
Stressors and Coping Strategies of Student Leaders in a Teachers' College: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

This descriptive qualitative study aims to find out the stressors, effects of stress and coping strategies of student leaders in a teacher's college. This study was conducted using the transcripts taken from the interview of eight (8) chairpersons from the various organizations within the college of education who were determined through purposeful sampling. The data was gathered through a semistructured online interview and analyzed using a thematic approach. From the data the stressors, effects of stress and coping strategies of the informants were identified. Thirteen meaningful categories emerged in this study. The Student leader's were primarily stressed because of (1) Organizational Stress, (2) Academic Stress, (3) Mental Stress, (4) Financial (5) Stress and (6) Academic-Related Support. The effects of stress to the informants were (7) Emotional Effects, (8) Physical Effects, and (9) Academic Effects. Thus because of these stressors and effects of stress, the student leaders would formulate these coping strategies (10) Emotional Support, (11) Spiritual Coping, (12) Physical Care, and (13) Recreational Coping. The task of a student leader is a tough endeavor as you have to balance both your academic and leadership roles. This proves that being a student leader is both demanding and a stressful role to play within a teacher's college.

Keywords: Student Leader, Stressors, Effects of Stress, Coping Strategies, Stress, Teacher's College

INTRODUCTION

Stress is a common problem among college students because of their busy schedules (McKiernan et al., 2021). As stress becomes disturbingly high among students (Saba Asif et al., 2018), they become more irritable and angry towards other students (Brobby, 2020) moreover, they can be attributing various stressors that they face in school and at home (Simpson, 2018). The most prevalent stressors for them are academic stress, financial stress, and social stress (Devi et al., 2015). Thus, students would devise coping strategies to combat stress and cope with its effects. They cope with stress by engaging in physical activities such as sports, developing social skills, and relaxing (Hatunoglu, 2020).

Previous studies on stressors and coping strategies highlight their relevance in today's educational landscape (Lawton, 2020). The collected research studies on stress encompass undergraduate students (Genesan et al., 2018) but not specifically on the

student leaders' well-being (Cheung et al., 2020). These papers focus on a different topic as they tend to generalize for convenience, which is insufficient to speak on behalf of a specific group of students (Olope et al., 2017). This concerns student leaders in a teachers' college who are overburdened with schoolwork and organizing events. It is important to address this gap in order to help student leaders to become more efficient.

This study is anchored on the "Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping" (Folkman and Lazarus, 1984, Dillard, 2019) which states that stress manifests itself in a variety of ways, including physical, emotional, and behavioral manifestations while coping strategies vary from person to person. This research study aims to describe student leaders, stress, stressors, and coping strategies in a teachers' college. Awareness of various stressors will aid in having interventions for the well-being of student leaders.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design. This research design gathers informants' experiences and it answers the hows and whys instead of how many or how much (Tenny et al., 2022). It was anchored on a constructivist epistemology which aimed to examine a reality that is believed to be socially constructed by providing a thorough account of the phenomenon being studied (Cerbo, 2012; Pedroso, 2020). The methodology, descriptive method was implemented in the study, which describes the characteristics of the problem, phenomenon, situation, or group under the study (Vijayamohan, 2022). This study is anchored on the "Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping" which evaluates how significant life events, as well as everyday affairs, affect emotions and how a person copes with stress (Janse, 2021).

Informants

For the purpose of this study, nine (8) Organizational Chairpersons of the College of Education, West Visayas State University-Main Campus were chosen to be informants in this study. Further, respondents were assigned pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality. The informants are chairpersons of the different organizations of the College of Education. Purposeful sampling was utilized to find informants with specific criteria needed for this research (Pedroso, Tangco-Siason, Ortizo-Roces, & Magramo-Basbas, 2022) namely: (1) officially enrolled student of West Visayas State University in the school year 2022 - 2023; (2) he/she is under the roster of students in the College of Education; and (3) a chairperson of an organization in the College of Education.

Figure 1: *Profile of the Informants*

Pseudonym of Informant	Gender	Age	College Organization
Karina	Female	21	English Majors' Organization
Jullius	Male	20	Kapisanang Diwa at Panitikan

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Nana	Female	21	Majors' of Values Education
Lesley	Female	20	Association of Early Childhood Education Students
Rafaela	Female	23	Science Teaching Majors' Association
Kimmy	Female	21	Association of General Education Students
Freya	Female	20	Special Education Students' Association
Cecillio	Male	22	Social Science Students' Society

Data Collection Instrument

The study utilizes a semi-structured interview guide, which relies on asking questions within a predetermined thematic framework; furthermore, this instrument employs open-ended questions, offering flexibility in gathering data from the informants (George, 2022). The instrument was divided into two parts. The first part focused on the informant's personal information and demographic profile. The second part was divided into three sub-sections namely; stressors, effects of stress, and coping strategies respectively. To ensure the consistency of this research, a variety of actions to improve the validity and reliability of the informants' responses and the research results was considered. The informants were informed about the research objectives, procedures, and importance, with detailed notes provided to measure response variation. Communication between researchers and informants was frequent to ensure consistent and accurate results. Triangulation was also used to confirm the findings' consistency and accuracy.

Data Collection Procedure

In order to obtain approval for conducting the study, a letter was presented to the Dean of the College of Education during the interviewing of the informants. A letter of consent was issued to the informants, and they were questioned via a google form that was delivered to their school emails. Responses were also categorized and saved for potential use in the study in the future. The information of the informants was kept private by using pseudonyms whenever they were referenced in the publication, and all required documents had to be filled out before the interview proper could start. The informants' identities were protected by the use of pseudonyms.

Data Analysis

The study utilized a thematic approach in interpreting and analyzing the data gathered from the informants. Thematic approach is a technique for studying qualitative data that involves looking through a data collection to find, examine, and document recurring patterns (Braun and Clarke, 2006, Byrne, 2021). This particular approach fits the study because it aims to look into the different stressors and coping mechanisms of the informants, as such it is necessary to see if there are any patterns or similarities among the answers for more comprehensive results.

RESULTS

Three (3) themes—Stressors, Effects of Stress, and Coping Strategies—were used to group the information that was taken from the informants' transcripts. These themes are then broken down into other subcategories that go into great detail about the information contained in the transcripts gathered from the informants.

Stressors

Stressors are particular situations that cause stress within people. Other potential contributing factors include our memories, our environment, or the people in our immediate vicinity (Wool, 2022). Student leaders in particular bear the brunt of many stressors, so as such this part is divided into five (5) sub themes namely *Organizational Stress, Academic Stress, Mental Stress, Financial Stress and Academic-Related Support*.

- ❖ **Organizational Stress:** Leadership is a very tough responsibility that one can hold, especially for Student leaders who have to juggle academic and organizational tasks. Within the organization itself, there are a multitude of stressors that a student leader faces on a daily basis. This can be further subdivided into four (4) sub categories namely *Unreliable Colleagues, Pressure, Administration Problems, Unexpected Changes in Schedules*.
 - **Unreliable Colleagues:** According to the responses of the informants, some of their colleagues within their organization are unreliable or simply cannot perform their duties as officers. This causes stress as these leaders require the full support of all their officers to efficiently run the organization.
 - Nana: “*Inactive organization officers*”
 - Kimmy: “*Officers are not committed to their positions*”
 - **Pressure:** The student leaders interviewed stated that the pressure of being a chairperson in their organization was very taxing and demanding. Some of these leaders are new to being chairpersons so the demand to live to the expectations of their peers was rather high.

- Freya: *“I was appointed chairperson last March to serve the organization for the remaining school year, I can say that there's a lot of pressure, especially since this is new to me”*
- **Administration Problems:** As student leaders, they are required to closely work with the school administration in order for their organization to receive support and permission to conduct activities inside and outside the school. However, according to the responses gathered, there seems to be problems in coordination with the administration, leading to many breakdowns in communications and lack of support for their organization.
 - Cecilio: *“Lastly, lack of resources in terms of physical facilities to accommodate every single activity and advocacy we want to conduct for the students”*
 - Julius: *“The tight deadlines of permits, letters, and other paperwork that must be accomplished on time are stressors for me”*
- **Unexpected Changes in Schedule:** In some circumstances, the activities that were planned by the organization could be set back due to a myriad of reasons like unexpected events and natural causes. These set-backs would greatly affect the chairpersons in charge as it is their responsibility to ensure that everything goes according to plan.
 - Cecilio: *“Third, the unexpected events and natural phenomenon which hampers our plans, implementation and preparations”.*
- ❖ **Academic-Related Stress:** Student leaders are students first and foremost. They are no different from the average student when it comes to what school related activities are given to them. As such it can be quite difficult to balance their role as a leader and a student. This would be one of their biggest challenges as they need to maintain their grades in order to continue their studies. This particular sub-category is further divided into two (2) subcategories namely **Studying and Activities**.
 - **Studying:** Studying for exams is quite difficult for a student leader as their focus is divided between their responsibilities with their respective organizations.
 - Lesley: *“Studying for exams or working towards deadlines is what i believe stresses me”*
 - **Activities:** According to the informants, it can be overwhelming to deal with projects, assignments and professors, coupled with your responsibilities as a

chairperson. This heavy workload can be a source of stress for many of the student leaders interviewed.

- Freya: *“Projects, assignments, deadlines, professors, and when you add up the responsibilities of being the head of an organization, the whole deal can be a bit overwhelming, to be honest.”*
- Cecilio: *“Second, too much workload in a month, aside from activities being mentioned on our calendar there are arising activities that we need to give our attention”.*

❖ **Mental Stress:** This particular stressor is quite a struggle for the informants. They have to endure this stressor as their responsibilities as student leaders dictates them to be calm in making key decisions for the benefit of the organization. This sub-category is further divided into two subcategories namely **Adjustment Issues and Severe Mental Issues.**

- **Adjustment Issues:** Adjusting to a new position and environment is not easy, it requires mental fortitude in order to adjust to these new changes.
 - Kimmy: *“Thus, that major switch from something I was not used to was, I believe a stressor of mine”*
- **Severe Mental Issues:** The informant in this category stated they had to deal with severe mental issues like phobias and mental disorders.
 - Karina: *“From trichotillomania to severe depression to panic anxiety disorder”*

❖ **Financial Stress:** Student leaders are not paid for their services rendered as chairpersons or whatever position they may hold. As such some of them feel like money is a sensitive topic for them to bring up.

- Rafaela: *“Money is a sensitive topic”*

❖ **Academic-Related Support:** Some student leaders would lack gadgets and other devices for their academic related responsibilities.

- Nana: *“The lack of gadgets for academic use”*

Effects of Stress

The persistent stress associated with school has a detrimental effect on students' ability to study, academic performance, achievement of education and employment, sleep quantity and quality, physical and mental health, and drug use consequences (Pascoe, 2019). The researchers identified three (3) sub themes of effects of stress on the student leaders namely *Emotional Effects, Physical Effects, and Academic Effects*.

- **Emotional Effects:** Student leaders are having a hard time in dealing with many things in school, especially that they are holding a huge role in their respective organizations. Student leaders also mentioned that one of the major effects of stress to them is anxiety and mental health issues. This category is further subdivided into (2) sub-categories namely *Anxiety and Mental Health*.
 - ❖ **Anxiety:** The body and mind's response to stressful, hazardous, or strange events is anxiety, which leads to uneasiness and fear (Javanovic, 2023). Under this sub-category, the researchers identified these (3) sub-themes namely *Irritation, Panic Attacks, and Burnout* based on the answers of the informants.
 - Nana: *"This has given me sleepless nights and anxiety thinking that I might have a low grade or worse."*
 - **Irritation:** Irritation is a typical emotion and can be brought on by or contribute to a variety of circumstances, such as life stress, lack of sleep, low blood sugar, and hormonal changes (Eske, 2019). The informants felt that the effects of these stressors really took a toll on their patience leading to self-doubt.
 - Lesley: *"I could get easily irritated, impatient and have doubts, and feelings of inadequacy."*
 - **Panic Attacks:** Panic attacks can also be the result of stress to some student leaders because of the responsibilities that need to be done on a specific time.
 - Freya: *"Sometimes, I would have panic attacks that would affect my mood and ruin my day."*
 - **Burnout:** Stress that is sustained or recurrent can lead to burnout, which is a condition of emotional, mental, and frequently physical weariness. Burnout

is also an effect of stress experienced by student leaders as they are constantly doing their duties as leaders (Perina et al., 2023).

- Cecilio: *"I feel burned out and unmotivated, which leads to sometimes not having an event at all"*

❖ **Mental Health:** The whole state of your thinking, emotion control, and behavior is referred to as your mental health. Sometimes people encounter a major impairment in this mental functioning. When patterns or changes in thinking, feeling, or acting disturb a person or impair their capacity to function, a mental illness may be present (Pruthi et al., 2021). Some informants would generalize the emotional effects of stress as mental health problems.

- Nana: *"Inactive organization officers as a stressor has a big impact, especially in my mental health."*

● **Physical Effects:** Even though you might not be aware of it, stress symptoms could be harming your health. You may believe that the nagging headache, your frequent sleeplessness, or your reduced productivity at work are all symptoms of an illness (Pruthi et al., 2021). An informant noted that they had a lack of sleep, lack of appetite and lack of rest as a student leader.

- Lesley: *"Also, as a student, it affects my overall mental well-being. I got too little sleep, barely had rest, and not eating enough"*

● **Academic Effects:** Stress would also affect the academic performance of the student leaders because they are also obligated to do the academic related responsibilities in order to have good grades as students. This would make a big difference to their life as students because they are also leaders who need to look on the other side of being a more responsible person to accomplish their responsibilities as student leaders.

- Cecilio: *"Regarding my academics as a student, this stressors challenged my peace of mind and focus"*

Coping Strategies

Having this aspect is crucial for student leaders as it enables them to manage stress, regulate emotions, build resilience, increase self-awareness, and improve their overall well-being. The researchers identified four (4) sub themes namely *Emotional Support, Spiritual Coping, Physical Care, and Recreational Coping*.

❖ **Emotional Support:** Student leaders face unique challenges and responsibilities that can negatively impact their mental health. Emotional support is an essential coping strategy for them to manage stress and promote their overall well-being. It helps student leaders regulate their emotions, reduce stress levels, and improve their mental health. Accessing emotional support also provides a sense of connection and belonging with others who understand their leadership challenges, allowing them to better manage their responsibilities and make effective decisions. There are (4) various sources of emotional support: from *Oneself, Nature, Friends and Family*.

➤ **Oneself** : Being a student leader can be overwhelming, and it's easy to prioritize the demands of leadership over one's own emotional needs. Nevertheless, it's essential to prioritize self-compassion and provide emotional support for oneself to maintain good mental health and prevent burnout.

- Freya: *"In dealing with stress, I usually try to calm myself and arrange my thoughts first"*
- Karina: *"Every time i wake up, i also don't forget to have self-affirmations as a counter for negative self-perception"*

➤ **Nature:** Student leaders can benefit from the calming and reflective qualities of nature, which can help them recharge and maintain their mental health.

- Nana: *"Find peace within me and the nature that surrounds me while internalizing positive thoughts that can help me move forward despite challenges"*

➤ **Friends:** Friends can offer critical support to student leaders by providing empathy, a listening ear, and encouragement. This type of emotional support is essential for student leaders to manage their emotions, decrease stress, and feel connected to others.

- Rafaela: *"I maintain relationships that are emotionally supportive. I request assistance from others"*

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- **Family:** Emotional support from family can help student leaders manage their emotions, reduce stress levels, and feel a sense of belonging and support by offering a safe space for expression, guidance, and encouragement.
 - Nana: *"Every week i always travel back home despite the distance because i feel recharge when i spend time with my family and nature"*

- ❖ **Spiritual Coping:** One informant utilized spiritual coping as a means of managing stress. This involved relying on their religious or spiritual beliefs and practices such as praying to God for strength and peace.
 - Kimmy: *"Above all, praying for me is a coping strategy for dealing with stress"*

- ❖ **Goal Setting:** An informant would state that setting goals like giving time to complete tasks, setting goals and making innovations would be a great way to cope with stress.
 - Cecilio:
 - **"Complete tasks"**
 - *"Second, we are always creating priority list of plans despite that the plate is full"*
 - **"Setting Goals"**
 - *"Fourth, give appropriate amount of time for collection of papers for the permits"*
 - **"Making Innovations"**
 - *"Lastly, we innovate, if venues are not available we transfer online if not we are looking for more possible area"*

- ❖ **Physical Care:** Some informants would share that getting enough sleep, eating a healthy diet and performing breathing exercises would help them cope and deal with their stress as student leaders.
 - **"Breathing Exercises"**
 - Karina:
 - *"When dealing with stress I take the time to breathe".*
 - **"Maintaining a Healthy Lifestyle"**
 - Kimmy:

- *"One thing that is also important and that I practice to cope with stress is making sure that I get enough sleep and eating a healthy diet".*

❖ **Recreational Coping:** A decent amount of the informants stated that recreational activities like joyriding on motorcycles, problem solving, watching tv shows/movies, spending time outdoors, taking long walks, playing with animals and doing their hobbies would help the student leaders cope with their stress as chairpersons and students.

- **"Watching Tv Shows or Movies"**
 - Julius: *"My stress coping strategies include sleeping, watching my favorite netflix series, and spending time outdoors"*
 - Kimmy: *"I also make time to enjoy things I love to do, such as watching K-dramas and eating my favorites"*
- Nana:
 - **"Joyriding on Motorcycles"**
 - *"Then, riding my motorcycle and road trips"*
 - **"Playing with Animals"**
 - *"Also, playing with my dogs"*
 - **"Practicing Hobbies"**
 - *"My crochet hobby help me deals with my stress as well"*
- Freya:
 - **"Taking Long Walks"**
 - *"It's important to increase the things that bring me happiness, relief, and joy. I would go on long walks, buy myself a drink, organize and declutter my closet, or take a nice relaxing bath"*

Stressors, Effects of Stress and Coping Strategies of Student Leaders in a Teacher's College.

Stressors

- Organizational Stress
 - Unreliable Colleagues
 - ⌘ Pressure
 - unexpected Changes
 - ⌘ Administration Problems

- Academic-Related Stress
 - Studying
 - ⌘ Activities

- Mental Health
 - ⌘ severe mental issues
 - ⌘ Adjustment Issues

- Financial Stress
 - ⌘ School related financial woes

- Academic-related Support
 - ⌘ Lack of Purchasing Power

- Emotional Effects
 - ⌘ Anxiety
 - ⌘ Irritations
 - Panic Attacks
 - ⌘ Burnout
- Mental Health

- Physical Effects
 - ⌘ Lack of Sleep
 - ⌘ Lack of Appetite
 - ⌘ Lack of Rest

- Academic Effects
 - ⌘ Academics becomes more challenging

- Emotional Support
 - ⌘ Oneself
 - ⌘ Nature
 - ⌘ Friends
 - Family

- Spiritual Coping
 - ⌘ Praying

- Goal Setting
 - ⌘ Giving time to complete tasks
 - ⌘ Setting Goals
 - ⌘ Making Innovations

- Physical Care
 - ⌘ Breathing exercises
 - ⌘ Maintaining a healthy lifestyle

- Recreational Coping
 - ⌘ Watching TV shows/movies
 - ⌘ Having Joyrides
 - ⌘ Playing with animals
 - ⌘ Practicing Hobbies
 - ⌘ Taking Long Walks

Effects of Stress

Coping Strategies

Figure 2: *Matrix of meaningful categories of the study*

DISCUSSION

College students are prone to stress because of their tight schedules (McKiernan et al., 2021). Some of these students would assume positions as student leaders, which would mean them balancing their academic standing and responsibilities to their organizations. The study's primary objective is to determine the stressors, the effects of stress and coping strategies of student leaders in a teacher's college. Thematic analysis was used to categorize each transcript into a theme that best fits it.

Stressors are specific circumstances that make individuals feel stressed. Our recollections, our surroundings, or the individuals nearby are other potential contributing variables (Wool, 2022). There are significant negative effects that stress has been discovered to have on people's lives, it is frequently perceived as something that is unhealthy, hazardous, and "must be avoided." (Nerstad et al., 2023). Organizational stress has the potential to promote learning and progress, which means it may also be adaptive for people. Therefore, stress is not only to blame for all illnesses and social issues at work or in life; it may also lead to beneficial effects like job-related well-being (Nerstad et al., 2023). An unreliable person is someone that is considered as unresponsive, unprincipled and weak (Sonnenberg, 2021). This is stressful because in order for these leaders to effectively lead the company, they need the support of all of their officers. The chairpersons thought that because these unreliable coworkers couldn't uphold the organization's standards, they brought the entire organization down. The participation of all the officers is essential and important for the day-to-day operations of an organization. Unresponsive or unreliable colleagues are stated to be a source of stress. Competition among coworkers, lack of trust and harsh working relationship with coworker or colleague creates stress for a teacher (Faisal, 2019). Pressure is defined as doing a lot of tasks or making a lot of decisions in very little time, or that people expect a lot from you (Collins, 2022). Some of these leaders are new to being chairpersons so the demand to live to the expectations of their peers was rather high. Leadership positions can be difficult, which may make a student leader feel worried. On the other side, the same student is expected to achieve academically, which puts pressure on them to do well (Njaramba et al., 2022). Communication breakdowns between student leaders and school management are considered very frequent in one university in Kenya, which hampers the services that could be given to the students (Murage et al., 2021). The chairpersons cannot perform their duties to the best of their abilities without support, this in turn would make them feel stressed out due to their inability to make any sort of decisions. College students' mental health may be impacted by a variety of stress factors, but academic stress may be the most significant one (Barbayannis et al., 2022). Student leaders are students first and foremost. They are no different from the average student when it comes to what school related activities are given to them. As such it can be quite difficult to balance their role as a leader and a student. This would be one of their biggest challenges as they need to maintain their grades in order to

continue their studies. Studying for exams is quite difficult for a student leader as their focus is divided between their responsibilities with their respective organizations. They cannot focus on both responsibilities due to time constraints and pressure given to them. This would be a source or catalyst for the chairpersons to be stressed and mentally exhausted. When studying for or taking an exam, stress is indicated by exorbitantly high performance expectations, high degrees of anxiety, self-criticism, and concentration. According to the study, exam anxiety and stress are highly correlated among college students (Snober, 2022). In a university in Kenya it was indicated by 56.5% of the respondents that, very frequently/ frequently academic endeavors compete for attention with leadership roles while 35.5% stated that rarely/occasionally there is a conflict. This would tell that there is a difficulty of juggling academic activities and leadership duties (Murage, 2019). Mental Stress is a particular stressor that is quite a struggle for the student leaders. They have to endure this stressor as their responsibilities as student leaders dictates them to be calm in making key decisions for the benefit of the organization. Severe mental illness (SMI) is defined as a mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder which results in serious functional impairment (NHI, 2022). An example of a disorder under this is Trichotillomania, defined as a disorder where you become fixated with pulling your hair out (Pereyra et al., 2022). College students frequently experience mental health issues. This might be as a result of the fact that many traditional and non-traditional undergraduate students find their time in college to be tough (Pedrelli et al., 2016). Financial stress is defined as anxiety-driven stress resulting from a financial event in a person's life (Krupinski, 2021). This particular study shows that a student's participation in various academic and extracurricular activities is significantly impacted by financial stress. As a result, the component to assess a student's stress should be taken into account by parents, university administration, and student counselors (Hossain et al., 2023).

The present findings show that there are various different effects of stress that student leaders encounter, which is caused by the stressors. First, stress has an emotional impact that may show up as anger or aggression, a sense of being out of control, insomnia, weariness or fatigue, sadness or sorrow, memory or concentration issues, or other symptoms (Racine, 2020). Too much stress also affects the emotions of a person, there are a lot of ways in handling stressors and it will show whether it is handled in a positive or negative way based on how a person acts towards another person. Anxiety, which produces unease and worry, is the body's and mind's reaction to stressful, risky, or unexpected circumstances (Javanovic, 2023). As they experience anxiety, there is a chance that they will experience panic attacks (Davis et al., 2023). As a student there will be activities that need to be accomplished at a certain date, some days there are a lot of activities that need to be done at the same day, and this leads to having a burnout (Perina et al., 2023). Sometimes, students that have too much work, and work all night to cram it all before the deadline become irritable, experience lack of sleep, and loss of appetite (Berry et al., 2023). If stress has an emotional effect it also has a physical effect, for the longer the stressors stay the worse the effect becomes. Experiencing stress could result in an increase of blood pressure, having higher risk of heart disease, headaches, and back or neck pain,

for it also affects your physical health (Racine 2020). Lastly, Academic stress has been linked to a variety of negative effects, including ill health, anxiety, depression, and poor academic performance (Deng et al., 2022) This narrative review summarizes the most recent findings on the effects of academic stress on students' ability to study and academic performance, as well as their vulnerability to mental health issues such as melancholy and anxiety, sleep disorders, and drug abuse (Pascoe et al., 2019).

The study highlights the crucial importance of coping strategies for student leaders in effectively managing stress, regulating emotions, building resilience, increasing self-awareness, and improving overall well-being. First and foremost, coping strategies that focus on emotions aim to decrease tension and stressful circumstances (Wirkus et al., 2021). It enables them to regulate their emotions, reduce stress levels, and enhance their mental health. There are four sources of emotional support identified in this study and these are from oneself, nature, friends, and family. Student leaders prioritize self-care, offering themselves emotional assistance to ensure good mental health and prevent burnout. Moreover, finding solace in nature and spending time outdoors help them feel positive, peaceful, and calm. Engaging in nature-related activities for just 20 minutes can contribute to the reduction of stress hormone levels (Hunter et al., 2019). Additionally, friends and family serve as an invaluable support system, offering understanding, assistance, and companionship. According to a study conducted by Slepian & Moulton-Tetlock (2019), just simply having a conversation with a reliable friend or coworker has the potential to alleviate your stress levels and foster deeper relationships. Sharing your feelings with someone not only helps improve your overall well-being but also enhances the closeness between individuals. Moving on, spiritual coping involves the utilization of religious or spiritual beliefs and practices to effectively manage stress. The use of religious coping techniques proved to be effective in improving the psychological and social dimensions of individuals' quality of life (Krägeloh et al., 2011). Engaging in activities such as praying, seeking strength from a higher power, and relying on spiritual beliefs helps student leaders improve their psychological and social dimensions of quality of life. Thirdly, goal setting allows student leaders to effectively manage their responsibilities by organizing and prioritizing tasks. It enables them to create a structured plan, prioritize their workload, and manage their time efficiently, ultimately reducing stress and increasing the likelihood of successful completion. Fourthly, physical care is emphasized as a crucial coping strategy for student leaders. Prioritizing sufficient sleep, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and engaging in breathing exercises are mentioned as key components. Adequate sleep and a nutritious diet support physical and mental health, while breathing exercises promote mindfulness, stress regulation, and relaxation. Both mindfulness breathing and cognitive reappraisal practices yielded a large effect size in reducing test anxiety for undergraduate students. Mindfulness breathing practice showed increased positive automatic thoughts over time, compared to their counterparts, the cognitive reappraisal practice and control group (Cho et al., 2016). Recent investigations also suggest that higher physical activity levels and longer duration of sleep are associated with lower levels of perceived stress during the COVID-19 pandemic (Moriarty et al.,

2021). Lastly, recreational coping involves engaging in enjoyable activities to manage stress. Examples include watching TV shows or movies, Joyriding on Motorcycles, playing with animals, practicing hobbies, and taking long walks. One of the coping strategies mentioned previously is watching TV shows or movies. The current sample provides further evidence of the positive connection between watching TV series and anxiety. This supports the notion that individuals who experience negative emotions are more likely to use binge-watching as a coping mechanism to recover from these undesirable feelings and effectively manage their negative moods (Boursier et al., 2021). Next is joyriding on motorcycles, it embarks on road trips and provides a sense of freedom, adventure, and excitement. Another coping strategy is playing with animals. It has been identified in the study that the presence of animals can have a calming effect and can provide emotional support. Spending time with pets allows the individual to enjoy the love and playful energy that the animals bring, and it also allows individuals to temporarily shift their focus away from stressors. According to the research conducted by Mueller et al. (2021), teenagers who have pets reported increased engagement with their pets during the pandemic and often regarded interacting with their pets as a means of managing stress. Moving on to practicing hobbies. According to El-shafei et al. (2018), engaging in activities like practicing hobbies and getting enough sleep contributes to a balanced life, relieving work-related stress and increasing compassion satisfaction. Additionally, Seetan et al. (2021) found that practicing hobbies were the preferred strategies for stress relief. Lastly, taking long walks, engaging in nature group walks, especially on a regular basis, was linked to a decrease in perceived stress, depression, and negative emotions, along with an increase in positive emotions and overall mental well-being (Marselle et al., 2019). In this study, researchers found out the notion that walking is an effective coping strategy for managing stress. Overall, the study underscores the significant impact of coping strategies on student leaders' mental health and well-being. Emotional support, spiritual coping, goal setting, physical care, and recreational coping all contribute to effective stress management, emotional regulation, and resilience. Implementing these strategies can greatly enhance student leaders' ability to navigate their responsibilities more effectively and improve their overall quality of life.

This particular study has various limitations that should be noted and addressed in future studies. Firstly, the informants interviewed for the study were only coming from a teacher's college, and as such the transcripts cannot generalize the stressors, effects of stress and coping strategies of student leaders from other colleges. Furthermore, the number of student leaders, which is eight (8) is a small number that may not be ideal to generalize the findings in the broader scope of student leaders in a teacher's college. Secondly, quantitative research may be utilized to supplement this study so that we can get a better sense of the stress that these student leaders experience through the use of statistical data. Thirdly, the position of chairperson cannot generalize the broader experiences of other student leaders who hold different positions within their organizations, so it is suggested that future studies could focus on these other positions. Fourthly, This study only focuses on the context of the stressors, effects of stress and

coping strategies of Student leaders, future studies may want to focus on different points of interest that are related to the well-being of student leaders. Lastly, our study used online-interview questionnaires that have pre-set questions which can lead to the transcripts being limited in its scope. Despite the limitations of this study that limited its scope, the results gathered from the study may set the groundwork for future studies on this particular topic.

CONCLUSION

Student leaders are an important part of any academic institution, as they are the ones responsible for representing the students under them and serve as their voice in the upper echelons of the bureaucracy. Their responsibilities don't end with their organizations but they also have a duty to fulfill their academic requirements to maintain their standing as students. So it is no surprise that these student leaders have their own set of stressors that have varying effects on their mental and physical well-being. Because of these stressors, student leaders have various coping strategies that are unique to each one's needs to deal with their academic and leadership Burdens. These leaders go above and beyond to deliver quality service to their constituents, that being the students under their respective organizations without the expectation of compensation or reward. This shows that being a student leader requires true grit and passion as this isn't just a position but it is a responsibility that you will need to bear for the sake of every student that looks up to you for leadership.

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