

Leadership Commitment Crisis: A Systematic Inquiry on Students' Perspective of Davao Central College

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ABSTRACT

Student leadership significantly influences organizational culture and engagement in higher education; however, Davao Central College is facing a growing issue: declining student leader commitment, which leads to disengagement and frequent withdrawal from leadership roles. This study explores the factors influencing leadership commitment through a qualitative, phenomenological approach, guided by Self-Determination Theory and Organizational Commitment Theory. The research draws on in-depth interviews with fourteen former student leaders and focus group discussions on five organizational moderators from various academic and non-academic student organizations formally recognized during A.Y. 2023–2024. Using a mixed variation-criterion sampling technique, the study uncovered thirteen major themes across three domains: role-related challenges and pressures, internal motivation and personal fulfillment, reflective and cognitive insights into leadership, leadership preparedness and role alignment, and social and environmental influences; external influences and social pressures, intrinsic motivation and passion, and altruism and values-based motivation; and communication and collaboration, institutional and structural support, strategic planning and accountability, leadership capacity building, and motivation and engagement. By capturing the lived experiences of student leaders, this study highlights how academic pressure, emotional fatigue, and a lack of preparedness impact their commitment. These insights underscore the necessity of institutional support and motivation rooted in Self-Determination Theory and Organizational Commitment Theory. Educational institutions should implement strategic interventions, such as mentorship, stress management, and leadership training, to enhance resilience and intrinsic motivation. At Davao Central College and beyond, programs tailored to student leaders' psychological and developmental needs can reduce burnout and foster long-term engagement. Future research may explore additional influencing factors to strengthen student governance and enrich the theory-practice connection in leadership development.

Keywords: Engagement, Leadership Commitment Crisis, Systematic Inquiry

INTRODUCTION

As a student leader, leadership is not just a role; it is the lifeblood of any organization, driving progress and fostering a sense of community. In academic institutions, student leaders are essential in fostering engagement, nurturing a sense of community, and furthering collective goals. However, a troubling trend has surfaced: many student leaders demonstrate a decrease in commitment following their initial involvement, frequently choosing not to pursue leadership roles in subsequent academic years. This disengagement creates a cycle of forced candidacy, wherein inexperienced individuals are nominated out of necessity rather than preparedness, undermining the continuity and effectiveness of student governance.

The declining commitment to leadership among students poses a significant issue within higher education institutions worldwide. Dawood and Abubakar (2024) emphasize that increasing academic pressures are discouraging students from maintaining active leadership roles. Similarly, Murage (2019) points out that the conflict between academic obligations and leadership responsibilities is a primary source of burnout and

frustration for student leaders. This situation is exacerbated by inadequate institutional support and insufficient collaboration, which undermine the overall effectiveness of student-led organizations (Dedicatoria et al., 2023). Furthermore, Friaes (2021) observes that the shift to virtual platforms during the pandemic created additional obstacles, including communication gaps and diminished program effectiveness.

In the Philippines, similar trends are observable. Student councils across the country are experiencing a decline in participation, as academic overload and hybrid learning environments hinder students' ability to take on leadership roles (Edejer & Frio, 2024; Cáceres-Reche et al., 2021). Local institutions in Davao are facing comparable challenges, with student leaders grappling with time management issues, burnout, peer apathy, and insufficient organizational support (Aparicio et al., 2023; Laude & Balongoy, 2023). Additionally, financial limitations, communication barriers, and the lack of mentoring structures further obstruct effective leadership development (Panibon, 2023).

At Davao Central College during the 2023–2024 academic year, this trend has become increasingly evident. The institution is grappling with a shortage of dedicated student leaders, highlighted by the departure of experienced individuals and challenges in recruiting qualified candidates. This leadership gap disrupts organizational stability and undermines the execution of student-centered initiatives. New leaders frequently lack sufficient preparation and motivation, putting the sustainability of student-led programs at risk.

Although existing literature recognizes the challenges encountered by student leaders, many studies tend to have a narrow focus, primarily addressing external barriers while failing to thoroughly investigate students' internal motivations, experiences, and perspectives. Additionally, there is a notable lack of research that provides actionable strategies tailored to institutional contexts, especially within mid-sized private colleges such as Davao Central College. This oversight creates a substantial gap in understanding the factors that influence sustained leadership commitment in student governance.

In addressing this gap, the current study aims to explore the lived experiences and perspectives of student leaders at Davao Central College regarding the factors that influence their commitment. By examining the motivations, challenges, and institutional conditions that affect student leadership engagement, this research seeks to provide evidence-based insights that can guide interventions aimed at revitalizing and sustaining student governance. Ultimately, this study contributes to the broader discourse on leadership in higher education by proposing tangible strategies to foster a more resilient and committed leadership culture within academic institutions.

Research Objectives

This study aimed to explore the perspectives of student leaders at Davao Central College regarding the factors that influence their commitment to leadership roles. Specifically, this study sought to:

1. Describe the experiences of student leaders in sustaining their commitment throughout their tenure.
2. explore the motives behind the student leaders in joining the clubs and organizations; and
3. unearth potential strategies that could improve student leaders' engagement and commitment.

Research Questions

1. How would you describe your overall experience in maintaining your commitment to your leadership role throughout your time as a student leader?

- 1.1. Can you describe specific experiences that influenced your commitment as a student leader?
- 1.2. What does commitment mean to you in the context of your leadership role?
- 1.3. What have been the most significant challenges you've faced in maintaining your commitment?

1.4. What factors have helped you stay engaged and committed to your leadership position despite the obstacles?

2. What motivated you to join a student organization and take on a leadership role?

2.1. What experiences or influences shaped your decision to pursue a leadership position?

3. What strategies do you think can improve student leaders' engagement and commitment to their roles?

3.1. What forms of institutional support do you think are essential for sustaining student leadership?

3.2. What opportunities would you like to see for student leaders to collaborate and share ideas?

3.3. What policies or structural changes could organizations introduce to enhance student leaders' overall experience and commitment?

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan (1985), and Organizational Commitment Theory, proposed by John Meyer and Natalie Allen (1991). Together, these frameworks provide a comprehensive lens for examining student leadership commitment at Davao Central College. Self-Determination Theory suggests that the fulfillment of autonomy, competence, and relatedness—essential psychological needs—fuels intrinsic motivation. When these needs are met, student leaders are more likely to remain engaged; conversely, unmet needs can lead to disengagement. On the other hand, Organizational Commitment Theory defines commitment through three dimensions: affective (emotional attachment), continuance (perceived costs of leaving), and normative (sense of obligation). These dimensions help explain why some student leaders persist while others choose to withdraw. The relevance of these theories to the study lies in their ability to elucidate the motivations and psychological states underpinning student leaders' decisions. For data analysis, the researchers employed these frameworks to code and interpret qualitative data, revealing how variations in need fulfillment and commitment dimensions influence leadership engagement or dropout.

METHODS

This qualitative study utilized a phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of student leaders at Davao Central College (DCC) concerning their commitment to leadership roles. Rooted in Husserl's philosophy, phenomenology helped the researchers understand how student leaders make meaning of their leadership journey and decisions to either continue or disengage from such roles. The study was conducted at Davao Central College, a higher education institution in Toril, Davao City, known for its active student organizations and leadership opportunities. The participants included 14 former student leaders from the academic year 2023–2024 who did not continue their roles in the succeeding year and five club moderators. A purposive sampling technique was applied to ensure diverse perspectives from different types of organizations. The data gathering procedure spanned four weeks, starting with the acquisition of participant lists from the Office of Student Affairs and Services (OSAS). In-depth interviews with student leaders were held from March 24–28, 2025, and a focus group discussion with moderators was conducted on April 4, 2025. All sessions were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim with participants' consent. Thematic analysis, based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework, was employed for data analysis, with recurring themes categorized into personal, organizational, and institutional factors. The analysis was guided by self-determination and organizational commitment theories. The study ensured ethical compliance, securing informed consent, maintaining confidentiality through pseudonyms, and protecting data in line with the Data Privacy Act of 2012. Participants had the freedom to withdraw at any point, and emotional support was made available during interviews. Overall, the methodology upheld academic rigor and ethical integrity in exploring student leadership commitment.

RESULTS

Figure 1 presents the summarized findings on the experiences of student leaders in sustaining their commitment throughout their tenure, highlighting key challenges, motivations, preparedness, and influences encountered during their leadership journey at Davao Central College. Analysis of their insights revealed five key categories: Role-Related Challenges and Pressures, Internal Motivation and Personal Fulfillment, Reflective and Cognitive Insights into Leadership, Leadership Preparedness and Role Alignment, and Social and Environmental Influences. Each category encompasses several core ideas: Time Management and Balancing Responsibilities, Pressure and Stress from Multiple Roles, Stress and Pressure from Leadership Responsibilities, Challenges in Maintaining Commitment due to Competing Priorities, Fulfillment Through Leadership Activities, Passion as a Driving Force for Commitment, Personal Growth Through Leadership, Reflections on Commitment and Leadership Roles, Communication as a Crucial Factor in Leadership, Lack of Initial Desire or Readiness to Lead, Lack of Knowledge and Interest in Leadership, Peer and Social Influence on Leadership Role, and Influence of Previous Leadership Roles on Current Commitment.

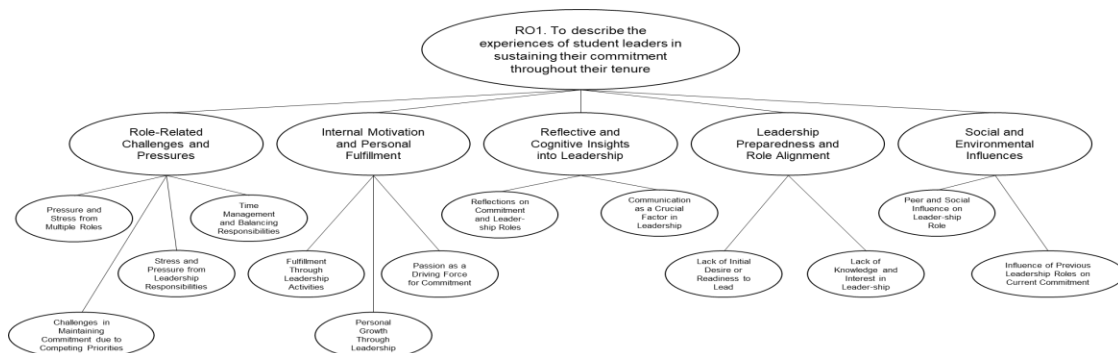


Figure 1. Experiences of Student Leaders in Sustaining their Commitment throughout their Tenure

As shown in Figure 2, the figure summarizes findings on the motives behind student leaders' involvement in clubs and organizations, detailing their initial inspirations, personal goals, external encouragement, and perceived benefits that influenced their decision to take on leadership roles at Davao Central College. The motivations behind student leaders' decisions to either continue or withdraw from their roles are illustrated in Figure 2. From the analysis of responses, three main themes emerged: External Influences and Social Pressures, Intrinsic Motivation and Passion, and Altruism and Values-Based Motivation. Each category encompasses several core ideas: External Encouragement and Mentorship, Peer influence as motivation, Lack of strong motivation, External invitation as primary motivator, Desire for experience, learning, and fulfillment, Personal Growth or Skill Development, Social Responsibility and Helping Others, Sense of Duty and Responsibility, and Desire to contribute through meaningful programs.

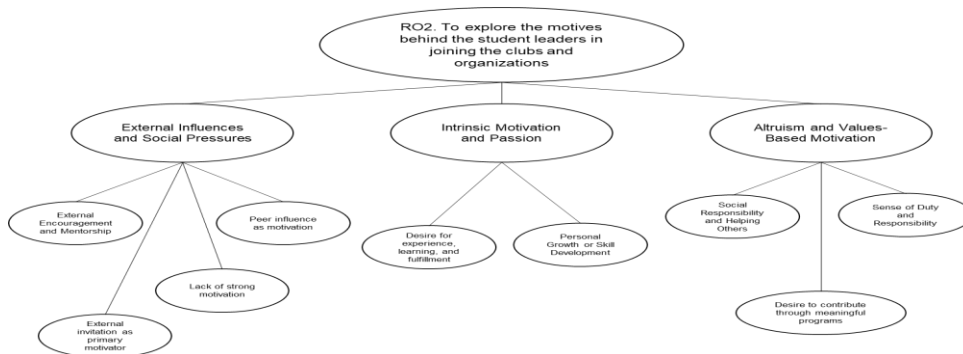


Figure 2. Motives Behind Student Leaders' Involvement in Clubs and Organizations

Figure 3 Table 3 presents the summarized findings on the potential strategies to improve student leaders' engagement and commitment, outlining recommended interventions, support mechanisms, institutional practices, and student-driven initiatives that may foster sustained leadership participation and organizational effectiveness at Davao Central College. The analysis revealed five key categories: Communication and

Collaboration, Institutional and Structural Support, Strategic Planning and Accountability, Leadership Capacity Building, and Motivation and Engagement. Each category encompasses several core ideas: Collaboration and Team Building, Importance of Communication, Open Forums and Discussions, Barriers to Effective Communication and Collaboration, Institutional Support Systems, Financial Support and Budgeting, Leadership Impact and Recognition, Transparency, Effective Planning and Time Management, Commitment and Accountability, Clear goals and vision, Commitment to Leadership, Leadership Training and Development, Understanding the role, Assessing capability, Leadership Attitudes and Compatibility, Motivating leadership continuation, and Leader disengagement.

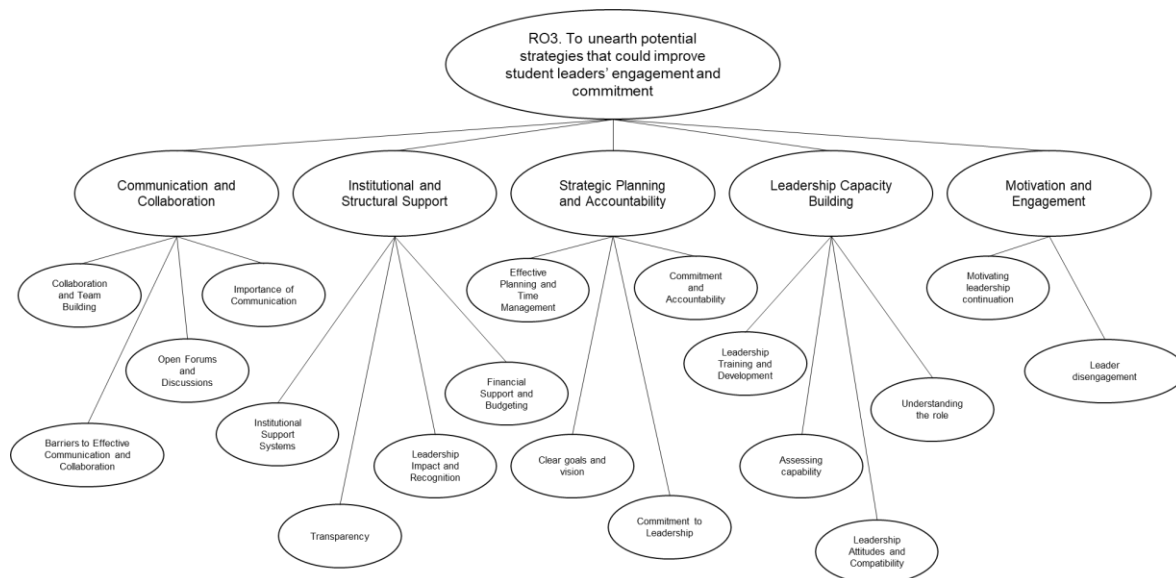


Figure 3. Motives Behind Student Leaders' Involvement in Clubs and Organizations

DISCUSSION

This chapter offers a summary and conclusion derived from the study. Additionally, it presents recommendations for the faculty, staff, and administration of Davao Central College aimed at enhancing the experiences and motivations of student leaders, as well as potential strategies to foster greater engagement and commitment among them.

Time Management and Balancing Responsibilities

The analysis underscores Time Management and Balancing Responsibilities as significant challenges encountered by student leaders. Participants indicated that the intersection of academic and leadership duties frequently resulted in stress and diminished commitment. This highlights the pressing need for support systems designed to assist student leaders in effectively managing these dual roles.

"Commitment for me is... It's hard to achieve, but if you have the will to commit to something, then you can do it. But for me, it's like I lost it because it's stressful. During that time, the major subjects were overlapping, so it became hard to handle..." **IDI-P10L186-190**

"Some experienced a decline in commitment, especially when academic pressures increased. For example, there were times when they missed deadlines or meetings because they prioritized schoolwork." **FGD-P2L45-48**

Sanchez and Clayton (2020) highlight that successful student leadership is significantly influenced by effective time management and the ability to adapt under pressure. Their research indicates that these skills bolster resilience and maintain commitment within educational leadership. Likewise, Murage et al. (2019) and Patrick (2022) noted that conflicts arising from academic leadership roles can often result in burnout unless mitigated by robust coping strategies.

Pressure and Stress from Multiple Roles

The analysis indicates that stress and burnout resulting from balancing multiple roles significantly impact student leaders' commitment. Participants noted that the strain of handling academic responsibilities, personal obligations, and leadership roles often leads to exhaustion, ultimately diminishing their effectiveness in both domains. This underscores the pressing need for institutional support to help student leaders safeguard their well-being and performance.

"...Time is the problem because I want to help in our department, but time is my enemy. Sometimes, I can only sleep for 3 or 4 hours because I still work at night, then in the morning I take care of the business, and in the afternoon, I have classes. So, I don't have any time, time is the enemy." IDI-P1L207-211

"They can't balance their academic responsibilities well because, of course, when you handle an organization, you need to put in effort. And in IT, the activities are pretty hectic, with many requirements, especially like this. So, I can't blame students for having difficulty balancing their studies and they participate in the organization." FGD-P4L55-61

Murage et al. (2019) discovered that heavy workloads stemming from both academic and leadership responsibilities contribute significantly to burnout among student leaders. This finding is supported by Tucay et al. (2023), who associated high stress levels with the challenges of balancing academic performance and extracurricular leadership roles. Additionally, Patrick (2022) highlighted that the tension between academic and leadership obligations presents a considerable challenge for student leaders, often resulting in frustration and disengagement.

Stress and Pressure from Leadership Responsibilities

The analysis highlights that the stress and pressure associated with leadership responsibilities are pivotal to the student leadership experience. Participants noted that the intersection of academic deadlines, internal conflicts, and personal challenges frequently results in significant stress and burnout, impacting their ability to lead effectively. This underscores the vital need for emotional resilience and mental health support to sustain student leaders' engagement.

"The biggest challenge has been managing stress and avoiding burnout. There were moments when academic deadlines, organizational conflicts, and personal issues became overwhelming." P5L222-224

"I could tell she was very frustrated that day because I was talking to her. I was frustrated as well because I didn't understand the reasoning... that really, the bogging down of the bureaucracy is honestly a point where she had a lot of frustration as well. To the point where she would say that if we were to have an event, I would say, 'Are we still going to hold an event if there are so many pitfalls just to make it happen?' Like, there's so much hassle and heartache involved just to push through one event. So, imagine having to do more events and then go through that heartache over and over again. It kind of wears you down... like mentally, as well as your motivation." FGD-P5L84-86

Sanchez and Clayton (2020) emphasize the importance of emotional resilience for student leaders, who must navigate the demands of academic excellence alongside the emotional challenges of leadership. In a similar vein, Murage et al. (2019) and Xiong et al. (2021) point out that prolonged exposure to high-pressure situations, without adequate mental and emotional support, can result in fatigue, diminished motivation, and a decrease in commitment. These insights underscore the necessity for comprehensive support systems that address not only the logistical aspects but also the emotional challenges encountered by student leaders.

Challenges in Maintaining Commitment due to Competing Priorities

The analysis highlights competing priorities and insufficient institutional support as significant barriers to the sustained commitment of student leaders. Participants noted that balancing leadership roles alongside personal, academic, and financial concerns frequently results in feelings of being overwhelmed, ultimately diminishing

motivation and participation. This underscores the necessity for comprehensive support systems that take into account the diverse pressures faced by student leaders.

"When I felt that it had become quite a burden to me... I badly want to focus on other things."
IDI-P11L57-59

"The most significant challenges student leaders face are financial support from the school, no scholarship or allowance given to them, and the proposals submitted are often late when returned, and the budget is not approved." **FGD-P3L156-159**

Murage et al. (2019) observed that student leaders experiencing burnout frequently redirect their focus to aspects they find more manageable, which ultimately impacts their commitment. Sanchez and Clayton (2020) support this observation, highlighting that a lack of resources, particularly financial ones, undermines the effectiveness of leadership. Additionally, Goodrich (2022) argues that insufficient institutional support not only limits what student leaders can achieve but also encourages disengagement, as these leaders feel unsupported in their endeavors.

Fulfillment Through Leadership Activities

The analysis indicates that experiencing fulfillment from their leadership impact is essential in strengthening student leaders' commitment. Participants shared moments of pride and satisfaction when their efforts resulted in meaningful experiences for others, reinforcing their sense of purpose and encouraging ongoing engagement in leadership roles.

"One key experience that strengthened my commitment was organizing the BSIT program. Seeing my co-students engage and express their appreciation made me realize the impact of my role, reinforcing my dedication." **IDI-P5L88-91**

"It's such a feel-good moment when you see the fruits of your labor, when you see the activities happen, and then you see that everyone's enjoying, they're learning something." **FGD-P5L130-133**

Smist (2020) discovered that observing the positive impacts of leadership initiatives enhances student leaders' sense of fulfillment and purpose, thereby strengthening their commitment. Likewise, Chapman and Aspin (2021) emphasize that the tangible results of leadership, such as successful events and active participant engagement, act as significant internal motivators. These findings demonstrate that, in addition to facing challenges, the emotional rewards associated with leadership are crucial for maintaining long-term involvement.

Passion as a Driving Force for Commitment

The analysis highlights passion as a potent intrinsic motivator that drives student leaders' enduring commitment. For many, this passion stems from a desire to create a meaningful impact, enabling them to navigate challenges and uphold resilience despite the competing demands of leadership and academics.

"...my commitment was fueled by my passion for making a difference and supporting my fellow students."
IDI-P5L23-24

"I think that's what makes the student leaders, or for me, like what commitment is. It's because it's passion that's being reciprocated, you know, with actual concrete stuff." **FGD-P5L141-143**

Kezar and Moriarty (2020) assert that passion significantly enhances both personal fulfillment and leadership effectiveness, thereby increasing a student leader's likelihood of persisting through challenging times. Benoiel and Schechter (2024) expand on this idea by noting that the perception of meaningful outcomes strengthens commitment, particularly when leaders observe their passion reflected in tangible results. This demonstrates the reciprocal nature of passion in leadership—when passion drives positive change, it fosters ongoing engagement, underscoring the vital role of passion in sustaining long-term leadership involvement.

Personal Growth Through Leadership

Leadership within student organizations frequently catalyzes profound personal transformation. Participants noted that their experience as a student leader fundamentally improved them, highlighting that the burden of responsibility compelled them to mature and cultivate essential skills such as time management, decision-making, and accountability. This personal development is not merely a byproduct of leadership; rather, it is integral to the very essence of the leadership experience.

"...a lot has changed in me, in myself, because of being a student leader... I became more responsible in my tasks." IDI-P9L39-41

"Well, mistakes are part of the experiences that teach them the lesson to polish and improve." FGD-P3L10-11

Leadership within student organizations frequently catalyzes profound personal transformation. Participants noted that their experience as a student leader fundamentally improved them, highlighting that the burden of responsibility compelled them to mature and cultivate essential skills such as time management, decision-making, and accountability. This personal development is not merely a byproduct of leadership; rather, it is integral to the very essence of the leadership experience.

Reflections on Commitment and Leadership Roles

Participants frequently shared profound reflections on the significance of commitment in their leadership roles. IDI-P4 characterized commitment as a solemn oath, underscoring a deep sense of responsibility not only to peers but also to faculty and staff. This emphasizes how student leaders perceive their roles as more than just tasks; they see them as trust-based responsibilities that require accountability and personal sacrifice.

"So I think commitment for me is like a promise that you have to do it by what you have oath and what you have pledged to your colleagues, or especially with those students and the other organization, or teachers or staff in faculties, etc." IDI-P4L156-159

In contrast, certain participants expressed a more nuanced perspective. FGD-P5 contemplated the challenging balance between the advantages of leadership and the considerable stress and workload it demands. This prompted a critical reassessment of whether maintaining leadership roles is truly worthwhile, particularly when considering the toll on emotional and physical well-being. Such reflections shed light on why some student leaders ultimately withdraw from their positions, despite an initial commitment to serve.

"Is the benefit worth the cost of the additional workload and stress... they do join the organization and then eventually they decide that they don't want to anymore, or they would just want to do something else, or like step down into a lower role for another organization." FGD-P5L29-35

Supporting literature reinforces these views: Sessa et al. (2019) and Ranke (2023) highlight the moral responsibility inherent in leadership, while Murage et al. (2019) and Tucay et al. (2023) examine how the pressures of balancing multiple roles can lead to burnout, prompting leaders to reassess their commitments. This interplay between emotional investment and practical limitations is crucial for understanding the dynamics of student leadership.

Communication as a Crucial Factor in Leadership

The findings highlight that communication is essential for the success and sustainability of leadership within student organizations. Participants noted that without effective communication, clubs tend to face challenges in maintaining member engagement and progress, often resulting in an unequal distribution of responsibilities among officers. This emphasizes that communication serves not only as a means of information exchange but also as a vital tool for fostering inclusivity and sustaining motivation among all members.

"Communication within the club is crucial to keep it afloat... if it's just you and the officers, it becomes really difficult... recruiting more members helps, because if it's just the officers, it doesn't feel as engaging." **IDI-P12L62-65**

"Although in his first year, there were challenges in terms of team dynamics, communication, and, you know, the participation within the team... Mark took the initiative to handle everything, like the paperwork, and how he managed the members..." **FGD-P4L14-17**

Liu et al. (2023) emphasize that effective communication is a foundational element of collaborative leadership, fostering clarity, cohesion, and momentum. When communication breaks down, leaders encounter challenges in engaging their teams and maintaining organizational unity. Therefore, proactive communication from leaders is crucial for overcoming internal obstacles and ensuring sustained group functionality.

Lack of Initial Desire or Readiness to Lead

A prevalent challenge observed among student leaders is the absence of genuine desire or readiness to take on leadership roles. One participant noted that their leadership position was assigned based on seniority rather than through election or personal interest, resulting in feelings of disengagement and unpreparedness. This situation underscores how being placed in a leadership role without true enthusiasm can impede full commitment and effective performance.

"It was a challenge for me to maintain my commitment to being a student leader... I was not elected to be an officer... I was appointed... they see me as one of the eldest members." **IDI-P11L53-56**

"I think reminding them that they have someone to talk to is a big factor, especially when you're very engaging with your student leaders... they're still students. And there's always a place where they can learn something. And by engaging with them, surprisingly, I learned a lot of things as well." **FGD-P52L276-283**

Research conducted by Murage et al. (2019) and Patrick (2022) indicates that leaders who lack intrinsic motivation frequently encounter challenges in role alignment and commitment, making it difficult for them to engage their teams effectively. On the other hand, Goodrich (2022) highlights the positive impact of mentorship and peer support networks on enhancing leadership preparedness. These resources play a crucial role in fostering growth and facilitating the transition for reluctant leaders. This suggests that nurturing supportive environments can transform initial hesitance into meaningful engagement in leadership roles.

Lack of Knowledge and Interest in Leadership

A significant challenge encountered by student leaders is a lack of understanding and genuine interest in their roles. Participants acknowledged that they often engage only at a superficial level, which may stem from a limited grasp of leadership responsibilities or a lack of deeper commitment. This suggests that, in the absence of passion and interest, leaders may miss out on fully embracing the growth opportunities that their positions provide.

"I noticed that I was just doing the bare minimum." **IDI-P11L59-60**

"Some leaders, especially the student leaders, are very conditional, meaning if there is an activity, they will be active, but as time goes by, if there is no activity, then the point will be inactive." **FGD-P1L1-3**

Benoliel and Schechter (2024) acknowledge that effective leadership demands a level of passion that is often lacking in student organizations. Similarly, Sanchez and Clayton (2020) highlight that a lack of awareness restricts meaningful engagement. Kezar and Moriarty (2020) further assert that, without structured support and clear expectations, leaders remain inactive between activities, ultimately compromising sustainability. To counter this issue, enhancing awareness and providing ongoing leadership training can cultivate sustained commitment and improve organizational progress.

Peer and Social Influence on Leadership Role

A significant challenge encountered by student leaders is a lack of knowledge and authentic interest in their responsibilities. Participants acknowledged that they often only fulfill the bare minimum, which suggests a disengagement that may stem from a limited understanding of leadership duties or a lack of deeper commitment. This indicates that without passion or genuine interest, leaders may not fully engage with the growth opportunities available through their roles.

"I was just included as a student officer because of someone I knew back then, who was my batchmate... I didn't want to be a student leader." **IDI-P1L1-4**

Benoliel and Schechter (2024) highlight that effective leadership often demands a level of passion that is frequently lacking in student organizations. Similarly, Sanchez and Clayton (2020) point out that a lack of awareness hinders meaningful engagement. Kezar and Moriarty (2020) further contend that without structured support and clear expectations, leaders tend to become inactive between activities, which compromises sustainability. By increasing awareness and implementing continuous leadership training, organizations can foster sustained commitment and enhance overall progress.

Influence of Previous Leadership Roles on Current Commitment

Peer and social influences significantly shape students' involvement in leadership roles. One participant noted that their foray into leadership was primarily motivated by peer connections rather than personal ambition. This observation underscores how social dynamics often dictate the selection of leaders more than intrinsic motivation does. It illustrates how peer pressure and social expectations can compel students to take on leadership positions even when they lack a genuine desire or readiness for these roles.

"...the first one who influenced me was when I was a student leader back in the classroom... and through that, I started to think, what if this type of leadership could take me to a higher position or a bigger organization... that experience became something I used to become more committed because I know how important it is to be a student leader, as it involves leading all the students in an institution." **IDI-P9L111-117**

Benoliel and Schechter (2024) highlight that external factors, such as peer expectations, can significantly influence leadership commitment. Northouse (2021) points out that while peer pressure can serve as a motivating force, it may also hinder authentic engagement. Furthermore, previous leadership experiences establish a foundation for a deeper sense of commitment and accountability in future roles, as noted by both Northouse (2021) and Smist (2020). This underscores the notion that leadership is a meaningful and impactful responsibility that extends beyond mere task management.

External Encouragement and Mentorship

External encouragement and mentorship serve as pivotal catalysts in the development of a student's leadership journey. Participants articulated that mentors who recognize and nurture their passions motivate them to assume leadership roles, providing a sense of validation and purpose that enhances their commitment. This type of mentorship extends beyond mere guidance; it focuses on identifying intrinsic qualities while inspiring students to contribute meaningfully to their communities.

"Because of my mentor, Ma'am Alona, she saw my passion as an artist, so she encouraged me to pursue that position." **IDI-P14L138-140**

"Family encouragement, peer influence, and the example of previous student leaders play a big role." **FGD-P2L40-41**

Hastings and Sunderman (2020) emphasize that mentorship plays a crucial role in developing key leadership skills, including decision-making, problem-solving, and interpersonal communication, all of which are vital for long-term engagement. Likewise, Ehlinger and Ropers (2020) underscore the significance of social support

networks, such as family, peers, and role models, in nurturing confidence and sustaining commitment to leadership over time.

Peer influence as motivation

Peer influence has emerged as a crucial motivator for students seeking leadership roles within clubs and organizations. Participants noted that encouragement from classmates, particularly during election periods, played a vital role in alleviating fears and boosting confidence to pursue these positions. This support not only fostered a sense of belonging but also cultivated accountability, demonstrating how peer groups can effectively inspire participation through emotional reinforcement and collective encouragement.

"... during the pre-election or the election time... my classmates are running for the positions and they badly needed someone to take a role... I have friends back as well, they have supported me well, and that motivated me to pursue this position." IDI-P7L24-25

"Motivation is infectious sometimes. You see someone do great things, and then the usual reaction is, Oh, I want to be like that, right? That's why we have our role models and other stuff like that, because we see people in their element doing the thing that they love genuinely..." FGD-P5L65-71

Zvobgo et al. (2023) assert that peer validation enhances the confidence of student leaders by normalizing and celebrating their leadership aspirations. Furthermore, Ehlinger and Ropers (2020) emphasize that peer role models provide concrete examples of success, motivating students to pursue leadership through both direct encouragement and aspirational modeling.

Lack of strong motivation

A significant aspect of external influences and social pressures is the lack of strong initial motivation among certain student leaders. Participants noted that many did not initially intend to run for leadership positions but were instead appointed or stepped in due to assumptions about the manageability of responsibilities or a lack of willing candidates. This reactive involvement often results in difficulties once the realities of leadership duties become apparent. However, commitment can evolve as these individuals develop a greater sense of responsibility toward those they serve.

"...I never planned to run for an officer position. Since I was just appointed, I thought I was just being tricked by our governor, thinking my job would be easy. But it turned out to be exhausting because, of course, the work depends on the position you're given. But I was motivated to join because of the students we were leading; that was the reason." IDI-P6L18-23

"I think that's a motivation I've noticed. When people say, No one will step up, so I'll just step up. It's out of sheer annoyance. But more of them see that there's an issue and then they want to rectify it... So, there's like that stubborn want to be able to help, but at the same time, there's a reluctance." FGD-P5L19-21

Zvobgo et al. (2023) note that leadership engagement arising from external appointments frequently results from circumstance rather than a genuine desire to lead. Ehlinger and Ropers (2020) emphasize that while initial reluctance can prompt participation, sustained commitment depends on nurturing intrinsic motivation to avoid burnout. Therefore, leadership roles assumed out of necessity must be carefully cultivated to transform hesitant involvement into authentic dedication.

External invitation as primary motivator

External invitations from authority figures significantly influence students' motivation to join clubs and organizations. Participants noted that encouragement from teachers or mentors served as a vital catalyst for their involvement, emphasizing that these opportunities are perceived as unique experiences during their college years. This underscores the powerful impact that respected individuals can have in inspiring students to step outside their comfort zones and embrace leadership roles.

"...what motivated me was my former teacher, Ma'am Ethel Derain. She told us before that she encouraged us to join because participating in clubs is something rare once you're in college. After college, it's all about reality. There won't be as much excitement anymore. So that's why I joined; I was encouraged to join, and I stood by it." IDI-P13L59-64

This is consistent with the findings of Zvobgo et al. (2023), which emphasize that mentorship and personal endorsements from influential individuals play a crucial role in motivating students to participate in leadership initiatives. This underscores the significance of external support mechanisms in fostering leadership development among students.

Desire for experience, learning, and fulfillment

The pursuit of experience, knowledge, and personal fulfillment is a significant component of intrinsic motivation among student leaders. Participants highlighted that leadership presents opportunities for growth, self-discovery, and confidence-building, all of which they greatly appreciate. For many, the process of overcoming challenges and gaining new skills lends a fulfilling sense of purpose that deepens their connection to their roles.

"The experience that you can get of being a student leader and the learning...also the fulfillment of joy and happiness." IDI-P4L13-15

"...and develop their leadership skills. Some also join to gain experience, build confidence, or meet new people." FGD-P2L7-8

This is consistent with the findings of Phillips et al. (2023), who discovered that students intrinsically motivated by personal development demonstrate greater commitment and persistence in leadership positions. Additionally, Zhao et al. (2021) further support the idea that participation in organizations aligned with students' interests enhances their commitment, as these roles resonate with their goals and values. Therefore, the combined benefits of professional growth and social connection strengthen the intrinsic motivations that drive sustained engagement in leadership.

Personal Growth or Skill Development

Personal growth and skill development are prominent motivators for student leaders to assume leadership roles. Participants indicated that the chance to refine skills such as communication, decision-making, and problem-solving was a primary reason for embracing leadership responsibilities. This highlights intrinsic motivation, emphasizing not only the outcomes of leadership but also the valuable journey of self-improvement.

"Because of my desire to enhance my skills... and also because of the people who uplift me." IDI-P9L107-108

"...and their passion to lead and make other people happy will reciprocate their efforts all in all." FGD-P3L10-11

Research conducted by Sormani et al. (2021) reinforces these findings, indicating that leadership experiences foster essential competencies vital for academic success and future careers. The authors also emphasize that intrinsic motivators, such as personal growth and the desire to assist others, promote sustained engagement and enhanced performance. This underscores the notion that leadership roles act as transformative platforms for skill development and enduring commitment.

Social Responsibility and Helping Others

A profound sense of social responsibility inspires numerous student leaders to take on organizational roles. Participants noted that their past volunteer experiences and a genuine desire to assist others motivated them to pursue and dedicate themselves to leadership positions within their school communities. This intrinsic urge to

give back not only brings them fulfillment but also strengthens their commitment to various leadership responsibilities.

"...being a volunteer in our municipality...serving those youths...those experiences molded me and influenced me to engage in different organizations and clubs in this institution" IDI-P4L81-84.

"Many student leaders are motivated by a desire to help others, improve the school community..."

FGD-P2L6-7

Hong et al. (2021) discovered that students driven by a sense of social responsibility exhibit increased resilience and sustained engagement in leadership positions. They highlight that when leadership is perceived as a means to make a meaningful impact, commitment deepens and becomes more enduring. This altruistic motivation reinforces students' connection to their organization's mission, promoting a continuous investment of effort and time.

Sense of Duty and Responsibility

A fundamental element of altruism and values-driven motivation among student leaders is a profound sense of duty that drives them to assume leadership positions. Participants shared that the fear of leaving their organizations without guidance or in the hands of the unprepared often motivated them to step forward, even when they felt unprepared themselves. This selfless sense of responsibility illustrates a moral obligation to serve their peers and to ensure the ongoing success and stability of their organizations.

"I decided to take on the role for the reason that I was afraid that someone would take over the position who is both not ready and is incapable... no one would take the position, so I just had no other choice but to take the position or else, nobody would lead us." IDI-P11L113-119

"...if I don't step up, no one's going to..." FGD-P5L25

Correia-Harker and Dugan (2020) provide evidence supporting the notion that numerous student leaders operate from a sense of accountability for the welfare of their community. Additionally, Marigmen et al. (2024) emphasize that this sense of responsibility plays a crucial role in sustaining leadership commitment, thereby motivating students to remain engaged in their activities, even when faced with challenges.

Desire to contribute through meaningful programs

A key driving force for student leaders is their intrinsic motivation to effect positive change through the development of impactful programs designed for their peers. Participants indicated that leadership roles provide a critical platform for initiating transformative initiatives and crafting enriching experiences within the student body, underscoring a profound commitment to altruism and community betterment.

"I saw student leadership as an opportunity to create meaningful programs that could benefit my peers." IDI-P5L16-17

"Others are inspired by their passion to serve or the opportunity to make a difference in their school." FGD-P2L41-42

Ehlinger and Ropers (2020) highlight that these leaders place the needs of their peers above personal accolades, perceiving their roles as avenues to tackle collective challenges rather than merely exerting power. Additionally, Zhao et al. (2021) reinforce the notion that a passion for community service cultivates greater commitment and ongoing involvement. This illustrates how the development of meaningful programs enhances student leaders' engagement and dedication.

Collaboration and Team Building

Collaboration and team building have proven to be crucial elements in creating strong and effective leadership teams. Participants emphasized that fostering trust and mutual respect from the outset is essential to avoid misunderstandings that could hinder student-led initiatives. This highlights the significance of cultivating interpersonal connections, where team members feel secure in sharing their ideas and actively participating.

"First, it is important to note that building strong and good relationships is a foundation of a smooth and productive collaboration between groups. If this is not present in the first place, the tendency is that there would be misunderstanding, miscommunication, misinterpretation, and all sorts of negative feelings that wouldn't help to improve the school community at all. If a good bond is established, it would be easier to share ideas during meetings and communicate each other's thoughts without feeling shy, afraid of being judged, or even anxious." IDI-P11L269-277

"Regular leadership forums, planning workshops, and joint projects with other clubs can encourage teamwork and the exchange of ideas." FGD-P2L253-255

Gross (2021) reinforces these findings, indicating that team-building activities not only strengthen relationships but also boost leaders' confidence. In a similar vein, Ascione (2024) highlights that regular workshops and collaborative events promote creativity, mutual learning, and a collective sense of ownership, all of which are essential for effective leadership and heightened student engagement.

Importance of Communication

Effective communication is essential for enhancing the engagement and commitment of student leaders. Participants identified that facilitating open dialogue not only encourages collaboration but also mitigates conflict, thereby streamlining the problem-solving process. This underscores the critical role of transparent communication in cultivating a unified sense of purpose and reinforcing the intrinsic value of each member within the organizational structure.

"Communication is very important, especially in times when collaboration is crucial for everyone, because each person's idea is very important, especially when challenges arise within an organization. It's very important to help find solutions to a problem more easily... if communication is not open, there's a possibility that conflicts may arise because not everyone agrees with others' opinions." IDI-P9L53-59

"Allowing them to have a voice in decision-making also helps increase their sense of responsibility." FGD-P2L6-8

Hassell-Goodman et al. (2024) discovered that leadership programs that promote open communication significantly enhance student engagement by making students feel understood and motivated. Similarly, Gross (2021) emphasizes that communication within collaborative workshops fosters cohesion and encourages long-term participation. Furthermore, findings from the NSLS (2024) highlight that participatory leadership, where students are involved in key decision-making, not only cultivates civic responsibility but also strengthens their commitment and sense of ownership in leadership roles.

Open Forums and Discussions

In student leadership, effective communication and collaboration are essential for maintaining engagement and commitment. One valuable strategy is the implementation of open forums, which provide a platform for students to express their concerns, share ideas, and discuss challenges related to leadership. This practice promotes transparency and fosters trust, ensuring that leaders feel acknowledged and involved in organizational decision-making.

"I think an open forum will be the right thing to do Open forum for those students who have a high concern for the administration or whatsoever that they did not agree with in their organizations, especially with their departments." IDI-P4L233-236

"Open forum must be a field of discussing possible events, or a small group discussion."
FGD-P3L258-259

As noted by Hassell-Goodman et al. (2024) and Risku and Holder (2024), open forums foster inclusive environments that encourage active participation and collaboration. These forums enhance critical thinking and facilitate collective decision-making, ultimately reinforcing a culture of openness and shared responsibility. Consequently, they prove to be invaluable instruments in sustaining student leaders' motivation, engagement, and long-term commitment.

Barriers to Effective Communication and Collaboration

Effective communication and collaboration are crucial for maintaining student leaders' engagement and commitment. However, several barriers can hinder these processes, including a lack of trust, identity-related issues, and limited communication skills. Participants voiced concerns about the challenges they face in obtaining approval for event proposals, often due to scheduling conflicts and time constraints.

"When it comes to proposing again, we also have some yearly events. But not all of them get approved. It's because, they say, it conflicts with the schedule or there's not enough time." **IDI-P13L201-203**

"...the root problem... is caused by it because if it's just a problem with people that can't commit because of maybe emotional, they can't commit, or more of, they don't have the proper motivation..." **FGD-P5L50-53**

These frustrations highlight how organizational and emotional challenges can undermine the motivation of student leaders. Risku and Holder (2024) emphasize that identity-based barriers and ineffective communication contribute to disengagement by breeding distrust and hindering decision-making. Additionally, emotional factors—such as feelings of being unsupported or unrecognized—further weaken a leader's commitment. To address these issues, Hassell-Goodman et al. (2024) recommend fostering transparent communication and providing regular, structured feedback.

Institutional Support Systems

The analysis highlights that effective institutional support systems play a crucial role in fostering sustained student leadership engagement. Participants emphasized that access to mentorship, resources, and moral support significantly enhances their motivation and reinforces their commitment to leadership roles. This underscores the idea that institutional backing not only equips student leaders with essential tools but also cultivates their sense of responsibility and purpose within their organizations.

"Having enough support system, genuine will, and courage to do something that will bring good change can help to strengthen one's commitment." **IDI-P11L63-65**

"That's why I feel like the important thing is when they sympathize, they're able to make these activities. They're able to ask the questions: What do the students need? What do the students want? Right?" **FGD-P5L143-146**

Henry (2019) highlights that institutions with well-structured leadership programs and mentorship opportunities experience greater engagement among student leaders. In a similar vein, Ascione (2024) emphasizes the importance of participatory decision-making in nurturing a sense of ownership among students. These insights illustrate that a collaborative and empathetic institutional environment promotes proactive leadership and fosters long-term student involvement.

Financial Support and Budgeting

The provision of financial support and resources is a crucial element in maintaining student leaders' engagement and commitment. Participants highlighted that institutional funding enables student organizations to execute programs that align with their vision, thereby making leadership roles more meaningful and

effective. This underscores the significance of tangible support in empowering student leaders to fulfill their responsibilities without the burden of financial constraints.

"Financial support from the institution would be a great help to implement and materialize the organization's vision." IDI-P11L176-177

"Discount in tuition fees, scholarship program, and small allowances given to them if the event is a long day or a long week." FGD-P3L100-101

Henry (2019) noted that access to financial resources significantly enhances both engagement and satisfaction among student leaders. In a similar vein, NSLS (2024) emphasizes that scholarships and financial incentives alleviate stress and improve focus, resulting in greater commitment to leadership roles. Furthermore, Berlanga and Corti (2025) confirm that students receiving financial aid often excel academically and exhibit a stronger commitment to their leadership responsibilities, highlighting that financial support serves not only a practical purpose but also acts as a potent motivational tool.

Leadership Impact and Recognition

Recognition and reward systems emerge as effective strategies for sustaining student leaders' commitment to their roles. Participants highlighted that being acknowledged through awards or public recognition fosters a sense of value and belonging, which enhances their motivation to continue serving in leadership positions. These affirmations serve as positive reinforcement, validating their efforts and encouraging long-term engagement.

"Recognizing and rewarding efforts can also help sustain commitment." IDI-P5L24

"Creating a reward or incentive system can also motivate student leaders to stay committed." FGD-P2L317-318

The National Society of Leadership and Success (NSLS, 2024) emphasizes that both formal and informal recognition systems play a crucial role in enhancing intrinsic motivation and perseverance. Similarly, Henry (2019) and Harrison and McGowan (2020) contend that institutions with well-structured reward systems—ranging from public recognition to scholarships—tend to see greater engagement from student leaders. These systems not only alleviate practical challenges but also cultivate a leadership culture where commitment and excellence are consistently acknowledged and nurtured.

Transparency

Transparency in leadership is crucial for fostering trust and maintaining commitment among student leaders. Participants noted that being open about decisions and actions helps uphold organizational integrity and ensures that everyone remains aligned with common goals. This openness promotes accountability and cultivates an environment where leaders are approachable and members feel valued and respected.

"...also, be transparent with what you're doing because it will reflect on your whole organization..." IDI-P12L66-68

"...be honest. If there is some request, even though we are almost one meter ahead of one by signing those permits, it will take at least one month... so I hope the permit or the ASAP should be given to the student leaders." FGD-P1L92-95

Hassell-Goodman et al. (2024) assert that transparency fosters a culture of accountability. In contrast, Gross (2021) emphasizes that a deficiency in clear communication can result in disengagement and burnout. These insights highlight the significance of sharing challenges, communicating progress, and establishing realistic timelines to maintain motivation and alleviate stress among student leaders.

Effective Planning and Time Management

Effective time management and strategic planning are essential for student leaders who must balance academic, organizational, and personal responsibilities. Participants highlighted that, without clear priorities and proper planning, student leaders may struggle to meet expectations. This underscores the fact that time management goes beyond mere scheduling; it encompasses prioritization and the structured management of tasks.

"...as a student leader, you should know how to manage your time because you need to balance your academics, your responsibilities in the organization, and also your personal life." IDI-P8L49-51

"Yes, implementing policies that promote a better balance between academics and leadership, such as flexible deadlines or excused absences for official duties, could be helpful." FGD-P2L315-317

Boda (2022) emphasizes that time management tools, including the Eisenhower Matrix and the Pomodoro Technique, are effective for managing competing demands. These methods help prevent burnout while enhancing productivity. Moreover, research indicates that institutions that provide flexible policies, such as extended deadlines or accommodations for leadership roles, cultivate supportive environments that improve commitment and leadership effectiveness. These strategies highlight the crucial importance of institutional support in aiding student leaders to thrive academically and in their leadership responsibilities.

Commitment and Accountability

Participants expressed frustration with student leaders who resign due to a lack of preparedness, stressing that such decisions adversely impact the continuity and stability of student organizations. This underscores the importance of approaching leadership roles with a commitment to the long term, where leaders are accountable not just to themselves but also to their peers and the institution.

"A leadership position is not a joke. You must think about taking one repeatedly so as not to disrupt the organization once you step down for some lame reasons. It's frustrating, like, 'What pushed you to run for a position only to end up stepping down because you're not ready or because you suddenly don't feel like it? Are you for real???' IDI-P11L409-404

"Yes, there should be a new structure for the student, for example of the student should be, and it should begin with the OSAS." FGD-P1L312-313

This viewpoint emphasizes the necessity of an accountable leadership structure that guarantees individuals in these roles are appropriately prepared and genuinely invested. Kroll (2024) advocates for the incorporation of accountability mechanisms, such as regular evaluations and reflective practices, into leadership training. These measures assist student leaders in internalizing their responsibilities and sustaining their commitment, ultimately preventing impulsive resignations that could disrupt student governance and organizational operations.

Clear goals and vision

The significance of strategic planning in cultivating student leader commitment is highlighted by the necessity of clear advocacy and thorough preparation before elections. Participants emphasized that student parties should enter the electoral process with well-defined advocacies and organized plans, which not only equip candidates but also inspire them with a clear vision for their leadership term. The participant also underscored the role of the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) in encouraging aspiring leaders to formulate these plans, thus reinforcing their commitment by providing a clear roadmap for success.

"In terms of policies, before the election, there should already be formed parties with ready advocacies and plans when the campaign day arrives... so the COMELEC should do their best to encourage students to run. And also, lastly, student leaders should follow the Constitution and By-laws because that's their basis on how to handle the organization." IDI-P9L286-292

"The OSAS may conduct and facilitate the collaboration of all leaders so that, in line with our vision, mission, and goal of Davao Central College." FGD-P1L248-250

This approach aligns with institutional goals and strengthens leadership commitment by clarifying roles and expectations, which in turn helps to mitigate burnout and disengagement (Ascione, 2024; Henry, 2019). Regarding collaboration, Participants emphasized that the Office of Student Affairs and Services (OSAS) can facilitate coordination among student leaders, ensuring that organizational efforts align with the institution's vision and mission. Such collaboration nurtures a cohesive leadership environment where accountability and shared objectives enhance sustained engagement. Research indicates that collaboration among student leaders fosters accountability and a focus on long-term campus goals, thereby reinforcing commitment throughout their tenure (Gross, 2021; Kroll, 2024).

Commitment to Leadership

The commitment to leadership within student organizations is closely tied to the expectations and accountability frameworks established for student leaders. Participants emphasized that setting clear conditions enables leaders to genuinely evaluate their dedication, thereby reducing the likelihood of abandoning responsibilities over trivial matters. This underscores the importance of robust structures that hold leaders accountable while fostering sustained commitment.

"Another thing is that there should be a set of conditions for student leaders that will make them think if they are committed enough to take on the responsibility. A student leader must not step down from his/her position because of some petty excuses/reasons." IDI-P11L405-409

"You let the students be free with it, right? It's like a blank canvas, and then you let them paint how they want to." FGD-P5L381-383

Henry (2019) posits that institutions should provide substantial support, such as mentorship and leadership training, to promote long-term engagement and mitigative disengagement. In alignment with this perspective, Participants emphasized that granting students the autonomy to shape their leadership journeys—akin to painting on a blank canvas—nurtures a sense of ownership and personal responsibility. The National Society of Leadership and Success (NSLS, 2024) reinforces this notion, demonstrating that interactive leadership programs enhance students' sense of responsibility and motivation. When students are empowered and adequately supported, they are more likely to remain committed and carry out their roles with enthusiasm and accountability.

Leadership Training and Development

Leadership training and development are vital for promoting continuous growth and support among student leaders through organized programs and mentorship. Participants emphasized that these initiatives are essential tools for enhancing engagement by offering opportunities for personal and professional growth, confidence-building, and skill development. These programs enable student leaders to manage their responsibilities effectively, navigate challenges, and cultivate their leadership styles.

"Implementing mentorship programs, providing leadership training, and creating a support system among student leaders can enhance engagement." IDI-P5L22-23

"Providing leadership training, organizing regular mentoring sessions, and recognizing their achievements can improve their engagement." FGD-P2L5-6

Harrison and McGowan (2020) underscore the effectiveness of peer mentorship and ongoing leadership programs, demonstrating that continual training equips leaders with the essential tools for success. In the focus group discussion, Participants also acknowledged the positive influence of leadership training on engagement, suggesting that pairing training with recognition of achievements further enhances commitment. This combination not only builds competence but also reinforces the value of student leaders' contributions. The

National Society of Leadership and Success (NSLS, 2024) supports these conclusions, highlighting the importance of interactive leadership activities that foster practical skills.

Understanding the role

A clear understanding of the leadership role is essential for fostering commitment and engagement among student leaders. Participants emphasized the importance of intentional self-reflection regarding their motivations for running and a strong dedication to fulfilling leadership responsibilities. This deliberate decision-making process ensures that leaders are aware of and prepared to embrace their duties throughout their term.

"...like you should... think about why you are running for that role, and you should, you know, really commit to that role and fulfill it until the end of the academic year." IDI-P3L14-17

"They have to be able to see that you guys need that freedom, just from academics. Because they've been there. Of all the people who would know, it would be the older people. Because I've been there. They've been there. They had their college days. They had their high school days." FGD-P5L115-119

This perspective aligns with findings from the National Society of Leadership and Success (NSLS, 2024), which highlight that leaders who fully comprehend the breadth of their roles tend to sustain engagement and navigate challenges more effectively, fostering a positive environment for themselves and their peers. Furthermore, senior leaders play a vital mentoring role by sharing their experiences and guiding younger leaders, as noted by Participants. Harrison and McGowan (2020) support this notion, demonstrating that peer mentorship enhances leadership capacity by deepening understanding and commitment. Such mentorship not only prepares emerging leaders but also reinforces the significance of leadership responsibilities, ensuring continuity and growth within student organizations.

Assessing capability

Effective leadership hinges on the selection of individuals who are capable, knowledgeable, and experienced in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities. Participants highlighted the significance of assessing a candidate's background and credentials to ensure that only the most qualified individuals take on leadership positions. This perspective aligns with the increasing focus on competency-based selection processes that prioritize skills and preparedness alongside good intentions.

"In applying or vying for a leadership position, it is important to check a person's capability and background. That should be a rule when someone wants to run for a position. That includes the credentials and referrals to make sure that the person who wants to be in a leadership position is really deserving and knowledgeable enough." IDI-P11L399-403

Research conducted by Henry (2019) and Gross (2021) underscores the importance of evaluating leadership potential prior to students assuming office. Such assessments are correlated with more successful leadership tenures and increased engagement. By ensuring that leaders are adequately prepared and competent, institutions can cultivate more effective and committed student leaders, ultimately enhancing the performance and impact of student governments and organizations.

Leadership Attitudes and Compatibility

Leadership attitudes and compatibility play a crucial role in shaping the experiences and effectiveness of student leaders. Authoritarian approaches can create communication barriers, hindering collaboration and leading to misunderstandings and fractured team dynamics. In contrast, leaders who embody openness, relatability, and adaptability are more likely to cultivate positive relationships and foster cohesive teams.

"...so others should not act like they are above everyone just because they are an officer. They should not carry themselves in a way that is hard to understand or with a very high standard for themselves, like some attitudes

that are hard to comprehend. Not everyone is like this, but there are some who, I don't know, I just can't understand." IDI-P1L2-5

"When we collaborate... we can make them work together." FGD-P5L369-372

Research conducted by Gross (2021) and Hassell-Goodman et al. (2024) underscores the importance of emotional intelligence, flexibility, and self-awareness in making leaders more approachable, thereby fostering trust and collaboration. Participants emphasized that collaborative leadership enhances engagement and commitment through effective teamwork. This perspective aligns with the principles of Binghamton University's Transformational Leaders Program (2022) and Ascione (2024), both of which advocate for team-building and interactive activities to improve leadership adaptability and strengthen group cohesion.

Motivating leadership continuation

Sustaining student leaders' commitment hinges on recognizing the key factors that influence their decision to continue or step back from their roles. For many, the opportunity to apply leadership skills and observe tangible outcomes serves as a significant motivator. Furthermore, support from faculty and peers is essential in maintaining their motivation throughout their tenure.

"I think the participation of those students who are enrolled in this institution will mold those students' leaders to pursue another career in their lives and give them the motivation to continue the leadership that they have started." IDI-P4L18-21

"We try our best to motivate the leaders, we try our best to encourage them to try for activities and stuff... they would see their work coming to fruition. So, of course, they'd be more motivated." FGD-P5L79-80

Research conducted by Henry (2019) indicates that leadership programs that integrate goal-setting, mentoring, and recognition significantly enhance ongoing commitment among student leaders. The provision of regular feedback and public acknowledgment establishes a positive reinforcement cycle that boosts motivation. Similarly, Hassell-Goodman et al. (2024) underscore the importance of open communication and transparent recognition systems in maintaining student leaders' engagement and sense of value.

Leader disengagement

Leader disengagement frequently arises from a confluence of individual and contextual factors that diminish student leaders' intrinsic motivation and commitment. As noted in Participants, adverse behaviors exhibited by peer leaders can instigate doubts regarding one's leadership ambitions, thereby demonstrating how detrimental interpersonal dynamics can undermine overall dedication to leadership roles.

"...that's what I've noticed now, because why did I leave there, why didn't I pursue becoming a leader or take over as an officer? It's because of their behavior..." IDI-P1L5-8

"So, we have very efficient students, who are very eager and motivated to do things, but there is no support from the adults who wish to see these people thrive... It's a demotivating factor because it happens every time, and eventually you stop wanting to do that." FGD-P5L27-28

Research conducted by Gross (2021) indicates that miscommunication and insufficient support within leadership groups foster toxic environments, leading to disengagement. A deterioration of trust and cohesion diminishes leaders' sense of belonging, heightening the likelihood of their withdrawal. Similarly, studies underscore that without robust institutional support and mentorship, student leaders are more prone to becoming demotivated and resigning from their roles (NSLS, 2024; Henry, 2019).

IMPLICATIONS

The study highlights a range of challenges faced by student leaders at Davao Central College in maintaining their commitment throughout their tenure. Key experiences identified include the struggle to balance academic

responsibilities with leadership duties, which often results in stress and emotional fatigue. Despite these challenges, student leaders frequently find motivation in personal growth, a sense of fulfillment from making a difference, and the intrinsic rewards that come with leadership. Reflective processes, such as reevaluating the costs and benefits of leadership, play a significant role in decision-making, as leaders consider the emotional and physical toll of their responsibilities. Furthermore, the lack of preparedness and knowledge regarding leadership adds complexity to students' commitment to their roles. Social and environmental factors, including peer pressure and past experiences, significantly influence leaders' decisions to persist in or step away from leadership positions. The findings strongly support the relevance of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Organizational Commitment Theory in understanding student leadership commitment. SDT underscores the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in fostering intrinsic motivation, which is evident in the experiences of student leaders. Similarly, Organizational Commitment Theory provides insight into the emotional attachment (affective commitment) and sense of duty (normative commitment) observed in student leaders. The pressures and challenges they encounter, along with intrinsic rewards, significantly impact their levels of commitment. Ultimately, the study suggests that providing support for student leaders in navigating these challenges, through institutional and structural measures, can promote sustained engagement in leadership roles and reduce burnout. This alignment underscores the significance of these theoretical frameworks in informing institutional strategies and offers valuable insights for enhancing student governance at Davao Central College.

Future Directions

Educational institutions beyond Davao Central College could benefit from this study to enhance their governance by creating environments that promote sustained student leadership through academic, emotional, and incentive-based interventions. Within Davao Central College, the administration is encouraged to adopt strategies that foster leadership continuity and engagement, emphasizing resilience, scholarship, and holistic student development. The Office of Student Affairs and Services (OSAS) may implement targeted programs aimed at addressing leadership burnout and disengagement, incorporating stress management, mentorship, and time-management initiatives. Clubs and organizations can refine their recruitment and retention strategies by cultivating supportive environments where student leaders feel valued, equipped, and guided in their personal and professional growth. Moderators can enhance their mentoring practices by identifying early signs of disengagement and providing timely, individualized interventions to strengthen organizational leadership. Current and aspiring student leaders are empowered to navigate the complexities of their roles while balancing responsibilities and maintaining well-being, all while making meaningful contributions to their communities. Lastly, future researchers are encouraged to build upon this study by exploring additional factors that influence leadership commitment, thereby contributing to more targeted and sustainable strategies that nurture student leadership across various institutions.

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