explored (Berthin, 2013).

Student leadership encompasses educational concepts and practices designed to empower young individuals, enabling them to articulate their views, participate in decision-making, and comprehend their rights and responsibilities as engaged citizens (Kambuga& Omollo, 2017). Participation in student government associations provides students with advantages in terms of career development and leadership, as well as skills in networking and relationship-building (Leboeuf, 2020). However, the cumulative pressure to excel, coupled with the demands of their respective roles, can lead to diminished morale and overall performance when academic and leadership responsibilities conflict, with primary challenges including stress and pressure and their potential consequences (Martha, 2020). The obstacles faced by student leaders may hinder their effectiveness in fulfilling their tasks, leading to poor leadership performance and academic difficulties (Murage et al., 2019). Tertiary student leaders have reported that the stress associated with their leadership roles adversely affects their academic outcomes (Mulenga et al., 2016). Consequently, existing research is inadequate, as there is a scarcity of materials elucidating the reasons and mechanisms behind these unfavorable outcomes, particularly for those involved in local governance.

The Sangguniang Kabataan chairperson, commonly referred to as the SK chairperson, is an elected member of the youth council who actively engages in local governance, representing the interests of the youth in every barangay (village) nationwide (Bautista, 2020). The Sangguniang Kabataan acknowledges the vital role of youth in nation-building, promoting their well-being, sense of nationalism, and civic engagement, thereby allowing individuals aged 15 to 30 to contest for SK positions (Soon, 2016). This age criterion underscores the fact that many SK chairpersons are still students. Research has demonstrated that political involvement among students can negatively affect their academic performance (Babalola et al., 2014). This study is grounded in Intersectionality Theory and Practice, which serves as a framework for analyzing the connections and interrelations across various social systems and categories (Atewologun, 2018). The primary challenges faced by student leaders are characterized by the conflict between academic

endeavors and leadership duties when carried out simultaneously, reflecting a negative correlation between the demands of these two roles (Murage, 2019; Martha, 2020). However, key question remain: What specific struggles do SK chairpersons encounter while managing their academic and leadership responsibilities concurrently?

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study used a qualitative-descriptive research design aimed at exploring SK chairpersons' struggles in both leadership and academics when undertaken concurrently. Qualitative descriptive research design is a type of research design that aims to provide a comprehensive summary of a phenomenon based on participants' perspectives, experiences, and contexts (Lanka, 2021). The study was anchored in Intersectionality Theory and Practice, which provided a framework and perspective to analyze the relationships and interdependencies between social systems and categories (Atewologun, 2018).

2.2 Informants

The informants of the study were the seven (7) Sangguniang Kabataan chairpersons, all of whom were tertiary students of West Visayas State University. To determine the informants, the researchers employed purposeful sampling (Pedroso, 2022), a form of non-probability sampling in which researchers rely on the inclusion criteria in choosing the informants to participate in the study. The following were the inclusion criteria: (1) He or she should be a tertiary student; (2) He or she should be an enrolled student of West Visayas State University for the school year 2023-2024; (3) He or she should be an elected SK chairperson from the 2023 election; and (4) He or she should be a BSEd Social Studies major student.

Table 1. Informants of the Study

Informants	A tertiary student	Enrolled at West Visayas State University for the school year 2023-2024	An education student Elected SK Chairperson from the 2023 election	A BSEd Social Studies student
1	✔	✔	✔	✔
2	✔	✔	✔	✔
3	✔	✔	✔	✔
4	✔	✔	✔	✔
5	✔	✔	✔	✔
6	✔	✔	✔	✔
7	✔	✔	✔	✔

2.3 Data Instrument

The study developed and employed a researcher-made semi-structured interview guide, which was critiqued and validated by qualitative research experts, an English critique, and a guidance counselor. Pilot testing was conducted with non-participating informants to ensure the reliability and suitability for data collection. The instrument was split into two sections. The initial section concentrated on gathering the informant's personal information and demographic characteristics. To provide flexibility in data collection from informants, the second part included open-ended questions about the intersection of academic and leadership struggles they encountered. The Intersectionality Theory and Practice (Atewologun, 2018) was used to create the interview guide's open-ended questions.

2.4 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection began after the Dean of the college approved the conduct of the study. The researchers sent each of their prospective informants a letter of consent to confirm their willingness to participate in a one-on-one interview with structured guidelines for the study. After the informants confirmed, an orientation was scheduled through Google Meet. This informed them about the guidelines, the proposed data-gathering time frame, the assurance of their anonymity and information confidentiality, and an overview of the questions being asked. The informants were also free to schedule their interview time and date with respect to their availability and preferred modality within the time frame given. After all that was said, the interview was carried out. While the informants were answering, researchers took notes and recorded the interview using a voice recording app and camera. The researchers let the informants recheck their answers on the notes of the researchers after the interview. Both parties agreed that all information would be kept confidential and stored in a Google Drive that only the researchers could access. Furthermore, to ensure privacy and confidentiality issues, all raw materials were removed after the findings had been analyzed, presented, and published (Alvarez, 2020).

2.5 Data Analysis

The collected data from the informants underwent the six steps of thematic analysis described by Braun and Clarke (2006). Thematic analysis is a process of identifying themes and patterns within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This provided a clear and useful framework to analyze the data gathered (Naeem, 2023). Using this approach, patterns of information were identified and categorized. Based on the categorization of the identified patterns of data, significant themes on the academic and leadership struggles of SK (Sangguniang Kabataan) were generated. Further, to have a better understanding of the informants' struggles, each theme was evaluated.

3. Results

To describe the academic and leadership struggles of SK (Sangguniang Kabataan) Chairpersons, four significant themes were generated: (1) Struggling to be available in both responsibilities; (2) Having difficulty in time and task management; (3) Experiencing burnout; and (4) Experiencing internal and external problems.

Struggling to Be Available for Both Responsibilities

Struggling to be personally available for both responsibilities at the same time is one of the challenges faced by student leaders. Although time management has been found to be one of the helpful techniques to manage time between multiple responsibilities (Wolters, 2021), student leaders still experience struggles when responsibilities demand their presence. Divided into two (2) sub-themes, this category includes (1) Overlapping schedules and (2) Having absences.

Overlapping Schedules

Scheduling is an effective way to manage time. However, regarding SK (Sangguniang Kabataan) chairperson availability, scheduling conflicts can still arise due to unexpected circumstances. Overlapping schedules of SK (Sangguniang Kabataan) chairpersons include (1) Having unexpected meetings and errands in the barangay and (2) Experiencing the same schedules for both activities.

- **Having Unexpected Meetings in Barangay**

  Meetings are a useful venue for a variety of tasks, allowing individuals to share ideas, make choices, create team connections, and even feel less lonely at work (Loes, 2022). Holding frequent team meetings may greatly improve everyone's productivity and motivation. However, SK Chairpersons struggle when they have important meetings and tasks in the barangay since these conflict with their academic timetables.

Edcelle: "If there is an urgent meeting, it is given that I can't attend physically because of my internship. My SK co-officers are aware that I can't attend because of the distance, given that I am in Iloilo City and our barangay is in Maasin, so we set up a kind of arrangement that I will meet virtually for the benefit of being aware of what's happening in the meeting."

- **Experiencing the Same Schedules for Both Activities**

  Effective scheduling can help with time management, establish a daily routine, and solidify a work-life balance (Saxena, 2018). As a student, organizing your days eliminates stress and ensures that you are productive. Despite the scheduling of SK Chairpersons, there are instances where many of them struggle because of overlapping schedules of activities to fulfill academic and leadership responsibilities.

Ela: "There have been instances where I missed big events in our barangay due to academic commitments. The main reason is that I prioritize the students that I handle."

Absences

SK Chairpersons experience struggles since academics and leadership responsibilities demand attention. The struggle to fulfill both roles effectively can sometimes result in absences in school or the SK council. Moreover, absences are prevalent due to abrupt circumstances. These include (1) Missing class lessons, (2) Prioritizing the most urgent tasks, and (3) Compromising other tasks.

- **Missing Class Lessons**

  Attendance is a key measure for educational institutions. This issue affects all levels of education and has a variety of factors, including class quality and students' personal circumstances (Ehrlich, 2018). Students who take on leadership roles often commit significant time and effort to their responsibilities, which can sometimes conflict with their school schedules. Most informants explained that there are lessons they miss because of their leadership responsibilities. Furthermore, they stated that sometimes they are absent due to urgent matters in the SK council.

Kate: "The demands of my leadership responsibilities sometimes take precedence over my studies, resulting in less time and energy devoted to academic pursuits."

- **Prioritizing the Most Urgent Task**

Prioritization is the practice of arranging possible development items in order of relevance. One of the most significant abilities that leaders can learn to assist them in managing their own and their teams' workloads is distinguishing between important and urgent tasks. As a result of addressing the most essential task, SK Chairpersons frequently miss academic and leadership obligations.

Jerol: "As I am dealing with so much paperwork, I prioritize what's most important while juggling my pending academic tasks as well."

Fritz: "There are sessions that I miss because I prioritize my academics."

- **Compromising Other Tasks**

Student leaders are multitaskers. They balance their academic duties and leadership positions while facing pressure to excel in both areas (Pedroso, 2023). Compromise is essential for resolving conflicts, as it aids in reducing tension, fostering comprehension, and averting further escalation. When people are open to compromise, it creates opportunities for effective communication and teamwork, which can result in more favorable outcomes. As a student and a youth leader, compromising is prevalent, especially when academics and leadership responsibilities demand much attention.

Earl: "I sometimes go to my internship for a short period because I need to process the opening of our SK bank account." He added that in leadership, "we have to compromise and figure out what's most important."

Having Difficulty with Time and Task Management

Being a student leader is a significant responsibility, requiring effective time management to balance academics and school activities (Moneva, 2019). However, there are still instances where the amount of tasks to do outweighs the student leaders' efforts to manage their time and tasks. This difficulty in time and task management is divided into two (2) sub-themes: (1) Experiencing a shortage of time and (2) Having piled-up work.

Experiencing a Shortage of Time

The scarcity of time is very inevitable for young leaders. One of the struggles of college students who enter politics is the challenge posed by academics and community work that need to be accomplished simultaneously (Nespor, 2013). Experiencing a shortage of time is subdivided into three (3) categories: (1) multitasking work, meetings, and activities, (2) doing academic and leadership work for a short period, and (3) meeting deadlines.

- **Multitasking Work, Meetings, and Activities**

Young leaders are challenged on how to be productive in their roles as both students and leaders, even when their time for academic and leadership work is limited, requiring them to master their skills in time management and prioritization.

Myka: "It seems like one of my major struggles is really schedule conflicts…the feeling of not knowing what to prioritize first, if the training, quizzes, or my reporting for my subject, which is graded strictly, are happening at the same time."

Kate: "Firstly, the time, like when your classes and seminars overlap. For instance, you might have training sessions and need to study for your class schedule. So, you often find yourself needing to sacrifice something, and for my part, I have absences because the training falls on weekdays."

Fritz: "There are times that academics and SK clash. There are times that the windows on your laptop… the other one is for academics and the other is for SK."

- **Doing Academic and Leadership Work for a Short Period**

Even with limited time for both academics and leadership responsibilities, young leaders struggle to be competent in both roles. They must hone their time management and prioritization skills to achieve this.

EJ: "I struggle to balance my academics and leadership due to the scarcity of time...because of the time division, I have my internship as a fourth-year student, and at the same time, I'm facing leadership responsibilities in the barangay."

Ela: "The demands of my leadership responsibilities sometimes take precedence over my studies, resulting in less time and energy devoted to academic pursuits."

Kate: "If you don't have time to review, you really get left behind. And when there is group work, you sometimes have to adjust your time to theirs, so it's really a struggle. It definitely manifests in academics that you're lacking in study time, lacking in review time, like me, for example."

- **Meeting Deadlines**

Completing tasks the day before deadlines is unavoidable for a person who is a college student and a leader at the same time (Theobald, 2021). One of the struggles that a young leader faces is meeting deadlines for their academic work as well as community work.

Ela: "One struggle that makes me physically and mentally drained is the pressure to meet deadlines and expectations in both roles. There are times when I question whether I can effectively balance these responsibilities without sacrificing one over the other."

Myka: "Another struggle for me is figuring out how to manage everything, especially since aside from the training, we also need to comply with various documents, submit papers, and handle matters in our office and barangay."

Piled-Up Work

The community work of young leaders is much more than what people expect them to handle. As a college student and a Sangguniang Kabataan Chairperson, one of their struggles is having piled-up work due to their two responsibilities that need to be carried out simultaneously. Having piled-up work is subdivided into two (2) categories: (1) unending academic activities and (2) encountering more community work.

- **Unending Academic Activities**

    Endless academic obligations are quite normal for college students. However, for young leaders who concurrently manage both their academic and leadership roles, this is a challenge. Balancing the demands of both roles is even more difficult if the academic activities are unending.

Jerol: "In terms of academics, I can say that it is very hard to manage when you are a public servant as well as a student because I carry academic workloads and responsibilities as an SK Chairman. So, my time is divided into two things, as an SK chairman and as a student… so it is common that my schoolwork and academic responsibilities are piling up."

Kate: "In terms of academics, there is group work in other subjects that really requires collaborative effort. The most recent experience I had was on how to adjust my time with the schedules of my groupmates, especially since I needed to prioritize academics. Sometimes, it's challenging because I couldn't fully fulfill my duties as an SK chairman first. It's like there's a clash between my leadership role and being a student."

- **Encountering More Community Work**

    Young leaders frequently face problems as their commitment to community service expands (Fusarelli, 2018). As they encounter more responsibilities and activities in their communities, the demands on their time and resources grow.

Kate: "The struggle is, last time before midterms, I attended many seminars, which reflected in my scores. There were subjects where I scored well, but there's this one particular subject that I struggled with because I didn't study it thoroughly. I couldn't keep up with their discussions because I missed a lot."

Ela: "I encountered difficulty during the first week of April when we celebrated our Annual Fiesta. As an SK Chairperson, I had to juggle organizing events such as the Linay sang Monpon and Basketball League while also keeping up with my academic responsibilities. It was a hectic time, and I struggled to balance my duties as an SK Chairperson with my academic commitments."

Experiencing Burnout

Maslach's classical theory defines burnout as a syndrome of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged physical tiredness, feelings of helplessness, and unfavorable attitudes about one's career and life (Çam, 2001). Burnout is also common among student leaders, according to Walburg (2014), as they are expected to lead effectively as well as excel in class. These are the two (2) sub-themes under experiencing burnout: (1) Experiencing exhaustion and (2) Affecting mental health.

Experiencing Exhaustion

Fatigue can be defined as a state of extreme physical or mental tiredness resulting from prolonged periods of activity or lack of adequate rest and sleep (Lewis-Smith, 2016). This definition describes the experiences of informants who acquire this fatigue from their academic and leadership responsibilities. The struggles faced by SK chairpersons are highlighted by the following: (1) lack of sleep and (2) experiencing travel exhaustion.

- **Lack of Sleep**

    Lack of sleep, often known as sleep deprivation, is an alarming pandemic among college students (Chen et al, 2019). It was experienced by the majority of the informants. Their sleep length is affected by their roles as SK chairman and student. Most of the informants stated that they sleep late at night and wake up early in the morning to fix themselves and travel to school to attend their classes. Sleep deprivation can also interfere with basic physiological activities such as blood pressure control and heart rate variability, both of which are essential for sustaining consciousness (Cajochen and Dijk, 1997).

Myka: "It gets affected because I sleep early since I wake up early to study; then, I only have 2 or 3 hours left for sleep because I have class at 7 am. I wake up at 5:30 to 6 and then hurry because I have a class at 7."

Fritz: "I usually arrive home around 8, and then I wake up early at around 4 in the morning to prepare and walk by 5:30 for the 7 AM class, so that's it."

Kate: "When it comes to the physical aspect, your body indeed experiences times when you feel mentally absent during class because you haven't slept. There are moments when you might even feel like fainting. So, when your mental state weakens, it significantly affects your physical well-being."

- **Experiencing Travel Exhaustion**

    Experiencing travel exhaustion can affect the ability of an SK chairperson to balance leadership and academic responsibilities. For an SK (Sangguniang Kabataan) chairperson who is responsible for both leadership duties and academic responsibilities, travel time exhaustion can

significantly impact their ability to balance these responsibilities. The time spent commuting between their academic institution and their leadership duties within the community can reduce the time available for studying, attending classes, or fulfilling other academic commitments.

Fritz: "Plus, the travel hours are around 1 hour, considering that I commute to St. Barbara every day."

Affecting Mental and Physical Health

College students may feel pressured to excel academically and socially, which can negatively impact their health (Ballesteros, 2022). Specifically, student leaders are prone to additional pressures from community interaction, academic achievement, and peer group duties (Campbell, 2022). The responsibilities of an SK (Sangguniang Kabataan) Chairperson carry a lot of weight because they are not just dealing with youth but also a whole community, politics, and leadership workloads. This sub-theme is divided into two (2): (1) Involvement in long years of leadership and (2) Experiencing high demands for their time and presence.

- **Involvement in Long Years of Leadership**

    When you are repeatedly exposed to something for many years, like leadership, you get used to it and also grow tired of it. Involvement in long-term leadership is either an experience to learn from or a cause of burnout.

Fritz: "In terms of being mentally and physically drained, it is because I started my leadership journey young."

- **Experiencing High Demands for Their Time and Presence**

    Fulfilling more than one responsibility at a time is undoubtedly stressful (Lansdown, 2009). The challenge of meeting the demands of both academic and leadership responsibilities is one of the struggles of these SK (Sangguniang Kabataan) Chairpersons. To meet the demands of their multiple roles, one has to devote much time and effort, including their presence.

Fritz: "That time when I needed to process the changing of signatories for the SK, some chairpersons really sacrifice not going to class just to do the processing, but in my case, I processed it in my vacant time because I also had a quiz on a major subject that same day."

Kate: "As I mentioned regarding my absences, I had to attend that specific seminar to obtain that necessary certificate. I really had to sacrifice."

Experiencing Internal and External Problems

Handling problems in life is easier when a person has psychological well-being, productive internal characteristics, and access to external support (Venema, 2023). However, maintaining this psychological well-being is not easy, especially when you are engaging with many personalities, as is the case when you are an SK (Sangguniang Kabataan) Chairperson. This theme is divided into two (2) sub-themes: (1) Facing pressures and (2) Exposing oneself to external negativity.

Facing Pressure

A leader is someone who handles a crisis calmly and with an adequately planned approach. Before diving into problem solutions, one should take a deep breath and pause to gather thoughts and examine the situation objectively. The Sangguniang Kabataan Chairperson is frequently put under strain by the competing demands of their leadership and academic responsibilities, as well as criticism from both sides. Facing pressure in the Sangguniang Kabataan includes (1) Maintaining grades and performance well, (2) Self-pressuring to lead effectively, and (3) Establishing personal expectations.

- **Maintaining Grades and Performance Well**

    Academic performance entails fulfilling the aims, achievements, and objectives outlined in the program or course in which a student is enrolled (Caballero, 2010). These are reflected as grades, which are the outcome of evaluations that include passing or failing certain examinations, subjects, or courses.

Myka: "One of the things I do is create a GANTT Chart on Google Calendar. So, when you've gone through it, that's how I set your tasks for a specific month, day, and time. Like at this hour, this is what I allocate for training. A 30-minute travel, focus, and then I can do assignments because after class, there are tasks. So, that's my struggle sometimes, how I manage it, considering aside from the training, we need to comply with documents, submit papers, and handle matters in our office and barangay hall. That's it."

- **Self-Pressuring to Lead Effectively**

    Effective pressure is the type that motivates you to attain your objectives and perform successfully (Sam M, 2023). To lead under pressure, a leader must possess a certain combination of talents that allows them to stay calm and focused on the final goals despite rising pressure. Effective leaders must be able to inspire their teams to stay on track and maintain a positive attitude, even in the most difficult times (Van Epps, 2023).

Jerol: "So, I'm not showing my constituents, the residents of our barangay, that I'm affected, but instead, I'm showing that I'm okay, like I'm doing my best to serve them while juggling my academics. Like I'm showing that they won't say, 'Oh, he's not doing his duties as an SK chairman because he prioritizes his schooling in the city.' So, I don't want to hear those stories, which is why I'm doing my best to conduct activities even though I'm still studying as a college student."

- **Establishing Personal Expectations**

    The position of a student leader requires both resilience and compassion, especially during challenging situations. It is essential for leaders to rise to the occasion and offer assistance, guiding their peers towards unity (Ziv, 2024).

Ela: "While the idea of giving up one of these roles has crossed my mind during moments of overwhelm, I am committed to finding a balance and persevering through challenges. I believe that with determination, support from my SK kagawads and family, and effective time management strategies, I can successfully navigate both academic and leadership responsibilities."

Exposing Oneself to External Negativity

Constructive criticisms, false information, and negative gossip are the most common forms of negativity that a person can encounter externally (Ballano, 2023). As a young leader, it is inevitable to hear negative opinions against your leadership, mostly from the elderly. Negativity affecting us does not only come from within but also from the people around us. This sub-theme is categorized into three (3) namely: (1) Receiving high expectations from others, (2) Receiving gossip from other people, and (3) Getting side comments about their duties.

- **Receiving High Expectations from Others**

    Prosocial people, specifically leaders, tend to fulfill others' expectations because they do not just care about their personal payoffs but also the benefits of others (Heintz, 2015). Fulfilling the high expectations of others is hard given that excelling in both academia and leadership is expected of you. This is most common among student leaders who have been performing well for a long time.

Jerol: "I have been a student leader ever since, and there are really people who are hard to please even though you are already doing your best."

Ela: "There are moments when I feel overwhelmed by the pressure to perform well academically while also fulfilling my duties as a student leader."

- **Being the Topic of Gossips**

    Gossipers often share information about the target, whether it is true or not; the gossip receiver will believe it to be true (Dores, 2021). Additionally, gossip can either be good or bad (Eckhaus, 2018). As a leader in a community where many people recognize you, gossip is certain to happen, and receiving gossip about you from others is also common.

Myka: "They are making up stories about me doing something which, in fact, I did not even do, and they will tell it to other people without proof. The worst thing is that those who are told might believe it."

Jerol: "They are what we call bashers. They are throwing negativity on your work even though you are not doing anything to them."

- **Getting Side Comments about Their Duties**

    Side comments, mostly from superiors, are also essential for improving your work. However, when these comments are disruptive and discouraging, they can also affect the mindset and momentum of the student leader. It has also been found that discouraging comments to a student might affect their performance in school (Bandiera, 2015).

Jerol: "There are those who are not even helping but have so many side comments and hate towards you and your work."

Discussion

Student leaders are seen by their fellow students as role models, as they mostly exhibit good qualities as students and leaders (Bowers, 2016). Student leaders, being as dedicated as they are to serve, have expressed their wish to engage in local government, which, in the case of the informants, is the Sangguniang Kabataan, or SK. However, student leaders are also encountering various challenges that can hinder their ability to fulfill their duties and responsibilities effectively (Murage, 2019). This study aims to describe the struggles of SK chairpersons while managing their academic and leadership responsibilities when performed concurrently.

Despite the proven effectiveness of time management as a technique to manage workloads and responsibilities, the informants are still experiencing struggles when it comes to their availability for both social roles. When multiple responsibilities clash, struggles with adjusting schedules are inevitable (De-Juanas, 2020). Additionally, choosing what to prioritize first is another struggle to deal with. Being available for both responsibilities is also a common scenario for SK chairpersons, as they have several community, organizational, and political tasks to do that overlap with their class schedules. Having unexpected meetings within the local government that involve SK officials is common. Meetings improve team member engagement and productivity by promoting idea exchange, decision-making, the development of team relationships, and a decrease in workplace isolation (Loes, 2022). While meetings are essential for government organizations like Sangguniang Kabataan, they can also spark a struggle when they are scheduled at the same time as their classes. The informants have shared that they have to be absent from meetings to attend classes. Also, given the fact that most of their barangays are far away from school, it is understandable that they have to prioritize one activity over the other. Having multiple activities scheduled at the same time is tiring, not just physically but also mentally. Effective scheduling can help with time management, get into a daily routine, and solidify a work-life balance (Saxena, 2018). Despite the fact that effective scheduling could help them manage their activities, it is a struggle for them to adjust

their schedules because school and SK are completely different institutions; the latter does not have anything to do with their lapses with the former, and vice versa. Because of these conflicting schedules, absences are unavoidable.

The demand for both responsibilities is pretty high; sometimes, the difficulty of carrying out both responsibilities successfully leads to absences from the SK council or school. Missing class lessons is also one of the challenges faced by the informants. For educational institutions, attendance is an important parameter that affects all levels and is impacted by things like the standard of the classes and the specific needs of each student (Ehrlich, 2018). Leadership roles often require significant time and effort, sometimes conflicting with school schedules, leading to missed lessons and absenteeism due to urgent SK council matters. Due to a hectic schedule of activities and responsibilities, these student leaders prioritize what is urgent and just set aside those that are less urgent. To manage workloads and distinguish between important and urgent activities, leaders must possess the critical skills of prioritization (Morgeson, 2006). Because they prioritize what is most important, SK chairpersons frequently miss work in their leadership and academic responsibilities. Most of the informants have said that they have absences during barangay sessions because they have to prioritize attending classes. SK chairpersons also have to compromise tasks and activities. Multi-taskers make up student leaders. They have to balance leadership tasks and academic obligations while meeting performance standards in each (Pedroso, 2023). A key component of resolving conflicts is to compromise. It facilitates understanding, defuses uncomfortable situations, and stops things from getting worse. Compromise-minded people provide opportunities for productive cooperation and communication, which produce better results. As a student and a youth leader, compromising is prevalent, especially when academics and leadership responsibilities demand much attention.

Being a student leader is a significant responsibility, requiring effective time management to balance academics and school activities (Moneva, 2019). The quantity of work to be done, however, sometimes surpasses the student leaders' ability to manage their time and responsibilities. For the youth leaders, a time shortage is inevitable. Time management is a challenge for college students who want to pursue careers in politics since they have to balance their studies and volunteer activities simultaneously (Nespor, 2013). Time is a certain factor in getting their work done and executing their activities. However, this can also be a struggle when they experience a scarcity of time. According to Buser's (2012) findings, it has been found that scheduling the task is better as it is a significant determinant of productivity. Because of this time scarcity, these student leaders have to master the art of multitasking. The informants have shared that they cannot give their full effort because their attention is divided. Doing tasks in a short period is usual for these student leaders, and most of them have shared their experiences when cramming their tasks. Although cramming has been found to be helpful (Gilraine, 2021), it can also affect the quality of the product. Most of the informants have mentioned that, because of other responsibilities, they only have minimal time left to review lessons.

When someone is both a leader and a college student, they must complete tasks one day ahead of schedule (Theobald, 2021). Meeting the deadlines for their academic work and community service is one of the challenges faced by a young leader. The informants pointed out that one of the things that can pressure them is deadlines. One of their challenges as an SK Chairperson and a college student is having piled-up work since they have two obligations that must be fulfilled concurrently. It is well known that youth leaders do far more in the community than was previously thought. College students typically have a never-ending list of activities to complete. It might be difficult for young leaders to balance their leadership responsibilities and academic obligations at the same time. For young leaders, juggling the demands of two responsibilities becomes much more difficult when their academic obligations are nonstop. One of the informants mentioned that it is common for them to have heavy to moderate academic workloads. As their dedication to community engagement grows, young leaders often encounter challenges (Fusarelli, 2018). They experienced more and more community work. The demands on their time and resources increase as they take on greater duties and involvement in their communities. The informants of the study have shared their sentiments; according to them, they have to juggle academics and community work, and it's a great struggle for them whenever they have big events in their barangay.

According to Maslach's classical theory, burnout is a syndrome of physical, emotional, and mental depletion brought on by persistent physical fatigue, feelings of powerlessness, and negative attitudes about one's career and life (Çam, 2001). Burnout is also common among student leaders, according to Waldburg (2014), as they are expected to lead effectively as well as excel in class. Our study found that experiencing exhaustion is common for SK chairpersons because almost all of them are college students. Fatigue is characterized as a condition of extreme physical or mental depletion brought on by extended periods of activity or insufficient sleep and rest (Lewis-Smith, 2016). The findings of the study illustrated how SK chairpersons experienced exhaustion as a result of a lack of sleep. Their sleep duration was affected by their academic duties as well as their leadership responsibilities. Due to hard work, people frequently struggle with sleep deprivation, especially students in high school and college (Muomah, 2023). Unexpected errands in the barangay are prevalent, which leads to travel exhaustion because of the distance from the barangay to school. Furthermore, the informants stated that they travel for almost an hour or more every day just to attend school and deal with their leadership responsibilities afterward. The informants' statement clearly describes their experiences of acquiring fatigue in their academic and leadership responsibilities. Consequently, another issue that SK chairpersons face is affecting their physical and mental health. Academic and social pressure to do well can be felt by college students, and this can be harmful to their health (Ballesteros, 2022). Thus, long years of leadership can affect physical and mental health. They repeatedly perform leadership duties, resulting in tiredness that affects physical health. Additionally, experiencing high demands on their time and presence contributes to factors that affect their mental well-being. There is no denying that juggling multiple responsibilities at once can be demanding (Lansdown, 2009).

Other than physical effects, this study also highlights the internal and external problems the informants have experienced. When someone has constructive internal traits, psychological well-being, and access to external assistance, managing life's challenges becomes less difficult (Venema, 2023). Maintaining psychological well-being is more difficult, though, particularly when you interact with a variety of people, as you would when serving as an SK Chairperson. Another struggle experienced by SK chairpersons in this study is facing pressure. Leadership and academic pressure are somewhat associated. Academic pressure is the strain that comes from having too much work to do, spending a lot of time studying, and having high standards for

grades (Banks, 2015). Balancing leadership and learning can be challenging. Due to pressure to perform well, students undergo self-pressure to lead effectively while dealing with their academics. We continuously put ourselves in a great deal of imbalance and stress as a result of the immense internal strain or self-expectations we quickly place on ourselves to comply and feel appreciated and accepted by society (Dunning, 2023). On the other hand, exposure to external negativity is another struggle for SK chairpersons. Being a chairperson is a new role for several of the student leaders in our study, so meeting peers' expectations was rather elevated. As a result, gossip is common for them to receive. Furthermore, gossip can have both negative and positive effects. Gossip senders frequently communicate information about the target, whether genuine or not, and the gossip receiver will believe it is true (Dores, 2021). Some of the students in this study received side comments about their duties that affected their performance. It was also discovered that discouraging words to a student could have an impact on their academic achievement.

This research possesses several limitations that should be considered in subsequent investigations. Firstly, the study exclusively involved interviews with SK Chairpersons who are BSEd Social Studies students, making it difficult to generalize the academic and leadership challenges faced by SK officials from other disciplines and colleges. Additionally, the small sample size of eight (8) SK chairpersons may not adequately represent the broader population of SK officials. Secondly, incorporating quantitative research methods could enhance this study by providing statistical insights into the difficulties encountered by these SK chairpersons. Thirdly, the experiences of SK chairpersons may not reflect those of other SK officials. Future research could benefit from examining the experiences of individuals in different SK roles. Lastly, while this study emphasizes the intersection of academic and leadership struggles, future research could explore other aspects that impact the well-being of SK officials. Despite these limitations, the data collected may serve as a foundation for further exploration of this topic.

Conclusion

College students who engage themselves in the field of community leadership are expected to juggle both their responsibilities in academics and leadership. This early engagement in politics and leadership brings numerous conflicts, challenges, and struggles, knowing that they are not just fulfilling their roles as students but also fulfilling their roles as Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) Chairpersons. The Philippines' age requirement and limit for running for SK positions imply that most SK chairpersons are still students. Unsurprisingly, these young community leaders are also pursuing their studies in college or university and face various challenges throughout their journey. The two roles that student leaders possess lead to difficulty in balancing the overlapping academic demands and community responsibilities. They juggle their class schedules, exams, and assignments while addressing community concerns in their respective barangays. Moreover, these struggles involve different aspects of their lives ranging from their time, community engagement, physical health, and mental health. Because of these, their performance in school and community has been affected, resulting in poor academic and leadership delivery. Action and practices within themselves to reduce their struggles while juggling both of their responsibilities must be highlighted and carried out. Furthermore, educational institutions and communities should also have actions and practices, as they are the ones who have a crucial role in empowering student leaders and reducing the burden and conflicts they face.

Through the collaborative forces of the student leaders themselves, the educational institution, and the community, a physical and mental health-supportive environment will be established effectively. This collaboration is not just beneficial to the well-being of the students but also to the productivity of the whole educational institution and community.

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