

## An Exploratory Research on Conflicts Faced by the Graduate Class Representatives from Kathmandu Valley

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### Abstract

*The study aims to identify conflicts or problems faced by the graduate class representatives from Kathmandu Valley. The study adopts a phenomenological approach. Thematic analysis was used to code the data and identify themes. This analysis includes an unstructured interview which was given by the CR to identify the problems faced by them in ten graduate colleges from the Kathmandu valley. Out of ten graduate colleges, 50 face-to-face, un-structured interviews were conducted with Class Representatives of 10 different graduate colleges from Kathmandu Valley. The CRs of each college are the respondent. Based on the individual interview given by the CRs, they face the problems related to the attendance which is used as internal marking of the students. Similarly, the problems related to the physical structure, programmes, jealousy, assignments and medical first-aid were also faced by the CRs in different gradual colleges.*

**Key Words:** Class representatives, conflict, thematic analysis, themes.

### Introduction

Every person encounters conflict on a daily basis. It can affect people who are engaged in the conflict as well as those who are not, and it can have both positive and negative effects (Mishra, 2021). Conflict is an inevitable phenomenon in educational institutions (Ertürk, 2021). Conflict occurs between people in all kinds of human relationships and in all social settings. Since there are so many different ways people can differ, the absence of conflict usually means that there is little meaningful interaction going on. Conflict in and of itself is neither good nor bad. However, the manner in which conflict is handled determines whether it is constructive or destructive (Deutsch & Coleman, 2020). Conflict can be both harmful and valuable; it should be managed in such a way that it brings more gains than harms to schools (Osatofo, 2017).

The class representative serves as the student body's voice to the faculty, administration, and other college constituents. A class president, often referred to as a class representative, is typically the head of a particular student body class and is in charge of the group that represents that class in the student council. Class presidents at elementary schools are often chosen by the class, which is made up of all the pupils enrolled in that grade level (Hurwitz, 2023). Class Representative is a student who is enrolled in a class and who is responsible for representing the cohort of that class (University, 2023). The most important, esteemed, and accountable positions at a university are Class Representative (CR) and Academic Representative (AR), who act as a bridge between the College administration, faculty, and students (Group, 2021). A student who expresses his or her class's opinions to the lecturer, department, and faculty is known as a class representative. Mostly the issues that have a major impact on educational quality and one's capacity to learn successfully are the ones that a class representative

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would typically bring up, such as assessment, access to paper reserves, the standard of tutorials, papers, and instructional resources . (Richards, 2013) . An individual chosen by the teacher to represent the class is known as a class representative (Teachmint, 2023) . Class representatives act as facilitators of communication, providing a conduit for feedback between staff and students (Rhodes University, 2022) . Professors and students are connected through representatives from each batch or class who serve as mediators . Since instructors can't reach everyone, they try to improve communication between staff, coordinators, and institution leaders and students (Shah, 2022) . Student leadership refers to educational strategies that allow college students the chance to take part in decision-making and carry out their civic duties (Murage, Njoka, & Gachahi, 2019) . A student in a given class who is nominated to represent their fellow students in that class and to serve as a conduit for communication between students and staff (Otago, 2014) . Student Reps Cohort and class reps are the group of students that complete student rep training (Springett, 2013).

A complicated process with many aspects, leadership is understood as a collection of beliefs, traits, and actions displayed by the leader to promote the involvement, growth, and dedication of followers(Sifuna, 2012) . Leadership is also considered as the art of influencing an individual or individuals in a particular direction that involves casting a vision, goal setting and motivating people (Spendlove, 2007) .

The results explored by the help of thematic analysis on the basis of following themes of each respondent.

Parajuli (2022)suggested that in order to address these issues and improve retention and graduation rates, students need extra support in the development of study skills, learning English, career counseling, motivation, and avoiding digital distractions.

Similarly, Neupane (2021) found that Students encountered difficulties learning due to various teaching methods used by their instructors, learning digital technology, and financial limitations that prevented them from investing in more practical devices and internet connectivity, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas . Additionally, Murage, Njoka, & Gachahi(2019) implies that There are few chances for student leaders to use their leadership skills and little student leadership input in the administration of the university . Frustration and calls for aggression may result from this.Ellis(2016)reported that both leadership responsibilities and independent study require attention, academic life becomes extremely stressful . Students typically become more ungovernable as a result of these grievances, going on the streets to protest university administration . Further, Huma et al . (2020)revealed that the lives of recently arrived students are affected by a variety of issues, such as issues with food, communication, acclimatization to the weather, and physical and scholastic difficulties . Parajuli and Linkha (2020) found that students in Nepal experienced scholastic difficulties like delayed course start dates, restricted access to library resources, and fewer teaching and learning opportunities due to Covid-19.

Kahu and Nelson (2018) argued that both the academic environment and life outside of the institution must be adapted for first-year students . Kahu and Nelson (2018) further argued that in addition to their own personal traits, students' performance is influenced by college procedures.Jones(2017) conducted in a comparison of domestic and foreign students at a state university in the United States, the absence of social support was found to be a major issue for the latter group of students . Pineteh (2014) reported that due to their linguistic and literacy backgrounds, as well as their

attitudes toward academic writing, undergraduate students in South African institutions face difficulties when it comes to academic writing . Goldrick-Rab (2010) reported that the community colleges in the United States' social, economic, and academic characteristics are among the three levels of obstacles that the students must overcome. Nelson(2010) affirms that many adults fail to give young people meaningful leadership chances, depriving them of the chance to grow their management skills . These studies show that the educational institutions are not free from challenges and conflicts . They should be addressed for the helpful to the management for the micro and macro level planning and decision making.

### **Statement of Problem**

In the colleges, the class representatives try to connect the good relationship between faculties and students, management and students, during the certain time period . Their objective is to manage the classroom as they were directed by the management and administration .

The class representatives or monitors or class leaders are connected with the management part . They directly or indirectly play a crucial role for boosting the management of the educational industries . They are physically related with the physical structure of the institution . They are also concerned with the all the programmes organized by the institution .

There was no more study have been conducted related to the challenges or conflicts faced by the Class Representative in context of Nepal but many more colleges are selecting and hiring the class representative in the colleges of Kathmandu Valley . They face different kinds of problems and issues but the problems have not been studied by any author till today . In the context of foreign education industries, the study related to the problems have been only studied in public university in Kenya on the topic of “Challenges Faced by Student Leaders in Managing Student Affairs in Public Universities in Kenya” . The studies conducted in different country in different situation and different colleges and universities in different countries but all these studies are based on the overall problems and conflicts of all the students of educational institutions . Because of that it became the best area of the study to explore the conflicts faced by the CR in the colleges . This study supports the management of the colleges for the internal improvement in the management as the micro part.

### **Objectives**

The major objective the study is to explore the conflicts or problems faced by the CR in the colleges.

### **Methodology**

This study adopts a phenomenological approach . In total, 50 face-to-face, un-structured interviews were conducted with Class Representatives of 10 colleges in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal . The CRs of each college are the respondents . Thematic analysis was used to code the data and identify themes.

Thematic analysis is a good approach to research where you're trying to find out something about people's views, opinions, knowledge, experiences or values from a set of qualitative data – for example, interview transcripts, social media profiles, or survey responses(Caulfield, 2022) . Qualitative theme analysis is a typical method for interpreting text and audio in disciplines like psychology . (Braun

& Clarke, 2006). The case study also demonstrated the suitability of thematic analysis to the interpretation of a slippery, complex and dynamic concept exhibiting temporal variation; in this case the concept of luxury (Berry, 1994).

## Findings

The paper reports the six themes based on the audio un-structured interviews conducted with the class representatives of 15 colleges in Kathmandu Valley . After the discussion the class representatives of different colleges, the researcher found the seven themes of respondents.

The results explored by the help of thematic analysis on the basis of following themes of each respondent .

### Attendance:

Attendance is a record of a student's presence in a college class. It helps the colleges for the internal marking of the students submitted to the university . According to the interviews given by the Class Representatives in the different colleges . An attendance has been coded as the first theme of the interview given by the CR . Out of 50 respondents, 16 respondent number elaborated about the challenges faced related to the attendance of students at the time of internal marking . When the internal marking became lower than the expectation of the students, the respondents used to face the conflicts with their friends . They were compelled to present the friends even though they were absent.

*1<sup>st</sup> Respondent's bite: I was present on present on Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup> January, 2022 . You made me absent but I was late entering the class . It is not fare yaar . You made me absent.*

*5<sup>th</sup> Respondent's bite: I am bunking my class today cheating to our coordinator . So, today present my attendance sathi . Next time I will support you.*

### Physical structure:

Physical structure means the facilities provided by the colleges like as lighting, air cooler or air condition, toilet, canteen, parking, library, etc . According to the 19 respondents due to all these facilities, they used to face the conflicts among friends . Their friends used to think that all these facilities were easily solved by the CR when they complain to the management . They tried to complain about all these problems but the solution of these problems became late due to which the CR of the colleges used to face conflict with the friends . They were tortured in the class room . They were blamed with badly.

*8<sup>th</sup> Respondent's bite: Since, last 10 days the air condition is not working . In these cold days why are you not consulting with the coordinator? Why are you not managing it soon? Go and inform your coordinator to prepare it soon .*

### Programme:

Programme is the activities conducted in the colleges to measure the extra performance of the students yearly . The programme is conducted inside and outside of the college . Out of 50 respondents, 29 respondents elaborated the conflicts faced by the CR in the class room and colleges . According to them, they used to be tortured when their friends were not nominated in any programme . They were blamed in choosing their own friend in a specific programme . They were tortured in financial matters

at the time of going to tour programme . They were also faced the conflict with friends in internal programme of the colleges.

*3<sup>rd</sup> respondent's bite: I have already informed you to enlist mine name in the list of dancing in the 2<sup>nd</sup> number but you listed mine name on 8<sup>th</sup> number . This happened not fare yaar . Always you make me last . In last programme, you forget to enlist mine name in badminton.*

*10<sup>th</sup> respondent's bite: I am interested in joining the tour programme because of vomiting problem in the vehicles . I told you not impose me to go for tour yaar . Let's face mine problem during the travel, too.*

### **Assignments:**

Assignments are project work or work assigned to the students for the preparation of university exam as well as internal marking . All the faculties focus on the assignments provided to the students . Assignments are measured as the best source of every college for the internal marking of the students . The internal marks are provided to the university as per the students prepared and submitted to the faculties of the colleges . As per the assignments submitted by the students the marked submitted to the management of the college . Due to the internal marking facility of the assignment, the CR could not get-rid-off from the conflicts related to the assignments . According to the 11 respondents, they faced issues related to the assignments when they did not inform about the date of assignment submission date . The CR were blamed in not informing knowingly.

*6<sup>th</sup> respondents: Because of you only, I could not submit mine assignment . You did not inform me on time . You are not illegible CR for our class.*

### **Jealousy:**

Jealousy also became the theme of the study in this paper . According to the respondents, when they were elected as the CRs of the in the college, many of their friends stopped talking and chatting with them . They felt jealousy . So, jealousy means ignoring someone when his/her own friend became the higher position holder . As per the 6 respondents, many of their friends stopped talking as soon as they became the CR . They started back biting with others . They stopped walking with them . They used to share all the notes of all subjects but when they became the CR, stopped all these activities.

*25<sup>th</sup> respondent's bite: I don't want to see your face as the CR of our class . You are not fit as CR in our class.*

### **Medical first aid:**

The medical first aid is last theme of the un-structured interview given by the respondents . Medical first aid is another important part of the service provided by the colleges . It is one of the important services taken as the major part of the college . In case of this facility provided by the college, the CR also could not get-rid-off from the challenges faced by them . Generally, the girl CR faced problems when this facility was unavailable in the college . According to the respondent number 26, 28, 29 – 43 and 49, they faced the conflicts when their friends were injured in playing game at the time of break and there was no facility of first-aid . According to the girl respondents, the girl problems made them to face the challenges when CR came to know the unavailability of the first-aid in the college . They mentioned of feeling irritation when their friend was suffering that kind of issue.

36<sup>th</sup> respondent's bite: What kind of CR you are yaar? Why can you not manage for the first-aid facility talking with the coordinator? Please do manage it by tomorrow .

Themes are features of participants' accounts that characterize particular perceptions and/or experiences that the researcher sees as relevant to the research question . They are generated using coding—the process of identifying themes in accounts and attaching labels (codes) to index them.

## Conclusion

The study themes have provided examples of how to apply thematic analysis to identify conflicts or other issues that the CR in colleges may be facing. The study identified that the challenges or conflicts or problems faced by the CR are genuinely occurred within the class room or within the campus . Because of these problems the personal intimacy of the friends is died . It was also found that the issues are not only connected with the management of college .

The virtues of thematic analysis lay in its capacity to handle such data in a way that ensures the richness and depth of the context may be kept, as well as in its diagrammatic portrayal of the findings, which offers a helpful framework through which to arrange the conversation (Walters, 2017).

The issues which are generated in the colleges that should be addressed by the help of CR . That is helpful to the micro management of the college . The system is provided by the top level of management but the problems are found from the general part of the college . The CR of the colleges are directly or indirectly involved in the challenges or issues . Because of that the CR can play a major role of the colleges to solve the issues from where these are raised . If the CR can solve the problems as soon as the problems are raised, they can be the best source to improve the performance of college . Time and again, if the management calls meetings with the CR to know the current issues and problems of the colleges, that guides the management to improve the performance .

## Limitations and Future Research:

The interview study was limited to consider only the view of class representatives of different colleges . The looking forward of challenges or conflicts faced by the CR in perspective of class representatives only . The issues are also faced by the other students, faculties and team of management . This study was conducted for finding out the conflicts not the solution in the perspective of CR . Not only finding the conflicts, the solution could be found by the help of CR and other students by conducting the interview individually which helps for the micro- management of colleges . It is recommended to the future researcher to research on the challenges faced by CRs out of Kathmandu Valley .

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