

Synergic Strategies for Empowering Student Leaders of the Supreme Secondary Learner Government (SSLG): Paradigm Shifts for Student Leadership

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Abstract

Student leaders are catalysts for promoting development, peace, and security, thus, they must be empowered and supported because they have the power to effectively change the world into a better place for everyone once given the necessary resources.

This study explored the influence of synergic strategies for empowering student leaders of the Supreme Secondary Learners Government (SSLG) of DepEd Region XII vis-a-vis the implementation of the programs, projects, and activities (PPAs) in their respective schools.

Using explanatory sequential mixed methods research, 363 SSLG student leaders completed the adopted quantitative survey questionnaire and 20 of them undergone in-depth interview and focus group discussion for the qualitative phase. Results indicated, that there is significant influence between the synergic strategies for empowering student leaders of the SSLG and the implementation of the PPAs.

Findings show that despite having significant influence in the implementation of the PPAs, small schools have the greatest number of partially implemented PPAs. Hence, the need for paradigm shifts for student leadership. The least implemented PPAs and their causes emerged and became the basis for the paradigm shifts embedded in a resource material called Synergic Strategies for Empowering Student Leaders (SSESL).

Keywords: Synergic Strategies, SSLG, Empowering Student Leaders, Paradigm Shifts, Student Leadership, Region XII

INTRODUCTION

With the advent of the new school operations post COVID 19 pandemic, student leaders wanted to make their communities more resilient by coming up with creative ideas, advancing social development, and igniting political change. Student leaders are catalysts for promoting development, peace and security if they are given the tools and chances to realize their full potential.

Students must be empowered and supported because they have the power to effectively change the world into a better place for everyone if they have the necessary resources (Youth and the Sustainable Development Goals, 2024). In the Philippines, public secondary education had undergone a paradigm shift and along with it was the Learner Government Program (LGP) formerly known as the Student Government Program (SGP) which should be harmonized with the school's framework and the context of the

community. The Department of Education (DepEd) recognizes the SGP to be the foremost co-curricular learner-led organization authorized to operate and implement pertinent programs, projects, and activities in the school (DepEd Order No. 49, series of 2011; DepEd Order No. 66, series of 2017).

Several studies were already conducted regarding the efficacy of the Supreme Student Government (SSG) in performing their duties and responsibilities and the results of these studies were used to propose leadership and empowerment programs (Alde, 2019; Arribado, 2018; Aviles, 2013) such as those cascaded from the national to the division levels. However, there were limited studies on how these leadership and empowerment programs influenced the performance of the student leaders in the implementation of the programs, projects, and activities in their respective schools. With the onset of the SDG 2030 Agenda, the student leaders, which comprised more than half of the youth force in the Philippines, had vital roles to play (Youth Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2019), thus, the urgency of this study.

Further, to thoroughly understand the implementation of the programs, projects, and activities by the student leaders, this study considered the extent of implementation in the small, medium, large, and very large schools (DepEd Order No. 19, series of 2016). This paper also examined the lived experiences of the participants during the division student leadership training they had attended vis-a-vis the school level implementation of the SSLG's programs, projects, and activities.

There was a rich literature concerning student leadership but the experiences of the student leaders as to the influence and impact of synergic strategies to the implementation of SSLG's programs, projects, and activities were limited (Njaramba et al., 2022; Murage et al., 2019). This study aimed to fill this gap in literature. The emerging themes from the research helped pave the way for paradigm shifts that would fill the gap and strengthen student governance and engagement, ultimately fostering a more cohesive and empowered student body.

This research employed explanatory sequential research design, a quantitative - qualitative mixed methods to assess the extent of implementation of the SSLG's programs, projects, and activities by the student leaders in public secondary schools of DepEd Region XII through the lens of the participants' lived experiences and delved into the qualitative awareness of student leaders, contributing to the broader discourse on student leadership empowerment within educational settings. Results of this study were used to identify potential paradigm shifts for student leadership not only in DepEd Region XII but also at the national level.

In this study, the researcher aims to contribute to Psychology and Education by identifying potential paradigm shifts for student leadership emerging from the experiences of the participants.

Research Questions

This study's primary purpose is to explore the influence of synergic strategies for empowering the student leaders of the Supreme Secondary Learners Government (SSLG) of DepEd Region XII vis-a-vis the implementation of the programs, projects, and activities in their respective schools after undergoing the student leadership training in their division. The study also intended to discover paradigm shifts for student leadership.

Specifically, this study sought answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the extent of implementation of the plans, programs, and activities by the student leaders after being capacitated during the division leadership training with respect to the DepEd Region XII's small schools, medium schools; large schools; and very large schools?

2. What is the extent of influence of the synergic strategies for empowering student leaders of the SSLG in the implementation of the programs, projects and activities across the school categories?
3. Is there a significant difference between the extent of influence of the synergic strategies for empowering student leaders of the SSLG and the extent of implementation of the programs, projects and activities by the student leaders?
4. What are the lived experiences of the participants in implementing the programs, projects, and activities in their respective schools?
5. What paradigm shifts may be proposed from the emerging themes emanating from the lived experiences, beliefs, and attitudes of the participants?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Student Leadership in Secondary Schools

In Student Leadership and Student Government (2022), Justin Patrick advocates for a redefined perspective on student leadership, emphasizing its potential as a genuine avenue for significant political engagement rather than merely a developmental exercise. He argues that when students are integrated as authentic stakeholders in school governance, they can influence policies meaningfully, thus transcending tokenism and fostering real democratic participation. Support for this view is echoed by Hevel (2016), who identifies student leadership as a critical component of educational processes, contributing to student growth. By fostering an environment where diverse perspectives of students are valued in decision-making, educational institutions not only enhance student self-esteem but also positively reshape their identities, leading to stronger institutional frameworks (Altbach & Luescher, 2020; Broom, 2015).

Global and Local Case Studies in Student Leadership

Successful student leadership models worldwide provided insights for local initiatives. For instance, the Student Leadership Challenge program, implemented in multiple countries, had developed leadership skills through experiential learning and community involvement (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). Programs like these have been shown to strengthen students' sense of identity and agency within their communities, allowing them to engage in meaningful change. By giving students opportunities to manage and balance their education and extra-curricular experiences, student leadership plays a critical role in fostering student achievement (Dedicatoria, Dionela, Climaco, & Balangon, 2023).

Empowering Student Leadership in Schools

Empowering student leaders in schools involved equipping students with the skills, confidence, and authority to lead their peers and contribute to their educational communities. As Furlong and Wargo (2018) emphasized, empowering students enhanced their agency, giving them tools to take responsibility for their learning and leadership roles. This empowerment fostered a sense of belonging and encouraged active participation in school governance, benefiting both individual growth and the school community. Effective empowerment of student leaders hinged on several key factors, including mentorship, resource allocation, and autonomy (Nadeem, 2024).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed the explanatory sequential mixed methods research design which has a two-phase design where quantitative data are collected and analyzed first, then qualitative data are collected and

analyzed based on the quantitative results. The qualitative data are used to explain the quantitative data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Participants

Quantitative Phase. To gather the quantitative data, the respondents were the three hundred sixty-three (363) SSLG student leaders of DepEd Region XII from the eight (8) schools division. The respondents are currently holding any of the SSLG positions as mandated by DepEd Order No. 2023-03 series of 2023 of the Office of the Undersecretary for Operations (OUOPS).

Qualitative Phase. A total of 20 participants were involved in the gathering of qualitative data: 12 student leaders for In-Depth-Interview (IDI) and eight (8) for Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The participants for the qualitative phase of this study were selected through purposive sampling.

Instruments of the Study

Qualitative Phase. A researcher-made interview guide was used to conduct the IDI and FGD which were composed of open-ended questions. The objective of this qualitative instrument was to explore the lived experiences of the participants regarding their empowerment during the student leadership training in their division and the implementation of programs, projects, and activities in their respective schools after they were capacitated during the said student leadership.

Quantitative Phase. The tools used in the quantitative phase were all adopted questionnaires, namely: Part I – Respondent Profile adopted from the Monitoring and Evaluation for the School's Youth Programs, Projects, and Activities pursuant to the provisions of DepEd Order No.11 S. 2016 - Additional Guidelines to DepEd Order No. 47, S. 2014 and DepEd Order No. 48, S. 2014 – Amendments and Additional Provisions to DepEd Order No. 45, S. 2007. Part 2 – Extent of Implementation of Programs, Projects, and Activities adopted from the study of Arribado (2016), and Part 3 – Influence of Synergic Activities in the Implementation of Programs, Projects, and Activities adopted from the study of Harlan (2024) were subjected to content and relevance validation through a five-panel validity test.

Procedures

Quantitative Phase. Using the explanatory sequential design, the researcher gathered first the data for the quantitative phase using the survey questionnaires. A letter requesting to conduct this study was sent to the DepEd XII Regional Director. After the approval of the said letter, it was personally forwarded by the researcher to the Schools Division Superintendents (SDS) to formally inform them regarding the conduct of the study. The researcher then conducted the five-panel validity test for the quantitative research instrument then integrated the comments and suggestions of the panel. In gathering the quantitative data, paper and pen survey questionnaires and Google Form Surveys were administered to the respondents.

Qualitative Phase. The qualitative phase was conducted after the determination of the results of the quantitative phase. In gathering the qualitative data, the following step-by-step process was followed: Informed Consent Forms with parental consent were given to the participants which were signed by them and their parents. The purpose of the qualitative phase of the study was explained to the participants and they were also informed of the possible potential risks and discomforts they might experience when participating in the study. It was emphasized that their participation in the study was completely voluntary, hence they were allowed to withdraw from being participants if they wanted at any time. The participants were asked questions based on the interview guide focused on the important variables of the study. Their

responses were recorded using a phone recorder. The data generated through the IDI and FGD were then sorted and analyzed. The procedures of Creswell and Creswell (2018) in analyzing the data which were gathered by the researcher through the qualitative phase were used.

Ethical Considerations

The research outline was submitted to the panel to ensure that aspects on ethics in research were strictly adhered to and observed. The study adhered to the Data Privacy Act of 2012, ensuring that personal information was collected solely for academic and research purposes with participant consent. Measures were implemented to maintain confidentiality, including anonymous data handling, and participants were assured their information would not be used elsewhere. The study demonstrated strong dependability, showcasing the consistency and reliability of its findings through well-documented research procedures that enable external scrutiny. The research methods employed were both valid and reliable, allowing for replication and yielding consistent results. Further, confirmability was established by providing an audit trail, ensuring that the data and interpretations were genuinely reflective of the participants' responses.

RESULTS

This section presents the findings according to the study's research questions. This study also intended to discover paradigm shifts for student leadership. The various results are presented on the succeeding tables.

Extent of Implementation of the Programs, Projects, and Activities

Tables 1 to 4 present the extent of implementation of the programs, projects, and activities by the student leaders after being capacitated during their respective division student leadership training in DepEd Region XII. These tables show the programs, projects, and activities of the SSLG, the means, the standard deviation, and the description of the range where the mean of each indicator lies. In this study, the extent of implementation is measured in terms of the contribution of the SSLG officer in the fulfillment of the DepEd mandated SSLG programs, projects, and activities.

Table 1 shows that the SSLG programs, projects, and activities are "partially implemented" in small schools with a category mean of 3.32 and standard deviation of 0.50 although the respondents also identified certain programs, projects, and activities that are "very well implemented". The item, *organizing the students and volunteers in the annual Brigada Eskwela* has a mean of 4.73 described as "very well implemented". While the item, *conducting peer support program* has a mean score of 2.57 described as "fairly implemented".

Table 1 Extent of Implementation of the Programs, Projects, and Activities in Small Schools

No.	Programs, Projects, and Activities of the SSLG	Mean	SD	Description
1	Organizing the students and volunteers in the annual Brigada Eskwela	4.73	0.45	Very well implemented
2	Leading / participating in the National Greening Program and other environment-related activities	4.71	0.50	Very well implemented
3	Conducting School Based Leadership Camp	2.92	0.56	Partially implemented

4	Conducting Peer Support Program	2.57	0.57	Fairly implemented
5	Conducting activities to prevent students from dropping out of school	2.88	0.48	Partially implemented
6	Conducting English Speaking Campaigns and Reading and Tutorial Services	2.75	0.48	Partially implemented
7	Conducting activities to support Anti-Drug Abuse Education and Campaign	2.92	0.44	Partially implemented
8	Assisting in ensuring that the school is a smoke/tobacco-free place	2.98	0.42	Partially implemented
9	Leading the students in organizing activities which start during the Teachers' Month Campaign every September and which culminate during Worlds' Teacher Day celebration on October 5	4.55	0.61	Very well implemented
10	Encouraging and supporting the participation of the students in recognized co-curricular clubs/organization and activities	3.08	0.69	Partially implemented
11	Monitoring and evaluating the student's activities in the school and in the community	2.80	0.45	Partially implemented
12	Coordinating with the SSLG COMELEC every election period	3.49	0.76	Well implemented
13	Monitoring and coordinating elections of the recognized campus co-curricular organization	2.94	0.31	Partially implemented
14	Creating committees necessary to address the needs of the students	2.92	0.39	Partially implemented
15	Enforcing policies designed to protect and promote the students' right and welfare	2.94	0.24	Partially implemented
16	Conducting Student Congress	2.75	0.44	Partially implemented
17	Launching a Social Media Campaign on Road Safety Awareness	2.96	0.28	Partially implemented
18	Conducting Interfaith Activities	4.00	0.57	Well implemented
19	Encouraging and supporting the participation of students in community outreach	3.29	0.58	Partially implemented

20	Leading / Participating in the National Clean-up Day	4.24	0.84	Very well implemented
Category Mean		3.32	0.50	Partially implemented

These results are supported by Murphy and Hallinger (2016) who posited that small schools, while offering a closer-knit environment, often face limitations in resources and staff capacity. This scarcity can hinder the scope and breadth of programs, as small schools may lack the financial and human resources to support wide-reaching initiatives. In contrast, Dronkers and Robert (2016) highlighted that smaller schools tend to foster a more intimate, personalized environment, which often translates into a supportive framework for program implementation. This setting allows educators to focus on individual students, potentially enhancing student engagement and program effectiveness.

Table 2 Extent of Implementation of the Programs, Projects, and Activities in Medium Schools

No.	Programs, Projects, and Activities of the SSLG	Mean	SD	Description
1	Organizing the students and volunteers in the annual Brigada Eskwela	3.78	0.42	Well Implemented
2	Leading / participating in the National Greening Program and other environment-related activities	3.62	0.52	Well Implemented
3	Conducting School Based Leadership Camp	2.75	0.47	Partially Implemented
4	Conducting Peer Support Program	2.96	0.81	Partially Implemented
5	Conducting activities to prevent students from dropping out of school	2.96	0.50	Partially Implemented
6	Conducting English Speaking Campaigns and Reading and Tutorial Services	2.78	0.62	Partially Implemented
7	Conducting activities to support Anti-Drug Abuse Education and Campaign	3.09	0.37	Partially Implemented
8	Assisting in ensuring that the school is a smoke/ tobacco-free place	3.11	0.42	Partially Implemented
9	Leading the students in organizing activities which start during the Teachers' Month Campaign every September and which culminate during Worlds' Teacher Day celebration on October 5	3.79	0.41	Well Implemented

10	Encouraging and supporting the participation of the students in recognized co-curricular clubs/organization and activities	3.01	0.20	Partially Implemented
11	Monitoring and evaluating the student's activities in the school and in the community	2.76	0.46	Partially Implemented
12	Coordinating with the SSLG COMELEC every election period	3.78	0.42	Well Implemented
13	Monitoring and coordinating elections of the recognized campus co-curricular organization	2.84	0.43	Partially Implemented
14	Creating committees necessary to address the needs of the students	2.89	0.45	Partially Implemented
15	Enforcing policies designed to protect and promote the students' right and welfare	3.07	0.64	Partially Implemented
16	Conducting Student Congress	3.26	0.57	Partially Implemented
17	Launching a Social Media Campaign on Road Safety Awareness	3.18	0.63	Partially Implemented
18	Conducting Interfaith Activities	3.74	0.66	Well Implemented
19	Encouraging and supporting the participation of students in community outreach	3.29	0.56	Partially Implemented
20	Leading / Participating in the National Clean-up Day	3.58	0.50	Well Implemented
	Category Mean	3.21	0.50	Partially Implemented

Table 2 reveals that the SSLG programs, projects, and activities are “partially implemented” in medium schools with a category mean of 3.21 and standard deviation of 0.50 although the respondents also identified certain programs, projects, and activities that are “well implemented”. The item, *leading the students in organizing activities which start during the Teachers' Month Campaign every September and which culminate during World Teacher's Day celebration on October 5* has a mean of 3.79 described as “well implemented”. While the item, *conducting School Based Leadership Camp* has a mean score of 2.75 described as “partially implemented”. Accordingly, Lee and Smith (2017) argue that medium schools usually have access to additional resources such as increased funding, specialized staff, and infrastructure, which can enhance program delivery. However, these advantages are counterbalanced by bureaucratic

hurdles that can impede the swift implementation of innovative programs. The structural complexities of larger institutions can create rigid administrative processes that slow down decision-making, making it challenging to respond quickly to emerging needs or new educational trends. This bureaucratic delay can often result in a disconnection between policy intentions and actual practice within the school, suggesting that school size plays a critical role in how effectively programs are implemented (Wolf et al., 2005). As emphasized by the participants, several programs, projects, and activities of the SSLG were partially implemented because of the lack of school-based funding and that the SSLG was heavily reliant on funding from external sources which are not consistently present. It was evident from the statements of the participants that the implementation of SSLG's programs, projects, and activities were hindered because the same were not included in the school's Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) which allocates budget for school operations and activities.

Table 3 Extent of Implementation of the Programs, Projects, and Activities in Large Schools

No.	Programs, Projects, and Activities of the SSLG	Mean	SD	Description
1	Organizing the students and volunteers in the annual Brigada Eskwela	4.20	0.43	Very Well Implemented
2	Leading / participating in the National Greening Program and other environment-related activities	3.68	0.59	Well Implemented
3	Conducting School Based Leadership Camp	3.23	0.59	Partially Implemented
4	Conducting Peer Support Program	3.29	0.46	Partially Implemented
5	Conducting activities to prevent students from dropping out of school	3.80	0.81	Well Implemented
6	Conducting English Speaking Campaigns and Reading and Tutorial Services	4.08	0.61	Well Implemented
7	Conducting activities to support Anti-Drug Abuse Education and Campaign	4.14	0.66	Well Implemented
8	Assisting in ensuring that the school is a smoke/ tobacco-free place	4.04	0.63	Well Implemented
9	Leading the students in organizing activities which start during the Teachers' Month Campaign every September and which culminate during Worlds' Teacher Day celebration on October 5	3.58	0.52	Partially Implemented

10	Encouraging and supporting the participation of the students in recognized co-curricular clubs/organization and activities	3.18	0.39	Partially Implemented
11	Monitoring and evaluating the student's activities in the school and in the community	3.29	0.50	Partially Implemented
12	Coordinating with the SSLG COMELEC every election period	3.40	0.55	Well Implemented
13	Monitoring and coordinating elections of the recognized campus co-curricular organization	3.49	0.54	Well Implemented
14	Creating committees necessary to address the needs of the students	3.87	0.79	Well Implemented
15	Enforcing policies designed to protect and promote the students' right and welfare	3.81	0.53	Well Implemented
16	Conducting Student Congress	3.11	0.40	Partially Implemented
17	Launching a Social Media Campaign on Road Safety Awareness	3.07	0.30	Partially Implemented
18	Conducting Interfaith Activities	3.39	0.59	Partially Implemented
19	Encouraging and supporting the participation of students in community outreach	3.95	0.27	Well Implemented
20	Leading / Participating in the National Clean-up Day	4.09	0.39	Well Implemented
Category Mean		3.64	0.53	Well Implemented

Table 3 manifests that the SSLG programs, projects, and activities are “well implemented” in large schools with a category mean of 3.64 and standard deviation of 0.53 although the respondents also identified certain programs, projects, and activities that are “partially implemented”. The item, *organizing the students and volunteers in the annual Brigada Eskwela* has a mean of 4.20 described as “very well implemented”. While the item, *launching a Social Media Campaign on Road Safety Awareness* has a mean score of 3.07 described as “partially implemented”. These results found support in Loyola (2022) which provided that large schools were also fortunate enough to receive financial support from their institutions, which they could use as initial funds for the implementation of their programs, projects, and activities. Further, as noted by Gordon and Louis (2017), teachers in larger schools often benefit from professional development opportunities which in turn helped in the fulfillment of school-based projects such as but not limited to fund-raising activities, tree planting and tree growing. In contrast, large schools despite their access to comprehensive resources may encounter administrative inertia and resistance to

change as noted by Hargreaves and Fullan (2015). These organizational barriers can dampen the enthusiasm for new programs, making it difficult for educators and administrators to implement Youth Formation initiatives effectively.

Table 4 Extent of Implementation of the Programs, Projects, and Activities in Very Large Schools

No.	Programs, Projects, and Activities of the SSLG	Mean	SD	Description
1	Organizing the students and volunteers in the annual Brigada Eskwela	4.98	0.14	Well Implemented
2	Leading / participating in the National Greening Program and other environment-related activities	4.56	0.50	Very well Implemented
3	Conducting School Based Leadership Camp	4.35	0.49	Very Well Implemented
4	Conducting Peer Support Program	4.45	0.50	Very Well Implemented
5	Conducting activities to prevent students from dropping out of school	4.42	0.50	Very Well Implemented
6	Conducting English Speaking Campaigns and Reading and Tutorial Services	4.36	0.52	Very well Implemented
7	Conducting activities to support Anti-Drug Abuse Education and Campaign	4.11	0.90	Well Implemented
8	Assisting in ensuring that the school is a smoke/ tobacco-free place	4.52	0.50	Very Well Implemented
9	Leading the students in organizing activities which start during the Teachers' Month Campaign every September and which culminate during Worlds' Teacher Day celebration on October 5	4.34	0.49	Very Well Implemented
10	Encouraging and supporting the participation of the students in recognized co-curricular clubs/organization and activities	4.22	0.62	Very Well Implemented
11	Monitoring and evaluating the student's activities in the school and in the community	3.54	0.71	Well Implemented
12	Coordinating with the SSLG COMELEC every election period	4.35	0.51	Very Well Implemented

13	Monitoring and coordinating elections of the recognized campus co-curricular organization	4.57	0.50	Very Well Implemented
14	Creating committees necessary to address the needs of the students	4.39	0.52	Very Well Implemented
15	Enforcing policies designed to protect and promote the students' right and welfare	4.35	0.49	Very Well Implemented
16	Conducting Student Congress	4.34	0.49	Very Well Implemented
17	Launching a Social Media Campaign on Road Safety Awareness	4.43	0.51	Very Well Implemented
18	Conducting Interfaith Activities	4.73	0.46	Very Well Implemented
19	Encouraging and supporting the participation of students in community outreach	4.70	0.46	Very Well Implemented
20	Leading / Participating in the National Clean-up Day	4.49	0.50	Very Well Implemented
	Category Mean	4.41	0.52	Very Well Implemented

Table 4 manifests that the SSLG programs, projects, and activities are “very well implemented” in large schools with a category mean of 4.41 and standard deviation of 0.52 although the respondents also identified certain programs, projects, and activities that are only “well implemented”. The item, *organizing the students and volunteers in the annual Brigada Eskwela* has a mean of 4.98 described as “very well implemented”. While the item, *monitoring and evaluating the student's activities in the school and in the community* has a mean score of 3.54 described as “well implemented”. As shown in Table 4, very large schools have very well implemented their programs, projects, and activities because as Anjum (2021) posited, they benefit from greater resources, including more diverse course offerings and extracurricular activities although they also encounter difficulties in maintaining individualized attention due to the sheer scale of their operations.

Influence of Synergic Strategies for Empowering Student Leaders of the SSLG

Tables 5 to 8 present the influence of the synergic strategies for empowering student leaders of the SSLG in the implementation of the programs, projects, and activities in their respective schools after being capacitated during the student leadership training. In the study, the influence of the synergic strategies is measured in terms of the perceptions of the SSLG officers as they implement the programs, projects, and activities in their respective schools. Further, Tables 5, 6, 7, and 8 show the data for Small Schools, Medium Schools, Large Schools, and Very Large Schools, respectively.

Table 5 Influence of Synergic Strategies for Empowering Student Leaders of the SSLG in the Implementation of the Programs, Projects, and Activities in the Small Schools

No.	The synergic activities from the student leadership training empower the SSLG in...	Mean	SD	Description
1	participating in the planning of the SSLG projects, programs, and activities in school.	3.75	0.74	Significant Influence
2	participating in the implementation of the SSLG projects, programs, and activities in school	3.69	0.47	Significant Influence
3	Believing that the synergic strategies serve as an important role boosting the student leaders' participation in the implementation of projects, programs, and activities within our school	3.98	0.65	Significant Influence
4	believing that SSLG establishes an environment in which the student leaders feel safe expressing their opinions and ideas	3.37	0.56	Significant Influence
5	believing that the SSLG programs strengthen my sense of connection and engagement in the academic community	3.75	0.66	Significant Influence
6	serving the student body in our school by implementing the SSLG projects, programs, and activities within our school	3.75	0.59	Significant Influence
7	taking responsibility and being held accountable for implementing the SSLG projects, programs, and activities within our school	3.53	0.70	Significant Influence
8	encouraging the student leaders to work towards the implementation of projects, programs, and activities within our school	3.53	0.50	Significant Influence
9	gaining the capability to allow student leaders to contribute to tasks needed for the implementation of projects, programs, and activities within our school	3.84	0.73	Significant Influence
10	contributing in the successful implementation of student initiatives such as the projects, programs, and activities within our school	3.88	0.71	Significant Influence
11	getting high levels of support from the student body and the school administration	3.25	0.72	Moderate Influence
12	gaining the ability to effectively negotiate to achieve fair	3.08	0.80	Moderate

	and reasonable outcomes			Influence
13	gaining the ability to organize and manage time effectively	3.61	0.72	Significant Influence
14	having a clear, justified, and achievable direction in my roles and functions as student leader	3.63	0.80	Significant Influence
15	gaining the ability to request for resources from the School Administrators and the community	2.59	0.61	Little Influence
	Category Mean	3.55	0.66	Significant Influence

Table 5 manifests that the synergic strategies for empowering student leaders of the SSLG has “significant influence” in the implementation of the programs, projects, and activities in small schools with a category mean of 3.55 and standard deviation of 0.66 although the respondents also identified certain strategies which have “little influence”. The item, *the synergic activities from the student leadership training empower the SSLG in boosting the student leaders’ participation in the implementation of projects, programs, and activities within our school* has a mean of 3.98 interpreted as “the synergic strategies have significant influence”. While the item, *the synergic activities from the student leadership training empower the SSLG in gaining the ability to request for resources from the School Administrators and the community* has a mean score of 2.59 interpreted as “the synergic strategies have little influence”. Patrucco et al. (2017) and Kyei-Badu (2010) support these results as they found in their respective studies that the strategies which are often used and being taught in leadership training programs and student leadership activities have become vital tools in the implementation and sustaining student-led activities and school-based initiatives.

Table 6 Influence of Synergic Strategies for Empowering Student Leaders of the SSLG in the Implementation of the Programs, Projects, and Activities in the Medium Schools

No.	The synergic activities from the student leadership training empower the SSLG in...	Mean	SD	Description
1	participating in the planning of the SSLG projects, programs, and activities in school.	3.42	0.50	Significant Influence
2	participating in the implementation of the SSLG projects, programs, and activities in school	3.37	0.59	Moderate Influence
3	believing that the synergic strategies serve an important role in boosting the student leaders’ participation in the implementation of projects, programs, and activities within our school	3.03	0.33	Moderate Influence

4	believing that SSLG establishes an environment in which the student leaders feel safe expressing their opinions and ideas	2.84	0.49	Moderate Influence
5	believing that the SSLG programs strengthen my sense of connection and engagement in the academic community	3.01	0.42	Moderate Influence
6	serving the student body in our school by implementing the SSLG projects, programs, and activities within our school	3.13	0.47	Moderate Influence
7	taking responsibility and being held accountable for implementing the SSLG projects, programs, and activities within our school	3.04	0.26	Moderate Influence
8	encouraging the student leaders to work towards the implementation of projects, programs, and activities within our school	3.25	0.54	Moderate Influence
9	gaining the capability to allow student leaders to contribute to tasks needed for the implementation of projects, programs, and activities within our school	3.33	0.55	Moderate Influence
10	contributing in the successful implementation of student initiatives such as the projects, programs, and activities within our school	3.47	0.50	Moderate Influence
11	getting high levels of support from the student body and the school administration	3.33	0.55	Moderate Influence
12	gaining the ability to effectively negotiate to achieve fair and reasonable outcomes	3.51	0.93	Significant Influence
13	gaining the ability to organize and manage time effectively	3.24	0.49	Moderate Influence
14	having a clear, justified, and achievable direction in my roles and functions as student leader	3.28	0.48	Moderate Influence
15	gaining the ability to request for resources from the School Administrators and the community	2.30	0.52	Little Influence
Category Mean		3.17	0.51	Moderate Influence

Table 6 shows that the synergic strategies for empowering student leaders of the SSLG has “moderate influence” in the implementation of the programs, projects, and activities in medium schools with a category mean of 3.17 and standard deviation of 0.51 although the respondents also identified certain strategies which have “significant influence” and “little influence”. The item which states that *the synergic activities from the student leadership training empower the SSLG in gaining the ability to effectively negotiate to achieve fair and reasonable outcomes* has a mean of 3.51 interpreted as “the synergic strategies have significant influence”. While the item which states that *the synergic activities from the student leadership training empower the SSLG in gaining the ability to request for resources from the School Administrators and the community* has a mean score of 2.30 interpreted as “the synergic strategies have little influence”.

Table 7 Influence of Synergic Strategies for Empowering Student Leaders of the SSLG in the Implementation of the Programs, Projects, and Activities in the Large Schools

No.	The synergic activities from the student leadership training empower the SSLG in...	Mean	SD	Description
1	participating in the planning of the SSLG projects, programs, and activities in school.	4.07	0.30	Significant Influence
2	participating in the implementation of the SSLG projects, programs, and activities in school	3.96	0.46	Moderate Influence
3	believing that the synergic strategies serve an important role in boosting the student leaders’ participation in the implementation of projects, programs, and activities within our school	3.55	0.70	Significant Influence
4	believing that SSLG establishes an environment in which the student leaders feel safe expressing their opinions and ideas	3.96	0.74	Significant Influence
5	believing that the SSLG programs strengthen my sense of connection and engagement in the academic community	4.22	0.57	Highly significant influence
6	serving the student body in our school by implementing the SSLG projects, programs, and activities within our school	4.37	0.58	Highly Significant Influence
7	taking responsibility and being held accountable for implementing the SSLG projects, programs, and activities within our school	4.25	0.64	Highly Significant Influence
8	encouraging the student leaders to work towards the implementation of projects, programs, and activities	3.74	0.51	Significant Influence

	within our school			
9	gaining the capability to allow student leaders to contribute to tasks needed for the implementation of projects, programs, and activities within our school	3.94	0.54	Highly Significant Influence
10	contributing in the successful implementation of student initiatives such as the projects, programs, and activities within our school	4.32	0.57	Highly Significant Influence
11	getting high levels of support from the student body and the school administration	3.81	0.44	Significant Influence
12	gaining the ability to effectively negotiate to achieve fair and reasonable outcomes	3.56	0.52	Significant Influence
13	gaining the ability to organize and manage time effectively	3.49	0.54	Significant Influence
14	having a clear, justified, and achievable direction in my roles and functions as student leader	4.18	0.50	Significant Influence
15	gaining the ability to request for resources from the School Administrators and the community	3.89	0.34	Significant Influence
	Category Mean	3.95	0.53	Significant Influence

Table 7 reveals that the synergic strategies for empowering student leaders of the SSLG has “significant influence” in the implementation of the programs, projects, and activities in large schools with a category mean of 3.95 and standard deviation of 0.53 although the respondents also identified certain strategies which have “highly significant influence” and “moderate influence”. The item which states that *the synergic activities from the student leadership training empower the SSLG in serving the student body in our school by implementing the SSLG projects, programs, and activities within our school* has a mean of 4.37 interpreted as “the synergic strategies have highly significant influence”. While the item which provides that *the synergic activities from the student leadership training empower the SSLG in gaining the ability to organize and manage time effectively* has a mean score of 3.49 interpreted as “the synergic strategies have significant influence”.

Table 8 Influence of Synergic Strategies for Empowering Student Leaders of the SSLG in the Implementation of the Programs, Projects, and Activities in the Very Large Schools

No.	The synergic activities from the student leadership training empower the SSLG in...	Mean	SD	Description
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1	participating in the planning of the SSLG projects, programs, and activities in school.	4.92	0.27	Highly Significant Influence
2	participating in the implementation of the SSLG projects, programs, and activities in school	4.60	0.49	Highly Significant Influence
3	believing that the synergic strategies serve an important role in boosting the student leaders' participation in the implementation of projects, programs, and activities within our school	4.33	0.49	Highly Significant Influence
4	believing that SSLG establishes an environment in which the student leaders feel safe expressing their opinions and ideas	4.24	0.43	Highly Significant Influence
5	believing that the SSLG programs strengthen my sense of connection and engagement in the academic community	4.90	0.30	Highly Significant Influence
6	serving the student body in our school by implementing the SSLG projects, programs, and activities within our school	4.82	0.42	Highly Significant Influence
7	taking responsibility and being held accountable for implementing the SSLG projects, programs, and activities within our school	4.84	0.36	Highly Significant Influence
8	encouraging the student leaders to work towards the implementation of projects, programs, and activities within our school	4.57	0.50	Highly Significant Influence
9	gaining the capability to allow student leaders to contribute to tasks needed for the implementation of projects, programs, and activities within our school	4.67	0.47	Highly Significant Influence
10	contributing in the successful implementation of student initiatives such as the projects, programs, and activities within our school	4.74	0.44	Highly Significant Influence
11	getting high levels of support from the student body and the school administration	4.47	0.51	Highly Significant Influence

12	gaining the ability to effectively negotiate to achieve fair and reasonable outcomes	4.62	0.50	Highly Significant Influence
13	gaining the ability to organize and manage time effectively	4.58	0.51	Highly Significant Influence
14	having a clear, justified, and achievable direction in my roles and functions as student leader	4.79	0.41	Highly Significant Influence
15	gaining the ability to request for resources from the School Administrators and the community	4.38	0.49	Highly Significant Influence
Category Mean		4.63	0.44	Highly Significant Influence

Table 8 manifests that the synergic strategies for empowering student leaders of the SSLG has “highly significant influence” in the implementation of the programs, projects, and activities in very large schools with a category mean of 4.63 and standard deviation of 0.44. All the items in this category have “highly significant influence” but the item which states that *the synergic activities from the student leadership training empower the SSLG in participating in the planning of the SSLG projects, programs, and activities* got the highest mean. While the item which provides that *the synergic activities from the student leadership training empower the SSLG in believing that SSLG establishes an environment in which the student leaders feel safe expressing their opinions and ideas* has a mean score of 4.24 still interpreted as *the synergic strategies have highly significant influence*.

Relationship between the Influence of Synergic Strategies for Empowering Student Leaders of the SSLG and the Implementation of the Programs, Projects, and Activities

Table 9 presents the relationship between the influence of synergic strategies for empowering student leaders of the SSLG and the implementation of the programs, projects, and activities. In this study, the relationship between the influence of the synergic strategies and the implementation of the programs, projects, and activities is measured through T-test analysis of the means. Results in Table 9 indicate a significant difference between the influence of synergic strategies for empowering student leaders and the extent of implementation of the programs, projects, and activities by the student leaders in their respective schools at .05 level of significance, $t(362) = 122.578, p < .000$ and $t(362) = 134.259, p < .000$.

Table 9 Results of T-test Analysis between the Influence of Synergic Strategies for Empowering Student Leaders and the Extent of the Implementation of Programs, Projects, and Activities

Indicators	Mean	SD	t-value	Df	Sig	Description
	3.40	.62	122.578*	362	.000	Significant

Synergic Strategies for Empowering Student Leaders							
Programs, Projects, and Activities	3.80	.54	134.259*	362	.000		Significant

*Significant at the .05 level.

This means that there is an effect or relationship between the influence of synergic strategies for empowering student leaders and the extent of the implementation of programs, projects, and activities by the student leaders in their respective schools. Hence, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the influence of synergic strategies for empowering student leaders of the SSLG and the implementation of the programs, projects, and activities is rejected at 0.05 level of significance. This result is supported by Patrucco et al. (2017) and Kyei-Badu (2010) who posited that students' leadership in schools is an important element in the management of school activities and maintaining students' discipline. Accordingly, the strategies that are often used and being taught in leadership training programs and student leadership activities have become vital tools in the implementation and sustaining student-led activities and school-based initiatives.

Lived Experiences of the Student Leaders in Implementing the Programs, Projects and Activities of the SSLG in their Respective Schools

Table 10 presents the lived experiences of the participants regarding their implementation of the SSLG's programs, projects, and activities in their respective schools. The essential themes generated from the responses of the participants when they were asked about their lived experiences in implementing the programs, projects, and activities of the SSLG in their respective schools are the following: *leadership experiences through implementation of the programs, projects, and activities; demonstrating nobility of student leadership; student empowerment through synergic strategies; and demonstrating effective leadership amidst challenges.*

Table 10 Lived Experiences of the Participants Regarding the Implementation of Programs, Projects, and Activities in their Respective Schools

Subject Probed	Core Ideas	Codes	Essential Themes
Participants' description of the extent of implementation of the programs, projects and activities	Division of labor Student participation in the activities Establishing good relationship in the community Leading with a heart Leading by example Performance and accomplishments Ability to connect with people Mutual respect Good decision-making and planning skills	Student leadership goals	Leadership experiences through implementation of programs, projects, and activities

Very well implemented programs, projects and activities	Engaging with diverse students Bridging between school officials and students Overwhelming feeling of success after the activities Getting support from external stakeholders	Striking a balance between internal and external factors	Demonstrating nobility of student leadership
Greatest contributor in the implementation of the programs, projects, and activities	Teamwork Ability to source-out funds Open mindedness Sensitive to the needs of others Collaboration Inclusive Time management Cooperation	Leadership functions	Student empowerment through synergic strategies
Poorly implemented programs, projects and activities	Failure to prioritize budget for the successful implementation of the PPA's Absence of proper infrastructures Lack of support from the school administration Lack of support coming from the students Shortcomings in project implementation	Student leadership financial inadequacy	Demonstrating effective leadership amidst challenges

Paradigm Shifts Emerging Themes Emanating from the Lived Experiences of the Participants

From the quantitative findings and qualitative explanation, paradigms of the traditional activities embedded in the student leadership training need shifts in order to keep abreast the contemporary needs of student leaders. Paradigm shifts are being proposed from the emerging themes emanating from the lived experiences of the participants. Subsequently, a resource material entitled Synergic Strategies for Empowering Student Leaders of the Supreme Secondary Learner Government (SSLG): Paradigm Shifts for Student Leadership was crafted and was validated by a panel of five experts using the Learning Resources Management and Development System (LRMDS) Evaluation Tool for Print Resources.

Table 10 Paradigm Shifts emerging themes emanating from the lived experiences of the participants

Aspect or Focal Point	Quantitative Findings	Qualitative Explanation	Paradigm Shifts
	Conduct of School Based Leadership Camp	Leadership training is usually conducted annually through student leadership trainings	Voice your Vision: Student Leadership Forum

Programs, Projects, and Activities partially implemented in small, medium, and large schools	<p>Conduct Peer Support Program</p> <p>Conduct Student Congress</p> <p>Encourage and support the participation of students in community outreach</p>	<p>such as the Division Learners Convergence (DLC)</p> <p>Unfortunately, small to medium schools don't have the financial capacity to conduct school-based leadership camps.</p>	<p>Appear to Peer Support Program</p> <p>Bida Change: An Outreach Program</p>
Inter-personal Factors influencing the implementation of PPAs were partially implemented in small and medium schools.	<p>Conduct activities to prevent students from dropping out of school</p> <p>Conduct English Speaking Campaigns and Reading and Tutorial Services,</p> <p>Monitor and evaluate the student's activities in the school and in the community</p> <p>Create committees necessary to address the needs of the students</p> <p>Monitor and coordinate elections of the recognized campus co-curricular organization</p>	<p>Student leaders from small and medium schools despite their dedication to service and eagerness to create meaningful change, are challenged to fully implement these PPA's. The lack of administrative support and personnel are challenges that are often used to justify why these PPA's are still partially implemented.</p>	<p>I Moni-Tour Mo: Monitoring and Attendance Evaluation</p> <p>Tara Basa: Reading Tutorial</p> <p>Student Monitoring and Evaluation Activity</p> <p>Committee Formulation for Student Affairs</p> <p>Boto Mo, Bantay Ko: A Voter's Education Seminar</p>
Challenges on leadership roles	<p>Enforce policies designed to protect and promote the students' right and welfare</p> <p>Assist in ensuring that the school is a smoke/tobacco-free place</p>	<p>These activities don't belong to the "flagship programs" of the SSLG's.</p> <p>The student organizations such as SSLG don't have the capability to sustain these activities for the same reason that these PPA's are not priorities of the SSLG's.</p>	<p>Students' Rights and Welfare: Policy Promotion and Enforcement</p> <p>Anti-Cigarette and E-smoking seminar</p>

	Conduct activities to support Anti-Drug Abuse Education and Campaign Launch a Social Media Campaign on Road Safety Awareness	The conduct of the following activities and campaigns will require the organization to spend additional funds which is the paramount logic why these PPA's are partially implemented in most schools.	Training on Road Safety Awareness and Responsible Driving
	Encourage and support the participation of the students in recognized co-curricular clubs/organization and activities		Talentadong Pinoy Batang Sox: A Club Registration Activity

Based on the quantitative data, the partially implemented PPAs are consistent with the results of quantitative data which argues that the failure implementation of PPA's are result of financial inadequacy and the contextual difference between school categories. Furthermore, the data highlights the significance of student leaders' demonstration of effective leadership despite challenges. The data also indicates that there is an interpersonal factor amongst student leaders influencing the implementation of the PPAs. Furthermore, the challenges on leadership roles often originate from the lack of financial support to successfully implement their PPAs. These arguments are supported by the quantitative data where it is evident that PPA's that require financial support are often categorized as partially implemented across small to large schools and categorically even in the case of very large schools. Thus, these partially implemented PPAs according to the quantitative result which later justified by the qualitative data are manifestation that there is need for a paradigm shift to recalibrate the synergic strategies in student leadership.

DISCUSSION

These results of this study show that the classification of schools by size has important implications for the effectiveness of educational program delivery, particularly for programs that emphasize youth leadership and empowerment. Recognizing the unique challenges and resources associated with small, medium, large, and very large schools can help educators and policymakers develop tailored strategies that enhance student outcomes. Research by the National Youth Council (2017) underscores the importance of adapting youth programs to fit the specific needs of schools of different sizes. Consequently, customizing program activities according to school size not only increases inclusivity but also ensures that each student has equitable opportunities to develop leadership skills and make meaningful contributions. By understanding and addressing the nuanced dynamics of school sizes, educators can more effectively empower students, creating environments where every individual has the chance to thrive academically and personally (Kurudirek et al., 2024). Emphasizing how students use their relationships with others, engage in activities, express themselves, and interact with their environment to affect the situations they

are involved in as well as instilling confidence in one's abilities and competency across school contexts is another aspect of empowerment (Canning, 2019).

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn: Therefore, the extent of implementation of the programs, projects, and activities by the student leaders after being capacitated during the division leadership training with respect to the following school categories in DepEd Region XII: Small schools; Medium schools; Large schools; and Very large schools are as follows: “partially implemented” in small schools and in medium schools, “well implemented” in large schools, and “very well implemented” in very large schools. The overall extent of implementation of SSLG programs, projects, and activities across school categories is “well implemented”.

The synergic strategies for empowering student leaders of the SSLG significantly influence the implementation of the programs, projects, and activities specifically as follows: has “significant influence” in small schools, “moderate influence” in medium schools, “significant influence” in large schools and “highly significant influence” in very large schools. The overall extent of the influence of synergic strategies for empowering student leaders of the SSLG is “significant influence” in the implementation of the programs, projects, and activities across all school categories.

There is a significant difference between the influence of synergic strategies for empowering student leaders and the extent of implementation of the programs, projects, and activities by the student leaders in their respective schools

The essential themes generated from the responses of the participants when they were asked about their lived experiences about their attitudes in performing their functions towards the implementation of the programs, projects, and activities of the SSLG in their respective schools are the following: manifesting leadership work ethics; demonstrating the qualities of a highly competent student leader; building just and equitable student leadership.

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