



Teenagers' Level of Satisfaction, Participation, Accessibility, and Sangguniang Kabataan Initiatives' Inclusiveness and Effectiveness

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the perceptions of teenagers from different socioeconomic backgrounds in Malaybalay City regarding the effectiveness of the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) in delivering programs, leadership, and inclusive governance. Using a quantitative descriptive-comparative design, data were collected from 100 teenagers as respondents aged thirteen to eighteen in Barangay Casisang and Barangay San Jose through a structured survey focusing on satisfaction, participation, accessibility, and inclusiveness of SK initiatives.

Findings revealed that respondents were generally very satisfied with SK programs and leadership, recognizing the council's role in youth representation and opportunities for engagement. Participation and accessibility were rated as high, particularly in terms of communication and inclusivity, although actual attendance at SK events remained moderate due to barriers such as financial constraints and limited interest. The inclusiveness and effectiveness of SK programs were also perceived positively, especially in leadership training and youth involvement in policy discussions, though concerns emerged about fairness in resource allocation and responsiveness to the needs of underprivileged groups. Correlation results indicated significant positive relationships between satisfaction, participation, and perceptions of inclusiveness, with participation and accessibility emerging as stronger predictors of inclusive governance.

These findings highlight that while teenagers appreciate SK initiatives, equitable distribution of resources and removal of barriers to full participation remain pressing challenges. The study underscores the importance of strengthening youth empowerment by ensuring that SK governance equally addresses the needs of both privileged and underprivileged communities. The results may guide SK officials, barangay leaders, and policymakers in developing more responsive, inclusive, and equitable youth programs.

Keywords: Sangguniang Kabataan, youth governance, socioeconomic status, participation, inclusiveness

INTRODUCTION

The Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) serves as the institutional mechanism for youth participation in local governance in the Philippines. Established to provide adolescents with formal representation at the barangay level, the SK is mandated to design programs, allocate funds, and advocate for youth-centered initiatives. Its structure is intended to cultivate leadership development, civic awareness, and inclusive governance among young constituents. Through this framework, the SK is positioned as both a training ground for future leaders and a platform for addressing the diverse needs of the youth sector.

Ideally, the SK promotes equitable program delivery and meaningful engagement by ensuring that young people are actively involved in planning, decision-making, and implementation processes. It is expected to create accessible opportunities regardless of gender, socioeconomic background, or educational attainment. However, despite reforms such as the SK Reform Act, concerns persist regarding the actual inclusiveness and effectiveness of SK initiatives. Questions remain as to whether programs genuinely reach marginalized youth or whether structural inequalities continue to influence participation patterns.



Socioeconomic status plays a critical role in shaping civic engagement and governance experiences. Adolescents from economically advantaged households often have greater access to information, digital platforms, transportation, and support systems that facilitate participation in community activities. In contrast, youth from lower-income backgrounds may encounter barriers such as financial constraints, limited access to communication channels, or competing responsibilities within the household. These disparities may affect how teenagers perceive and engage with SK initiatives.

Differences in socioeconomic background can therefore influence levels of satisfaction, participation, and perceptions of fairness in governance. Youth who frequently access SK programs and feel represented may develop stronger trust in leadership, while those who experience barriers may perceive governance as less inclusive. Resource allocation, transparency in budgeting, and outreach strategies further contribute to shaping perceptions of equity and effectiveness within youth governance structures.

Understanding these dynamics is essential in evaluating whether the SK fulfills its mandate of inclusive representation. If participation is uneven or satisfaction varies significantly across socioeconomic groups, then inclusiveness may be more symbolic than substantive. Conversely, if teenagers across income levels report positive engagement experiences, this may indicate that SK initiatives are successfully bridging socioeconomic divides within the community.

This study therefore examines teenagers' levels of satisfaction with SK programs and leadership, their participation and accessibility experiences, and their perceptions of inclusiveness and effectiveness in Malaybalay City. By focusing on selected barangays with varied socioeconomic compositions, the research aims to provide empirical evidence on how youth from different income backgrounds evaluate SK performance.

Specifically, the study investigates whether satisfaction and participation significantly influence perceived inclusiveness of SK governance. By analyzing these relationships, the research seeks to determine whether active engagement and positive leadership evaluation contribute to stronger perceptions of fairness and responsiveness. The findings aim to inform improvements in youth governance practices and strengthen inclusive policymaking at the barangay level.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded in Social Capital Theory (Putnam, 2000) and Participatory Youth Empowerment Theory (Jennings et al., 2006), which collectively explain how youth engagement influences perceptions of governance effectiveness. Social Capital Theory posits that networks, trust, and access to social resources enhance civic participation, suggesting that teenagers from higher socioeconomic backgrounds may have greater exposure and opportunity to engage in Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) initiatives. Meanwhile, Participatory Youth Empowerment Theory emphasizes that meaningful involvement in decision-making processes strengthens leadership development, civic identity, and a sense of belonging. Within the SK context, accessibility and participation are therefore expected to shape teenagers' perceptions of inclusiveness and governance effectiveness.

The framework is further supported by Adams's (1965) Equity Theory, which highlights the role of perceived fairness in shaping satisfaction and engagement. According to this theory, individuals evaluate institutions based on whether resources and opportunities are distributed equitably relative to others. Applied to SK governance, teenagers' satisfaction and participation may depend on whether programs and resources are perceived as fairly allocated across socioeconomic groups. When fairness and access are evident, perceptions of inclusiveness and effectiveness are strengthened; when inequity is perceived, trust and engagement may decline. Together, these theories provide a comprehensive lens for examining how socioeconomic conditions, satisfaction, and participation influence perceived inclusiveness of SK initiatives.

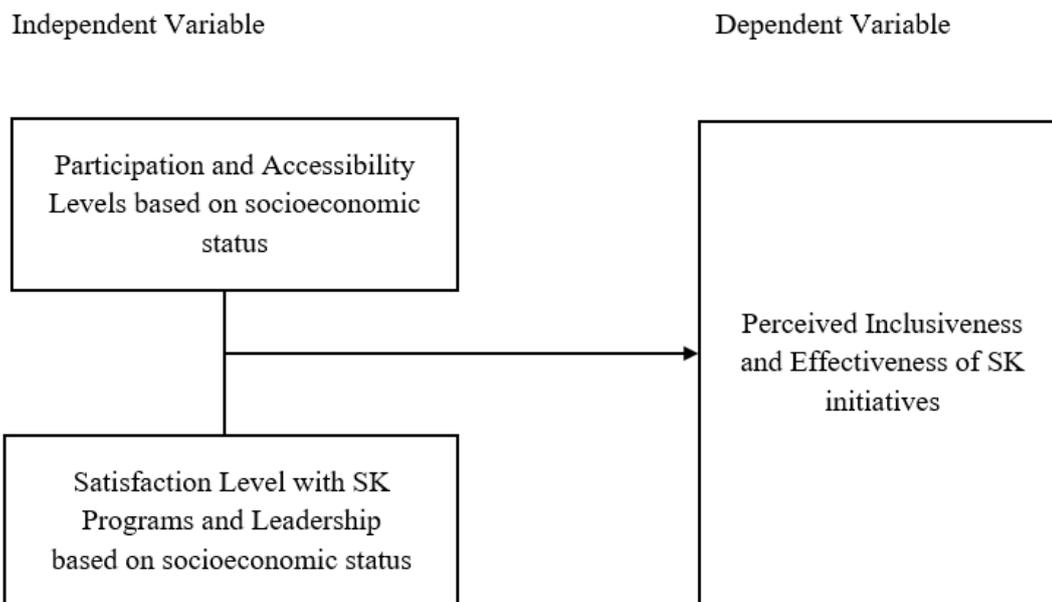


Figure 1. Schematic Diagram of the Study

Scope

This study is limited to examining the perceptions of teenagers aged 13 to 18 years old residing in Barangay Casisang and Barangay San Jose in Malaybalay City regarding Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) programs and leadership. It specifically measures their levels of satisfaction, participation, accessibility, and perceived inclusiveness and effectiveness of SK initiatives in relation to their socioeconomic background. The research employs a quantitative approach using self-reported survey data and does not extend to other barangays, broader political or administrative analyses, or qualitative perspectives.

The relatively small and localized sample, together with the use of purposive sampling, restricts the generalizability of the findings beyond the selected respondents and limits broader applicability to other communities or local government contexts. While socioeconomic background is central to the conceptual framework, it was not subjected to comparative inferential statistical testing across income groups; thus, potential differences among socioeconomic strata were not empirically established. In addition, reliance on self-reported data may introduce response bias, and the correlational design precludes causal conclusions, as the results describe associations rather than definitive cause-and-effect relationships.

Nevertheless, the focused scope of the study allows for a context-specific and in-depth examination of youth governance within selected barangays, generating insights grounded in local socioeconomic realities. The balanced demographic representation across age, gender, and income categories enhances the internal validity of the findings within the defined locale. Moreover, the strong reliability of the instrument (Cronbach's $\alpha = .891$) supports the consistency and credibility of the measured constructs.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Youth participation in governance has long been recognized as a cornerstone of democratic development, particularly in contexts where institutional mechanisms are designed to amplify young people's voices. In the Philippines, the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) was institutionalized to provide adolescents with formal representation in local governance structures. Studies have shown that youth councils can enhance leadership skills, civic awareness, and community engagement when properly implemented (Gonzales, 2019; Flores et al., 2021). However, empirical evidence also indicates variability in the effectiveness of SK programs, with participation levels often influenced by structural, political, and socioeconomic factors (David, 2021). These findings suggest that while SK holds strong potential as a youth empowerment mechanism, its impact may differ across communities.

Socioeconomic status plays a significant role in shaping youth civic engagement and access to governance opportunities. Research consistently demonstrates that adolescents from higher-income households are more likely to participate in civic and leadership activities due to greater access to resources, information, and supportive networks (Reyes, 2018; Serrano, 2022). Conversely, youth from lower-income backgrounds may face barriers such as financial constraints, limited exposure to governance processes, and competing economic responsibilities. Ramiscal (2023) further argues that disparities in resource allocation at the barangay level can exacerbate inequalities in youth participation, leading to uneven access to SK programs and services. These findings highlight the importance of examining inclusiveness and fairness in youth governance structures.

Participation and accessibility are critical determinants of perceived governance effectiveness. Literature suggests that when youth are actively involved in program planning, policy discussions, and leadership training, they are more likely to perceive governance institutions as inclusive and responsive (Jennings et al., 2006; Rosales, 2023). Conversely, limited access or tokenistic participation may reduce satisfaction and weaken perceptions of legitimacy. Studies also emphasize the role of effective communication and outreach in increasing youth involvement, particularly through digital platforms and community-based engagement strategies (Hsu & Wang, 2017). Thus, participation is not merely attendance but encompasses meaningful involvement in decisionmaking processes.

Despite reforms such as the SK Reform Act (RA 10742), challenges remain in ensuring transparency, accountability, and equitable program implementation. Concerns regarding political influence, uneven fund distribution, and limited monitoring mechanisms continue to surface in youth governance research (Castillo et al., 2024; Domingono et al., 2019). However, emerging studies suggest that strengthening leadership training, implementing equity-based budgeting, and leveraging technology for transparency can enhance inclusiveness and effectiveness (Ladia & Pano, 2023). Overall, the literature underscores that satisfaction, participation, and perceptions of fairness are interconnected dimensions that shape how youth evaluate governance institutions such as the SK.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative descriptive–correlational design to examine teenagers' levels of satisfaction, participation, accessibility, and perceived inclusiveness and effectiveness of Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) initiatives in Malaybalay City. The descriptive component was used to determine the extent of satisfaction, participation, and inclusiveness as perceived by the respondents, while the correlational component assessed the significant relationships among these variables. The research was conducted in Barangay Casisang and Barangay San Jose, selected to represent contrasting socioeconomic conditions. A total of 100 teenagers aged 13 to 18 years old participated in the study using purposive sampling to ensure representation from different income groups.

Data were collected using a structured, validated questionnaire consisting of sections on demographic profile, satisfaction with SK programs and leadership, participation and accessibility, and perceived inclusiveness and effectiveness. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale with corresponding qualitative interpretations. The instrument underwent content validation and pilot testing, yielding a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.891, indicating strong internal consistency. Data were analyzed using frequency and percentage for demographic variables, mean and standard deviation for levels of perception, and Pearson product-moment correlation to determine the significance of relationships among satisfaction, participation, accessibility, and perceived inclusiveness, with the level of significance set at $\alpha = .05$. Ethical standards were strictly observed, including informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Furthermore, the study explicitly recognizes its methodological limitations, particularly those concerning sampling strategy, reliance on self-reported measures, and the correlational design, to promote transparency and guide cautious interpretation of the findings.

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the study, focusing on the demographic characteristics of the respondents and their perceptions of the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) programs and leadership in selected barangays of Malaybalay City. It discusses the levels of satisfaction, participation, accessibility, and perceived inclusiveness

and effectiveness of SK initiatives, as well as the statistical relationships among these variables. The results are organized according to the research questions and are analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical measures to provide a clear understanding of how teenagers from different socioeconomic backgrounds evaluate SK governance.

Table 1 Demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age.

Age	Frequency	Percent
13 – 15 Years Old	52	52.0
16 – 18 Years Old	48	48.0
Total	100	100.0

Table 1 presents the demographic distribution of respondents according to age. Out of the 100 teenagers surveyed, 52 (52.0%) are between 13–15 years old, while 48 (48.0%) fall within the 16–18 years old bracket. This distribution reflects a nearly equal representation of early and late adolescents, ensuring that both younger and older teenage perspectives are proportionately included in the study. Such balance minimizes age-related bias and allows for a more comprehensive understanding of youth perceptions toward Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) initiatives.

The inclusion of respondents from both developmental stages is particularly important, as early adolescents may differ from older teenagers in terms of civic awareness, leadership exposure, and engagement opportunities. Younger adolescents may still be forming their understanding of governance structures, while older teenagers are more likely to have experienced direct participation in SK programs and activities. By capturing responses from both groups, the study accounts for variations in maturity, social responsibility, and level of involvement in community affairs.

This balanced age composition strengthens the internal validity of the findings by ensuring that conclusions are not disproportionately influenced by a single age cohort. It allows for meaningful comparisons across developmental stages and enhances the reliability of the overall assessment of satisfaction, participation, and perceived inclusiveness. Consequently, the age distribution supports a more nuanced and representative evaluation of SK initiatives within the selected barangays.

Table 2 Demographic profile of the respondents in terms of gender.

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	54	54.0
Female	46	46.0
Total	100	100.0

Table 2 presents the demographic distribution of respondents in terms of gender. Out of the 100 teenagers surveyed, 54 (54.0%) are male and 46 (46.0%) are female, indicating a slightly higher proportion of male participants. Although males comprise a marginal majority, the difference is minimal, resulting in a relatively balanced gender composition within the sample. This distribution ensures that both male and female voices are proportionately represented in the evaluation of Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) initiatives.

Gender representation is an important consideration in youth governance studies, as experiences of participation, access, and satisfaction may vary across male and female adolescents. Differences in social expectations, leadership exposure, and community engagement opportunities can influence how teenagers perceive governance structures. By including both genders in nearly equal proportions, the study reduces the likelihood of gender bias and enhances the comprehensiveness of the findings.

The near-equal gender distribution strengthens the inclusiveness and credibility of the study’s conclusions. It allows for a more balanced assessment of satisfaction, participation, accessibility, and perceived inclusiveness of SK initiatives across gender groups. Consequently, the findings may be interpreted as reflective of broader youth perspectives within the selected barangays rather than being skewed toward a single gender category.

Table 3 Demographic profile of the respondents in terms of household income.

Household Income	Frequency	Percent
Less Than ₱13,873	26	26.0
₱13,873 – ₱27,746	38	38.0
₱27,746 – ₱55,492	15	15.0
₱55,492 – ₱97,111	15	15.0
₱97,111 to ₱166,476	3	3.0
₱166,476 to ₱277,460	2	2.0
₱277,460 and above	1	1.0
Total	100	100.0

Table 3 presents the demographic distribution of respondents according to household income. The data reveal that the largest proportion of participants belongs to the ₱13,873–₱27,746 income bracket, comprising 38% of the sample, followed by 26% earning less than ₱13,873. This indicates that more than half of the respondents come from households within the low-income category. Middle-income groups, specifically those earning ₱27,746–₱55,492 and ₱55,492–₱97,111, each account for 15% of respondents. In contrast, only a small fraction belongs to higher-income brackets, with 3% earning ₱97,111–₱166,476, 2% earning ₱166,476– ₱277,460, and 1% earning ₱277,460 and above.

The distribution clearly demonstrates that the sample is predominantly composed of teenagers from low to lower-middle income households. This socioeconomic composition is particularly significant, as financial capacity often influences access to civic opportunities, exposure to leadership programs, and participation in community activities. Youth from economically constrained households may experience limitations such as restricted mobility, reduced access to digital platforms, or competing responsibilities that could affect their engagement in Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) initiatives.

Given this profile, the study provides a meaningful basis for examining how socioeconomic status shapes satisfaction, participation, accessibility, and perceptions of inclusiveness in youth governance. The strong representation of lower-income groups ensures that the perspectives of economically vulnerable youth are adequately captured. Consequently, the findings offer valuable insights into whether SK initiatives effectively address the needs of teenagers across varying income levels and whether governance practices are perceived as equitable and inclusive within resource-diverse communities.

Table 4 Level of satisfaction of teenagers from different socioeconomic backgrounds with SK programs and leadership.

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
The SK effectively represents the youth in governance.	4.00	0.853	Very Satisfied
The SK provides opportunities for youth engagement and participation.	3.79	0.946	Very Satisfied
The SK implements programs that address the needs of teenagers in my barangay.	3.77	0.920	Very Satisfied

I am satisfied with the leadership skills of our SK officials.	3.73	0.839	Very Satisfied
The SK activities contribute to the overall wellbeing of teenagers in the community.	3.68	1.014	Very Satisfied
Overall	3.79	0.681	Very Satisfied

Table 4 presents the level of satisfaction of teenagers from different socioeconomic backgrounds with SK programs and leadership. The overall mean of 3.79 (SD = 0.681) indicates that respondents are very satisfied with the initiatives of the Sangguniang Kabataan. This result suggests a generally favorable evaluation of SK governance among youth participants, reflecting confidence in the council’s role within their respective barangays. The relatively low standard deviation further indicates consistency in responses, implying that satisfaction is widely shared across the sample.

Among the specific indicators, the highest-rated item reveals that teenagers perceive the SK as effectively representing the youth in governance (M = 4.00, SD = 0.853). This implies that respondents recognize the SK as a legitimate platform for youth voice and advocacy. Other indicators, including the provision of opportunities for youth engagement (M = 3.79, SD = 0.946) and the implementation of programs addressing teenagers’ needs (M = 3.77, SD = 0.920), were likewise rated very satisfied. Satisfaction with the leadership skills of SK officials and the contribution of SK activities to teenagers’ well-being further reinforce the perception that SK programs are relevant and beneficial to the youth population.

These findings suggest that teenagers, regardless of socioeconomic background, generally hold positive perceptions of SK performance and leadership effectiveness. The consistent “very satisfied” ratings across all indicators indicate that SK initiatives are viewed as responsive and supportive of youth development. However, while satisfaction levels are high, continuous improvement in program delivery and equitable resource allocation remains essential to sustain and further strengthen youth trust in local governance structures.

Table 5 Level of participation and accessibility of SK initiatives.

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
The SK effectively informs the youth about upcoming events and opportunities.	3.80	1.044	High Level of Participation
SK programs and activities are accessible to all youth regardless of socioeconomic background.	3.75	0.968	High Level of Participation
The SK provides sufficient opportunities for youth from all socioeconomic classes to engage in community activities.	3.54	1.009	High Level of Participation
There are barriers that prevent youth from actively participating in SK programs.	3.38	1.062	Moderate Level of Participation
I have attended SK events or programs in the past year.	3.06	1.377	Moderate Level of Participation
Overall	3.51	0.736	High Level of Participation

Table 5 presents the level of participation and accessibility of SK initiatives among teenagers. The overall mean of 3.51 (SD = 0.736) indicates a high level of participation, suggesting that respondents generally perceive SK activities as accessible and open to youth involvement. This implies that the council’s efforts in outreach and engagement are recognized by teenagers across different socioeconomic backgrounds. The moderate standard deviation further indicates a reasonable level of consistency in how participation and accessibility are perceived among respondents.

Specifically, respondents agreed that the SK effectively informs youth about upcoming events and opportunities ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 1.044$), highlighting the effectiveness of communication channels used by the council. They also perceived that SK programs are accessible regardless of socioeconomic background ($M =$

3.75 , $SD = 0.968$) and that sufficient opportunities are provided for youth engagement. These results reflect a positive evaluation of inclusivity in program promotion and planning, suggesting that structural mechanisms for outreach are in place and functioning.

However, moderate ratings were observed regarding the presence of barriers to participation ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 1.062$) and actual attendance in SK activities within the past year ($M = 3.06$, $SD = 1.377$). This indicates that while programs are perceived as accessible, practical constraints—such as financial limitations, time conflicts, or varying levels of interest—may hinder consistent involvement. Therefore, although communication and perceived accessibility are strong, actual participation levels may still be influenced by socioeconomic and logistical factors that require targeted interventions.

Table 6 Level of inclusiveness and effectiveness of SK initiatives in addressing the diverse needs of youth.

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
The SK provides leadership training and skillbuilding activities that are accessible to all youth.	3.93	0.946	High Level of inclusiveness and effectiveness
Overall, the SK is effective in addressing the diverse needs of the youth in my barangay.	3.89	0.994	High Level of inclusiveness and effectiveness
The SK actively engages teenagers in policy discussions and decision-making processes.	3.87	0.971	High Level of inclusiveness and effectiveness
The SK considers the needs of both privileged and underprivileged youth in its programs.	3.63	0.971	High Level of inclusiveness and effectiveness
The SK allocates resources fairly among different socioeconomic groups.	3.59	0.854	High Level of inclusiveness and effectiveness
Overall	3.78	0.702	High Level of inclusiveness and effectiveness

Table 6 presents the level of inclusiveness and effectiveness of SK initiatives in addressing the diverse needs of youth. The overall mean of 3.78 ($SD = 0.702$) indicates a high level of inclusiveness and effectiveness, suggesting that respondents generally perceive the Sangguniang Kabataan as responsive and accommodating to various youth concerns. The relatively moderate standard deviation reflects consistent perceptions among teenagers from different socioeconomic backgrounds, reinforcing the credibility of the findings.

The highest-rated indicator reveals that the SK provides accessible leadership training and skill-building activities ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 0.946$), highlighting the council's role in fostering youth development and empowerment. Respondents also rated highly the overall effectiveness of SK in addressing diverse youth needs and its active engagement of teenagers in policy discussions and decision-making processes. These findings suggest that the SK is viewed not only as a provider of programs but also as a platform that promotes participation in governance and leadership formation among young people.

Although resource allocation fairness ($M = 3.59$, $SD = 0.854$) received the lowest mean among the indicators, it still falls within the high interpretative range. This indicates that while inclusiveness is generally perceived positively, there may be lingering concerns regarding equitable distribution of resources across different socioeconomic groups. Therefore, while the SK is broadly regarded as inclusive and effective, strengthening transparency and equity mechanisms may further enhance trust and reinforce perceptions of fairness in youth governance initiatives.

Table 7 Test of significant relationship between the level of satisfaction of teenagers from different socioeconomic backgrounds with SK programs and leadership, and the level of level of participation and accessibility of SK initiatives toward the perceived inclusiveness of Sangguniang Kabataan initiatives.

Variable	r	p-value	Interpretation
Level of satisfaction of teenagers from different socioeconomic backgrounds with SK programs and leadership	.596	.000	Significant
Level of participation and accessibility of SK initiatives	.683	.000	Significant

Table 7 presents the test of the significant relationship between teenagers' satisfaction, participation and accessibility, and their perceived inclusiveness of Sangguniang Kabataan initiatives. The results reveal a statistically significant positive relationship between satisfaction and perceived inclusiveness ($r = .596$, $p = .000$), indicating a moderate to strong association. This suggests that teenagers who report higher levels of satisfaction with SK programs and leadership are more likely to perceive the initiatives as inclusive and effective in addressing diverse youth needs.

Furthermore, participation and accessibility demonstrate an even stronger significant positive relationship with perceived inclusiveness ($r = .683$, $p = .000$). This indicates that active involvement and access to SK programs have a substantial influence on how teenagers evaluate the fairness and responsiveness of youth governance. In practical terms, when young people feel informed, able to participate, and provided with opportunities to engage, they are more inclined to view SK initiatives as inclusive and equitable.

These findings underscore that while satisfaction with leadership and programs is important, participation and accessibility serve as stronger predictors of perceived inclusiveness. Meaningful engagement appears to play a critical role in shaping positive governance perceptions. Therefore, strengthening participatory mechanisms and reducing barriers to access may significantly enhance teenagers' trust in and evaluation of SK effectiveness and inclusiveness.

The findings across Tables 4, 5, and 6 collectively indicate that teenagers from different socioeconomic backgrounds generally hold favorable perceptions of Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) initiatives in terms of satisfaction, participation, accessibility, inclusiveness, and effectiveness. The "very satisfied" rating in Table 4 suggests strong approval of SK leadership, representation, and program implementation. Adolescents perceive the SK as a legitimate institutional platform for youth voice and governance, consistent with the mandate of the SK Reform Act (Republic Act No. 10742), which institutionalizes youth participation in local policymaking. This favorable evaluation reflects emerging institutional trust, aligning with Social Capital Theory's assertion that participatory networks and perceived responsiveness strengthen civic legitimacy (Putnam, 2000). Within the selected barangays, SK initiatives appear to meet foundational expectations of youth representation as envisioned under the Local Government Code (Republic Act No. 7160).

However, while satisfaction levels are notably high, Table 5 reveals a more nuanced participation landscape. Although overall participation and accessibility are rated positively, moderate scores in actual attendance and perceived barriers indicate that engagement is not uniformly experienced across all youth. This discrepancy suggests that formal accessibility does not automatically translate into sustained involvement. Structural and socioeconomic constraints—such as time limitations, financial barriers, and competing responsibilities—may limit practical participation, particularly among economically disadvantaged youth. This distinction reflects broader scholarship on youth civic engagement, which emphasizes that meaningful participation requires not only institutional openness but also removal of structural barriers (Jennings et al., 2006). Thus, theoretical access must be distinguished from substantive engagement.

Table 6 further reinforces generally positive perceptions of SK inclusiveness and effectiveness, particularly in leadership development and youth involvement in decision-making processes. These findings support participatory governance principles that view youth engagement as both developmental and democratic (Jennings et al., 2006). Nevertheless, the comparatively lower mean rating for fairness in resource allocation

suggests subtle equity concerns. While still interpreted as high, this indicator signals the importance of monitoring distributive justice in program implementation. Equity Theory (Adams, 1965) posits that perceptions of fairness significantly influence satisfaction and continued engagement; thus, even marginal disparities in perceived resource distribution may affect long-term institutional trust, especially in socioeconomically diverse communities.

The correlational findings in Table 7 provide empirical confirmation of the interconnectedness of satisfaction, participation/accessibility, and perceived inclusiveness. Both satisfaction ($r = .596$) and participation/accessibility ($r = .683$) demonstrate statistically significant positive relationships with perceived inclusiveness, with participation emerging as the stronger predictor. This suggests that while favorable evaluations of leadership are important, direct engagement and access to programs exert greater influence on how youth assess inclusiveness and effectiveness. Participation, therefore, appears to function as the central mechanism through which governance legitimacy is constructed at the barangay level. These findings align with evidence from national youth governance studies indicating that active civic involvement strengthens perceptions of responsiveness and accountability (Castillo et al., 2024).

The overall results indicate that SK governance within the selected barangays is viewed positively; however, participation depth and perceived equity remain critical areas for institutional refinement. Moderate attendance levels and reported participation barriers suggest that socioeconomic conditions may still shape engagement patterns. Given that a substantial proportion of Filipino youth belong to lower-income households (Philippine Statistics Authority [PSA], 2023), governance mechanisms must intentionally address structural inequalities to sustain inclusiveness.

Considering the findings, policy implications should extend beyond general affirmations of youth engagement and instead prioritize structured, equity-oriented governance mechanisms. Barangay and SK officials may institutionalize data-driven monitoring systems that disaggregate participation trends by socioeconomic category to identify disparities in access. Participatory budgeting forums and transparent reporting of SK fund allocation—consistent with the accountability principles embedded in RA 10742—can enhance perceptions of distributive fairness. Furthermore, targeted outreach strategies such as transportation assistance, flexible scheduling, digital engagement platforms, and localized awareness campaigns may mitigate structural barriers that inhibit actual participation despite perceived accessibility. By grounding policy adjustments in empirical evidence and statutory mandates, SK governance can transition from broad claims of inclusiveness toward measurable, equity-driven youth empowerment outcomes. Such alignment strengthens institutional legitimacy, reinforces civic trust, and advances the standards of participatory local governance envisioned in Philippine public administration frameworks.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the study reveal that teenagers from different socioeconomic backgrounds generally perceive the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) programs and leadership positively. Respondents expressed very high satisfaction with SK representation, leadership, and program implementation, indicating that youth governance initiatives are viewed as responsive and beneficial within the selected barangays. Participation and accessibility were also rated at a high level, suggesting that communication mechanisms and engagement opportunities are present and functional. Furthermore, inclusiveness and effectiveness of SK initiatives were perceived positively, reflecting general trust in the SK's ability to address diverse youth needs.

The study further establishes that both satisfaction and participation/accessibility have statistically significant positive relationships with perceived inclusiveness of SK initiatives. Notably, participation and accessibility demonstrated a stronger correlation with inclusiveness than satisfaction. This indicates that while favorable perceptions of leadership are important, actual involvement and access to SK programs play a more influential role in shaping how teenagers evaluate inclusiveness and fairness in governance. Meaningful engagement therefore emerges as a critical determinant of perceived effectiveness.

Despite the overall positive findings, certain indicators suggest areas for improvement. Moderate ratings in event attendance and perceived barriers to participation imply that structural or socioeconomic factors may still limit full engagement among some youth groups. Additionally, although resource allocation fairness was rated high,



it obtained comparatively lower mean scores than other indicators, signaling the need for stronger transparency and equity measures in program implementation.

In light of these findings, it is recommended that SK officials strengthen outreach strategies to ensure broader and more consistent youth participation, particularly among underrepresented and economically disadvantaged groups. Programs should be scheduled and structured in ways that reduce participation barriers, such as transportation limitations or conflicting responsibilities. Additionally, transparency mechanisms in budgeting and resource allocation should be enhanced to reinforce perceptions of fairness and inclusiveness.

Finally, SK leadership should institutionalize participatory decision-making processes that allow teenagers to contribute actively to policy discussions and program planning. Leadership training programs may further emphasize equity-focused governance and inclusive leadership practices. Future research may expand the scope to additional barangays, incorporate qualitative methods for deeper insights, or explore longitudinal designs to examine how sustained participation influences perceptions of governance effectiveness over time.

To strengthen the analytical rigor of subsequent investigations, future studies should broaden the sampling frame and employ probability-based techniques where feasible. Additionally, conducting inferential comparisons across socioeconomic strata would provide clearer empirical evidence regarding income-based disparities in youth governance perceptions.

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