

Effects of Organizational Activities to the Academic and Social Functioning of Student Nurses

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Abstract This study examined the effects or organizational activities to the academics and social functioning of students nurses from a phenomenological point of view of four nursing student leaders. Involvement in extra- curricular activities is one of the most important things you can do while studying. Being a member of a registered student organization (RSO), or fraternity or sorority is one way in involvement. In-depth interview and answered essay were the main methods of data gathering. Employment of Colaizzi's strategy in descriptive phenomenology established the data analysis. In all participants, there were events in which involving theirselves in organizational activities would lead them to experience stress and harsh moments. On the other hand, it could also help them in their academic performance such as activities conducted serve as an avenue for them to enhance their nursing skills, leadership skills, relationship skills, technical kills, language and communication skills and prioritization and management skills. Involvement in organizational activities opened doors for opportunities and chances to engage in medical missions, meeting new friends and bonding with alumni, clinical instructors and to community people that lead to sense of fulfillment. It revealed that involvement in organizational activities is fulfilling. It could bring stress and exhaustion to students but more importantly, it gives students an opportunity to practice and polish their skills that were taught to them. In addition, it creates an avenue in which it gives experiences and learning to students that they could use in the future.

Keywords College, Experiences, Negative, Nursing skills, Positive, Qualitative

1. Introduction

College days signifies a precarious development period for both late adolescents and young adults. It is very stressful, although, it is one of the most exhilarating experience in one's life [1]. Involvement in extra- curricular activities is one of the most important things you can do while studying. As defined by the English Webster Dictionary, involvement is any activity outside the classroom that could enhance and contribute to student learning [2]. Being a member of a registered student organization (RSO), or fraternity or sorority is one way in involvement. According to the article written by Joy Burgess [3] in 2009, parents who let their children joining in extracurricular activities at school is a clever choice. It is one of the very important way in assisting children to develop many working and people skills such as building a solid-relationship skills, time management and prioritization and others [4]. A research that was conducted by Morrissey [5] in 2005 found out that there is an established link between adolescent's extracurricular and educational

attainment as adults in their occupational choice and income. Also, he noted that because of extracurricular activities in schools had help in reducing the number of student who participates their selves in some risky behaviours. These factors are one of the reasons why students should know how to balance their time in their academic responsibility and extra-curricular activities because in participating to these well-versed activities it could bring an impact to their success in the future [6].

Researchers states that with good education and proper guidance a leaders arises [7] and that educational attainment and background reflects leader's ability [8]. Being active in a registered student organization can bring student's life both positive and negative effect [9].

Another research conducted by Kerssen-Griep, et. Al [10] in the year 2003 on learning motivation and interactions in school shows that student perception of instructional behavior sustains their involvement in classroom. Jackson, Weiss, Lundquist and Hooper [11] examine the degree to which cognitive motivation predicts academic performance. They had stated that school activities can give students a motivation. According to Paul and White (1990) academic performance is highly correlated with extracurricular activities. It supported the hypothesis stated by Mynell in the year 2004, "the more involvement in school activities means a better grade point average" [13].

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Fredericks and Eccles in 2006 [7] found out that participation in organizational activities can be connected to positive academic outcomes, including improved grades, test scores and increased educational aspirations. While on the other hand, Eccles and Barber (1999) [14] have found out that there are negative effects in engaging in organizational activities. The more time the students involve their selves with the organizational activities the lesser time they will be involved in some tricky behaviors (Mahoney & Stattin 2000) [15].

Given that there are many interested students joining in organizational activities, it is important to know the positive and the negative effects brought about by student organizational activities to the academic and social functioning of student nurses.

The study is significant to the following fields. For the Student Body Organizations the results of the study may help in addressing the negative effects and it can help in improving the positive effects of student activities. For the students it will give them motivation to join in student activities and thoughts on how they will solve the negative effects of activities in their academic performance and social functioning. Lastly, for the community specifically for the parents, it will give them a sense of fulfillment in the performance of their children.

I am a student leader since I was in high school up to the present. I am currently the Vice –President of Finance of the Nursing Association of Responsible Students of Benguet State University- College of Nursing. Being a leader, it gave me unexpected things. I have seen many leaders who most of the time cry because of unaccomplished task as a result of pressure, difficulty and number of upcoming activities. Also, I have seen leaders who sacrifice their social life just to finish a certain task assigned to them. On the other hand, there are these leaders who are satisfied and contented because of new friends found.

2. Methods

The study used the descriptive qualitative method in conducting the research. A comprehensive sampling was utilized to determine who will be the participants. In choosing participants, inclusion of the following criteria were observed; a level 4 student nurse of Benguet State University-College of Nursing, officer of an organization and lastly, he/she should have an active social life.

In-depth interview was used to gather the data from the chosen participants. Before the interview was conducted, I took the most convenient time and place of the participants for the interview. In the early stage, I established good rapport, gained trust, and also developed good relationship with the participants.

Results of the interview were subjected to Colaizzi's phenomenological method of data analysis. It offers personal insights into how to present an auditable decision trail in a

phenomenological research study and explores issues of rigor and trustworthiness. It provides practical examples on how to illustrate the processes that can be employed to interpret and analyse of the research study when writing a thesis or research report.

The following methods were used by the researcher to know the effects of student organizational activities reported by the respondents: reading and rereading descriptions, extracting significant statements, formulating meanings and categorizing into clusters of themes and validating to identify the effects common to all respondents with original text. In terms of validation, methodological triangulation was used to validate the gathered data.

3. Results and Discussions

The themes that emerged from the data are presented in the conceptual map below. The conceptual map shows three broad domains namely: Deleterious Moments, Remunerations and Chances and the subdomain of each.



3.1. Deleterious Moments

This domain includes the negative effects that the participants experienced being a student leader in their academic performance and their social functioning. These were the harsh experiences and feelings of the participants.

3.1.1. Pressure is High

Some of the participants stated that most of the people (adviser, clinical instructors and schoolmates) around them are expecting them to be a role model. *"Being a leader, people see you as a role model, if you had committed one mistake, people will ignore the good things that you've done and that mistake will never be forgotten"*, stated by B. Being

a student leader means something. Other students look up to you as something perfect. A leader is someone who abides by the law, a genius, have a good performance and person who is expected not to have rooms for mistakes. According to an article written by Sharlyn Lauby [16] last February 2013, there are six qualities that a leader must possess to empower others namely awareness, commitment, empathy, foresight, listening and persuasion. C related that *"When I was not yet an officer I was not thinking what my instructors are expecting of me. I don't care and even if I will commit a mistake, I feel that nobody cares at all. Today is different. I am always thinking that I should do better. I need to be prim and proper. Also I need not to commit mistakes/ errors because for sure I can be the subject of some gossips"*. C further stated that *"Actually, there are no direct expectations that are obliged of us to meet. It's our own perception and maybe we are just paranoid because the time, effort and dedication are just too much to handle"*. According to Maria Pascucci [17], president of Campus Calm website, women leaders tend to feel an internal and external pressure to do things perfectly. The pressure that they had placed in themselves leads them to suffer the ill effects of anxiety, depression, insomnia, overwhelmed, poor self-esteem and chronic stress.

3.1.2. Time Where Art Thou

There will always be more things to do than time to do them. Example as A stated *"Our activities is stealing our time. Instead of resting, we are working"*. B also stated that *"Due to things that are needed to be accomplished, I have lesser time to review. I believe that if I had given more time I think I can get a higher score"*. C claimed, *"I feel sorry for I have a lesser time to spend with my boyfriend and my guilt heightens when he verbalizes his understanding on my situation"*. And lastly, D shared that *"I always feel that my time is not enough especially on times that our activities are conducted simultaneous with our requirement. I don't know what to finish first"*.

We all have many things to do, but don't have enough time and energy to do them all. We don't have enough resources to do it perfectly. Many things will be left undone no matter how hard we try [18]. Sometimes we must forgo something we would like to do in favor of something that has to be done to accomplish our objectives [19].

3.1.3. I Feel I'm Stranger

There are moments that need to be sacrifice being a student leader as stated by A, *"There are times when my friends are upset because I'm not with them when they hang out. Sometimes they are ignore me and there are times that I feel that I don't belong to the group. When I meet them I'm late and sometimes, I think that I'm a total stranger to them"*. Time management to students is very difficult to apply, it is a challenge for them to balance their time with friends and with school works. This things could lead to a significant stress [18].

3.1.4. Forgotten Responsibility

Taking on new responsibilities is an important part of growing up, but it can also be a difficult one. Children nowadays, are being resistant to do some new chores but they are willingly accept new privileges [4]. But due to some circumstances, there are responsibilities, small responsibilities that are neglected. B said that *"There are times that I miss Sunday masses due to activities and making of proposals"*. In addition, C shared that *"There are times when I am not able to do my responsibilities as a daughter like washing the dishes, cooking and washing clothes. It's shameful but it's true"*. In every aspects of our lives, there are moments that we are too focused on something that we tend to forget some little things. The important thing is we are aware of it so that we can try to solve it. It's impossible to be aware of all of our mistakes. We would probably deny it to ourselves. But it is possible and desirable to accept, to be aware and gladly face the consequences of our behavior and mistake especially to things that would help us to learn [14]. As Tavis and Aronson [20] say *"Learn to see mistakes not as terrible personal failings to be denied or justified but as inevitable aspects of life that help us grow and grow up"*.

3.1.5. Undesirable Drive

Most of the students experience significant amount of stress due to activities and responsibilities that had bung up their schedules. Sometimes students can't find time to try new strategies to relieve their stress (Scott, Elizabeth 2014) [21]. Sometimes if our stress at school is not relieved then probably we can bring our stress home. For example, B said that *"I tend to transfer my anger, stress and frustrations to my siblings. I lose my cool and yell at them"*.

3.1.6. Out of Focused

There are things in our lives that cause us to worry and make us preoccupied. A shared that *"There are times that I am not able to listen to discussion because I'm thinking of the things that I am obliged to do in the organization"*. In addition, C claimed that *"Sometimes, I can't focused in clinical duties and classes"*.

3.1.7. Rest

Everybody needs rest. There are times that all you want to do is rest especially when you are too stressed and exhausted. Sometimes, we think that we are a superhuman who doesn't need rest. For example C stated that, *"There are times when all I wanted was rest. I isolate myself and do not involve myself with other people. I really want to mingle with my family and friends but I'm really so exhausted and stress that all I want to do is rest"*.

3.2. Remunerations

These are the viewed benefits/ consolations that the participants had experienced. These are the things that had helped the participant to keep going for what they have

started.

3.2.1. Study Time

Being a student leader, one task you need to accomplish is being an organizer and as part of the team, you need to know what would be included in the activity. In every activity conducted there is knowledge. Participant A stated that *"it serves as a review"*. In addition, D added that *"I gain knowledge with spontaneous peer reviews"*. In every organization, there are moments in which you share ideas and at the same time, you will learn from the ideas shared [22].

3.2.2. Enhancement

Students has the greater opportunity to grow and learn things about the world. The student organizations is one such opportunity given to students to learn and enhance skills [23]. For example, all of the participants shared that they have these skills that had been enhanced through the organization. As what A stated *"The organization is helping me in enhancing nursing skills that I have learned before"*. Furthermore, B wrote that *"I have various responsibilities and adding one more give me an opportunity to develop my prioritization and management skills,"* C wrote that *"I have developed a little bit of time management"*. Today, time management is an important skill to master most especially to students because it can help them manage various responsibilities in life such as academic and social engagement [24]. As we all know, many students feel like they do not have enough time to get everything done. Family, school, friends and other obligations and responsibilities are constantly competing with each other for the student's valuable time. If time management and prioritization are correctly learned and applied, it can actually save more time for the students. D stated that *"considering my position, I was able to improve my technical computer skills, language and communication skills and others"*. Involving yourself as one of the student leaders or members in an organization will let you learn some skills of interactive and effective communication [25]. In addition, it will help you to become a good listeners. You will learn to be flexible to adapt to changes that would help you perform your optimum capacity that could offer you an important learning and practical experience that you could use in the near future.

3.3. Chances

These are the opportunities that were opened to the participant. Opportunities that are important parts of growing up.

3.3.1. Where to go

As students, were exposed into community organization and civic roles that they had not encountered before, they can participate in decision making [22]. This collaboration leads to skill enhancement, confidence building and acceptance of responsibilities that prepare them as they navigate toward

adulthood [5]. For example A shared that *"it opened doors to nursing activities especially extension services"*. Due to increasing number of students, not all students have the opportunity to experience going out in school such as joining medical missions.

Engaging yourself with others. In every place we go, we meet other people that would make our lives meaningful. We met people that would change the way we view things, who would give us joy, sadness and others emotions. For example B stated that *"being a student leader also opened an avenue for me to get to know other people and even get to meet new friends and it continually teaching me to love people as they are"*. Furthermore, A added that *"it provides opportunity to bond with other officers, instructors and alumni"*. We know that emotions and social bonding were essential for the individual's growth and development (Parket, J. & Hacket, E., 2013) [11].

3.3.2. Making a Difference

Student leaders has given an opportunity to see and explore the outside world. Hence, they would most likely know that the small things they are doing can make a difference. The things they sees in the outside world inspires them to be more proactive and changes their point of view in life. They feel that they should bring change to the world so they tend to become dedicated and passionate to all the things they are doing. The dedication and determination stays with them until they would meet the changes they want to change (Wilson, N., 2009) [14]. As B stated *"the responsibilities I hold as a student leader challenged me in many ways"*. Furthermore, C added that *"though, becoming an officer, I learned life lessons that cannot be forgotten and being an officer is fulfilling"*. We need to be able to recognize that even when we have wonderful experience and profound connections, the source of our happiness, sense of fulfillment is generated within [20]. Recognizing it, frees us to see people and events as what they are. As what Allan Wallace [5] shared *"Sense of fulfillment is a foundation of healthy self-esteem and respect for others. When there's a state of fulfillment, then a need for validation and approval sought outside is not arising. Opinions of others have very little power or value when encountered with a sense of inner stability freed from external conditions"*.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

My findings revealed that engaging yourself in organizational activities means accepting/adding new responsibility, responsibility that once you've accepted there's no turning back. Such activities can give students harsh/ stressing moments. One is the pressure that comes with it. Another is the limited time for them to do all the responsibility that had been given to them. This could lead to misunderstandings between friends and forgetting other responsibilities such as doing household chores and going to mass. It's not forgetting but students are so overwhelmed to

the added responsibilities that they tend to sacrifice others. Being stressed and exhausted, students just want to rest on free days instead of joining and mingling with family and friends. On the other hand, organizational activities don't only lead to stressful events, but it also helps students in their academic performance in which the activities conducted served as a review from the past lessons they had learned especially nursing skills. It also served as an avenue for them to polish their skills such as leadership skills, relationship skills, language and communication skills, technical skills and more importantly the prioritization and management skills. Also, being involved in such organizational activities opened doors to things that students will not experience such as going to places and joining medical missions or going to communities that would help them realize something that they didn't realize before. Furthermore, it gave an opportunity to broaden the social life of students by meeting new friends, bonding with alumni, clinical instructor and community people. Lastly, it revealed that being a student leader, a sense of fulfillment is achieved.

Based from the findings, I would suggest that students would continue to engage in organizational activities and to practice stress management. To the organization, they should conduct activities or events that could lessen the stress or an event in which students can share their feelings and release their burdens. And lastly, I would recommend a further study that would focus on the effects of organizational activities to the well-being of the students.

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