

Evaluating Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) Leaders' Performance against Illegal Drugs

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Abstract:- Illegal drugs have been a widespread problem in the Philippines, particularly among the youth. The government has launched various campaigns and programs to address this issue, and the SK is expected to play a significant role in implementing these initiatives. Thus, this research is conducted to assess the extent of implementation of the SK leaders in performing their duties and responsibilities related to addressing illegal drugs. It also seeks to explore the unique programs being practiced by the SK leaders in response to the campaign against illegal drugs. This study made use a sequential explanatory mixed method. The respondents of this study were 149 individuals from 14 selected Barangays in Vigan City. Of these, 94 were Barangay Council members, and 55 were Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) Council members. Questionnaire and interview were used to gather data. Findings revealed that the extent of implementation of the SK leaders on the performance of their duties and responsibilities against illegal drugs is Much Implemented with an overall mean of 2.97. While the unique programs are: adolescent hub, literary and numeracy program.

Keywords:- Illegal drugs, Sangguniang Kabataan, unique programs, drug campaigns, performance.

I. INTRODUCTION

It is undeniable that over the past 40 years, the worldwide commitment to combating the drug problem has become more robust and stronger. The scientific and academic institutions, as well as governments and international organizations, have all collaborated to study and address this issue, which is to blame for the unfathomable levels of bloodshed and suffering throughout our nations. However, drugs is a global problem that demands a global solution, and therefore new international consensus is needed in which different countries must make a sustained effort to think about creative and innovative ways to eradicate this scourge from our societies (Kitchen & Novotny, n.d.).

According to Kitchen and Novotny (n.d.), the drug problem has been a significant concern worldwide over the past 40 years. Governments, scientific and academic institutions, and international organizations have all worked together to address this issue. However, the problem demands a global solution, and new international consensus is needed to eradicate it from societies.

The United Nations for Youth (n.d.) has expressed concern about the susceptibility of young people to drug use in recent years. The effects of rampant drug misuse and trafficking are particularly evident among young men and

women, often leading to violence, including street violence. Strategies to prevent drug misuse range from preventing drug use to assisting those who are already misusing drugs. Drug addiction prevention programs are regularly emphasized in drug control strategies at national and international levels.

Poole (n.d.) emphasized that today's youth contribute significantly to society, bringing diverse experiences, perspectives, and energy. With their endless excitement and fresh perspectives on pertinent issues, young people can make a significant contribution to society. Young people in the Philippines face a range of challenges as they grow and develop in a rapidly changing world. They must navigate complex social, economic, and cultural forces while building their identities and making important decisions about their health and well-being. Drug misuse, in particular, has become a concerning trend among young people, with increased availability and diverse options contributing to its prevalence (Poole, n.d.).

To address these challenges, the Philippines has established the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK), a youth governance mechanism with its own budget and national agency as secretariat. The SK plays a crucial role in empowering young people to shape policies and programs that impact their lives. By engaging with the Katipunan ng Kabataan and initiating initiatives that promote the well-being and growth of youth, the SK enables young people to maximize their potential and contribute to the development of the nation (UNICEF Manila, 2007; Ateneo de Manila University, n.d.).

The Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) plays a crucial role in promoting the well-being and growth of young people in the Philippines. One of the key challenges that the SK faces is the issue of illegal drugs among youth. As such, SK officials have been actively implementing various programs and initiatives to address this problem.

According to Lontoc, et al. (2019), the implementation of the SK reform law in the Philippines has led to an increase in youth participation in local governance. SK officials have been involved in various programs aimed at addressing the needs of their constituents, including drug prevention programs. Reyes and Ramos (2020) also found that SK officials have been implementing unique programs, such as sports and arts activities, to promote positive behavior among youth and prevent drug use.

One example of a successful anti-drug campaign implemented by the SK is the case of Barangay Pulo in Quezon City. The SK in Barangay Pulo adopted a community-based approach that involved education and

community engagement (Pascua & Testado, 2021). The SK officials worked closely with the barangay council and other stakeholders to promote awareness about the dangers of drug use and to provide support and services to those who were struggling with addiction.

Another program that has been implemented by the SK is the Youth Drug Watch Program. This program aims to prevent drug use among youth by promoting awareness and providing education on the dangers of drug use. It also encourages youth to report any drug-related activities in their community (Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, n.d.).

In addition to drug prevention programs, the SK has also been involved in providing support and services to those who are struggling with addiction. The SK has established rehabilitation centers and has partnered with local organizations and agencies to provide counseling and other services to those who are in need (Filipino Times, 2021).

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Social learning theory proposes that individuals learn through observation and modeling of the behavior of others in their social environment (Bandura, 1977). This theory suggests that behavior is shaped by the interaction between an individual's environment, behavior, and personal factors. In this study, social learning theory can be applied to explain how SK officials learn from their environment and implement unique programs to address the issue of illegal drugs among youth. SK officials may observe successful drug prevention programs implemented in other communities and model their own programs after them. They may also draw on their personal experiences and beliefs to shape their approach to drug prevention. Moreover, social learning theory suggests that behavior is also influenced by reinforcement and punishment (Bandura, 1977). In the case of the SK, positive reinforcement can come from the successful implementation of drug prevention programs and the positive impact they have on the community. This can encourage SK officials to continue implementing these programs and to seek out new and innovative approaches.

Another theory is the *community empowerment theory*. This theory posits that sustainable development can be achieved through the active participation of community

members in decision-making processes and the development of their own solutions to community problems (Zimmerman, 1995). Community empowerment theory can be applied to explain how SK officials involve community members in the development and implementation of drug prevention programs. SK officials may work with community members to identify the root causes of drug use and to develop programs that are tailored to the needs and characteristics of their community. This approach can promote community ownership of the programs and increase their effectiveness. Moreover, community empowerment theory suggests that the development and implementation of community-led programs can lead to increased community cohesion and social capital (Zimmerman, 1995). This can help to build resilience and strengthen the social fabric of the community, which can in turn contribute to the prevention of drug use among youth.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This research aims to assess the extent of implementation of the SK leaders in performing their duties and responsibilities related to addressing illegal drugs. It also seeks to explore the unique programs being practiced by the SK in response to the campaign against illegal drugs.

IV. METHODOLOGY

This study made use a sequential explanatory mixed method. The respondents of this study were 149 individuals from 14 selected Barangays in Vigan City. Of these, 94 were Barangay Council members, and 55 were Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) Council members. Questionnaire and interview were used to gather data.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Extent of Implementation of the SK Leaders on the Performance of their Duties and Responsibilities against Illegal Drugs

Table 1 presents the extent of implementation of the SK leaders on the performance of their duties and responsibilities against illegal drugs. General findings shows that the extent of implementation of the SK leaders is much implemented with an overall mean of 2.97. This means that the SK officials perform their duties and responsibilities; however, there is still a need to improve their performance to deliver the services needed to their constituents and the entire community.

Table 1: Implementation of the SK leaders on their Performance of their Duties and Responsibilities against Illegal Drugs

Area Indicators	TOTAL	
	Mean	QI
1. Implementation of sports and recreational activities	3.53	VMI
2. Conduct of Leadership training	3.08	MI
3. Administer youth forums and symposiums against illegal drugs	2.70	MI
4. Conduct anti-drug abuse campaign anti-Drug abuse campaign	2.95	MI
5. Distribution of informative materials in relation to illegal drugs	2.79	MI
6. Making of informative signs against illegal drugs	2.81	MI
7. Implementation of the Sangguniang Kabataan Standard Training in Extensive Anti-Drug Preventive Education – A Uniform Program for Youth Leaders (SK-STEP-UP)	2.08	I

8.	Implementation of the Kabataan KontraDroga at Terorismo	2.73	MI
9.	Participation to the Barangay Drug Abuse Council Programs	2.96	MI
10.	Promulgation of resolutions necessary to carry out the objectives of the youth in the barangay, in accordance with applicable provisions of the Code.	3.14	MI
11.	Initiating programs designed to enhance the social, political, economic, cultural, and intellectual, moral, spiritual, and physical development of the members.	3.26	MI
12.	Consulting and Coordinating with all youth organizations in the barangay for policy formulation and program implementation.	3.20	MI
13.	Creating regular and special committees, as it may deem necessary to effectively carry out its programs and activities	3.09	MI
14.	Partnering with the LYDC in planning and executing projects and programs of specific advocacies like good governance, climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and resiliency, youth employment and livelihood, health and anti-drug abuse, gender sensitivity, and sports development	3.23	MI
General Mean		2.97	MI

Legend:

3.25 – 4.00	Very Much Implemented	2.50 – 3.24	Much Implemented
1.75 – 2.49	Implemented	1.00 – 1.74	Not Implemented

The law requires SK officials, who are elected officials of the local government unit, to carry out their duties and responsibilities to the best of their ability. They were selected because the community, particularly the youth, have faith in their ability to positively influence the youth's well-being.

According to a study by Clarizze et al. (2014b) that evaluated the performance of SK officials in carrying out their mandated duties and responsibilities as outlined in the Local Government Code, all officials received a positive assessment. However, some tasks were found to be carried out ineffectively, and this finding was supported by a similar study by UP-CIDS, which revealed limited youth involvement in activities such as situational analysis, planning, monitoring, and assessment.

The failure to adhere to the SK's established meeting schedule may result in vague and undefined plans for young people. Although officials may have lofty goals at the start of their term, ineffective communication and scheduling conflicts often prevent subsequent planning and well-prepared activities. Interviews revealed that scheduling conflicts were a common reason for officials not fulfilling this duty, as most SK officials are students with other priorities. The study also found that although other youth organizations received a good rating, they received little support when consulting and developing programs with SK officials. Due to the youth's immaturity and lack of coordination and consultation with the SK and the Sangguniang Barangay, inadequate planning and actions may result in problems such as poorly planned activities, inconsistent and irrelevant objectives, insufficient funds, and conflicting projects with other organizations (Clarizze et al., 2014).

Specifically, the implementation of the SK leaders on the performance of their duties and responsibilities against illegal drugs, sports, and recreational activities got the highest mean of 3.53, interpreted as "Very Much Implemented". This only implies that the Sangguniang Kabataan, in general, are more involved in playing sports

and conducting activities that generate fun and excitement for all participants, including those watching such sports or recreational activities. Besides the fun and excitement, sports and recreational activities serve as bonding time for the youth, wherein they showcase their talents, teamwork, and camaraderie to win in the event they are participating. This is validated by the interview conducted with the different participants in each barangay in which the most common activity they are doing is sports. One of the groups of participants stated that "*Siguroti common kaseti sports, which is translated to "Maybe the common is sports."*" Another group said,

"Pinagpalpaliga mi ngem almost 2 years gamin nga nag stop itipatournament," which is also translated as "Our competitions, however, almost 2 years that the tournaments are stopped."

Furthermore, there are many benefits of sports and recreational activities, including improving individuals' health and well-being, contributing to the empowerment of individuals, and promoting the development of inclusive communities.

Lastly, sports and recreational activities are not limited since they can participate, even those with disabilities. In the case of the researcher, who happens to be a Taekwondo instructor and coach, the researcher has a student who is blind. The student still performs the needed skills with proper instruction and guidance while appreciating and enjoying her work.

Paralleled with the implemented measures of Sangguniang Kabataan, "Sangguniang Kabataan Standard Training in Extensive Anti-Drug Preventive Education – A Uniform Program for Youth Leaders (SK-STEP-UP)" got the lowest mean of 2.08 and described as "Implemented", followed by "Youth Forums and Symposiums against illegal drugs" with a mean of 2.70 and "Kabataan KontraDroga at Terorismo" with a mean of 2.73, both verbally described as "Much implemented" with regard to the implementation of the SK leaders on the performance of their duties and

responsibilities against illegal drugs. This means those identified measures with a low rating are usually disregarded regarding implementation. This could be attributed to the fact that some of the programs to be implemented are new to the youth leaders, and lack the necessary information on how to perform them. If the youth leaders do not know what to do, they often disregard the implementation and focus on activities they can perform well. There are also instances that the youth leaders tend to avoid the implementation of such activities because they are unaware of the program or activity.

As cited by Poole (n.d.), young people's engagement significantly enhances service delivery. Young people are the finest experts on young people, so by letting them make important decisions on the most important things, services are more relevant to their needs. Young people gain from better services that aim to deliver the answers and explanations they want and from being active participants in an attempt that involves them. Nevertheless, this is not the same as having a young person assess the program who plays a crucial role in the management and structures. It could also be claimed that the service beneficiaries might evaluate the program and offer suggestions for development and areas that function well. Those from the target group who are familiar with the program inside and out are more effective than people who merely know what the program offers.

The statement made by Poole also supports the result of the implementation of the performance of SK officials on the "Sangguniang Kabataan Standard Training in Extensive Anti-Drug Preventive Education – A Uniform Program for Youth Leaders (SK-STEP-UP)". Despite the mandate from a national agency, the youth leader could not perform the program since it was only institutionalized a couple of months before the pandemic. As a result, the youth leaders do not have firsthand knowledge and experience as to how, where, and when it should be implemented, likewise, who should be involved in implementing the program.

Also, Youth Forums and Symposiums against illegal drugs have a similar situation to the SK STEP-UP. This program is one of the everyday activities that can be done to strengthen the youth's knowledge, understanding, and belief about the ill effect of drugs not only to the people but to the general society. However, it is not being fulfilled due to a lack of implementation by the SK officials due to a lack of mechanisms. It will always need the assistance of an agency or experts primarily concerned with drug prevention to provide answers or ways to address their concerns related to drugs.

As stated in the Theory of Generalization by Bandura (2001), a person matures, and when exposed to more complex environmental forces, his pattern of behavior will change, age represents the level of maturity and educability. As Brownell (1998) added, the importance of providing training and seminars will encourage independence and reward initiative within the capabilities in motivating to achieve these become productive and to work cooperatively with others. Experiences obtained in one situation apply to

other situations, likewise, Zell and Krizan (2014) emphasizes the value to understand, organize and generalize specific experiences, which can be encouraged by training, depending upon the person's insights.

As to the Kabataan KontraDroga at Terorismo, the full implementation will happen once the program is institutionalized in the city. The Federated Sangguniang Kabataan officials in the city of Vigan should give their attention to the process of giving formality of the program so that youth leaders in each barangay can already start performing their duties and responsibilities in the implementation of the said program. The federated officers may also seek the LGU official's assistance to help institutionalize the Kabataan KontraDroga at Terorismo.

Similar to what is needed in the city regarding the implementation of the Kabataan KontraDroga at Terorismo, Cavite made a move to educate and engage Caviteño youth on the importance of drug abuse consciousness through a holistic approach to understanding its impact, the Provincial Youth and Sports Development Office (PYSDO) facilitated a 2-day Anti-Drug Abuse Seminar for Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) leaders. The seminar proper began with Mr. Joseph Ryan V. Geronimo, Senior Staff of the Department of Interior and Local Government – Cavite opening a profound discussion on the youth's participation in the Anti-Illegal Drugs Program, wherein he elaborated on the role of SK in the Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Council (BADAC) and shared some BADAC experiences. Meanwhile, Mr. Bae shared his insights on the harmful effects, symptoms, and preventive action toward drug addiction. He also imparted the potential damage that illegal drugs can cause to an individual's life. The seminar aims to showcase the province's initiative against illegal drugs and its aim to equip the youth on drug abuse prevention (Cavite Provincial Information and Community Affairs Department, 2018).

In general, the SK is performing well. However, there is a need to improve their performance in exercising their duties and responsibilities, particularly in the implementation of the measures against illegal drugs. Furthermore, the SK must be trained to further capacitate them in performing their duties and responsibilities as youth leaders. As Poole (n.d.) explained, when young people have faith in who they are and what they do, they become responsible citizens with limitless potential.

Similar findings were found in the study carried out in Plaridel, Bulacan: despite the adults' outstanding efforts and willingness to assist the kids, most of the projects and activities originate from adults rather than necessarily from the youth. It would be crucial for the kids to be actively involved in the design and development stages of any program planning when considering the future of youth programming and youth development initiatives. This will guarantee that young people are sufficiently engaged. This way, the young people will be interested in the program and try to keep it going. This does not imply that the youth do not support the collaborative projects the elders put forth. The research team believes it is crucial to ensure adolescents are recognized as assets in the community and, as such, be

involved in project planning for initiatives that interest them. This is crucial because young people depend on adults to suggest programs and projects and expect this to happen regularly. However, when young people feel like they are a part of the planning, they can take the initiative and rely less on elders. Youth gain vital leadership skills in this manner, are better equipped to participate, and have the potential to become tomorrow's leaders (Chand, 2008).

Also, community leaders and SK members need wise, selfless, committed, brave, and effective leadership. These public officials in the community should be the primary source of inspiration, radiating the necessary influence to energize these ideas into a concerted action from the community members to carry out and materialize community projects, particularly those based or partially on the principle of self-help. The municipality's SK and the local officials should take the initiative to organize a meeting of the community's people so they can share their thoughts and feelings, overcome their indifference, and become aware of the difficulties that affect the whole area. Community leaders must know how to influence the group to follow them or lead them in the right direction, thus, achieving the country's national objectives (Aranas, 2015).

B. Unique Programs being Practiced by the SK in Response to their Campaign Against Illegal Drugs

It was identified that the Sangguniang Kabataan is practicing two unique programs in response to their campaign against illegal drugs. These programs are the adolescent hub and literacy and numeracy program.

C. Adolescent Hub

The adolescent hub is a program by the city government through the City Health Office. This program is created to provide friendly facilities and programs for the youth. What makes it unique is that different barangays, including schools, are tasked to provide a center to cater to the needs of the youth.

At the barangay level, the SK officials must create their hub. The SK must provide a facility for the conduct of the different activities of the program. In the hub, youth can stay there and play, bond or hand out. The hub also serves as a counseling and consultation place for youth experiencing problems or difficulties or wanting advice. Through the hub, the SK officials also guide the youth to avoid teenage pregnancy or drugs related issues.

The Sangguniang Kabataan Officials initiate the adolescent hub and are being assisted by the Barangay Council if needed. Different government and non-government organizations also participate in the hub depending on the services needed by the youth.

In the implementation of the adolescent hub, the SK officials set up a place that can be utilized for the implementation of the different programs. The SK officials also provide materials for games and facilities used for research and projects. Lastly, the SK officials conduct consultation and counseling with the youth whenever they have problems or only need some advice. When the SK

official observes that a youth needs help, they will be the ones to approach the youth to address whatever is needed.

The Social Bond Theory supports the adolescent hub, which explains why most people refrain from crime versus engaging in criminal activities based on the premise that people instinctually form social bonds. These social bonds become an unwritten contract that keeps society running smoothly by the people within the community adhering to social standards, avoiding the fate of losing a job, disappointing friends and family, and jail time. This theory also explains that the strong relationship between the people in the community creates a solid bond capable of enduring any problem that may arise in the future, particularly for the youth (Carnevale, 2022).

Likewise, a response of participant 2 supports the premise stating that

"Agdamag kami sir dagitimakita mi ngakabataan. Amwen mi no adda problema da maipanggeptipinagbasa da, wenno personal ngabanag. Sami tulongansuda sir no mabalin mi ipaay." (We ask sir the youth. We try to know if they have problems with their studies or their personal life).

Participant 4 said

"Consultation para dagitimadepdepress, adda kailnaganna or about ti drugs. Pagay-ayaman, agtambay, jammig." (Consultation for those who are depressed, those who have needs or about drugs. Playing area, hangout place and jamming)."

Similarly, participant 8 mentioned

"Adolescent hub da sir mabalin da iti ag chess, agaramid projects da, no kayat da agaramid project da, ditoy da nga um-umay". "(In the adolescent hub, they can play chess, do their projects. If they want, ket can do their projects, they come here)."

Lastly, participant 12 said

"Jay adolescent hub sir, no masapolti consultation dagiti pada mi nga SK sir, umay da nukwakenyami. Kapatang mi suda. Wennosaan sir no adda madlaw mi, dakamimismotimangkapatangkenyadan". "(For the adolescent hub sir, if consultation is needed to the SK, they come to us. With talk with them. Or if ever we have some observations, we are the one who will approach them)".

David Hawkins and Richard Catalano created the risk and protective factor theory based on a thorough review of the research on drug use and other problem behaviors in young people. Similar to the medical model of human disease, this theory contends that substance misuse and other problematic behaviors can be reduced by reducing the figure of risk variables, halting their growth, and enhancing personal protective factors. Risk factors can happen to a person or their family, friends, or community, making them more likely to develop substance use issues. As opposed to this, protective factors are everything that lowers the likelihood of emerging problematic substance usage. (*SAGE Reference - Risk and Protective Factor Theory*, n.d.)

The Adolescent hub is seen as an effective measure of drug prevention. As cited by Cavenett (2013), furthermore, it was stated that, regardless of whether they increase program-specific effectiveness or short-term cost-effectiveness concerning reducing youth substance use, prevention efforts that include developing youth leaders capable of playing a significant role in prevention efforts for youth or adults associated with youth substance use are valuable as future investments in the field of substance abuse prevention. The effectiveness of a program may or may not be increased by having trained young leaders offer youth prevention programs, but the program's long-term impact on youth leaders is a very different matter. Youth who tend to abstain from substance use are often recruited because there may not be much opportunity for declining use rates among youth leaders. However, a trained youth leader may play a future parental or community role and, frequently, a future preventionist.

VI. LITERACY AND NUMERACY PROGRAM

The literacy and numeracy program is an activity of the SK which serves as an avenue for learning. SK officials extend their services to the youth by providing tutorials to help them in their studies. Usually, the SK officials are the ones who serve as tutors to their constituents. Before the pandemic, the SK usually visit different schools to conduct tutors. They can also set a schedule if they wish to be tutored at the barangay hall, or the SK officials will be the ones to visit them at home.

This is supported by the response of participant 10:

“Jay literacy and numeracy program mi sir, mabalin da ag pa schedule ta agisuro kami jay barangay hall wennomapan kami jay balay da.” (For the literacy and numeracy program, they can set a schedule for their visit at the barangay hall for us to teach them or we can go visit them at their respective houses)”

The need to encourage young people to be law abiding to avoid being involved in drug-related activities can be done through proper education and guidance by people with the passion and dedication to influence others. As explained by Deci and Ryan (1985) in theory, General Motivational styles called general causality orientations are a person's belief in personal change and their drive to change. The Causality Orientations Theory describes an individual's motivation and conduct pattern. General causality orientations are typically stable, trait-like traits that express a person's confidence in their capacity to influence or effect change.

However, according to Poole (n.d.), it has been recognized that drug prevention programs in schools are an inefficient form of prevention. The first problem is that restricting drug prevention initiatives to schools leaves out a sizable portion of young people, especially those with unconventional lifestyles which could have left school and begun working. Moreover, antiquated educational techniques are frequently used in schools, where students are expected to passively absorb the lessons in life that their adult teachers are trying to impart to them. This approach

stops the audience member from replying to the speaker, preventing a fruitful interchange of ideas and the audience member from understanding the lesson. It is ineffective for young people who seek acceptance as individuals capable of making decisions that impact their own life. In their school years, children start to look for role models among their peers rather than among their teachers or parents, which emphasizes the disconnect even more.

VII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusion

Drug prevention programs are most effective when young people participate, as it fosters character and confidence in them. SK officials are doing well in implementing their duties against illegal drugs, but special attention is needed to further strengthen the campaign. The SK has unique programs that can help the youth in the campaign, and giving them the opportunity to put these ideas into practice will enable them to develop more robust drug prevention strategies. Active involvement of young people leads to better outcomes, more creative ideas, and decisions that are more suited to their needs.

B. Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, the researcher offers the following recommendations:

- Encourage and facilitate active participation of young people in drug prevention programs, as their involvement fosters character development and enhances their confidence.
- Provide special attention to strengthening the campaign against illegal drugs, despite the SK officials' good implementation of their duties.
- Enable SK officials to implement unique programs that cater to the needs of young people, allowing them to develop more effective drug prevention strategies.

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