

Leadership Competence of Supreme Student Government Officials

MARLUMINA B. TEH

mbteh@universityofbohol.edu.ph
<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4654-990X>

MARLO A. MAHUMOT

mahumotmarlo09@gmail.com
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6712-1750>

ROXANIEL P. CAVAN

roxanielcavan5@gmail.com
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9511-9802>

NIMROD REX Q. OJENDRAS

nimrodrexojendras9@gmail.com
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5466-3887>

ABSTRACT

Leadership competence is the ability to exercise the prescribed skills and behavior of a given task. The responsibilities that the University of Bohol Supreme Student Government (UBSSG) officials are facing involve the transitioning quickly from their usual daily teenage activities to that of being young leaders. In this connection, the researchers deemed it imperative to assess the leadership competence of the UBSSG officials for the school year 2018-2019. This study used a standardized descriptive questionnaire as the main instrument in gathering data from the target respondents. The findings show that the highest-rated leadership competencies of UBSSG were Diversity Learning (Very Competent), Self-

Responsibility (Very Competent) and Integrity (Very Competent); and the three lowest-rated leadership competencies of UB SSG are Cross-functional Teamwork (Moderately Competent), Business Acumen (Moderately Competent), and Empowerment (Very Competent). The overall composite mean is 3.38 (Very Competent). The researchers are hopeful that those concerned will take into consideration the findings of this study and take steps that include but not limited to the conduct of financial management training for sustainable finances, team-building activities and linkages among departments.

Keywords: leadership competence, student leadership, student government, descriptive, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Leadership competencies are leadership skills and behaviors that contribute to superior performance. By using a competency-based approach to leadership, organizations can better identify and develop their next generation of leaders (Brownwell, 2006). In paragraph six of ASEAN declaration on the Adoption of the ASEAN Youth Development Index (ASEAN, 2017) states that the age range of the youth is a critical time for them to realize their capabilities through gainful and rewarding employment, educational opportunities, health and well-being, and participation and engagement.

A student government serves as a training ground for future leaders. Hopefully, those individuals who have traversed the wonderful opportunity given by the school may inculcate in their minds the sustainable development goals or global goals which encompasses action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure peace and prosperity, etc.; and leadership values together with the characteristics of good governance as they go through with their field of interest. Good governance encompasses participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus orientation, equity, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability and strategic vision (UNDP, 1997).

The youth are said to be the future of a nation. As such, they must be trained well for the future. They must be equipped with the knowledge and skills that the leaders of today have. The moment these young leaders reach the age of majority, they will be prepared to take the mantle of responsibility. Since they were inculcated with good values while serving in school, they will be expected to act according what is right and just

leading towards good governance. The duties and responsibilities that the University of Bohol Supreme Student Government (UBSSG) officials face involve transitioning quickly from their usual daily teenage activities to that of being young leaders. Thus, it is necessary to make them realize, the purpose why the UBSSG was instituted in the first place. Hence this study is conducted.

In school, the student government is a governing body which carries the voice of the student community to the administrators and promotes harmony through the imposition of rules and regulations. The UBSSG is patterned after the setup of the Philippine government. Presently, only the judicial branch is missing. Since it is democratic and conducts election, new sets of officials appear after the end of each term usually per annum. Therefore, it is inevitable that there are some who are novices in the position they ascend to and thus, they find it difficult as they go through with their duties and responsibilities. The challenge here does begin after the end of the elections and extends until the ends of their terms. The UBSSG officials take a big responsibility since they lead the student community. This justifies the emphasis placed on leadership development for the Supreme Student Government Officials of the University of Bohol.

Achievement Motivation Theory. This theory is also referred to as the Acquired Needs Theory or the Learned Needs Theory, developed by David Clarence McClelland, an American psychologist. It attempts to explain and predict behavior and performance based on a person's need for achievement, power, and affiliation (Luissier and Achua, 2007).

Need for Achievement. McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, and Lowell (1958) defined the need for Achievement as competition which concerned on standards of excellence. Daft (2008) also stated that the need for Achievement is the desirable accomplishment of something which is difficult, master of multiple tasks and have a high standard of success.

Leadership Style Theory. Kurt Lewin and his associates identified the following two basic leadership styles (Lewin, Lippett & White, 1939):

Autocratic leadership style - The decision is in the hand of a leader, tells employees what to do and closely supervises works (Lewin, et al 1939); (Likert, 1967).

Democratic leadership style - Participation in the decision is the highlight in democratic leadership style, works with employees to determine what to do and does not closely supervise employees. (Lewin, et al. 1939); (Likert, 1967).

Fiedler's Contingency Leadership Theory. Fiedler believed that leadership style is influenced by the leader's personality and behavior.

Leaders do not change their leadership style; they only change the situation (House & Aditya, 1997).

Path-goal Leadership Theory. Robert House developed this Theory and attempted to explain how the behavior of a leader influences the performance and satisfaction of the followers (House & Aditya, 1997). According to House (1971), the Path-goal Leadership Theory consists of the following factors: Situational factors; Environmental factors; and Leadership styles.

Bass' Theory of Transformational Leadership. Bass (1985) defines transformational leadership theory in terms of the leader's impact on followers. Leaders are motivated to do more than what was originally expected because of followers' trust, admire and respect. According to Bass, a leader can transform followers by acquainting them more to be aware of the importance and value of task outcomes; inculcating them the importance of teamwork; heightened their higher-order needs. Further, he views transformational leadership as more than just another term for charisma, which, according to him, "charisma is a necessary ingredient of transformational leadership, but by itself it is not sufficient to account for the transformational process".

Servant-leadership. Servant-leadership is an employee-focused of leadership which empowers followers to make decisions and keep control of their jobs. Servant-leadership is leadership that transcends self-interest in order to serve the needs of others, by helping them grow professionally and emotionally (Daft, 1999). According to Greenleaf (1997), the key to servant-leadership is based on the following four supporting values, to wit: Strong teamwork orientation; Decentralized decision-making and power; Equality assumption; and Reward assumption.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). SDG or Global Goals are universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity (UN - Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2019). Supreme Student Government serves as the training ground of students on leadership while they are in school. This student body is geared towards the application of primary steps of the global goals —end all forms of poverty and hunger; good health; well-being; quality education; gender equality; clean water and sanitation; affordable and clean energy; decent work and economic growth; industry, innovation and infrastructure; reduced inequalities; sustainable cities and communities; responsible consumption and production; climate action; protection of life below water and land; peace, justice and strong institutions.

In the study conducted by Washington, Sutton, & Field (2006) titled "Individual differences in servant leadership: The role of values and personality" with the objective is to address the lack of empirical research on servant leadership by investigating relationships between servant leadership and four individual differences, namely: values of empathy, integrity, and competence and the five-factor model's personality factor of agreeableness, showed that followers' ratings of leaders' servant leadership were positively related to followers' ratings of leaders' value of empathy, integrity, and competence. Followers' ratings of leaders' servant leadership were also positively related to leaders' ratings of their own agreeableness. This study used the Dennis and Winston's servant leadership scale, Braithwaite and Law's Goal and Model Values Inventories with 288 followers and 126 leaders in three organizations and the following variables: follower's ratings of leaders' servant leadership, followers' ratings of leaders' values of empathy, integrity, and competence; and leaders' ratings of their own agreeableness.

Muller (2010), in his study titled "Attitudes and leadership competences for project success" found out that variances in project results are caused by the attitudes of project managers and the variances in business results are caused by a mixture of their attitude and emotional competences. The purpose of this study is to investigate the relative importance of project managers' attitudes towards their project and their leadership competences for achieving project success. This study used 400 responses to a global web-based questionnaire to identify the variances in attitudes and leadership competences of project managers and its relation to project success.

In the study conducted by Malaluan, Baja, Carandang, Vergara, & Tamayo (2014) titled "Performance of Sangguniang Kabataan Officials as Mandated by the Local Government Code of 1991", with 200 respondents composed of the students, faculty members and administrative personnel of the Lyceum Asia Pacific community who were randomly chosen revealed that the SK has been able to perform well their mandated duties and responsibilities by the Local Government Code and being rated as Good. Though there are defects, the respondents believed that reformation rather than abolition would correct SK failures and shortcomings. There are recommendations that are being formulated which are drawn from the results: DILG may review the provisions of R.A. 7160 implementing the duties and functions mandated to the SK; DILG may also evaluate SK officials' performance based on their annual and

end-of-term reports; and strengthen the observance of Linggo ng Kabataan with the help of the Sangguniang Bayan and Sangguniang Barangay.

The primary purpose of this study is to assess the leadership competence of Supreme Student Government Officials of the University of Bohol, School Year 2018-2019, Tagbilaran City, Province of Bohol.

METHODOLOGY

The respondents of the study were the 144 UBSSG Officials for the School Year 2018-2019. The locale of the study was the University of Bohol in Tagbilaran City, Bohol, Philippines. The researchers utilized the quantitative descriptive normative survey using the standardized questionnaire as a main tool patterned from the questionnaire developed by Wyk (2007) who in her dissertation, utilized the 360° Leadership Assessment Questionnaire as part of a Leadership Development Model and Process at University of Pretoria, South Africa.

The questionnaires were in the checklist form wherein the respondents were made to reflect their personal level of judgment of the different items included in the inquiry using the corresponding of scale 4,3,2,1 as 4 is the highest and 1 is the lowest; for 4 is A or Always meaning Very Competent, 3 is S or Sometimes meaning Moderately Competent, 2 is R or Rarely or Less Competent, and 1 is N or Never meaning Not Competent.

To officially conduct the study, the researchers wrote a letter addressed to the Vice President for Academic Affairs of the University of Bohol asking permission to conduct the study with the recommendation from the Dean of Student/Personnel Services, Head of Student Affairs and President of the UBSSG, and endorsement from their Adviser and the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

The target respondents were given ample time to answer the questionnaire to assure proper and thorough accomplishment of the said tool before it was finally retrieved. After the retrieval of questionnaire, the responses were classified, tallied and collated in a tabular form. The data gathered were then analyzed and interpreted using statistical formula to test the hypotheses in which the results served as the bases for the summary of findings that will lead to the drawing of conclusions and offering recommendations.

Statistical Treatment. The data were analyzed and interpreted using frequencies, percentages and weighted mean. **Pearson – Product**

Coefficient Moment Correlation was used to determine the significant degree of correlation between level of motivation towards leadership and profile. **T-Test was used to compute the** significant degree of difference between national and local SSG officials as to their level of leadership competence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of Respondents. Thirty-seven (25.69%) of the respondents were 20 years old, 29 of them (20.14%) were 19 years old and 19 (13.19%) were 21 years old. There were 41 male (28.47%) and 103 female (71.53%) SSG officers. Thirty-three (22.92%) percent of the respondents were national officers and 111 of them (77.08) percent were local officers.

Fourteen (9.72%) of the respondents were students from the College of Engineering and Technology and University High School - Senior High School; 13 of them (9.03%) were students from the College of Business and Accountancy and Victoriano D. Tirol Advanced Learning Center (VDTALC); 12 (8.33%) were students from the College of Architecture and Fine Arts and Education; and four (2.78%) were students from the College of Arts and Sciences. Sixty-one (42.36%) were fourth year students, 21 (14.58%) were grade 12 students and 18 (12.50%) were third year students.

Eighty-one (56.25 percent) of the respondents have been young leaders for one year, 27 (18.75%) have been leaders for two years, 14 (9.72%) have been leaders for three or more years. Seventy-five respondents (52.08%) have attended the University of Bohol Leadership Enhancement and Development Seminars (UB LEADS), 15 (10.42%) have attended various leadership workshop/training sponsored by their department or college and 13 (9.03%) have attended Leadership Congress sponsored by the UBSSG.

Level of Leadership Competence of UBSSG Officials. Results revealed an overall composite mean is 3.38 or Very Competent. The highest-rated leadership competencies of the respondents were Diversity Learning with a mean of 3.56 (or Very Competent), Self-Responsibility with a mean of 3.55 (or Very Competent) and Integrity at 3.48 (or Very Competent).

On the opposite end of the spectrum, the lowest-rated leadership competencies of the UBSSG officials were Cross-functional Teamwork with a mean of 3.00 (or Moderately Competent) and Business Acumen with a mean of 3.21 (also Moderately Competent level).

Table 1. Composite Mean Comparative Results of Leadership Competence

	Items	Responses		Interpretation	Rank
A.	Integrity	3.48	A	Very Competent	3
B.	Adaptability	3.43	A	Very Competent	5
C.	Self-Responsibility	3.55	A	Very Competent	2
D.	Leadership Communication	3.43	A	Very Competent	5
E.	Purpose Building	3.37	A	Very Competent	10.5
F.	Motivational Capacity	3.40	A	Very Competent	9
G.	Information Capacity	3.34	A	Very Competent	12
H.	Conceptual Ability	3.42	A	Very Competent	7.5
I.	Visionary Thinking	3.43	A	Very Competent	5
J.	Business Acumen	3.21	S	Moderately Competent	14
K.	Diversity Learning	3.56	A	Very Competent	1
L.	Cross-Functional Teamwork	3.00	S	Moderately Competent	15
M.	People Development	3.37	A	Very Competent	10.5
N.	Performance Achievement	3.42	A	Very Competent	7.5
O.	Empowerment	3.29	A	Very Competent	13
	Overall Composite Mean	3.38	A	Very Competent	

Relationship between Age and Leadership Competence. The computed value of r is 0.264, which is higher than the critical value of 0.159 at 142 df and 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. This result shows that there is a significant degree of relationship between age and leadership competence. This finding indicates that the leadership competence of respondents is related to age.

Relationship between Department/College and Leadership Competence. The computed chi-square value is 27.467, which is higher than the critical value of 22.36 and 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. This result shows that there is a significant degree of relationship between department/college and leadership competence. This indicates the leadership competence of the respondents is related to the department or college that they belong to.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the UBSSG officials were generally considered as very competent leaders suggesting that they possessed the requisite leadership skills and abilities.

The three highest-rated leadership competencies of the UBSSG were Diversity Learning, Self-responsibility and Integrity. These results suggest that the officials demonstrated an understanding of different social, economic, and political perspectives and an understanding of the contributions that each individual or person makes. Additionally, the UBSSG officials are keenly aware of their self-responsibility and the importance of integrity.

Meanwhile, the lowest-rated leadership competencies of the UBSSG were Cross-functional Teamwork and Business Acumen. These results suggest that as a whole, UBSSG officials were still not a fully collaborative group wherein high emphasis was placed on communication and working together on stated objectives. Also, the UBSSG did not rate high as to their business acumen, which is not surprising since they are still students and have not yet fully engaged or immersed in a commercial setting.

There was a significant degree of relationship between age and leadership competence. This result indicates that one gets better at leadership as he or she gets older.

There was also a significant degree of relationship between department/college and leadership competence. It indicates that the leadership competence of the SSG officials is affected by the department/college where they belong.

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