

# SK Reform Law of 2015: Perspectives of Sangguniang Kabataan in Cabanatuan City, Philippines

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**Abstract.** As of 2021, the International Monetary Fund ranked the Philippines as the 27th largest economy in the world based on nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and the 10<sup>th</sup> largest economy in Asia. As a result, the nation has complete faith in the leadership abilities of its youth and is committed to promoting the common welfare. The study is a welcome addition to the relevant literature because it determined the SK Chairpersons' knowledge of and compliance with the 2015 SK Reform Law (Republic Act No. 10742). The fact that the majority of SK Chairpersons in Cabanatuan City was aware of the 2015 SK Reform Law is an encouraging sign that the elected youth in Cabanatuan City is responsible and accountable in their position as SK Chairperson. The awareness of the SK Chairperson plays a vital role in our society and can encourage youth participation in activities. Yet, there is still a need to further develop the technical skills of the youth so that they can perform their duties effectively.

**Keywords:** Duties and functions; Leadership; SK Reform Law; Youth participation

## 1. Introduction

Youths are important because they inevitably become adults and formal participants in all aspects of social life. The researcher hopes to have a better understanding of the factors that influence the psychological and cultural development of young people. It also seems obvious that young people from many countries represent a changing set of different types, preferences, languages, and beliefs from older people. Yet, in its own right, the youth population is significant (Little, 2013). The opportunity to participate in political participation is a key way to achieve an inclusive policy in which citizens can participate in the public decision-making process. Political involvement is a key part of democracy. In theory, this is a positive method to enable those who

participate in politics to further receive education in democracy and political leadership. However, in many countries in the world, young people's understanding and views on participation in politics are still not ideal. In this way, young people can be excluded from political participation (Bincof, 2018). Globally, there is a growing trend to enable young people to directly formulate policies and plans. The Philippines has institutionalized Sangguniang Kabataan (SK), a youth management system with its own budget established by law and as a national agency of the secretariat. However, the law that created SK has a history of more than ten years. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)–Manila has sought assistance from the Department of Interior and Local Government. The UNICEF–Manila Foundation has funded a systematic and national evaluation of the impact of SK on young people as a basis for making more reasonable and effective recommendations (Balanon, 2007).

Before the creation of Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) during President Corazon Aquino's presidency, there was the Kabataang Barangay (KB), the main institution that allowed young people to engage in public affairs and was considered to be the political network of the Imee Marcos. On April 15, 1975, during Marcos' administration, Pambansang Katipunan ng Kabataang Barangay ng Pilipinas was established under Presidential Decree No. 684. The purpose of the bill is to “clearly define the role of young people in youth tasks, so as to give full opportunities to express their views, aspirations and hopes” (Evangelista, 2018). The youth council in Barangay is composed of a chairman and 7 members, elected by the Katipunang Kabataan, or registered youth between 15 and 30 years old. These officials are between 18 and 24 years old and will serve a three-year term. The elected SK is expected to propose a three-year rolling comprehensive plan to align with the Philippine Youth Development Plan (PYDP) and other youth-centered laws and ordinances (Gavilan, 2018). According to Tughero (2018), the National Youth Commission (NYC) has assigned a series of tasks to the elected village youth leaders to ensure that they play their role while in office in nation-building. The leaders of Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) will be given a small task to be completed every month for 24 months under the NYC “24 Steps to Pagbabago” program.

Stakeholder participation is a key component of good governance. Through the SK, young people are empowered by local government agencies at all levels (Dumbrique, 2019). Youth councils can be used as a way to control society, and

tame and guide dissent among young people, rather than an opportunity to cultivate political power among young people (Taft & Gordon, 2013).

In the Philippines, the government supports and believes in the capacity of the youth not just to lead but also to empower the country. They are confident that these people have fresh mind and ideas that will certainly mold a better future for the country.

Article II, Section 13 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution states that;

“The State recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation–building and shall promote and protect their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well–being. It shall inculcate in the youth patriotism and nationalism, and encourage their involvement in public and civic affairs.”

The Constitution expresses that the youth has a very vital part in refurbishing the nation thus, leading to the creation of the Sangguniang Kabataan, or what all of us know as SK which is embodied in the Local Government Code (LGC) of 1991. Chapter 8, Section 423, Paragraph (a) of the LGC states that *“There shall be in every Barangay a Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) to be composed of a chairman, seven (7) members, a secretary, and a treasurer.”*

According to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the youth is best understood as “a period of conversion from the dependence of childhood to adulthood’s independence and mindfulness of our interdependence as members of a community.” It added that in order to keep statistics across regions consistent, young people are classified between 15 and 24 years old, but that does not affect other descriptions of Member States. The annual statistical yearbook of the United Nations system on population, learning, employment, and health clearly states that all United Nations data on youth are based on this description.

Young people who pass Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) are strongly encouraged to participate in politics and governance starting from the Barangay level and get 10% of the Barangay IRA. The SK council voted by young people aged 15 to 17 is composed of a chairman and 7 members. The board of directors appointed a secretary, treasurer, and committee head among its members. The Philippine government is the only country in the world that has a mechanism to involve the youth sector in governance (UNDP, 2007). This is a response to the appeal of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children, which creates a way for

them to actively represent their sector in the affairs of local government and the country as a whole. It is necessary to study the experience of these elected young leaders, especially their participation/non-participation in corruption, which deserves academic attention, because this is based on the author's research on the corruption literature in the Philippines (Madlangbayan, 2008; Aban, 2009; Laut et al., 2012). The participation of youth in local governance is to check whether these young leaders have absorbed the ideals of clean government, or whether it is a good starting point like traditional political leaders to participate in corruption; they also follow the same path. The 2015 "SK Reform Law" is not perfect, and there are exploitable loopholes that have not yet been clarified it is necessary to resolve what needs to be done to make the "SK Reform Law" more precise and effective for young people.

Therefore, the purpose of this research is to determine whether the SK officials of Cabanatuan City comply with the 2015 SK Reform Law.

The study, therefore, posed the following problems, to wit:

1. How may the socio-demographic profile of the respondents be described in terms of:

- 1.1 Age;
- 1.2 Sex;
- 1.3 Civil Status; and
- 1.4 Educational Attainment?

2. How may the observance of the SK Reform Law of 2015 be described in terms of:

- 2.1 SK History;
- 2.2 Duties and Functions; and
- 2.3 Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials?

3. Is there a significant relationship between the socio-demographic profile of the respondents and the Observance of the SK Reform Law of 2015?

4. What recommendation may be offered based on the findings of the study?

### 1.1. Theoretical Framework

Compliance theory should account for regulatees' empirical tendency to pursue several, varied aims. According to empirical research, compliance and

noncompliance are driven by pecuniary, emotional, and normative motivations (Tyler, 2006). Compliance and disobedience are complicated behaviors with many causes that are hard to link. Regulators may be requested to comply with non-legal expectations, making it more inclusive than mere conformity with the law (Thaler & Sunstein, 2009).

## 2. Methodology

Descriptive or survey research was used. Auberbach and Silverstein (2003) said descriptive research describes, explains, and interprets current conditions. A descriptive study examines a local phenomenon. Descriptive research examines conditions, practices, structures, differences, interactions, options, processes, and trends. According to Given (2007), descriptive research describes a social context, group, community, scenario, or another phenomenon in depth. This research focuses on the facts that best characterize a current or former event to present a complete and accurate picture. The weighted mean and verbal interpretation of SK History, Duties and Functions, and Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials of the following respondents were 3.25–4.00 (Highly Aware/Strongly Agree), 2.50–3.24 (Aware/Agree), 1.75–2.49 (Slightly Aware/Disagree), and 1.00–1.74 (Unaware/Strongly Disagree). Spearman correlation was used to determine if respondents' profiles in SK History, Duties and Functions, and Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials were related.

### 2.1. Sampling Procedure

This study used purposive sampling to recruit population-representative subjects. The researcher analyzed socioeconomic level, intellect, education, and other elements that may affect the population. Then the researcher chooses a sample that accurately represents the target population on these variables.

The researcher selects the sample in purposive sampling. Purposive sampling seeks a sample that meets research goals. Expert knowledge about the target population is used to non-randomly choose a cross-sectional purposive sample (Henry, 1990). Internal Consistency Reliability determined instrument reliability. Ten Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) Chairpersons were utilized to test instrument reliability. The instrument's reliability was confirmed by a significant Cronbach's alpha. Cronbach's alpha coefficient aggregates all correlations

between scale values to determine reliability. Higher numbers indicate greater reliability. The instrument has good internal validity and reliability if it is over 0.70.

## 2.2. Respondents

The researcher employed a survey approach to determine the association between socio-demographics and the SK Reform Law of 2015 observed by SK Officials in Cabanatuan City. A random sample of participants completes a survey, test, or questionnaire about the variables of interest in the Survey Method. Random sampling is essential for survey generalizability (Cherry, 2018)

### 2.2.1 Research Site

This study was conducted in Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija, Philippines, the largest city in Nueva Ecija. It is the "Tricycle Capital of the Philippines" with its 30,000 registered tricycles and "Gateway to the North" for Nueva Ecija and nearby provinces like Aurora and Bulacan. It was chosen as a research site because of its accessibility and to examine Sangguniang Kabataan's awareness of their commitments.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1. SK Chairpersons' Awareness of the History of Sangguniang Kabataan

It is essential for public servants to have a thorough understanding of the history of the Sangguniang Kabataan in order to carry out their responsibilities and to be guided by previous initiatives, provisions, and experiences in the implementation of policies, programs, and activities.

**Table 1. SK Chairpersons’ awareness of Sangguniang Kabataan History**

History	Highly aware		Aware		Slightly aware		Unaware		Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Kabataang Barangay started/established in 1975.	12	13.5	68	76.4	5	5.6	4	4.5	2.58	Aware
P.D. 1191 or the Pambansang Katipunan ng Kabataang Barangay ng Pilipinas was signed by President Marcos in 1977.	5	5.6	61	68.5	22	24.7	1	1.1	2.79	Aware
There was a Presidential Council for Youth Affairs in 1987 wherein there was 1 Chairman and 4 members.	5	5.6	58	65.2	20	22.5	6	6.7	2.58	Aware
There is a part of Sangguniang Kabataan on the Local Government Code of 1991.	16	18	52	58.4	14	15.7	7	7.9	2.87	Aware
Issues in Sangguniang Kabataan are nepotism, dynasty, corruption, and capability.	10	11.2	55	61.8	22	24.7	2	2.2	2.82	Aware
The National Youth Commission was created through R.A. 8044.	12	13.5	54	60.7	20	22.5	3	3.4	2.84	Aware
SK Elections were postponed in 2002.	13	14.6	59	66.3	17	19.1	0	0	2.96	Aware
Task Force Youth Development was created in 2013 to substitute SK.	12	13.5	59	66.3	15	16.9	3	3.4	2.90	Aware
R.A. 10742 or the SK Reform Law of 2015 is the latest law that reformed SK.	20	22.5	59	66.3	7	7.9	3	3.4	3.08	Aware
R.A. 10742 there are 5 Key reforms.	21	23.6	48	53.9	15	16.9	5	5.6	2.96	Aware
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>									<b>2.838</b>	<b>Aware</b>

According to the table above, the SK Chairpersons are *aware* of the History of the Sangguniang Kabataan Reform Law of 2015, with an average weighted mean of 2.838.

*3.2. Assessment of SK Chairpersons’ Observance of their Duties and Functions as enshrined in the SK Reform Law of 2015*

The study assessed the SK Chairpersons’ observance of their duties and functions as enshrined in the SK Reform Law of 2015. The areas mentioned are indicated in Table 2.

**Table 2. Chairpersons’ Observance of Their Duties and Responsibilities**

Duties and Functions	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Formulate a 3-year plan known as the Comprehensive Barangay Youth Development Plan.	19	21.3	57	64.0	9	10.1	4	4.5	3.02	Agree
Approval of the annual budget.	18	20.2	55	61.8	11	12.4	5	5.6	2.97	Agree
Promulgate resolutions necessary to carry out the objectives of the youth in the barangay.	18	20.2	52	58.4	13	14.6	6	6.7	2.92	Agree
Hold fund-raising activities which are in line with the Comprehensive Barangay Youth Development Plan.	24	27.0	51	57.3	9	10.1	5	5.6	2.49	Agree
Create regular and special committees from the Katipunan ng Kabataan.	20	22.5	55	61.8	13	14.6	1	1.1	3.06	Agree
Adopt and implement a policy on full public disclosure of all its transactions and documents involving public interest.	22	24.7	50	56.2	14	15.7	3	3.4	3.02	Agree
SK Chairperson is the one who calls and presides over meetings of the SK.	18	20.2	55	61.8	13	14.6	3	3.4	2.99	Agree
Implementation of policies, programs, and projects.	18	20.2	54	60.7	14	15.7	3	3.4	2.98	Agree
SK Chairperson is the one who exercises general supervision over the affairs and activities of the SK and its members.	19	21.3	54	60.7	14	15.7	2	2.2	3.01	Agree
Sangguniang Kabataan coordinates with the Sangguniang Barangay and other youth organizations.	12	13.5	61	68.5	6	6.7	10	11.2	2.84	Agree
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>									<b>2.93</b>	<b>AGREE</b>

Based on the table above, the SK Chairpersons generally agree, with an average weighted mean of 2.93, that they are knowledgeable about their Duties and functions. Creating regular and special committees from the Katipunan ng Kabataan has the greatest weighted mean of 3.06 while Hold Fundraising activities which are in line with the Comprehensive Barangay Youth Development Plan has the lowest weighted mean of 2.49.

*3.3. Assessment of SK Chairpersons’ Observance of the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials*



**Table 3. SK Chairpersons’ Observance of the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials**

Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Always uphold the public interest over personal interest.	14	15.7	61	68.5	9	10.1	5	5.6	2.94	Agree
Perform and discharge our duties with the highest degree of excellence, professionalism, intelligence, and skill.	19	21.3	52	58.4	15	16.9	3	3.4	2.65	Agree
Remain true to the people at all times.	20	22.5	49	55.1	18	20.2	2	2.2	2.98	Agree
Act with justness and sincerity and do not discriminate against anyone.	23	25.8	53	59.6	11	12.4	2	2.2	3.09	Agree
Provide service to everyone without unfair discrimination regardless of party affiliation or preference.	16	18.0	53	59.6	15	16.9	4	4.5	3.06	Agree
Extend prompt, courteous, and adequate service to the public.	16	18.0	56	62.9	16	18.0	1	1.1	2.98	Agree
Always be loyal to the Republic and to the Filipino people.	22	24.7	48	53.9	18	20.2	1	1.1	3.02	Agree
Promote the use of locally produced goods, resources, and technology and encourage appreciation and pride of country and people.	17	19.1	59	66.3	9	10.1	4	4.5	3.0	Agree
Commit ourselves to the democratic way of life and values. Maintain the principle of public accountability.	17	19.1	55	61.8	12	13.5	5	5.6	2.94	Agree
Lead modest lives appropriate to your positions and income.	20	22.5	55	61.8	12	13.5	2	2.2	3.04	Agree
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>									<b>2.97</b>	<b>AGREE</b>

The SK Chairpersons from Cabanatuan City largely agree that they observe the offered Statements, with an Average Weighted Mean of 2.97. To serve everyone without unfair discrimination regardless of party affiliation or preference has the highest weighted mean (3.06), while to perform and discharge duties with the highest degree of excellence, professionalism, intelligence, and skill has the lowest (2.65).

#### 4. Conclusion

The majority of the SK Chairpersons were single, college-educated men, according to the findings. Most of the SK Chairpersons in Cabanatuan City knew the general concepts of the SK Reform Law of 2015, indicating accountability and responsibility. Their awareness of an SK official's responsibility helps them participate and be accountable. According to the study, SK authorities need greater technical training on the Reform Law.

This will inspire them and other youth to join community development efforts. Officers may benefit also from barangay advisers.

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