

Institutionalizing and Managing a Financially Independent Sangguniang Kabataan: The Role of SK Chairperson

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Abstract

Financial management expertise aids Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) Chairpersons in achieving and managing financial independence under Section 20 of Republic Act No. 10742. This study explores the experiences of Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) Chairpersons in Tagum City, Philippines, in achieving and managing financial independence. Through in-depth interviews with eight former SK Chairpersons, the study reveals that effective financial management strengthens institutional inclusivity and resilience. Key challenges faced by SK Chairpersons include insufficient procedural knowledge, inadequate internal resources, political pressure, and lack of youth participation. To overcome these challenges, they employed coping mechanisms such as continuous self-development, attention to detail, and communication initiatives. The study underscores the importance of promoting accountability, transparency, and constituent feedback in SK decision-making. The findings suggest that effective management of financial independence enhances decision-making and youth governance. The study recommends continuous training and resources for SK Chairpersons to improve their procedural knowledge and capabilities. The National Youth Commission and Local Youth Development Offices can play a crucial role in providing support to SK Chairpersons, thereby helping build more resilient and inclusive institutions.

Keywords: Chairperson, Financial Independence, Institutionalizing, Philippines, Sangguniang Kabataan

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Introduction

The Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) plays a vital role in promoting youth participation in governance and community development. It is recognized as a platform that allows young individuals to engage in public affairs and contribute to local policymaking (Erlina et al., 2023; Maglunque & Aceron, 2021). However, since its inception in 1975, the SK has faced recurring criticisms related to inefficiency, fund mismanagement, and lack of accountability (Palangdao et al., 2023). These issues led to substantial reforms, most notably the passage of Republic Act No. 10742, or the SK Reform Act of 2015, which aimed to redefine the structure, responsibilities, and financial independence of the SK.

Financial independence is a cornerstone of these reforms. It enables SK chairpersons to plan and execute programs autonomously and manage funds responsibly, thus enhancing local governance effectiveness (Llave, 2020). Yet, despite its importance, SK leaders often struggle with technical and procedural gaps in implementing financial autonomy. Many express confusions about complex processes and lack sufficient training in budgeting and financial reporting (Flores et al., 2022). Bautista (2020) further pointed out that SK councils often failed to submit reports and implement development projects effectively, revealing a weak foundation in financial management. These concerns are compounded by critiques that young, elected officials lack legal capacity and real-world experience in contract management and governance (SK Operations Manual, 2024; Danao, 2015).

To operationalize financial autonomy, Joint Memorandum Circular (JMC) No. 1, s. 2019 issued by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), and National Youth Commission (NYC) outlined procedural guidelines. These include obtaining a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN), applying for a Fidelity Bond, and opening a current bank account under the SK's name. This was further strengthened by DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2023-171, which emphasized the compliance of newly elected SK officials with these financial and administrative requirements immediately after taking their oath and completing the mandatory training.

Despite clear legal mandates, implementation varies across localities. Enciso et al. (2022) reported that in General E. Aguinaldo, compliance with the financial independence provision led to better youth empowerment outcomes, showing that proper adherence to the reform law can positively impact governance. However, other localities have yet to fully realize the benefits due to lack of support mechanisms, capacity building, and institutional guidance. This inconsistency highlights a pressing

research gap: while financial independence is legally mandated, little is known about the actual experiences, strategies, and challenges SK chairpersons face in carrying it out.

This study is anchored on Republic Act No. 10742 and DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2023-171, which serve as the theoretical and procedural backbone of the research. These documents delineate the responsibilities and expectations placed on SK chairpersons as the primary actors in institutionalizing financial independence within the SK. The study also supports Sustainable Development Goal 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), emphasizing transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness in governance—especially in youth-led structures.

The study adopts a qualitative descriptive methodology to explore the lived experiences of SK chairpersons in financially independent SK units. Using purposive sampling, in-depth interviews were conducted to understand their challenges, coping mechanisms, and management strategies. The data were analyzed using a thematic approach to identify recurring patterns and key themes.

Specifically, the study answers the following research questions:

- 1) How did SK Chairpersons effectively institutionalize a financially independent Sangguniang Kabataan?
- 2) What challenges do SK Chairpersons encounter in managing financially independent SK?
- 3) What coping mechanisms did the SK Chairpersons employ to overcome challenges?
- 4) What strategies do SK Chairpersons recommend to successfully manage a financially independent SK?

This research acknowledges several limitations. It focuses on one city, which may affect the generalizability of findings, given the unique political and socio-economic dynamics of each locality. Moreover, it primarily gathers perspectives from SK chairpersons, potentially excluding valuable input from other stakeholders such as barangay officials or youth constituents. Finally, while Republic Act No. 10742 serves as the main theoretical lens, it may not capture all the contextual and cultural variations in leadership experiences across different Barangays.

Methods

Study Participants

The study targeted former Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) chairpersons with diverse experiences, representing various settings, budget scales, and leadership styles in managing financially independent SK units. A total of eight SK chairpersons were selected to participate in in-depth interviews. This sample size ensured diversity in experiences, capturing insights from different geographical locations, budgetary contexts, and leadership approaches within the study locale. The chosen sample size aligned with qualitative research standards, which typically recommend a range of six to 35 participants (Morse, 2000).

Participants were chosen through purposive sampling, a method designed to select individuals who could provide valuable and diverse insights into the research questions. This approach emphasizes information-rich cases to explore matters central to the study's purpose (Patton, 1990). Eligible participants included SK chairpersons with at least three years of service and one year of experience managing a financially independent SK, ensuring they had substantial tenure and varied experience. These criteria allowed for a deeper examination of leadership styles, challenges, and financial planning strategies. Participation was voluntary, with individuals able to decline or withdraw at any stage without explanation.

Table 1. SK chairpersons were selected to participate in in-depth interviews

| Code | Age | Years in Serving Financially Independent SK | Barangay Unit | Study Group |
|-------|-----|---|------------------------------------|-------------|
| IDI 1 | 26 | 1 year & 6 months | Barangay Magugpo West, Tagum City | Interview |
| IDI 2 | 26 | 2 years | Barangay Mankilam, Tagum City | Interview |
| IDI 3 | 26 | 2 years | Barangay La Filipina, Tagum City | Interview |
| IDI 4 | 26 | 1 year & 2 months | Barangay Magugpo East, Tagum City | Interview |
| IDI 5 | 25 | 1 year & 2 months | Barangay Canocutan, Tagum City | Interview |
| IDI 6 | 27 | 1 year | Barangay Nueva Fuerza, Tagum City | Interview |
| IDI 7 | 24 | 2 years | Barangay Magugpo South, Tagum City | Interview |
| IDI 8 | 26 | 1 year & 5 months | Barangay Magdum, Tagum City | Interview |

The study was conducted in Tagum City, Davao del Norte, Philippines, focusing on former SK chairpersons from financially independent Sangguniang Kabataan units in eight selected barangays: Mankilam, La Filipina, Magugpo East, Magugpo West, Magugpo South, Nueva Fuerza, Canocutan, and

Magdum. These barangays were purposely chosen based on their budget scales, population sizes, and leadership styles, reflecting diverse local dynamics. This selection aligns with Yin's (2018) recommendation to choose cases or locales offering a wide range of experiences, enhancing the depth and breadth of the research.

Materials and Instruments

The researchers employed a semi-structured, research-designed interview guide to investigate the experiences, decision-making processes, and challenges faced by SK chairpersons in managing financial independence. This approach, endorsed by Mashuri, Sarib, Alhabsyi, and Ruslin (2022), is particularly effective for qualitative research as it allows for the collection of in-depth information while maintaining focus on the study's objectives. In-depth interviews were conducted to comprehensively explore participants' experiences, perspectives, and challenges. As noted by Boyce (2006), in-depth interviews are valuable for gaining detailed insights into individuals' thoughts and behaviors and for exploring complex or new issues in depth.

Study Design

The study employed a qualitative research design with a holistic case study approach to explore the role of SK chairpersons in financially independent Sangguniang Kabataan units. This approach facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the case within its real-life context, highlighting complexities and variations across different settings. As Follette (2001) explains, holistic case studies view the unit as a single global phenomenon, contrasting with embedded approaches that consider a unit as the sum of its parts. The study was bound by time and activity, with researchers collecting extensive data over an extended period using multiple methods.

This study adopted an exploratory-descriptive approach to gain new insights and provide a comprehensive understanding of the roles of financially autonomous SK chairpersons. DeCarlo (2018) notes that exploratory research builds initial understanding, while descriptive research defines and details the subject. The researchers served as observer-participants during interviews, fostering rapport while maintaining objectivity to enhance the study's credibility. A descriptive data analysis framework was used to examine the chairpersons' responsibilities and decision-making processes. As Rawat (2021) explains, descriptive analysis uncovers patterns and meets analytical conditions, while Creswell (2013) emphasizes its value in systematically describing the research subject. To ensure trustworthiness, the study applied Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four criteria: credibility (member checking), transferability

(contextual richness), dependability (audit trail), and confirmability (researcher reflexivity), ensuring the study's objectivity and reliability.

Data Gathering Procedure

Thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) structured phases, was employed to process and understand qualitative data systematically through "coding," facilitating the identification of patterns and meaningful insights aligned with the research objectives.

1. Familiarization with Data: Researchers transcribe and repeatedly read interview data to immerse themselves and note initial ideas.
2. Generation of Initial Codes: Meaningful parts of the data are labeled with short codes or keywords; memos are used to record key points.
3. Identification of Themes: Codes are grouped into broader themes that reflect patterns and insights across the dataset.
4. Review of Themes: Themes are checked for coherence with coded data and the full dataset, using tools (e.g., MAXQDA) and thematic maps.
5. Defining and Naming Themes: Themes are clearly defined, named, and refined to ensure they accurately represent the data.
6. Production of the Report: Key findings are reported with strong examples, tied to the research questions and literature, and presented visually and narratively.

Adhering to ethical guidelines, researchers met research ethics by securing informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, and prioritizing participant well-being. Continuous monitoring and addressing of ethical concerns were conducted throughout the research process. This methodology provides an extraordinary exploration of the role of the SK chairperson, emphasizing the credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability of the study's qualitative data. Ethical considerations are integral to maintaining the integrity of the research process.

Result and Discussion

Eight former SK chairpersons (six females and two males, aged 24–29) from various barangays in Tagum City, Davao del Norte, participated in in-depth interviews. They represented Mankilam, La Filipina, Magugpo East, Magugpo West, Magugpo South, Nueva Fuerza, Canocutan, and Magdum—barangays with financially independent SK units. To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms were used.

Participants were purposively selected based on criteria including at least three years of service and one year of managing a financially independent SK. The Provincial Youth Development Office (PYDO) of Davao del Norte verified which Barangays had operational SK financial independence, based on compliance with Republic Act No. 10742 and DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2023-171 (e.g., functioning SK treasurer, approved ABYIP, and independent fund management). The interviews aimed to explore their experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, and recommendations for managing an autonomous SK.

Categorization of Data

Using Braun and Clarke's 2006 framework, the researchers conducted a systematic analysis of the transcribed in-depth interviews. This began with familiarization, where transcripts were read multiple times to identify key concepts. In the next phase, recurring ideas were assigned to initial codes. These codes were then grouped into potential themes, which were refined through repeated review to ensure clarity and alignment with the entire dataset. To support this process, the study used MAXQDA Analytics Pro 2022 as a qualitative data analysis tool. It enabled the researchers to organize and retrieve coded data efficiently, visualize code relationships, and generate thematic maps that helped confirm emerging patterns. This software also ensured consistency in the application of codes and themes across all data. In the final phase, representative responses were selected to illustrate each theme, and the findings were linked to research questions and existing literature. This structured approach allowed for a thorough and credible analysis of the role of SK chairpersons in managing financially independent SK units.

Experience of SK Chairpersons in Institutionalizing a Financially Independent Sangguniang Kabataan

The study participants described their lived experiences as SK chairpersons in institutionalizing a Financially Independent Sangguniang Kabataan. As a result of the study, four themes were generated: Complying with Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) Requirements, Seeking Assistance from Local Authorities, Attending Preparatory Training, and Consulting with Financially Independent SK. The mentioned themes helped researchers report the core ideas, which detail their lived experiences in institutionalizing Financially Independent SK units.

Complying with DILG Requirements

One of the central themes in institutionalizing a financially independent SK is the chairpersons' compliance with the requirements set by the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG). After completing the SK Mandatory Training, which equips youth leaders with essential governance skills (Cal, Abellanosa, Payao, and Niere, 2023), SK chairpersons are expected to fulfill a series of administrative steps as outlined in DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2023-171. These include applying for a Fidelity Bond, securing a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN), and opening a separate SK bank account. These procedures are necessary for the SK to fully exercise its fiscal autonomy, and compliance with them marks the foundational stage of becoming financially independent.

“First requirement jud before mag process is dapat naka attend mi sa SK mandatory training.”

- ID14

“The first thing to do before processing is that we must have attended the SK mandatory training.”

Seeking Assistance from Local Authorities

Another key theme is the SK chairpersons' reliance on support from local authorities to successfully establish financially independent SK units. Navigating the technical and procedural requirements set by national policies often required guidance from government agencies and barangay officials. Collaboration with these institutions provided clarity on compliance steps and ensured proper alignment with local governance protocols. As emphasized by Ramirez and Sicangco (2023), such cooperation enables SKs to access institutional support and resources, enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of their initiatives while ensuring alignment with broader development goals.

“We also invited concerned offices during the assembly, from DILG, Ug City planning and BIR, COA, City Budget ug LGU Tagum invited pud ato para mahan-ay lang gyud ang proseso sa pag financial independent sa SK sa barangay.”

- ID11

“We also invited concerned offices to the assembly, including the DILG, City Planning, BIR, and LGU, so that the process of making the SK financially independent from the barangay could be properly organized.”

Access to Adequate Training

Access to proper training emerged as a vital factor in enabling SK chairpersons to manage a financially independent SK effectively. Training equips them with the essential knowledge and competencies required for fiscal management and governance. As emphasized by Llave (2020), foundational training prepares youth leaders to handle the complexities of their roles, particularly in financial matters. Hastwell (2023) further highlights that training not only builds technical capacity but also fosters a sense of ownership and empowerment among SK officials, motivating them to actively pursue and sustain financial independence within their councils.

“Dili gyud sya sayon Ma’am, walay nag tudlo sa amoa naay trainings pero dili gyud sya comprehensive na training mura lang sya og sort of information na mao na sya ang buhaton pero ingun na comprehensive wala gyud.”

- IDI1

“It wasn't easy. No one taught us; there was training, but they weren't comprehensive. It was more like providing information on what to do, but nothing was comprehensive. That's why it's so important to have proper training.”

Consulting with Financially Independent SK

A recurring theme in the institutionalization of financially independent SKs is the practice of consulting with fellow SK chairpersons who have already achieved financial autonomy. This peer-to-peer approach helps new leaders minimize delays, replicate effective practices, and adapt proven strategies to their own local contexts. Given the limited clarity during the early implementation of Republic Act No. 10742, such consultations provide practical insights and real-world guidance. As Dosh (2018) emphasizes, learning from peers who have navigated the same challenges offers valuable mentorship, fosters knowledge-sharing, and strengthens the overall capacity of SK leaders to manage finances responsibly and efficiently.

“Sa among time, kung kinsa ang naka una ug financial independence sila napud among sundon para sunod-sunod na para gamay ra ug delay na ma sinati.”

- IDI1

“During our time, we followed those who achieved financial independence first so that we could replicate their process. This way, we experienced fewer delays.”

Challenges of SK Chairpersons in Managing a Financially Independent

The informants were asked what challenges they encountered in managing a financially independent SK. The researcher identified the following emerging themes: Inadequate Internal Resources, Inadequate Procedural Knowledge, Political Pressure, and Lack of Youth Participation.

Insufficient Procedural Knowledge

A major challenge faced by SK chairpersons in managing a financially independent SK is their lack of procedural knowledge, particularly in handling financial transactions and reporting. As the first batch to experience financial autonomy under Republic Act No. 10742, many expressed difficulties in navigating government processes, which hindered transparency and operational efficiency. This finding echoes Flores et al. (2022), who noted that while SK officials recognize the value of financial independence, they struggle with the complexity of its implementation. Rey and Espiritu (2023) further emphasized that procedural understanding—developed through training and experience—is essential to strengthening accountability, building confidence, and improving governance among SK leaders.

“Daghan mi ug pangutana na wala natubag regarding sa pagka sunod-sunod sa mga proseso. Labi nagiud sa among financial transactions. Dili pariha sa barangay na sanay na sa mga pasikot-sikot pero sa amoaa is bag-o pajud kaayu na trabaho.”

- IDI1

“We have many unanswered questions regarding the sequence of processes, especially with our financial transactions. It's not like in the barangay where they are already familiar with the procedures, but for us, this work is very new.”

Inadequate Internal Resources

Despite attaining financial independence, SK chairpersons continue to face challenges due to limited internal resources, including insufficient manpower, funds, and materials. These constraints hinder the smooth implementation of projects, often resulting in delays or unmet community needs. Hansen, Matiang’i, and Ziob (2017) emphasize that human capital—skills, knowledge, and innovation—is a critical asset for effective organizational performance, highlighting the importance of an empowered and well-supported SK workforce. Without adequate support and fair incentives, as Llave (2020) warns, SK performance may suffer, and the risk of mismanagement or disengagement increases, ultimately weakening the sustainability of financial independence.

“Grabe kaayo ka challenging kay lisod ang preparation sa documents tapos naa mi mga activities pahitabuon para sa among youth and kulang mi ug manpower. ”

- IDI2

“It's challenging because preparing documents is difficult, and we have activities to organize for our youth, but we lack manpower.”

Political Pressure

Political pressure from barangay officials emerged as a significant barrier to the effective management of financially independent SK units. As SKs transition away from barangay control, resistance often arises due to long-standing political dynamics and the barangay council's reluctance to relinquish oversight. Informants described tensions during financial deliberations, where SK initiatives faced scrutiny or interference. This challenge aligns with Lena (2018), who observed that some barangays imposed strict rules or redirected SK funds, undermining youth-focused programs. Although Republic Act No. 10742 grants SKs financial autonomy and 10% of the National Tax Allotment, Valencia (2022) noted that political influence can still hinder SKs from fully exercising their mandate and prioritizing youth empowerment free from partisan interests.

“Actually, naa gyuy external challenges kay syempre pila gud ka years under sa barangay ang SK so murag wala nasanay ang barangay na independent ang SK. So, mura sila ug nabag-uhán ba during session mag tubag pa ang SK ug ang barangay kagawad ug unsay nahitabo sa budget, given sa na implement na balaod youth lang gyud ang maka gamit sa SK allocated budget.”

- IDI1

“Actually, there are external challenges because, for many years, the SK has been under the barangay, so the barangay is not used to the SK being independent. It's like they are still adjusting. During sessions, the SK and the barangay councilors still have to discuss what happened to the budget, given that, according to the implemented law, only the youth can use the SK allocated budget.”

Lack of Youth Participation

A major challenge in managing a financially independent SK is the lack of active youth involvement, which undermines the very purpose of the institution. Despite having autonomy, SK chairpersons struggle to mobilize council members and constituents, resulting in poor attendance, weak engagement, and ineffective decision-making. This challenge was echoed by Caingles (2024), who observed disruptions in governance when SK members failed to attend meetings or fulfill duties.

Similarly, Reguindin (2023) noted that low participation, often due to misconceptions that SK programs are limited to sports, hinders the success of youth initiatives. Without strong youth involvement, independence becomes symbolic rather than functional, weakening the SK's capacity to deliver relevant and responsive programs.

“Naa gyud mga time na mag conduct mi sa among assembly kay dili sila mag attend due to personal reasons. Mao na mag lisod pud ko ug relay sa ilaha sa mga angay namong buhaton, then there are times na questionon ko nila pero wala sila nag buhat sa ilang mga task.”
- ID15

“Sometimes we conduct our assembly, and they don't attend for personal reasons. This makes it difficult for me to relay what we need to do. Then there are times when they question me, but they aren't doing their tasks.”

Coping Mechanisms of SK Chairperson Employed to Overcome Challenges in Managing a Financially Independent SK

The participants were asked how they cope with managing a financially independent SK. The researcher identified the following emerging themes: Continuous Self-Development, Attention to Details, Communication and Consultation Initiatives, and Consistent Adherence Evaluation.

Continuous Self-Development

A notable theme among SK chairpersons is the pursuit of continuous self-development, rooted in their personal commitment to community service and youth empowerment. Amidst the challenges of financial management and governance, many draw strength from their intrinsic motivations—what inspired them to lead in the first place. Mahmoud (2023) emphasizes that self-reflection fosters growth by helping individuals understand their behaviors and limitations. For SK chairpersons, this journey is both professional and personal, driven by idealism and civic responsibility. As Morris (2019) notes, self-development is an ongoing effort to enhance one's skills and knowledge, while Walker and Reichard (2020) highlight that leadership is cultivated through intentional experiences. These insights affirm that personal growth is essential in building resilient, effective SK leaders.

“Balik gyud ka sa imung kaugalingon, nganong nisulod ka ana nga trabaho, nganong nagpa pili ka na daghan man ug responsibilities, so balik gyud ka sa imung kaugalingon ang imung rason nganong naa ka as SK chairperson.”

- ID11

“Go back to yourself. Why did you enter this job? Why did you choose to take on so many responsibilities? So go back to yourself. What is your reason for being an SK chairperson?”

Attention to Details

Attention to detail in financial management is a crucial practice among SK chairpersons, helping to prevent issues such as budget overruns, funding discrepancies, and internal disputes. By implementing clear protocols for fund release and regularly updating their councils on financial matters, chairpersons build trust and accountability within their organizations. As shared by IDI3, consistent reporting during meetings reinforces transparency. Lepădatu and Pîrnău (2019) stress that precision in financial handling is essential, especially in complex systems where missteps can have significant consequences. Similarly, Carbon (2023) underscores that adherence to financial reporting standards enhances consistency and stakeholder awareness. These practices strengthen the SK’s credibility and operational efficiency.

“In terms of transparency, every regular meeting namo gina present jud pila na ang nabilin sa budget, sa appropriation, pila nalang ang funds nga nabilin sa bangko and tanan transactions gina present na namo sa ilaha.”

- IDI3

“In terms of transparency, at every regular meeting, we present how much is left in the budget, in the appropriation, how much funds are left in the bank, and all transactions we present to them.”

Communication and Consultation Initiatives

Effective communication and consultation initiatives are essential strategies employed by SK chairpersons to manage a financially independent SK successfully. These efforts foster open dialogue with barangay officials, team members, and youth constituents, allowing for collaborative decision-making and ensuring that projects align with community needs. Consultation not only strengthens leadership and management skills but also promotes a respectful and transparent working environment. Noor (2020) emphasizes that such initiatives enhance participatory governance by encouraging inclusive and thoughtful discussions. Additionally, Flores et al. (2021) highlight that the SK’s mandate involves implementing youth programs, forming committees, and submitting financial reports—all of which require clear communication to function effectively. These practices ultimately support strategic planning, conflict prevention, and sound financial management.

“Sa amo, once na naay mga problems na mag arise kay amo gyud na gina-lingkuran or gipasabotan especially sa internal, attitude sa mga SKs ang commitment og passion mawala na usahay ang respect sa matag usa amo gyud na gina lingkoran.”

- IDI1

“In our case, whenever problems arise, we address them directly, especially internally. The attitude, commitment, and passion of the SKs lost sometimes, and respect for each other, which we prioritize to address.”

Consistent Adherence Evaluation

Consistent adherence to legal and procedural standards is a vital practice among SK chairpersons, reinforcing transparency, accountability, and good governance. Regular consultation with oversight agencies like the Commission on Audit, City Accounting, and City Budget offices—as shared by IDI1—demonstrates a proactive approach to ensuring that financial operations remain aligned with legal frameworks. Putri et al. (2021) emphasize the importance of understanding state systems to navigate institutional relationships effectively, while Batliwala (2020) highlights that adherence to legal frameworks is essential for sound financial governance and broader societal development. This continual evaluation process aligns with adult learning principles, where SK leaders actively seek knowledge to improve their leadership capabilities. Through such diligence, SK chairpersons not only enhance governmental capacity but also contribute to strengthening democratic values and public trust in youth-led institutions.

“Mag visit mi og other offices sama sa Commission on Audit, City accounting, mangutana sa city budget unsay mga dapat buhaton para mas ma guide me, mag sige jud mig pangutana sa ilaha aron dili mi magsigeg kamali og para mas maging knowledgeable mi, para guided jud mi sa pag manage sa independent na SK.”

- IDI1

“We will visit and ask other offices like the Commission on Audit, City accounting, and City Budget to know what should be done to guide us better. We will keep asking them so we won't make mistakes and to become more knowledgeable, so we are guided in managing independent SK.”

Strategies of SK Chairpersons Recommend for Successful Management of a Financially Independent SK

The researcher identified the following emerging themes: Promote Accountability in Decision-making, Facilitate Feedback Mechanisms from Constituents, Practice Transparency in Financial Transactions, and Encourage Openness and Consultative Approach.

Promote Accountability in Decision Making

Promoting accountability in decision-making is a vital strategy for SK chairpersons in managing a financially independent Sangguniang Kabataan. Regular council meetings and an informed understanding of SK processes help ensure transparency, timely interventions, and effective oversight. As emphasized by Aleksovska (2021), institutions' decisions reflect their values and impact communities significantly; thus, public sector accountability mechanisms require individuals to justify their actions to a broader audience. Understanding how these mechanisms influence outcomes is crucial for improving governance. Mallinson and Suter (2022) further explain that accountability reduces decision-making errors by promoting rational judgment and encouraging more thorough information processing. By applying these principles, SK chairpersons can foster a culture of transparency and trust, leading to a more cohesive and results-oriented council.

“Sa transparency especially sa decision-making, meeting gyud na sa council, isip usa ka SK Chairman, hold accountable kas imong mga decision, maong dapat huna hunaon gyod nimo sa makadaghan unsay posibleng impact saimong decisions.”

- IDI2

“Go back to yourself. Why did you enter this job? Why did you choose to take on so many responsibilities? So go back to yourself. What is your reason for being an SK chairperson?”

Facilitate Feedback Mechanism from Constituents

Facilitating feedback from constituents is essential for prioritizing programs, improving decision-making, and promoting participatory governance in a financially independent SK. By systematically addressing urgent community needs, SK chairpersons can ensure efficient resource use and impactful project implementation. Effective communication and teamwork within the SK council, including active listening during meetings, further support this goal. Jean and Caingcoy (2020) emphasize that citizen participation is central to a people-driven democracy, where legislative actions must reflect public input. Establishing open communication channels with constituents empowers youth voices and fosters

inclusivity. Moreover, Anon (2024) highlights that in financial management, feedback mechanisms are critical for informed decision-making, risk mitigation, and performance evaluation—ultimately enhancing the SK's operational efficiency and accountability.

“During meetings, kinahanglan gyud nato mahibal an unsay ikasulti sa ubang miyembro, kay diha ka maka amgo sa mga anga ug di angay buhaton, ug uy on ba ang kadaghanan o dili.”

- IDI1

"During meetings, it is essential for us to know what other members have to say, as you can sense their thoughts and determine what should or should not be done and whether the majority agrees."

Practice Transparency in Financial Transactions

Transparency in financial transactions is a core principle that fosters accountability, trust, and responsible governance within the Sangguniang Kabataan. By openly disclosing financial activities—such as income, expenditures, and budget allocations—SK chairpersons demonstrate integrity and promote public oversight. Tubrazy (2023) stresses the importance of addressing inconsistencies and ensuring compliance with financial regulations to maintain transparency and prevent misconduct. Clear financial reporting also allows regulatory bodies to uphold ethical standards and reduces the risk of fraud or mismanagement. As UFTRS (2020) notes, public trust is foundational to democratic governance, and transparent financial practices strengthen this trust, reinforcing the SK's credibility and legitimacy in managing public funds.

“Regarding pud sa financial transparency, gina update pud namo sila regarding sa dagan sa financial transactions namo, gina update sila monthly para dili pud sila mag worry or mag question kung unsa nay dagan sa ilahang SK dapat informed sila always.”

- IDI1

"Regarding financial transparency, we also update them on the progress of our financial transactions, providing them with monthly updates so that they don't have to worry or question what's happening with our SK. They should always be informed."

Encourage Openness and a Consultative Approach

Encouraging openness and adopting a consultative approach allows SK chairpersons to harness collective insights, fostering more inclusive and responsive decision-making. By involving stakeholders and community members, SK leaders ensure that initiatives reflect the real needs and aspirations of

their constituents, strengthening both engagement and ownership. This approach aligns with the principles of servant leadership, emphasizing empathy, active listening, and prioritizing the welfare of others. As Mizrahi, Cohen, and Vigoda (2020) and Reilly (2020) affirm, such leadership builds trust, enhances social capital, and improves organizational outcomes by giving constituents a meaningful voice in governance. Ultimately, openness and consultation help cultivate transparency, unity, and progress within the SK's jurisdiction.

"Ginauna jud nako ang kapakanan sa ubang tao. Siguro maong nag success ko kay good listener ko. Ginapaminaw gyud nako ang ilahang mulo or unsa akong sunod buhaton nga walay ma compromise."

- ID14

"I put the welfare of other people first. Maybe that's why I'm successful: I'm a good listener. I listen to what they say or what I should do next without compromising."

Encouraging openness and adopting a consultative approach allows SK chairpersons to harness collective insights, fostering more inclusive and responsive decision-making. By involving stakeholders and community members, SK leaders ensure that initiatives reflect the real needs and aspirations of their constituents, strengthening both engagement and ownership. This approach aligns with the principles of servant leadership, emphasizing empathy, active listening, and prioritizing the welfare of others. As Mizrahi, Cohen, and Vigoda (2020) and Reilly (2020) affirm, such leadership builds trust, enhances social capital, and improves organizational outcomes by giving constituents a meaningful voice in governance. Ultimately, openness and consultation help cultivate transparency, unity, and progress within the SK's jurisdiction.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study, anchored in Republic Act No. 10742, affirms that financial independence is vital in empowering SK chairpersons to effectively perform their governance roles. Supported by JMC No. 1, s. 2019 and DILG MC No. 2023-171, financial autonomy is operationalized through key procedural requirements such as the acquisition of fidelity bonds, TIN registration, and the opening of SK bank accounts. Adherence to these guidelines ensures transparency and accountability in financial operations.

The findings emphasize that financial independence, when combined with adequate training and institutional support, strengthens youth leadership and governance. This supports the objectives of

Sustainable Development Goal 16—promoting inclusive, accountable, and transparent institutions. Agencies such as the NYC and Local Youth Development Offices play a crucial role in addressing knowledge gaps and equipping SK officials through continuous training and technical assistance.

To further enhance youth governance, policymakers should institutionalize support systems that build the procedural and leadership capacities of SK chairpersons. Encouraging financial independence must go hand in hand with accountability mechanisms and youth-centered policies that foster responsibility, innovation, and civic engagement. Investing in youth leadership development not only advances community initiatives but also lays the foundation for resilient, inclusive local governance.

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