Exploring Leadership Stress and Coping Mechanisms Among Student Leaders in Public High School in Arayat Pampanga

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Abstract: **Stress is a pervasive challenge faced by individuals, including student leaders in academic settings. This study explores the leadership stress and coping mechanisms among student leaders in Public High School in Arayat, Pampanga. Through qualitative design and face-to-face interviews with eighteen (18) student leaders, stressors such as rules disobedience, lack of cooperation, pressure, and workload emerged as prominent themes. These stressors hindered effective leadership, highlighting the need for coping mechanisms to navigate the complexities of leadership roles. In response to the stressors identified, student leaders employ various coping mechanisms. Time management emerged as crucial, allowing leaders to organize tasks efficiently and avoid feeling overwhelmed. Seeking help from peers and mentors provided valuable support and insights, while withdrawal from stress for self-reflection, and religious coping, particularly prayer, offered solace and guidance. By employing these coping strategies, student leaders can effectively manage stress and enhance own leadership effectiveness. This study's findings shed light on the unique challenges faced by student leaders and provide valuable insights into coping mechanisms that can mitigate leadership stress. Understanding these dynamics can inform support systems and interventions to promote student leaders' well-being and effectiveness in their roles.**

Keywords: **stress, leadership stress, coping mechanisms, student leaders.**

1. Introduction

Stress is a problem most of the people encounter every day. It is a natural human response that limits a person to address challenges. Hence, stress can be defined as a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation. In addition, owing to the fact that stress is a human body's reaction to a challenge or demand, professionals, workers and even students can experience it and no one is an exemption.

As stated by Oladipupo, Rjoub, Kirikkaleli, and Adebayo (2022), stress is a common and inevitable aspect in humans' life. Additionally, it is the physiological response of humans to threatening events in the environment. Students' stress levels are rising, making students less able to lead in a complex environment (Barker, Howard, Villemaire-Krajden., & Galambos, 2018).

Leadership refers to the capacity of an individual or a group of individuals to direct and influence followers. It is commonly believed that leaders are capable of making wise, and challenging choices. Additionally, student leaders set attainable objectives, express a clear vision, and give followers the information and resources needed to accomplish leadership objectives (Barney & Pratt, 2017). Power, responsibility, and influence are linked to leadership. These are required for a leader in able to manage any situation that arises and to maintain the positive attitude of the team even in the face of uncertainty (Koberling, 2023).

Student leaders are a group of elected officials in academic setting. Each leader has a duty to represent students' interests in accordance with the council regulations and act as the students' advocate. In addition, these student leaders represent a constituency, such as a class or an organization (Chemutai & Chumba, 2014).

According to the study of Torres, Harding, and Yeo (2020), aside from stress from different school works, deadlines and compliance, students who chose to take another responsibility such as being a school governing body and serving as a student leader may become a visible sign of stress, and is referred to as leadership stress.

As stated by Koberling (2023), leadership stress can be characterized as the feeling of being stressed out when faced with stressful events while fulfilling leadership roles. Additionally, being a student leader may also bring with it a huge variety of stress, weight, which can make things seem challenging to handle.

Student leaders raise a variety of matters that affect classes and other issues influencing the general welfare of the students in schools (Munasinghe, 2018). Furthermore, student leaders spend a large portion of non-academic time to carry out the responsibilities of being a leader. Hence, student leaders attempt to strike a balance between academic, professional, and personal obligations. Additionally, to fulfill the demands of each leadership roles, students forego sleep, skip meals, and often neglect academic obligations.

Caraig, Masangcay, Villanueva, and Manibo (2020) stated that being a student leader is indeed highly challenging and the

actual struggle is on how to respond on different situations, and how to put one's own sentiments while fulfilling leadership duties. Based on the studies shown that stress is currently existing to student leaders, McGonigal (2015) on the other hand mentioned that stress can be transformed from something negative to something positive by student leaders to enhance performance and expand relationships. Koberling (2023) suggests that there are strategies student leaders can use to prevent and cope with stress, these referred to as coping mechanisms.

Coping mechanisms refer to the strategies and actions students rely on when faced with exceptionally stressful circumstances. These approaches serve as a support system, which aids in maintaining composure until student leaders can finally adapt to the new situation (Cooks-Campbell, 2022). Additionally, as Yazon, Ang-Manaig, and Tesoro (2018) have stated, coping mechanisms are techniques that people often use when experiencing complicated situations—these mechanisms help individuals in responding to stressful situations while also maintaining emotional well–being. Therefore, coping skills improve student leaders' perseverance in the facing difficulties in academics.

Existing research predominantly focus on coping mechanism of general student population without giving specific attention to the unique experiences and challenges faced by student leaders. Student leaders can effectively cope with leadership stress through having different coping mechanisms. Therefore, this study aims to explore the coping mechanisms of student leaders with regards leadership stress.

A. Research Questions

This study aims to explore the leadership stress and coping mechanisms among student leaders in Arayat, Pampanga.
Specifically, the researchers seek to answer the following questions:
1. What are the leadership stress that the student leaders experience?
2. What are the coping mechanisms of the student leaders regarding leadership stress?

B. Significance of the Study

The study will be beneficial to the following:

Students: The findings of this study will help students know more about the struggles of student leaders. In addition, it will show the unique experiences that come with leadership roles and give ideas on how student leaders cope with leadership stress.

Student Leaders: This study aims to provide student leaders with various ways to handle leadership stress more effectively. By understanding these coping mechanisms, student leaders can adjust to these strategies to meet individuals' needs and situations.

Student Leaders' Adviser: This study will be beneficial to student leaders' adviser in able to be aware of the stress that the student leaders experience. Student leaders' adviser may help by providing guidance to student leaders regarding leadership stress.

Future Researchers: The study's findings will help future researchers understand more about the academic stress and coping mechanisms of student leaders. This study will help future researchers to further explore, expand, and deepen the understanding of leadership stress and coping mechanisms among student leaders.

C. Scope and Delimitation

The study was delimited only to eighteen (18) student leaders in Arayat, Pampanga. The purpose of the study is to explore the leadership stress and coping mechanisms of student leaders.

2. Methodology

A. Research Design

The researchers used qualitative method with the aim to explore the leadership stress and coping mechanisms of student leaders in Adelle Grace Montessori School Incorporated. In able to answer the questions about the leadership stress and coping mechanisms among student leaders in Arayat, Pampanga, the experiences of student leaders in terms of leadership stress and the coping mechanisms were used in this study. The qualitative method is an interactive process by which the scientific community gains a better understanding of the phenomenon being studied through a significant distinction (Aspers and Corte, 2019).

The qualitative method which was used in this study is appropriate and relevant to conduct an interview which were answered through the experiences of a certain event or phenomenon that is up–to–date and suitable for the research subject. The research was accomplished in qualitative phenomenological design. The goals of phenomenological research are to provide in–depth descriptions of the phenomenon and to seek reality from people's narratives based on experiences (Yuksel and Yildirim, 2015).

B. Participants of the study

The participants of the study were the eighteen (18) student leaders in Arayat, Pampanga who are experiencing leadership stress and what coping mechanism the student leaders use. According to Ellis (2016), a sample of between 6 to 20 individuals are sufficient.

Purposive sampling which uses a criterion in selecting participants was employed by the researchers. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique wherein certain criteria are needed to select the subjects (Nikolopoulou, 2022). The criteria for choosing the participants are student leaders who are currently studying at public schools in Arayat, Pampanga.

C. Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at selected Public High Schools in Arayat, Pampanga. This locale provided a rich context for examining leadership stress among student leaders. By focusing on Arayat, Pampanga, the researchers aimed to capture a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of student leaders facing similar challenges, ensuring the relevance and applicability of the findings to the local community.

D. Research Instrument

The researchers took thorough steps to ensure that the interview process was conducted properly. By creating a consent letter to the different Public High School principals and establishing the interview boundaries and schedule, the researchers set clear expectations. Recording the participants' responses word-by-word and conducted one-on-one interviews with open-ended questionnaires helped the researchers gather accurate data. Moreover, participants were given enough time by the researchers to formulate answers which is vital. In addition, maintaining confidentiality is essential. Attention to detail helped in ensuring the integrity and quality of the research.

E. Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers took thorough steps to ensure that the interview process was conducted properly. By creating a consent letter to the different Public High School principals and establishing the interview boundaries and schedule, the researchers set clear expectations. Recording the participants' responses word-by-word and conducted one-on-one interviews with open-ended questionnaires helped the researchers gather accurate data. Moreover, participants were given enough time by the researchers to formulate answers which is vital. In addition, maintaining confidentiality is essential. Attention to detail helped in ensuring the integrity and quality of the research.

F. Ethical Consideration

It is the researchers' duty to explain and inform the respondents to adherence to ethical standards, prior to conducting interviews, formal letters of approval were composed and submitted to the principals of the selected public schools in Arayat, Pampanga. These letters outlined the purpose and methodology of the study, seeking permission to conduct interviews within the respective institutions. Additionally, the letters requested the cooperation of the school administration in excusing participating students from regular activities during the interview sessions, ensuring minimal disruption to their academic schedules. Furthermore, the researchers prioritized the protection of participants' integrity and privacy throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, emphasizing voluntary participation, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw from the study at any time without repercussions. Participants were provided with detailed information about the research objectives, procedures, empowering the participants to make informed decisions about the participants' involvement. Moreover, participants' identities were anonymized in all research materials and publications to ensure confidentiality and protect the participants' privacy.

Throughout the data collection and analysis process, the researchers maintained a strict commitment to confidentiality and data security. All interview recordings, transcripts were securely stored and accessible only to authorized personnel. Overall, the researchers adhered to professional standards of conduct, ensuring honesty, objectivity, and integrity in all aspects of the research process answering the questionnaire.

Another job of the researchers is to make sure that all of the information shared by the respondents on the survey questionnaire will be surely absolute confidentiality.

Informed consent, voluntary participation, anonymity, and confidentiality are the right of the respondents that the researchers must do.

3. Findings

In correspondence to exploring the leadership stress and coping mechanisms among student leaders in public High Schools in Arayat, Pampanga, open-ended interviews were conducted among eighteen (18) student leaders who are currently studying in public High School. Direct answers of the participants with regards the stress that the student leaders' experiences are presented in the following order: Rules Disobedience, Lack of Cooperation, Pressure, Workloads.

A. Rules Disobedience

Disobedience of rules and guidelines can be a significant stressor for student leaders, undermining their authority and ability to maintain order within the school. When rules are disregarded or violated, it can create chaos, confusion, and frustration, as student leaders struggle to enforce standards of conduct and uphold the values of their group. The following statements shows that students' rules disobedience is one of the things that stresses the student leaders.

"Yung sa mga students na hindi nakikinig sa mga rules or protocols na ginagawa ng mga SSLG officers or mga leader na valid naman ung protocol na 'yon sa principal." (Those students who aren't listening to the rules or protocols implemented by the SSLG officers or leader, even though those protocols are made valid by the principal.) -SL4

"Yung ibang mga students na ahm- hindi sila masyadong-hindi nakikinig sa mga rules namin at mga sinasabi namin sakanila." (The other students who don't actually listen to the rules we implement and to things that we are saying.) -SL5

"Mga students kasi hindi naman lahat makokontrol mo and kahit na marami kayong mga officers may mga hindi pa rin talaga susunod sa rules yun yung mga lagi kong nakakasagupa is yung mga nag-cucutting classes, yung mga nagsisigarilyo, pero wala pa naman sa drugs." (You cannot control all the students. Even if there are numerous officers, there are still students who don't abide the rules. In most cases, I always encounter students who are cutting classes and smoking cigarettes in school. However, I haven't yet encountered students who are using drugs.) -SL15

B. Lack of Cooperation

Lack of cooperation among students can be a significant source of stress for student leaders. When working on group projects or organizing events, student leaders rely on the support and collaboration of their peers, advisors, faculty, and other stakeholders. However, if students are uncooperative, unresponsive, or unwilling to contribute, it can create roadblocks, delays, and additional stress for the student leader.

The following statements of the participants shows that lack of student cooperation is one of the things that stresses the student leaders.

"The problem here in our school is most of the students here, they don't coordinate much and a lot of things happen in the shadows and most of the time, those things that happen in the shadows go undetected and this- therefore those in the shadows and under the radar hindi na namin na-aasikaso, nakaka-stress na din sa'min kasi it's hard to identify what the problems are kasi some people they don't open up." (The problem here in our school is most of the students don't coordinate much and a lot of things happen in the shadows and most of the time, those things go undetected and therefore, we haven't gotten the chance to solve them. It's stressing on our part because some people don't open up, we can't identify what the problems are.) -SL1

"Yung madalas naming ahm- na- nararanasan dito sa school is yung mga students na hindi ahm- walang cooperation, like ah- minsan kapag may programs kaming ginagawa, may mga times na hindi sila nakiki-sama at nakikipag- nakikipag cooperate." (What we always experience not having cooperation from the students. Sometimes, when we have programs, they don't really participate and cooperate.) -SL18

C. Pressure

Pressure is a potent source of leadership stress for student leaders, often resulting from the weight of expectations placed upon them by both their peers and teachers. This pressure can manifest in various forms, including academic performance, extracurricular responsibilities, and social dynamics. The following statements of the participants shows that pressure is one of the things that stresses the student leaders.

"Pressure and ahm- pag maraming pinapagawa yung mga teachers namin and what not, and yung mga problems mas nagiging anxious and pressured po ako." (Pressure. When teachers give us a lot of things to do, the problem is, I feel more anxious and pressured.) -SL6

"The pressure and we get some expectations from others since ahm- sslg officers kami." (The pressure and we get some expectations from others since we are SSLG officers.) -SL17

"Of course, pressure from the expectation from higher grade level and the teacher advisers." (Of course, pressure from the expectation of the higher grade levels and the teacher advisers.) -SL12

D. Workloads

The workload associated with leadership roles can often be overwhelming for student leaders, leading to significant stress. Student leaders are typically tasked with a wide range of responsibilities, including organizing events, managing teams, representing their peers, and balancing academic commitments. The following statements of the participants shows that workload is one of the things that stresses the student leaders.

"Ahm yung naexperience ko po like a student leader is yung sa school works po na nagsasabay sabay." (My experience as a student leader is when my school works were given simultaneously.) -SL2

"Responsibilities kase uhm sa school there are two responsibilities as a student leader and ah- ordinary student, there are difference between the two- being an ordinary students kailangan nagpa pass ka ng mga PETA on time mga lectures and mga iba't ibang activities and as a student leader naman po nag iimplement kami ng mga programs, projects and many more every month so ah- nahihirapan po talaga ako mag manage ng time ko po kase there are times na nagsasabay po ung dalawa." (Responsibilities because at school, there are two responsibilities: as a student leader and an ordinary student. There are differences between the two: being an ordinary student, you need to pass PETA on time, lectures and various activities and as a student leader, we implement programs, projects and many more every month so it's really hard for me to manage my time because there are times when the two needed to be done at the same time.) -SL3

"Usually na experience ko is yung nag sasabay sabay kasi I am a.. I am an STE student and marami rin kaming ginagawa so yung projects namin sa STE and yung projects namin sa SSLG minsan nag sasabay. So, in that case, hindi ko alam kung ano yung uunahin, misan sabay sabay pa yung mga deadlines nila. (Usually, what I experienced is having things to do simultaneously. Since I am an STE student, we have a lot of projects to do and at the same time, we have a project in SSLG. In that case, I do not know what to do first.) -SL11

"Kapag marami yung ginagawa sa club di mo na alam kung ano yung uunahin." (When there are a lot of things to do with our club, you don't know what to prioritize) -SL16

The participants identified four main stressors: rules disobedience, lack of cooperation, pressure, and workloads. Disregard for rules and cooperation challenges increased stress levels, while pressure from peers and teachers intensified leadership stress.

On the other hand, in correspondence with finding out the second research question about the coping mechanisms of the student leaders regarding leadership stress, the answers of the participants in relation to the research question are presented in the following order: Time Management, Seek Help, Withdrawal from Stress, Religious Coping.

E. Time Management

It involves organizing and prioritizing tasks to make the most efficient use of available time. For student leaders who often juggle academic responsibilities, extracurricular activities, and leadership roles, effective time management is crucial in

managing stress. By allocating specific time slots for various tasks, student leaders can avoid feeling overwhelmed and ensure that important responsibilities are addressed in a timely manner. The following statements of the participants shows that time management is one of the effective ways to cope up with leadership stress.

"Kailangan lang dito is gumamit ng time management. Kung hindi ka marunong gumamit ng time management, maguguluhan ka talaga kung ano yung mas gagawin mong priority." (You just need to use time management. If you don't know how to it, you will be really confused about what to prioritize.) -SL10

"I like prioritizing task and doing management, time management is very important for being a student leader." (I like prioritizing tasks and having management. Being a student leader, time management is very important.) -SL12

"Pinapractice ko yung time management para magawa lahat nung mga kailangan gawin." (I practice time management in able to do everything that needs to be done.) -SL16

F. Seek Help

For student leaders who often shoulder significant responsibilities and may feel pressure to perform well, seeking help can be instrumental in managing stress effectively. By seeking advice from mentors, peers, or support networks, student leaders can gain valuable insights, perspectives, and coping strategies for navigating difficult situations. Moreover, reaching out for emotional support from friends, family members, or mental health professionals can provide a sense of validation, comfort, and reassurance during times of stress. The following statements of the participants shows that one of the effective ways to cope up with leadership stress is to seek help.

"Maghihingi po ako ng help sa co-officer ko and mismong sa SLG adviser para po ma.. yung pong problem ay ma uhm, ma solve ko po." (I will ask for help from my co-officers and the SLG adviser so that I will be able to solve the problem.) -SL8

"Nirarant ko to sa mga ah kaibigan ko and sa mga slg officers ko din kung paano ah sosolusyunan yung mga problema and sama sama kaming gumagawa nito kaya hindi siya mahirap para saamin. (I vent out to my friends as well as to my SLG officers. In able to solve the problem, we do it together so it's not that hard for us.) -SL13

"Ahm- nakikipag cooperate po ako sa mga mas mataas po sa akin like sa yung kuya po namin which is yung president po nakikipag ano po sa- nag oopen po ako sa kanila about yung mga nangyayari po sa akin na hindi ko na po hindi ko po kaya kasi hindi ko po sila kayang ihandle at yun lang. (I cooperate with those who are in higher position than me, like our older brother, who is the president. I tell them about what is happening when I can't handle it well.) -SL14

G. Withdrawal from Stress

For student leaders facing the pressures of their roles, withdrawal from stress offers a crucial respite from the demands of leadership. During this time, they can engage in activities such as reflection, or simply being alone with their thoughts. This practice allows them to decompress, gain perspective, and recharge mentally and emotionally. By stepping away from the noise and busyness of their responsibilities, student leaders can better manage stress, maintain clarity of mind, and sustain their well-being, ultimately enhancing their effectiveness in leadership roles. The following statements of the student leaders shows that having a quiet time is one of the effective ways to cope up with leadership stress.

"If ever sumosobra pa po ahm- then I would try to shut, shut everything out like mga people wala po- hindi po muna ako makikipag interact kase when I'm under- when I'm feeling stress I get I tend to a lot more irritated ahm- mas tendency po na mas mabilis po akong mainis and stuff kaya tinatry ko po na wag muna maki interact sa mga ibang tao kase madadamay po yung nga relationship." (If it's already too much, I try to shut people out and I won't interact with them because once I do, I tend to get irritated. When I feel stressed, I tend to easily get irritated so I don't interact with other people.) -SL6

"All I do is I just give myself a break kapag hindi ko na siya kaya and I always rem- I always remember na dapat maging ano maging ano rin give time for yourself and wag masyado padalahin yung stress and like half 'me' time kapag hindi na kaya." (All I do is I just give myself a break whenever I am unable to handle it well and I always remember to give myself time and don't let the stress affect me. I do a half "me" time whenever I feel like I can't take it anymore.) -SL11

H. Religious Coping

For student leaders facing the pressures of their roles, turning to their spiritual beliefs and religious coping can serve as a source of guidance, hope, and resilience. Prayer, for example, allows individuals to express their concerns, fears, and hopes, fostering a sense of inner peace and trust in a higher power. Moreover, spiritual practices often encourage mindfulness and reflection, helping student leaders to center themselves, clarify their priorities, and approach their responsibilities with greater clarity and purpose. The following statements of the participants shows that one of the effective ways to cope up with leadership stress is to pray.

"Usually, I just pray for that our school will get better and it's ahm-pupils they'll find the light in their life." (Usually, I just pray that our school will get better and its pupils, hoping for them to find the light in their life.) -SL1

"Yung matitip ko lang po is manalangin po tayo lahat na kay Lord na kakayanin naten I-overcome yung stress na... na... na-experience natin." (The tip I would like to give is to pray to God that we will be able to overcome and withstand the stress that we are experiencing.) -SL2

In response to the second research question, several strategies emerged from participants' responses. Time management proved effective, with students emphasizing the need to prioritize tasks efficiently to avoid feeling overwhelmed. Seeking help from peers and higher-ranking officers also emerged as a valuable coping strategy. Additionally, withdrawal from stress for self-reflection and shutting out external stressors helped some student leaders maintain their mental well-being. Lastly, many found solace in religious coping, turning to faith for guidance and strength during challenging times.

4. Discussion

The main objective of this study is to explore the leadership stress and coping mechanism among student leaders in Public High Schools in Arayat, Pampanga. The participants agreed to participate in the study of the researchers, and the following research questions were answered: (1) What are the leadership stress that the student leaders experience? (2) What are the coping mechanisms of the student leaders regarding leadership stress?

The researchers utilized qualitative research method and phenomenological research design. The researchers had eighteen (18) student leaders to participate who are currently studying in Public High Schools in Arayat, Pampanga. The researchers used purposive sampling in choosing the participants. Moreover, the answers of the participants were gathered through face-to-face interview. Three (3) open-ended interview questions were analyzed through thematic analysis. The participants ensured that the participants' identity and information will not be disclosed.

Caraig, Masangcay, Villanueva, and Manibo (2020) stated that being a student leader is indeed highly challenging. On the other hand, Koberling (2023) suggests that there are strategies student leaders can use to prevent and cope with stress, these referred to as coping mechanisms. Each student leaders experienced different stressors while fulfilling the responsibilities of being a student governing body. Hence, student leaders have different ways in coping up with this stress, which refers to as coping mechanisms. In this study, the researchers explored the leadership stress and coping mechanisms of student leaders in Public High Schools in Arayat, Pampanga.

According to the study conducted by Shahmohammadi (2014), students' rules disobedience proved to cause mutinous chaos in the school setting, one of which is it could give student leaders a hard time in leading the students. The first theme that the researchers have formulated was rule disobedience. Based on the statements given by the participants in the conducted interview, three of the participants stated that rule disobedience is one of the things that stresses the student leaders. Participants indicated how rules disobedience contributes to the leadership stress that student leaders' experiences.

The second theme is lack of cooperation. Based on the study's findings, two of the participants stated that lack of cooperation from the students is one of the leaderships stress the student leaders experience. Strayer, (2012) stated that not having cooperation towards the students and the student leaders will cause chaos in a school setting. The participants indicate that not having enough cooperation among students and the student leaders do not help the student leaders in resolving the problems encountered at school.

The third theme is pressure. In accordance to the study's findings, three of the participants stated that student leaders experience leadership stress once encounter pressure. In accordance to this, as stated by Jang, Gao, Wu and Guo (2020), tension, discomfort, and other emotions caused by the pressure from school, family, and society in the learning process caused a person to experience ample amount of stress. The participants indicates that the experienced pressure came from the teachers and the students in respective schools.

The fourth theme is workloads. Creagh, Thompson, Mockler, Stacey, and Hogan, (2023) defined workload as the amount of work done over a given period. 4 out of 18 participants responded that one of the leadership stresses that the student leaders experience is workload. The participants also stated that the number of workloads were given with the same deadlines causes the student leaders to be stressed.

In relation to the second research questions, participants indicated the different coping mechanism they have undertaken to cope with the stress they experience as a student leader.

Aeon, and Aguinis, (2017) proved that time management has helped people to prioritize tasks, allocate resources efficiently, and meet deadlines consistently. Based on the study's findings, 3 out of 18 participants stated that time management served as aid to overcome leadership stress, making it as one of the coping mechanisms that student leaders may use.

The second theme is to seek help. Algorani and Gupta (2013) stated that help-seeking proved to be an effective coping mechanism when a person experiences stress. Based on the study's findings, 3 out of 18 participants stated that seeking for help from colleagues helps overcome stress, it was also proved to be one of the effective coping mechanisms of student leaders regarding leadership stress.

The third theme is withdrawal from stress. Slot, Vieira, Vieira dos Santos, Gomes, Te Lindert, and Assche, (2019) proved that withdrawal helps student leaders focus on managing stress by taking a break, enhancing students' effectiveness both in and out of school, while also serving as a preventative measure against hurting others' feelings. In addition to this, 2 out of 18 participants stated that having a quiet time helps them cope up with leadership stress, hence, proving that withdraw from stress is one of the coping mechanisms of student leaders regarding leadership stress.

The fourth theme is religious coping. 2 out of 18 participants stated that praying to God, asking for His help, and venting out problems is effective in coping with leadership stress. Jung (2015) proved that participating to religious practices including prayer and going to church can mitigate the effect of leadership stress to young individuals such as student leaders.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study sheds light on the leadership stress experienced by student leaders in Public High Schools in

Arayat, Pampanga, and the coping mechanisms that were employed to cope up with these leadership stress. The findings revealed that student leaders face stressors such as rule disobedience, lack of cooperation, pressure, and workloads, which can significantly impact the well-being of the student leaders. However, through effective coping mechanisms like time management, seeking help, withdrawal from stress, and religious coping, student leaders are able to lessen the effects of leadership stress and maintain effectiveness on the role of each leader. These insights highlight the importance of supporting student leaders and being provided with resources in able to manage stress effectively. Overall, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the unique experiences and challenges faced by student leaders and offers valuable implications for supporting the mental health and well-being of each leader.

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