



SALINLAHI:

Exploring the Importance and Influence of UP Diliman Provincial, Regional and Ethno-linguistic Organizations (PRE Orgs)

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary goal of this study was to know how UP Diliman provincial, regional and ethno-linguistic organizations (hereinafter referred to as “UPD PRE orgs”) have influenced their student members and how these members perceive the importance and influence of their PRE orgs on the UP community and Philippine society. The research study specifically aimed:

1. To draw a profile of the socio-demographic characteristics of the members of UPD PRE orgs;
2. To describe the reasons UPD students join PRE orgs;
3. To determine the importance of UPD PRE orgs to their student members;
4. To determine the attitudes of student members toward their PRE organization, and;
5. To explain the perceptions of student members of the importance and influence of their PRE orgs on the UP community and Philippine society.

METHODOLOGY

A mixture of quantitative and qualitative approach was employed. The survey method was used to provide a general picture of all PRE orgs. A total of 47 PRE orgs in UP Diliman were identified. Fourteen (14) PRE orgs were then randomly selected using random cluster sampling. Then, through stratified sampling, the number of respondents per organization was determined. The survey was administered by 218 respondents.

To supplement the survey method with an in-depth view, focus group discussions (or FGDs) were also conducted. Four (4) member orgs of the UP Sanlahi Alliance and one (1) non-member were purposely selected to be the informants in the FGDs. Each FGD consisted of 4 to 8 discussants. *For the list of respondents and informants, please see attachment.*

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents’ Profile

PRE org members are predominantly female (57%), 19-year olds (27%), Roman Catholic (78%) and those with Student Number 2006 (33%). They come from 16 different colleges or units in UPD. Six out of ten respondents joined PRE orgs in their freshman year, while 34% in their sophomore year. Fifty-three percent (53%) are affiliated with other UP orgs, with academic orgs as the most common.

Reasons for joining PRE orgs

The top reasons of student members for joining PRE orgs were:

- 1. to gain friends or meet new people (91.2%);**



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Nevertheless, informants from the FGDs stated that they wanted to have friends whom they think they would share common beliefs or culture with. Others have their high school friends who also joined the PRE organization they are in.

*“Nung time kasi ng first year,
from same high school kaming lahat,
so parang pagdating ng UP wala ka pa masyado kilala,
mas magandang may makakasama ka
na matatawag mong katulad mo.”*

2. be of service to their provinces/regions (83.9%);

*“Sumali ako kasi yung mga projects ng HIMA
focused sya sa pagtulong
hindi lang yung sa mga taga Aklan.
So parang to give back sa pinagmulan namin,
para may magawa sa kapwa Aklanos.”*
-UP HIMA member (Aklan province)

- 3. learn or experience new things (80.7%);**
- 4. to develop their potentials (66.5%);**
- 5. to get to know about their origin (64.2%);**
- 6. as a diversion from academic life (63.8%), and;**
- 7. to cope with UP life more easily (58.7%).**

It should be noted that they did not join PRE orgs for academic reasons. It is highlighted by the majority which regards PRE org as a diversion from their academic lives.

Interestingly, the reason of those who joined their PRE orgs in their third or fourth year was primarily for new learning and experiences, while those who joined in their first couple of years in UP mainly wanted to gain new friends.

What they got out of joining PRE orgs

They thought that joining PRE orgs was not detrimental to their academic life and to forming social circles. According to informants, they have learned to be flexible between acads and social life. However, some still find time conflict between acads and org activities.

*“Minsan kasi pag required ka umattend ng activities
tapos may exam ka din, nahahati yung time.”*



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And in such conflicts, sometimes org wins over acads.

*“Kasi kunwari maraming tao sa tambayan
tapos may class ka,
nahihigit ka nang hindi pumasok
kasi nga masaya sa tambayan.”*

While they did not join their PRE orgs for academic purposes, they ironically saw somehow upon joining that their orgs still provided academic assistance.

They also agreed that when they joined:

1. they became more aware of issues in their provinces/regions and were able to take action about them;

*“Mas mapapalapit ka sa province.
Mas marami kang malalaman about sa province,
sa pagse-share ng ideas... information.
Malalaman nyo rin yung mga current events sa province.”*

2. their cultural pride was boosted;

Based on the FGDs, part of this cultural influence is the enrichment of the members' knowledge about their origin's language and culture.

3. they gained new knowledge;
4. their orgs served as a training ground;

Informants said they get equipped with experiences, interpersonal communication and leadership skills, which prepare them in the real world i.e. the workplace.

Also, related to future employment, members get to establish connections with their alumni, according to an FGD informant.

5. their orgs helped in developing their personality;

They learned to handle pressure and responsibilities.

*“Natutunan mong resilience na kahit may mga adversities
na nangyayari, somehow kaya nyo palang mag pull through.”*



6. they experienced personal growth;

“Natulungan akong mag-grow as a person, kasi hindi naman na-e-experience ng lahat yung nae-experience ng may org. Compared sa mga non-org students, buhay nila acads lang. Kasi andaming activities para ma-enhance yung mga abilities mo, like leadership, time management.”

7. they became happier, and;

8. they found a new home or family.

Ultimately, the factor that got the highest mean score: Their PRE org is a “home away from home.” They joined the org because they wanted to gain new friends. But what did they get? A new family.

“Malalabanan mo yung homesick(ness).”

“Freedom kasi tanggap ka nila kung ano ka.”

“The people. The members. The way we click. Kahit may away, it's still fun kasi you can just say na, ‘Are you still galit pa ba?’ and then you laugh, because that's how you said it.”

The statement, “*Fun, family, advocacies equal masayang org*” may summarize the abovementioned gratifications.

Attitude toward PRE orgs

The abovementioned reasons and actual gratifications did affect their attitude toward their PRE orgs positively, in terms of sense of org pride, fulfillment and commitment.

This attitude may be attributed to what an informant said, implying more comfortableness with PRE orgs:

“Kasi pag academic org parang ang common nila ay parang manghihiraman lang kayo ng acad stuff, mag-uusap lang kayo about acads. Madalang lang magkaron ng conversation about personal life. Mas madaling magkwento pag same kayo ng pinanggalingan..”

Also, commitment, as an informant pointed out, is a matter of priority. But it was also found out in the FGDs that once the members have established this dedication, they become loyal not only to the organization, but also to their province. This makes them surpass all the shortcomings.



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*“Sinasabuhay yung quote na ‘Don’t quit’ talaga.
Andami daming problems pero natututunan mo pa ring magstick
at magstay sa org.”*

Importance of PRE Orgs

Moreover, PRE orgs play a vital role in the UP community. Discussions revealed that they allow for representation and development of different cultures. Through this, UP students are made aware of different provinces and cultures, and their people and identity for that matter.

PRE orgs are also said to nurture productive students, citizens and leaders.

Another is in achieving unity amid diversity. An informant said,

“Contribution din ng [PRE orgs] sa diversity, kasi feeling ko healthy yun, na sa isang komunidad, may pagkakaiba-iba, kasi dun nabubuo yung kabuuan.”

PRE orgs also serve as a guide especially to high school students who want to study in UP. They popularize UP and its excellence among the students.

*“Feeling ko mauubos yung mga taga-province [sa UP].
Hindi naman nagpopromote ang UP sa mga province,
so malalaman na lang ‘Ay may UPCAT pala.’
Tapos hindi naman nila alam.
Hindi sila makapag-apply, hindi sila makapag-exam,
hindi sila makapag-enroll.
Kahit yung magagaling,
marami din naman magagaling sa probinsya e.”*

*“We have an annual quiz show and most of the schools
in the province they know about it.
It's like the first impression they would have about UP,
and sometimes it's what makes them want to go to UP.”*

Without PRE orgs, there will be no support group for UP students of the same cultural background and understanding.

*“Kung walang provincial orgs sa UP, or kung maalis man sya,
parang it's synonymous to saying hindi natin pinapahalagahan
yung different ethno-linguistic groups sa UP,
kasi yung provincial orgs yun nga yung diversity na sinasabi.”*

*“Nakakatawang pakinggan na Unibersidad ng Pilipinas
pero hindi kinikilala ang ibang parte o ibang sector sa Pilipinas.
Siguro kung puro taga-Manila,
Unibersidad ng Maynila na lang sana.”*



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The role of PRE orgs also extends to society. Through the orgs' advocacies (e.g. education, environment, etc.), projects (medical and dental mission, discussion series, career orientation and review, etc.), citizens in the orgs' respective provinces and regions get to receive help, support and assistance. Most importantly, these orgs have a huge advocacy for the youth. PRE org members serve as role models for the youth through inspiration and example.

*“We believe that when we go there,
we engrain them with what their role is
as youth of the country.”*

*“Malaking bagay rin na maging inspirasyon...
na umasam sila nang mataas
tulad ng makapasok sila sa unibersidad.
Kasi may mga taong tulad namin na nakapasok,
magandang bagay din na maging inspirasyon sa iba,
modelo, huwaran.”*

Is this regionalism? Is this sectionalism?

Furthermore, informants contradicted the notion that PRE orgs promote regionalism and sectionalism in UP. They said that the existence of PRE orgs even adds to UP's identity and culture. They added that they do not restrict their members to join other orgs. What PRE orgs advance and underscore is Filipino nationalism.

*“Hindi natin dapat i-classify sya as regionalism.
Kung magka-classify tayo ng ganun,
sana nandun muna tayo sa basic level of identity,
yung parang self identity.
Paano mabi-build yung isang buo
kung yung isang unit e hindi nya alam
kung ano yung pinagmulan nya,
ano yung kultura nya.
Hindi naman sya talaga nagpopromote ng pagkawatak-watak,
actually mas nabubuo nga sya dahil kino-complement ang bawat isa.”*



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CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The University of the Philippines, being the national university, must acknowledge and value the existence of different cultures, and thus the relevance of PRE orgs. The University therefore must give support to PRE orgs by implementing rules that do not threaten their existence. The University must not impose a big number of members just to have the orgs recognized, because it is impossible to be met. Another is by granting *tambayan* and improving its facilities. *Tambayan* serves as a big factor in gathering members in order for them to most effectively communicate among themselves, plan and carry out projects.

It can be seen that homogeneity is not created among PRE org members, given their differences in backgrounds. This may imply that growth of individuals is not retarded. Diversity still flourishes, and it contributes to their learning.

Freshmen should not be restricted from joining PRE orgs, as this serves to be very beneficial to them in terms of exposure and coping.

Also, PRE orgs contribute to the so-called “UP education” by serving as an effective venue for learning and holistic development even outside the classrooms. It is noteworthy also that PRE orgs have a unique function on their student members i.e. providing something that other UP orgs cannot – a deeper understanding of their culture.

SALINLAHI was first presented in public on October 12, 2009 in the UP CMC Auditorium. This research project was initiated and headed by Jojit Aero A. Oñate, UP Sanlahi Alliance Vice-Chairperson for Education and Research and a member of UP CORE. He also authored this executive summary. The Survey Team was headed by Marlon Bungcayao, UP CORE President, while the FGD Team by Leona Poserio, UP CORE Vice-President for Research and Development. To see the PowerPoint presentation of this study (with a thorough discussion and the actual quotations), type in [jojitaero salinlahi](#) on **YouTube**.



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SURVEY RESPONDENTS

1. UP Angkan
2. UP Batangan
3. UP Harong
4. UP Ibalon
5. UP Kadugong Bol-anon
6. UP Kagayhaan
7. UP Kaisa
8. UP Kamangyan
9. UP Lakan
10. UP Lambak
11. UP Lawod
12. UP Sandiwa
13. UP Saro
14. UP Soccsksargen

FGD INFORMANTS

1. UP Aguman
2. UP Catandungan
3. UP HIMA
4. UP Kalilayan
5. UP Namnama