



Assessing Demographics, Perceptions, and Participation: A Study on Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) Effectiveness and Improvement Suggestions

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ABSTRACT: The Sangguniang Kabataan is an important institution in the Philippines that represents the interests of youth and engages them in local governance. This study examines the perceptions of young Filipinos regarding the Sangguniang Kabataan's (SK) participation in local government, focusing on understanding how youth perspectives influence the efficacy of SK initiatives. The research integrated a descriptive quantitative research design. A total of 32 participants were involved in the study, providing insights into their demographic profiles, perceptions of SK duties and functions, levels of participation in SK activities, and suggestions for improving SK officials and their activities. The findings reveal that while respondents generally recognize the importance of the SK in representing youth in local government, there are areas where its effectiveness can be enhanced, such as in implementing youth-focused programs and initiatives. The study also highlights barriers to youth participation in SK activities, including lack of awareness and time constraints. Recommendations for improving youth engagement in the SK include prioritizing advocacy for youth-related issues, enhancing communication with young individuals, and focusing on initiatives that address critical issues like poverty, education, and mental health. By implementing these recommendations, the SK can better serve the needs and aspirations of the youth population and create a more responsive and inclusive local governance structure.

KEYWORDS: civic engagement, community participation, local governance, leadership development, sangguniang kabataan, youth perceptions.

INTRODUCTION

The Sangguniang Kabataan plays an important role in Philippine politics, and it serves as a platform for emerging leaders to sharpen their skills in public service. The Sangguniang Kabataan is established according to the Local Government Code and amended further by the Sangguniang Kabataan Reform Act (Republic Act No. 10742); the Sangguniang Kabataan's role is to ensure meaningful youth participation in nation-building, youth leadership, and civic engagement, and participation in local governance. This study explores youth's perceptions of SK's involvement in local governance.

"The youth are the hope of the nation." A statement was as old as its origin, Gat. Rizal, Jose, P., but continues to survive until now. The youth are the most vibrant, energetic, and large group of humanity; thus, they are important stakeholders in any nation. There is no better way for a nation to prepare for its future than to deliberately and successfully provide the younger generations with the necessary skills and resources. Neglecting the youth of a country means neglecting its future, and the consequences are usually significant and costly. Therefore, the significance of how the SK is perceived cannot be overstated, especially in a country like the Philippines, where a significant percentage of the population is under the age of 30.

Suppose we want to see more democratic practices, political accountability, and social inclusion in the Philippines. In that case, we need to know how the SK affects—or doesn't affect—youth participation in governing processes. The primary goal of this research is to examine the SK's impact on community development and policy-making and its success in mobilizing youth for civic engagement. Our findings will help educators, community leaders, legislators, and most importantly, the young, who may use this information to create more educated tactics to engage their peers.



The history, roles, and issues of the Sangguniang Kabataan in the Philippines have been discussed in previous studies. The research study by Domingono et al. (2019) provided insights into the Sangguniang Kabataan's grassroots structure and the ongoing debate about its effectiveness in empowering the youth. On the other hand, Balanon et al. (2007) emphasize the perspective of youth within a specific barangay, pointing out the need for increased awareness and active engagement among the young population. This study seeks to address these deficiencies by investigating the perceptions of young Filipinos regarding the SK's function within their respective communities and the overall democratic framework of the Philippines.

Filling these gaps is critical if we want to learn more about how the youth in the Philippines are involved in local government. This study intends to fill a gap in our understanding of the Sangguniang Kabataan's function by exploring these overlooked areas to provide a framework for governance that is inclusive, participatory, and sensitive to the interests and desires of the youth. The study seeks to contribute to developing more efficient youth engagement policies and initiatives by identifying potential areas for expanding the SK's influence on youth participation in governance.

Research Objectives

1. To determine the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - a. Age;
 - b. Gender;
 - c. Barangay residence.
2. To evaluate the respondents' perceptions regarding the duties and functions of Sangguniang Kabataan.
3. To measure the respondents' participation level in Sangguniang Kabataan activities.
4. To measure the respondents' perceived effectiveness of the Sangguniang Kabataan officials.
5. To assess respondents' suggestions regarding the improvement of Sangguniang Kabataan officials and their related activities.

METHODOLOGY

The research utilized a descriptive quantitative design to analyze the current perceptions and behaviors of youth regarding the involvement of Sangguniang Kabataan in local governance. According to Rahi (2017), the descriptive research method pertains to a specific type of inquiry that seeks to gather information regarding current events. Stratified sampling was used to guarantee a representative sample of the youth population in various barangays in Manila, considering variables such as age and gender. According to Vořechovský, M. et al. (2003), stratified sampling is essential for obtaining precise statistical response properties with a limited number of simulations. This approach allows for rapid and accurate evaluations of complicated computational models. The data were collected using Google Forms, a versatile and user-friendly application that enables fast dissemination. By employing this approach, we guaranteed that participants from different barangays in Manila had easy access and convenience, improving our sample's variety and representativeness. As stated by Hsu, H. Y., & Wang, S. K. (2017). Google Forms is a highly efficient tool for collecting and analyzing data. It offers a free and collaborative platform for designing forms and seamlessly integrating with Google Sheets for data analysis. This method simplifies designing questions, collecting responses, and presenting data, making it highly suitable for academic and scientific research. Responses collected via Google Forms would be analyzed using Microsoft Excel, a statistical software for descriptive statistics, focusing on frequencies, means, and standard deviations to identify patterns, trends, and general perceptions of the SK's effectiveness and engagement strategies.

Research Instrument

The research instrument used in this study included questions about young people's knowledge regarding the roles and functions of the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) as the independent variable. It also examined their opinions on the effectiveness of the SK in promoting civic engagement among young people and the factors that influence their participation in SK activities as dependent variables. Demographic information, including age, gender, and barangay of residence, will be collected. The survey was conducted among barangay residents in Manila to guarantee a sample that accurately represents the population. The questions included a wide range of topics, including evaluating knowledge of the SK's functions, gathering opinions on its influence on youth engagement, understanding motives for participating in SK events, soliciting suggestions for improvement, and gauging the likelihood of future participation. Participants were asked to score each response on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, following relevant statements, to express their viewpoints.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section offers a detailed analysis of the study's findings of young Filipinos' perceptions of the Sangguniang Kabataan's (SK) participation in local government. The main goals of this analysis are to show how important it is to comprehend how youth perspectives affect the efficacy and impact of SK initiatives, to shed light on the relationships that exist between Filipino youth and the SK, and to improve civic engagement tactics and policy decisions that support meaningful youth participation in local governance processes. By using these insights, the study hopes to offer significant knowledge that can support a local governance structure that is more responsive, inclusive, and participatory and that successfully meets the needs and ambitions of the youth population.

Table 1. Respondents' Demographic Profile

Age	Frequency	Percent (%)
17-19 years old	9	28.13
20-22 years old	23	71.88
Gender		
Male	14	43.75
Female	12	37.5
LGBTQIA+	6	18.75
Barangay of residence		
Brgy 471	1	3.13%
Legarda	1	3.13%
Barangay 397, Sampaloc	2	6.25%
Quiapo	2	6.25%
Manila	4	12.5%
Barangay 478	1	3.13%
Lagalag Tiaong Quezon	1	3.13%
Sta Cruz Manila	1	3.13%
Manila, Sampaloc	2	6.25%
Brgy. 398 Zone 41 District 4	3	9.38%
Brgy. 396	1	3.13%
UST	2	6.25%
Brgy. 457	1	3.13%
Brgy. 395	1	3.13%
Brgy. 468	1	3.13%
Brgy. 715	1	3.13%
Brgy. 392	1	3.13%
Brgy. 373	1	3.13%
Alvarado 1312, Tondo	1	3.13%
Brgy. 729	1	3.13%
TOTAL	32	100

Table 1 provides insights into the age, gender, and barangay (neighborhood) of residence distribution among the surveyed population. Regarding age, most respondents are 20-22 years old (71.88%), indicating a significant presence of young adults in the sample. Meanwhile, 28.13% of respondents are between 17 and 19 years old, highlighting a smaller but still significant proportion of teenagers.

Gender distribution reveals a slight male majority, with 43.75% of the sample being male, compared to 37.5% of female respondents. Additionally, 18.75% of respondents identify as LGBTQIA+, reflecting the difference within the surveyed population.



The barangay of residence shows a varied distribution, with no single area dominating the sample. However, some barangays such as Quiapo (6.25%), Manila (12.5%), and Brgy. 398 Zone 41 District 4 (9.38%) shows relatively higher proportions of respondents. The rest of the barangays represent smaller percentages, indicating a spread across different neighborhoods.

The data suggests a mixed population spread across various neighborhoods, with no single area dominating the sample. However, certain barangays like Quiapo, Manila, and Brgy. 398 Zone 41 District 4 shows relatively higher proportions of respondents.

Table 2. Respondents’ Perceptions Regarding The Duties And Functions Of Sangguniang Kabataan.

No.	Items	M	SD	I	Rank
1	The Sangguniang Kabataan plays a significant role in representing the youth in local government.	4.125	1.145	Strongly Agree	1
2	The SK effectively implements youth-focused programs and initiatives in the community.	3.656	1.144	Agree	3
3	The SK adequately advocates for youth-related issues within the local government.	3.656	1.144	Agree	4
4	The SK successfully promotes the welfare of young people in the community.	3.906	1.206	Agree	2
5	The SK is effective in promoting civic engagement among youth.	3.75	1.125	Agree	5
6	The SK has been successful in fostering leadership skills among the youth.	3.625	1.152	Agree	6
OVERALL MEAN		3.786	1.523	AGREE	

Legend: 0.00 – 1.00 (strongly disagree), 1.01 – 2.00 (disagree), 2.01 – 3.00 (neutral), 3.01 – 4.00 (agree), 4.01 – 5.00 (strongly agree)

Table 2 presents mean (M) scores, standard deviations (SD), and interpretations of responses on a Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree." Overall, the data suggest that respondents generally perceive the SK as playing a significant role in representing youth in local government, with a mean score of 4.125 and a relatively low standard deviation of 1.145. According to Abad & Jayson (2023), we can thrive in an environment of fast digitalization and disruption of conventional conventions by using internet platforms, youth-led discussions, and passionate advocacy. We are not solely focused on trends but contribute to discussions and initiatives on various topics, including those of national and global significance. Our mission will remain the same. Youth must play its role well to show everyone that when we lead, we lead effectively without losing touch. The mean value (3.786) suggests a moderate level of agreement or positive result overall, assuming the scale used in the survey was structured such that higher values indicate stronger agreement.

Furthermore, the SK is seen as effectively implementing youth-focused programs and initiatives (M = 3.656), advocating for youth-related issues (M = 3.656), and promoting the welfare of young people in the community (M = 3.906), all with moderate agreement among respondents. According to the Local Government Code of 1991 (RA 7160), the SK is responsible for developing a three-year plan called the Comprehensive Barangay Youth Development Plan. This is the foundation for developing the Annual Barangay Youth Investment Plan, which must be aligned with the Philippine Youth Development Plan. The SK shall also promulgate resolutions necessary to carry out the objectives of the youth and initiate and implement SK Projects and programs to enhance the members' social, political, economic, cultural, intellectual, moral, spiritual, and physical development. Being part of the Sangguniang Kabataan helps the young leaders reach and engage their fellow youth to change their society. Additionally, the SK is viewed as effective in promoting civic engagement among youth (M = 3.75) and fostering leadership skills (M = 3.625), with respondents generally agreeing with these statements.

These findings suggest that the SK is perceived positively in its efforts to represent and address the needs of young people within the community, though its functions and initiatives may need further improvement or enhancement.



Table 3. Level Of Participation Of The Respondents In Sangguniang Kabataan Activities

No.	Items	Frequency	Percent (%)
1	Have you ever participated in any SK activities?		
	Yes	5	15.6%
	No	27	84.4%
2	If yes, what motivated you to participate?		
	Community involvement	2	40%
	Personal interest	3	60%
3	If no, what are the main reasons for not participating?		
	Not aware of activities	8	26.63%
	Lack of interest	8	29.63%
	Time constraints	11	40.74%
4	How likely are you to participate in future SK activities?		
	Very Likely	2	6.45%
	Likely	6	19.35%
	Neutral	16	51.61%
	Unlikely	6	19.35%
	Very unlikely	1	3.23%
	TOTAL	32	100

Table 3 shows that only 15.6% of respondents have participated in Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) activities, while the majority (84.4%) have yet to. Among those who participated, the main motivations were personal interest (60%) and community involvement (40%). The main reasons cited by those who have not participated in SK activities include time constraints (40.74%), lack of interest (29.63%), and need to be made aware of the activities (26.63%).

This suggests that lack of awareness and competing priorities are significant barriers to youth participation in the SK. Looking at future participation, over half of the respondents (51.61%) expressed a neutral likelihood of participating in future SK activities. However, a sizable portion (25.8%) said they are likely or very likely to participate, while 22.58% are unlikely or very unlikely to do so. This indicates a mixed outlook, with room for improving youth engagement in the SK. These findings suggest raising awareness, enhancing interest, and addressing time constraints to increase participation in SK activities.

Table 4. Suggestions Of Respondents Regarding The Improvement Of Sangguniang Kabataan Officials And Their Related Activities.

No.	Items	M	SD	I	Rank
1	The SK should focus more on disaster preparedness and response to enhance youth engagement.	4.125	0.9018	Disagree	10
2	The SK should focus more on sustainable development and environmental protection to enhance youth engagement.	4.40625	0.5938	Agree	5
3	The SK should focus more on cultural preservation and heritage conservation to enhance youth engagement.	4.1875	0.8125	Neutral	8
4	The SK should focus more on promoting local tourism and community development to enhance youth engagement.	4.21875	0.78125	Neutral	9
5	The SK should focus more on addressing social issues such as poverty and inequality to enhance youth engagement.	4.90625	0.09375	Strongly Agree	1



6	The SK should focus more on promoting peace and conflict resolution to enhance youth engagement.	4.65625	0.66652	Agree	6
7	The SK should focus more on advocating for human rights and social justice to enhance youth engagement.	4.84375	0.71340	Agree	2
8	The SK should focus more on promoting inclusive education and access to quality schooling to enhance youth engagement.	4.8125	0.8387	Agree	3
9	The SK should focus more on promoting mental health awareness and well-being to enhance youth engagement.	4.65625	0.82	Agree	7
10	The SK should focus more on empowering marginalized youth groups, such as indigenous communities and LGBTQ+ youth, to enhance youth engagement.	4.71875	0.80	Agree	4
OVERALL MEAN		3.3237	0.70178	AGREE	

Legend: 0.00 – 1.00 (strongly disagree), 1.01 – 2.00 (disagree), 2.01 – 3.00 (neutral), 3.01 – 4.00 (agree), 4.01 – 5.00 (strongly agree)

The table presents survey data indicating respondents' opinions on various focus areas for the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK), the youth council in the Philippines, to enhance youth engagement. The results show that respondents strongly agreed that the SK should prioritize various initiatives to enhance youth engagement. The highest-ranked priority, with a mean score of 4.91 and the lowest standard deviation of 0.09, was addressing social issues such as poverty and inequality. This suggests a widespread agreement among respondents regarding the importance of effectively tackling systemic issues to engage young people. The value of 4.5527 suggests a relatively high level of agreement or positive sentiment overall, assuming the scale used in the survey was structured such that higher values indicate stronger agreement.

The highest priority for the SK in enhancing youth engagement is to address social issues like poverty and inequality, indicating a recognition of the systemic barriers hindering youth involvement. In 2009, about 13.4 million (35.5%) of children under 18 years were considered income poor. Their family needed to meet the minimum food and non-food basic needs. Based on the FIES and LFS, the poverty threshold 2009 was around 16,800. To address this issue, NAPC-Youth and Student Sector Council representative Ninian Sumadia raised this call to sustain poverty reduction among the country's youth sector. She urged the SK candidates to prioritize implementing anti-poverty programs for the youth once elected in their localities.

They are followed by the advocacy for human rights and social justice, emphasizing the importance of equitable treatment and empowerment for all youth. Lastly, promoting inclusive education and access to quality schools, focusing on the potential of education in breaking cycles of disadvantage and fostering social responsibility. These priorities all received mean scores above 4.8, indicating strong agreement among respondents. According to the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS), The most important platform SK officials should focus on is education. Free printing and photocopy services or a computer center for students can close the digital gap among young people who need access to the internet or other technological devices at home. The project will reduce the students' financial stress. Scholarships or financial assistance can be proposed to address poverty.

While responses for some focus areas, such as promoting sustainable development and environmental protection, cultural preservation and heritage conservation, and empowering marginalized youth groups, were slightly more variable, they still received high mean scores above 4.1, suggesting general agreement on their importance.

Though still strongly supported, the lowest-ranked priority was promoting local tourism and community development, with a mean score of 4.22. Despite being ranked last, it's important that this initiative still garnered significant agreement among respondents.

The data suggests that respondents believe the SK should focus on diverse initiatives, including addressing social issues, promoting education and well-being, advocating for human rights, and supporting marginalized groups to engage youth in community development and participation effectively.



CONCLUSION

The SK is widely recognized for its substantial contribution to representing the youth in local government, with respondents expressing great regard for this particular feature. Nevertheless, the SK's efficacy could be improved in many domains, such as the execution of programs and initiatives targeted toward the youth and the promotion of youth-related concerns within the local government.

Although the work of the SK is considered important, a significant majority of respondents (84.4%) have never taken part in SK activities. The primary reasons for not participating are limited time availability, lack of enthusiasm, and insufficient knowledge of SK activities. These findings indicate that increasing knowledge, fostering interest, and resolving scheduling difficulties may boost youth engagement in the SK.

Respondents identified several potential focus areas for the SK to enhance youth engagement. These include addressing social issues such as poverty and inequality, advocating for human rights and social justice, promoting inclusive education, and supporting mental health awareness. According to the respondents, these strategies would most effectively achieve the desired outcomes. Initiatives about disaster preparedness, cultural preservation, and empowering underprivileged youth groups were perceived as having a lower likelihood of increasing engagement.

In general, the results emphasize the necessity for the SK to boost the execution of its programs, strengthen its advocacy endeavors, and more effectively connect its areas of focus with the goals and concerns of the adolescent population. Focusing on three specific areas is crucial to enhancing the SK's effectiveness in encouraging civic engagement and youth participation in local governance.

RECOMMENDATION

The researchers recommend that the SK organization continue prioritizing and enhancing its youth initiatives. One of the important initiatives should be advocating for youth-related matters inside local government to empower young individuals and provide them with a platform to express their opinions and contribute to society. To gain a deeper understanding of the desires and requirements of the younger generation in their localities, the SK should build effective means of communicating with them. This will enable them to launch initiatives that address urgent issues such as mental health, educational opportunities, and youth employment. Furthermore, the researchers suggest that future studies revise the data collection strategy due to the potential variation in user comprehension of questions when not presented in person. With a thorough explanation of the questionnaire and a guarantee that everyone understands it, respondents may be able to grasp the importance of questions that may seem obvious to the developer of the questionnaire. This interpretation can lead to accurate conclusions. Implementing these recommendations will enhance the Sangguniang Kabataan's engagement with the youth, effectively address critical issues, and produce lasting benefits for the community. Additionally, it will ensure the availability of accurate data for developing programs and policymaking. You may adopt the questionnaire found in this link: (https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vRLOoInpC7a__mzfamsHLeK9LfnDWVfqJ7DUfZrjOhldJ_8qHMuspy5Q2Gmgz6hBg/pub).

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