RESEARCH ARTICLE

How do Student Leaders in a Teachers' College Cope with Stress?

John Erwin Prado Pedroso[1*], Timothy Christian Bonyog[1], Renee Mae Hinojales[1], Hiezyl Marie Sinoy[1], Sherwin Siosan[1]

[1]College of Education, West Visayas State University, La Paz, Iloilo City, Philippines

Corresponding Author: John Erwin Prado Pedroso: johnerwin.pedroso@wvsu.edu.ph

Abstract
As stress becomes disturbingly high among college students, it becomes one of the common problems that is brought about by their demanding schedules. This qualitative-descriptive research aims to describe how student leaders in a Teachers' College cope with stress. Eight (8) student leaders were identified using purposeful sampling. A duly-validated semi-structured interview guide was used to gather data through online-in depth interviews. Three (3) significant themes and thirteen (13) meaningful categories emerged after using a thematic approach to analyze the data, namely: (1) stressors (organizational, academic, mental, financial, and academic-related support); (2) effects of stress (emotional, physical, and academic); and, (4) coping strategies (emotional support, spiritual coping, goal setting, physical care, and recreational coping). As student leaders balance both academic and leadership roles, they have to skillfully manage stress through their effective coping strategies.

Keywords: Student Leader; Stress; Coping Strategies

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 (Asif et al., 2018), they become more irritable and angrier towards other students (Brobbey, 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 (Sia 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 (Olape 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 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 used a qualitative descriptive research design based on constructionist epistemology and naturalistic inquiry methodology to investigate a socially constructed reality (Pedroso et al., 2022). Similarly, this study was founded on the Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping, which assesses daily activities, affects emotions, and how people cope with stress (Janse, 2021). Furthermore, stress has been shown to manifest in a variety of ways, including physical, emotional, and behavioral manifestations, with coping strategies varying from person to person (Dillard, 2019).

Informants

Informants

Eight (8) student leaders from a Teacher's College at a public university in the Philippines were included in this research study. They were selected through purposeful sampling (Pedroso, Siason, Roces, & Basbas, 2022). The inclusion criteria are as follows: (1) he/she is an officially enrolled student at West Visayas State University in the school year 2022-2023; (2) he/she is on the College of Education student roster; and (3) he/she is the chairperson of an accredited organization in the College of Education.

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

Figure 1: *Profile of the Informants*

Data Collection Instrument

This study made use of a researcher-made semi-structured interview guide that was validated by three (3) qualitative research experts. Similarly, the interview guide was pilot-tested with three (3) non-participating student leaders. The instrument is divided into two (2) parts. The first part concentrated on the informant's personal details and demographic profile. To maintain flexibility in data collection from informants (George, 2022), the second part included open-ended questions about how student leaders cope with stress. Furthermore, the Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping (Folkman and Lazarus, 1984; Dillard, 2019) was used to create the interview guide's open-ended questions.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process began after the Dean of the college approved a letter to conduct the study. The informants were organized using Facebook Messenger's group chat for easy access. A formal letter of invitation as an informant and a consent form was made available from

the same platform to inform them of the study and confirm their willingness to participate. Following the informant's confirmation, an online orientation meeting was scheduled in which they were informed of their voluntary participation without monetary compensation, as well as assurances of information confidentiality and anonymity of their identity, as pseudonyms were used. Each informant received a Google Meet link through which the in-depth interview was conducted.

Data Analysis

The data gathered from the informants was examined using the five -steps of Braun and Clarke's (2006) Thematic Approach which resulted in the identification of recurring patterns of information, specifically significant themes on stressors, effects of stress, and coping strategies. Using the constant comparison technique, the data revealed more similarities and differences in information, further resulting in the formation of meaningful categories. Triangulation of information through literature and observation was used to establish the findings' validity and reliability. Likewise, the written transcript of the findings was also presented to the informants for approval.

Results

There were three (3) significant themes relating to how student leaders in a teachers' college cope with stress namely: (1) stressors; (2) effects of stress; and, (3) coping strategies.

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 (Goodwin, 2022). Stressors of student leaders were divided into five (5) sub-themes namely: (1) Organizational Stress; (2) Academic Stress; (3) Mental Stress; (4) Financial Stress; and, (5) 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 daily. Organizational stress was subdivided into four (4) categories namely: (1) Unreliable Colleagues; (2) Pressure; (3) Administration Problems; and, (4) Unexpected Changes in Schedules.

- *Unreliable Colleagues*

Some of the student leaders' 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 pressure of being a chairperson in their organization was very taxing and demanding. Some of these student leaders are new to being chairpersons so the demand to live up 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 for their organization to receive support and permission to conduct activities. However, there seem to be problems in coordination with the administration, leading to many breakdowns in communications and a 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 setbacks would greatly affect the chairpersons as it is their responsibility to ensure that everything goes according to plan.

> Cecilio: *"... 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 to continue their studies. Academic-related stress was divided into two (2) categories namely: (1) Studying and (2) Activities.

Studying: Studying for exams is quite difficult for student leaders 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*
For a student leader, 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: *"...too much workload in a month, aside from activities being mentioned on our calendar-- there are activities that we need to give our attention".*

Mental Stress
This stressor is quite a struggle for the informants. They have to endure this mental stress as their responsibilities as student leaders dictate them to be calm in making key decisions for the benefit of the organization. Mental stress was divided into two (2) categories namely: (1) Adjustment Issues and (2) Severe Mental Issues.

- ● *Adjustment Issues*
Adjusting to a new position and environment is not easy. It requires mental fortitude to adjust to these new changes.

Kimmy: *"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 positions they may hold. Thus, 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 the school has a detrimental effect on student's ability to study, academic performance, achievement of education and employment, sleep quantity and quality, physical and mental health, and drug use consequences (Pascoe, 2019). Effects of stress on student leaders have three (3) sub-themes namely: (1) Emotional Effects; (2) Physical Effects; and, (3) Academic Effects.

Emotional Effects

Student leaders are having a hard time dealing with many things in school, especially since they are holding a huge role in their respective organizations. Student leaders also mentioned that one of the major effects of stress on them is anxiety and mental health issues. Emotional effects were divided into (2) sub-themes namely: (1) Anxiety and (2) 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). Anxiety is divided into four (4) categories namely: (1) Irritation; (2) Panic Attacks; (3) Burnout; and, (4) Mental health.

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 (Legg, 2019). Student leaders felt that the effects of these stressors 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 for some student leaders because of the responsibilities that need to be done at 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., 2020). 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 on 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., 2020). 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 have an impact on the academic performance of student leaders, as they are also required to carry out academic responsibilities to maintain good grades as students. This would make a significant difference in their lives as students because they are also leaders who must consider the other side of being a more responsible individual to fulfill their responsibilities as student leaders.

Cecilio: *"Regarding my academics as a student, these 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. Student leaders' coping strategies were divided into five (5) sub-themes namely: (1) Emotional Support; (2) Spiritual Coping; (3) Goal Setting; (4) Physical Care; and, (5) 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 were (4) various sources of emotional support namely: (1) Oneself, (2) Nature; (3) Friends; and, (4) 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 to combat 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: "*I 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 emotionally supportive relationships. I request assistance from others."*

Family. Emotional support from family can help student leaders manage their emotions, reduce stress, and

feel a sense of belonging. The family offers a safe space for expression, guidance, and encouragement.

Nana*: " I always travel back home despite the distance because I feel recharged when I spend time with my family and nature."*

Spiritual Coping

*Praying.*For student leaders, spiritual coping is a means of managing stress. This involves 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
Student leaders set goals by giving time to complete tasks. Making innovations would be a great way to cope with stress.

Cecilio: *"Complete tasks".   " We are always creating a priority list of plans despite that the plate is full.",*

Setting Goals. *"...give the appropriate amount of time for collection of papers for the permits...",*

"Making Innovations", *"We innovate. If venues (for our event) are not available, we transfer them online. If not, we look for other possible venues"*

Physical Care
Student leaders shared that getting enough sleep, eating a healthy diet, and performing breathing exercises would help them cope with stress.

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 eat a healthy diet".*

Recreational Copping

Recreational activities such as joyriding on motorcycles, problem-solving, watching TV shows or movies, spending time outdoors, taking long walks, playing with pets, and doing hobbies were mentioned by student leaders as ways for them to 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 favorite foods."*

Joyriding on Motorcycles
Nana: *"...riding my motorcycle and road trips"*

Playing with Animals
Nana: *"... playing with my dogs"*
"Practicing Hobbies"

Nana: *"Crochet helps me deal with my stress as well."*

Taking Long Walks
Freya: *"It's important to increase the things that bring me happiness, relief, and joy. I would go on long walks, and buy myself a drink. I also organize and declutter my closet, or take a nice relaxing bath."*
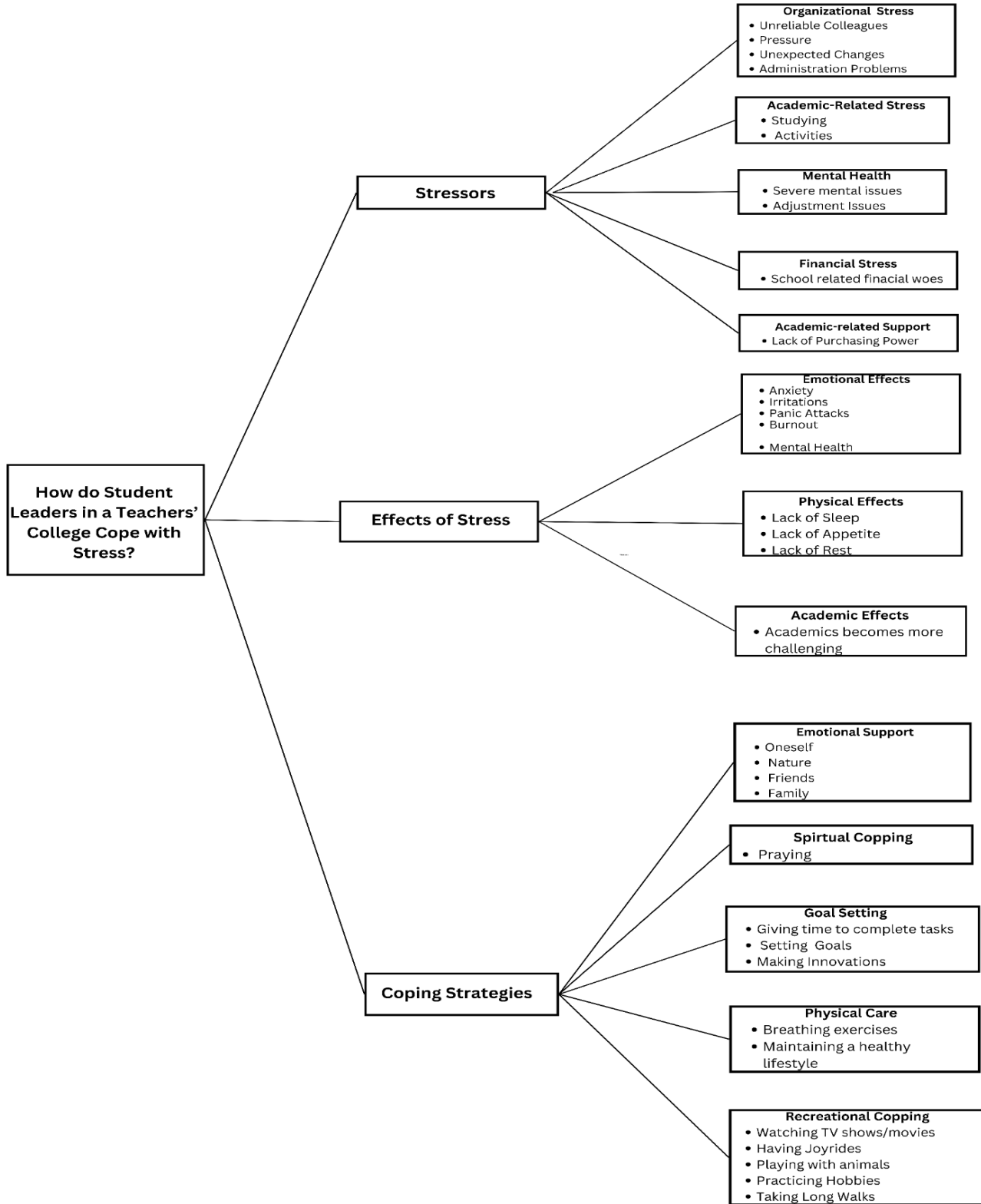
Figure 2: *Demonstration on How Student Leaders in a Teachers' College Cope with Stress*

Discussion

College students are prone to stress because of their tight schedules (McKiernan et al., 2021). Some of these students would serve as student leaders, which would require them to balance their academic standing with their responsibilities to their organizations. This study aims to describe how student leaders in a teachers' college cope with stress.

Stressors are specific circumstances that make individuals feel stressed. Our recollections, our surroundings, or the individuals nearby are other potential contributing variables (Goodwin, 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).

Our study found that 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). Unreliable individuals are unavoidable in any organization. They are regarded as unresponsive, unprincipled, and ineffective (Sonnenberg, 2021). As a result, they become a source of stress for leaders, because these leaders require the support of all of their officers to effectively lead the company. In this study, student leaders believed that by failing to uphold the organization's standards, these unreliable co-officers may bring the entire organization down. Furthermore, the participation of all officers is required for an organization's day-to-day operations. Unresponsive or unreliable coworkers are cited as a source of stress. Similarly, stress is caused by coworker competition, a lack of trust, and a difficult working relationship with a coworker or colleague (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 the student leaders in this study are new to being chairpersons, so the demand to live up to the expectations of their peers was rather high. Therefore, leadership positions can be difficult, which may make a student leader feel worried.

While student leaders are expected to achieve academically, which puts pressure on them to do well (Njaramba et al., 2022), one of the findings of this study pointed out that student leaders cannot perform their duties to the best of their abilities without the support of the administration. So, they felt stressed out due to their inability to make any sort of decision. Similarly, a study conducted in Kenya posited

that communication breakdowns between student leaders and school management were considered very frequent which hampered the services that could be given to the students (Murage et al., 2021).

As college students, their mental health may be impacted by a variety of stress factors, but academic stress may be the most significant one (Barbayannis et al., 2022). First and foremost, student leaders are students. When it comes to school-related activities, they are no different than the average student. As a result, balancing their roles as a leader and a student can be difficult. This will be one of their most difficult challenges because they must maintain their grades to continue their studies. In this study, a student leader's focus is divided between their responsibilities with their respective organizations, making studying for exams difficult. Due to time constraints and pressure, they are unable to focus on both responsibilities. For student leaders, this would be a source of mental exhaustion because stress is characterized by exorbitantly high expectations, high levels of anxiety, self-criticism, and concentration. As a result, exam anxiety and stress are highly correlated among college students (Snober, 2022). According to a Kenyan study, 56.5% of respondents stated that academic endeavors compete for attention with leadership roles very frequently/frequently, while 35.5% stated that the conflict is rare or on an occasional basis only. This would tell that there is difficulty in juggling academic activities and leadership duties (Murage, 2019).

On the other hand, mental stress is a particular stressor that is quite a struggle for the student leaders in this study. They have to endure this stressor as their responsibilities as student leaders dictate them to be calm in making key decisions for the benefit of the organization. College students frequently experience mental health issues. This might be 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).

Another stress experienced by student leaders in this study is financial stress. It 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 impacted by financial stress. As a result, the component to assess students' stress should be taken into account by parents, university administration, and student counselors (Hossain et al., 2023).

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 positively or negatively 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 on the same day, and this leads to 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 a lack of sleep, and loss of appetite (Goodwin, 2022).

If stress has an emotional effect, it also has a physical effect, the longer the stressors stay the worse the effect becomes. Experiencing stress could increase blood pressure, having a higher risk of heart disease, headaches, and back or neck pain, for it also affects your physical health (Racine 2020). Meanwhile, academic stress has been linked to a variety of negative effects, including ill health, anxiety, depression, and poor academic performance (Deng et al., 2022) and vulnerability to mental health issues such as melancholy and anxiety, sleep disorders, and drug abuse (Pascoe et al., 2019).

This study also 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. Coping strategies that focus on emotions aim to decrease tension and stressful circumstances (Wirkus et al., 2021), it enables student leaders to regulate their emotions, reduce stress levels, and enhance their mental health. As this study highlights four sources of emotional support which were from oneself, nature, friends, and family, would mean that student leaders prioritize self-care, offering themselves emotional assistance to ensure good mental health and prevent burnout. One of the coping strategies of student leaders may be found in the ideas of Hunter et al. (2019) who posited that finding solace in nature and spending time outdoors helps them feel positive, peaceful, and calm. Specifically, 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.

Another coping strategy highlighted in this study is spiritual coping which 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 help student leaders improve their psychological and social dimensions of quality of life.

Student leaders in this study pointed out that goal-setting allows them to effectively manage their responsibilities by organizing and prioritizing tasks. Likewise, 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.

Physical care is also 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 the control group (Cho et al., 2016). In addition, higher physical activity levels and longer duration of sleep are associated with lower levels of perceived stress (Moriarity et al., 2021).

Also, recreational coping involves engaging in enjoyable activities to manage stress which in this study include watching TV shows or movies, joyriding on motorcycles, playing with pets, practicing hobbies, and taking long walks. One of the coping strategies mentioned by student leaders is watching TV shows or movies as there is a 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). Joyriding on motorcycles makes student leaders embark on road trips and provide a sense of freedom, adventure, and excitement.

Playing with pets is another coping strategy. The presence of animals can have a calming effect and provide emotional support. Spending time with pets allows people to enjoy the love and playful energy that the animals bring, as well as temporarily shift their focus away from stressors. According to Mueller et al. (2021), teenagers who have pets reported increased engagement with their pets and frequently regarded interacting with their pets as a means of stress management. 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 strategy for stress relief. Finally, taking long walks and participating in nature group walks regularly was associated with a reduction in perceived stress, depression, and negative emotions, as well as an increase in positive emotions and overall mental well-being (Marseille et al., 2019). Researchers discovered that walking is an effective coping strategy for stress management in this study. Overall, 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 their 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 serving as their voice in the upper echelons of the bureaucracy. Their responsibilities don't end with their organizations but they also must 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.

Declaration

Conflict of Interest: No conflict of interest was identified

Authors contribution:
Dr. John Erwin Pedroso - Researcher
Timothy Chrystian Bonyog - Researcher
Renee Mae Hinojales - Researcher
Sherwin Siosan - Researcher
Hiezyl Marie Sinoy - Researcher

Data availability: Public

References

Asif, S., Pervaiz, T., Raouf, M., Shahzad, T. Z., & Mudassar, A. (2018). Frequency of depression, anxiety, and stress among university students. NCBI https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7372668/

Barbayannis, G., Bandari, Zheng, Baquerizo, Ming, & Pecor. (2022, May 23). Academic Stress and Mental Well-Being in College Students: Correlations, Affected Groups, and COVID-19. PubMed. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35677139/

Boursier V, Musetti A, Gioia F, Flayelle M, Billieux J, Schimmenti A. Is Watching TV Series an Adaptive Coping Strategy During the COVID-19 Pandemic? doi: 10.3389/fpsyt.2021.599859.

Brobbey, E. (2021, July). The impact of stress on the academic performance of students in the University of Cape Coast, School of Business. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/355049499_The_impact_of_stress_on_the_academic_performance_of_students_in_the_University_of_Cape_Coast_School_of_Business

Cho, H., Ryu, S., Noh, J., & Lee, J. H. (2016). The Effectiveness of Daily Mindful Breathing Practices on Test Anxiety of Students. PLOS ONE, 11(10), e0164822. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0164822

Collins. (2022). Pressure definition in American English | Collins English Dictionary. Collins Dictionary. https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/pressure

Deng Y, Cherian J, Khan NUN, Kumari K, Sial MS, Comite U, Gavurova B, Popp J. Family, and Academic Stress and Their Impact on Students' Depression Level and Academic Performance. Front Psychiatry. (2022). doi: 10.3389/fpsyt.2022.869337. PMID: 35782431; PMCID: PMC9243415.

Devi, S., & Mohan, S. (2015, October). A study on stress and its effects on college students. International Journal of Scientific Engineering and Applied Science (IJSEAS), 1(7). ISSN: 2395-3470

Dillard, D. M. (2019). The Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping: Predicting Posttraumatic Distress in Telecommunicators. ScholarWorks | Walden University Research. https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations/6719/

El-Shafei, D. A., Abdelsalam, A. E., Hammam, R. A., & El-Gohari, H. (2018). Professional quality of life, wellness education, and coping strategies among emergency physicians. Environmental Science and Pollution Research, 25(9), 9040–9050. 986. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11356-018-1240-y

Faisal, F., Khair, A., & Nadia, N. (2019, December). stress is caused by coworker competition, a lack of trust, and a difficult working relationship with a coworker or colleague. Bulletin of Education and Research, 41(3), 44-60.

Ganesan, Y., Talwar, P., Fauzan, N., & Onn, Y.B. (2018, March). Journal of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development, 3(2).

George, T. (2022, January 27). Structured Interview | Definition, Guide & Examples. Scribbr. https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/structured-interview/

Goodwin, M. (2022). Loss of appetite and tiredness: Causes and when to consult a doctor. Medical News Today. https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/loss-of-appetite-and-tiredness

Hatunoglu, B. (2020). Stress coping strategies of university students. Cypriot Journal of Educational Sciences, 15(5), 1320-1336. https://doi.org/10.18844/cjes.v15i5.5502

Hossain, M.K., Mahfuz, T., Latif, S. and Hossain, M.E. (2023), "Determinants of financial stress among university students and its impact on their performance", Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education, Vol. 15 No. 1, pp. 226-237. https://doi.org/10.1108/JARHE-02-2021-0082https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyt.2021.599859

Hunter MR, Gillespie BW and Chen SY-P (2019). Urban Nature Experiences Reduce Stress in the Context of Daily Life Based on Salivary Biomarkers. Front. Psychol. 10:722. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00722

Janse, B. (2021). Transaction Theory of Stress and Coping (TTSC). https://www.toolshero.com/psychology/transactional-theory-of-stress-and-coping/

Krägeloh CU, Chai PP, Shepherd D, Billington R. How religious coping is used relative to other coping strategies depends on the individual's level of religiosity and spirituality. J Relig Health. 2012 Dec;51(4):1137-51. doi: 10.1007/s10943-010-9416-x. PMID: 21042859.

Krupinski, M. (2021, November 2). What is financial stress? Financial Stress. https://financialstress.com/what-is-financial-stress/

Lawton. J.(2020). Stress and Health. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/smi.3168

Legg, T. J. (2019). What causes irritability? Symptoms, severity, and treatments. Medical News Today. https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/325564

Marselle, M. R., Warber, S. L., & Irvine, K. N. (2019). Growing Resilience through Interaction with Nature: Can Group Walks in Nature Buffer the Effects of Stressful Life Events on Mental Health? International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 16(6), 986. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16060986

McKiernan, K., Supnet, A., & Capdeville, C. (2021, December 21). Exploring the relationship between stress and student leadership among student pharmacists. Science Direct. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1877129721003336

Moriarty T, Bourbeau K, Fontana F, McNamara S, Pereira da Silva M. (2021). The Relationship between Psychological Stress and Healthy Lifestyle Behaviors during COVID-19 among Students in a US Midwest University. Int J Environ Res Public Health.;18(9):4752. doi 10.3390/ijerph18094752.

Mueller, M. K., Richer, A. M., Callina, K. S., & Charmaraman, L. (2021). Companion Animal Relationships and Adolescent Loneliness during COVID-19. Animals, 11(3), 885. https://doi.org/10.3390/ani11030885

Murage, L., Gachahi, M., & Njoka, J. (2019, January 31). Challenges Faced by Student Leaders in Managing Student Affairs in Public Universities in Kenya. International Journal of Education & Literacy Studies, 7(1). ISSN: 2202-9478

Nerstad, C., Seljeseth, I., Richardsen, A., & Cooper, C. (2023). Wiktionary. https://perspectivesblog.sagepub.com/blog/research/what-is-organizational-stress- and-why-does-it-matter

Njaramba, L., Njaramba, W., Ayivi, W., Gitagia, E., Ansah, P., & Umotong, K. (2022). Student leadership roles and their impact on academic performance. International Journal of Economics, Commerce, and Management, 10(5). ISSN 2348 0386

Olape, R., Yahaya, L., Amadi, E., & Tiamiyu, K. (2017). Stress Level and Academic Performance of University Students in Kwara State, Nigeria. Makerere

Journal of Higher Education, 9(1), 103 – 112. http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/majohe.v9i1.9

Pascoe, M. C., Hetrick, S. E., & Parker, A. G. (2019). The impact of stress on students in secondary school and higher education. International Journal of Adolescence and Youth, 1–9. doi:10.1080/02673843.2019.1596823

Pedrelli, P. (2016). College Students: Mental Health Problems and Treatment Considerations. NCBI. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4527955/

Pedroso, J.E.P. & Vegas, K. I. Domingo, J. & Delfin, H. (2022). Challenges, Coping Mechanisms, Learning Insights in Modular Learning of Social Studies Graduate School Students in a State University. 3. 1485-1493.

Perina, K., Ma, L., & Drevitch, G. (2023). Editorial Process. Psychology Today. https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/docs/editorial-process

Pruthi, S., Allen, N., & Arora, A. (2020) YouTube. https://www.mayoclinic.org/about-this-site/meet-our-medical-editors

Racine, V. (2020). The impacts of stress on your mental health. Red Cross Canada. https://www.redcross.ca/blog/2020/10/the-impact-of-stress-on-your-mental-health?fbclid=IwAR0Ax3QWy-uMDdifnbYYyzxRChI0B9PKlpRVgOsb4tTv6aL4B29fq4WjEVk

Seetan K, Al-Zubi M, Rubbai, Y, Athamneh M, Khamees A, Radaideh T (2021) Impact of COVID-19 on medical students' mental wellbeing in Jordan. PLoS ONE 16(6): e0253295. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0253295

Siason, A. ,Magramo-Basbas, J.I.F, Montaño, H. & Felimon, R ,& Ortizo-Roces, C. & & Pedroso, J.E. (2022).

Exploring Mentees' Needs from a Mentoring Program: Towards the Development of a Mentoring Toolkit. 2. 33-45. 10.32996/bjahs.

Simpson, S. (2018). Stress Triggers, the Effects Stress Has on Social, Mental and Physical Behavior in College Students, and the Coping Mechanisms Used. Murray State'sDigitalCommons.https://digitalcommons.murraystate.edu/bis437/215/?utm_source=digitalcommons.

murraystate.edu%2Fbis437%2F215&utm_medium=P
DF&utm_c ampaign=PDFCoverPages

Siu Yin Ching, S., Cheung, K., Hegney, D., & Rees, C. (2020). 42. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nepr.2019.102690

Slepian, M. L., & Moulton-Tetlock, E. (2019). Confiding Secrets and Well-Being. Social Psychological and Personality Science, 10(4), 472–484. https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550618765069

Snober, G. (2022). A study on exam stress and anxiety among graduate and post-graduate students. Anveshana's International Journal of Research In Education, Literature,

Sonnenberg, F. (2021, March 23). Are You Reliable or a Flake? — Frank Sonnenberg Online. Frank Sonnenberg Online. Retrieved July 3, 2023, from https://www.franksonnenbergonline.com/blog/are -you-reliable-or-a-flake/

Wirkus A, Wirkus L, Stasiak K, Kozłowski P (2021). University students' strategies of coping with stress during the coronavirus pandemic: Data from Poland. PLoS ONE 16(7): e0255041. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0255041