

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION OF SANGGUNIANG KABATAAN

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ABSTRACT

Youth engagement in public policy, decision-making, and community development initiatives is paramount for achieving a just, equitable, and sustainable future. Despite global endorsements and local legislative efforts, the meaningful participation of young people, particularly through organizations like the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK), remains challenging. This research study is about the project implementation, drawing from the framework established by John Quibol (2023). Through a structured survey of 50 SK Officials from various barangays within Davao City, this research evaluated their project implementation. Analysis using Mean, T-test, and ANOVA were the statistical tools used in this study. It was found that the SK perceived a moderate level as to their project implementation. Moreover, they revealed no significant difference in the level of project implementation when they were grouped by sex and educational attainment. It implies that sex and educational attainment have nothing to do with project implementation.

Keywords:

Planning, Project implementation, Sangguniang Kabataan, SK Officials, SK Projects, Youth

INTRODUCTION

A just, equitable, and sustainable future for all will simply not be possible without the involvement of the world's 1.2 billion young people [1]. The UN believes that an expanded and strengthened youth participation in public policymaking and decision-making at all levels can greatly advance the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Young people are a driving force for societal change and advocating their active inclusion in policy spaces can provide diverse perspectives that can improve and inform critical decisions. The United Nations endorsed a global standard for meaningful youth engagement in decision-making and over the years, governments established their local youth organizations. But despite their numbers, young people remain invisible when it comes to policymaking and continue to struggle to make an impact in the community, with little influence over decision-making on issues related to sustainable development, the maintenance of peace and security, and human rights [1]. Young people are an often untapped but potent resource for community change. Engaging the youth in community change coalitions requires more time, resources, and intentionality than many anticipate, making it imperative to base the work on well-established principles.

In the Philippines, the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) and Katipunan ng Kabataan (KK) were created through the Local Government Code of 1991 (Republic Act 7160) which provides the opportunity for young people to directly participate in local governance. Republic Act 10742, also known as the "Sangguniang Kabataan Reform Act of 2015", recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation-building hence the establishment of adequate, effective, responsive, and enabling mechanisms and support systems that will ensure the meaningful participation of the youth in local governance and nation-building. In more than 30 years of implementation, the Sangguniang Kabataan has faced

various challenges and has undergone several reformations. Following its abolishment in 2008, during the 19th Congress, and its reinstatement in 2015, the Sangguniang Kabataan still has many concerns for improvement. One of its major problems is its project implementation which has been engaged with several limiting factors.

Inadequate Support and Resources

Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) officials have successfully initiated programs to enhance youth skills and morals, such as environmental protection, infrastructure development, and sports activities. However, a UNICEF-funded study by the DILG and NAPC highlights that SK officials need better support and guidance. Current DILG training programs are often ineffective, with many officials not fully engaging with the seminars. Addressing these training gaps is crucial to improving the impact of SK officials [2].

It is imperative that training for all SK officials be consistent and standardized to ensure they can effectively serve their constituents and comply with government guidelines. Uniform training programs will equip SK officers with the necessary skills and knowledge enhancing their overall effectiveness [3].

Alternatively, some SK councils are also seen as victorious in their project implementation. In celebration of International Youth Day, 15 Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) projects were awarded during the 2nd National Search for Outstanding SK Project Awards. One of the awarded outstanding SK projects, under the active citizenship and governance category, was the “Botante Ako” by SK Cabantian, Davao City. The pioneering award-giving program was initiated by Positive Youth Development Network, co-presented by Galing Pook Foundation and in partnership with Unilab Foundation, Ideas Positive, HeadsUp PH, YPEER Pilipinas, Ideas Positive Alumni Community, and GoodGov PH.

SK recognition platforms can help improve the quality of SK project implementation, with the aim to showcase and recognize the most outstanding youth-led initiatives among SK councils and honor their contributions in advancing the promises of the Philippine Youth Development Plan (PYDP), Ambisyon Natin 2040, and the Sustainable Development Goals [4].

Lack of Autonomy and Decision-making Power

Youth councils are designed to actively engage and involve young people in the decision-making processes within their local communities [5]. The final law reformed the SK (Sangguniang Kabataan) by setting the official age range to 18-24 years and granting them fiscal autonomy, allowing them control over their funds without needing barangay council approval [6]. This independence reduces patronage issues and enables more effective youth-led projects. However, challenges remain, such as inefficiencies from unfilled SK positions and the need for proper compensation for SK officials, particularly for demanding roles like the SK Treasurer, which require significant expertise. These reforms and challenges highlight the need for continued support to enhance SK’s effectiveness [3].

In addition, Youth councils engage young people in local decision-making, benefiting both the community and the youth members, who gain skills and self-esteem. Despite limited research on their operations, involving youth in decision-making is recommended to enhance empowerment and drive positive outcomes for individuals and communities [7].

In terms of decision-making, adolescents enjoy greater freedom in making autonomous and meaningful decisions as compared to their childhood. However, various contexts influence these decisions, such as cultural messages that encourage autonomy and risk-taking, parental monitoring that seeks to prevent risky health decisions, and peers who can be both a positive and negative influence on health-related decisions [8].

While the decision-making power of young people varies widely depending on the context, research studies also show that there is now a clear trend toward increasing empowerment for both males and females, particularly in societies that prioritize gender equality and provide equitable access to resources and opportunities. Realizing gender equality in terms of equal opportunity has been communicated through the United Nations target 5.5 of SDG 5 on gender equality and empowerment. Unfortunately, gender inequality in public governance is still highly visible, reflecting and reinforcing existing norms on female participation in political and economic life. Limited female participation in governance structures, where key policy issues and resource allocations are decided, often negatively affects women's political, economic, and social opportunities. Representation of women in leadership positions does not automatically translate to real authority, influence, or autonomy, often more because of gendered prejudices than women's actual ability [9].

Inadequate Planning and Execution

Clarizze et al. (2014) found overall positive performance among SK officials in executing their duties under the Local Government Code [10]. However, UP-CIDS revealed that there were tasks carried out ineffectively due to limited youth engagement in essential activities like situational analysis, planning, and assessment. This highlights the necessity for improving youth involvement in local governance.

Educational background among young leaders can also be considered a major factor in terms of the perceived level of project implementation. In the study of Yap-Zerrudo, A.M., Armada, M.A.A. (2020), it was found that aside from age there are some intrinsic factors contributing to the low performance of the SK council in the municipality of Janiway, Iloilo [11]. Lack of creativity and innovation among SK officials was considered a weakness in SK project implementation. Creativity and innovation can be attributed to the educational background and experiences of SK officials. These qualities enable SK officials to be resourceful in coming up with projects and creating ways to support their implementation. A deeper understanding of the inherent factors of the individual youth in community participation may be the critical next step in progressing SK as a mechanism for national development [11].

Also, in a certain study by Caingles, et. al, it was found that most SK council meetings were attended by fewer members of the SK [12]. Poor participation of SK council members was due to conflict in schedules to equally essential engagements like doing their academic requirements, extra-curricular activities in school, and work duties. Hence, most often the scheduled meetings are postponed [12] The SK's inconsistent meeting schedule leads to ambiguous plans for youth, hindered by communication issues and scheduling conflicts, particularly among student officials. Collaborative efforts between youth organizations and the SK and the Sangguniang Barangay are hindered by a lack of support and coordination, resulting in poorly planned activities, insufficient funds, and inconsistent objectives. Addressing these challenges is essential to ensure effective youth engagement and program development within local governance structures [13].

Planning and Goal-setting Issues

Goal setting stands as a cornerstone of effective governance, representing the foundational process of establishing priorities and charting the course for impactful decision-making [14].

Involving the youth in the design and development stages of program planning is crucial for the future of youth programming and development initiatives. This ensures their engagement and sustained interest in the programs. While collaborative projects with elders are still valued, it is essential to recognize adolescents as assets in the community and involve them in planning initiatives that interest them [13].

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Further, in the planning of programs for community development, the representation of female youth leaders is also being pursued nowadays since the young female population has a different group of concerns that need to be heard and addressed. In 2018 SK polls, it was reported that the Commission on Elections (Comelec) data showed more women emerged as winners. They tallied that more than 35 percent of winners in the elections were women, up from 20 percent in previous elections. However, men holding village or youth council (Sangguniang Kabataan or SK) positions still outnumbered women. Nevertheless, this data showed that our communities are now welcoming gender equality through equal representation in positions of youth leadership. Comelec Commissioner Rowena Gumanzon stated that women nowadays are more educated and have access to information and social media that help them connect with their supporters [15].

Lack of Communication and Transparency

Vivas (2015) observed a general decline in the effectiveness of the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) within its current framework, noting a perceived inefficiency among elected youth leaders in fulfilling their roles. This decline may stem from a lack of engagement, potentially attributed to a lack of trust between youth and adult community members in the government [16]. Hence, in the sixteenth Congress RA 10742 was passed, an act establishing reforms in the Sangguniang Kabataan creating enabling mechanisms for meaningful youth participation in local governance and nation-building.

Sangguniang Kabataan officials are urged to give precedence to executing the powers and functions delineated in the Sangguniang Kabataan Reform Act of 2015. This entails placing a premium on fostering transparency and ensuring public disclosure of transactions. To achieve this, the Sangguniang Kabataan should uphold an updated youth database and profiles, alongside the establishment of committees aimed at proficiently devising and executing programs [17].

However, one of the limitations observed in SK councils is the lack of a trained or competent treasurer. In 2019, Section 10 of RA 10742, as amended by RA 11768 states that the Sangguniang Kabataan Chairperson shall appoint a treasurer with an educational or career background relating to business administration, accountancy, finance, economics, or bookkeeping. Provided further, that only if no person meets the requirements can the SK Chairperson consider other suitable nominees. Accordingly, it was reported by SK Federation President Jaffar Marohomsalic through the Sunstar July 2019 issue, that at least 50 barangays in Davao City do not have an appointed SK treasurer. This has caused delays in the project implementation since some of the barangays are having difficulties managing their funds due to the absence of an SK treasurer. To bridge this gap, some barangay treasurers assume the responsibility, which according to Llemmit is legally questionable. On the other hand, other barangay treasurers refuse to assume the responsibility of an SK treasurer [18]. Nevertheless, this situation needs to be addressed as the lack of an SK treasurer limits the SK council for the proper management of SK funds.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of the study is to determine the level of project implementation of Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) in Davao City. This research also aims to determine if there is a significant difference in the level of project implementation of Sangguniang Kabataan Officials when grouped according to their sex, and educational background.

METHODOLOGY

A quantitative descriptive-comparative method, an approach to identify similarities and differences between the groups being studied was utilized in the study [17]. A survey of 50 SK Officials from different Barangays in Davao City was done using 26-item questionnaires adapted from an undergraduate thesis entitled "Project Implementation of Sangguniang Kabataan" by John Paul Quibol of the University of Southeastern Philippines-College of Development Management [19]. The first part of the questionnaire required answers for the establishment of demographic profiles

such as age, sex, and educational background. The second part of the questionnaire gathered the respondents' observations on the pre-determined dimensions and indicators. The answers of the respondents are compared statistically using the SPSS Statistics software and evaluated through Mean, T-test, and ANOVA.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The demographic profile of the respondents is shown in Table 1. Out of the 50 respondents, Female respondents account for 72% (36) of the total respondents while 28% (14) are male respondents. This can be attributed to the increasing representation of female youth leaders being pursued nowadays. In 2018 SK polls, it was tallied that more than 35 percent of winners in the elections were women, up from 20 percent in previous elections. Though men holding village or youth council (Sangguniang Kabataan or SK) positions still outnumbered women, this data shows that leadership opportunities are now also open for female youth leaders [14].

Further, the educational background of the SK officials reveals that 74% attended or are currently attending college, 22% already graduated college, and only 4% are High School graduates and have never attended college yet. Based on Republic Act (RA) 10742 or the "Sangguniang Kabataan Reform Act", the age requirements for SK officials were raised from 15-17 years old to 18-24 years old. This allows youth officials to enter contracts and be held liable. All the respondents for this study fall into the age 21 and above bracket.

Indicator	Frequency	Percent
Sex		
Male	14	28.00%
Female	36	72.00%
Total	50	100.00%
Education		
High School Graduate	2	4.00%
College Undergraduate	37	74.00%
College Graduate	11	22.00%
Total	50	100.00%

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents.

Table 2 shows the level of project implementation of Sangguniang Kabataan. An average response of 2.67 (SD=0.24) resulted from the indicator of inadequate support and resources. It shows that most of the SK officials somewhat agree that they are not allowed to participate in the mandatory training and seminars related to the project, not much budget is allocated to implement the project, and consultation meetings are not usually performed. Due to this lack of support and resources, the projects they implement are not sustainable. The budget was important since the program would not be realized without a budget. And the process involved in the budget request is long [11].

Lack of autonomy or decision-making power also gave a moderate level, having a mean of 2.86 (SD=0.34). This indicates that most of the respondents neutrally agree that there has been a lack of self-government when it comes to project implementation. It has been a challenge since the planning and budget are not given directly to the SK. Though the SK operation manual states that the budget for the project should be downloaded to the SK, what happens is that the budget is forwarded to the Barangay Council and is in their control [11].

In the same way, inadequate planning and execution gave a "Moderate" level or an average score of 2.74 (SD=0.40). This indicates that the respondents somewhat agree that the goals of some projects need to be clearly defined and are ambitious. The challenges encountered in planning programs include difficulty identifying issues affecting youth [11].

As a result, the proposed projects do not meet the needs of the youth.

Also, a moderate level of project implementation in terms of planning and goal-setting issues and lack of communication and transparency was shown in Table 2 with a mean of 2.83 (SD=0.44) and 2.71 (SD=0.43), respectively. Effective planning and goal setting are critical to the success of any project [17].

Overall, the mean score for all indicators was 2.75 (SD=0.22), giving a descriptive level of "Moderate". The result indicates that respondents somewhat agree on all listed challenges encountered in the implementation of SK project.

Indicator	Standard Deviation	Mean	Descriptive Level
Inadequate Support and Resources	0.24	2.67	Moderate
Lack of Autonomy/ Decision-making Power	0.34	2.86	Moderate
Inadequate Planning and Execution	0.40	2.74	Moderate
Planning and Goal-setting Issues	0.44	2.83	Moderate
Lack of Communication and Transparency	0.43	2.71	Moderate
Overall	0.22	2.76	Moderate

Table 2. Level of Project Implementation of Sangguniang Kabataan.

Table 3.1 shows the significant difference in the level of project implementation of Sangguniang Kabataan when results are grouped by Sex. The mean values for males (2.69) and females (2.82) are at comparable levels with slight differences suggesting both sexes accept the indicators affecting the SK project implementation. With a T-value of 1.776 and a P-value of 0.082, the level of project implementation has no significant difference as perceived by male and female SK officials. The data in Table 3.1 also suggests that sex has nothing to do with the level of SK project implementation.

Looking into the results per indicator, inadequate support and resources, inadequate planning and execution, planning and goal-setting issues, and lack of communication and transparency, generated p-values that are more than the accepted significance level of $P=0.05$. This shows the male and female SK officials exhibited similar levels of responses for such indicators. However, only one indicator generated a significant difference lower than the accepted significance level of $P=0.05$. The responses for the lack of autonomy or decision-making power generated a T-value of 2.122 and a P-value of 0.039, confirming a substantial difference in the male and female SK officials' perceptions. With a higher mean value of 2.93 than that of the male, with responses generating a mean of 2.71, female respondents agree more that SK project implementation solely relies on the decision of the barangay council, SK officials lack the training necessary for the management of funds, and that the barangay council most likely decides which project should be implemented. Furthermore, this data supports the results from previous studies where it was found that representation of women in leadership positions does not automatically translate to real authority, influence, or autonomy, often more because of gendered prejudices than women's actual ability [8].

Indicator	Male	Female	T-Value	P-Value	Decision of H ₀
Inadequate Support and Resources	2.65	2.70	0.609	0.545	Accept
Lack of Autonomy/ Decision-making Power	2.71	2.93	2.122	0.039	Reject
Inadequate Planning and Execution	2.80	2.74	0.414	0.681	Accept
Planning and Goal-setting Issues	2.72	2.90	1.258	0.215	Accept
Lack of Communication and Transparency	2.70	2.71	0.154	0.878	Accept
Overall	2.69	2.82	1.776	0.082	Accept

Table 3.1 Significant Difference in the Level of Project Implementation of Sangguniang Kabataan when results are grouped by Sex.

The significant difference in the level of project implementation of Sangguniang Kabataan when results are grouped by educational background is shown in Table 3.2. For all the indicators, it was found that educational background does not significantly impact the level of SK project implementation. The generated P-Values of all indicators were greater than the accepted significant value of 0.05, showing that the SK Officials, even having different educational backgrounds, generated similar responses and perceptions when it came to the challenges encountered in the implementation of SK Projects. Although looking into the mean values, it can be said that SK officials who have higher education are less affected by the challenges in terms of inadequate planning and execution, planning and goal-setting issues, and lack of communication and transparency on SK project implementation. Educational background among young leaders can affect the level of project implementation as there are some intrinsic factors contributing to the low performance of SK councils. Creativity and innovation can be attributed to the educational background and experiences of SK officials. These qualities enable SK officials to be resourceful in coming up with projects and creating ways to support their implementation. A deeper understanding of the inherent factors of the individual youth in community participation may be the critical next step in progressing SK as a mechanism for national development [10].

Indicator	High School Graduate	College Undergraduate	College Graduate	F-Test	P-value	Decision of H ₀
Inadequate Support and Resources	2.65	2.69	2.68	0.021	0.979	Accept
Lack of Autonomy/ Decision-making Power	2.80	2.88	2.85	0.054	0.948	Accept
Inadequate Planning and Execution	3.30	2.70	2.88	2.857	0.067	Accept
Planning and Goal-setting Issues	3.00	2.91	2.62	1.986	0.149	Accept
Lack of Communication and Transparency	3.00	2.71	2.64	0.610	0.548	Accept
Overall	2.80	2.81	2.71	0.627	0.539	Accept

Table 3.2 Significant Difference in the Level of Project Implementation of Sangguniang Kabataan when results are grouped by Educational Background

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CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, this study determined that Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) officials have a neutral stance on the perceived indicators, the inadequate support and resources, lack of autonomy or decision-making power, inadequate planning and execution, planning and goal-setting issues, and the lack of communication and transparency, affecting the SK project implementation in Davao City. Based on the generated mean and P-values, it can also be concluded that the SK project implementation is not affected by either sex or educational background.

However, strengthened female young leaders' representation in decision-making can be made. Also, strategic training on planning and project management, and upskilling of the youth leaders who oversee the SK councils can help improve SK project implementation.

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