

Core Competencies of Student Leaders

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Abstract - *This study was conducted to determine how the core competencies of student leaders are developed. Descriptive method of research was used in the study specifically in determining how the core competencies of the student leaders from both public and private secondary schools in Nueva Ecija were affected by their position as student leaders. Survey questionnaires were used in gathering the data from the respondents and other techniques such as informal interviews and observations were also conducted. This method dealt with the relationships between variables and the development of generalization and principles of theories that are valid. The data were consolidated, organized, presented and analysed using statistical treatments. The result showed that the student leaders' core competencies were significantly related to their academic performance. Overall, it was found in the study that there is a significant relationship between and among core competencies, and academic performance of student leaders. Student leader – respondents' have developed their core competencies during their involvement in the school organization.*

Key Words: student organization; core competencies; academic performance; student leaders; Supreme Student Government

I. Introduction

The role of students in the school organization cannot be overemphasized as the school's philosophy and vision recognize them as the center figure of the educational program. They are perceived to share accountabilities in the achievement of its purposes as well as being partners and collaborators in the school's development. The objective of developing the students into a well-rounded and holistic individual is parallel to their joint acceptance of the commitment of sharing and attaining harmonious school climate toward the attainment of the educational objectives.

The Supreme Student Government is the foremost co-curricular student organization authorized to operate and implement pertinent programs, projects and activities in schools nationwide. Pascua (2017) cited in her presentation as Youth Formation adviser, the legal bases of Supreme Student Government (SSG) along with Supreme Pupil Government (SPG) in the elementary schools namely; Department of Education Order No. 47, series 2014 and DepEd Order No. 11, series 2016. According to her, SPG/SSG is founded on the principles of participatory democracy, responsible servant leadership, collaboration, unity, accountability, and efficiency in serving the student body.

II. Review of Related Literature

Impact of Involvement in Student Organizations

Student organizations function as social opportunities for students to network in college campuses and also serve as a significant link for students to colleges or universities experiences (Kuk & Banning, 2010). According to Hall (2012), student organizations offer approaches to stimulate learning experience beyond the classroom curriculum. They create networking opportunities among students with similar personal and professional interests and provide the probability of building networks to bigger communities beyond an organization (Hall, 2012). Through participation in student organizations, students can maintain relationships with other individuals that have the same professional interests; develop stronger mentoring relationships with their teachers; gain ability to think critically, plan appropriately and make decisions (Hall, 2012).

Haber (2011) noted the evolution of the definition of leadership which began with qualities or characteristics of a person or a position. Over the past decades, leadership as a concept evolved to be more relational, process-oriented and systems-focused, emphasizing aspects of team-building and social interaction. Leadership identity development look at processes by which individuals become leaders through peer interactions and ongoing membership in groups. Recognizing the history of leadership definition and measurement, this research included self-reported measures of both individual traits and relational behaviors. A list of traits and behaviors was developed based on the many different types of source materials described earlier. Prive (2012) used the phrase “positive attitude,” rather than using “persistence,” “commitment.” In choosing traits to explore the researcher attempted to identify traits that students would be able to self-assess based on their student organization involvement. Literature on leadership is vast and that some of the existing leadership scales asked for external evaluation of leaders’ abilities before/after evaluations. Age appeared to be an important aspect of leadership behavior, and that traditional students would have had little direct experience in some aspects of leadership (Walter & Scheibe, 2013).

In choosing leadership traits and relational behaviors, numerous sources were studied, choosing characteristics that students could understand and with which they would have had experience in their organizational activity. For example, students may not have had military experiences or understand military-related terms, but the military leadership training materials are generally highly regarded and had many leadership traits that are found useful. Given the supposition that leaders develop and are not necessarily born, student leaders will have fewer experiences and need more development and might not have experiences related to some common traits (Day & Sin, 2009). Others noted that the literature was filled with studies that have “theoretical and applied value” without being integrated with previous studies (Derue, Nahrgnag, et al. 2011).

According to Dominador (2013) of University of the Northern Philippines in his study on Student Leadership and its results, outcomes and highlights, the practitioners’ top three competencies are:

1. Developing and promoting a shared vision that drives unit, divisional, and institutional short- and long-term planning and organizing of work;
2. articulating the vision and mission of the primary work unit, the division and the institution; and

3. leading, motivating, influencing, inspiring, and enabling others to contribute towards the effectiveness and success of the organization.

He found out that the students rated the practitioners' leadership competency level as high. The students' best skills included performing tasks competently and effectively, accepting and utilizing suggestions to improve performance, and demonstrating positive leadership qualities. Regression analysis revealed that certain combinations of the practitioners' competencies are good predictors of overall student leadership quality. Documentary analysis identified the outcomes in terms of the student leaders' accomplishments along the university functions of instruction, research, extension and production. The students cited student governance as among the highlights of the program. The Student Leadership Development Program may be enhanced by retooling the practitioners, conducting regular training-workshops for both the seasoned and emerging student leaders, and expanding students' involvement in various activities inside and outside the university.

Importance of Involving Students in the Leadership Process in Schools

Students' involvement in the leadership process in school serves as their training ground in making decisions. According to Black et al., 2014, "leadership roles in schools have been noted to confer positive effects on those who are involved, including at student level". On this note, Lavery and Hine (2013) asserted that student leaders acquire skills such as time management, organization, interpersonal communication, decision-making, public speaking, and conflict resolution amongst others (p. 41). According to one Chinese study, student leadership improved their test scores, enabled them to take initiatives, improved their popularity in class, and boosted their beliefs about their efforts (Anderson and Lu, 2014, p. 1). Further, Black et al (2014) have stated that apart from reflecting the pre-existing skills in the students, the leadership roles also help the students develop and strengthen their cognitive capability including academic performance (p. 32). In addition, it has been stated that leadership gives the students' opportunities the experience that facilitates their transition into adulthood. This is because the roles give the student a learning chance that facilitates the acquisition of life experience and learning. Leadership has, thus, been considered part of a lifelong learning that enables those involved to not only acquire and advance their skills but also improve their academic excellence.

Impact of Leadership in the Academic Performance

A study about the Impacts of involving students in leadership Positions on their Academic Performance in Ramtha City, Jordan stated that student leadership involves engaging the learners in activities such as student parliament, class representation, and collaborative decision making on the issues that either directly or indirectly affecting the learners. Though not much exploited, the concern about the impacts of involving students in leadership in schools has been a longstanding concern amongst scholars, not only in Ramtha and Jordan but all over the globe (Anderson and Lu, 2016, p. 1). On this note, a report by the Ministry of Education (2014), on The Development of Education: National Report of Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan highlighted the need to activate the role of students and the youth in Jordanian schools to make them more effective, learners. Moreover, the report also recommended that the schools in the region should conduct promising leadership programs for the learners and encourage their participation in the national programs organized by bodies, for example, the Child Saving Institution (Ministry of Education, 2014).

For instance, student leaders are able to identify challenges in the school before they escalate and break down the school's communication system (Abu-Shreah and Al-Sharif, 2017, p. 15; Gates et al, 2014). This enables the student leaders as well as the school management to deliberate on the issues thus improving their academic performance. Based on further results of this study, it was noted that out of an average score of 3.83, principals in Ramtha City secondary schools had an arithmetic average score of 3.62 of implementing the results of the meeting where the student leaders gave their views on the management of schools in Ramtha City (Abu-Shreah and Al-Sharif, 2017, p. 24). This, therefore, showed that student leadership directly contributed to the higher academic performance of the learners in the schools as noted in the study.

The Impact of Extracurricular Activities on Student Development

There is a greater need to truly understand the impact that participation in extracurricular activities has on student achievement. According to Cadwallader, Garza, and Wagner (2012), extracurricular activities are defined as the activities in which the students participate after the regular school day has ended. These activities may include high school athletics, school clubs, marching band, chorus, orchestra, and student leadership organizations. It is important to note the differences between extracurricular activities and co-curricular activities. Co-curricular activities are activities that occur during the normal class time (Frame, 2017). Most students that participate in high school band, chorus, and orchestra spend countless hours outside of the normal class day. For this reason, these activities are classified as extracurricular activities.

According to Reeves (2018), there is a strong association between student involvement in extracurricular activities and improved attendance, behavior, and academic performance. Reeves (2018) explained that all students who participate in some type of extracurricular activity perform better than students who are not involved. This involvement includes participation in sports and other school sponsored activities. Students who are consistently exposed to music perform better than students that are not exposed.

III. Objectives of the study

- To study the profiles of respondents under study
- To study the respondents' academic performance
- To study the respondents' development of core competencies be described in terms of character building & wider interest as a student leader
- To study the relationship between the respondents' profile and their academic performance
- To study the relationship between the respondents' profile and their core competencies
- To study the relationship between the respondents' academic performance and their core competencies

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A sample consisting of 138 officers of both public and private secondary school in Nueva Ecija.

Data collection sources

Primary data

A questionnaire is administered to the 138 respondents and primary data is extracted by this method

Secondary data

Secondary data is collected through articles, websites etc.

Limitations of the study:

- Sample size is limited
- Locale of the study is limited
- Time is a major constraint

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table: 1
Age group of respondents

12	13	14	15	16	17	18
4	9	20	15	38	20	32

From the above table, it is evident that most of the respondents were aged 16 years old (27.54% or 38) followed by aged 18 years old with 32 or 23.19%. Respondents who were 17 and 14 years old recorded the same number of respondents which is 20 or 14.49 % each while respondents who were 15 years old were 15 or 10.87%. The remaining 9 respondents or 6.52% were aged 13 years old and 2.90% or 4 of the respondents were aged 12. It can be gleaned that most of student leaders were age 16. In this age students become active and have higher interest and motivation to involve in different school activities and organizations.

Table: 2
Gender of the respondents

Male	Female
50	88

From the above table, it is found that shows that majority of the respondents were female, 88 or 63.77% and the remaining 50 or 36.23% were male. This figure shows that female student leaders exceed in number compared to their male counterparts. Current leadership trends show an incorporation of more feminine relational qualities, such as transformational leadership and other feminist value leadership styles.

Table: 3
Grade Level of the respondents

Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
14	18	14	27	33	32

From the above table, it is found that the highest percentage of the respondents' grade level is Senior High School (SHS), specifically in Grade 11 represented by the 33 out of 138 respondents or 23.91%. This is followed by 32 or 23.19% who were in Grade 12, then by 27 or 19.57% in Grade 10, 18 or 13.04% from Grade 8 and the remaining 14 or 10.14% each came from Grades 7 and 9. In connection with this result, Walter and Scheibe (2013) in their research found both negative and positive relationships but concluded that the overall picture rather reveals a negative influence of leaders' age on task effectiveness. When it comes to relational

effectiveness, in terms of follower satisfaction older leaders seem to be in general as effective as younger leaders.

Table: 4
Position of the respondents in the student organization

President	Vice President	Secretary	Treasurer	Auditor	Public Relation Officer	Sgt. At Arms	Business Manager	Representative	Muse	Escort
6	9	6	6	10	10	8	6	75	1	1

From the above table, it is evident that the grade level representatives have the greatest number of positions held by the respondents which was 76 or 55.07%. This is based on the Article VIII, Sec. 2 of The Revised Constitution and By-Laws of SSG, “The Year Level Representatives/s shall be elected depending on the number of enrollees in the school pursuant to DECS Order No. 37, s. 2001.

Table: 5
Length of service in the student organization

1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years
120	11	3	1	3

From the above table, it is evident that majority or 120 out of 138 (86.93%) respondents had served for two years in their respected positions, followed by 11 or (87.97%) who had two years of service to the organization. On the other hand, only three respondents each were recorded to have served the student organization for three and five years; and lastly, only one (1) respondent had rendered four years of service to the organization.

Table: 6
General weighted average of the respondents

75-79	80-84	85-89	90-100
0	0	4	134

From the above table, it is shown that the General Weighted Average (GWA) of the respondents. Majority or 134 (97.10%) of the respondents obtained grades of 90 – 100 with a Verbal Description (VD) of “Outstanding” and the remaining 4 or 2.90% of the respondents obtained a grade of 85-89 with a verbal description of “very satisfactory”. Overall respondents obtained an outstanding verbal description in their GWA which is one of the qualifications of being an SSG officer as stated in Article VIII: Composition, Election, Qualifications and Term of Office of the SSG, sec. 7 of The Revised Constitution and By-Laws of SSG, “Candidates for all SSG elective positions shall be a good academic standing with general average of 85 and above without any failing grade during the 1st and 3rd grading period of the current school year.”

Advancing a similar view, studies by Nannyonjo (2017) and Stave et al (2017) on how to improve the academic performance of students in Jordanian schools concluded that students need to be involved in leadership positions (p.11). The study further highlighted that engaging student in leadership make them more responsible which can ultimately boost their academic achievements (Stave et al, 2017, p.11).

Table: 7

Honors received of the respondents

With High Honors (95 - 97)	With Honors (90 - 94)	Below 90
27	107	4

From the above table, it is evident that the honors/merits received by the respondents. It shows that majority or 107 out of 138 respondents or 77.53% obtained the award “With Honors” (90 - 94) while 27 out of 138 or 19.57% obtained an award of “With High Honors” (95 - 97). The remaining 4 or 2.89% of the respondents achieved below 90 average. The result implies that most of students’ leaders are still able to cope with and manage their time in studying despite their positions in leadership. Honors received as an indicator of students’ academic performance is the best-known variable for explaining critical thinking according to the Journal of Agricultural Education Volume 46 Number 1, 2005.

Table: 8

Awards and recognition received

Leadership Award	Conduct Award	None
6	32	100

From the above table, it is evident that the awards and recognition received by the respondents. It shows that there were 6 student leaders with the position as President who got a leadership award in their respective schools. For conduct awards, 32 out of 138 student leaders got this award. The guidelines in giving these awards is DO 36, s. 2016 – Policy Guidelines on Awards and Recognition for the K to 12 Basic Education Program.

Table: 9

Development of student leaders’ core competencies

Core Competencies	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. I have the ability to approach problems with greater awareness to moral and ethical consequences.	3.37	Strongly Agree
2. I learn to cultivate a sense of responsibility for one’s own behaviour as I become a leader.	3.42	Strongly Agree
3. I can identify my own strengths and weaknesses because other students are cautious of my acts.	3.14	Agree
4. I am open to new ideas, new horizons in life as a student leader.	3.43	Strongly Agree
5. I would love to share my personal interest to others.	3.23	Agree

6. I develop self-confidence and self-worth during my performance as a student leader.	3.70	Strongly Agree
7. I cultivate my personal and psychological health during my term as a leader.	3.31	Strongly Agree
8. I believe my development of more hobbies will enhance my quality of life.	3.55	Strongly Agree
9. I gain wider spectrum of personal and life skills as I serve in school organization.	3.18	Agree
10. I also gain understanding of others right as I become a leader.	3.62	Strongly Agree
Average weighted mean	3.40	Strongly Agree

The table shows that the overall weighted mean is 3.40 with the verbal description “strongly agree”, which implies that the student leaders strongly agree to the thought/idea of every statement. The highest weighted mean of 3.70 was obtained in statement number 6 “I develop self-confidence and self-worth during my performance as student leader”, verbally described as strongly agree, while statement number 3 “I can identify my own strengths and weaknesses because other students are cautious of my acts” obtained the lowest weighted mean of 3.14 with verbal description “agree”.

Table: 10
Relationship between profile of student leaders and their academic performance

Profile		GWA	Honors and awards
Age	Correlation Coefficient	.074	-.095
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.390	.270
	N	138	138
Gender	Correlation Coefficient	.061	-.077
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.475	.368
	N	138	138
Grade level	Correlation Coefficient	.093	-.123
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.278	.150
	N	138	138
Position in the school organization	Correlation Coefficient	-.242**	.062
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.472
	N	138	138
Years serving as a student leader	Correlation Coefficient	.108	-.012
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.206	.889
	N	138	138

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The data revealed the result of correlation analysis made between student leaders’ profile and their school’s performance. It can be seen that in all the profiles of the respondents, only the “position in the student organization” has a significant relationship with their Academic Performance specifically in their General Weighted Average (GWA) with a corresponding significance or p-value of .004 and r of -.242. It means that those student leaders in the lower positions which is the grade/year level representative were able to have an outstanding academic performance than those student leaders who were in the higher positions like president, vice president, etc. One main reason of this result is because of the corresponding duties and functions of the officers which is stated in the Article IX – Duties and Functions of the SSG Officers of The Revised Constitution and By-Laws of SSG. They are accountable for many duties and responsibilities, which may have a striking effect on their performance in class.

Table: 11

Relationship between and among Profile of student leaders and core competencies

Profile		Core competencies
Age	Correlation Coefficient	-.038
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.659
	N	138
Gender	Correlation Coefficient	-.015
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.860
	N	138
Grade level	Correlation Coefficient	-.039
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.651
	N	138
Position in the school organization	Correlation Coefficient	.094
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.274
	N	138
Years serving as a student leader	Correlation Coefficient	.169*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.048
	N	138

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The result of correlation analysis made between student leaders’ profile and core competencies shows that from all the profile of the respondents only the “years serving as student leader” has a significant relationship with the development of the core competencies of the student leaders with a corresponding significance p-value of .048 and r of .169. It means that the longer years of serving as student leader, the higher the level of core competencies developed among the respondents.

The involvement of students in an organization give students a chance to exercise their skills in positions of responsibility (Hay and Dempster, 2004, p. 411). In view of this, leadership roles in schools have been noted to confer positive effects on those who are involved, including at student level (Black et al, 2014, p. 32). On this note, Lavery and Hine (2013) have asserted that student leaders acquire skills such as time management, organization, interpersonal communication, decision-making, public speaking, and conflict resolution amongst others (p. 41). According to one Chinese study, student leadership improved their test scores, enable them to take initiatives, improves their popularity in class, and boost their beliefs about their efforts (Anderson and Lu, 2014, p. 1).

Table: 12

Relationship between core competencies and academic performance of student leaders

Core competencies	Academic Performance	
	GWA	Honors and awards
Correlation Coefficient	.195*	-.198*
Sig. (2-tailed)	.022	.020

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The table shows the relationship between core competencies and academic performance of student leaders. The table shows the result of correlation analysis made between respondents’ development of core competencies and with the respondents GWA, honors and awards received or students’ academic performance.

It can be seen that in the respondents’ development of core competencies has both significant relationship with the respondents’ GWA with a corresponding significance or p-value of .022 and r of .195. It denotes that those students’ leaders with high level of development of core competencies also obtained outstanding GWA.

Lastly, it can be seen that the respondents’ development of core competencies has a significant relationship with the honors and awards received by the respondents with a corresponding significance or p-value of .020 or r -.198. It means that those student leaders who have low level of development of core

competencies are those who got honors and awards however, those who have higher competencies are those who had no award.

VI. Conclusion

The above study revealed that majority of the student leader-respondents were 16 years old, enrolled in Grades 11 or 12, and most are females. They also usually served for a year, probably one school year. They assumed different positions in the student organization and many were grade level representatives which means this position becomes the student leader's stepping stone in holding higher positions in their journey as an officer in the Supreme Student Government.

Result indicates that student leaders have to be outstanding in class which is as one also of the qualifications of being an officer in an organization. They were mostly achievers, being student leaders who were awarded with "honors/merits" and also winners/participants of different competitions in school-Journalism, Sports, Scouting and even Mathematics.

It indicates that student leaders that are in lower position are more capable to excel or obtain an outstanding performance in class unlike to those student leaders who are holding higher which have bigger responsibility, their academic performance is affected. The longer of years of serving as student leader, the higher core competencies were developed.

In terms of the student leaders' level of core competencies, student leaders who have low communication skills were able to develop a higher-level core competencies. Lastly, results indicates that those students' leaders with high level of development of core competencies are also those student leaders who obtained outstanding General Weighted Average (GWA).

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