

Echoes of Youth Governance: Grounded Theory of Political Expectations among Sultan Kudarat Sangguniang Kabataan Officials

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ABSTRACT

Political expectations shape how young leaders understand, perform, and sustain their roles in local governance. In the context of the Sangguniang Kabataan, these expectations are significant because youth officials serve as both community representatives and emerging political actors whose early governance experiences may shape their understanding of public service. Utilizing Constructivist Grounded Theory methodology, data were generated through in-depth interviews with six Sangguniang Kabataan Municipality Federation officials in Sultan Kudarat. Data analysis involved iterative coding, constant comparison, and memo writing to conceptualize emerging categories grounded in participants' lived experiences. The analysis yielded a substantive theory of negotiated political expectations in youth governance, characterized by three main themes: formation of expectations, interpretation of leadership meanings, and recalibration under governance reality. The core process describes how political expectations begin from prior leadership experiences, social influences, institutional awareness, and personal motivations; are interpreted through service, accountability, opportunity, ethics, and practical realism and are negotiated through consultation, adaptation, compliance, assertion, and emotional coping. This study contributes to youth governance and political science by providing a grounded framework explaining political expectations as cyclical, negotiated, and shaped by governance reality. The findings offer implications for strengthening youth leadership support, institutional responsiveness, and more realistic governance preparation.

Keywords: Political Expectations, Youth Governance, Sangguniang Kabataan, Sultan Kudarat, Constructivist Grounded Theory, Negotiated Expectations

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Youth governance plays a vital role in strengthening democratic participation, civic representation, and leadership formation, particularly in local communities where young people are expected to participate in decision-making and public service. In the Philippines, this role is institutionalized through the Sangguniang Kabataan, a formal youth governance body that grants young leaders' responsibilities in planning, program implementation, representation, and community engagement under the Local Government Code and the SK Reform Act (Republic Act No. 7160, 1991; Republic Act No. 10742, 2015). Within this national context, SK officials are not merely youth representatives but emerging political actors who experience governance as an early site of leadership, accountability, and public responsibility.

Scholarly work highlights that political expectations are shaped by several interrelated processes, including role interpretation, social interaction, learning, evaluation, and adjustment. Role Theory explains that individuals understand leadership through the responsibilities attached to their positions, while Symbolic Interactionism emphasizes that meanings are continuously constructed through interaction with others (Biddle, 1986; Blumer, 1969). Social Learning Theory further suggests that expectations are learned through observation, experience, and reinforcement, while Expectation–Disconfirmation Theory and Relative Deprivation Theory explain how

individuals revise their expectations when actual experiences differ from what they initially anticipated (Bandura, 1977; Gurr, 1970; Oliver, 1980). These perspectives suggest that political expectations are not fixed duties simply imposed on young officials, but evolving meanings shaped by experience, interaction, and governance realities.

In the Philippine local governance context, youth leadership is complicated by bureaucratic procedures, resource limitations, institutional requirements, community expectations, and political dynamics. Philippine governance is often shaped by the interaction of formal institutional rules and informal socio-political practices, where public officials must respond not only to legal mandates but also to relational expectations, local power dynamics, and community demands (Brillantes & Fernandez, 2023; Pertierra, 2002). In the case of the Sangguniang Kabataan, officials operate under formal responsibilities provided by the SK Reform Act, yet their actual performance is shaped by issues of participation, accountability, resource access, and responsiveness within local governance (DILG, 2022; PIDS, 2023; UNICEF Philippines, 2022). Although the SK provides a formal space for youth participation, holding office does not automatically result in meaningful participation because young leaders must continuously navigate the realities embedded within local governance. Existing studies on youth governance commonly emphasize measurable outcomes such as participation rates, program implementation, and leadership effectiveness, but they give less attention to the internal processes through which SK officials construct, interpret, negotiate, and manage the expectations attached to their roles. This creates a knowledge gap because youth governance is often assessed based on visible performance while the lived process behind leadership decisions, adjustments, frustrations, and persistence remains underexplored.

In Sultan Kudarat, this gap becomes more significant because SK officials operate across diverse local settings with different administrative conditions, community dynamics, and socio-political environments. Local governance experiences are shaped by place-based conditions, since officials do not perform their roles in abstract institutions but within specific communities marked by varying resources, political relationships, and administrative capacities (Brillantes & Fernandez, 2022; World Bank, 2022). Provincial-level SK Federation officials are positioned within layered governance spaces where they represent youth interests, coordinate with local government units, participate in planning and decision-making, and respond to both institutional and community expectations. This makes Sultan Kudarat a meaningful site for the study because its selected municipalities and city provide a localized setting for examining how political expectations are formed, challenged, and negotiated in actual youth governance practice. The grounded theory is especially useful for studying processes within situated contexts (Charmaz 2014), making it appropriate for understanding how SK officials construct meaning from their lived experiences in Sultan Kudarat.

To address these gaps, the study employed a constructivist grounded theory approach to generate a grounded theory on the dynamics of political expectations among Sangguniang Kabataan officials in Sultan Kudarat.

Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to explore and develop an explanatory understanding of how Sangguniang Kabataan officials in Sultan Kudarat experienced, interpreted, negotiated, and managed political expectations, and how these expectations influenced their governance practices, leadership identity, decision-making, and engagement in youth politics.

Specifically, this study aimed to:

1. To explore the sources of political expectations experienced by Sangguniang Kabataan officials.
2. To examine how Sangguniang Kabataan officials interpret political expectations related to their governance roles.
3. To analyze the processes through which Sangguniang Kabataan officials negotiate, respond to, and manage political expectations in practice.
4. To explore how political expectations influence their role performance, leadership identity, and decision-making.
5. To generate a grounded theory model in participants lived experiences that illustrates the dynamics of political expectations in youth governance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews relevant literature and studies that provide context for the research.

Political Expectations as a Constructed Orientation

Political expectations are shaped by how citizens and leaders understand responsiveness, accountability, and public service in governance. Citizens' expectations of public services are influenced by political, organizational, economic, technological, and individual factors, showing that expectations are not fixed but shaped by wider governance conditions (Qin et al., 2025). Similarly, youth participation in Philippine governance is connected to expectations of transparency, accountability, inclusivity, and responsiveness among youth leaders (Castillo, 2024).

In the Sangguniang Kabataan context, SK participation and performance are often evaluated through local governance involvement, community responsiveness, and perceived effectiveness (Rey, 2023). Youth governance is also expected to move beyond sports-centered activities and contribute to broader youth development and nation-building (Palangdao, 2023). Moreover, youth constituents evaluate SK officials based on their perceived development contributions, showing that expectations toward young leaders are shaped by public perception and community needs (Mascara, 2024).

Recent literature suggests that political expectations in youth governance are constructed through formal responsibilities, public evaluation, responsiveness, and local community demands. However, these studies still focus more on participation, performance, and perceived contribution, with limited attention to how SK officials themselves interpret, negotiate, and manage these expectations in actual governance practice.

Early Leadership Exposure

Early leadership exposure is considered an important foundation in developing youth leadership skills, responsibility, and civic participation. Youth leadership programs help develop technical, human, and conceptual skills among young individuals, especially when they are exposed to structured leadership activities and guided practice (Zavala, 2023). Similarly, civic engagement experiences allow student leaders to strengthen their leadership abilities through community-based initiatives and direct participation (Buhain, 2024). Leadership exposure is also linked to community engagement because young leaders develop confidence, responsibility, and practical skills when they are given opportunities to lead and participate in collective activities (Tiernan et al., 2025). Overall, early leadership exposure serves as a formative experience that prepares young individuals to understand leadership as responsibility, service, and active involvement in governance.

Social Contexts

Social contexts are important in shaping youth leadership because young leaders develop their sense of responsibility through interaction with family, peers, mentors, and the community. Youth participation is strengthened when young people are supported by social networks and given opportunities to engage in community-based decision-making (PIDS, 2023). In the Sangguniang Kabataan context, youth leaders are often evaluated through their responsiveness, visibility, and ability to connect with their constituents (Rey, 2023). Social relationships also influence how young officials understand their roles, since leadership is shaped not only by formal duties but also by public expectations and community trust (Castillo, 2024). Social contexts help construct political expectations by making leadership a relational responsibility shaped by encouragement, feedback, recognition, and community demand.

Institutional Contexts

Institutional contexts refer to the formal rules, structures, and procedures that define how young leaders perform their governance roles. In the Sangguniang Kabataan, these contexts shape expectations through legal mandates, planning processes, budgeting requirements, documentation, and accountability mechanisms that guide official action (DILG, 2022).

Institutional support is also important because youth participation becomes more meaningful when young officials are given clear roles, resources, and access to decision-making spaces. Without these conditions, participation may become limited to compliance rather than genuine influence in governance (PIDS, 2023).

Individual Motivations

Individual motivations refer to the personal goals, values, and aspirations that influence how young leaders understand their governance roles. Youth leaders with stronger civic motivation are more likely to participate in community activities, pursue public service, and develop a sense of responsibility toward local issues (Castillo, 2024). In reality, youth participation is often affected by limited resources, weak institutional support, and public distrust toward youth leadership (PIDS, 2023). These conditions influence how young officials sustain motivation, especially when their desire to serve is challenged by governance limitations. Personal motivation also becomes relevant because SK officials are expected not only to implement programs but also to show commitment, responsiveness, and accountability to their constituents (DILG, 2022).

Service-oriented engagement

Service-oriented engagement emphasizes the commitment of young leaders to address community needs, represent youth concerns, and contribute to local development through active public service. Youth participation becomes meaningful when young people are involved in inclusive decision-making and are given opportunities to respond to local issues (PIDS, 2023). In the Sangguniang Kabataan context, service is commonly evaluated through responsiveness, program implementation, and visible engagement with constituents (Rey, 2023). Youth leaders are also expected to demonstrate accountability, inclusivity, and social connection in performing their roles (Castillo, 2024). Service-oriented engagement therefore strengthens youth governance by connecting leadership responsibility with public responsiveness and meaningful community participation.

Decision-oriented Responses

Decision-oriented responses emphasize the ability of young leaders to make practical choices, prioritize needs, and act on governance concerns despite limited resources or competing expectations. Effective youth participation depends on meaningful involvement in decision-making, where young people are not only consulted but are able to influence actions and outcomes (PIDS, 2023). However, decision-making in youth governance is often constrained by institutional procedures, resource limitations, and local political conditions, making leadership less direct and more dependent on negotiation (Castillo, 2024). In the Sangguniang Kabataan context, decision-oriented leadership becomes important because officials are expected to translate youth concerns into programs, policies, and responsive local initiatives (DILG, 2022). Therefore, decision-oriented responses support youth governance by connecting leadership judgment with practical action, prioritization, and accountability.

Structured Role

Structured role reflects how young leaders understand governance as a position shaped by formal duties, accountability, and institutional expectations. Role-based expectations guide officials to perform according to established responsibilities and standards attached to their positions (Biddle, 1986). Institutional rules further structure leadership by defining appropriate conduct through procedures, mandates, and organizational norms (March & Olsen, 1989). In youth governance, SK officials are expected to follow accountability, compliance, and performance requirements within established governance frameworks (DILG, 2022). Structured role therefore frames leadership as a formal responsibility where service must be carried out through duties, rules, and institutional discipline.

Developmental Context

Developmental context highlights youth governance as a space where young leaders develop confidence, skills, identity, and civic responsibility through actual participation. Youth involvement in governance strengthens

leadership formation when young people are given opportunities to engage in decision-making, community service, and public problem-solving (Checkoway, 2011). Active youth participation also builds empowerment by allowing young leaders to gain voice, responsibility, and influence in community affairs (Wong et al., 2010). In this sense, participation in youth governance becomes developmental because SK officials are not only expected to deliver programs, but also to mature as responsible, accountable, and community-oriented leaders (Castillo, 2024). Developmental context therefore frames youth leadership as both public service and personal-political formation.

Interactive Engagement

Interactive engagement enables young leaders to build community connection, gather youth concerns, and improve decision-making through consultation and dialogue (PIDS, 2023). Actively engaged youth officials are better able to respond to local needs because they align programs and actions with the expectations of their constituents (Rey, 2023). Participatory spaces that encourage consultation strengthen youth representation and promote more inclusive local governance (Castillo, 2024). This engagement supports responsiveness and accountability, making youth leadership more grounded in community participation and collective decision-making (DILG, 2022).

Adjustment and Adaptation

Adjustment and adaptation involve the ability of young leaders to modify plans, respond to constraints, and continue governance work despite changing conditions. Adaptive youth officials are better able to manage limited resources, procedural delays, and shifting community demands by revising strategies according to what is feasible (Castillo, 2024). Studies show that meaningful youth participation requires flexibility because local governance often involves institutional limitations and uneven access to support (PIDS, 2023). In youth governance, adjustment and adaptation strengthen leadership responsiveness by helping officials align their goals with actual conditions while sustaining public service and accountability (DILG, 2022).

Role Performance

Role performance incorporates duty fulfillment, program implementation, resource management, and responsiveness to community needs, making it central to effective youth governance. SK officials who perform their roles effectively are expected to translate plans into concrete programs while observing accountability and public responsibility (DILG, 2022). Strong role performance also depends on the ability to align leadership actions with institutional expectations and constituent needs, especially in local settings where youth participation must be both visible and meaningful (PIDS, 2023). This strengthens governance practice by ensuring that leadership is not only symbolic, but expressed through actual service delivery, responsible decision-making, and sustained community engagement.

Leadership identity formation

Leadership identity formation supports how young officials develop confidence, responsibility, and self-understanding as public leaders. SK officials who build a stronger leadership identity are more likely to see their role beyond position-holding and connect it with service, accountability, and community representation (Castillo, 2024). This identity helps youth leaders sustain motivation, respond to public expectations, and develop a clearer sense of purpose in governance (PIDS, 2023). It also enables them to navigate challenges with maturity and adapt their leadership style based on experience, strengthening their growth as emerging political actors.

Bureaucratic Processes as Structuring Conditions

Bureaucratic processes as structuring conditions shape how youth leaders plan, implement, and justify governance actions within formal rules and procedures. Bureaucracy organizes public administration through documentation, hierarchy, approval systems, and rule-based decision-making, which can promote accountability but may also slow down local action (Weber, 1922). In youth governance, these processes influence how SK officials translate programs into approved and properly documented activities (DILG, 2022). Bureaucratic requirements therefore

structure role performance by making leadership dependent not only on initiative, but also on compliance, coordination, and procedural discipline.

Budgetary Constraints and Delays in Resource Availability

Budgetary constraints and delays in resource availability involve limitations in funds, delayed releases, and restricted access to materials needed for program implementation. Local youth governance is affected when financial resources are insufficient or not immediately available, limiting the ability of SK officials to deliver responsive and timely programs (DILG, 2022). Resource limitations also weaken meaningful youth participation because young leaders may have plans and community-driven initiatives but lack the funds or institutional support needed to carry them out (PIDS, 2023). These constraints therefore shape governance practice by forcing youth officials to prioritize feasible programs, adjust expectations, and manage public demands within limited financial capacity.

Political Dynamics and External Influences

Political dynamics and external influences involve the pressures, relationships, and informal power interactions that affect how youth leaders make decisions and perform their roles. Local governance is often shaped by political relationships, community expectations, and institutional actors that influence how programs are supported, delayed, or contested (Brillantes & Fernandez, 2022). SK officials may also experience external pressure from community groups, local leaders, and political networks, affecting their ability to act independently and pursue youth-centered priorities (Castillo, 2024). Managing these influences requires strategic coordination, communication, and political awareness, allowing young leaders to protect public service goals while navigating the realities of local governance.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on Constructivist Grounded Theory, supported by six sensitizing theories: Relative Deprivation Theory, Stress and Coping Theory, Social Learning Theory, Symbolic Interactionism, Role Theory, and Expectation– Disconfirmation Theory. These theories do not serve as fixed frameworks that predetermine the findings, but rather they provide sensitizing concepts that guide the interpretation of how political expectations are formed, interpreted, negotiated, and recalibrated in youth governance.

Relative Deprivation Theory

Relative Deprivation Theory explains how expectations are shaped by the perceived gap between what individuals believe should happen and what they actually experience (Gurr, 1970). In this study, the theory helps explain how SK officials compare their aspirations for service, leadership, and program implementation with the actual limitations they encounter in governance. When ideals are confronted by limited resources, delayed processes, or political interference, expectations may be adjusted, lowered, or redirected.

Stress and Coping Theory

Stress and Coping Theory explains how individuals appraise difficult situations and develop coping strategies in response to pressure (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This theory supports the study by explaining how SK officials manage emotional strain, criticism, public pressure, and governance-related challenges. It is useful in understanding why some young leaders adjust, detach emotionally, persist, or reconsider their future involvement in politics.

Social Learning Theory

Social Learning Theory emphasizes that individuals learn behaviors, values, and expectations through observation, interaction, and reinforcement (Bandura, 1977). In this study, it helps explain how SK officials develop political expectations from prior leadership experiences, family encouragement, peer support, mentorship, and exposure to other leaders. It shows that expectations are not formed in isolation, but are learned from social environments and leadership models.

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic Interactionism explains that individuals act based on the meanings they construct through interaction with others (Blumer, 1969). This theory is important because SK officials interpret expectations through their relationships with constituents, peers, community members, and other political actors. It supports the view that political expectations are not merely imposed by law or position, but continuously shaped through social meaning-making.

Role Theory

Role Theory explains that individuals understand behavior through the duties, norms, and responsibilities attached to their social positions (Biddle, 1986). In this study, it helps explain how SK officials interpret their governance roles based on legal mandates, institutional expectations, public accountability, and community responsibilities. However, the study does not treat roles as fixed because officials may reinterpret or negotiate these expectations depending on actual governance realities.

Expectation–Disconfirmation Theory

Expectation–Disconfirmation Theory explains how individuals compare expected outcomes with actual experiences, leading to satisfaction, dissatisfaction, or adjustment (Oliver, 1980). This theory supports the study by explaining how SK officials recalibrate their expectations after encountering the realities of governance. When their initial expectations do not match actual conditions, they may redefine success, become more realistic, or adjust their decision-making and leadership orientation.

Together, these theories support the study’s view that political expectations are not fixed, linear, or purely institutional. They are learned, interpreted, tested, managed, and reconstructed through experience. Relative Deprivation Theory explains the gap between aspiration and reality; Stress and Coping Theory explains the management of pressure; Social Learning Theory explains the formation of expectations through observation and experience; Symbolic Interactionism explains meaning-making through interaction; Role Theory explains the influence of formal positions and responsibilities; and Expectation–Disconfirmation Theory explains how expectations are recalibrated when reality differs from what was initially anticipated. These theories collectively support the generation of a grounded theory that understands political expectations in youth governance as a cyclical and negotiated process shaped by experience, interaction, institutional demands, personal aspirations, and governance realities.

Working Concept

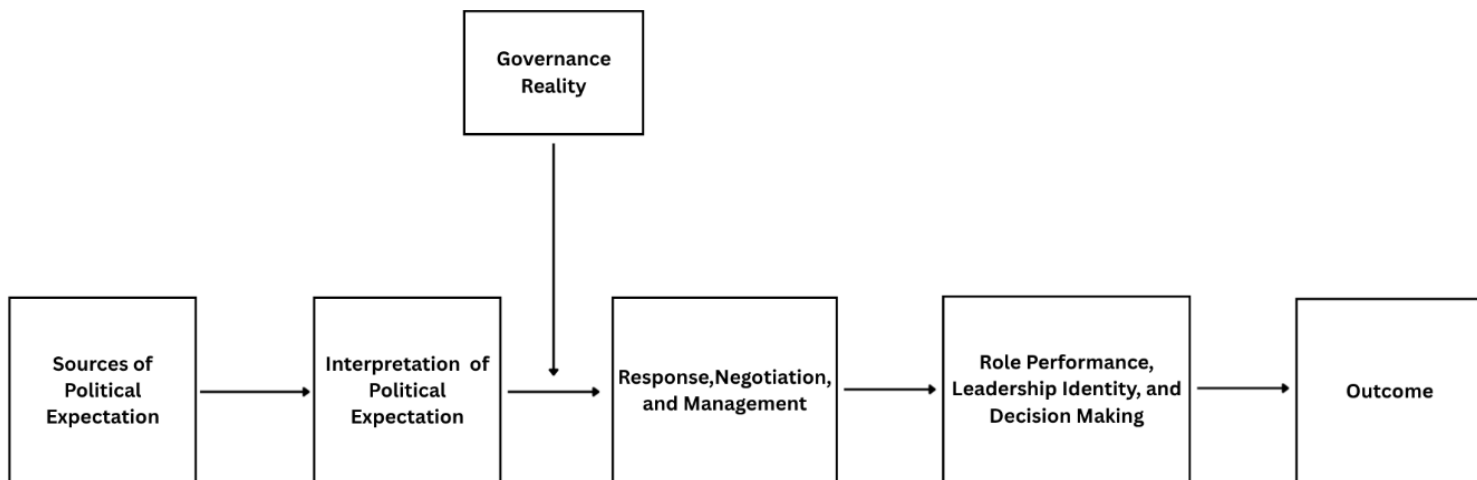


Figure 1: Echoes of Youth Governance: Grounded Theory of Political Expectations among Sultan Kudarat

Sangguniang Kabataan Officials

Figure 1 presents the working structure of the study, illustrating how political expectations operate within the governance experiences of Sangguniang Kabataan officials. It shows that political expectations are not treated as fixed duties or simple institutional demands, but as dynamic meanings shaped by experience, interaction, and local governance conditions.

The figure highlights the movement of political expectations from their initial formation to interpretation, negotiation, response, and management in practice. These expectations influence how SK officials understand their roles, make decisions, perform responsibilities, and construct their leadership identity. As the process develops, governance reality serves as a key intervening condition, representing bureaucratic procedures, resource limitations, community demands, and political dynamics that shape how expectations are experienced and acted upon.

This functions as the study's working concept. It supports the introduction by showing the main phenomenon being examined, connects with the methodology by justifying the use of constructivist grounded theory, and prepares the discussion by presenting political expectations as a process rather than a fixed variable. Overall, the model frames youth governance as a continuing process of meaning-making, adjustment, and negotiation within the lived realities of local governance.

METHODOLOGY

This section describes the research design, participants, data gathering procedures, and methods of analysis used in the study.

Research Design

The study utilized a constructivist grounded theory approach to generate a grounded theory on the political expectations of Sangguniang Kabataan officials in Sultan Kudarat. Constructivist grounded theory is a qualitative research approach that develops theory from systematically gathered experiences while recognizing that meanings are co-constructed between the participants and the researchers (Charmaz, 2006; 2014). This approach is often employed when the researcher aims to understand social processes, lived experiences, and meanings that cannot be fully explained through predetermined variables or existing theories.

Constructivist grounded theory does not treat knowledge as simply discovered from data, but as interpreted through interaction, context, and reflexive analysis. This made the approach appropriate for the study because political expectations were not examined as fixed institutional duties, but as dynamic meanings shaped by leadership experience, social interaction, institutional demands, and governance realities (Charmaz 2014)

The approach was especially pertinent to the study because the researchers, as political science students, were situated within the same broader field of governance, public service, and political institutions being examined. Their academic background allowed them to engage with the participants' experiences using concepts of leadership, accountability, participation, institutional rules, and local governance. However, consistent with constructivist grounded theory, this position was not treated as neutral or detached; rather, it was acknowledged as part of the interpretive process through which meanings were analyzed and understood.

Considerably, employing this method was advantageous because it enabled the researchers to move beyond merely describing the experiences of SK officials. Instead, it allowed the study to generate a grounded theory that explains how political expectations are formed, interpreted, negotiated, and recalibrated within youth governance. By using this approach, the study captured political expectations as a lived and ongoing process, ultimately leading to a deeper and more context-sensitive understanding of youth leadership among Sangguniang Kabataan officials in Sultan Kudarat.

Informants of the Study

The study utilized purposive sampling in selecting the six informants from selected localities in Sultan Kudarat, namely Tacurong City, Esperanza, Kalamansig, Bagumbayan, Isulan, and Senator Ninoy Aquino. These areas were included not only because the informants met the criteria of the study, but also because they provided geographical variation within the province. For the purpose of this study, Tacurong City, Esperanza, and Isulan were treated as mainland or inland localities; Kalamansig represented the coastal locality; while Bagumbayan and Senator Ninoy Aquino were treated as upland or interior localities. This classification was used as an operational geographical reference for the study, based on the location and physical setting of the selected localities within Sultan Kudarat. The geographical spread was considered relevant because the study sought to include informants from different local settings rather than limiting the data to one area of the province. In this way, the selection of informants allowed the study to gather accounts from officials who experienced Sangguniang Kabataan governance across varied territorial contexts, while still remaining focused on the main phenomenon of political expectations (Provincial Planning and Development Office Staff, 2010; Philippine Statistics Authority 2022; Dechavez et. al, 2023).

The geographical variation did not aim to compare municipalities or claim that each locality automatically produces different political expectations. Rather, it served to strengthen the contextual scope of the study by ensuring that the selected informants came from more than one type of local setting. This helped situate the grounded theory within the broader context of Sultan Kudarat, where Sangguniang Kabataan officials operate across mainland, coastal, and upland or interior areas.

Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where participants are selected based on specific characteristics relevant to the study's objectives, allowing researchers to gain in-depth insights from individuals who have direct knowledge of the phenomenon being studied (Noor et al., 2022). This method was appropriate for the study because the purpose was not to produce statistical representation, but to gather rich and information-based accounts from Sangguniang Kabataan officials who were directly involved in youth governance. In this study, the geographical spread of the selected localities also strengthened the sampling process because it allowed the researchers to capture political expectations across varied local settings rather than from one type of community alone.

Additionally, the informants included in the study were those who were incumbent members of the Sangguniang Kabataan Provincial Federation, had served for at least two years, were actively involved in governance-related activities, and had no record of suspension. These criteria ensured that the informants had sufficient experience in performing their roles and had sustained exposure to the expectations, responsibilities, and realities of Sangguniang Kabataan governance. Informants who did not meet these criteria were excluded from the study.

The decision to include six informants was guided by the principle of data saturation, a recognized concept in qualitative research. Data saturation occurs when additional data no longer produces new significant themes, categories, or insights relevant to the study. Saturation may occur within a relatively small number of interviews when participants share focused, information-rich, and relevant experiences (Guest et al., 2006). In this study, the six informants provided sufficient depth because their accounts showed recurring patterns, meaningful similarities, and relevant variations in how political expectations were formed, interpreted, negotiated, and managed in youth governance.

By selecting informants with direct and sustained experience in Sangguniang Kabataan leadership across geographically varied localities, the study ensured that the data gathered were grounded in actual governance practice. Their accounts provided the basis for understanding political expectations not as abstract ideas, but as lived and negotiated experiences shaped by leadership responsibility, institutional demands, community expectations, and local governance realities.

Instruments of the Study

The study utilized a researcher-made in-depth interview guide as the primary instrument for gathering qualitative data. In-depth interviews are useful in qualitative research because they allow participants to explain their experiences, meanings, and reflections in detail while still allowing the researcher to follow a prepared set of guide questions (Kallio et al., 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this study, the interview guide was designed to explore the political expectations of Sangguniang Kabataan officials in Sultan Kudarat within the context of youth governance.

The interview guide was crafted based on the research objectives, the working concepts of the study, and the sensitizing concepts discussed in the review of related literature. The researchers first identified the major areas that needed to be explored, namely the sources of political expectations, the meanings attached to these expectations, the ways participants respond to expectations in governance practice, and the influence of these expectations on leadership, decision-making, and role performance. From these areas, open-ended questions were developed to allow participants to narrate their experiences in their own words. This approach is consistent with qualitative interviewing, where questions are designed to guide the conversation while still allowing participants to provide rich and experience-based responses (Patton, 2015; Kallio et al., 2016).

The interview guide underwent internal validation before it was used in the actual data gathering. The guide was reviewed by the research adviser and internal validators to determine whether the questions were clear, relevant, aligned with the study objectives, and appropriate for the participants. This process helped ensure that the questions were understandable, non-leading, and capable of generating data related to the phenomenon being studied. Expert or internal review is commonly used in qualitative research to strengthen the content and face validity of interview guides before data collection (Kallio et al., 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

A separate pilot testing was not conducted because the instrument was not a standardized survey questionnaire that required statistical testing for reliability or validity. Instead, the study used an in-depth interview guide, which is flexible and open-ended by nature. In constructivist grounded theory, the interview guide may develop through the research process as the researcher follows emerging meanings, asks probes, and refines attention based on the data being generated (Charmaz, 2014). Since the guide had already undergone internal validation and was designed to support flexible probing, pilot testing was not necessary as a separate procedure. What mattered more was that the questions remained aligned with the objectives while allowing participants to explain their experiences freely.

In addition to the interview guide, the researchers themselves served as important research instruments. In qualitative research, the researcher is often considered the main instrument because data are generated through interaction, listening, questioning, probing, interpretation, and reflection (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2018). In constructivist grounded theory, data are not treated as neutral information simply extracted from participants. Instead, meanings are co-constructed through the interaction between the participants and the researchers. This means that the researchers' role in asking questions, listening carefully, probing responses, interpreting meanings, and reflecting on emerging ideas was central to the research process.

The position of the researchers as political science students was also considered part of the instrumentality of the study. Their academic background in governance, political participation, public service, and local institutions helped them engage meaningfully with the participants' accounts. However, this position was approached reflexively. The researchers recognized that their disciplinary background may influence how they understood and interpreted the data. To address this, reflection and memo writing were used throughout the study to document emerging insights, assumptions, comparisons, and analytical decisions. Reflexivity is important in qualitative research because it allows researchers to become aware of how their background and position may shape the research process (Berger, 2015; Charmaz, 2014).

The interviews were supported by audio recording, jottings, and memo writing. Audio recording was used to ensure that the participants' responses were accurately captured and later transcribed verbatim. Jottings were used to record important points, significant statements, and immediate observations during the interview. Memo writing served as

a reflective and analytic tool, allowing the researchers to document insights, questions, comparisons, and developing interpretations during the research process

Overall, the research instrument was not limited to the in-depth interview guide alone. It included the internally validated interview guide, the researchers' reflexive role, audio recordings, jottings, and memo writing. Together, these supported the study's constructivist grounded theory design by allowing political expectations to be examined as meanings constructed through experience, interaction, and interpretation.

Data Gathering Procedure

The data gathering procedure for this study followed a structured and sequential qualitative process aligned with constructivist grounded theory. Initially, approval for the conduct of data gathering was secured from the concerned academic authorities to ensure institutional compliance, research ethics, and proper authorization. Following this, formal approval was also obtained from the Sangguniang Kabataan Provincial Federation of Sultan Kudarat, recognizing the relevance of its involvement since the study focused on the lived governance experiences of SK officials within the province.

Subsequent to the approval stage, the researchers coordinated with the selected informants from the Sangguniang Kabataan Provincial Federation. The informants were briefed about the purpose of the study, the nature of their participation, the voluntary character of the interview, and the confidentiality of their responses. Informed consent was secured before the conduct of the interviews to ensure that participants fully understood their rights and the ethical conditions of the study.

After consent was obtained, in-depth interviews were conducted with selected SK officials from Sultan Kudarat. The interviews allowed the participants to share their experiences and perspectives regarding political expectations, governance responsibilities, decision-making, and youth leadership. Since the study followed a constructivist grounded theory approach, the interviews were designed to be flexible, allowing the researchers to ask follow-up questions and clarify meanings based on the participants' responses.

During the interview process, audio recording, jottings, and memo writing were used to support data collection. Audio recording ensured that the participants' responses were accurately captured for transcription, while jottings allowed the researchers to note important statements, immediate impressions, and relevant observations during the interview. Memo writing was conducted throughout the data gathering process to record early reflections, analytic thoughts, emerging ideas, possible patterns, and questions that arose from the participants' accounts. This was important because memo writing in constructivist grounded theory helps researchers trace how their understanding develops while remaining close to the data.

Following the interviews, the audio recordings were transcribed verbatim to maintain the accuracy and completeness of the data. The researchers continued memo writing after transcription to document deeper reflections, compare participant accounts, and identify possible conceptual directions. In this way, data gathering and early analysis were treated as connected processes, consistent with constructivist grounded theory.

Throughout the data gathering process, ethical principles were strictly observed. The identities of the informants were kept confidential, participation remained voluntary, and the gathered information was used solely for academic purposes. Overall, the procedure ensured that the data were collected in a systematic, ethical, and context-sensitive manner suitable for developing a grounded theory on political expectations among Sangguniang Kabataan officials in Sultan Kudarat.

Data Analysis

The data analysis and interpretation process involved organizing, coding, comparing, and interpreting the qualitative

data gathered from the in-depth interviews. Since the study employed constructivist grounded theory, the analysis focused on generating a theory from the participants' lived experiences rather than testing predetermined variables or hypotheses. Grounded theory is appropriate for studies that seek to explain social processes based on systematically gathered and analyzed qualitative data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015). This approach allowed the researchers to examine political expectations as a process shaped by meaning-making, interaction, and governance realities.

The interview transcripts were first examined through initial coding, where significant statements, actions, and meanings were identified closely from the participants' responses. Initial coding helped the researchers remain open to the data and avoid forcing the responses into predetermined categories. This was followed by focused coding, where the most relevant and recurring codes were grouped into broader categories. These coding stages helped the researchers move from raw interview data toward a more conceptual understanding while keeping the analysis grounded in the participants' accounts (Charmaz, 2014; Saldaña, 2021). Through this process, the researchers were able to identify how political expectations were formed, interpreted, negotiated, and recalibrated in youth governance.

Throughout the analysis, the researchers employed memo writing with the constant comparative method. This means that memo writing was not treated as a separate activity from comparison; instead, memos were written while the researchers continuously compared responses within and across participants. The constant comparative method helped identify similarities, differences, recurring patterns, and possible relationships among categories. This method is central to grounded theory because it allows the researcher to compare incidents, codes, categories, and concepts as the analysis develops (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Memo writing documented the researchers' analytic reflections, emerging insights, questions, and conceptual directions as the analysis progressed (Charmaz, 2014; Birks & Mills, 2015).

Elements of thematic analysis were used as an organizing tool for presenting the data. Thematic analysis is useful for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). However, in this study, thematic analysis was not used as the main method of analysis. It only supported the organization and presentation of recurring codes and categories. The primary analytical approach remained constructivist grounded theory because the goal of the study was not only to describe themes, but to generate an explanatory model of how political expectations operate as a process in youth governance.

Instead of treating themes as fixed topics, the study organized the data through action-oriented and process-based categories. This was consistent with grounded theory coding, where participants' experiences are examined in terms of actions, movements, and processes rather than static descriptions (Charmaz, 2014; Saldaña, 2021). In this study, categories such as forming expectations, interpreting leadership meanings, negotiating governance realities, adjusting responses, and recalibrating expectations helped explain how Sangguniang Kabataan officials actively made sense of their roles.

Researcher reflexivity was also observed throughout the analysis. Since the study followed a constructivist perspective, the researchers recognized that their position as political science students could influence how they interpreted the participants' accounts. In qualitative research, reflexivity is important because it allows researchers to examine how their background, assumptions, and position may shape the research process (Berger, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018). To address this, reflective memo writing and constant comparison were used to make the analytic process more transparent, careful, and grounded in the participants' experiences.

Overall, the data analysis process enabled the researchers to develop a credible grounded theory of how political expectations are formed, interpreted, negotiated, and recalibrated in youth governance. The use of initial coding, focused coding, constant comparison, memo writing, reflexivity, and thematic organization allowed the researchers to move from individual accounts toward a broader explanatory model while remaining connected to the lived experiences of the participants.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers adhered to generally accepted ethical principles in conducting the study, including informed consent, confidentiality, beneficence, voluntary participation, and permission from the concerned organization. Approval was secured from the concerned academic authorities and the Sangguniang Kabataan Provincial Federation of Sultan Kudarat before data gathering. The informants were informed about the purpose of the study, their right to withdraw, and the confidentiality of their responses. All gathered data were used solely for academic purposes, and the participants' identities were protected throughout the research process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the findings based on the research objectives and the data gathered.

Table 1. Sources of Political Expectations Experienced by Sangguniang Kabataan Officials

Sources	Areas	Specification
Prior Leadership Experiences	a) School Leadership Involvement;	Serving as class officer;
		leading student organizations;
		organizing school events;
		representing students in meetings;
		handling conflicts among peers
	b) Prior Community Engagement;	Participation in barangay activities;
		volunteering in local events;
		assisting barangay officials;
		involvement in church/youth ministries;
		exposure to community decision-making
	c) Early exposures to responsibility	Being assigned leadership roles at a young age;
		managing group tasks;
		being accountable for outcomes;
		being relied on by peers or adults;
		handling responsibilities beyond age expectations
Social Influences	a) Family encouragement;	Parents/relatives encouraging leadership or public service;
		family expectations to serve;
		influence of politically active family members;
		advice to “help the community”
	b) Peer support;	Friends encouraging candidacy;
		peer validation of leadership ability;
		being nominated by peers;
	c) Community perceptions;	Expectations from constituents;
		pressure to perform;
		being seen as a “role model”;
		community feedback;
		public image shaping expectations

	d) Mentorship	Guidance from barangay officials, SK seniors, or local leaders;
		learning through observation;
		receiving advice on governance;
		reliance on experienced individuals
Institutional Awareness	a) Awareness of RA 10742;	understanding legal responsibilities;
		awareness of limitations under the law;
		exposure to training/seminars about RA 10742
	b) Knowledge of SK duties;	Understanding roles;
		awareness of required outputs;
		expectations of accountability and reporting
	c) Exposure to governance processes	Attending meetings;
		observing budgeting procedures;
		experiencing bureaucratic steps;
		participation in planning and implementation processes
Personal Motivation and Aspiration	a) Desire to help the community;	expressed intention to serve youth;
		addressing local issues;
		desire to improve community conditions;
	b) Advocacy	Focus on specific causes;
		pushing for programs aligned with personal beliefs
		issue-based motivation
	c) Proving capability	Desire to demonstrate leadership competence;
		countering doubts;
		showing youth can lead;
		personal validation through performance
	d) Responding to negative perceptions	Motivation to change stigma about SK;
		desire to “redeem” the image of youth leaders;
		reacting to criticism of the institution

Table 1 presents the sources of political expectations experienced by Sangguniang Kabataan officials. The findings show that political expectations are manifested through four major sources: prior leadership experiences, social influences, institutional awareness, and personal motivation and aspiration. These sources indicate that expectations are not formed from one factor alone, but from the interaction of earlier leadership exposure, relationships with others, knowledge of governance structures, and personal reasons for entering public service (Bandura, 1977; Biddle, 1986; Blumer, 1969; Charmaz, 2014).

Prior leadership experiences are shown through school leadership involvement, prior community engagement, and early exposure to responsibility. These were specified through experiences such as serving as class officer, leading student organizations, organizing school events, representing students in meetings, handling conflicts among peers, participating in barangay activities, volunteering in local events, assisting barangay officials, being assigned leadership roles at a young age, managing group tasks, being accountable for outcomes, and being relied on by peers

or adults. These experiences served as early foundations in shaping how participants understood leadership, responsibility, accountability, and public service (Bandura, 1977; Biddle, 1986; Checkoway, 2011).

Social influences are manifested through family encouragement, peer support, community perceptions, and mentorship. These were specified through parents or relatives encouraging leadership, family expectations to serve, influence of politically active family members, advice to help the community, friends encouraging candidacy, peer validation of leadership ability, expectations from constituents, pressure to perform, being seen as a role model, community feedback, public image, guidance from barangay officials or senior SK leaders, learning through observation, and receiving advice on governance. These influences shaped political expectations by validating participants' leadership capacity, creating public pressure, and providing guidance on how leadership should be practiced (Bandura, 1977; Blumer, 1969; Pertierra, 2002).

Institutional awareness is shown through awareness of RA 10742, knowledge of SK duties, and exposure to governance processes. These were specified through understanding legal responsibilities, awareness of limitations under the law, exposure to training or seminars about RA 10742, understanding SK roles, awareness of required outputs, expectations of accountability and reporting, attending meetings, observing budgeting procedures, experiencing bureaucratic steps, and participating in planning and implementation processes. These specifications indicate that political expectations were also shaped by formal rules, duties, procedures, and accountability mechanisms (Biddle, 1986; DILG, 2022; March & Olsen, 1989; Republic Act No. 10742, 2015).

Personal motivation and aspiration were shown through desire to help the community, advocacy, proving capability, and responding to negative perceptions. These were specified through expressed intention to serve the youth, addressing local issues, desire to improve community conditions, focus on specific causes, pushing programs aligned with personal beliefs, issue-based motivation, desire to demonstrate leadership competence, countering doubts, showing that youth can lead, seeking personal validation through performance, motivation to change the stigma about SK, desire to redeem the image of youth leaders, and reacting to criticism of the institution. These specifications show that expectations were also shaped by the participants' internal goals, values, advocacies, and desire to prove the worth of youth leadership (Gurr, 1970; Oliver, 1980; PIDS, 2023; UNICEF Philippines, 2022).

Overall, the findings imply that political expectations among SK officials are multi-sourced, layered, and mutually reinforcing. Prior leadership experiences provide early exposure, social influences validate and pressure leadership identity, institutional awareness gives formal direction, and personal motivation gives purpose to public service. Together, these sources show that SK officials do not enter governance as blank actors. They bring accumulated experiences, social relationships, institutional understanding, and personal aspirations that collectively shape how they begin to understand political expectations in youth governance.

Table 2. Interpretations of Political Expectations Among Sangguniang Kabataan Officials

Interpretations	Areas	Specifications
Public Service	a) Serving the youth;	prioritizing youth concerns;
		representing youth voices
	b) Delivering programs;	organizing activities;
		ensuring visible outcomes
	c) Addressing community needs	responding to local issues;
		aligning with barangay needs
Responsibility and Accountability	a) Fulfilling duties;	completing assigned tasks;

		attending responsibilities
	b) Responding to community expectations;	completing assigned tasks;
		attending responsibilities
	c) Managing resources properly	proper fund allocation;
Political Opportunity		compliance with procedures
	a) Platform for leadership;	developing leadership skills;
		gaining experience
	b) Opportunity for influence;	contributing ideas in decision- making;
		influencing youth programs;
		participating in community decisions
	c) Career stepping stone	preparing for future roles;
		building networks
Moral and Ethical Model Interpretation	a) Acting as a role model;	maintaining proper conduct;
		setting examples
	b) Upholding values	practicing integrity;
		fairness in decisions
	c) Avoiding misconduct	preventing violations;
		maintaining credibility
	a) Adjusting to limitations;	modifying plans;
		adapting to constraints
Adaptive and Practical Interpretation	b) Managing expectations;	balancing demands;
		redefining success
	a) Being realistic in governance	recognizing delays;
		focusing on feasibility

Table 2 presents the interpretations of political expectations among Sangguniang Kabataan officials. The findings show that political expectations are interpreted through five interconnected meanings: public service, responsibility and accountability, political opportunity, moral and ethical model interpretation, and adaptive and practical interpretation. These interpretations are not separate or isolated from one another. Rather, they form one broad interpretive space where SK officials make sense of leadership through service, duty, opportunity, values, and practical governance realities (Blumer, 1969; Charmaz, 2014).

Public service is shown through serving the youth, delivering programs, and addressing community needs. These were specified through prioritizing youth concerns, representing youth voices, organizing activities, ensuring visible outcomes, responding to local issues, and aligning actions with barangay needs. This means that SK officials interpret political expectations as a call to serve their constituents and produce meaningful actions for the youth and

community. At the same time, this interpretation is already shaped by early awareness that service must respond to actual barangay needs, available opportunities, and the limits of what can be delivered in practice (Checkoway, 2011; PIDS, 2023; Rey, 2023).

Responsibility and accountability are manifested through fulfilling duties, responding to community expectations, and managing resources properly. These were specified through completing assigned tasks, attending responsibilities, properly allocating funds, and complying with procedures. This interpretation shows that political expectations are understood not only as service, but also as an obligation to perform duties responsibly and accountably within the limits of the office. Here, governance reality is reflected in how accountability is tied to procedures, resource management, and compliance, showing that responsibility is interpreted with an awareness of institutional rules and practical constraints (Biddle, 1986; DILG, 2022; March & Olsen, 1989).

Political opportunity is shown through platform for leadership, opportunity for influence, and career stepping stone. These were specified through developing leadership skills, gaining experience, contributing ideas in decision-making, influencing youth programs, participating in community decisions, preparing for future roles, and building networks. This means that SK officials may also interpret political expectations as opportunities for growth, influence, and future leadership development. However, this opportunity is not understood as unlimited, since influence depends on participation in actual decision-making spaces, available networks, and the ability to navigate local governance conditions (Bandura, 1977; Castillo, 2024; Wong et al., 2010).

Moral and ethical model interpretation is manifested through acting as a role model, upholding values, and avoiding misconduct. These were specified through maintaining proper conduct, setting examples, practicing integrity, ensuring fairness in decisions, preventing violations, and maintaining credibility. This interpretation highlights that SK officials understand expectations not only in terms of what they do, but also in terms of how they behave as visible youth leaders. Governance reality subtly enters this interpretation because credibility, fairness, and avoidance of misconduct become more important in a setting where public judgment, political pressure, and institutional accountability shape how leadership is evaluated (Brillantes & Fernandez, 2022; Pertierra, 2002; UNICEF Philippines, 2022).

Adaptive and practical interpretation is shown through adjusting to limitations, managing expectations, and being realistic in governance. These were specified through modifying plans, adapting to constraints, balancing demands, redefining success, recognizing delays, and focusing on feasibility. This means that political expectations are interpreted realistically, especially when officials begin to recognize that leadership is affected by available resources, procedural delays, community demands, and implementation limits. Among the interpretations, this most clearly shows how expectations are already being filtered through what governance may allow, require, or restrict (Gurr, 1970; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Oliver, 1980).

Overall, the findings show that political expectations are interpreted as multi- dimensional, overlapping, and gradually grounded in governance reality. SK officials do not understand expectations through one meaning alone. Public service gives the expectation its purpose, responsibility and accountability give it structure, political opportunity gives it direction for growth, moral and ethical interpretation gives it value, and adaptive-practical interpretation grounds it in feasibility. Together, these interpretations show that political expectations are not merely duties to be followed, but meanings that SK officials continuously construct as they move from initial formation toward a more realistic understanding of leadership within youth governance.

Table 3. Processes of Negotiating, Response to, and Managing Political Expectations among Sangguniang Kabataan Officials

Process	Areas	Specifications	Negotiation	Response	Management
Consultative and Collective Decision-	a) Seeking suggestions;	gathering youth input;	Interpreting diverse suggestions under varying	Soliciting and considering stakeholder input	Sustaining inclusive engagement despite limited
		Requesting			

Making		feedback	participation		participation
	b) Youth consultation;	Organizing consultations;	Aligning expectation through discussion with youth	Conducting consultation and meetings	Maintaining participation despite turnout issues
		Facilitating discussions			
	c) Majority decision-making;	voting on proposals;	Reconciling conflicting views among members	Voting and finalizing decisions	Sustaining collective agreement despite disagreement
		reaching consensus			
Strategic Adaptation and Adjustment	d) Participatory planning	Collaborative planning;	Integrating multiple perspective into planning	Developing programs with stakeholders	Sustaining shared ownership of plans
		joint program development			
	a) Adjusting plans;	revising scope;	Reinterpreting expectation based on constraints	Revising plans and timelines	Sustaining adaptability under changing conditions
		adjusting timelines			
Process	b) Prioritizing feasible programs;	Selecting feasible projects;	Filtering expectations based on feasibility	Selecting achievable initiatives	Sustaining realistic goal-setting
		aligning with resources			
	c) Modifying expectations	Lowering or redefining targets;	Reconciling ideal vs realistic expectations	Lowering or redefining targets	Sustaining alignment with actual capacity
	Areas	Specifications	Negotiation	Response	Management
		alignment with actual capacity			
Compliance with Institutional Rules	a) Following RA 10742;	Observing mandates;	Interpreting expectations within legal mandates	Aligning actions with the law	Sustaining legality in governance actions
		policy alignment			
	b) Adherence to procedures;	Securing approvals;	Understanding procedural constraints	Following approval processes	Sustaining procedural consistency
		Coordination			
Resistance and Assertion	c) Documentation compliance	Preparing reports;	Recognizing reporting requirements	Completing necessary documents	Sustaining accountability through records
		documentation			
	a) Standing firm in decisions;	Maintaining stance;	Interpreting conflicting expectations	Maintaining decisions despite pressure	Sustaining direction amid opposition
		Defending decisions			
	b) Pushing projects despite opposition	Continuing projects;	Negotiating response from others	Proceeding initiatives	Sustaining Implementation under conflict
		Managing opposition			
	Confronting others	Confronting issues;	Interpreting disagreement and conflict	Addressing opposing views directly	Sustaining authority while managing conflict
		Addressing disagreements			

Emotional Coping and Detachment	Ignoring criticism;	Selective attention;	Interpreting criticism and public pressure	Filtering negative feedback	Sustaining focus despite criticism
		Ignoring negativity			
	Emotional detachment;	Emotional regulation;	Managing emotional expectations	Separating emotions from decisions	Sustaining objectivity
		composure			
Process	Areas	Specifications	Negotiation	Response	Management
	c) Resilience;	persistence;	Interpreting setbacks and pressure	Persisting despite challenges	Sustaining long term Engagement
		adaptation			
	Stress management	Time management;	Recognizing workload pressures	Applying coping strategies	Sustaining performance under stress

Table 3 presents the processes through which Sangguniang Kabataan officials negotiate, respond to, and manage political expectations in governance practice. The findings show that political expectations are not only understood by the participants; they are also worked through in actual situations where participation, resources, procedures, conflict, and emotional pressure shape how leadership is carried out. These processes include consultative and collective decision-making, strategic adaptation and adjustment, compliance with institutional rules, resistance and assertion, and emotional coping and detachment (Charmaz, 2006; Charmaz, 2014; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Consultative and collective decision-making is shown through seeking suggestions, youth consultation, majority decision-making, and participatory planning. These were specified through gathering youth input, requesting feedback, organizing consultations, facilitating discussions, voting on proposals, reaching consensus, collaborative planning, and joint program development. In terms of negotiation, SK officials interpret diverse suggestions, align expectations through discussion, reconcile conflicting views, and integrate multiple perspectives into planning. As a response, they solicit stakeholder input, conduct consultations, vote on decisions, and develop programs with others. As management, they sustain inclusive engagement, maintain participation despite turnout issues, preserve collective agreement despite disagreement, and encourage shared ownership of plans. This shows that consultation is not simply about asking people what they want; it is also about making decisions when participation is uneven, opinions differ, and collective agreement must still be maintained (Checkoway, 2011; PIDS, 2023; Wong et al., 2010).

Strategic adaptation and adjustment is manifested through adjusting plans, prioritizing feasible programs, and modifying expectations. These were specified through revising program scope, adjusting timelines, selecting feasible projects, aligning plans with available resources, lowering or redefining targets, and aligning expectations with actual capacity. In terms of negotiation, SK officials reinterpret expectations based on constraints and reconcile ideal plans with what can realistically be done. As a response, they revise plans, select achievable initiatives, and redefine targets. As management, they sustain adaptability, realistic goal-setting, and alignment between expectations and actual capacity. This shows that adjustment becomes necessary when original plans encounter limits in time, budget, manpower, approval, or implementation (Gurr, 1970; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Oliver, 1980).

Compliance with institutional rules is shown through following RA 10742, adherence to procedures, and documentation compliance. These were specified through observing mandates, policy alignment, securing approvals, coordination, preparing reports, and documentation. In terms of negotiation, SK officials interpret expectations within legal mandates, understand procedural constraints, and recognize reporting requirements. As a response, they align their actions with the law, follow approval processes, and complete necessary documents. As management, they sustain legality, procedural consistency, and accountability through records. This shows that fulfilling expectations is not only a matter of willingness or initiative, since actions must also pass through rules, approvals, documentation, and accountability mechanisms (Biddle, 1986; DILG, 2022; March & Olsen, 1989; Republic Act No. 10742, 2015).

Resistance and assertion were manifested through standing firm in decisions, pushing projects despite opposition, and confronting others. These were specified through maintaining one's stance, defending decisions, continuing projects, managing opposition, confronting issues, and addressing disagreements. In terms of negotiation, SK officials interpret conflicting expectations, negotiate responses from others, and make sense of disagreement or conflict. As a response, they maintain decisions despite pressure, proceed with initiatives, and address opposing views directly. As management, they sustain direction amid opposition, continue implementation under conflict, and maintain authority while managing disagreement. This shows that leadership sometimes requires more than adjustment; it also requires firmness when decisions are contested, projects are questioned, or external pressure challenges the direction of action (Brillantes & Fernandez, 2022; Castillo, 2024; Pertierra, 2002).

Emotional coping and detachment were shown through ignoring criticism, emotional detachment, resilience, and stress management. These were specified through selective attention, ignoring negativity, emotional regulation, composure, persistence, adaptation, time management, and applying coping strategies. In terms of negotiation, SK officials interpret criticism, public pressure, emotional expectations, setbacks, and workload demands. As a response, they filter negative feedback, separate emotions from decisions, persist despite challenges, and apply coping strategies. As management, they sustain focus, objectivity, long-term engagement, and performance despite stress. This shows that managing expectations is not only procedural or strategic; it is also emotional, because SK officials must continue performing their roles even when they experience criticism, pressure, fatigue, or discouragement (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Oliver, 1980; Rey, 2023).

Overall, the findings show that political expectations are processed through negotiation, response, and management as connected forms of governance action. Negotiation explains how SK officials interpret competing demands and make sense of expectations. Response explains the concrete actions they take when facing those expectations. Management explains how they sustain their roles over time despite limitations, pressure, conflict, and emotional strain. Together, these processes show that SK officials do not simply follow expectations; they continuously work through them in actual youth governance practice (Charmaz, 2014; Blumer, 1969; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Table 4. Influence of Political Expectations on Role Performance, Leadership Identity, and Decision-Making

Dimension of Influence	Areas	Specifications	Leadership Identity	Role Performance	Decision-Making
Adjustment and Recalibration of Expectations	a) Lowering expectations	Reducing target outcomes; adjusting ambitions	Leads officials to view themselves as more grounded and less idealistic leaders	Results in scaling down programs and activities to manageable levels	Encourages choosing safer and more achievable options
	b) Becoming realistic	Recognizing limitations; accepting constraints	Shapes identity toward practicality and awareness of limitations	Promotes actions that align with available resources and actual conditions	Leads to decisions that prioritize feasibility over ambition
	c) Redefining success	Focusing on achievable outcomes; valuing small accomplishments	Transforms how leaders measure their effectiveness beyond ideal outcomes	Encourages focusing on small wins and attainable outputs	Guides decisions toward achievable goals rather than ideal targets
	d) Shifting priorities	Reallocating focus; prioritizing urgent needs	Develops identity as flexible and responsive to changing demands	Results in reallocating efforts toward urgent or	Influences decisions to prioritize immediate and

				feasible concerns	practical needs
Decision-Making Orientation	a) Value-based decisions	Guided by principles; prioritizing community welfare	Reinforces identity as a principled and community-oriented leader	Leads to actions guided by ethics and public service values	Results in decisions grounded in moral considerations
	b) Consultative decisions	Incorporating stakeholder input; seeking consensus	Shapes identity as an inclusive and participatory leader	Encourages engaging others in actions and planning	Leads to decisions that incorporate stakeholder input
	c) Strategic decisions	Planning ahead; aligning with long-term goals	Develops identity as a forward-thinking and goal-oriented leader	Promotes planned and structured execution of activities	Results in decisions that consider long-term impact
	d) Pragmatic choices	Choosing feasible options; adjusting to constraints	Shapes identity as adaptable and realistic leader	Leads to practical actions based on constraints	Encourages decisions that prioritize what is workable
Sustained Engagement and Commitment	a) Continued service	Ongoing participation; sustained involvement	Strengthens identity as a committed public servant	Results in sustained participation in governance activities	Encourages continued involvement in decision-making
	b) Commitment to role	Fulfilling responsibilities; prioritizing duties	Reinforces sense of responsibility and accountability	Leads to consistent fulfillment of duties	Supports decisions aligned with obligations
	c) Motivation to lead	Desire to serve; maintaining leadership drive	Sustains identity as an active and driven leader	Encourages proactive engagement in tasks	Influences decisions that reflect initiative and purpose
Disengagement and Withdrawal Tendencies	a) Burnout	Emotional exhaustion; reduced energy	Weakens leadership identity due to emotional exhaustion	Results in reduced effort and participation	Leads to avoidance or minimal engagement in decisions
	b) Hesitation to continue	Uncertainty in role; reduced commitment	Creates uncertainty in self-perception as a leader	Leads to inconsistent role performance	Causes indecisiveness or delayed decisions
	c) Preference for personal goals	Prioritizing self-interest; shifting focus	Shifts identity away from public service orientation	Reduces focus on governance responsibility	Influences decisions toward personal priorities
	d) Exit from politics	Intention to leave; withdrawal from participation	Leads to detachment from leadership identity	Results in withdrawal from responsibility	Ends active participation in decision-making

Co-existing Engagement and Withdrawal Tendencies	a) Simultaneous commitment and detachment	Mixed engagement; emotional distancing	Produces dual identity of responsibility and emotional distance	Maintains performance despite reduced emotional investment	Leads to decisions driven by obligation rather than passion
	b) Sustained participation despite reduced motivation	Continued attendance; reduced internal drive	Reflects identity anchored in duty rather than enthusiasm	Continues role performance with limited internal drive	Maintains decision-making despite low motivation
	c) Sense of duty overriding emotional disengagement	Obligation-driven actions; responsibility over emotion	Reinforces identity tied to obligation	Sustains actions even under emotional strain	Drives decisions based on responsibility rather than desire
	d) Active role performance with declining enthusiasm	Completing tasks; lowered enthusiasm	Reflects gradual disengagement in identity	Maintains visible participation despite low energy	Leads to routine or less innovative decisions
	e) Internal questioning of impact while maintaining external responsibility	Self-doubt	Creates tension in leadership identity	Continues performance while questioning effectiveness	Results in cautious and reflective decision-making

Table 4 presents how political expectations influence the leadership identity, role performance, and decision-making of Sangguniang Kabataan officials. Unlike the earlier tables that explain where expectations come from, how they are interpreted, and how they are worked through in practice, this table shows how repeated governance experiences reshape the way officials see themselves, perform their duties, and make decisions. The findings show five major influences: adjustment and recalibration of expectations, decision-making orientation, sustained engagement and commitment, disengagement and withdrawal tendencies, and co-existing engagement and withdrawal tendencies (Charmaz, 2014; Oliver, 1980).

Adjustment and recalibration of expectations is shown through lowering expectations, becoming realistic, redefining success, and shifting priorities. These were specified through reducing target outcomes, adjusting ambitions, recognizing limitations, accepting constraints, focusing on achievable outcomes, valuing small accomplishments, reallocating focus, and prioritizing urgent needs. After repeated encounters with limited resources, delays, workload, and implementation constraints, SK officials begin to view themselves as more grounded and practical leaders. Their role performance becomes more focused on manageable activities, attainable outputs, and urgent concerns. Their decision-making also becomes safer and more feasible, as they learn to choose what can realistically be done rather than what is only ideal (Gurr, 1970; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Oliver, 1980).

Decision-making orientation is shown through value-based decisions, consultative decisions, strategic decisions, and pragmatic choices. These were specified through being guided by principles, prioritizing community welfare, incorporating stakeholder input, seeking consensus, planning ahead, aligning with long-term goals, choosing feasible options, and adjusting to constraints. This influence is closely connected to recalibration because once officials become more realistic, their decisions also become more careful, values-based, consultative, strategic, and practical. In leadership identity, this shapes officials as principled, participatory, forward-thinking, and adaptable leaders. In role performance, it encourages ethical action, stakeholder engagement, structured implementation, and practical execution. In decision-making, it produces choices that balance ideals, community input, long-term goals, and workable conditions (Biddle, 1986; Blumer, 1969; PIDS, 2023).

Sustained engagement and commitment is shown through continued service, commitment to role, and motivation to lead. These were specified through ongoing participation, sustained involvement, fulfilling responsibilities, prioritizing duties, desire to serve, and maintaining leadership drive. Even after expectations are adjusted and decisions become more practical, some officials continue to define themselves as committed public servants and responsible youth representatives. This strengthens role performance through continued participation, consistent fulfillment of duties, and proactive engagement in governance tasks. It also sustains decision-making because officials continue to take part in choices even when governance work becomes demanding. This shows that recalibration does not automatically weaken commitment; in some cases, it allows officials to continue serving with a more realistic understanding of leadership (Bandura, 1977; Checkoway, 2011).

Disengagement and withdrawal tendencies are shown through burnout, hesitation to continue, preference for personal goals, and exit from politics. These were specified through emotional exhaustion, reduced energy, uncertainty in role, reduced commitment, prioritizing self-interest, shifting focus, intention to leave, and withdrawal from participation. After repeated exposure to pressure, delays, conflict, and unmet expectations, some officials begin to experience weakened motivation or uncertainty about continuing in politics. In leadership identity, this may create doubt or distance from public service. In role performance, it may result in reduced effort, inconsistent participation, or withdrawal from responsibilities. In decision-making, it may lead to avoidance, delayed action, or choices influenced more by personal priorities than governance responsibility (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Oliver, 1980; Rey, 2023).

Co-existing engagement and withdrawal tendencies are shown through simultaneous commitment and detachment, sustained participation despite reduced motivation, sense of duty overriding emotional disengagement, active role performance with declining enthusiasm, and internal questioning of impact while maintaining external responsibility. These were specified through mixed engagement, emotional distancing, continued attendance, reduced internal drive, obligation-driven actions, responsibility over emotion, completing tasks, lowered enthusiasm, and self-doubt. This shows that sustained engagement and disengagement are not always separate outcomes. Some SK officials may continue fulfilling their responsibilities while also feeling emotionally detached, less motivated, or uncertain about their impact. In leadership identity, this creates tension between being responsible and feeling distant. In role performance, visible participation continues even when enthusiasm declines. In decision-making, choices may become more cautious, routine, or obligation-driven (Charmaz, 2014; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Oliver, 1980).

Overall, the findings show that political expectations influence SK officials in interconnected ways. Repeated governance experiences first push officials to adjust their expectations, which then shapes how they make decisions, sustain commitment, or experience withdrawal. However, these influences do not move in a simple one-directional path. Commitment may continue after recalibration, disengagement may emerge despite active performance, and responsibility may override emotional exhaustion. Together, these findings show that political expectations can strengthen leadership, make it more realistic, and sustain public service, but they can also create fatigue, hesitation, and emotional distance. This gives a more realistic picture of youth governance because SK officials may remain active in their roles while continuously renegotiating their motivation, identity, performance, and decisions (Charmaz, 2014; Blumer, 1969; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Table 5. Core Components and Movement of the Grounded Theory Model

Model Component	Core Categories	Areas	Function in the Model	Feedback Movement
Sources	Formation of Political Expectations	Prior leadership experiences	Establishes the initial bases from which SK officials develop expectations about leadership, service, responsibility, and governance.	—

		Social influences		
		Institutional awareness		
		Personal motivation and aspiration		
Interpretation	Meaning-Making of Political Expectations	Public service	Shows how SK officials understand and give meaning to expectations before these are acted upon in governance practice.	After influence occurs, the loop returns here through renewed interpretation of expectations based on leadership experience.
		Responsibility and accountability		
		Political opportunity		
		Moral and ethical model interpretation		
		Adaptive and practical interpretation		
Process	Negotiating, Responding to, and Managing Expectations	Consultative and collective decision-making	Explains how expectations are handled after encountering governance reality through consultation, adjustment, compliance, assertion, and coping.	Reinterpreted expectations may again be negotiated, responded to, and managed through these processes.
		Strategic adaptation and adjustment		
		Compliance with institutional rules		
		Resistance and assertion		
		Emotional coping and detachment		
Influence	Effects on Leadership Experience	Adjustment and recalibration of expectations	Shows how expectations affect leadership identity, role performance, and decision-making after being processed in actual governance conditions.	These influences produce outcomes that may reshape how future expectations are understood and handled.
		Decision-making orientation		
		Sustained engagement and commitment		
		Disengagement and withdrawal tendencies		
		Co-existing engagement and withdrawal tendencies		
Feedback Loop	Continuing Reinterpretation and Recalibration	Looping back to interpretation	Illustrates the cyclical movement of the model, where leadership outcomes reshape how future expectations are understood and handled.	The loop does not return to sources. Instead, it begins again at interpretation because the original sources remain formative, while later outcomes reshape meaning-making and practice.

Table 5 presents the core components and movement of the generated grounded theory model. It organizes the findings into five major parts: sources, interpretation, process, influence, and feedback loop. These components show that political expectations among Sangguniang Kabataan officials do not follow a fixed or linear path. Rather, they move through a continuing process where expectations are formed, interpreted, acted upon, experienced, and later reinterpreted through accumulated governance experience.

The source component explains the initial formation of political expectations. These include prior leadership experiences, social influences, institutional awareness, and personal motivation and aspiration. This shows that SK officials do not enter governance without prior meanings of leadership. Their expectations are already shaped by earlier responsibilities, encouragement from others, awareness of institutional rules, and personal goals to serve, lead, or prove capability. However, these sources function as starting points rather than final determinants of how expectations will later be understood or practiced.

The interpretation component shows how SK officials assign meaning to political expectations. These meanings include public service, responsibility and accountability, political opportunity, moral and ethical model interpretation, and adaptive and practical interpretation. This part is crucial because expectations do not automatically become action. They first pass through meaning-making, where officials define what it means to serve, be accountable, lead ethically, use leadership as an opportunity, and act realistically within governance conditions.

The process component explains how expectations are negotiated, responded to, and managed in actual governance practice. These processes include consultative and collective decision-making, strategic adaptation and adjustment, compliance with institutional rules, resistance and assertion, and emotional coping and detachment. This is where expectations encounter the actual conditions of governance, such as limited resources, procedural requirements, approval systems, political pressure, criticism, and participation challenges. As a result, SK officials do not simply follow expectations as originally imagined; they consult, adjust, comply, assert, or cope depending on the situation.

The influence component presents how political expectations shape leadership identity, role performance, and decision-making. These influences include adjustment and recalibration of expectations, decision-making orientation, sustained engagement and commitment, disengagement and withdrawal tendencies, and co-existing engagement and withdrawal tendencies. This shows that expectations can strengthen commitment, make decisions more strategic, and deepen responsibility. However, they can also produce fatigue, hesitation, emotional distance, or withdrawal. In some cases, commitment and disengagement exist at the same time, where officials continue performing their duties while internally questioning their motivation or impact.

The feedback loop explains why the grounded theory is cyclical rather than linear. After political expectations influence leadership experience, the process does not end. These experiences reshape how SK officials interpret future expectations. However, the cycle does not return to the original sources because those sources represent the initial formation of expectations. Instead, later experiences feed back into interpretation, where officials make sense of new expectations through what they have already encountered in governance.

Overall, this shows that political expectations in youth governance are cyclical, negotiated, and grounded in lived governance realities. They are formed from multiple sources, interpreted through overlapping meanings, processed through actual constraints, and experienced as influences on leadership identity, role performance, and decision-making. The generated theory therefore reframes SK governance not as a simple movement from expectation to action, but as a continuing process of meaning-making, adjustment, and recalibration.

Figure 2 then illustrates this movement through the Cyclical Process Theory of Negotiated Political Expectations in Youth Governance, showing how expectations move from formation to interpretation, process, influence, and renewed interpretation in later governance experiences.

A Cyclical Process Theory of Negotiated Political Expectations in Youth Governance Illustration.

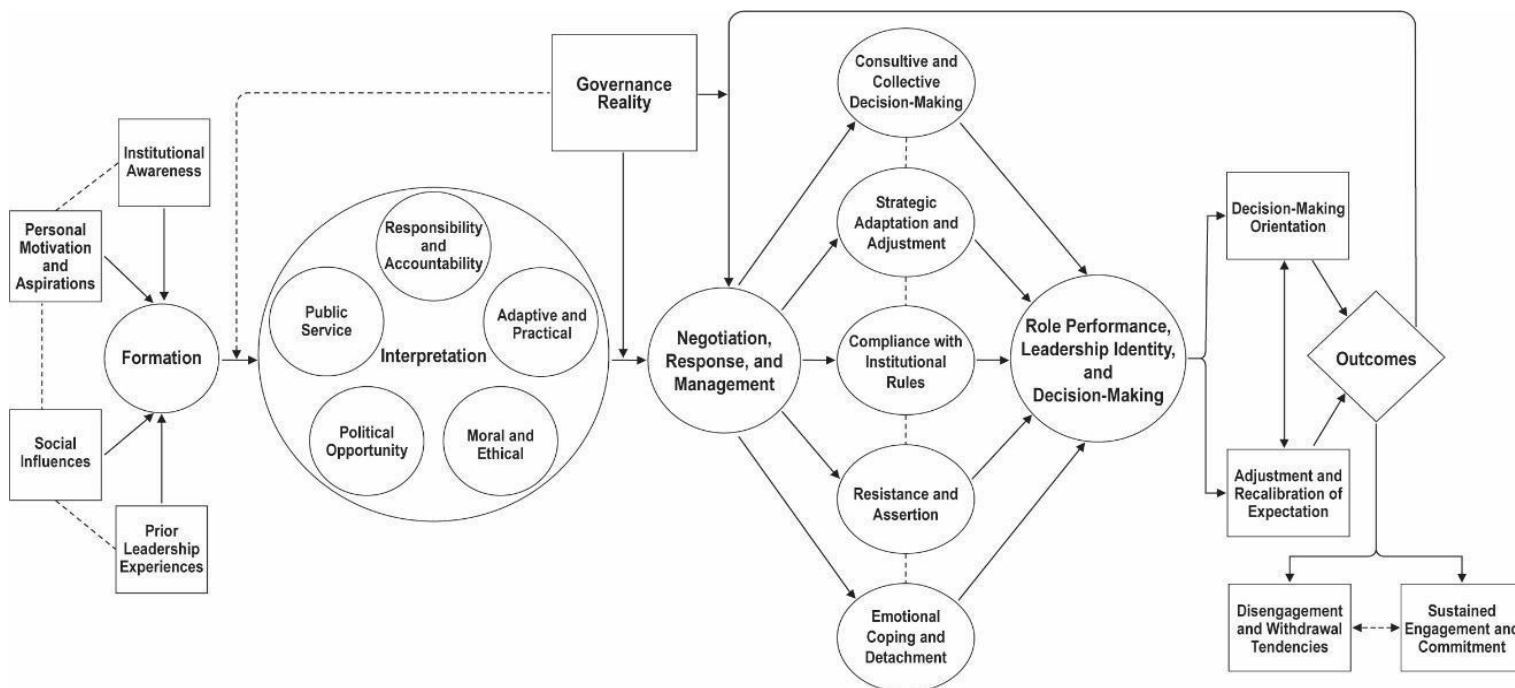


Figure 2. A Cyclical Process Theory of Negotiated Political Expectations in Youth Governance.

Figure 2 presents the grounded theory generated from the study by showing political expectations as the main phenomenon in youth governance. The model explains that political expectations among Sangguniang Kabataan officials are not fixed ideas that remain the same throughout their term. Instead, these expectations change as officials move through actual governance experiences. What makes these expectations “negotiated” is the presence of governance reality, which includes bureaucratic procedures, limited resources, political pressures, institutional rules, and community demands.

The model begins with the formation of political expectations. These expectations are shaped by prior leadership experiences, social influences, institutional awareness, and personal motivations. These sources provide young officials with their early understanding of leadership, such as the belief that they should serve the youth, fulfill responsibilities, follow rules, prove their capability, or contribute to the community. However, these early expectations are only the starting point. They do not fully explain how officials will act once they begin experiencing governance in practice.

After formation, political expectations move into interpretation. At this stage, officials give meaning to what they expect from leadership. They may understand leadership as public service, responsibility and accountability, political opportunity, moral and ethical conduct, or adaptive and practical action. This part of the theory shows that political expectations are not only about what others demand from officials. They are also about how officials personally understand their role and what leadership means to them.

The central force in the model is governance reality. It affects the movement of expectations from interpretation into actual practice. Once officials encounter real conditions such as delayed processes, limited budget, community pressure, or political interference, their expectations are tested. This is where expectations become negotiated. Officials may still want to serve, lead, and implement programs, but they must now consider what is possible, what is allowed, and what can realistically be done under existing conditions.

Because of this, officials respond to political expectations through different processes. These include consultative and collective decision-making, strategic adaptation and adjustment, compliance with institutional rules, resistance

and assertion, and emotional coping and detachment. These processes show that Sangguniang Kabataan officials do not simply follow expectations as they are. They adjust, defend, comply with, manage, or emotionally distance themselves from these expectations depending on the situation.

The model also shows that negotiated political expectations influence role performance, leadership identity, and decision-making. The way officials understand and manage expectations affects how they perform their duties, how they see themselves as leaders, and how they decide in governance. These influences may lead to decision-making orientation, adjustment and recalibration of expectations, sustained engagement and commitment, or disengagement and withdrawal tendencies.

A key point of the theory is that these outcomes are not always separate. An official may remain committed to public service while also feeling tired, discouraged, or emotionally detached. This means that youth leadership is not simply about being active or inactive, committed or uncommitted. It is more complex because young officials may continue fulfilling their responsibilities while internally questioning their impact or struggling with pressure.

The cyclical nature of the model is also important. The process does not end once outcomes appear. Instead, the experience of governance feeds back into how officials understand their future expectations. However, the return is not a simple return to the original sources of expectation. It is a return to a more experienced interpretation shaped by what officials have already encountered in governance.

Overall, Figure 2 explains that political expectations in youth governance are cyclical, negotiated, and shaped by governance reality. The theory shows that young officials enter governance with expectations, but these expectations are repeatedly tested by actual conditions. As a result, they are continuously adjusted, managed, and redefined through lived experience. This makes political expectations not just personal beliefs or institutional duties, but an evolving process that shapes how young leaders understand, perform, and sustain their role in governance.

CONCLUSION

This study generated a constructivist grounded theory explaining political expectations as a cyclical process of negotiation under governance reality among Sangguniang Kabataan officials in Sultan Kudarat. The core category of the theory is the continuous negotiation of political expectations. This core category integrates the major findings of the study: expectations are formed through prior leadership experiences, social influences, institutional awareness, and personal motivations; interpreted through service, accountability, opportunity, ethics, and practical leadership; negotiated through consultation, adjustment, compliance, assertion, and emotional coping; and recalibrated through their effects on role performance, leadership identity, and decision-making.

The theory shows that political expectations are not fixed demands that officials simply follow. Rather, they are meanings that officials continuously construct and reconstruct as they encounter actual governance conditions. Governance reality, such as bureaucratic procedures, limited resources, political pressure, public criticism, institutional rules, and participation challenges, shapes how expectations are tested in practice. Because of these conditions, officials must balance what they want to achieve, what constituents expect, what the law requires, and what is realistically possible. This is what makes political expectations negotiated.

The consequences of this negotiation are complex. Political expectations may strengthen commitment, responsibility, strategic thinking, and continued service. However, they may also produce fatigue, hesitation, emotional distance, and withdrawal tendencies. A key insight of the theory is that engagement and disengagement may coexist. Some officials may continue fulfilling their responsibilities while also feeling tired, doubtful, or less motivated. This provides a more realistic view of youth governance, where public service may continue even under internal strain.

Consistent with constructivist grounded theory, this theory is co-constructed and context-bound. It emerged from the participants' accounts and from the researchers' interpretation as political science students studying youth

governance within the Philippine local political context. The researchers' background shaped how public service, institutional limits, participation, and local politics were interpreted. This reflexive position does not weaken the theory; rather, it makes clear how meaning was constructed through the interaction between participant experience and researcher interpretation.

The study contributes to existing literature by moving beyond views of youth governance that focus mainly on performance, participation, or formal duties. It shows that Sangguniang Kabataan officials are not only role-bearers who comply with expectations; they are young political actors who interpret, adjust, resist, cope, and redefine expectations through lived governance experience. The theory is credible because it is grounded in recurring participant accounts, original because it frames political expectations as cyclical and negotiated, resonant because it reflects the tensions experienced by youth officials, and useful because it can inform capacity-building, expectation management, adaptive leadership, and institutional support for youth governance.

However, the theory remains provisional and bounded by the experiences of selected Sangguniang Kabataan officials in Sultan Kudarat. It does not claim to represent all youth leaders or all governance settings. Future studies may extend theoretical sampling to other provinces, barangay-level officials, municipal or provincial youth governance actors, or even non-youth political institutions to examine whether the theory holds, expands, or changes across different contexts. Overall, the study concludes that young leaders do not merely enter governance and follow expectations; they learn, struggle, adjust, and repeatedly redefine public service as they face the real conditions of local governance.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings, these recommendations offer possible directions for applying the generated grounded theory in understanding and responding to political expectations in youth governance.

For Practice and Sangguniang Kabataan Officials

To strengthen the formation of political expectations, orientation programs may be conducted for newly elected and incumbent Sangguniang Kabataan officials. Since the study found that expectations are shaped by prior leadership experiences, social influences, institutional awareness, and personal motivations, these orientations may help officials identify where their expectations come from and how these expectations may affect their leadership. This could help young officials enter governance with a clearer understanding of their responsibilities, limitations, and possible challenges, instead of relying only on idealized views of public service.

To improve the interpretation of political expectations, training programs may focus on public service values, accountability, ethical leadership, and practical governance. The study found that officials interpret political expectations through service, responsibility, opportunity, moral conduct, and adaptive realism. However, these meanings may become difficult to balance when personal goals, community demands, political pressures, and institutional rules overlap. This recommendation suggests that Sangguniang Kabataan officials may benefit from activities that help them understand leadership not only as a desire to help, but also as a responsibility that requires judgment, fairness, and realistic decision-making.

To strengthen the negotiation, response, and management of political expectations, capacity-building activities may focus on expectation management, adaptive leadership, consultative decision-making, strategic planning, and emotional resilience. The study found that Sangguniang Kabataan officials negotiate expectations through consultation, adaptation, compliance, assertion, and emotional coping. These processes show that officials are not passive actors; they actively adjust, defend, manage, or reinterpret expectations depending on the situation. The implication is that young officials may become better prepared to handle conflicting expectations without immediately viewing limitations, criticism, or delays as personal failure.

To address the influence of political expectations on role performance, leadership identity, and decision-making,

regular reflection sessions may be conducted among Sangguniang Kabataan officials. The findings show that expectations can strengthen commitment and responsibility, but they may also lead to fatigue, hesitation, emotional distance, or withdrawal tendencies. Reflection sessions may provide officials with a space to process their governance experiences, assess how expectations affect their leadership identity, and recognize that difficulty in governance does not automatically mean failure.

This may help them sustain public service commitment while also becoming more aware of the pressures attached to their role.

For Policy and Administration

For Local Government Units and Sangguniang Kabataan federations, the findings provide a framework for improving institutional support for young officials. Since governance reality was found to strongly shape how political expectations are negotiated, Local Government Units may strengthen technical assistance on budgeting, documentation, program implementation, coordination, and compliance with governance procedures. This recommendation is grounded in the finding that expectations become harder to manage when young officials encounter bureaucratic processes, limited resources, and institutional requirements without enough guidance.

Mentorship systems may also be established between experienced local officials and Sangguniang Kabataan officials. The study found that political expectations are shaped by social influences and institutional awareness, meaning that guidance from experienced actors can affect how young leaders understand and carry out their roles. A mentorship system could help officials translate their expectations into practical action, especially when they encounter procedural delays, public demands, resource limitations, or political pressure. This does not mean that mentors should control youth officials, but that they may provide support in navigating governance realities more effectively.

Local Government Units may also create clearer consultation and feedback mechanisms between Sangguniang Kabataan officials, communities, and institutional actors. Since the study found that expectations are relational and shaped through interaction, regular consultation could help clarify what communities expect, what officials can realistically provide, and what institutional support is available. This may reduce the gap between public expectations and actual governance capacity, while helping young officials manage expectations in a more transparent and participatory way.

For the Academe

For political science and youth governance studies, the generated grounded theory suggests that political expectations should not be treated only as fixed attitudes, institutional duties, or public demands. Instead, they may be studied as lived, negotiated, and cyclical meanings shaped by experience, interaction, and governance reality. This study extends existing discussions on youth governance by showing that young officials do not simply follow expectations; they form, interpret, negotiate, manage, and recalibrate them through actual governance experience.

The study also refines the discussion on youth leadership by showing that engagement and disengagement are not always separate outcomes. Some Sangguniang Kabataan officials may continue fulfilling their responsibilities while also experiencing doubt, fatigue, or emotional distance. This offers a more realistic understanding of youth governance, where public service may continue even under internal strain. For the academic discipline, this suggests that future studies should avoid viewing youth leaders only as active or inactive, effective or ineffective, committed or disengaged. Their experiences may be more complex, relational, and process-based than these categories suggest.

The theory also provides an original contribution by positioning governance reality as the condition that makes political expectations negotiated. This challenges overly linear views of leadership development and supports a more process-oriented understanding of political behavior. In this way, the study contributes to political science by explaining how early governance experiences may shape leadership identity, decision-making orientation, and

future political engagement among young officials.

Methodological Recommendations for Future Researchers

Future researchers may refine the method by improving the use of in-depth interviewing. Since political expectations involve meanings, emotions, pressures, and personal reflections, future interview guides may include more probing questions on how officials feel when expectations are unmet, how they adjust after criticism or failure, and how they distinguish between personal expectations, community expectations, and institutional expectations. This could deepen the analysis of how expectations are negotiated in practice.

Future researchers may also strengthen theoretical sampling by extending the inquiry to other governance and organizational contexts. While this study focused on selected Sangguniang Kabataan Provincial Federation officials in Sultan Kudarat, future studies may examine political expectations among actors in barangay, municipal, provincial, or national governance institutions. This could help refine the generated theory by exploring how expectations are formed, interpreted, negotiated, and recalibrated across different levels of public service, authority, and institutional responsibility.

Beyond formal political settings, future researchers may also consider applying the generated theory to non-political organizational contexts, such as workplaces, student organizations, civil society groups, community-based organizations, or professional institutions. Although these settings do not operate as formal government structures, individuals within them may still experience expectations from superiors, peers, members, clients, communities, or the organization itself. This may provide a basis for examining whether the process of forming, interpreting, negotiating, and recalibrating expectations also appears in leadership, management, and organizational roles outside youth governance.

This recommendation does not assume that the theory automatically applies to all settings. Rather, it suggests that the theory may serve as a starting framework for comparison and refinement. By studying other contexts, future researchers may determine which parts of the theory remain useful, which parts need revision, and which new categories may emerge from different social and institutional realities.

Future researchers may also make memo writing more explicit. Since constructivist grounded theory recognizes that meaning is co-constructed by the researcher and participants, a detailed memo trail may help show how early codes became focused codes, how categories were compared, and how the final theory was developed. This would strengthen the transparency of the analytic process and help readers understand how the grounded theory emerged from both the data and the researchers' interpretation. Observation may also be considered as a supplementary method in future research. Since political expectations are acted upon in meetings, consultations, program implementation, and community interactions, observation protocols may help future researchers examine how expectations are performed in actual governance settings. This could complement interview data and provide a richer understanding of how officials manage expectations in practice.

Constructivist Grounded Theory Considerations

These recommendations reflect the constructivist orientation of the study. They are not intended to prescribe one correct way of handling political expectations. Rather, they provide possible actions based on how participants experienced, interpreted, negotiated, and recalibrated expectations in their own governance contexts. The researchers' position as political science students, documented through reflection and memo writing, also shaped how political expectations, governance reality, and youth leadership were interpreted in the study.

The recommendations are connected to the evaluation criteria of grounded theory. They support credibility because they are logically connected to the empirical findings on unclear expectations, governance constraints, emotional strain, and recalibration. They show originality because they treat political expectations as negotiated and cyclical rather than fixed or purely institutional. They demonstrate resonance because they reflect the everyday realities of

Sangguniang Kabataan officials who continue serving while managing pressure and limitations. They also show usefulness because they offer practical directions for officials, institutions, and future researchers who seek to understand and support youth governance more realistically.

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