

Determinants of Students' Participation in Campus Organizations and School Management Functions in Selected Higher Educational Institutions

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Abstract - Student organizations afford rich learning experiences outside the classroom. Furthermore, they perform indispensable functions in fulfilling the school's philosophy, mission, and vision. This study looked into the factors that determined students' participation in campus organizations and involvement in school management functions. The respondents were 312 student leaders in 14 tertiary schools in Regions X, XI and ARMM. The data were gathered through researcher-made questionnaires, then analyzed using Chi-square, Pearson r, T-test and F-test. The key findings were: among the motivations for students' participation in organizations, learning/experience and authority/recognition appeared highly important. The school administrators' dealing styles supportive/responsive and consultative/participative had higher mean scores. Significant correlations between the administrators' dealing styles and the student leaders' participation in campus organizations

and involvement in school management functions were confirmed.

Keywords - student involvement, management functions, student organizations

INTRODUCTION

Student organizations provide complementary and supplementary learnings to classroom lessons. Out of initiative and creativity, student groups engage in programs that cater to students' multi-interests and nurture a holistic development. These campus groups have long been recognized by educators to be of great value not only for their integral role in the education of the learners (Delworth, Hanson & Associates, 1989, Kuh & Lund, 1994), but even in the attainment of the school's vision and mission (www.TheStudentLeadershipGuide.com).

Moreover, student organizations are legally provided and protected. A noted legalist and educator considered student associations as an expression and enlargement of human liberty. Like all citizens, students have a constitutional freedom of association (Dizon, 1992). In the Philippines, even during the Martial Law years, such right was mandated by then Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports, stating that "the establishment and operation of student organizations in schools be allowed as a medium to afford students a forum for enriching student life as well as provide a vehicle for more productive endeavors towards the attainment of the goals of the school and that of society (Sec. 2, Department Order No. 63 s., 1976). Such provision is enlarged in the Education Act of the Philippines, Section 9, (cited in Nolloedo, 1995) declaring that students and pupils in all schools shall have the "right to form, establish, join and participate in organizations and societies recognized by the school to foster their intellectual, cultural, spiritual and physical growth and development; or to form, establish, join and maintain organizations and societies for purposes not contrary to law."

So in any educational institution it is common to see student groups that organize programs and activities for the studentry (Barr, Desler & Associates, 2000). However, while some of these are valued for their

contributions to school development, it is sad to note that others are found or perceived to be inimical to school welfare. Sometimes or often times, suspicion and power struggle exist openly or silently between student organizations and school administrations. Such conflict would result to demoralization or rebellion on the part of student leaders, and discomfort and prejudice on the part of school administrators.

Such warring attitudes must not prevail in the educational community. For student leaders and their organizations, if rightly guided and properly motivated, perform indispensable roles in the school's endeavors towards achieving its goals. In specific ways, they can be idealistic disseminators of the school's philosophy and policies (Asinas cited in Biscocho, 1990), dependable facilitators in the implementation of school programs (Stoops, Rafferty & Johnson, 1975), persuasive agents in the school's marketing efforts (Baldwin, 2001), and free contributors of ideas for organizational well-being (Delworth, Hanson & Associates, 1989). Indeed, campus organizations are dynamic partners in the academic institution's march to progress.

This study is premised in the hope that there could be better yet unexplored ways to deal with student organizations, to nurture their potentials, to elicit their cooperation, and to maximize their contributions to the entire school system. Ultimately, this research explores how the roles of student organizations can be enhanced in their contributions to school administrative efforts so that they can be committed partners in a school's endeavor to uphold its institutional philosophy and fulfill its corporate mission and vision.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In most cases, students' services for the school are within the context of extracurricular activities. Thus, this research looked into the student leaders' motivations and personal profile, the school characteristics and the administrators' dealing styles— whether and how they equate with students' participation in campus organizations and with their involvement in school management functions.

To deal with the issues in this research and draw pertinent data, this study specifically examined the: (1) profile of student leaders; (2) school characteristics; (3) motivations of student leaders; (4) dealing

styles of school administrators; (5) student leaders' participation in campus organizations; (6) student leaders' involvement in school management functions; (7) relationship of motivations with personal profile, school characteristics, and administrators' dealing styles; (8) relationship of motivations with student leaders' participation in campus organizations and involvement in school management functions; (9) relationship of administrators' dealing styles with student leaders' participation in campus organizations and involvement in school management functions; (10) differences in the student leaders' level of participation and extent of involvement considering their personal profile and the school characteristics; and, (11) intervention programs that can be proposed based on the results of the study.

METHODOLOGY

The participants of this study were three hundred and twelve (312) student leaders (167 males and 145 females) who were studying in fourteen (14) colleges and universities in the cities of Regions X, XI and in the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). The schools were selected based on their ownership and management, i.e., whether state, catholic or protestant; and in terms of their locations, i.e., in a town proper, along the highway, or in a secluded area.

The data were collected through a series of questionnaires devised by the researcher based on personal experiences and observations. The instruments viewed the student leaders' personal profile, their motivations for joining campus organizations and school management functions, and the characteristics of their schools. The same instruments evaluated the school administrators' dealing styles, the student leaders' level of participation in campus organizations and their extent of involvement in school management functions. The questionnaires also provided spaces wherein the respondents could suggest ways on how student organizations may help the school administration. The instruments were validated by a panel of experts who were administrators, professors and former student leaders, and pre-tested among incumbent student leaders to establish item-reliability.

The data-gathering was done with the assistance of the Student Affairs Deans, Central Student Government Advisers, and the student

leaders of the schools visited. The data were then processed through the computer software SPSS (Version 10), using the Chi-square, Pearson r coefficient of correlation, T-test and the F-test (ANOVA).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following were the salient results of this research:

Among the motivations affecting the student leaders' participation in campus organizations, learning/experience and authority/recognition appeared to be highly important. The other motivations were rated as moderately important.

When the student leaders evaluated their school administrators' dealing styles, it was revealed that the administrators were moderate in their working relationship with student leaders and organizations as indicated by the rating "sometimes" in almost all of the individual and overall dealing styles. However, the dealing styles supportive/responsive and consultative/participative had higher mean scores.

Taking into account the intervening factors related to the student leaders' motivations, it appeared that of the personal factors, motivations had a positive correlation with the student leaders' secondary school ($r=12.798$ at .05 level). Among the school factors, motivations had positive correlations with facilities/equipment ($r=19.538$ at .05 level) and with rules on student behavior ($r=31.214$ at .01 level). Considering the administrators' dealing styles, motivations had positive correlations with supportive/responsive ($r=0.274$ at .01 level) and with consultative/participative ($r=0.228$ at .01); but had negative correlations with permissive/neglectful ($r=-0.301$ at .01), with manipulative/inconsistent ($r=-0.157$ at .01) and with dictatorial/controlling ($r=-0.132$ at .05).

Looking into the specific motivations related to the student leaders' participation in campus organizations and to their involvement in school management functions, it came out that the motivations authority/recognition ($r=0.253$), learning/experience ($r=0.235$), satisfaction/productivity ($r=0.231$), service/commitment ($r=0.166$), identification/belongingness ($r=0.252$), time-filler ($r=0.300$) and coincidental/providential ($r=0.154$) had significant correlations at the

.01 level; while benefits/privileges ($r=0.124$) and capacity-test ($r=0.120$) had significant correlations at the .05 level. Notably, only the motivation pressure/necessity had no significant correlation with participation in campus organizations. As a whole, a highly significant correlation ($r=0.303$ at .01 level) existed between motivations and participation in campus organizations. On the other hand, the only motivation that had significant relationship with the student leaders' involvement in school management functions was service/commitment ($r=0.121$) at the .05 level.

Considering the relationship of the administrators' dealing styles with the student leaders' participation in campus organizations and with their involvement in school management functions, it appeared that the dealing style dictatorial/controlling had a negative correlation ($r=-0.112$ at .05 significance level) with participation in campus organizations. Unexpectedly, the dealing styles that might be negatively viewed such as manipulative/inconsistent ($r=.126$) and dictatorial/controlling ($r=.129$) had positive correlations with involvement in school management functions at the .05 significance level.

Looking into the differences in the student leaders' participation in campus organizations and involvement in school management functions when their personal profile and the school characteristics were taken into account, the T-test and F-test results showed that:

Gender and religious background made differences in participation in campus organizations. In particular, males had more participations than females; and the Seventh-day Adventist student leaders had more participations than their other religious group counterparts.

School location made a difference in students' participation in campus organizations, especially the schools that were located in secluded areas.

Ethnicity, religious background, academic load, father's education, and mother's occupation made significant differences in the students' involvement in school management functions. Specifically, students belonging to the combined tribal groups other than Cebuano, were Roman Catholics, who were carrying only 1-9 units academic load, with fathers who had post-graduate degrees (e.g. Master's, Doctorate, Law, Medicine), and mothers who were plain housewives or ordinary employees were more involved in management functions.

A school's location and facilities/equipment made significant differences in the students' involvement. Particularly, students who were studying in schools that were located along the highway outside a town proper and with excellent educational facilities were more involved in school management functions.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this research lead to the following inferences and implications:

Motivations that are grounded on yearning for authority and recognition, desire for learning, maximizing one's potentials, rendering service, identification with a group, wise use of time, and on coincidental factors determine students' participation in campus organizations. While the only motivation that determines students' involvement in school administrative efforts is the desire to serve.

School administrators who deal with students in a dictatorial and controlling manner deter the latter's participation in campus organizations. Yet, dealing with student leaders in intrusive, manipulative and inconsistent ways determine students' cooperation in school management functions.

Students who have more participations in campus organizations are studying in schools that are located in secluded areas. On the other hand, students who are more involved in school management functions have light academic load, and are studying in schools that are located along the high way outside a town proper, with more than adequate educational facilities.

Thus, in drawing a profile of student leaders in higher educational institution, it appears that students who are likely to be active in campus organizations and cooperative in school management efforts are highly motivated and had graduated from secondary schools that provide a variety of extracurricular activities. They are studying in colleges/universities that have superb educational facilities and with rules on student conduct that are reasonable, and with school administrators who support and consult the student leaders.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the results of this study, the following recommendations are relevant:

1. Student leaders must understand the goals and roles of their organizations in the school system, and work towards maximizing their potential contributions to institutional welfare. It is well for student leaders to maintain their leadership performance at a high level to gain the respect and enjoy the support of the administration and faculty.

2. As educational leaders, they need to realize the indispensable roles of student organizations in the school system, and seek to enhance students' participation in the governance process by giving them more service opportunities for institutional development. School administrators should be more involved in the programs of student organizations, not in an intrusive manner, but by being supportive to their activities and sensitive to their ideals and issues. The school administration would conduct periodic leadership formation institutes to train student leaders on leadership trends, and to mold them towards cooperation in sincere administrative efforts. Likewise, the administration would organize symposia and retreats for administrators and advisers/moderators of student groups to deal with the issues on understanding the dynamics and functions of student organizations, and maximizing their potential contributions to institutional welfare.

3. A similar study be done, using regression analysis, that will look into the direct effects of motivations as well as the personal factors, school characteristics, and administrators' dealing styles on the student leaders' participation in campus organizations and involvement in school management functions to identify certain predictor variables. An instrument be devised that would assess the administrators' dealing styles based on their own responses. The results would then be compared with the data taken through the instrument that assessed the same variable based on the student leaders' own perceptions— to see if there is congruence between the administrators' and students' assessments. In addition, the instruments used in this research would be standardized for stability and general applicability.

4. Taking the same variables of this research, and using the same instruments, a comparative study be conducted that would look into the possible differences in the results if the respondents as well as the school administrators were grouped by schools and school types.

5. A longitudinal study is done on student leaders from their first year up to their senior year to see possible similarities or differences in their motivations, assessment of administrators' dealing styles, participation in campus organizations and involvement in school management functions over time.

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