# Lived Experiences of Female Grand Student Council (Granscil) Officers in Serving the College Community

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Abstract: The study focuses on women in leadership roles. It explores what are the lived experiences of female Grand Student Council (GRANSCIL) officers in serving the college community. Women's leadership is a debated subject throughout history; several researches have primarily relied on inequalities and biases of gender in leadership roles and highlighted that women are underrepresented. This study examines the way in which women lead and the way they deal with challenges they have experienced in serving. The study utilized a qualitative research method, particularly transcendental phenomenology, to analyze the data acquired from the participants. The participants were the former female GRANSCIL officers who have served the college community for two years. Moreover, the result of this study revealed seven major themes such as; perception of women's leadership, women's leadership styles, roles and responsibilities in serving the college community, women's way of facing the challenges, and realizations of female leaders in serving the college community, women's way of facing the challenges, and realizations of female leaders in serving the college community. Lastly, the study indicates that women in leadership are also capable of performing different tasks. Female leaders did not consider their gender as hindrance in performing their roles and responsibilities; be sides, as leaders, they tend to look upon what is best for the community. Hampered by several difficulties, yet they still come up with different strategies to cope.

Keywords: Women's leadership, leadership in the college community, leadership experiences, student leaders

# INTRODUCTION

Leadership is one of the most frequently debated subjects in literature across all fields of study. Several studies have defined leadership and even listed the qualities of a good leader. According to Warren Bennis, "Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality". Kruse (2013) also asserts that Leadership is a social influence process, which maximizes the time and effort of others towards the fulfillment of the goal. In the area of politics, political leaders with various traits improve policy quality, legitimacy perceptions, and constituent responsibility. An effective leader should have the ability to influence and motivate, which may lead his or her colleagues or fellowment obecome productive and be able to reach their goals. Hence, the definition of leadership will depend on how people conceptualize it. But there is a question regarding the difference between the leadership ability of women and men. Does gender identity can be a factor that hinders someone to lead?

In human civilizations, access to leadership posts is a key indicator of gender disparity. When it comes to leadership positions, there is still a gender imbalance in many firms. Women are still underrepresented on the highest level of leadership and decision making including their roles in government, businesses and in community. Several studies have found that females can hardly get leadership positions than males due to the persistent belief that only men are deserving of leadership and women are not. The patriarchal culture still significantly impacts how people perceive things. This circumstance demonstrates women's poor participation in leadership positions. It is widely known that it is substantially less common for women holding top executive positions in business and politics than to men. Inequality in opportunities, underrepresentation, and career advancement to senior leadership roles are issues that persist for women in companies (Adu-Oppong & Arthur, 2015; Darko & Seibu, 2016). Women do not hold the same leadership roles as their male counterparts, regardless of their degree of education or willingness to advance in their employment. Men still dominate higher jobs, and women are still underrepresented in management.

With the goal of improving women's representation in leadership roles, the globe strives to achieve gender equality as one among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, these are both motivated by the idea of "leaving no one behind." Through the aforementioned SDG, member states of the UN, including the Philippines, have vowed to guarantee that all citizens be granted the same rights and privileges regardless of their sexual orientation (David et al. 2017).

The study conducted by Kellerman & Rhode (2018) has found that women remain to have a long way to go, particularly in the area of leadership. The study by Ahmad et al. (2022) also provides that women dominate the global health workforce, yet, they are underrepresented in the upper ranks of government and business leaders, policy and governance forums, thought leadership panels, and decision-making bodies. In patriarchal developing nations, women who have positions are still facing numerous obstacles and negative perceptions. There are still many challenges standing in the way of women in leadership. The main challenges that bar women in leadership are interpersonal, cultural, and organizational barriers (Alotabai 2020). As the study by Dasig (2020) fo und that women are active participants in exercising their responsibilities in an organization, yet their responsibilities are still limited by their gender roles.

But despite of gender disparities in leadership, there are still no findings that show female leaders regularly perform worse than male leaders; therefore, it is paradoxical to understand why women historically and throughout cultures have tended to be underrepresented as leaders within human groups and organizations, and it is yet unknown how women's underrepresentation in leadership might alter (Smith et al., 2021). Women do not hold the same leadership roles as their male counterparts, regardless of their degree of education or willingness to advance in their employment. The question of the difference between the way in which women and men leaders enact, and experience leadership is still unanswered. People have different perceptions of which specific leadership qualities of males and female may excel.

In the Philippines, two women have risen to the presidency in the last fifteen years. In the country's history, the first female who occupied a seat in the presidency was Corazon Aquino; she was elected after Ferdinand Marcos was charged with criminal wrongdoing. Later on, Joseph Estrada, was accused of corruption and plundering the Philippine economy, and Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo succeeded. In study by Labonne et al. (2021), several women are now occupying the seats in the higher positions, especially in the government. In both houses of the Senate and the House of representative, women presently holds 29% of the seats. The Philippines ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in the representation of women in leadership positions all over the globe. This illuminates that the Philippines commonly does well in various measures of gender equality.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study will probe the lived experience of female students that are part of the Grand Student Council (GRANSCIL).

The study aims to answer the central question, "What are the lived experiences of the female Grand Student Council (GRANSCIL) in serving the college community?". Specifically, it will answer the following queries:

- 1. How do female officers perceive women's leadership?
- 2. What are their leadership styles in serving the college community?
- 3. What are their roles and responsibilities in serving the college community?
- 4. How do they perform these roles and responsibilities?
- 5. What are the challenges they have faced in serving the college community?
- 6. How do they face the challenges of serving the college community?
- 7. What are their realizations in serving the college community?

# METHODOLOGY

The study employed qualitative research with a transcendental phenomenological method to be used in particular because the researchers will seek to analyze lived experiences to gain deeper insights into how the participants understand those experiences. Phenomenology is a qualitative research approach that seeks to comprehend and explain the universal essence of a phenomenology (TPh) investigates the everyday experiences of human beings (Delve & Limpaecher 2022). Husserl's Transcendental Phenomenology (TPh) is a philosophical approach to qualitative research methodology that seeks to understand human experience (Moustakas, 1994). Pure TPh is based on the concept of putting aside all preconceived ideas (epoche) in order to see phenomena through clear lenses, allowing the true meaning of phenomena to emerge naturally with and within their own identity (Moustakas, 1994).

Furthermore, Moustakas' (1994) data analysis method of transcendental phenomenology is the best suited methodologically for this study since it focuses on and uses the lived experiences, perceptions, and voices of the participants, and through this, the researcher would be able to understand them and interpret data given in this study.

## RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

The locale of this study is in one of the private school institutions, which is located in Pagadian City, Zamboanga del Sur. This institution Achieves Excellence, Cultivates a Peaceful Environment, Takes Care of Mother Earth, and Serves Humanity. It has a group of school leaders known as the Grand Student Council (GRANSCIL). The researchers believed that the study is relevant to the environment since GRANSCIL has female leaders who will be used as the participants of the study.

## RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

The participants of the study will be the former Female GRANSCIL officers in the mentioned environment. The researchers will gather the list of former GRANSCIL officers and select those female officers who have a minimum of two consecutive years of experience in serving the college community.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

This chapter presents the results and discussion based on the data gathered on the lived experiences of female grand student council (GRANSCIL) officers in serving the college community. Female GRANSCIL officers have experienced different challenges in serving the college community. But, despite those challenges, they were able to perform their responsibilities and acquire different strategies for performing those. Besides, they have come to great realizations and learnings in serving the college community. Furthermore, female GRANSCIL officers have different perceptions of women's leadership, and they have also employed different styles of leadership.

Seven major themes arise in this study; perception of women's leadership, leadership styles, roles and responsibilities, performing roles and responsibilities, the challenges they faced in serving, how they faced the challenges, and realizations in serving.

## Perception of Women's Leadership

Women's leadership has long been an issue since people can barely see women in the realm of leadership. Conceptualizing women in leadership roles will give us insight into women's leadership. Three categories arise from the responses about female officers' perception of women's leadership: women having an organized approach to leadership, emotional female leaders, and female leaders possessing the same traits as male leaders.

Women have an organized approach to leadership. Female leaders are organized, they make plans in advance so that everything will run smoothly. The participants asserted.

"usahay mas better mo lead ang babayi kaysa a laki kay ang babayi organize ug mas calm magdala'. [ Sometimes, women are better than men in terms of leading because a woman is organized and leads more calmly.] P7

"Usually pag babaye man gud, gusto is planado daan arun ang implementation hapsay jud sya, so, katung sa akoa na time is ano, treasurer man gud ko ga una, so under jud sa mga mando sa mga presidents, so sa sinugdanan palang daan dapat budgeting naa na gyud, dapat ana, e see to it gyud nimo sya, kada event, bali murag maximum, dapat dili gyud mo magka short-short, so unsa nag maka allocate, dapat mao ra gyud pod tuy iguon". [Usually, when it's a woman, she wants to plan in advance so that the implementation is smooth. So, during my time, I'm also the treasurer, so it's under the orders of the presidents, so it should be, in the beginning, budgeting is already there, it should be there, you must see to it every event, but it

seems like a maximum, you should never be short of budget, so what can be allocated it should be the same for you.] P13

"Para sa akua nu pag babaye ang mag dala sa leadership kay mas organize and mahuman gyud syag dali kay naka plano na daan tanan". [When a woman takes the lead, it is more effective and well-organized since everything is planned.] P14

The participants perceived that female leaders are more organized than males, they believed that women make plans in advance in order to make everything in the organization run accordingly... Female leaders systematize the flow of information and ensure that everything will go according to their plans. Women were regarded as outstanding in taking the initiative, acting with resilience, self-development, driving for achievements, and exhibiting great integrity and honesty (Zenger & Folkman, 2019). Women are more geared for inspiration; they keep their staff informed, provide updates, and set goals. It has been found that the public also perceives women to be more organized than males. Women are indistinguishable from men in key leadership attributes such as intellect and potential for invention, with many believing they are better than men in areas of being compassionate and organized leaders.

*Emotional female leaders.* Female leaders are perceived to be more emotional. Women would easily get affected in situations where everything is hard to handle. In dealing with difficulties or challenges, female leaders are seen to be more patient. Female leaders are just like a mother who cares for their children; and a leader who shows empathy to their members. The participants contended.

"Women's leadership is different from men's. Women's leadership is something more emotional. Women tend to look upon the welfare, like the mentality of the students, they look into more emotional stuff rather than the physical stuff in itself. Women tend to fulfill what they could do for the students. Mas madiskarte ang babae." [Women's leadership is different from men. Women's leadership is something more emotional. Women tend to look upon the welfare, like the mentality of the students. They look into more emotional stuff rather than the physical stuff in itself. Women fulfill what they can do for the students. Also, women are wise.] P3

"For me, I think some people say, women daw tend to be more emotional compared to men, which is actually I think, true man pod sya at some point." [ I think some people say women tend to be more emotional compared to men, which is actually true at some point] P8

"Once man gud ang baye mag lead naa syay mahatag nga something dili mahatag sa laki, like siguro i think, kung sa akong na observe lang hah, mas patient ang mga women when it comes to dealing problems or dealing kana bitawng mga challengs." [Once a woman takes the lead, she can give something that a man can't give; I think, from what I've observed, women are more patient when it comes to dealing with problems or dealing with challenges.] P9

Women may be more emotional, but they are also more sympathetic and possess a high degree of emotional intelligence attributes that should be acknowledged as an asset in the workplace, particularly in leadership roles. Women are seen to be more patient in dealing with problems or challenges. Moreover, the participants also added that women leaders are just like a mother who cares for their subordinates. Their intuition and sensitivity can contribute to a well-rounded workforce and a sense of belongingness (Wagner, 2019). They are also excellent negotiators and peacemakers, which are essential for resolving workplace problems. According to the study by Kahanna (2021), women are good leaders because they have a responsible, caring attitude and are ready to deal with any obstacles that may arise. Women are typically more empathetic than men. Hence, women and men appear to have different approaches to interpreting information. While men are calm in a state of drama, women prefer to remain occupied with the situation, letting them help others while emotions are running high.

*Female leaders possess the same traits as male leaders*. Leadership requires no gender. Both men and women have the capability to lead, and leadership will matter based on how one achieves the responsibilities of a leader. There might be a difference in gender, but the way in which women leaders lead may also be the same as men. The participants stated.

"Kung giunsa nako pag perceive ang men same rapud sa women. Being a leader is not just about the gender." [I perceive women's leadership the same as how I perceive men. Being a leader is not just about gender.] P2

"Para sa akoa ang leadership dile man siya mag matter kung babayi baka o lalaki kay depende siya kung geunsa nimo pag achieve imong responsibility as an officer. So para sa akoa ok ra mag officer ang isa ka babayi dile na siya mag base sa gender depende rana siya geunsa nimo pag handle ang usa ka position or unsaon nimo pag achieve imong goals, plan or platforms ug geunsa nimo pag handle imong department during sa imong term." [For me, leadership doesn't matter if you are a woman or a man because it depends on how you achieve your responsibility as an officer. So, for me, it's okay for a woman to be an officer because it's about how you handle a position or how you achieve your goals, plan, or platforms and how you handle your department during your term.] P4

*"It's ok for women to lead, dile ra siya mag matter sa gender kay all of us kay naay capability to lead."* [It's okay for women to lead. Gender doesn't matter because all of us have the ability to lead]. P7

Women can lead just as well as men. Women may fulfill any position since there is no difference between us and males. P12

Gender differences in leadership do not matter. Female leaders are believed to be as strong as men, and they can also perform the responsibilities of men. It was not yet concluded that men have more effective and significant leadership qualities than women and vice versa (Radu et.al., 2017). Gender difference is recognized but several researches infer that there was no significant difference in leadership effectiveness between genders. Female leaders might have the same quality of leadership as men. They may differ in strategies, but just as men, women can lead as better as men. Women can also perform the roles and responsibilities of a leader. Moreover, Rhode (2017) states that men and women are perceived to be similar in important leadership attributes such as intellect, honesty, ambition, decisiveness, and innovation. In terms of leadership effectiveness, most studies found no significant gender disparities. The same study also provides that leadership success often necessitates ablend of traditionallymale and feminine characteristics, such as vision, ethics, interpersonal skills, technical proficiency, and personal attributes, such as self-awareness and self-control.

# Women's Leadership Styles

Women's leadership styles are often characterized as democratic and interactive. This means that women leaders tend to value collaboration, communication, and inclusivity in decision-making processes. They encourage participation from their members and they seek to create a work environment where everyone can contribute their ideas and perspectives. Two categories arise from the responses about female leadership style in serving the college community: Democratic or Participative Leadership and Interactive Leadership.

Democratic or Participative Leadership. Democratic or Participative Leadership. Female Leaders are democratic or participative, wherein they listen to their members and involve them in the decision-making process. Female leaders value the opinions and ideas of their colleagues and encourage them to share their thoughts and suggestions because they do believe that participative and democratic leadership creates a collaborative and inclusive working environment where everyone feels valued and respected. They asserted:

"When we talk about leadership styles, it is something reflected in our personality. So as a leader, I wanted a democratic style wherein everyone in my team got involved because it encourages collaboration, teamwork, and aside from that, maka feel sila ug belongingness." [When we talk about leadership styles, it is something reflected in our personality. So as a leader, I wanted a democratic style wherein everyone in my team got involved because it encourages collaboration and teamwork, and aside from that, I want to make them feel belonging.]. P6

"The leadership style that I used during my time is a democratic leadership, that means the students participate in the decision-making process. Communication skills reflect a leader. A good leader can be known not on the way they plan, but on the way they communicate." [The leadership style that I used during my time is democratic leadership, which means the students participate in the decision-making process. Communication skills reflect a leader. A good leader can be they communicate in the decision-making process. Communicate in the decision-making process. Communicate is democratic leadership, which means the students participate in the decision-making process. Communication skills reflect a leader. A good leader can be known not by the way they plan but by the way they communicate.] P11

Democratic leadership, as defined by Ekiyor and Dapper (2019), is a style of leadership where the leader involves the group in the decision-making process, encourages participation, and values the opinions, and encourages them to share their ideas and suggestions. Democratic leadership is the ability to communicate and value everyone's thoughts and opinions (Assey et al, 2019). It allows the leader to hear different perspectives and ideas from the group members, which can lead to better decisions and solutions.

*Interactive Leadership.* Female leaders focus on building relationships with their team members and creating a positive work environment that fosters trust, respect, and open communication. They let their team members or co-officers take ownership of their work and empower them to make wiser decisions that accord with the organization's goals and values. They asserted:

"I trust the members more than I trust myself. So parang, I tend to listen more to them rather than I listen to myself. Leadership in itself is not hard because we tend to lean more on what your members could do. Trust is the best ingredient." [I trust the members more than I trust myself. It's somewhat like I tend to listen more to them than I listen to myself. Leadership in itself is not hard because we tend to lean more on what your members could do. on what our members can do. Just trust the best ingredient.] P3

"Ako kay everytime naay decision making sa amoang club I always asked the opinion of my members, and in decision making dile ko ganahan ako ra mo decide mangayo sab kog opinion sa akong members I always encourage them to show their leadership skills." [Every time there is decision-making in our club, I always ask the opinion of my members, and in decision-making, I don't like to decide for our club; I also ask my members for their opinion too. Lastly, I always encourage them to show their leadership skills.] P7

"During atong akong term akong leadership style kay una I listened to what they want to happen during events then mag pa meeting dayun ko para mabotaran sa majority kay dilr ko ganahan ako ang mag decide para sa club. Lastly, as much as possible ganahan ko akong members mo participate makng mag attendance gyud ug sanction ko ato. "[During my term, my leadership style was as follows: first, I listened to what they wanted to happen during events; second, I did not decide for all of us; instead, I held a meeting, and all decisions were voted on by my members. Finally, I want as many of our club's members to participate as possible. Therefore, I always use attendance tracking and sanctioning.] P15

According to Younas (2021) leaders listen more and talk less. Indeed, this leadership style maintains stronger and more intimate leader-subordinate relationships. Elaigwu (2019) also states that women prefer "interactive leadership" because it allows members to contribute not just to participate in decision-making; it also emphasizes collaboration, communication, and engagement between leaders and their team members.

Roles and Responsibilities in Serving the College Community

Women leaders have a wide range of roles and responsibilities, which can vary depending on their specific position and the context in which they are working. In this study, two categories arise from the responses about female roles and responsibilities in serving the college community; these include: to delegate tasks, monitor team members, and serve as role models.

*Task's delegation.* Female leaders delegate tasks evenly towards its members by telling them what exactly to do. Female leaders are known for their ability to delegate tasks effectively. They understand that they cannot do everything themselves and rely on their team members to help achieve the goals of the organization.

"As a leader, my roles and responsibilities, first delegating tasks, lead the team, monitor and manage my members." [As a leader, my roles and responsibilities first include delegating tasks, leading the team, monitoring and managing my members.] P6

"As a president, my roles and responsibilities at that time I distribute the task to my co-officer fairly gyud, ako sab sila gena encourage to participate in activities, and lastly to follow the rule of the s chool in terms of attendance and sanctioning. [As a president, my roles and responsibilities at that time I distribute the task to my co-officer fairly, encourage my club members to participate in activities, and lastly, follow the rule of the school in terms of the school in terms of attendance and sanctioning.]P15

Delegation is a way of assigning duties and responsibilities to subordinates or team members. When leaders delegate tasks to their team members, it can bring several benefits to the leader-member relationship. Delegation benefits leader-member relationships, increases the speed and quality of decision-making, reduces the workload for the leader, and enriches the knowledge and skills of subordinates (Badjie, 2021).

*Managing or monitoring members.* Female leaders are known for their strong leadership skills and ability to monitor or manage members effectively. They possess excellent communication skills and are able to create a positive and productive work environment. Female leaders are also known to be empathetic and understanding towards their team members, which helps them build strong relationships and trust with their team. They asserted:

"Ang number one nako na reason nganong mingdagan ko kay gusto ko mahimong leader sa isa ka department para naay usa ka tawo nga mo guide sa students kung unsa ang angay buhaton ig abot sa mga activities and all, then mahimo sab na role model sa uban, ug ofcourse ganahan ko nindot akong leadership na mahatag nga maikabilin sa students." [My number one reason why I ran is that I want to be a leader in a department so that there is someone who will guide the students on what should be done in terms of activities and all, then I want also to be a role model for others, and lastly, of course, I like to end my term leaving a good leadership towards the college community.]P4

"Since I was then the president of our club and later on became the Mass Media Officer, my responsibilities are to monitor my members and to take and spread information. "[Since I was then the president of our club and later on became the Mass Media Officer, my responsibilities are to monitor my members and to take and spread information." [Since I was then the president of our club and later on became the Mass Media Officer, my responsibilities are to monitor my members and to take and spread information."

Leaders view their role as facilitating and organizing the work of their team Mansaray (2019). Female leaders see themselves as enablers and coordinators of the work. They tend to monitor their members to ensure that everyone is engaged and guides them if there's an issue that needs to be addressed.

A Role Model. Female leaders can serve as excellent examples to their members by demonstrating qualities such as being responsible for their actions since, as a leader, they must do what is good for everyone.

"Ang number one nako na reason nganong mingdagan ko kay gusto ko mahimong leader sa isa ka department para naay usa ka tawo nga mo guide sa students kung unsa ang angay buhaton ig abot sa mga activities and all, then mahimo sab na role model sa uban, ug ofcourse ganahan ko nindot akong leadership na mahatag nga maikabilin sa students." [My number one reason why I ran is that I want to be a leader in a department so that there is someone who will guide the students on what should be done in terms of activities and all, then I want also to be a role model for others, and lastly, of course, I like to end my term leaving a good leadership towards the college community.] P4

"Usa na ganahan nako ma achieve ato is dile tungod nga dile ka popular walakay right na maelect sa position. So ang imoha lang is be a good role model para sun on ka dayun dapat responsible ko sa akong action, dayun doing what is good for everybody kay ig mobuhat kag dile maayo murag mo reflect nga ang imohang mg nasasakopan kay moreklmao sa imong way ug padagan" [One thing I would like to achieve is not because you are not popular. You do not have the right to be elected to the position. So, what I did was be a good role model and be responsible for my actions. Lastly, do what is good for everybody because when you do something bad, it seems to reflect that your subordinates will complain about your way of leading.] P5

"In my opinion, you have to start with someone who leads by example. Individuals are more likely to follow someone who is prepared to work hard themselves. Usually, giving commands from a place produces less effective results than having someone really engaged in the situation." [In my opinion, you have to start with someone who leads by example. Individuals are more likely to follow someone who is prepared to work hard. Usually, giving commands from a place produces less effective results than having someone really engaged in the situation." [In my opinion, you have to start with someone who leads by example. Individuals are more likely to follow someone who is prepared to work hard. Usually, giving commands from a place produces less effective results than having someone really engaged in the situation.] P12

According to Adawiysah (2022) one of the fundamental truths about leadership is that a leader is a role model or example for subordinates. When it comes to leadership, effective leaders must be role models to subordinates because they set the tone for the organization and they are set as examples to their subordinates to follow.

## Ways of Performing Roles and Responsibilities

Leaders have different ways of performing their roles and responsibilities. Depending on their positions, some leaders tend to follow orders from those who are superior to them, and some have their initiative to formulate activities that are benefic ial to the community. Two specific categories come up from the responses about how Female leaders perform their roles and responsibilities: Following orders and Initiating outreach activities

*Following orders*. Female leaders follow the calendar of activities that are already prepared by the department heads; they prioritize the completion of tasks and achieving goals. They are focused on the job at hand and are committed to getting things done in an efficient and effective manner.

"Dire sa CTEAS department kay kung unsa ang calendar of activities naka specific kay mao ako nabuhat pero na officer man ko during pandemic then na butterfly gehapon ko kay ko kay ang president ato kay na admit didto ko naka try naintegrate naba naa nay online na games pero wala rato naka hindrance nga babayi ko na balance ra gehapon nako ang responsibilities". [During my term in the CTEAS department, we followed what was specified in the calendar of activities. I also became an officer during the pandemic. As always, I have held different positions since the president got admitted, but that's not a hindrance for me to lead. I was still able to balance my responsibilities.] P4

"Ako nag follow man kog calendar of activities ana ang nahitabo gyud ato kay naa may pandemic nay mga delay of activities and then ang nabag o kay naa nay integration instead of face to face naa nay virtual mas challenging siya kay nangangapa paka unsa imo buhaton dayun naa sab me outreach ato naghatag *me ug mga notebooks and tsinelas sa badjao ,dayun nag filming me sab ato.* "[I also follow the calendar of activities. That's what really happened because there is a pandemic, there are delays in activities, and then there's already integration. Instead of face-to-face, it is now virtual, and it is more challenging on my part because I wonder what to do. Lastly, my co-officers and I conducted an outreach. We gave notebooks and slippers to stray kids, and then we also filmed the activity.] P5

Female leaders are somewhat bureaucratic, they emphasize the importance of hierarchy and the chain of command. They are detail-oriented and task-focused, value rules and structure, and disciplined; they make decisions independently. Female officers rely on standardized procedures and processes to ensure consistency. Additionally, the participants asserted that they are just following the calendar of activities initiated by their department heads. According to Ullah (2021), bureaucratic leaders are detail-oriented and task-focused, value rules and structure, are strong-willed and self-disciplined and have a great work ethic.

*Initiating Outreach Activities.* Female leaders are engaged and committed to making a difference in the lives of others. A leader is someone who reaches out to people and communities in need and is committed to helping those who are struggling or marginalized, and she may use her position of power and influence to advocate for change.

"During sa akong leadership sa student council, ako man gud sauna kay dile ra isa ka position akong nahandle kay mura kog butterfly gud kay adto ko sa isa ka position kay nay usa ka officer nga wala ga perform sa iyang duties so ako ang gasalo sa iyang responsibilities ato nga time lisod gyud siya pero syempre nag function gehapon ko. Sa activities na akong nabuhat kay nanaka mig Glab mag share mga naa sa Columaban kay adopted community man nato to. Pero during ato nga time kay ig adto nimo mag dala kayg mga lami nga food dayun ig panguli kay mangaon nalang ug tinapa anda all so ing ana among na experience". [ During my leadership in the student council, I did not handle only one position because I was like a butterfly; there was an officer who did not perform his duties, so I did his part of the responsibilities. On the other hand, in the activities that I did, we went to Glab to share what we here in Columban with our adopted community. But during this time, when you go there, you bring delicious food, then when you go home, you just eat bread, so that's our experience.] P4

"Naa sab me outreach ato naghatag me ug mga notebooks and tsinelas sa badjao, dayun nag filming me sab ato." [My co-officers and I conducted an outreach. We gave notebooks and slippers to stray kids, and then we also filmed the activity.] P5

The role that women can play in promoting community security, development, and progress. This means that women can bring unique perspectives and skills to the table that can help address issues such as poverty. By recognizing and supporting the involvement of women in community affairs, we can create more inclusive and effective communities that benefit everyone.

# Challenges that Women Faced in Serving the College Community

Leaders are not perfect; they all have experienced different challenges while serving. Some of these challenges evolve on having misunderstanding with their colleagues and members, and some may have difficulty in performing their roles and responsibilities. Four specific categories come up from the responses about the challenges that female leaders have faced in serving the college community: lack of unity among colleagues, difficulty in handling the position, deal with different attitudes of the members, and conflict of academic and leadership activities.

*Lack of unity among colleagues.* Female leaders have experienced difficulties in dealing with their co-officers. They had lots of misunderstandings that resulted in discord. The participants stated.

"Ang pinaka hasol langjud atong nag lead ko, kay kanang dili kayo cooperative ang imong mga kauban." [ The most irritating part during my leadership years was that my colleagues were not that really cooperative.]P1 "Ang challenge nga akong naagian atong officer pako kay kanang dili mag kasinabot and dili makita sa mga kauban ang imong effort." [The challenge that I have encountered when I was an officer, is just when we have misunderstandings with my colleagues and also when they do not recognize my effort.] P2

"Daghan ko ug worst experience during sa akong term una kay crisis a leadership kay syempre dile lalim nga dile mo mag kasinabot sa imong kauban, worst nako na experience kay magkagubot me sa akong kauban na officers naabot man gud sa point na among governor wala na ming lihok sa iyang duties so kinsa mosalo ako man ang vice ako gyud mosalo kay nag gubot me kay nay mis understanding kay syempre kada meeting nay time dile mag kasinabot kung unsay buhaton sa events." [I had a lot of worst experiences during my term. The first one was a crisis in leadership because I got into trouble with my fellow officers. It even reached the point that our governor was not performing his duties, so who will continue the task? Of course, the Vice, which is me.] P4

"Dayun ang pinaka worst pa gyud kay as a leader dile rasab ikaw ang leader need sab nimo idea sa uban kanang need ka ug coordination dile ra nimo mabuhat ikaw ra isa kay ang imong buhaton dile ra para sa imoha para sa tanan lisod mo decide as a leader kay alangan imong gusto mao na gyud siya. "[Then the worst thing is you need the help of others, especially in making decisions since it is for all students, so you need their participation and coordination for the fulfillment of the task given.] P5

Having misunderstandings with colleagues is a hard challenge of being a leader, it might result in chaos in the organization. Lack of strong leadership and unity among members of the council can bar the execution of activities for the community. Conflicts and unending problems might arise from a lack of collaboration. The participants also added that they need cooperation among colleagues in order to capture different ideas and that they would be able to build great decisions. A cohesive team is essential for making an organization's objectives into reality. When we discuss leadership, we frequently refer to individuals—one person to many. Yet, leadership is about a team that makes an organization grow. A group of leaders must be unified through a hierarchy. It's about a group of people who looked for direction and clarity. If the ways to achieve the desired goals are unclear, the result will end in chaos (Field, 2022).

*Difficulty in handling the position.* Not all leaders are adequate in handling their position especially when they do not have any background in the position they are taking. Having not enough experience in leadership positions hinders their ability to perform their responsibilities. There are also instances where leaders are having difficulties in handling their position due to some circumstances that make them question their worth as a leader. The participants stated.

"Naglisod sab ko sa time nga ming adapt ko ug laing position kay from governor na treasurer ko sa national pa gyud so kato lisod kayo kay education ko na students dile ko CBE syempre na ngapa ko unsaon pag audit unsaon pag compile sa resibo pero with the help of my advisers na fulfill nako ako mga responsibilities ". [ Then I also had a hard time when I adopted another position because I was from governor to treasurer, so it was difficult because I was an education student, and I didn't have any background in financing, unlike those business students.] P4

"Ang isa sa akong challenges kay unsaon nimo siya pag handle ang position knowing na wala kay background. Lisud jud iperform akong responsibilities especially isa sabko kaanak, example need ka sa balay dile ka kaadto kay nay activities need nimo mo report dire, dayun ig nay practices nga gabie na kayo then moingon pa gyud imong parents na unsa may makuha nimo ana ". [ As a leader, one of my challenges is how I can handle the position without knowing that I don't have a background. It's really hard to handle, especially that I also have obligations to perform as a child. For example, you need to be at home, but you can't because there are activities and you need to report. Also, my parents are questioning me about what I could get in becoming a leader.] P5

Problems in handling responsibilities are difficult especially when a leader does not have enough background or experience to the assigned position; it might be difficult for leaders to perform their functions. Women in the realm of leadership are seemingly small in number and this might be because women have difficulties in adapting leadership positions. They might be good in some aspects but if assigned to another, they are having difficulty in coping with numerous changes (Mestry, 2017).

*Difficulty in dealing with different attitudes of the members.* Female leaders have struggled in dealing with different attitudes of the members. Controlling the different attitudes of members is really a challenge since it is not easy for them to have to ugh leadership. They shared.

"Ikaduha kay lisod ihandle ang mga students labi na babayi biya ta no dile ta dali makapangisog lahi ra gyud mangisog ug modisipina ang lalaki during ato gyud lisod ipersuade ang students na mo enter sila sa isa ka events labi na sa ting clearance mga gahig ulo unsa on nimo pag displina nga mo follow sila sa rules." [Second, it's difficult to handle the students, it's not easy for us to be brave, and students usually get afraid of men more than women. During this time also, it's really hard to convince students to enter an event, especially during clearance, and it is really difficult to discipline students.] P4

"During Hugyaw, kay everytime mangita kog participant's lisod birahon ako members, bisan ignon nimo mohatag kag 100 pesos na load dile gyud mangapil." [During Hugyaw, every time I'm looking for participants, it's hard for me to let my members participate in school activities. Even if you give them 100 pesos as a load, they won't participate.] P7

"Ang challenges jud nga akong nasinati kay gina hesitate kos mga members, pressure, tas kana pung nay mga activities nga dili mo cooperate ang uban members." [The challenges that I faced were hesitation, pressure, and also when there were members who were uncooperative in the activities.] P10

One of the things I experienced as an officer is that the students are really hard to manage sometimes especially when it comes to following the rules and regulations in every activity. P11

Managing different attitudes of the members is really a challenge for female leaders especially when they are perceived to have an amiable personality and they may be more affected than men. There can be trouble in exercising leadership. Leaders are taking risks in attracting different attitudes of their members and challenging the ways in which they think. Members may take advantage of female officers because of their feminine attributes, and also because it is hard for them to deal with and discipline diverse personalities of their members, they may find it hard to gain respect from their members. According to Paterson (2019), leaders' ethical conduct influences followers' immoral behavior. The actions and ethical voice of leaders have a substantial impact on role ethicality, which in turn has an impact on unethical conduct of members. Leaders must hold the power bestowed upon them because they are playing an important role in managing their subordinates (Heifetz & Linsky, 2017).

Conflict of academic and leadership activities. Female officers have struggled much in balancing their time and responsibilities in academics and in leadership. They shared.

"Challenges daghan, syempre we need to balance also no, the acads, kuan man gud sya, ga leader-leader, actually nag serve mi, kuan day mi service providers, chaar, so ang imong challenge is paunsa pag balance imong academics, paunsa nimo pag balance imong responsibility, kay it requires time man gud sya, dili sya pwede muadtu dadtu kung kanus a ka ganahan but you you have certain responsibility na kailangan jud ka muadtu". [There are many challenges, of course. We need to balance also academics since we are a leader, actually, we serve them like we are service providers, so your challenge is how to balance your academics,

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how do you balance your responsibility because it really requires time, and you can't go there when you like, but you have certain responsibility that you have to go there.] P9

"3<sup>rd</sup> year ko grabe akong adjustment kay kanang accountancy biya grabe ka lisod! Nagka hila-hilak ko ana, kanang akong major kay naa tuy time kana bitawng busy kaayu kay mag prepare sa event then need pa nimo mag tuon, grabe ang mga bilar atu na time, then naka experience jud pod kog kuan isa sa mga major nako is nabagsak ko! Hilak ko "! [ It's my 3rd year, and I'm having a hard time adjusting because taking accountancy is very difficult! I started crying because my major was very busy at that time because you have to prepare for the event, then you still need to study. I failed one of my subjects! I really cried!] P13

"Daghan kaayug mga challenges uy labi nang usahay mag dungan ang event sa school then naay upcoming exam tas while preparing sa event naay mga quizzes nga kailangan tun-an. Grabi kaayu kalisod kay miskang unsa nimo ka manage sa imong time, dilijud malikayan maglisod gyud japon ka". [There are a lot of challenges, especially sometimes the school event coincides with an upcoming exam, and also while preparing for the event, there are quizzes that need to be studied. It is very difficult because no matter how you manage your time, it is inevitable that you will have a hard time.] P14

Academic life becomes extremely difficult as leadership duties and personal studies compete for attention. Being a leader and a student at the same time is really difficult, since as a student, they must compete for achieving excellence in academics while performing their functions as a leader. In the study of Murage (2019), it was found that student leaders may have to commit a significant amount of time to academic difficulties due to the complexity of their responsibilities.

Women's Ways of Facing the Challenges

As leaders inevitably experience challenges in their term of serving, they also have different strategies to cope and be able to perform their responsibilities despite the difficulties. Women have to deal with difficulties and obstacles in their personal and professional lives. This can include traits such as resilience, empathy, adaptability, and collaboration. Women often have to navigate societal and cultural barriers in addition to personal challenges, which can shape their approach to problem-solving and decision-making.

Two categories emerged from the participant's responses during the one-on-one interview about how they face the challenges in serving the college community. These are accepting the consequences and having proper time management.

Accepting the consequences. Female leaders who accept responsibility for their actions and the consequences that follow demonstrate strength, integrity, and accountability. They understand that leadership comes with a level of responsibility and are willing to take ownership of their decisions, even when they don't go as planned. The participants concede.

"I just face it as it is. Face the consequences." -P1

"Kung unsa man ang mga nahitabo. Then learn from it para maka adjust napud sa sunod. Gi accept nalang jud nako." [I just have to accept the possible outcomes and learn from them so that I can adjust next time.] – P2

"I just have to take it up and explain to people why you're doing that stuff. I just face the consequences." - P3

"Sa akua kay wala koy mahimo, buhaton jud nako na, kay kung dili nako buhaton karun basing pagka ugma

madugangan pa hinuon ede mas magkalisod pa jud ka ug taman. Kailangan jud buhaton jud karun dayun mintras kaya pa kay ugma lahi napod." [I can't do anything about it, so I'll take care of it now because, if I wait, perhaps the problem will get worse tomorrow and you won't be able to park as easily. It has to be done now because tomorrow is different.] –P14

"Ato nga time e face nako by finding ways just like giving rewards such as gcash if they won and of course trusting myself that I can do it ana ra gyud." [I faced those challenges by finding ways, just like giving rewards such as cash if they won and trusting myself that I could do it.] – P15

The statement suggests that worrying about things that have already happened in the past is pointless because we cannot change what has already occurred. It is similar to crying over spilled milk; once it has happened, there is no way to undo it. This philosophy is commonly used in consequentialism, which presents that the goodness and badness of an action depends solely on its consequences. This approach can be applied to various levels and types of moral properties. Essentially, the idea is to focus on what can be done in the present and future rather than dwelling on the past (Sinnot-Armstrong, 2022).

Having proper time management. Female leaders understand the importance of prioritizing tasks and delegating responsibilities to their team members. They asserted.

"Time management, self-discipline and mo adjust gyud ka sa ilaha but actually those challenges are an opportunity for me to grow and learn how different people respond in different situations. Kay at that time second year pako then para sa akoa challenge gyud so ako mahimo kay mo adjust sa ilaha or putting myself to their shoes kay wala biyay mas high pa ug position then ang adviser dile biya always present." [Time management, self-discipline, and you really adjust to them, but actually, those challenges are an opportunity for me to grow and learn how different people respond in different situations. Because at that time, I was in my second year, so it was really a challenge for me since I needed to adjust and put myself in their shoes because there was no higher position that would help me, and our adviser at that time was not always present.] –P7

"Time management lang jud, set kag time unsa una nimo buhaton. I prioritize lang jud nimo ang mga pinaka una or kinahanglan buhaton para dili ka madak an sa mga trabahuon." [It's just time management. Set a time, what you should do first. Just prioritize the things that need to be done first so that you don't get overwhelmed with work.] - P8

"I'm focusing more on time management so that I may fulfill both my obligations in serving the Granscil office and my academic responsibilities." P12

"Maka ingun jud ko naglisod jud ko ug manage sa akong time, isa pod sa challenge kanang time management, hilig ko mag procrastinate didtu, katu na time is dapat unalang gyud, before pa sa activity una lang gyud nako ihatag ang mga budget, dayun pagkahuman mananghid na dayun ko sa president, sa adviser, naay mga meetings mu ingunjud pod ko kung mag conflict bitaw sa council like meeting then naay klase, muingun jud ko nga I prioritize jud nako ako klase." [I can say that I have a hard time managing my time, that's one of the challenges is time management. I tend to procrastinate there. That time I should do it first. Before the activity, I will give the budget first, then after that, I will beg. I will go to the president or to the adviser. If there will be meetings in the council and it is a conflict with my class schedule, I will really tell them. I will say that I will prioritize class first.] –P13

Time management is a process of self-management that involves consciously and deliberately focusing on time when making decisions about what to do, how long to spend on activities, how to improve efficiency, and when to perform specific activities. It is a set of behaviors that are aimed at achieving an effective use of time while working towards specific goals. In other words, time management involves taking control of one's time and using it in a way that utilizes productivity and limits wasted time. This requires planning, prioritizing, and organizing tasks in a way that ensures that the most important activities are completed first, and that time is used efficiently to accomplish goals. Overall, time management is an important skill that can help individuals ac hieve success in both their personal and professional lives (Razali 2018).

Realizations of Female Leaders in Serving the College Community

The understanding or awareness of women in leadership roles about their responsibilities and duties in serving the college community includes their recognition of the needs and concerns of students, faculty, and staff, and their efforts to address them through effective communication, decision-making, and collaboration. It also involves their recognition of the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion in creating a supportive and inclusive environment for all members of the college community. As female officers go through several obstacles in serving the college community, they still have come up with great realizations. Two categories emerged from the participant's responses during the interview about their realization of serving the college community. These are serving as an informative experience and serving as a training ground to be a good citezen.

Serving as an informative experience. Female leaders had realized that serving was not just about helping, but it is also about learning. By dedicating themselves to serving the community, they gained a deeper understanding on how to deal with people and on how to cope with challenges. They said,

"Narealize jud nako nga dakog contribution sa among pagka kami ang pagka Granscil. Beneficial nako especially namarbaho na kay experienced na anad nag atubang ug problema like time management." [I realized that being a GRANSCIL Officer really has a great contribution to us now. Especially now that I have my profession, it is very beneficial in facing problems like time management.] –P1

"Ma achive nimo imong self-worth and self-confidence kay pag abot nako dire ulawon ko pero pag gawas nako baga nakog nawong. Na mold ko kay kabalo nako mo handle sa situation like unsaon ang saktong pag han-ay." [You can achieve your self-worth and self-confidence. It molded me to handle different situations.] – P5

"One thing I learned as an officer is the ability to understand different personalities. I learned how to be a good leader, And I learned how to listen." P11

"Akong realization kay in serving you need to be passionate and you need to love what you are doing because through that you can achieve self fulfillment." [My realization during that time is that in serving, you need to be passionate and love what you are doing because, through that, you can achieve self-fulfillment.] – P15

Research has shown that women bring significant value to leadership positions, particularly in the heal theare industry. While traditionally feminine qualities such as emotional intelligence, empathy, and intuition are often cited as reasons for women's success in leadership roles, studies have also found that women's strength and perseverance are equally important (Czabanowska et al., 2017). The same study also provides that companies that include women in leadership positions tend to perform better, possibly due to these skills as well as their ability to multitask. Overall, the research suggests that women are an asset to leadership teams and should be given equal opportunities to lead.

Serving as a training ground to be a good citizen. A female leader recognized that serving others is not only a noble act but also a training ground for becoming a good citizen. They realized that being an officer helped them become better, which they have applied to their current professions, in interacting with people. They asserted.

"Naapply nako akong pagka granscil sa akong trabaho karon. Good model. All experiences are worth it kay nay mga learnigs nga nakuha." [I have applied my experiences in GRANSCIL in my work right now, like being a good model. All of those experiences are worth it, for I have gained different learnings.]–P2

"Honestly speaking thankful ko for giving me the opportunity to experience being a leader because it serve as my training ground especially right now that I am working as a public servant here in my barangay, it taught me how to work in a team, engage in different group of people and become an effective and efficient *leader kay as of now na relate nako akong pagka leader sa reality karun sa ako work dile nako mabag ohan sa lahi lahi nga na attitude sa tawo dile nako ma culture shock kay na train nako.*" [Honestly speaking, I am thankful for giving me the opportunity to experience being a leader because it serves as my training ground, especially right now that I am working as a public servant here in my barangay. It taught me how to work in a team, engage with a different group of people and become an effective and efficient leader.] – P6

"It was really fun kay dili man ko trully introvert pero i think naka help sya sa akua to interact more with people and then nakatabang sila sa akua na makita naku ba, even though they are still students kay mix man jud na lain-lain ug department when it comes to Granscil, so makita nako sila even though they are granscil students naa silay potential ba to become a leader in the near future." [It was really fun because I'm not really that introverted person, but I think it helped me to interact more with people, and then they also helped me, even though they are still students since we are a mix of different departments. When it comes to Granscil, I can see that even though they are Granscil students, they have the potential to become a leader in the near future.] -P8

"Training ground gyud nimo sya, like ma challenge jud imong patience and pagsinabtanay. Then ang pag halubilo sa imong mga co-officers nimo. Open minded jud ka para sa suggestion para ma unite mo into one." [This serves as your training ground, and your patience and understanding will be really challenged. Then the interaction of your co-officers with you. You are open-minded for suggestions so that you can unite into one.] -P13

"Thankful ko kay naagian nako tung mga inatu na experiences kay best experience jud tu sa akong college life. Kung wala nako tu naagian na inatu na experiences maybe irresponsible guro ko now. Ang akong pagka Granscil officer jud ang mould kung unsa ko nako now." [I am thankful that I went through those experiences because it was the best experience in my college life. If I hadn't gone through those experiences, maybe I'd be irresponsible now. The fact that being a Granscil officer helped to shape who I am today.] – P14

Leadership opportunities in various settings such as social, political, or professional contexts can lead to different outcomes. However, a study has shown that being in a leadership position can have significant benefits for students beyond just demonstrating their abilities or popularity. These benefits may include personal growth, development of transferable skills, and opportunities for networking and career advancement. Thus, the statement implies that taking on leadership roles can be a valuable experience for individuals in various contexts (Anderson 2017). The importance of the Leadership education model emphasizes the significance of leadership education for undergraduate students in the present times (Kunz & Garner, 2007). It suggests that the current job market is highly unpredictable, and students need to possess specific leadership qualities to succeed in their future careers. These qualities include the ability to gather and combine information from different sources, self-management skills, and the ability to empower others.

The theory of this study proposes that leaders are born with just the right traits and abilities for leading and it defines leaders as valiant, mythic and ordained to rise leadership when the situation arises. In this study, female officers have sought to foster unity and cooperation among colleagues and members of the community. They allow their members to share their ideas and encourage participation in decision making. Furthermore, different challenges have hampered their way in serving the college community yet they still come up with solutions and face the situation with courage.

The research provides empirical data on the lived experiences of female leaders in serving. This information is significant, given that only few researchers come across in studying the lived experience of female leaders since most papers tackles about the gender gap between male and female

The results of this study should be valued when the school commends to investigate how leaders of the college community exercise their leadership roles. The study of female GRANSCIL officers can offer valuable insights for improving leadership and

promoting unity among students. Furthermore, the study will assist school administrators understand how school leaders combine their academic and leadership obligations, allowing them to propose better solutions.

## CONCLUSION

The study on the lived experiences of female Grand Student Council officers in serving the college community highlights that women in leadership are also capable of performing different tasks. Female leaders did not consider their gender as hindrance in performing their roles and responsibilities, besides as leaders they tend to look upon what is best for the community. Hampered with several difficulties, yet they still come up with different strategies to cope. Moreover, the study also revealed that female leaders sought to foster unity and cooperation among colleagues and members. They encourage everyone to interact and participate actively in decision making.

Lastly, in this study, female GRANSCIL officers follow orders from their heads and formulate activities that will help others, especially those who belong to marginalized groups of people. They also employ democratic and interactive style of leadership in which they acknowledge the opinions and ideas of others. Additionally, they have also experienced challenges while serving such as, lack of unity among colleagues, difficulty in handling position, difficulty in dealing with different attitudes of the members, and conflict of academics and leadership activities. However, they face these challenges by accepting the situation as it stands. They just accept the consequences and learn from it in order to avoid it from happening again. They also cope with the challenges by having proper time management in which they take initiative in prioritizing and delegating tasks.

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