

POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT AMONG THE YOUTH IN BARANGAYS WITH LOW
NUMBER OF QUALIFIED VOTERS DURING THE 2007 SANGGUNIANG
KABATA-AN ELECTION: ISSUES AND CONCERNS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to describe the extent of political involvement of the youth during the 2007 Sangguniang Kabata-an (S.K.) election and determine the factors that deter or promote political involvement and formulate possible course of actions that would address current related issues and concerns. Nearly half of the respondents (48.8 %) were 16 years of age, 32.6 % of whom were 17 years old, while the rest were 15 years old. Almost two-thirds of the respondents reached the high school level of education, while one-fourth of them are in college level. This implies that a substantial portion of the respondents have low educational attainment. Nearly half of the respondents' parents were earning a gross monthly income of P5, 000 and below, while less than one-fourth were earning P20, 001 and above. This implies that the biggest portion of the respondents came from families whose monthly gross income is below the minimum regional wage. The mean monthly gross income was P5, 762.78. Less than one-half of the respondents' fathers have earned college degrees, while nearly one-fourth were college level and the rest were either elementary or post graduate level. The trend indicates that most of the respondents' fathers have college education. On the other hand, nearly one-half of their mothers earned college degrees, while slightly over one-fourth of their mothers were high school graduates, while the rest of their mothers were either elementary, high school, or college level. The majority of the respondents have no family members who are actively supporting politicians or occupying elective positions in Iloilo City in the last six years, while 14.0 % of them have at least one family member who is actively supporting politicians in the last six years in Iloilo City. The rest of the respondents have two, three, or four family members who are active in politics. Majority of the respondents have manifested "high involvement" during the 2007 SK election. However, more than one-fourth of them also manifested 'very poor involvement'. This implies that a substantial percentage of their level of involvement was characterized by active involvement or no involvement at all. All participants decided to run as SK chairwomen because of family pressure and encouragement by barangay officials. All of them have family members who are barangay or SK officials. Furthermore, they were also assured of victory, either by their parents or barangay officials

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background and Rationale of the Study

The start of the 21st century seems to be a triumph for democracy as a form of governance. Almost everybody claims to be a democrat, and almost all political regimes claim to be democracies (Defensor, 2002). In a country of 85 million people, direct democracy is impossible. In today's practice, democracy refers to a system of government where the people actively participate in running the government through their representatives. The processes and procedures involved in the selection of executives or legislators are called electoral system, defined as "the set of rules that govern the conduct of elections" (Calvert, 1993).

The will or consent of the people is expressed by way of election, plebiscite, initiative, referendum, recall and public opinion, which they exert on those who govern on their behalf, particularly the elected officials. Democracy cannot do without elections, which are the means by which the people are able to elect or even boot out corrupt and incompetent officials. But the process is not perfect, elections still yield officials who are unworthy of the people's mandate (de Leon, 1999).

In an authoritative survey of the impact of recent social change upon political participation, Dalton, (1996) identifies several interesting trends in the United States. These can be summarized as follows:

1. an increasingly informed and critical citizenry;
2. a decline of trust in the effectiveness of political elites and institutions;
3. a decline in loyalty to traditional political parties;
4. a drop in turnout rates in elections due to lack of meaningful political choice;
- and
5. an increase in unconventional political participation.

Development theorists have observed that most citizens in developing societies of the Third World are politically inept and immature in the context of democratic perspective. Hence, political modernization is one prerequisite for the attainment of national development to the maximum. Accordingly, they must be enabled to engage in interest articulation, interest aggregation, political communication, political socialization and political recruitment (Muhi et.al., 1993).

This simply means that the people must vigilantly exercise their right in running a government that is sensitive and responsive to their needs and aspirations. Part of this is electing officials that can hold accountability for their actions. However, this lack of mature political participation has created a kind of governance that is relatively ineffectual in promoting the general welfare.

Although citizens' general knowledge and critical skills have undoubtedly been enhanced, many still lack understanding of the specific details of conventional democracy (Bennet, 1997). In a study conducted by the University of California in 1998 involving 250,000 American college students, the results showed that only 27% felt it was important to keep up with political affairs (Guardian, 1998). The data revealed a

particular worrying trend on the lack of interest in politics among the young college students, while their older counterparts tended to be more active in the political affairs.

In the Philippines it is a fact that present day Filipinos have become more vigilant in protecting their “consumer interests” related to food, water supply, housing, drugs, medicines, garbage disposal, among others (Zapanta et. al., 2003). In a liberal democracy, the main function of elections is to serve as a countervailing political factor to armed force or violence. Elections are the way by which government diffuses economic difficulties, military demands, or internal political challenges (Defensor, 2002).

In [1996](#), the turn out at the [general election](#) in the United States was 49 percent, which was the lowest turn out since 1924, despite a record of 13 million new voters registering to vote in 1992. This could simply have been because so many potential voters considered the result a forgone conclusion rather than America developing a sudden apathy towards politics. The election results of [2000](#) replicated the [1996 election](#) in terms of voters’ participation with only about 50% of registered voters participating. This was in a campaign where there was no foregone conclusion regarding the candidates - Al Gore and George W. Bush. However, the [2000 election](#) was considered to be one of the most open [elections](#) in recent years with no foregone conclusion, yet the voting turn-out was low. One problem that has made worse the issue of voter representation is the fact that an individual must initiate voter registration well before [Election](#) Day. It cannot be done immediately before an election and the evidence shows that this is a policy that favors those who wish to involve themselves in the political set-up but acts against those who are less politically motivated from (http://www.historylearningatsite.co.uk/voting_patterns_in_america.htm)

However, in a study made by the British Cohort Survey in England in 1997, the results found that of the 9,000 people born in 1970, 60% of men and 75% of women had “no interest” or were “not interested” in politics. This marked a considerable increase in political apathy compared to similar surveys conducted six years earlier (Sunday Times, 1997). Furthermore, the study showed that the apparent political apathy can be explained by the public’s association of politics with discredited politicians and elite system of democracy (Faulks, 1999).

In a study made in 1980, the results showed that 80% of American college educated adults voted, 59% of those with four years high school education voted 43% of those with a grade school education voted. It is a generalization of the study that American voters are far more likely to vote if they have middle to large income, are educated to college level and have an occupation that is linked to their education (http://www.historylearningatsite.co.uk/voting_patterns_in_america.htm).

In the European theatre, studies have shown public’s distaste for politics is viewed as a symptom of a much deeper sense of political dissatisfaction. The figures indicate that since 1976 satisfaction with the working of democracy in Western Europe has declined considerably (Fuchs & Klingermann, 1995). In a parallel study conducted by the Commission of the European Communities in 1997, the results revealed that 41% of the citizens said they could not rely upon their national parliament, and 45% felt their government to be unreliable.

The nature of existence of government is to regulate societal activities in order to harmonize conflicting interests, thereby being able to achieve social order for the good of the greatest number. The running of government intends to solve social problems,

solvable only and provisionally by citizens and the public at-large, along with and assisted by their public officials (Wilson, 1994). On the other hand, how the government intends to solve societal problems is called public policy. In the context of a democratic system of governance, the people should have an active voice in the formulation of policies, which directly or indirectly affect their lives and society as a whole.

The Research Problem

Modern social and political theorists have sought to examine the case of an alienated man – “a man who is not, in fact, what he is in essence: a man whose actual existence does not correspond to his human existence” (Petrovic, 1067). The word ‘alienation’ means aloofness, estrangement, apathy, keeping away, indifference, and cutting off from something or somebody, whether society, religion, administration, or even self (Gould & Kolb, 1965).

In a democratic system of governance, political power emanates from the people. The President, Vice-President, members of Congress, local chief executives, and members of local law making bodies are all directly elected by the people. Once elected, these officials have the power to chart the destiny of nations.

At the barangay level, SK officials are granted by law adequate power by RA 7160 to enhance the quality of life of the youth through government funded programs and projects. In some cases these projects and programs are also provided by Non-Government Organizations. Section 426 of RA 7160 states that, “The Sangguniang Kabataan shall:

- (a) Promulgate resolutions necessary to carry out the objectives of the youth in the barangay in accordance with the applicable provisions of this Code;
- (b) Initiate programs designed to enhance the social, political, economic, cultural, intellectual, moral, spiritual, and physical development of members;
- (c) Hold fund-raising activities, the proceeds of which shall be tax exempt and shall accrue to the general fund of the Sangguniang Kabataan: provided, however, that in the appropriation thereof, the specific purpose for which such activity has been held shall be satisfied;
- (d) Create such bodies or committees as it may deem necessary to effectively carry-out its programs and activities;
- (e) Submit annual and end-of-term reports to the sangguniang barangay on their projects and activities for the survival and development of the youth in the barangay;
- (f) Consult and coordinate with all youth organizations in the barangay for policy formulation and program implementation;
- (g) Coordinate with the appropriate national agency for implementation of youth development projects and programs at the national level; and
- (h) Exercise such other powers and perform such other duties and functions as the sangguniang barangay may determine or delegate or as may be prescribed by law or ordinance.

Looking at the duties and functions of the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK), one can readily see that the SK as an institution exercises real power in charting the destiny of barangays. Effective management would necessarily require SK officials to be knowledgeable about the scope and limitation of their duties and functions. In

discharging their duties and functions, SK officials are also bound to follow prescribed requirements mandated by RA 7160.

The Legal Dilemma

The proper utilization of political power may not be realized if it is contrary to law. In Iloilo City, some barangays have less than five elected SK members, which means that the elected SK officials are at a dilemma since they cannot make any resolutions that would allow them to utilize the SK budget nor draw their development plan due to lack of quorum.

If the Filipino strongly believed and cherished this democratic practice, it follows that the people are willing to actively participate in the political arena, either as candidates or plain voters. The study determined the extent of political involvement among the youth in barangays with low number of qualified voters under the premise that it is relatively easier for the government to “reach-out” to fewer number of voters.

Objectives of the Study

This study attempts to describe the respondents’ political involvement during the 2007 Sangguniang Kabata-an (SK) election. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. describe the personal characteristics of the respondents such as age, sex, educational attainment, educational attainment of parents, monthly income and parents gross monthly income;
2. describe the political characteristics of respondents such as number of family members who are active supporters of a political party or parties, and number of family members occupying elective positions;
3. describe their involvement during the 2007 SK election;
4. determine factors that promote or deter political involvement;
5. examine current issues and concerns about the role and functions of the SK; and
6. formulate strategies that would enhance political involvement among the youth and address current critical issues and concerns pertaining to the role and functions of SK representatives.

Theoretical Framework

Developmental Theory of Democracy

According to Faulks, (2000), the developmental theory of democracy is a more compelling one because political participation is seen as good in itself. It is something that all individuals can play a part in and through, thus developing not only their political competence, but also forge the links that form civil society. In relation to this study, it is assumed that the respondents tend to believe that they have no active voice in the democratic system, hence, their disinterest in actively participating in the last SK elections.

Theory of Reasoned Action

The theory of reasoned action and behavior performance postulated by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen states that the primary determinant of behavior is the intention of the person to perform the act (Taylor. 2000). The person's intention to behave in one way or the other is treated as a function of a person's attitude towards performing the behavior and his perception of the social pressure exerted upon him/her to perform the behavior. The theorist further argues that in order for a person to perform a given behavior, the person must have formed "a strong commitment to perform the behavior".

In the context of this study, it is assumed that those who voted or ran as SK candidates have strong commitment to the roles and functions of the Sangguniang Kabata-an (SK) as an institution.

Rational Choice Theory

According to the rational choice theory, human beings make rational calculations with respect to the best way to maximize utility or benefits. In relation to this study, it is assumed that respondents would tend to be more politically involved in the SK election because they believe they can get something in return.

Operational Definition of Terms

Personal Characteristics refers to respondents' age, sex educational attainment, monthly income, nature of employment/business, profession or work of parents.

Age refers to the respondents' actual age on the date of the SK elections which was held on October 29, 2007.

Sex refers to the biological classification of the respondents, categorized as either male or female.

Educational Attainment refers to the highest educational attainment of respondents who have earned college, high school, and elementary education.

Gross Monthly Income refers to the total monthly gross income of the respondents' parents. Gross income is categorized as follows: P5,000 and below; P5,001 to P10,000; P10,001-15,000; P15,001 to P20,000; and P20,001 and above.

Educational attainment of parents refers to the highest educational attainment of respondents' parents and is categorized as follows: elementary educated, High school educated, college educated, post baccalaureate educated (Master / Doctoral).

Political characteristics refer to the number of respondents' family members who are actively supporting a political party and the number of respondents' family members who have occupied elective positions in the last six year or are occupying elective positions during the time that the study was conducted.

Number of family members who are active supporters of political parties refer to the immediate family, parent's brothers, sisters, and their parents (Lolo/Lola) who are

actively supporting politicians in Iloilo City in the last six years or are occupying elective positions during the time that the study was conducted.

Family members occupying elective positions in the last six years refer to the immediate family, parent's brothers, sisters, and their parents (Lolo/Lola) who are occupying elective positions in Iloilo City in the last 6 years or are occupying elective positions during the time that the study was conducted.

Extent of political involvement refers the actual participation of respondents in the last SK elections. Political involvement is broken into series of actions such as registering as voter, actual voting, and running as candidate. Each action is given an equivalent of one point. The highest possible score is 3 points and the lowest is zero for those who failed to perform a single act of political participation. Political involvement is categorized as follows: High involvement (3 points); Moderate involvement (2 points); Poor involvement (1 point); and No involvement (0 point).

Significance of the Study

The results of the study may provide our lawmakers valuable information that may help them formulate policies that would enhance the participation of the youth during elections.

This study may provide government officials insights towards understanding the interplay of various factors that influence political alienation and come up with programs that would overcome these barriers in order to motivate the youth to actively participate during regular SK elections.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

The study covered seven barangays (villages) with low number of qualified SK voters during the 2007 SK election. The structured questionnaire was administered in seven separate settings, so that the researcher and research assistants can immediately respond to questions and clarifications in a uniform manner.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the processes followed in the conduct of the study. This includes (1) the research design, (2) identification of the study population and the study area, (3) determination of respondents and (5) data processing.

Research Design

This study is descriptive in nature. To answer the objectives of the study, the one-shot survey designed was used. This design was used in this study because it can describe a situation as it exists at a particular time.

Study Area and Population

1. The target population of this study were the 43 youths in the seven mentioned barangays (villages) in Iloilo City with low number of qualified SK voters during the 2007 SK election. Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents in the seven barangays.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents in the Barangays

Name of Barangay	No. of Qualified Voters	Percentage %
1. Brgy. Semenario, Jaro	4	9.30
2. Brgy. El 98, Jaro	6	13.95
3. Brgy. Bantud, Lapaz	6	13.95
4. Brgy. Laguda, Lapaz	5	11.62
5. Brgy. San Jose, City Proper	5	11.62
6. Brgy. Sampaguita, City Proper	4	9.30
7. Brgy. Kahirupan, City Proper	13	30.23
Total	43	100

Study Instrument and Data Collection

A self-administered questionnaire was used in collecting the data for this study. The questionnaire was constructed based on the objectives of the study and operational definition of the variables. After the researcher had formulated the questions needed to obtain the required information from the respondents, the instrument was presented to a jury of experts who provided some suggestions in order to enhance the quality of the questionnaire.

The revised questionnaire was pre-tested among selected youth at L.J. Ledesma Subdivision, Jaro, Iloilo City who were not part of the study sample for suggestions and

comments before the reproduction of the final copies. The questionnaire was constructed in English language and the local dialect, depending on the preference of the respondents.

Before the survey was conducted, formal letters requesting permission to conduct the study were sent to the seven barangay (villages) chairmen. The letter explained the rationale and objectives of the study.

Data Processing and Analysis

Data was processed as soon as all the completed questionnaires were collected. Further review was made, and when completed, the data was encoded and computer processed and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows.

Frequency and mean were used to describe the personal characteristics of the respondents such as age, educational attainment, school currently enrolled, employment status, gross monthly income of parents and political characteristics such as number of family members who are actively supporting political parties and number of family members who have occupied elective positions in the last six years in Iloilo City. The same statistical tools were used to describe the respondents' political involvement during the 2007 SK election.

For information which could not be fully captured through the quantitative approach, such as facilitators and barriers of youth involvement in the 2007 SK election, current issues and problems, were obtained through Focus Group Discussion (FGD). All SK Chairpersons of the seven barangays were invited to participate in the FGD, however, two of them failed to attend the activity. The recommendations formulated by the five FGD participants were directed towards improving political involvement among the youth and addressing critical issues about the role and functions of the SK. The recommendations were further presented to the Iloilo City Director of the Department of Interior and Local government for comments and suggestions.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first part of the study pertains to the description of the respondents according to their age, sex, educational attainment, monthly gross income of their parents, educational attainment of parents, and number of family members who are actively supporting politicians and the number of respondents' family members who have occupied elective position in the last six years or are occupying elective positions during the time that this study was conducted in Iloilo City. The second part presents the description of respondents' extent of political involvement during the 2007 S.K. election. The third part deals with the qualitative analysis of current problems, issues, and concerns among the Sangguniang Kabataan (S.K.) officials representing the seven barangays with low number of qualified voters during the last SK election.

Personal Characteristics of the Respondents

Respondents Age

Table 2 shows that nearly half of the respondents (48.8%) were 16 years of age, while 32.6% were 17 years old and the rest were 15 years old. According to Republic Act 7160, only those whose ages are 15 to 17 years old are eligible to participate in the SK election.

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Respondents According to their Age

Personal Characteristics	f	%
Age		
15 years old	8	18.6
16 years old	21	48.8
17 years old	14	32.6
Total	43	100.0

Respondents Sex

Six in every 10 respondents were females (Table 3). Majority of the respondents were females (60.5 percent) the rest were males.

Table 3. Frequency Distribution of Respondents According to their Sex

Personal Characteristics	f	%
Sex		
Male	17	39.5
Female	26	60.5
Total	43	100.0

Respondents' Education

The results in Table 4 reveal that 65.1% of the respondents reached the high school level of education, while 20.9% are in college level. Only 2.3% were elementary level and the rest were high school graduates. This implies that a substantial portion of the respondents have low educational attainment.

Table 4. Frequency Distribution of Respondents According to their Educational Attainment

Personal Characteristics	f	%
Educational Attainment		
Elementary level	1	2.3
High School Level	28	65.1
High School Graduate	5	11.6
College Level	9	20.9
Total	43	100.0

Gross Monthly Income of Respondents' Parents

The data in Table 5 show that nearly half (44.2 percent) of the respondents' parents were earning a gross monthly income of P5, 000 and below, while 14.0 percent were earning P20, 001 and above. Only 9.3 percent were earning P15, 001 – P20, 000 and the rest were earning P10, 001 – P15, 000. This implies that the biggest portion of the respondents came from families whose monthly gross income is below the mandated minimum regional wage of P220 / day. The mean monthly gross income was P5, 762.78.

Table 5. Frequency Distribution of Respondents According to Monthly Net Income of their Parents

Personal Characteristics	f	%
Monthly Income of Parents		
P5000 & below	19	44.2
P5001-P10, 000	6	14.0
P10, 001-P15, 000	8	18.6
P15, 001 and P20, 000	4	9.3
P20, 001 and above	6	14.0
Total	43	100.0
Mean Monthly Net Income	P5,762.78	

Educational Attainment of Respondents' Fathers

The data in Table 6 show that 41.9% of the respondents' fathers earned college degrees, while 23.3% reached college level. Only 9.3% were post graduate level and the rest of their fathers were either high school level (7.0%) or graduates (14.0%). The trend indicates that most of the respondents' fathers have college education.

Table 6. Frequency Distribution of Respondents according to the Educational Attainment of their Fathers

Educational Attainment of Respondents' Fathers	f	%
Elementary level	2	4.7
High School level	3	7.0
High School Graduate	6	14.0
College Level	10	23.3
College Graduate	18	41.9
Post Graduate Level	4	9.3
Total	43	100.0

Educational Attainment of Respondents' Mothers

Table 7 reveals that nearly one-half of the respondents (48.%) earned college degrees, while 4.7% have post graduate education. Slightly over one-fourth (27.9%) of their mothers were high school graduates. This implies that about five in every ten of

their mothers earned college degrees. The rest of their mothers were either elementary, high school, or college level.

Table 7. Frequency Distribution of Respondents according to the Educational Attainment of their Mothers

Educational Attainment of Respondents' Mother	f	%
Elementary level	1	2.3
High School level	4	9.3
High School Graduate	12	27.9
College Level	3	7.0
College Graduate	21	48.8
Post Graduate Level	2	4.7
Total	43	100.0

Political Characteristics of the Respondents

Number of family Members Supporting Politicians in the Last Six Years in Iloilo City

Almost three-fourths of the respondents (74.4 %) have no family members who are actively supporting politicians in the last six years in Iloilo City, while 14.0% of them have one family member who is actively supporting politicians in the last six years in Iloilo City (Table 8). The rest of the respondents had either two, three, or four family members who are active in politics.

Table 8. Frequency Distribution of Respondents According to Number of Family Members Actively supporting Politicians in the Last Six Years in Iloilo City

No. of family Members Actively Supporting Politicians	f	%
0	32	74.4
1 Family Member	6	14.0
2 Family Members	3	7.0
3 Family Members	1	2.3
4 Family Members	1	2.3
Total	43	100.0

Number of Family Members Occupying Elective Positions in the Last Six Years in Iloilo City

The results in Table 9 indicate that almost three-fourth of the respondents (74.4 %) have no family members who have occupied elective positions in the last six years or are presently occupying elective positions in Iloilo City, while 20.9 percent have one member occupying elective position. The rest have two family members occupying elective positions in the last six years in Iloilo city.

Table 9. Frequency Distribution of Respondents According to Number of Family Members Occupying Elective Position in the Last Six Years in Iloilo City

No. of Family Members Occupying Elective Positions	f	%
0	32	74.4
1	9	20.9
2	2	4.7
Total	43	100.0

Respondents' Level of Participation in the 2007 S.K. Election

To derive the respondents "level of Involvement", the scores were assigned to various election activities, namely: 0 point = not registered as voter; 1 point = registered as voter; 2 points = registered and voted in the 2007 SK election; and 3 points = registered, voted, and participated in the SK election contest. The different scores represent the different levels of "involvement", namely: 0 = very poor involvement; 1 = poor involvement; 2 = moderate involvement; and 3 = high involvement.

Table 10 shows that nearly one-half of the respondents (48.8 percent) had manifested "high involvement" during the 2007 SK election, however, more than one-fourth (30.2 percent) of them had also manifested 'very poor involvement'. This implies somewhat extreme political involvements among the youth; they are either actively involved or not involved at all.

Table 10. Frequency Distribution of Respondents According to their Level of Participation in the 2007 SK Election

Level of Participation in the 2007 SK Election	f	%
Very poor Participation (0)	13	30.2
Poor Participation (1)	3	7.0
Moderate Participation (2)	6	14.0
High Participation (3)	21	48.8
Total	43	100.0

Facilitators and Barriers of Political Involvement

In order to fully capture the essence of political involvement among the youth in the 2007 SK election, it is important to solicit the ideas and aspirations of the youth through a focus group discussion (FGD). Five SK chairpersons participated in the FGD because two of them failed to arrived.

The phenomenon of political involvement is the result of interacting societal forces from within and outside the barangay. The purpose of the qualitative analysis is to determine barriers and facilitators of political involvement among the youth and come up with policies that would enhance participation and address critical issues surrounding it.

Youth Perspective of Political Involvement

The FGD participants defined “political involvement” from multiple perspectives. The essence of political involvement according to them means that the youth should:

1. follow the prescribed requirements in order to register as voters;
2. actively campaign and vote during SK election;
3. be role models to be followed;
4. perform their mandated role as SK representatives; and
5. be visible to their constituents.

Factors that Promote Political Involvement Among the Youth

The participants identified nine facilitators of political involvement among the youth during the 2007 SK election and these are the following:

Family pressure. According to one participant she was forced by her parents to run in the 2007 SK election. In her words, “*Ginpilit ako magdalagan bilang SK chairwoman sa amon nga barangay*” (I was forced by my parents to run as SK chairwoman in the 2007 SK election). In fact, it was her parents who provided her the copy of COMELEC application and paid for her drug test, which is part of the requirements for the said election. The comment resulted in a very active exchange of

ideas among the rest of the participants. After engaging in spontaneous verbal interactions most participants expressed that they were simply encouraged by their parents and relatives to run during the 2007 election and were also assured of winning.

Encouragement from Barangay Officials. All FGD participants have family members or relatives who are currently barangay officials and some expressed that they have relatives who are presently serving as SK chairpersons. All of them were assured by some barangay officials that “*Sigurado ka nga mada-og*” (You are sure winners). One participant commented that it was the barangay chairman who personally requested her to run and assured her of victory. According to her, the barangay chairman told her that, “*kulang ang naga-padalagan sa SK ... dapat madalagan ka gid kay sigurado ikaw nga mada-ug*” (only few are running in the SK election and you should run because you are a sure winner).

Desire to improve the performance of the SK. There was a consensus among the participants that the previous barangay SK’s were somewhat inactive and less visible to the youth in their respective barangays and this motivated them to run as SK chairpersons in the 2007 SK election. Some participants expressed that, “*Ginhambalan kami gani nga-a mapadalagan ka SK kay wala man na pulos*” (We were sometimes asked by people what made us run in the 2007 SK election, since the SK is useless). All participants pointed out that they believed that in their own small way they can improve the performance of the SK as an institution. One participant even commented that, “*Wala gid nahimo-an maskin isa ka proyekto sa barangay and da-an nga SK*” (The previous SK have not done anything and have not provided the barangay with even one project). After this comment, the rest of the participants nodded their heads and engaged in spontaneous verbal interactions among themselves. This finding supports the theory of reasoned action by Fishbein and Ajzen that the primary determinant of behavior is the intention of the person to act (Taylor, 2000). The commitment of the participants to enhance the performance of the SK propelled them to run in the 2007 SK election.

To help out-of-school youth. One participant expressed that it was her desire to help the out-of-school youth that really motivated her to run in the previous SK election. This comment was met with silence and disinterest from the other participants. However, there was a consensus among the participants that helping their constituents through projects and programs also motivated them to seek public office. Some pointed-out that they also wished to provide more attention to out-of-school youth in order to make them productive members of the community.

Surpassing the performance of the previous Barangay SK. All participants were in agreement that they want a barangay with active SK officials. One participant even expressed that one reason why she ran in the SK election was to prove that her administration would be much better than the previous SK. She further commented that, “*Mahilig ako sa leadership kag halin sa una gusto ko gid ya maging leader.... gusto ko ma-challenge ko lawas ko... para sa akun qualified ako*” (Ever since, I always desire to be a leader and I want to challenge myself because I fully believed that I am qualified to be an SK chairperson). This comment resulted in a few seconds of silence and passive reaction. However, after engaging in verbal interactions among themselves, they agreed in a consensus that they were fed-up with the inactivity of the previous SK officials; hence, they decided to run as SK chairpersons in the last election. Viewed from one perspective, this finding supports the rational choice theory that human beings make

rational calculations with respect to the best way to maximize utility or benefits. Being a leader would offer prestige and the power to control other people, thereby enabling the person to experience mental fulfillment. Many people would be very willing to invest time and efforts in exchange of this state of being; thus, making rational calculation of the act (candidacy) with reference to its benefits. The satisfaction brought about by offering the people better performance can be treated as a benefit worthy of time and effort. From the perspective of reasoned action theory, political involvement is seen as the product of commitment to enhance the performance of the SK as an institution.

Pressure from peers. Most of the participants expressed that peer pressure from disgruntled youth over the poor performance of their barangays also made them compete in the 2007 SK election. According to one participant, "*Friends ko ang nagtulod sa akon para maka make a change in the barangay*" (My friends were the ones who pushed me to run in the previous SK election). Most participants commented that they were "encouraged" by their friends to run but were not "pushed".

The experience of being an SK Representative. All participants agreed that being SK representatives can help them enhance their personality and leadership skills. One participant expressed that she just wanted to experience how it is to be an SK representative with no other underlying reason. This comment was met with silence and smiles from the rest of the participants. However, most of them commented that the position would enable them to provide improvements in the functions and role of the barangay SK as an institution. Another participant commented that the desire to exercise power was not the reason why she decided to run in the last election but all of them agreed that nothing is wrong by desiring power because it is the use of power that defines its morality.

Enhancing management skills. One participant stated that one of the reasons why she ran in the SK election was to enhance her management skills. She further expressed that, "*Halin sa una gusto ko maging leader ... maskin sa simbahan naga leader ako sa mga youth*" (Ever since it has always been my desire to be a leader ... even in our church I am the leader of the youth). Some reacted to this comment by talking among themselves, but others remained silent. When the interactions resumed, most of the participants strongly expressed that enhancing management skills is necessary in order to achieve better work performance as SK representatives. Some of the participants expressed that they want to learn how to manage time taking into account their dual roles – as students and SK representatives. This comment resulted in a very active interaction among themselves and all of them expressed that as SK representatives they have multiple roles and managing their time is very important in order to be effective officials.

The assurance of being a "Sure Winner". There was a consensus among the participants that all of them were given the assurance by barangays officials and family members that they are "sure winners" in the election. Because of the shortage of SK candidates, all of them were aware that they were sure winners, but most of them were not aware of the legal repercussions if the SK slate is less than the prescribed quorum. One participant was even warned by a barangay official that it is useless to run as SK chairman because there were only three SK candidates.

Factors that Deter Political Involvement of the Youth in the 2007 SK Election

The participants identified eight barriers that deter political involvement among the youth in the 2007 election and these are:

Political involvement and academic performance. All participants were in agreement that there are academic courses that demand so much time and effort from students, thereby discouraging them from actively participating in SK politics. Some of them expressed that B.S. Nursing students would usually tell them that, “*Indi nya gid mahatagan time magpangampanya kag mag-serbe bilang SK respresentative kay tutukan nya iya pagtu-on*” (I cannot give enough time for campaign or serving as SK representative because I have to concentrate on my studies). Most participants also expressed that this is also the attitude of those who are enrolled in big colleges and universities. This finding reinforces the rational choice theory that human beings make rational calculations with respect to the best way to maximize utility or benefits. In the context of this study, some youth perceived their involvement in the SK election as a factor that deters their academic growth or survival. Because of this, they don’t expect some benefits in return for their involvement in SK election, since their focus is on their studies, which they expect would be able to provide them benefits in the near future. However, the finding of this study contradicts the findings of a study conducted in the U.S. in 1980 involving 250,000 college students. The study showed that American voters were far more likely to vote if they are college graduate to college level from (http://www.historylearningatsite.co.uk/voting_patterns_in_america.htm). In this study, the data show that youth with high school education were more politically involved in the 2007 SK election.

Inadequate information campaign by COMELEC. All FGD participants expressed that some youth in their barangays failed to register as candidates because they have inadequate knowledge about the requirements and procedures prescribed by law. Many of them commented that, “*May ara mga kabata-an wala ihibalo sa requirements ... parehos abi sa edad kag ano ang himu-on para makapadalagan*” (Some of the youth don’t have knowledge about the requirements like age requirement and what to do in order to register as candidate). In fact, there was a consensus among the participants that they only knew about the drug-test requirement and the “*cedula*” (residence certificate) when they started processing their registration for candidacy. Some of them commented that there were some youth who backed-out from the SK race when informed about the procedures and requirements prescribed by law. Most participants agreed that this scenario could have been avoided if candidates or even voters were properly informed about all the requirements and procedures mandated by the Local Government Code of 1991.

Avoiding inconvenience. According to the FGD participant, one factor that deters political involvement is the inconvenience of complying with the prescribed requirements and procedures for SK voting and candidacy. Most of them expressed that the youth are easily discouraged by inconveniences. Some of them commented that, “*Tak-an sila mag linya-linya nga dugay sa COMELEC office*” (They are fed-up of falling in line for a long time at COMELEC office). This expression made all of them talk instantaneously and nod in agreement. Some of them also expressed that many of the youth were discouraged to register as voters or candidates because COMELEC office is very crowded and hot,

not to mention the need to come back to COMELEC office to complete some minor requirements. It was the consensus of the participants that the youth are easily fed-up with inconveniences and in the words of one participant, “*Dasig sila matak-an*” (The youth are easily fed-up). This finding can be viewed from two dominant theories. Avoiding slight inconveniences can be treated as a manifestation of poor commitment to the democratic ideals represented by the SK election; therefore the theory of reasoned action by Fishbein and Ajzen holds true since their decision not to participate in the SK election was an off-shoot of their poor commitment to the ideals of democracy. From the perspective of the rational choice theory, the decision not to participate in the SK election due to minor inconveniences may be related to their rational calculation that they will not gain “something” in return, thus reinforcing the theory.

Rectifying clerical errors at COMELEC office. All FGD participants expressed that during the last 2007 SK election, some names of resident voters disappeared from the COMELEC official list of voters. To rectify this kind of error, the concerned parties were required by COMELEC to submit and fill-up pertinent documents. According to one participant, “*Wala nalista ila ngalan pero nagparehistro sila ... may hawid sila ya sang pagregister nila*” (They were not listed but they were able to register as voters and they have duplicate copies of their registration). All of them lamented that it is very tiring to rectify errors emanating either from the barangay secretary or COMELEC.

Arrogant behavior of some COMELEC employees. There was a consensus among the participants that the arrogant behavior of some COMELEC employees discouraged some youth to register as voters or to pursue their candidacy. As expressed by most of them, “*Kami nga youth wala gawa nakakilala kag naka-intindi sang mga rekwesto sa pagpadalagan bilang SK candidate kag dapat buligan kami*” (The youth have no sufficient knowledge about the requirements and procedures needed to be complied by SK candidates). Right after this comment, the rest of the participants openly expressed their dissatisfaction and frustration over the behavior of some COMELEC personnel. To this effect, they expect to be guided properly by COMELEC employees. Most of the participants commented that they were simply given forms to fill-up without any further guidance. Furthermore, they commented that some employees were very passive in entertaining their questions or problems.

Insufficient knowledge about the SK. Most of the participants commented that some youths in their barangays have poor knowledge about the real role and functions of SK representatives. Some also expressed that some youth have no clear idea about the scope and limitation of the power exercised by SK representatives. Some participants expressed that this is true, while others remained silent. However, there was a consensus among participants that many of the youth in their barangays believed that it is only the SK Chairman who is running the Sangguniang Kabataan. A participant commented that, “*Gapati ang iban nga ang mga SK representatives mga alalay lang sa SK Chairman kag wala man sila kuwa-on bilang representatives*” (Some youth in their barangays believed that the SK representatives are simply assistants of the SK chairman and they get nothing from being SK representatives). This comment was met by head nods from the rest of the participants. This finding does not support the study of Dalton (1996) that the American voters were more informed and critical about voting issues and problems in the United States.

The fear of responsibility. Some of the participants commented that some youths in their barangays decided not to pursue their candidacy because they were apprehensive about their responsibilities and obligations to their constituents. The fear of not being able to come-up to expectations de-motivated them from pursuing SK candidacy. A participant expressed that “*Iban nga youth wala nagkandidato kay kulba-an sang obligation*” (Some youth did not run during the 2007 election because they fear being responsible and obligated to serve the interest of their constituents). This reason solicited wide acceptance from the rest of the participants.

Discouragement by parents. There was a consensus from the participants that rich parents are actually discouraging their children from actively participating in SK politics even though their children are desirous to join. Some participants lamented that, “*May kaya man sila, sa universities sila gaeskwela, pero ang kabata-an tani willing ... pero hambal sang parents nila ang SK sagabal sa pag-eskwela*” (Children of well-to do families and are studying at big universities were willing but their parents told them that their involvement in the SK is a distraction to their studies). This comment was supported by nods and spontaneous verbal interaction from the participants.

Issues and Concerns: The Legal Dilemma

The FGD participants were SK chairwomen of seven barangays with low number of registered voters. One barangay has five SK members; hence, it was able to reach the prescribed quorum that enabled them to legally function. However, the remaining barangays are at a dilemma since they cannot make any resolutions that would allow them to utilize the SK budget nor draw their development plan due to lack of quorum.

The Perspective of the Department of Interior and Local Government

The Local Government Code of 1991 and its implementing rules and regulation is silent with regard to the mode of appointment to fill-up existing vacancies in the Sangguniang Kabataan. Because of this predicament, the President of the Philippines who exercises general supervision over local government pursuant to Article X, Section 4 of the 1987 Constitution; Section 18 of the Administrative Code of 1987; and Section 25 of the Local Government Code issued Administrative Order Number 224 on August 8, 2003 authorizing the secretary of Interior and Local Government to exercise the power of appointment to fill-up existing vacancies in the Sangguniang Kabataan at the barangay level.

In a Department Advisory from the Office of the Undersecretary dated March 11, 2003 addressed to all DILG Regional Directors and Field Officers, the communication states that, “The synchronized Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan elections were held on October 29, 2007, and for areas where no election was held on the aforesaid date, the COMELEC through Resolution No. 8374 scheduled the special elections on December 15, 2007. However, based on the reports from the field, there are still barangays without candidates for the position of SK Chairman and/or SK Members. Moreover, there are barangays where the number of candidates for the positions in the “Sangguniang Kabataan was insufficient to complete the set of officers and/or those elected failed to qualify or assumed office, etc., which resulted in incomplete set of elected officials.”

Sec. 423 of RA 7160 states that, “(a) There shall be in every barangay a Sanggunianf Kabataan to be composed of a chairman, seven (7) members, a secretary, and a treasurer.”

With reference to the problem on incomplete set of SK officials, the possible remedy available is to invoke Section 435 (c) of the Local Government Code of 1991 which states that:

“After the vacancy shall have been filled, the sangguniang kabatan chairman shall call a special election to complete the membership of the sanggunian. Such sangguniang kabataan member shall hold office for the unexpired position of the term of the vacant seat.”

Sec.426. Powers and Functions of the Sangguniang Kabataan. The Sangguniang Kabataan shall:

- (i) Promulgate resolutions necessary to carry out the objectives of the youth in the barangay in accordance with the applicable provisions of this Code;
- (j) Initiate programs designed to enhance the social, political, economic, cultural, intellectual, moral, spiritual, and physical development of members;
- (k) Hold fund-raising activities, the proceeds of which shall be tax exempt and shall accrue to the general fund of the Sangguniang Kabataan: provided, however, that in the appropriation thereof, the specific purpose for which such activity has been held shall be satisfied:
- (l) Create such bodies or committees as it may deem necessary to effectively carry-out its programs and activities;
- (m) Submit annual and end-of-term reports to the sangguniang barangay on their projects and activities for the survival and development of the youth in the barangay;
- (n) Consult and coordinate with all youth organizations in the barangay for policy formulation and program implementation;
- (o) Coordinate with the appropriate national agency for implementation of youth development projects and programs at the national level; and
- (p) Exercise such other powers and perform such other duties and functions as the sangguniang barangay may determine or delegate or as may be prescribed by law or ordinance.

Looking at the duties and functions of the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK), one can readily see that the SK as an institution exercises real power in charting the destiny of barangays. Effective management would necessarily require SK officials to be knowledgeable about the scope and limitation of their duties and functions. In discharging their duties and functions, SK officials are also bound to follow prescribed requirements mandated by RA 7160.

The nature of the Department Advisory deals more with the problem pertaining to poor political participation among the youth. The Department of Interior and Local Government simply assumed that the problem is solely related to poor participation and not lack of qualified participants in the SK election.

In an interview with the City Director DILG-Iloilo City on June 18, 2007, she said that because of this prevailing problem, the elected SK officials can nominate qualified youth in the barangay to the sanngunian with approval from the DILG. Furthermore, the City Director said that the minimum number of the Sanggunian should be five elected

officials. Failure to attain the quorum would mean that the elected SK officials cannot legally perform their official duties and functions.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This is the concluding chapter of the study and presents a summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations.

The purpose of the study was to describe the extent of political involvement of the youth during the 2007 Sangguniang Kabata-an (S.K.) election and determine the factors that deter or promote political involvement and formulate possible course of actions that would address current related issues and concerns.

Summary of Findings

Nearly half of the respondents (48.8 %) were 16 years of age, 32.6 % of whom were 17 years old, while the rest were 15 years old.

Almost two-thirds (65.1 %) of the respondents reached the high school level of education, while one-fourth (20.9 %) of them are in college level. Only 2.3 % were elementary level and the rest were high school graduates. This implies that a substantial portion of the respondents have low educational attainment.

Nearly half (44.2 percent) of the respondents' parents were earning a gross monthly income of P5,000 and below, while 14.0 percent were earning P20,001 and above. Only 9.3 % were earning P15,001 – P20,000 and the rest were earning P10,001 – P15,000. This implies that the biggest portion of the respondents came from families whose monthly gross income is below the minimum regional wage. The mean monthly gross income was P5,762.78.

The data show that 41.9 % of the respondents' fathers have earned college degrees, while 23.3 % were college level and a minority percentage (9.3 %) had post graduate education. The rest of their fathers were either high school level or graduates. The trend indicates that most of the respondents' fathers have college education.

On the other hand, the data also reveal that nearly one-half (48.8 %) of their mothers earned college degrees, while 4.7 % have post graduate education. Slightly over one-fourth (27.9 %) of their mothers were high school graduates. This implies that slightly over one-half of their mothers earned college degrees. The rest of their mothers were either elementary, high school, or college level.

The majority of the respondents (74.4 %) have no family members who are actively supporting politicians in Iloilo City in the last six years, while 14.0 % of them

have at least one family member who is actively supporting politicians in the last six years in Iloilo City. The rest of the respondents have two, three, or four family members who are active in politics.

Almost three-fourth (74.4 %) of the respondents have no family member occupying any elective positions in Iloilo City in the last six years or currently occupying elective positions at the time this study was conducted, while 20.9 % have only one member currently occupying elective position. The rest of them have two family members occupying elective positions in Iloilo city or currently occupying elective positions during the time that the study was conducted.

Majority of the respondents (48.8 %) have manifested “high involvement” during the 2007 SK election. However, more than one-fourth (30.2 %) of them manifested ‘very poor involvement’. This implies that a substantial percentage of their level of involvement was characterized by active involvement or no involvement at all.

Major Findings from the Focus Group Discussion

All participants decided to run as SK chairwomen because of family pressure and encouragement by barangay officials. All of them have family members who are barangay or SK officials. Furthermore, they were also assured of victory, either by their parents or barangay officials

All participants have manifested a strong dislike to the inactivity of the administration of previous Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) in their respective barangays and decided to compete in the election in order to improve the performance of the SK as an institution. Most of them have the idea that they can surpass the performance of the previous administration and bring more projects and programs to their constituents.

Most of the participants expressed that their decision to compete in the 2007 SK election was also the result of pressure from peers who were also disgruntled about the passive administration of the previous SK officials.

Based on their facial expression and body language, most of the participants do not consider the possibility of enhancing management skills as a reason why they decided to run in the SK election.

The FGD participants had identified some factors that deter political involvement in the 2007 SK election. There was a consensus from all the participants that some youth who were enrolled in academic courses which demands so much time and effort decided not to participate in the 2007 SK election.

All participants also expressed that some youth failed to participate in the 2007 SK election because they were not thoroughly informed about the requirements and procedures in registering as voter or running as SK candidate. They all commented that the information campaign of COMELEC was inadequate and ineffective in reaching out to the youth.

There was a consensus among all the participants that many youth had manifested disgust over the inconvenience brought about by the requirements and procedures prescribed by COMELEC. These inconveniences refers to the overcrowding and hot environment at the COMELEC regional office and the arrogant behavior of some employees, whom they perceived as indifferent in providing assistance to SK voters or

candidates, especially on matters pertaining to the rectification of clerical errors in their voting documents.

All participants commented that rich parents are discouraging their children from any involvement in the SK election. These children are usually enrolled in big universities or colleges in Iloilo City. The parents usually tell their children that any involvement in the SK is a distraction to their studies and is not worth their time and attention.

Another reason that deters political involvement among the youth is their insufficient knowledge about the roles and functions of the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK). Most of the participants expressed that many of the youth perceived the SK representatives as mere assistants of the SK chairman and exercising no real power and authority. Most of them also expressed that some of the youth perceived the SK as a useless institution, henceforth, not worthy of their time and attention.

Some of the participants expressed that some youth decided not to run as SK candidate because they fear being responsible to their constituents. The idea of performing certain obligations mandated by law deters them from actively participating in barangay SK politics. However, this reason was not supported by some participants based on their facial expression and silence.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are advanced:

1. The Local government Code of 1991 should be amended in order to provide the Executive Branch more flexibility in addressing the problem pertaining to shortage of qualified SK participants;
2. The SK in barangays with inadequate number of minimum elected SK officials should be allowed to perform their roles and functions; however, in matters needing majority votes, it should be referred to the elected officials of the Iloilo City SK Federation for approval;
3. COMELEC should intensify its information campaign about election requirements, procedures, role and functions of the Sangguniang Kabata-an in collaboration with barangay officials and the academe; and
4. Registration of voters and candidates should be decentralized at the barangay level, thereby providing the youth convenience and speed in complying with the documentation requirements or rectifying clerical errors.

Integrating barangays with low number of qualified SK voters to well populated barangays is not recommended because this course of action would only create more problems. Barangay elections are divided into two components, the elected barangay officials and the SK officials. The problem of this study covers only the latter because the former does not have any problem of this nature.

Implications on Policy

In most cases the main characteristic of statutes is their broadness in scope. The underlying reason for this is to give the Executive Branch adequate room to formulate the implementing rules and guidelines. The Executive Branch is the one constantly in touch and interacting with the ‘realities’ in the various political subdivisions in the country. Its bureaucratic machinery regularly updates the Office of the President about the prevailing issues and concerns of the people. Therefore, it is just logical to provide the Executive Branch more room in formulating the implementing rules and guidelines of statutes.

However, the prerogative of the Executive Branch to formulate the implementing rules / guidelines is not absolute. In principle, such prerogative cannot go against the purpose or spirit of the law. The law states that there should be seven (7) SK members in every barangay and the quorum of this number should be five members in order for the SK to function legally. However, this statutory provision is not always achieved during SK election.

The recommendations proposed by the SK chairpersons are highly functional, taking into consideration the current predicament of their respective barangays. However, RA 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991 is very clear about the creation and election, powers and functions and the conduct of meetings of the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK). Since the prescribed number of SK membership is a statutory provision, an amendment is first required because the Executive Branch cannot implement rules and guidelines that would contradict the provisions of the law.

The amendments should take into consideration the present problem of the seven barangays covered by this study. In cases where there is shortage of qualified SK voter in some barangays, it is highly suggested that the elected SK officials be allowed to perform their roles and functions, however, in matters requiring majority votes, such should be delegated to the elected officers of the Iloilo City SK Federation. Furthermore, the amendments must also specify the time frame for the SK Federation officials to convene and decide on matters requiring majority votes and the entire process must be strictly supervised by the Department of Interior and Local Government.

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