Ethnomethodological Inquiry on Keeping Students' Community in the Campus Organizations Amidst the Virtually-Facilitated Interactions

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Abstract

Students' sense of community refers to the relationship that they establish being part of the organization. The transition on the delivery of education from face to face to virtual impacts the operations of the student organizations in school in so many ways. This study aims to explore virtually-facilitated interactions of students on keeping their sense of community within the campus organizations as experienced by the student leaders and members. Using an ethnomethodological approach in research, this study focuses on describing the strategies employed by the participants in keeping their sense of community amidst the virtual interactions. The study uses in-depth interview to generate the categories of strategies. In transitioning to remote interactions, students utilize available online platforms as fundamental utilities for their online interactions. Keeping their sense of community includes Social Connectedness; Setting guidelines and routines to be observed but not to be imposed; Reaching out for updates; Giving feedback to inspire openness and Allotting moments to relate and recreate. The study provides better understanding on the dynamics of students' interactions in the virtual space in keeping their connections and fellowship. The institutions need to ensure support, guidance, motivation and empowerment on students' affairs both online and offline in order to upkeep their drives on making a difference through their advocacies and initiatives.

Keywords: Keeping Students' Community, Virtually-facilitated Interactions, Ethnomethodology

Introduction

Sense of community' originally defined to mean supportive network, a stable structure that one can depend on psychological significance and identification. Further, developing this sense of community and connections is one of the life's major tasks and should be the overarching goal of all community interventions. He further explained that when this sense of community is lost, it can become an underlying root to many problems, then appreciating and understanding the development of community might well contribute to the analysis of more specific problems and better yet their resolutions. Additionally, community-building help keep the students in the class and in the program, to promote full engagement in the class, to facilitate effective collaborative learning, and to encourage continued communication after the course or program is complete for development of the learner (Brown, 2001).

In the context of student organizations in school, this is one of the areas which the officers and members are trying to connect and establish community spirit among the members from the beginning of the school year. There are several initiatives and activities being conducted in order to build up good rapport and relationship among the members of the organizations. Leadership through teamwork, togetherness, collective actions and collaboration are being emphasized and are taught explicitly and implicitly among them. In the article of Brown (2001), she explained that every organization has its own unique culture which largely influences its capacity for creating a healthy community. This culture is determined by a variety of factors but ultimately starts with one foundational piece — a strong mission. An organizations with a strong mission, the members feels that they are working towards a greater goal and can use it as a source of inspiration within themselves and the community each and every day.

With transition on the delivery of education from face to face to virtual, it also impact the operations of the student organizations in school in so many ways. Primarily, is the delivery of programs and activities of the students' clubs and organizations. These organizations have also shifted into the virtual platform in order to continue the mission and the purpose of the group that is to provide opportunities for its members' growth and development. Along with this transition is also a change in the dynamics of the officers and members within the organizations such as the way they collaborate, they interact and build rapport and relationship as they are now in the virtual environment. Looking into the dynamics of students' interaction in the virtual environment, several experts shared what they have observed and experienced seeing students' dynamic in the virtual platform

positively or negatively. In online classes for example, some learners barely interact and they don't work together. Sometimes, they do, depending on the encouragement, motivation, teaching style and approaches of the teachers as well. Major (2015) mentioned in his article published that it can be challenging to achieve community in an online course and to know whether it has developed. There is a need to see a good sense of what a strong group dynamic looks like in an online environment. In the article of Brown (2001) on the process of community building in distance learning classes, she mentioned that while it is true that distance learning provides a convenient, flexible, manageable alternative for this developing segment of society. However, students in asynchronous distance classes work at computers miles apart at varying times of the day and night. This feeling of being alone is being experienced by every learner. This is overcome when students join together in a community of learners who support one another. The process of forming a community of learners is an important issue in distance learning because it can affect student satisfaction, retention, and learning. Her study in on developing a theory to explain the process of building community in a virtual platform as few studies have been done to discover how learners actually define or understand community, whether they feel part of a community, and, if so, how that phenomenon occurs. Exploring this phenomenon is significant as it adds new research, rooted in accepted classroom theory and practice, to the literature on distant learning. With the aid technology, everything seems to be possible even how people sustain and maintain connections through online interaction. Technology facilitates the pedagogical approaches by using available tools or management systems with augmented reality and virtual reality which facilitates new paradigm on learning (Mobo, 2020). In support, Bautista (2016) concluded that online community learning is a potential platform in sustaining community of inquiry and practice in leveraging academic conditions. In relation to student's involvement online, in the context of academic learning the study of Cabansag et al. (2020) proves that learners are actually motivated to participate in the online interaction and this participation can still be improved with proper facilitation and support. In line with online interactions, communication is vital in the process. The processing theory of Walther (2008) as cited by Ramo and Campued (2020) specifies that verbal cues are the central considerations in forging effective relationships online.

The purpose of this research study is to explore the emerging strategies of that are consciously and

unconsciously experienced or employed by the student leaders, members and advisers of the student organizations in Notre Dame of Marbel University. Keeping their connections is essential in building a sense of community which is considered to be a lifeblood of any organizations be it on the professional level organizations, community level or organizations within the school campus in all levels of education. The sense of community that is being experienced by every member makes them belong, they feel that they can bring their most authentic selves while working with the others, and more likely to be productive working on their tasks in the organization. Jason (1997) explained that one vital aspect of human life that is lacking is the understanding of a true sense of belonging and connectedness within the communities.

This study on describing the strategies in community building in the virtual environment will probably add-up to the understanding of distant learning looking into the dynamic of students in building a sense of community and connections among them. However this research is in the context of student organizations in school which is also considered to be an essential component talking about holistic development among the learners while they are in school. Using an ethnomethodological lens, the study will elucidate the practices and strategies as emerged from the experiences of the participants as they continue engaging and interacting in the campus organizations virtually.

Research Questions

This study sought to explore virtually-facilitated interactions of students on keeping their sense of community within the campus organizations as experienced by the student leaders and members of the student organizations in Notre Dame of Marbel University. Using an ethnomethodological approach in research, this study focuses on describing the practices and strategies employed by the participants in developing a sense of community among the student leaders and members of the campus organizations where they belong amidst the virtual delivery of the programs and activities of the organizations.

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Methodology

This study utilizes ethnomethodological approach in explaining the practices and strategies of advisers, student leaders and members in building the sense of community among them in the organization. Grafinkel (1967) as the proponent of this tradition explained that this methodology aims to investigate the rational properties of indexical expressions and other practical actions as contingent ongoing accomplishments of artful practices of everyday life. Have (2004) explained that it is a special kind of social inquiry dedicated to explicating the collectivity members create and maintain a sense of order and intelligibility in social life. On the later developments, ethnomethodology has become a business on formulating general rules, statements, practices or procedures used in the constitution of local social orders, the later work stresses the idea that those practices, etc. are intimately tied to the occasions to which they are being used to be discussed independently of them (Have, 2004).

This study it uses in-depth interview and focused group discussion as the method in data gathering following an interview guide containing the questions to elicit the practices and strategies the participants experienced. Theoretical sampling is observed in gathering data. The participants are the officers of any of the organizations, be it in a student council or clubs of the university and have been an officer for at least 2 school year, and the any of the members of any recognized clubs and organizations of the school. In terms of thematic analysis, significant statements that are reflective of the practices and strategies are drawn from transcript. These statements are coded and transformed into meanings or concepts. These concepts are clustered to form themes/categories. Theoretical saturation is also observed in the analysis of the data.

Results

Online platforms as fundamental tools for remote interactions

In transitioning to remote interactions, students in the campus organizations had taken advantage to utilize some available online platforms as fundamental utilities for remote interactions in the conduct of their meetings, discussions, forum, planning of activities, etc. within the organizations. This includes the use of google meet, zoom, social media, Facebook messenger

or private text messaging as the most accessible media/platforms being used. Based from the sharing of the participants, the use of Facebook messenger in communicating with each other has a lot of positive advantages in the course of their interactions. Basically, almost everyone has account on Facebook messenger. It is accessible and easy to navigate when it comes to delivery and receiving of messages. It can facilitate as well in terms of sending and receiving files. Student prefer messenger because messages can be posted anytime, they can reply anytime, they can exchange ideas anytime and members can participate in the discussions anytime. The google meet and zoom meeting are also helpful especially when it comes to real time meetings and discussions. Their features allow students in the organizations to have live interactions. Common to what the participants have shared, remote modality of conducting programs and activities has been done by their respective student councils, clubs and organizations because of the availability of the technology and online platforms.

When asked what will happen in the virtual setting, then probably it is with the involvement of the media or any virtual platform, for example you are in a zoom meeting, messenger of google meet… (Participant 4)

Mostly Sir (we use) messenger… If emergency, Sir we use google meet.. (Participant 1)

We utilize zoom meeting, sometimes google meet for our meetings and discussions. But, group chat is a lot easier to communicate with them (referring to the members.. (participant 2)

Now, this social media help in establishing much faster connection because you can message in just one click about your ideas and it is much more interactive because there are people that are drawn to visual…(participant 3)

Shared Strategies of Students on Keeping their Connections

Keeping Social Connectedness

Participant 1 narrated that the bonding among them has already been established even before the delivery of education has shifted to remote modality. But it was also observed by the participants that this bond and relationship were somehow affected by the remoteness of their interactions.

Many of our members are quite not interested anymore to participate in the activities online.

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They lost their enthusiasm to write article and to communicate (participant 1)

When she was asked for the reason why students are losing interest to participate, she mentioned that many students at first do not prefer online platform for interaction. Several members have already renounced membership from the group because of the new set up. Participant 3 shared that just like him, other students would also prefer face to face interactions in the conduct of the activities. He added that on the part of the leaders, facilitating students in face-to-face is easier than in virtual. From these sharing, it seems that virtual interactions are quite not appreciated by the students. When the participants were asked on what did they do in order to keep their fellow officers and members intact even during the remote delivery of their programs in the organizations, they said that the constant exchange of messages in the group chat, private messaging and calls when necessary have kept them connected despite their remoteness.

Creating common virtual space has emerged as the theme on describing the strategy of the officers (in particular) in keeping others to stay and participate in the undertakings of the organization. In doing so, initially, they have created the group chat and Facebook group page as common available platform where they can communicate and interact. As experienced by the participants, using group chat to communicate their ideas to with the members of the group is easier and more efficient. It is efficient in the sense that all of them can be able to see and read the message without necessarily privately messaging each one of them. The group chat is their common space where they are allowed to post, reply, react to the messages. As shared by participants 4 and 5,

Through the group chat we have created, there's is no need for us to send them individual messages. They can just read it and reply in the group. Everyone can read all the responses, so, they can also interact on the responses of the others. There goes the interaction..(participant 4)

First, we create the group chat. The group chat is very convenient when it comes to communication. The messages can reach all the members of the group. So, it's really efficient..(participant 5)

Begin with light convo to engage them more. As noted by the participants on their experiences in trying to engage the members in the conversation albeit it's virtual, the officers considered doing simple act of relating to the members starting with a simple message

of "Kumusta na kamo guys?", "I hope everything is well", and some other encouraging and positive messages to inspire and ignite conversation in the group chat. As shared by participant 3,

Gastart gid na pirmi sa hello, hi kumusta to start up the convo sa group…kumustahon mo gid sila always pram aka feel sila nga we care and we're reaching them out..That's my experience..(participant 3) (We always begin with simple hi and hello to start the conversation)

Dapat indi gid biglaon ang mag members. As leader dapat kabalo ka gid anay ang kmusta sa ila para maengage sila sa convo…Kung biglaon mo sila ka-lay down sang serious issue or topic, hesitant sila magreply or mag interact kay feel nila ng abasi wla sila macontribute sa conversation..(participant 5) (The conversation should start with light conversation before engaging them into more serious topic just to hook their interest to participate in the conversation)

Winning their mood and interest at first. Participant 3 shared his experience that whenever he wanted the members to engage in the discussion related to programs and updates, he usually begins with light conversations just like asking them about their day activities, their knowledge on the current issues from the news or sometimes sharing some funny memes and quotes. Responses from the member signify that they are in the mood to interact. The members has eventually shown the willingness to openly share their thoughts in the virtual discussions especially if there are matters which needed to be decided on. As officers, they knew that their role is significant in processing the inputs of the members posted in the chat box. They ensure to make sense on the messages of their fellow officers and members posted in the group conversation. They have observed that the members have learned to openly and confidently agree or disagree to the messages or suggestions posted by other members in the group chat discussions. Participants have pointed out that expressing ideas in written (through the group chat or private messaging) without necessarily facing the persons being dealt with is easier than with face-to-face interactions. When asked to elaborate on this further, one participant explained that possibly because when in the group chat, there is given time for any members to construct ideas as either a reply or feedback to the given information. Anyone can have enough time to verify the information before replying. For them, at some point, it has developed their being mindful with the information received.

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Processing replies. When they reply to the information, they ensure to have thought of their replies several times so as not to get embarrassed or even to embarrass others with their replies. On the other hand, there are also members who simply reply to the messages posted in the group chat without necessarily thinking whether it's a well-thought reply or just a sudden reply right after receiving the message. When asked why so, the participant has attributed it to the personality or characteristics of the members. Further on, the participant explained that some members are naturally confident to express whatever they want to, while others are quite selective with their replies so as not to commit mistakes with their words/language posted in the group chat. Additionally, he mentioned that:

Tone and voice are important when conveying messages because these aspects can determine if the message is received positively or negatively by the audience. The exact same words said in different tones of voice can mean very different things to the receiver of those words. This is the reason why some are careful with their replies. (participant 1)

Being mindful with the language. Being careful of the language is related much to community building as individuals may not want to hurt or implicate other member through the misinterpreted form of language. In the constant group chats/conversations, members and officers feel that they are welcomed, they are free to express their thoughts on the agenda without hesitations. They have not experienced being embarrassed with their ideas shared in the group. From their sharing, there are members who were at first not quite certain and confident to interact in the group chat thinking that their ideas or their opinions may not be recognized by others. With constant encouragement of the leaders, members who were at first hesitant to share ideas have eventually learned to engage and interact. As mentioned by participant, the role of the leader in trying to engage the members in the discussion has helped them to establish that confidence and trust in their participation in the conversation.

Everyone's ideas is acknowledged. They try to make every member feel they are part of the decision making. To do this, they use of voting poll when there are options to choose from and ask them for their suggestions. Following up every member is a must after every online meeting such as providing recap, summary of the discussion, written minutes of the meetings provided to all who attended and asking the member on their clarifications. Another strategy shared by the participants on ascertaining connections

with fellow officer and members is recognizing them whenever they accomplish or have exerted efforts on the given tasks. They give reward like e-certificates as affirmation strategy. As shared, the members and officers do appreciate the recognition and it motivates them more to get involved.

Setting guidelines and routines to be observed but not to be imposed

Communication between screens can be difficult once not done properly. During online meetings and discussions, basic guidelines are being set and observed by the students in order to facilitate a more fluid and effective interactions among them. These include technical guidelines such as opening of the camera during conferences so that the facial expressions of the participants on conveying the messages becomes visible to all. As explained by one participants,

We ask the speaker to turn on the cam when he is saying something….We want to see one's face and expressions while speaking. It feels that we are really connected… It's different when your just simply hear the audio"(participant 3)

During the meeting for example, you are a resource speaker and you ask them for a response…When they talk, you ask them to please open their camera so that the participants can identify who is actually talking…..and so others can relate (participant 4)

Being Virtually there. As noted by the participants, opening of camera or videos during online conferences/meetings enhances the kind of rapport felt by the students during the conversation. When the camera or video is on, the facial expressions can be seen and the sincerity of the speaker can be felt. Aside from asking the participants to turn on their camera when sharing, the facilitators of the meetings also encourage the them to use their microphones when speaking. Turning on the microphone when speaking also contributes in relaying clear and direct messages form the others. According to the participant, when the message of one member is being relayed clearly by expressing it up during the meeting, it invites and motivates others to speak too, thus, real time interaction happens albeit online. For them, it still feels like they're together and near. The voices speak volume of the feelings and expressions of the speaker. When it's not working well due to connectivity, members resort to chat although chat sometimes doesn't really show and capture the real expression intended by the speaker.

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It's totally different when someone communicates orally. It has impact to the listeners or to the other participants…The voice and the tone have meaning being conveyed too.. We know when one is angry, irritated, or happy sad… (Participant 1)

Different from just using the chat or written messages… It leads to misunderstandings.. So during our meetings, we ask them to open their mic when they want to speak. (Participant 3)

Atleast there are still ways kahit malayo kami. And we can still communicate with these platforms…just like in google meet, pag-chat po kasi parang may (theres is) limitation…The non-verbal communication dahil may mga paguusap po na dapat marinig mo 'yong tono… okay basi di kayo mag kaintindihan nag ginamean niyo..(Participant 2)

Kasi minsan kapag nag-memeeting ka nang online, not all of them can turn on their cameras. So you cannot see the expression, the sincerity. And when it comes to sharing

…that's the struggle or that's the hard part because you can only hear what they are saying and sometimes pa they cannot turn on their microphone so you have to settle in the chats…Thus, as much as possible we really ask them to turn on their cam and mic when communicating….(Participant 3)

Participant 5 shared that, most to the time the members do not use the microphone to say something during meetings. They opt to use the chat box to write their concerns and questions. But as for participant 5, when he is the speaker, and try to ask something from the participants, he requires them to turn their cameras and microphones on to express their thoughts. He explained that such is important to avoid misinterpretation of the message being conveyed. Though, for participant 1, the use of the chat box to express their opinions, suggestions and ideas is also applicable as there are instances that participant couldn't open both the cam and mic due to technical issue in the gadget used or due to connectivity issue.

Reaching out for updates and discussions

To ensure their continued involvement and participation of students officers who usually facilitate the discussions online constantly post information or updates in the group messaging and encourage others to give their views and opinions too. Participants shared that there are times, other members are quite passive by simply putting the information on 'seen' mode.

Dealing with 'seen' mode. Student leaders try to get responses from the them to ensure connections. However, based from the sharing of some participants of this study, only few members and officers have been actively participating in the conversation online. When asked to explain the possible reason/s why only few are interacting, common to their observation is that most of the members and even some officers are quite not confident in sharing their own thoughts in the group chat. Other possible reason is that, some just wanted to observe and follow through the exchanges of messages by other active members and simply follow whatever is to be agreed upon.

Some officers or members are 'seeners'.. Not that they do not want to participate in the online activities of program, but it's just that they are quite ashamed to share their suggestions. Some members are really active and vocal. So, maybe they feel that other officers and members can already discuss the matter. (Participant 2)

So, as officers, we really try hard to make everyone take part in the conversation. Sometimes, we tag them just to get notice and ask them of their opinions.. (Participant 3)

Encouraging sharing. While this has been the attitude of some members, others are said to be upbeat on the other hand. By upbeat, they meant, eager and enthusiastic to reply to the messages, thus, interactions and exchanges of ideas ultimately occur. For the participants, they like it when the members and officers exchanges ideas. It connects them. Everyone feels belong. Every idea shared is valuable. As noted by the participant, officers, as part of their roles, constantly reach out the members and encourage them to share. Participant 1 pointed out that student leaders do exert efforts to connect with the members in the organizations to encourage them to share or express their thoughts, ideas and suggestions on the issues and concerns of the organization through the virtual platform. As explained by the participants, group chat is an easy way to reach out the members. They use this tool in order to connect with those who are no longer attending the meetings. They either send private messages or tag the members in the group chat. Further, the student leaders as facilitators of every meeting allow members to openly share their issues and concerns to them even through text, chat or call. Leaders reach out to the members of the organization in response to their issues and concerns. They give consideration to an officer with a particular concern the reason of his/her absence in the meeting.

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Being considerate and affectionate. Additionally on ascertaining connections with other members, student leaders give consideration to an officer with a particular concern the reason of his/her absence in the meeting. To show concern means telling the officer who called up to get well and try to cope up next time.

One thing that I keep on reminding them na..guys, maskin ano man ang mga problems nyo, pwede man kamo maka share saakon..pwede kamo makashare sang inyo mga..(problems)/... Kis a Sir ginakulit ko na sila Sir, ginatawagan lang. Kamusta kana? Uy kamusta kana, wala kana ga-attend saaton na meeting. Hopefully next time maka- attend ka na biskan online lang ta..(Participant 1) (Keep encouraging other officers and members to be open to share their concerns.. The leader is assuring to listen and help when necessary… Sometimes, he called up)

Posting questions to ponder. Practically, parking questions or any related subjects concerning the programs and activities of the organization usually initiate discussions. this can be questions posted in the group chat or questions raised in the conferences.

Giving and eliciting feedback to inspire openness of communication

(Intensifying feedback mechanisms and ensuring responses)

Providing feedback for the members on their concerns to (audience, participants, listeners) by utilizing the features of technology or application to elicit and encourage response and cooperation is essentially part of student leaders' strategies on keeping members in the organization and ensuring their continued participation.

The same lang din siya sa face to face setting the only difference is you are between the screen. To ensure interaction you will have response and that response will be in the form of chat. Kahit raise hand lang it can be considered as a response. If there is a response to your concern… so that it will have a connection to your audience. (participant 3) (Just the same with face to face interactions. The only difference is that you communicate between screens. Responses maybe written through chat or some icons like raise of hands. Response to your concerns (questions) means there is connection)

As noted by the participants, as facilitators, the need to be somehow creative and strategic in order to get feedback and responses from the members. Some of their sharing were as follow:

For example kahit hindi meeting setting, example you are a resource speaker, for example you ask them for a response halimbawa if naririnig nyo ko press 1. Diba may mga magagandang instances if you see to ensure your entering their state kumbaga naririnig ka nila or napapansin ka nila. (participant 3)

During zoom, if I feel that they are no longer attentive, I ask them do some task in manipulating the online tool like, asking them to change their names into this of point out he person next to them on screen, or asking them to do stretching, etc… (participant 4)

Intensify feedback through tagging the names of the members allows interactions too. The connections among members through attracting members and posting updated information in the virtual group such as the fb page and group chat work a lot according to them.

Tagging who. Attracting attention through tagging anyone or everyone as an approach involves mentioning of names of particular member/s (tagging); Being 'tagged' or 'tagging a person' contributes in building rapport; Being 'tagged' in the group chat makes member feels 'important' 'valuable' 'someone with role/s' or 'someone concern of something; Being 'tagged' could mean that one is recognized for something either good or something good;

Tagging their names in the messenger also helps..when they are being tagged they reply.. (participant 1)

Mentioning the names of the members in the Group chat; Post the names of absent members in the group chat. Absences of other officers and members is a common issue that they also need to deal with. Hence, tagging them or mentioning them also help to get their attention.

Proactively reaching out the members to get feedback on their situations. Many times, they need to be proactive in reaching out these fellows. They investigate and understand the situation and reasons for absences. When asked why do they need to exert effort on this situation, they shared that, it is just but necessary for leaders to exert effort on knowing what's going on with the other officers. So, they were trying to get feedback from them every time they called up or connect through chat. Student leaders allowing open communication for everyone. Members are encouraged to be open with their concerns with the officers. In the statement below, the participant is relating that absences of fellow officer is understandable so long as he/she properly informs

him. He even encourages his fellow to feel free to share their concerns and worries to provide any means of support when necessary.

Okay lang man na wala ka, makasulod sa meeting as long as ginahambal mo saakon ano ang mga problem mo. We will address to that, we will take action to that. Amuna Sir for example magtawag ang isa ko ka officer ko na pres, medyo di ko maka ano subong kay not feeling well. Sige sige. Excuse ka anay subong kay bal an ko na hindi ka maka ano subong. E consider ko ang imo nga kwan. So, bawi lang sa next time kag hopefully nga maging okay kana. (Participant 2) (It's okay if other officers could not attend the virtual meeting so long as they communicate and relate the reasons of their absence. When the officers called up and opened up their concerns I really excuse them give them the chance to attend to their concerns first)

Allotting moments to relate and recreate virtually

Leaders initiate virtual bonding with the officers and members of the organization. With the use of google meet or zoom, the do online kumustahan, kulitan, chikahan, tawanan. As shared the intention of doing this kind of virtual bonding is to help one another especially those who have some issues and concerns and also

to continuously connect with each other. Because they knew that virtual platform can be challenging, they exert effort on connecting with each other like using of chat group as 'chikahan' or 'lokohan' platform. They use google meet for meetings to see each other's live faces (Expressions, gestures, reactions).

Building rapport. They use of group chat to facilitate concerns and some queries. Some members ask questions, then officers will respond to the concerns which usually initiates start of conversations. Exchange of conversations in the chat develops confidence of the members to communicate ideas. Conversation though online still allows interaction among them. During this casual online encounter, they get the chance to motivate and inspire each other. As shared by the participants,

Usually, before to start the main agenda of the meeting, we allocate time for chikahan. Kumustahan…Tawanan iyan kami and kulitan...(participant 1) (We really allot time to build rapport first before proceeding to serious matters..)

Although we miss and face to face interaction, we still manage to build and sustain our relationship virtually.

Re-storying experiences during as intervals. There is an effort for the members to connect with each because they recognized that they are part of the group. During their meetings, they ask each one to relate their stories, what's going with them at the moment, what changes happen to them, anything which the members are willing to share with the group virtually. The officers initiate telling their stories and asking members to tell their stories as well. As shared by the participants, it also helps to get recent updates on the activities of the members of the organizations.

Siguro we try to motivate others parang normal lang na maglokohan, kwentuhan anong ganap sa life sa group chat during meetings… (participant 2) (We try to motivate each other. During virtual meetings, we try to share our life experiences…)

May mga part sa meetings naming in-between that we tell some stories from our experiences…kung anoa no lang sir na pwede ma-share…very light topic to share lang…(participant 4) (During meetings, we find time to relate our experiences or anything that we want to share in the group)

Insights

Keeping the connections is vital in building a sense of community among students within campus organizations in school especially during the time of pandemic where education is delivered remotely. Students' face to face to interaction has been shifted into online interaction which somehow affected rapport, fellowship and collaborations of students and members. In the case of NDMU and even in some other universities, continued connections and collaboration of students are still being stimulated because these student organizations in school did not actually stop from delivering relevant and innovative programs and activities though online. Intriguingly, how do these student leaders manage and facilitated the dynamics in the online interaction to ensure that connections, rapport and sense of community are still felt by the members and students. Apparently, online tools and platforms are readily available and accessible to anyone who may want to utilize them for specific purposes. As reiterated, these online platforms have been so familiar with almost all individuals and they are made open to be used for socializing, communicating either in formal or informal context. In keeping and getting student leaders and members together in the campus organization during the remote delivery of education, the challenge seems to be reliant on the magnitude of efforts and initiatives manifested

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or shown by the officers in reaching out fellow officer and members utilizing these media available. From the experiences of the students, as reflected on their sharing, they have actually maximized these tools to connect, reconnect and keep connecting with their fellows albeit the interaction is remote due of the safety and health protocols being observed during the pandemic.

With the outcome of exploring the shared experiences of the participants, the strategies are simple, practical, and not really unusual. In fact, some may even factual for face to face interactions just that they interact in-between screens and so some approaches and strategies could be quite different. Unlike in the face to face interactions, remote learning can be more tight, controlled, time consuming, effortful endeavor in trying to make every one engaged. Student leaders' facilitation must have to be strategic, creative and perhaps can be easily done as strategies are very practical but way too exhausting due to the varying levels of energy and attitudes of the members with their responses.

Implications

The study provides better understanding on the dynamics of students' interactions in the virtual space in keeping their connections, fellowship and collaborations. Community building happens when there is a conscious effort from the individuals belonging to a group in making it happen. The student leaders of today have evidently manifested resilience and commitment on pushing through their passion and advocacy on youth development from their continued implementations of programs and activities though remotely. From the standpoint of the student affairs practitioners, the need to enhance and boost such interactive process in the virtual environment requires their attentions and full support in order to ensure student development and holistic formation despite the limited space. It would be a big challenge for both students and faculty who have direct participation on this aspect of student life to actually enhance some strategies and nurture the manner of delivery in order that learners can be able to see the essence of keeping connections among them in order to establish a community spirit within the organizations despite the

limited platform. Learner-centered interaction mediated by technology manifests the growth and maturity of the students to take advantage on the opportunity brought by technology and also their skills to utilize them and most importantly their attitude towards change and productivity. Thus, the institutions need to ensure support, guidance, motivation and empowerment for these learners to upkeep or sustain the drive on making a difference in the lives of their fellows and on the advocacies that inspire life on their respective organizations the reason why they keep pushing despite the unusual situation.

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