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STUDENT WORKLOAD: ITS IMPACT ON THE LEARNING EXPERIENCES OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract

Student workload has been recognized as a major factor in the teaching and learning environment (Kyndt, Berghmans, Dochy & Bulckens (2013). As a matter of fact, Whitelock, Thorpe, and Galley (2015) argued that dropout It can occur when students are unable to devote the necessary time to their course work. Despite these claims, however, student workload is still a neglected issue in research literature as well as in practice among teachers. (Chambers, 2006). Thus, this mixed-methods study aims to examine the impact of student workload on the learning experiences of Senior High School students of Baliuag University. A total of 537 grade 11 (incoming grade 12) and grade 12 students (incoming freshmen) were selected as respondents of the study. Data were gathered using interview, focus group discussion, and survey method. The findings of this study will benefit the senior high school students, principals and administrators by proposing a senior high school schedule with a balanced mix of curricular and co-curricular activities that will develop senior high school students holistically and improve their learning and capacity to handle multiple activities inside and outside of the classroom.

Keywords: academic workload, learning experiences, senior high school,

The K-12 shift has changed the educational landscape of the country. With the first batch of senior high school graduates in 2018, schools offering senior high schools are looking for ways on how to improve the curriculum to make it more effective for students' learning. The Baliuag University senior high school program adheres to the prescribed DepEd curriculum consisting of 34 subjects in two years (14 core, 7 applied, 9 specialized subjects, and 4 PE classes). Additional elective subject is also given per strand (SAP Business for ABM, Makertek Robotics for STEM, and Digital Arts and Photoshop for GAS and HUMSS).

According to McNaught, Lee, and Chan (2012), the amount and kind of work students do is among the most crucial factors affecting their engagement in their course of study. This is shared by Kyndt, Berghmans, Dochy, and Bulckens (2013) who said that students' workload has been recognized as a major factor in the teaching and learning environment. Despite these claims, however, student workload is still a neglected issue in research literature as well as in practice among teachers (Chambers, 2006).

This issue is highlighted as studies on workload indicate that the term is a complex construct that not only concerns time commitment, but the quality and nature of work, as well as the characteristics and motivation of students. Moreover, studies suggest that if students perceive they are overloaded, they may complete their studies and resort to surface learning approach, which can eventually lead to failure to attain the learning outcomes (Wilson, Lissio, & Ramsden, 1997; Lockwood, 1999). Thus, the purpose of the workload is defeated. However, simply asking students' perception of their workload (qualitatively) without really measuring it quantitatively might not be very reliable since methodological difficulties arise in the use of qualitative method. It is therefore necessary to use a more rigorous method of calculating student workload (McNaught, Lee, & Chan, 2012), which this study aims to use.

As noted, workload is a complex construct that not only concerns time commitment, but also the quality and nature of work, students' other engagements inside and outside the curriculum, and the characteristics and motivation of students. The term workload can be defined as the amount of work being assigned to a person in a specified time period. In this case, assignment, tutorial classes, test or examination, quizzes, report and practical activities like students observing or manipulating real objects or materials or witnessing a teacher demonstration are under academic workloads (Hodson, 1990). Students need to fulfill these in order to graduate (Yusoff et al., 2010a). For the purpose of this study, the definition of academic workload is based on Lonze (2011) who defined it as students' reported time spent completing academic work assigned in class, time spent working on assigned homework, and the time that students spend to prepare for their classes outside of the school day.

Based on informal interviews with students, parents and teachers, the academic workload of students is too heavy. One parent even commented that her child seemed too exhausted from an overload of school work. The researchers conducted this study in order to find out the veracity of these claims and to help create a balanced curriculum, with enough workload, assignments, and in-class and outside classroom activities that students can effectively cope with.

Review of Related Literature

A survey of literature shows that student workload is correlated with a number of factors such as dropout, learning, academic performance, and stress, among others. While this study is a mixed-methods study, results from the interview data help support the quantitative result from the survey to establish whether workloads are too much, just right, or too little.

Student workload and dropout. Student workload is a contributing factor why many students drop the course prior to completion (Bowyer, 2012). This is supported by Whitelock, Thorpe, and Galley (2015) who revealed that dropout can occur when students are unable to devote the necessary time to their course work and eventually drop out of the learning process. The number of study hours in the curriculum must therefore be carefully planned in order to create a balance of workload and challenge that would stretch the limits of students but will not discourage them from continuing their studies. While the study of Whitelock et al. is related to this present study, the background of the investigation is nevertheless on distance learning which definitely requires good time management skills. Meanwhile, the study of Bowyer was taken in the context of business law students. Both used college students as participants of the study.

Student workload and quality of student learning. Chambers (2006) revealed a relationship between student workload and quality of students' learning. The context of the study is done in an open university. Kyndt, Berghmans, Dochy, and Bulckens (2013) likewise suggested that students' workload is a major factor in the teaching and learning environment. The study used mixed-methods design similar to the present study, focusing on the perception of quantitative and qualitative aspects of workload. The results showed that 'having time' is a precondition for experiencing a manageable workload. This study, however, investigated what workload meant for students in higher education, whereas, in the present study, the participants are senior high schools students.

Student workload and academic performance. Findings from the study of Kurataa, Banob, and Matias (2015) revealed that there is a significant relationship between overall workload of engineering students with their academic performance, which could be one of the reasons for board retakes. There are very few studies similar to this, most of which focus on working students taking up medical and engineering courses.

Student workload and stress. There is a positive relationship between academic workload and perceived stress among students (Kausar, 2010; Weerasinghe et al., 2012). This is parallel to the findings of Rahim, Saat, Aishah, Arshad, Aziz, Zakaria, Kaur, Kamaruddin, and Suhaimi (2016) who opined that one of the factors contributing to students' stress is the amount of academic workload they bear. Meanwhile, Ganesh et al. (2012) showed that stress is more prevalent among students due to academic factors, to the point where it can impact their academic performance. These studies have established the effect of academic workload on stress and academic performance. Unlike the present study, the mentioned studies used quantitative design to determine the relationship, but nevertheless used undergraduates as their participants.

All these studies were taken in the context of open universities, medical fields, law, and engineering, using quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods design, with qualitative as the more dominant. According to literature, workload is best studied using qualitative design (Chambers, 1992; Kember, Charlesworth, Davies, McKay, & Scott, 1997; Kember, 2004). Thus, this present study used both qualitative and quantitative design, although heavier on qualitative.

Senior high school students' learning could be affected if they are given too heavy academic workload. Having graduated the first batch of senior high school students, it would be best to examine the curriculum and the academic workload levied on students so as to recommend changes and improvement if many aspects of student life could possibly be affected by it.

Research Questions

Based on the lack of studies conducted on student workload of senior high school students, the following are the questions that this research study would like to answer:

1. How much time do Grades 11 and 12 students spend at home, on average, to complete their school workload?

2. How do Grades 11 and 12 students perceive their workload?

3. How do senior high school students assess their workload:
   a. Types of workload
   b. Problems arising from workload
   c. Sufficiency and appropriateness of workload
   d. Recommendations to improve workload

Method

This study aims to investigate the academic workload of former Grades 11 and 12 students (incoming Grade 12 and first year college). Workload is best studied using qualitative design (Chambers, 1992; Kember, Charlesworth, Davies, McKay, & Scott, 1997; Kember, 2004). The goal of this design is to use qualitative methods to answer some questions and to support quantitative findings (Creswell, 2013). In this study, quantitative data were collected and analyzed prior to the collection and analysis of qualitative data. Interview was used to further understand the quantitative responses of students.

Participants

Convenience sampling was used to select the participants of the study. A total of 291 students consisting of 219 Grade 12 and 72 incoming first year college students participated in the survey conducted in school year 2018-2019.

The number of participants is one of the limitations of this study since many Grade 12 students last year (incoming freshmen this school year) have already transferred to another school; thus, the number is fewer compared to Grade 11 (incoming Grade 12). Selected students, five per year level, were interviewed as they came for enrollment.

Data Gathering Procedure

The administration of the survey coincided with the senior high school enrollment. Thus, selected students who enrolled were also asked to be interviewed.

Data Analysis

Responses from interviews of students were transcribed and analyzed using qualitative content analysis (Elo & Kyngas, 2008; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Instrument

The survey instrument that measured the amount of time students spend in their academic workload was taken from the study of Lonze (2011). It measures the student's reported time completing class-related readings, assignments, and preparing presentations at home per week. All subjects were reflected, and the above measurements were asked for each subject. This is a modified instrument in which the real subjects of Grade 11 and 12 students were reflected instead of the "first hour class," "second hour class," and so forth that are used in the original instrument.

Method Validity

Credibility can be operationalized through the process of member checking to test the findings and interpretations with the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Both the researchers did the coding, which was verified by the principal of Senior High School. Once the coding was finished, the three compared notes and derived themes from the analysis.

Results and Discussion

In this section, the results of the data gathered are presented and discussed. The quantitative result is presented first, followed by the qualitative.

Table 1. Time spent by grade 11 and grade 12 students at home to complete their school work

Grade 11	Average time Spent based on Lonze (2011)	No. of Hours	Grade 12	Average Time Spent based on Lonze (2011)	No. of Hours
FIRST SEMESTER			FIRST SEMESTER		
Oral Communication in Context	2.41	2 hours	Introduction to the Philosophy of the Human Person	2.80	3 hours
21st Century Literature from the Philippines and the World	2.45	2 hours	Pagbasa at Pagsusuri Tungo sa Iba't Ibang Larangan ng Pananaliksik	2.70	3 hours
General Mathematics	2.59	3 hours	Physical Science	2.78	3 hours
Earth and Life Science	2.42	2 hours	Understanding Culture, Society and Politics	2.75	3 hours
Komunikasyon at Pananaliksik sa Wika at Kulturang Pilipino	2.39	2 hours	Physical Education and Health	2.42	2 hours
Physical Education and Health	2.00	2 hours	Practical Research 2	3.20	3 hours
English for Academic Purposes	2.61	3 hours	Empowerment Technologies	2.79	3 hours
Specialized 1	2.65	3 hours	Specialized 1	3.07	3 hours
Specialized 2	2.74	3 hours	Specialized 2	3.00	3 hours
SECOND SEMESTER			SECOND SEMESTER		
Reading and Writing Skills	2.39	2 hours	Contemporary Philippine Arts from the Regions	2.90	3 hours
Personal Development	2.44	2 hours	Physical Education and Health	2.65	3 hours
Statistics and Probability	2.66	3 hours	Inquiries, Investigation and Immersion	3.13	3 hours
Media and Information Literacy	2.43	2 hours	Applied Economics	2.99	3 hours
Physical Education and Health	2.01	2 hours	Specialized 3	3.10	3 hours
Filipino sa Piling Larangan	2.49	2 hours	Specialized 4	3.18	3 hours
Practical Research 1	2.90	3 hours	Specialized 5	3.42	3 hours
Specialized 3	2.77	3 hours			
Specialized 4	2.78	3 hours			

Table 1 shows the average time spent by students on class-related readings, assignments, and preparations at home per week. As shown, students spend about three hours or more a week on research, math, and specialized subjects for both Grades 11 and 12 curricula. These are likewise the subjects perceived by students as heavy.

For Grade 11, first semester, General Mathematics, English for Academic Purposes, Specialized subject 1 (Organization and Management for ABM and GAS; General chemistry for STEM; and World Religions for GAS and HUMSS) and Specialized subject 2 (Pre-Calculus for STEM; Disciplines and Ideas in the Social Sciences for HUMSS; Business Math for ABM) were found heavy by students as evidenced by the number of hours spent at home in completing the required tasks.

For the second semester, students spent more time in the following subjects: Statistics and Probability, Practical Research 1, and Specialized Subject 3 (Trends, Networks, and Critical Thinking for HUMSS; Applied Economics for GAS and STEM; and General Biology 2 for STEM) and Specialized Subject 4 (Community Engagement, Solidarity and Citizenship for HUMSS; General Chemistry 1 for GAS; and General Physics 2 for STEM).

For Grade 12, subjects students spent the most number of hours are Practical Research 2, Immersion and Specialized Subjects 1 to 5. Specialized Subject 1 comprises Disciplines and Ideas in the Applied Social Sciences for HUMSS; General Biology for STEM and GAS; and Entrepreneurship for ABM. Specialized Subject 2 is composed of Philippine Politics and Governance for GAS and HUMSS; General Physics for STEM; and Fundamentals of ABM 2 for ABM. Meanwhile, Specialized Subject 3 includes Trends, Networks, and Critical Thinking for HUMSS; Applied Economics for GAS and STEM; and General Biology 2 for STEM, while Specialized Subject 4 covers Community Engagement, Solidarity, and Citizenship for HUMSS; General Chemistry 1 for GAS; and General Physics 2 for STEM. The coverage of Specialized Subject 5 is Culminating Activity/Work Immersion for HUMSS and GAS; Research or Capstone Project/ Work Immersion for STEM; and Business Enterprise Simulation/Work Immersion for ABM. These subjects are considered major and foundational subjects.

Generally, it may be noted that students find math, science, English, and research subjects as heavy. The succeeding tables presenting the qualitative descriptions of students regarding their workload further support this finding. Students must be guided on these subjects and deadlines of requirements must be scheduled in coordination with other subject teachers so as to unclog the concentration of most activities toward the end of every semester.

Table 2. Students' perception of their academic workload

Theme: Assessment of Student Workload
Subtheme A: Types of Workload
Subtheme B: Problems Arising from Workload
Subtheme C: Sufficiency and Appropriateness of Workload
Subtheme D: Recommendations to Improve Workload

After gathering the quantitative data, students were interviewed to describe their workload. They also described the amount of workload that they usually do during the semester. Four major subthemes were generated from the interviews done: types of workload, problems arising from workload, sufficiency and appropriateness of workload, and recommendations to improve workload. The results are presented according to these themes.

Assessment of Student Workload

The Senior High School students have a diverse set of experiences. Since the program is still new, a number of new experiences are laid out before the students and even the parents and the teachers as well. Alongside these new experiences are the new types of workload that the students encounter.

Types of workload. This part supports research question number 1 on average time spent by students on their homework, readings, and other at-home preparations. Table 1 shows that the maximum number of hours students spend for class-related activities is almost four hours a week. This is not quite substantial and reveals that students' workload was not as heavy as initially perceived by students and parents.

A number of students said that the most common types of work they do are performance tasks. These are the usual activities given by teachers as a culminating activity for all their lessons. According to Department Order No. 8, s. 2015, these activities showcase what the students know and what they can do. These range from actual performances like role plays, stage plays, speech choirs, and other oral performances to written tasks like reflections and critique papers. Even online activities may sometimes be considered as performance tasks.

The Grade 12 Accountancy, Business, and Management (ABM) students, enumerated the usual performance tasks they had during their Grade 11. Some of these activities involve portfolios, role plays, reporting, answering worksheets, stage plays, speech choirs, and dance performances.

Additionally, the Grade 12 Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) students mentioned some other projects and performance tasks they did. These include Vlog making and magazine cover making (see lines

231-249 of Appendix B). Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) students, on the other hand, had video presentations aside from the above-mentioned activities.

Another type of workload mentioned by all the students interviewed was the thesis (research paper). This is very common among the students since students from across all strands are required to come up with research papers. There are two types of research papers that students have to accomplish during the whole duration of Senior High School. A qualitative research is expected to be the final product of Grade 11 students while Grade 12 students are expected to make a quantitative research before they finish their Senior High School.

Problems arising from workload. Since the workloads given to the students, major concerns arise such as mode of delivery of workload, student dependence on others, cramming, and stress.

In one of the interviews, R1, a STEM student, related her problem regarding how additional workloads and instructions are given by teachers. She said, *"Yon din po ang problema ko. Parang iaannounce po sa group chat (GC) e yong iba po wala pong GC. Di ba po mas maganda pong sabihin po sa loob ng classroom kesa sa internet?"* (That is also my problem. It's like they [teachers] will announce in the group chat but some of us do not have group chats). This is supported by R5 when she said, *"Opo, minsan po sa GC. Yong samin po kasi iaannounce po sa classroom tapos yong iba po nagtatanong na lang din po sa GC, parang ganon po."* (Yes, sometimes they do it in GC. In our case, they will announce it [activities] in the classroom then some will just be asking in our GC).

Another problem which came out of the interviews is the dependence of some students with others especially in group projects and performances. This is highlighted in the response of R1, an ABM graduate, who said that the activities were challenging.

"Challenging in terms of the activities, the groupmates po. Sometimes po kasi depende tlaga sa group. Yong cooperation ng group, minsan din po e may kailangan palang ayusin, late na nilang nasasabi ganon. So, yon po, challenging yong part na yon. Lalo na po kasi kunwari, last year nagkaron ng competitions, so nagpapractice kami, tapos pasok, tapos practice ulit." (It is challenging in terms of the activities, the group mates. Sometimes, it really depends on the group, the cooperation of the group. Sometimes, things had to be done and it's only when it's late that they mention this. That's the most challenging part there. Especially last year, there were some competitions so we were practicing and we had to go to school then practice again.

She even added, "*Tsaka add ko lang po, nong nag work immersion po kasi, nilabas po kasing parang yong leaders sa classroom. Ang nahirapan po kaming part non is kami po yong leaders non, pero po yong naiwan namin is hindi po talaga yong maasahan nyo na may magpprogress. Kaya po, workload is nag iimmersion po kami tapos pag uwi sa bahay is tatanungin namin kung anong improvement tapos kung wala silang nagagawa gagawin namin."* (I would just also like to add that when we had our immersion, we, the leaders were sent out of the school. We had a hard time because we were the leaders but those who are left here in school were not dependable. Our paper had no progress. That is why our workload was double because when we reach home, we would ask for updates and if they have done nothing, we would do the job).

It can be seen that additional workload is borne by a few students because of others who rely heavily on them. That is why students tend to prefer individual works over group works. In the case of R2 and R5, both ABM 11 students last year, they directly said that for them, individual works are better than group works. This is mainly because their groupmates also add to the burden of the workload itself. Similarly, R3 and R5, STEM students, share the same sentiments saying that group works are unfair because not everyone would exert the same efforts. Some students, especially in research, only help in the financial aspects of the paper. R3, a HUMSS student, also share the same feelings saying that the workload during the second sem became more difficult, especially research, because of his groupmates.

Students resort to cramming. The tasks are given ahead of time but students sometimes have a tendency not to work on them unless the deadlines are up. This can be clearly seen in the statement of R1, a STEM student, when asked about the most important lesson she learned in Senior High School: *"No to cramming kasi po yong iba po, maaga namang binibigay sa amin tapos di naman namin agad ginagawa kaya pag nagpasahan na, sabay sabay sila. Kami lang din yong mas nahihirapan."* (No to cramming because sometimes, tasks were given to us earlier but still we did not do them immediately. It was only when the deadlines were nearing that we worked on them. It is just we who suffer in the end.)

Additionally, cramming mainly happens during the last quarter of every semester since all subjects require tasks as part of their culminating activity. Students described the amount of workload that they had during the first semester and second semester. R4, a GAS student, said that the first semester was not that difficult. It was only during the months of September to October that their work started piling up. This is supported by R3, when she mentioned that the first semester was somewhat easier, thinking that teachers were still gentle to them since that was their first time in Senior High School. She even said, *"Feeling ko po yong second sem yong pinaka mataas ang workload kasi po nong first, siguro po parang binebaby pa ho kami na parang yon pa lang po kasi yong first step e. Parang don pa lang po naming makikila yong Grade 11. Syempre, di naman po kami*

kaagad bibigyan ng mabibigat na work. Kaya po nong second sem medyo naging mabigat kasi nagkaroon po kami ng defense, thesis. Tapos meron pa din po kasi kaming isang defense don sa Disaster. Kasi po GENCAD kami. Tapos nagkaron din po kami ng projects na more on papers po tulad nong mga nagreresponse sa mga… mga critic papers po. Kayo po parang nagkasunod sunod. Tsaka po parang mas maikli po kasi yong time ng second sem. Kasi po parang November, December tapos meron po tayong vacation. Tapos January, pagpasok po ng January parang meron po tayong quizzes kaagad ganon. Tapos March, exam. Mas mabigat po yong second sem." (I feel like most of the workload was done in the second sem. This may be because during the first sem, we were treated like babies taking our first steps, familiarizing ourselves with being Grade11. During the second sem, the workload became heavier because we had our thesis defense. We also had our Disaster [Disaster Readiness and Risk Reduction] defense. Then, we also had many paper works like critic papers. They all piled up. It also seemed like the second semester is shorter than the first semester because we had our Christmas vacation. Then, come January, we immediately had our quizzes, then by March, we had the exam. Really, second sem is more difficult.)

As a result of all the abovementioned situations, students felt stressed with the workloads given to them. It is very evident in the response of R5, a GAS 12 student, when she said that her experience was like a rollercoaster ride. She shared that she had moments when she had only a little sleep and that she had times when she cried. It can be seen that she was stressed in the classroom because of her classmates. She said that her classmates did not help her in their group projects. Because of that, there were times when she cried and slept very late.

Another factor which caused stress to the students are the deadlines set by teachers. Since all subjects have performance tasks or projects, deadlines have a tendency to be falling on the same periods, that is, the last quarter of the semester. But, according to students, some projects are given to them earlier but some of them chose not to do them immediately. This can best be seen in the response of R3 when she related the most important lesson she learned in SHS: *"we must not procrastinate po. Kasi karamihan po samin, halimbawa po, pang umaga tapos wala na pong pasok sa hapon, nag jajam muna po pero marami pa namang gagawin. Kumbaga, sinasabi nila, sa gabi na lang gagawin tapos minsan pagkagaling sa lakwatsa, pag uwi, pagod na kaya di na nagagawa."* (We must not procrastinate because many of us, for example do not have afternoon classes; instead of doing our assigned tasks, we have jammings. The mentality is that they could do it at home after going out but upon arriving home, they are already tired and the task is not completed.)

Sufficiency and appropriateness of workload. Generally, it can be observed that students have a number of tasks and activities to accomplish. But when asked about their perception of the amount of workload given to them, majority suggested that it was not too much, while a few said it was heavy. They knew the value of all the workloads given to them. All the HUMSS students agreed that their workloads are appropriate (line 88, Appendix E). R2, a GAS student, mentioned that the activities given to them were appropriate because they were able to apply the things that they learned in their subjects. She even said: *"Sa akin po, para sakin, enough siya in a way na appropriate sya sa mga subject namin kung san yong mga lessons e naaapply namin. Tapos sa reading and writing napag aralan po namin yong mga divide method, naaapply naman po namin. Nagiging heavy lang siya in a way na yong mga deadlines nagkakasabay sabay. For example ngayong Monday nagbigay agad ng dalawang projects, kinabukasan dalawa na naman. Kumbaga, naiipon ng naiipon to the point na hindi na namin alam kung alin yong uunahin namin."* (For me, it is appropriate in a way that we were able to apply our lessons. Then in Reading and Writing we were able to apply the divide method. It only becomes heavy when the deadlines happen to fall on the same date/time. It was like they started to pile up and we did not know what to do first.)

Overall, students think that the workload they do is just enough for their age and grade level. They only encounter several problems, the most common of which is the deadline of each workload. Students find it difficult to accomplish all their assignments especially if their deadlines are fast approaching.

Recommendations of students to improve workload. Since they are the ones experiencing the workload, students were asked to suggest ways on how to lessen the burden of the workload. R1, a HUMSS student, when asked if they like the workload to be adjusted, said that deadlines or activities should be given at least two weeks ahead of time. All of them agreed in that suggestion and even added that time really is their only problem when talking about their workload. This is supported by R2 and R5, STEM students, who said that the only suggestion that they can give is to work on the deadlines of the projects.

On the other hand, R4, a GAS student, suggested that teachers should set a specific amount of activity that they will give the students. He also added that students should know the benefits that they will derive from the activity. Similarly, R2, an ABM student, suggested that specialized subjects should be given more emphasis on workloads. She also mentioned that core subjects should be lessened or at least lighten the requirements that they ask the students.

Lastly, students also suggested that teachers coordinate with other teachers so that, if possible, two or more teachers can grade the same activity of the students. They just have to look at the different aspects of the performance or output to look into their target competencies.

Conclusions

The workload given to senior high school students not only stretches the mental competence of students but also builds their character. Quantitative results show that Grades 11 and 12 students spend a considerable amount of time at home to complete their academic requirements. This teaches them the value of prioritizing activities and helps them discipline themselves as to how they use their time efficiently. When students are given many tasks to do, they learn how to multitask and exercise their leadership abilities, particularly in group work.

Students also regard math, science, English, and research subjects as heavy. By *heavy*, it means that they feel burdened by the tasks placed on them to complete the requirements. However, qualitative results reveal that other factors such as lack of time management skills, and poor cooperation of team members in group work like research affect how students perceive their work load. If students tend to cram, they might perceive their workload as heavy as evidenced by a number of students who said that they have a heavy workload. On the other hand, students who manage their time well feel that their work load is just right and is appropriate and relevant to their needs.

Moreover, students have different perceptions of their workload based on their experience with the types of workload, the nature of task, schedule of submission, and relevance of workload. While majority of the students said their workload was just enough, there were still some who said it was heavy, stressful, and challenging. Types of workload such as role plays, stage plays, speech choirs, oral performances, written tasks like reflections and critique papers, and online activities affect how students see their work load. Another factor is the nature of the task such as individual, paired, or group task. Students regard research as heavy because other group members simply depend on the leader to complete the activity. This lack of cooperation among group members results in students' perception that their academic load is heavy, when in fact, it is not when the work is divided among members and if all students cooperate. Some students even showed preference for individual activities, which they find lighter as compared to group activities.

Recommendations

While the literature argues that too much student workload has negative effect on learning, many students believe that it has a positive impact on them (Bowyer, 2012; Chambers, 2006; Kurataa, Banob, & Matias, 2015). It teaches them the value of team work and the importance of time management and prioritizing. It is therefore recommended that teachers explain the relevance of the activities to students to help them appreciate and derive lessons behind the activities.

Students commented that they prefer individual tasks than group works. This is unfortunate since 21st century skills require students to collaborate, cooperate, and interact with peers. Group work can accomplish this. Because senior high school students are not used to this new learning method, more activities that require groupings must be introduced to them to teach them accountability. Peer rating must be required to encourage everyone to contribute to the group task. This will open their minds to the necessity of being a good team player when they are already employed in their jobs.

Researchers who want to extend this study may conduct a deeper investigation into senior high school workload by using triangulation to validate the claims of students with teachers and parents. Senior high school students from other public schools offering SHS program may also be included as participants in the study to find out if there are differences in the perception of student workload in terms of school type of students.

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