



# Student Body Organization Practices and The Transformation of Student-Leaders Among Empowered Secondary Schools in The Division of Agusan Del Norte, Northeastern Mindanao, Philippines

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**ABSTRACT.** This study analyzes the relationship between student body organization practices and leadership transformation among 87 student leaders from selected empowered secondary schools in Agusan del Norte, Philippines, using a descriptive research design and total enumeration. Organizational practices: participatory democracy ( $M = 4.32$ ,  $SD = 0.48$ ), servant leadership ( $M = 4.45$ ,  $SD = 0.41$ ), and collaboration ( $M = 4.38$ ,  $SD = 0.44$ ); were rated high. Leadership transformation was also high in the personal ( $M = 4.40$ ,  $SD = 0.43$ ) and interpersonal ( $M = 4.36$ ,  $SD = 0.46$ ) domains, but moderate in the community domain ( $M = 3.62$ ,  $SD = 0.57$ ). Pearson correlation analysis indicated significant positive relationships between organizational practices and leadership transformation ( $r = 0.58$ – $0.71$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). These results indicate generally favorable outcomes but

identify weaker performance in community engagement and inconsistencies in participatory implementation. Targeted leadership interventions are recommended to strengthen authentic student governance and community-oriented leadership development.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The youth of today have substantial information on the upheaval of technology. And the actual utilization of this tool enables them to be aware of what is going on with the environment they are living in. They should use then their awareness in participating with extracurricular involvement to develop potential leaders and serve the populace.

Students are essential stakeholders in school governance (Obiero, 2012). He further added that the students should have a voice in making decisions on the campus since they are the clientele of these decisions.

In the Philippines, training of student-leaders starts in the Basic Education Curriculum. It can trace its beginning when the Department of Education, Culture, and Sports established on January 15, 1998, through DO No. 2 series of 1998 the Center for Students and Co-Curricular affairs with the mandate of focusing on the matters of the youth and students and consolidate its participation in nation-building. Along with the separation of Department of Education, it also issued DepEd Order No. 37 series of 2001 on August 2, 2001, for the synchronized student government elections and it recognized the student government as a vehicle for developing leadership skills among the students. Furthermore, the said DepEd Order aims to sustain student government programs and conduct strategic planning of student activities and leadership training for student officers. Another, DepEd Order No. 43 series of 2005 emerged on July 28, 2005, entitled the Standard Constitution and By-laws of the Supreme Student Governments in Secondary Schools in the recognition of the significant role of the Supreme Student Government (SSG) in the schools. Its main objective is to strengthen the student governments, provide an easy reference in monitoring and evaluating the performance of the student governments.

After three years, the department floated another DepEd Order number 34 series of 2008 that laid down the mandated thrusts, programs and activities of the Supreme Student Government. It aimed to have an avenue for unity and cooperation among students where they can improve their leadership abilities. It also seeks to train students to become better members of society with the ideals and principles of participative democracy.

On July 24, 2009, the Department of Education Revised the Constitution and By-laws of the Supreme Student Government through DepEd Order No. 79

series of 2009. It aims to strengthen the student governments and the students in all secondary schools, to standardize the Supreme Student Government as a significant instrument in school student governance in all secondary schools and provide an easy reference in monitoring and evaluating the performance of student governments.

As the years passed, the department made some adjustments of its thrusts, and the student government was also in parallel with this modification. DepEd Order No. 49 series of 2011 was disseminated with mandated programs, projects, and activities of the Supreme Student Government and indicated in the DepEd order that the department authorizes the Supreme Student Government (SSG) to operate and implement relevant programs, projects and activities in schools nationwide. It acknowledges that SSG is the training ground of student-leaders for good governance, volunteerism, unity, and cooperation. The organization basically trains the students to become better members of society following the ideals and principles of participatory democracy and good citizenship.

Embracing further change, the department once again disseminated another DepEd Order No. 47 on December 1, 2014, that established the present Constitution and By-laws of the Supreme Pupil Government and Supreme Student Government in Elementary and Secondary Schools. As stipulated in DepEd order, schools should have a Coordinating Council of Campus Co-Curricular Organization otherwise known as the President's Circle. This circle serves as a consultative mechanism for the implementation of the various programs and projects of all co-curricular organizations. They also plan programs and activities on the campus. Working with the SSG officers and Co-curricular organization' presidents is the General Assembly that is considered as the source of information and consultation in the decision-making process.

The Department of Education in the Philippines revitalized and inaugurated the Youth Formation Division in the year 2015 for the field to have a clearer picture of what the student body organization is. It emphasized that the Supreme Student Government (SSG) is the highest student body organization based on the principles of student governance. It is committed to putting values, principles, and ideas into action through academic, socio-civic, leadership programs and activities.

In addition, the Youth Formation Division emphasized in its Constitution and By-laws that the following are few of the objectives of the Supreme Student Government such as to represent the students in policy-making body of the school, to empower the students to strive for excellence, and to encourage them to be proactive members of the society.

While the Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines has issued comprehensive policies and frameworks to strengthen student governance, particularly through the Supreme Student Government (SSG), there remains a noticeable gap between policy intent and actual implementation at the school level. Existing literature and institutional mandates emphasize student participation in decision-making and leadership development; however, in practice, student involvement is often limited or merely symbolic.

In the Division of Agusan del Norte, despite initiatives such as the Youth Optimizing Life Opportunities (YOLO) program and established SSG structures, student leaders are not consistently integrated into formal governance processes. Their proposals are frequently subjected to administrative deliberations without their participation, thereby undermining the principles of participatory governance and student representation. This indicates a disconnect between prescribed democratic practices and the realities experienced by student leaders.

Moreover, there is limited empirical evidence examining how these governance practices influence the actual development and transformation of student leaders, particularly in terms of personal growth, social relationships, and community engagement. Existing studies tend to focus on policy frameworks rather than lived experiences and outcomes of student leadership at the grassroots level.

Thus, a significant research gap exists in assessing (1) the extent to which student governance policies are meaningfully implemented in schools, and (2) how these practices contribute to, or hinder, the holistic development of student leaders. Addressing this gap is crucial in identifying areas for improvement and in designing responsive intervention programs that genuinely empower student leaders and promote authentic participatory governance.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This section presents literature and related studies that establish the theoretical and empirical foundations of the present study, particularly focusing on participatory democracy in student governance and leadership transformation among student leaders.

Schools play a crucial role in shaping not only the intellectual but also the psychosocial and leadership capacities of young individuals. As primary institutions of socialization, schools provide structured environments where democratic values and leadership competencies can be cultivated. The recognition of students as active stakeholders in governance is strongly grounded in the rights-based framework of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which emphasizes the learners' right to express their

views and participate in decisions affecting them. This principle directly supports the concept of participatory democracy, where student involvement in governance is not merely symbolic but essential to institutional decision-making (Black et al., 2010).

Participatory democracy in schools is further reinforced by studies highlighting the importance of student inclusion in decision-making processes. Obondo (as cited in Oni & Adetoro, 2015) found that active student participation enhances leadership effectiveness and promotes a sense of ownership and accountability. Similarly, Shatilova (2014) demonstrated that student leadership in democratic school settings is characterized by shared authority, inclusivity, and meaningful engagement in institutional change. These findings suggest that participatory practices are fundamental mechanisms through which leadership skills are developed, linking directly to the transformational outcomes of student leadership.

The concept of leadership transformation is closely associated with experiential learning and leadership practice. The Shared Leadership Approach (Bright et al., as cited in Kelly & Azaola, 2015) posits that students develop leadership competencies through active engagement—planning, decision-making, and reflection. This aligns with Astin’s theory of student involvement, which asserts that higher levels of engagement in leadership activities lead to greater personal and developmental gains (Dela Ahiatrogah & Koomson, 2018). These studies emphasize that leadership transformation occurs across multiple dimensions, including personal growth, interpersonal relationships, and social responsibility.

Moreover, servant leadership, as discussed by Dierendonck (2011), contributes to leadership transformation by fostering empathy, collaboration, and a strong sense of community among student leaders. This leadership style aligns with the study’s variable on responsible servant-leadership and supports the development of people-oriented and community-centered leadership behaviors. In parallel, the Pacific Policy Research Center (2010) identified key 21st-century skills, such as collaboration, communication, and problem-solving, as outcomes of leadership engagement, further reinforcing the transformative impact of student leadership experiences.

Empirical studies also highlight the long-term benefits of leadership engagement. Nelson (2017) noted that students who engage in leadership roles are more likely to develop competencies that translate into future professional leadership. Tucker (2019) further emphasized that student leadership provides a platform for self-expression, goal-setting, and accountability, all of which are indicators of personal transformation. These findings collectively support the argument that leadership experiences in school significantly influence the holistic development of student leaders.

In the Philippine context, the Supreme Student Government (SSG) serves as the primary mechanism for student participation in governance. Studies by Cayabyab and Racho (2015) and Labor (2015) underscore the importance of student councils in promoting leadership development, discipline, and representation. However, while these studies affirm the value of student governance structures, they tend to focus on functional roles rather than examining how specific governance practices; such as participatory decision-making and collaboration; translate into measurable leadership transformation outcomes.

Furthermore, while gender has been explored in leadership studies, findings by Paustian-Underdahl et al. (2014) indicate no significant differences in leadership effectiveness between males and females. This supports the inclusion of sex as a variable in the present study, particularly in examining whether leadership transformation differs across groups within the context of student governance.

Despite the breadth of literature on student leadership and governance, a gap remains in integrating these concepts. Specifically, there is limited research that explicitly examines how participatory democracy practices within student organizations influence the multidimensional transformation of student leaders—particularly in terms of personal, interpersonal, and community development. Most existing studies treat participation and leadership development as separate constructs rather than interrelated processes.

Thus, the present study builds on existing literature by directly linking student governance practices (participatory democracy, servant leadership, and collaboration) with leadership transformation outcomes, providing a more comprehensive understanding of how student leadership is developed within the school context.

## **THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK/PARADIGM OF THE STUDY**

This study was anchored on Alexander W. Astin's Theory of Student Involvement which was initially published in July 1984 at the Graduate School of Education, University of California, Los Angeles. This theory explains how desirable the outcome both for institutions and students are if students are involved in co-curricular activities. In his argument, Astin (1985) had five underlying assumptions about involvement that basically pointed out the effects of co-curricular activities particularly the student governance. The theory claims positive effects on physical and psychosocial effects.

Lebron and Stanley, et. al. (2017) is using Astin's Theory of Student Involvement, as they expounded their study entitled "The Empowering Role

of Profession-based Student Organizations in Developing Student Leadership Capacity.” In their research, they viewed that participation in organizations can develop the skills of leadership, preparedness to the future workplace and have a positive attitude towards work and accepts responsibility independently.

Bruce and Stephens (2017) also supported the Theory of Student Involvement in their study on Bridging Secondary and Postsecondary Leadership Experiences: A Toolkit for Leadership Learning Facilitators. They recommended to the students’ advisers to integrate activities for involvement and leadership development in student organizations from secondary to postsecondary institutions.

Further, in the study conducted by Foreman and Retallick (2013), they found out that students who held a leadership role in a club or organization have a higher consciousness of self. Leaders are then committed and value driven. However, the study found no increased benefit in terms of psychosocial development for students who served as high-ranking officers in extracurricular clubs or organizations over those students who were in the lower rank. The study found out that individual values, consciousness of self, congruence and commitment development have nothing to do with the leveling of the positions in the organization.

Craft (2012) also supported the theory of Astin in his study on The Impact of Extracurricular Activities on Student Achievement at the High School Level explored the relationship between student achievement and participation in extracurricular activities. The study found that students that participate in extracurricular activities have higher grade point averages, higher assessment scores, are unbeaten in their high school graduation writing test and seldom miss days of school.

The input variables of this study were the practices of student body organization concerning participatory democracy, responsible servant-leadership, and collaboration, as well as the transformation of student-leaders as to personal, relations to other people and contribution to the community. The process involved gathering data through survey questionnaires, treatment of the data using mean and t-test, and interpretation of data. The output variable is the intervention program. Figure 1 shows the research flow.

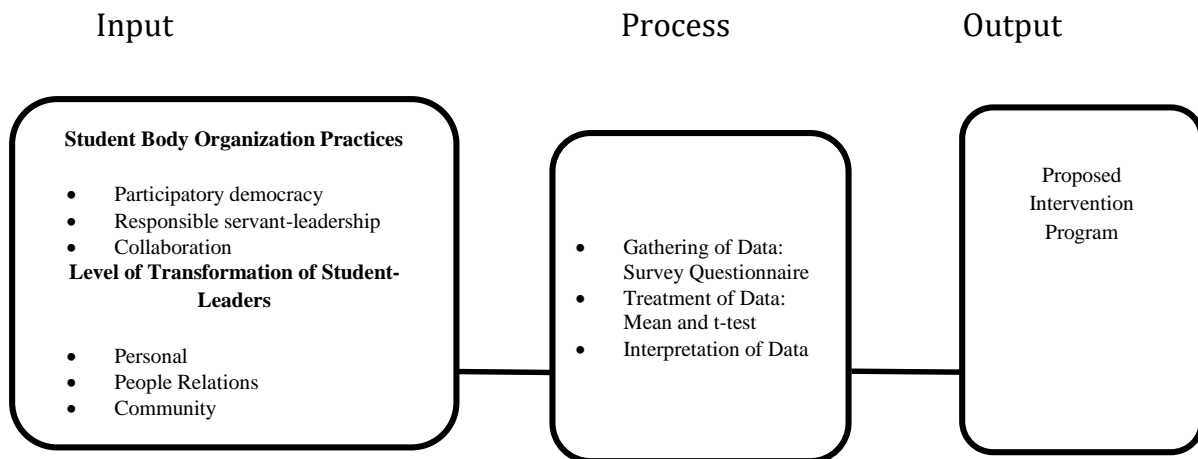


Figure 1. Research flow

## SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The researcher believed that the study is an excellent help to the following:

**School Administrators.** The results of the survey will give them some insights on the consultative way of leadership that is student-centered and anchors on the youth empowerment.

**Teachers.** The outcomes of the study will serve as an eye-opener to the teaching force that planning and implementation of the programs, projects, and activities in the school should not be done solely by the teaching and non-teaching personnel.

**Supreme Student Government Advisers and Club Teacher-Advisers.** The findings of the study will serve as a guide to the teacher-advisers of the highest student body organization to be an advocate of youth empowerment. Teacher-advisers should be a channel, and a mediator between the teaching and non-teaching force and students, that beforehand school programs, projects, and activities should be planned with the student-leaders and decisions should be concluded after a consultative meeting with the students.

**Students.** The findings of the study will also encourage the students to join extracurricular activities to enjoy their learning experiences more beyond the four corners of the classroom since leadership is a skill and if exercised well, it will develop them personally to make a more significant contribution to the community and to the country.

**Student-leaders.** The outcomes of the study will be useful to the student-leaders for them to be encouraged and be sustainable as they serve the student body organization. This will also pave the way for the full implementation of youth empowerment at school.

Future Researchers. The results of this study will encourage researchers to give emphasis to the voice of the students and do further research on how to enhance youth leadership and offer more intervention programs to inspire students to serve.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Despite the existence of established policies and frameworks promoting student governance in Philippine secondary schools, the actual implementation of student body organization practices remains inconsistent, raising concerns about their effectiveness in fostering meaningful leadership development among student leaders. In the Division of Agusan del Norte, the extent to which student governance practices translate into genuine participatory experiences and contribute to the holistic transformation of student leaders remains unclear.

Thus, this study aims to examine the gap between the intended functions of student body organizations and their actual practices, and how this gap influences the transformation of student leaders in selected empowered secondary schools.

Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent are student body organization practices implemented in terms of:
  - 1.1 Participatory democracy;
  - 1.2 Responsible servant-leadership; and
  - 1.3 Collaboration?
2. To what extent do these practices contribute to the transformation of student leaders in terms of:
  - 2.1 Personal development;
  - 2.2 Interpersonal (people) development; and
  - 2.3 Community engagement?
3. Is there a significant difference in the level of student leadership transformation when grouped according to sex?
4. What intervention program can be proposed to address identified gaps in student body organization practices and enhance student leadership outcomes?

## **METHODOLOGY**

This section presents the study design, population, data gathering instruments, procedures, data treatment, and ethical considerations.

### **STUDY DESIGN**

This study employed a descriptive research design to examine student body organization practices and the transformation of student leaders in selected empowered secondary schools in the Division of Agusan del Norte, Philippines. The design was appropriate for systematically describing existing conditions and identifying relationships among variables without manipulation.

### **POPULATION OF THE STUDY**

The participants consisted of 87 student leaders, including 45 Supreme Student Government (SSG) officers and 42 President's Circle officers from selected public secondary schools during School Year 2018–2019.

A total enumeration approach was utilized, wherein all identified members of the target population were included. Prior to enumeration, purposive sampling was applied to define the group of interest; student leaders actively engaged in governance. The inclusion of the entire population minimized sampling bias and enhanced the reliability and representativeness of the findings.

### **DATA GATHERING TOOLS**

Data was collected using an adopted structured questionnaire from the *National Leadership Survey (2015)* of Western Sydney University. The instrument consisted of four parts:

Part I: Respondents' demographic profile

Part II: Leadership position and years of service

Part III: Student body organization practices (participatory democracy, servant leadership, collaboration)

Part IV: Leadership transformation (personal, interpersonal, and community dimensions)

The instrument employed a 5-point Likert scale, with response categories ranging from 1 (Seldom) to 5 (Always). Emoticons were incorporated alongside verbal anchors to improve engagement and response clarity among secondary school participants, without altering the scale's measurement properties.

## **VALIDATION OF THE INSTRUMENT**

Prior to data collection, the questionnaire underwent content validation. The validation process used a quantitative rating scheme based on a 4-point relevance Likert scale (1 = Not Relevant, 2 = Slightly Relevant, 3 = Relevant, 4 = Highly Relevant).

The instrument was evaluated across the following parameters:

- Content relevance (alignment of items with study objectives and constructs).
- Clarity of language (appropriateness for secondary-level comprehension).
- Item representativeness (adequacy of items in capturing each variable domain).
- Construct coverage (extent to which participatory democracy, servant leadership, collaboration, and leadership transformation dimensions were operationalized)
- Cultural appropriateness (contextual suitability for Philippine secondary school settings)

The instrument obtained an overall Content Validity Index (CVI) of 0.89, indicating high content validity. Minor revisions were made based on feedback, including simplification of item wording and refinement of terms for contextual clarity.

## **DATA GATHERING PROCEDURES**

A formal request to conduct the study was submitted to the Schools Division Superintendent. Upon approval, coordination was made with SSG advisers of Agay National High School and Jagupit National High School.

The researcher personally administered the questionnaires. Prior to distribution, respondents were oriented on the purpose of the study and provided instructions. Completed questionnaires were retrieved immediately after administration. Data were then encoded, tallied, and prepared for analysis.

## **TREATMENT OF DATA**

The following statistical tools were employed:

- Mean and Standard Deviation – to determine the level of organizational practices and leadership transformation
- t-test for Independent Samples – to examine significant differences in responses when grouped according to sex

- Pearson Product-Moment Correlation – to determine the relationship between student organization practices and leadership transformation variables

### ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained prior to data collection. Respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Data was used solely for research purposes, and ethical standards in educational research were strictly observed.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part presents the results and discussions of the gathered data, and the subsequent interpretation and analysis of the problems posted in the study.

Statement of the Problem 1. What are the practices of student body organizations in terms of participatory democracy, responsible servant-leadership and collaboration?

Table 1 shows the extent of participatory democracy practices among student body organizations.

Table 1 Extent of Participatory Democracy Practices of Student Body Organizations

Participatory Democracy	Mean	Extent of Practices
Officers are consulted in the decision-making process in the school.	2.61	High
Committee members for the school' programs/projects/activities are composed of student-leaders.	2.59	High
Officers will vote whenever a decision involves choices.	2.67	High
School programs/projects/activities are in accordance with the student-leaders' suggestions.	2.45	High
Meetings are called to plan an activity.	2.84	High
Everybody is informed for updates of the organization through email/memos/text messages.	2.46	High
Planning is made by student-leaders before the start of the school year for officers to take ownership of the school activities.	2.60	High
Needs of students are aired out during meetings.	2.30	Moderate
All officers are allowed to participate in the decision-making process of the organization.	2.66	High
After-event' evaluations are done by student-leaders to have better activities in the future.	2.57	High
Overall Mean	2.57	High

Note: Means falling within the intervals 1.00-1.66: Seldom/Low, 1.67-2.33: Often/Moderate, 2.34-3.00: Always/High

The extent of respondents' participatory democracy practices is in general high as perceived in the overall mean of 2.57. The highest mean of 2.84 exposes that meetings are called for planning the school activities. On the other note, the least mean response of 2.30 unfolds that students' needs are moderately aired during meetings.

The data is quite confusing since it is contrasting from the mere fact that the largest mean implies that meetings are called for planning the activities, yet the students' needs are moderately aired during meetings as revealed by the least mean. As practiced in the school setting, the school administration plans activities together with teachers and staff through a meeting usually presided by the school principal. The only person to represent the student body organization is its organization's adviser in accordance with the Constitution and By-laws of the Supreme Student Government, which outnumbered if voting and deliberation are being raised.

The data on the needs of students are aired during meetings with moderate level contrasts with the study of Shatilova (2014) that emphasized the importance of participatory democracy practices in governance of the school. The said study found out that student-leaders' inclusion in school decisions is a manifestation of democratic characteristics. The implication of the gathered data is that school administrations in the selected empowered schools are somehow authoritative since not all sectors in the school campus are being included in deriving the decision of the activities, including the planning stage, which hinders the student-leaders to bring out the needs of fellow students.

Besides, practicing participatory democracy among young leaders can also be supported by the study of Texas State Safety Center (2018). The center published that by engaging the youth as leaders, essential skills in community service and democratic citizenship are being imparted. This suggests that student governance is one of the ways to teach the young people the principles of democracy, that opinions should be heard. The implication of this is that the selected empowered schools included in this study are not teaching its students the real meaning of democracy.

Moreover, participation and freedom of expression among the student-leaders is explicitly supported by the provisions of the United Nation's National Convention on the Rights of the Child which actively promotes for the right of the child to express its views freely (Black, et al., 2010). This implies that the student-leaders of the chosen empowered schools have limited freedom of expression since the data reveals that the needs of the students are moderately aired during meetings.

Table 2 shows the extent of responsible servant-leadership practices among student body organizations.

Table 2 Extent of Responsible Servant-Leadership Practices of Student Body Organizations

Responsible Servant Leadership	Mean	Extent of Practices
I serve to pay back to the co-students' trust.	2.63	High
Serving the studentry is one of my priorities.	2.64	High
I care for the welfare of my co-students more than myself	2.36	High
I am interested in making sure that the co-students reach their goals.	2.49	High
I take time to talk to my co-students on a personal level.	2.25	Moderate
I am an active leader/member of a committee of the school activities.	2.52	High
I recognize when my co-students are contented without asking them.	2.28	Moderate
I encourage my fellow students to join the organization in serving the student populace.	2.54	High
I ensure that co-students' enjoy their experiences at school.	2.68	High
I sacrifice my own choice over the interests of others.	2.26	Moderate
Overall Mean	2.47	High

Note: Means falling within the intervals 1.00-1.66: Seldom/Low, 1.67-2.33: Often/Moderate, 2.34-3.00: Always/High

Table 2 shows that with an overall mean of 2.47, data shows that there is a high extent of responsible servant-leadership practices of student body organizations. The most substantial mean rating of 2.68 demonstrates that students do always ensure that their colleagues enjoy experiences at school. On the other hand, the item describing the perceived sacrifice of taking time to talk to co-students on a personal level obtained the least mean score of 2.25. As stipulated in the provisions of the Constitution and By-laws of the Supreme Student Government, student-leaders are the representatives of the students and as mediators between the school administration and the students. It implies that student-leaders of the empowered schools in Agusan del Norte are responsible servant-leaders that ensure students enjoy their stay in school, yet talk moderately to their fellow students on personal level.

The practice of responsible servant-leadership can be supported by Dierendonck (2011) who emphasized for the servant-leadership's advantages for organizations' positive working environment. This implies that student-leaders of the empowered secondary schools in this study create a harmonious school environment through practicing responsible servant-leadership.

Table 3 presents the extent of collaboration practices of student body organizations.

Table 3 Extent of Collaboration Practices of Student Body Organizations

Collaboration	Mean	Extent of Practices
The student body works with the teachers and staff during school-related activities.	2.68	High
Student-leaders are asked what committee they would work best.	2.60	High
Teachers and administration listen to the concerns of student-leaders.	2.62	High
The teachers and administration respond to the needs of the students channeled through the student body.	2.59	High
The school administration clearly explains to the student-leaders their powers, duties and responsibilities.	2.75	High
I work with other student-leaders most of the time.	2.34	High
I work with clubs and other organizations in the school in realizing a certain goal.	2.31	Moderate
The student body gets support in every proposal being laid down to the administration.	2.38	High
The student-leaders work as a team.	2.71	High
The student body has a representative during teachers and staff meeting for planning and goal setting.	2.33	Moderate
Overall Mean	2.53	High

Note: Means falling within the intervals 1.00-1.66: Seldom/Low, 1.67-2.33: Often/Moderate, 2.34-3.00: Always/High

The massive mean score of 2.75 means that the school administration clearly explains to the student-leaders their powers, duties, and responsibilities. On the other hand, the student-leaders' practices in working with clubs and other organizations in the school realizing a particular goal has the lowest mean of 2.31. As to the Division of Agusan del Norte, it has a mandate to conduct a school-based leadership training right after the SSG election that usually happens every February. In addition, with the creation of the Youth Formation Division of the Department of Education in the year 2015, teacher-advisers are gradually capacitated in handling student governance that explains the data that student-leaders become aware of their power, duties, and responsibilities. Its overall mean of 2.53 signifies school governance in the selected empowered schools in the Division of Agusan del Norte highly practices collaboration.

Collaboration in the school governance could be supported by Bright, et. al. as cited by Kelly and Azaola (2015). It is much emphasized in the findings of the study that students learn by doing, reflecting, analyzing and experimenting with new behaviors in a safe environment outside the traditional classroom. The inclusion of student-leaders in planning together with other club officers creates a supportive environment that promotes students' empowerment, more likely enables students to take the initiative and exercise positive peer

influence and camaraderie with other student-leaders of the different clubs and organizations.

Furthermore, according to Cayabyab and Racho (2015), with the Supreme Student Government Officers, there is a connection between the management of the school and the students through collaboration. The school management encourages the leaders to strive more and maintain sustainability of the clubs' existence which is in contrary, moderately being practiced by the empowered schools in Agusan del Norte as conveys in the data.

Statement of the Problem 2. What is the level of transformation of the student leaders among empowered secondary schools in the Division of Agusan Del Norte, Northeastern, Philippines in terms of personal, people and community?

Table 4 reveals the level of personal transformation of student-leaders.

Table 4

Personal	Mean	Level of Transformation
Develop professionally as a student-leader.	2.60	High
Boost my value as a person through my contributions in the organization.	2.59	High
Gain more friends and acquaintances.	2.72	High
Learn to accept mistakes.	2.80	High
Understand personal strengths and weaknesses.	2.87	High
Be confident to take calculated risks.	2.57	High
Make wise decisions to be able to not jump into conclusions too quickly.	2.53	High
Persevere when things are not working out as anticipated.	2.43	High
Show respect for the views/opinions of others.	2.85	High
Display conviction in one's personal values.	2.64	High
Overall Mean	2.66	High

#### Level of Transformation of Student-Leaders to Personal

Note: Means falling within the intervals 1.00-1.66: Seldom/Low, 1.67-2.33: Often/Moderate, 2.34- 3.00: Always/High

Considering its overall mean of 2.66 with a high level of transformation, it generally shows that student body organization yields positive personal transformation to the student-leaders. The highest mean score is 2.87 which implies that a sense of belongingness and self-worth is among the many psychosocial effects on the student leaders. The least mean of 2.43, on the other hand, connotes that perseverance, when things are not working out as anticipated, is the least among all the variables. The implication of this is

perseverance is not on top of the list of personal transformations being developed in joining the student body organization as evident in the data.

This claims of having personal transformation when the student join student body organizations can be supported by Astin as cited by Dela Ahiatrogah and Koomson (2018). As published, the more students are involved in school leadership activities, the higher their success in learning and personal development will be.

The data is also aligned with the study of Nelson (2017), who stated that leaders among students later become leaders at a workplace more often than those who do not have prior leadership experience. This is because they already learned how to handle responsibility, and they already experienced working with a team as they work with their co-officers and even work with the teachers and staff.

Furthermore, according to Franklin (2015), giving the student-leaders chance to make their own choices leads them to make wise decisions, and they never learn to make big decisions if they are not given opportunities for both success and failure. This implies that the school administrators and teachers of the schools must let go of control and decentralize the autonomy of the student-leaders to fully develop their potentials by giving chances to plan the school activities on its own.

Moreover, Pacific Policy Research Center (2010) also claims that the more student-leaders are front liners in governance, the more they have personal transformation. The implication of this is that student-leaders of the three empowered schools are more responsible and have a laudable transformation to oneself.

Table 5 shows the level of relations with other people transformation of student-leaders.

Table 5 Level of Transformation of Student-Leaders to Other People

People	Mean	Level of Transformation
Work productively with others.	2.52	High
Influence people's behavior in positive ways.	2.71	High
Develop camaraderie with others.	2.54	High
Receive constructive feedback from co-students, parents, school teaching and administrative staff and stakeholders.	2.53	High
Listen to points of view of others.	2.80	High
Motivate others to achieve positive outcomes through collaboration.	2.59	High
Contribute positively to discussions.	2.66	High
Work constructively with people who are resisters or who are in the opposition.	2.34	High

Be honest in dealings with others.	2.78	High
Show concern for others.	2.78	High
Overall Mean	2.63	High

Note: Means falling within the intervals 1.00-1.66: Seldom/Low, 1.67-2.33: Often/Moderate, 2.34- 3.00: Always/High

The overall mean of 2.63 with a high level of transformation implies that by joining student body organization, student-leaders tend to be team players and have a positive attitude towards other people. The most significant mean score of 2.80 signifies that student body organizations bring notable transformation of student-leaders in relations to other people. On the other end, work constructively with people who are resistant is the least mean of 2.34 signifies student body organizations shape student-leaders to have tolerance to the people who challenge their patience and be conversant to the people who have contentions towards their administration.

The data above can be aligned with Oni and Adetoro (2015) which revealed that the regular involvement of students in decision-making enhances leadership effectiveness and has various related benefits like dealing with people. This implies that student body organization enhances student-leaders as to their relations to other people.

Also, according to Ndung'u and Kwasira (2015) that the leadership roles of the student council in secondary schools were influencing and directing to other students whom they were leading. Student body organization is a direct experience in governance, and this organization can make a positive contribution to molding the youth on socialization and the fundamental public relations that in effect give harmony and promote camaraderie. The implication of this is that the student body organizations of the empowered schools in this study develop positive peer relationships of student-leaders and towards other people.

Table 6 presents the level of contribution to the community transformation of student leaders.

Table 6 Level of Transformation of Student-Leaders to the Community

Community	Mean	Level of Transformation
Participate in networks with other schools for possible lobbying with the country's policymakers.	2.21	Moderate
A stepping stone in the membership with professional leadership associations.	2.36	High
Undertake self-guided reading on leadership (ie. on the internet, journal articles etc.).	2.23	Moderate
Involve in mentoring/coaching programs with student-leaders of other organizations.	2.28	Moderate

Participate in the country's program for youth leaders that provides clear information about what students should know and be able to do for the country.	2.26	Moderate
Provide information about the youth in support for improvement efforts made by the Department of Education and other agencies.	2.33	Moderate
Mediate in disseminating newly adopted state education policies and procedures.	2.33	Moderate
Initiate programs and projects in consistent with the Department of Education's mandated programs, projects and activities.	2.28	Moderate
Encourage young leaders to run in the electoral race like Sangguniang Kabataan.	2.25	High
Join clubs and organizations with cause/advocacies.	2.59	High
Overall Mean	2.31	Moderate

Note: Means falling within the intervals 1.00-1.66: Seldom/Low, 1.67-2.33: Often/Moderate, 2.34- 3.00: Always/High

The overall mean of 2.31 reveals that there is only a moderate contribution to the community transformation of student-leaders. The most substantial mean rating of 2.59 demonstrates that students do always join clubs and organizations with cause/advocacies. Due to the learning that the student-leaders have acquired during their administration, they tend to be picky on what clubs and organizations to join in the community.

On the contrary, the item "participate in networks with other schools for possible lobbying with the country's policymakers" is the least mean score of 2.21. This implies that the practices of student body organizations moderately transform the student-leaders to make initiatives to create networks with student-leaders with other schools and even with non-educational organizations.

In connection with, according to Neri, Ernesto (2014) that youth should play a big part in whatever decisions that will be created. This implies that student governance implementation affects also the practices in the community, wherein local community officials cannot have decisions based on the clamor of the youth. The implication of this is that student body organizations in the selected empowered schools are moderately serving their purposes in the creation of student governance, which is to produce responsible citizens through contributing to the community for the nation-building, which is the aim in creating the Supreme Student Government.

Moreover, according to late Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago that "the young people should not only participate in the community but strive to become leaders in their community." She emphasized that the school is the best avenue for shaping our future leaders. In contrary, the student body organization in the empowered schools in this study needs further

enhancement to fully achieve the long-term end of creating the student governance in making contribution to the community.

Statement of the Problem 3. Is there a significant difference between the ratings of the student-leaders according to sex?

The t-test result on the mean responses of the student-leaders on practices of student body organization when group according to sex marks insignificant and unfolds that mean responses of the student-leaders do not differ significantly across sex. Hence, the extent of leadership practices does not have something to do with sex.

Also, the t-test result on the mean responses of the student-leaders as to the level of transformation inflicted by student body organizations when group according to sex also marks insignificant and discloses that the level of student-leaders' transformation does not have something to do with sex.

The data can be supported by the points of view of Paustian-Underdahl, et al. (2014) who emphasized that when all leadership contexts are considered, men and women do not differ in perceived leadership effectiveness and further concluded that there is no significant gender difference in leadership effectiveness. The implication of this is that with regards to Supreme Student Government, whether the student-leader is male or female, their practices in student governance are the same likewise how the organization affect them and inflict transformation on them. What matters most is the process of operation and the range and scope of entrustment that the school administration is willing to extend to the elected student-leaders.

Statement of the Problem 4. Based on the results of the study, what intervention programs may be proposed to student body organization practices and the outcomes of student-leaders?

Based on the result of the study, participatory democracy, responsible servant-leadership, and collaboration have high level extent of practices. As to the transformation of student-leaders in joining the student body organization, it is evident in the data that the personal transformation and relations to other people transformation have high level of transformation. However, contribution to community transformation is just moderate, which focuses on the intervention program.

In connection with, School-based Leadership Training for newly elected SSG officers and Club Presidents is highly proposed especially for those for the newbies to be acquainted with the essential duties they are expected to perform and to know their rights as elected officers of the highest student organization of the school. Topics on creating networks for other organizations outside the school campus is the suitable subject based on the result of the study. There is already a mandate from the Division of Agusan del

Norte to conduct a school-based leadership training, but most of the schools failed to comply with this mandate. The recommendation for this is to make it compulsory and be an accreditation requirement for the Supreme Student Government of the schools to be recognized in the division office.

## **CONCLUSION**

The findings and subsequent recommendations reflect an iterative process of assessment, feedback, and targeted intervention, which is central to advancing the field of health communication. By systematically identifying strengths (high levels of participatory democracy, servant leadership, and interpersonal transformation) alongside gaps (moderate community engagement), the study demonstrates how evidence-based feedback can inform the refinement of communication strategies within school governance. This iterative cycle strengthens participatory communication, enhances message relevance, and promotes more inclusive decision-making processes among student populations.

From a health communication perspective, empowering student leaders to actively participate in governance and community initiatives fosters peer-led information dissemination, advocacy, and behavior modeling, which are critical in promoting health awareness and positive social practices in school settings. The absence of sex-based differences further supports the scalability and inclusivity of such interventions.

These outcomes align with the broader objectives of Sustainable Development Goal 3, particularly in promoting mental well-being, social cohesion, and youth engagement in health-related decision-making. Strengthening student leadership and participatory structures contributes to creating supportive school environments where health-promoting behaviors can be effectively communicated and sustained. Ultimately, the study underscores the role of student governance as a viable platform for advancing holistic well-being and cultivating future leaders who are equipped to contribute to community health and development.

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