

Core Youth Participation and Involvement in the Municipality of Santa Cruz, Laguna: Basis for Developing a Comprehensive Plan for the Youth Sector

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Abstract

This study aimed to assess the level of core youth participation in the programs, projects, and activities (PPAs) initiated by the Local Government Unit (LGU) Santa Cruz. Specifically, it sought to determine the demographic profile of the respondents, the level and type of youth participation in the PPAs based on the Typology of Youth Participation and Empowerment (TYPE) Pyramid, the youth involvement across nine centers of participation, and the relationship between demographic profiles, type of youth participation, and levels of youth involvement. *Methods:* A Descriptive-Quantitative survey analysis design was employed, complemented by the Descriptive method of research. The study involved 297 core youth respondents aged 18 to 24 from Santa Cruz, Laguna, selected through Stratified Random Sampling. A structured questionnaire was used as the research instrument, which underwent rigorous content validation. Data were analyzed using frequency and percentage distribution, weighted mean, standard deviation, and Pearson-R product moment of correlation.

Findings: The study revealed that youth aged 20 to 22 were most engaged, with a slight gender imbalance favoring females. Most respondents were In-of-School Youth (ISY), and there was robust participation across all types of youth-driven initiatives—Adult-Driven, Youth-Driven, and Youth-Adult Shared Control. Education, Active Citizenship, and Environment showed the highest levels of youth involvement, while areas like Health, Economic Empowerment, and Governance displayed moderate engagement. Significant relationships were found between demographic profiles, type of youth participation, and levels of youth involvement across various centers. *Conclusions:* Contrary to the hypotheses, demographic profiles and types of youth participation significantly influenced youth engagement across different program areas. The study highlighted the need for inclusive strategies tailored to specific demographic groups, emphasizing the importance of a balanced approach that ensures youth voices are heard and valued.

Recommendations: Based on the study's findings, recommendations include enhancing the Youth-Adult Partnership, creating tailored engagement programs for demographic groups with lower participation, establishing youth councils for leadership development, and offering training and mentorship programs. Initiatives such as a Youth Innovation Fund, diversifying sports programs, and collaborating with educational institutions are suggested to boost youth involvement. Supporting youth-led environmental projects, promoting active citizenship, and providing entrepreneurship support are also highlighted. Strategies should be age-specific, and dedicated youth-friendly spaces should be established. Lastly, a continuous monitoring and evaluation system is advised to assess and improve program effectiveness.

Keywords: Core Youth; Participation; Involvement; Youth-Adult Shared Control; Youth-Adult Partnership

I. Introduction

The youth are widely recognized as integral contributors to nation-building, a notion supported by a plethora of literature and research. young people, constituting a significant proportion of the global population, contribute to economic, social, and political development (Johnson, Patel, Lee, & Garcia, 2020). The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2014) emphasizes that participation is a fundamental right, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and reaffirmed in various international agreements. Active involvement empowers youth to not only enhance their own capabilities but also to contribute meaningfully to community development, fostering vital life skills, awareness of human rights, and positive civic engagement. Equipping young individuals with the necessary knowledge, education, and access to their civil liberties enables them to engage effectively within society.

Youth participation in political, economic, and social spheres is crucial for establishing robust and inclusive democracies. This importance is underscored in Article II, Section 13 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, which recognizes the vital role of youth in nation-building, promoting their holistic well-being and encouraging their active engagement in public affairs (Philippine Constitution, 1987). Moreover, the enactment of Republic Act (RA) 10742, or the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) Reform Act of 2015, further demonstrates the government's commitment to fostering youth participation. This legislation aims to establish mechanisms for empowering youth and ensuring their meaningful involvement in local governance and nation-building (Republic Act No. 10742, 2015).

At the local level, the Municipal Government of Santa Cruz, Laguna has embraced these principles through Municipal Ordinance No. 42 – S2020 and Municipal Ordinance No. 50 – S2020, which establish the Municipal Youth Development Office and the Municipal Youth Development Council, respectively. These ordinances seek to promote wide-ranging youth participation in local governance, facilitate the creation of a Local Youth Development Plan, and oversee its implementation.

As the designated Local Youth Development Officer of Santa Cruz, Laguna, the researcher recognizes the significance of studying how the youth participates in local government initiatives. Engaging in decision-making has proven to give young individuals a stronger sense of empowerment and accountability. This active involvement not only encourages ownership but also deepens their understanding of civic responsibilities (Smith & Johnson, 2018). Studies show that including youth in shaping policies boosts the effectiveness of programs designed for them (Martinez & Gomez, 2018). Moreover, encouraging youth participation can strengthen community social unity and inclusion (Nguyen & Smith, 2016).

Conducting a local study on youth participation in Santa Cruz, Laguna will provide valuable insights into the specific needs and preferences of the youth population, facilitating the development of tailored programs and policies. Moreover, the findings of this research can inform evidence-based policymaking, enabling the municipality to allocate resources effectively and promote a vibrant and inclusive local community. Ultimately, investing in research on youth participation is an investment in the future, ensuring that the voices and perspectives of young citizens are acknowledged and respected.

II. Methods

2.1 Research Design

The research design employed for this study is a Descriptive-Quantitative survey analysis design, complemented by the Descriptive method of research, which was deemed the most appropriate approach. This methodology was chosen to assess youth participation within the programs, projects, and activities (PPAs) of the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Santa Cruz, focusing on the framework of the 9 centers of youth participation. Descriptive Research, involves systematically collecting, presenting, and interpreting data to describe a phenomenon (Thompson & Garcia, 2017). Quantitative Survey Analysis Design, as outlined by Babbie (2019), focuses on collecting numerical data to quantify relationships and patterns. The Descriptive Method of Research, detailed by Creswell and Creswell (2017), seeks to objectively depict and narrate a phenomenon without altering it. By utilizing these methods, the study aims to provide an objective description of youth participation in the LGU's PPAs, ensuring comprehensive data collection and analysis to address the research objectives effectively.

2.2 Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study consist of Core Youth aged 18 to 24 within the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Santa Cruz, Laguna, chosen due to their crucial role in community engagement and transition from adolescence to adulthood. The sample size comprises 297 core youth respondents, as determined by Raosoft Sample Calculator from the original pool of 780 respondents.

They were selected using a Stratified Random Sampling technique to ensure representativeness across the municipality's five zones. This method accounts for the diversity among barangays within each zone, recognizing their unique characteristics and demographics. The study's robust sampling design aims to capture the nuances of youth participation, enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings within the Santa Cruz community.

2.3 Research Procedure

The research procedure encompassed several structured steps to ensure systematic data collection and analysis. In 2023, the study commenced with the proposal and approval of the research title, followed by the meticulous development and validation of a questionnaire by the researcher, incorporating feedback from advisor and subject specialist. Official permissions were then sought from municipal authorities, facilitating the administration of the questionnaire to Core Youth respondents in Santa Cruz. Post-data collection, rigorous analysis ensued, culminating in the integration of panel feedback to refine the final manuscript. Central to data collection was a specifically tailored questionnaire, designed with a Likert-scale rating format to comprehensively capture youth participation within LGU Santa Cruz across various Programs, Projects, and Activities (PPAs) aligned with the nine centers of youth participation.

2.4 Research Instrument

The research instrument utilized in this study is a structured questionnaire tailored to assess the depth and nature of Core Youth participation within the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Santa Cruz, Laguna. Comprising three parts, the questionnaire encompasses various constructs and dimensions relevant to youth engagement and involvement in LGU programs, projects, and activities (PPAs) aligned with the nine centers of youth participation. Part I focuses on gathering demographic information, including age, sex, barangay and youth status. Part II delves into the type of youth participation in LGU Santa Cruz PPAs, utilizing a Likert-scale rating format ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree" to gauge respondents' perceptions as follows.

Numeric Weight	Verbal Description	Descriptive Indicators
5	Strongly Agree	76% - 100% - High level of agreement or a very positive perception of the statement
4	Agree	51%- 75% - Agreement with the statement but might have some reservations or uncertainty
3	Moderately Agree	26%- 50% - Lack of strong agreement or disagreement
2	Disagree	1%- 25% - Disagreement with the statement
1	Strongly Disagree	0% - High level of disagreement or a very negative perception of the statement

Part III assesses the level of youth involvement in LGU PPAs, employing the same Likert-scale rating format to measure degrees of engagement as follows.

Numeric Weight	Verbal Description	Descriptive Indicators
5	Fully Involved	76% - 100% - Deeply engaged and actively participated in a significant number of the LGU's PPAs and are considered key contributors to the programs' success
4	Involved	51%- 75% - Actively and consistently participated in many of the LGU's PPAs
3	Moderately Involved	26%- 50% - Consistently involved in several of the LGU's PPAs
2	Minimally Involved	1%- 25% - Occasionally participated in one or a few of the LGU's PPAs
1	Not Involved	0% - Not engaged in any of the LGU's PPAs

The questionnaire underwent rigorous content validation through concurrent validity method to ensure clarity, reliability, and validity of the instrument. Concurrent validity involved presenting the survey to the researcher's adviser and other experts for feedback to assess clarity and comprehensibility. The data collection process involved obtaining official authorization from municipal authorities, followed by the dissemination of letters of request to key stakeholders, including the municipal mayor, Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) Federation, and various youth-oriented organizations in Santa Cruz. Personal administration of the questionnaire to the core youth respondents facilitated direct interaction and clarification of uncertainties. Overall, the research instrument was meticulously designed and implemented to gather pertinent data effectively, ensuring the reliability and validity of the study's findings.

2.5 Research Instrument

The following statistical treatments were used to test and analyse the data collected.

To determine the profile of core youth respondents in terms of age, sex and youth status, frequency and percentage distribution were used.

To find out the level of youth participation in the PPAs of the municipal government of Santa Cruz Laguna based on the TYPE Pyramid, weighted mean and standard deviation were utilized.

To determine the significant relationship between the demographic profile of the respondents and the programs, projects and activities (PPAs) of the LGU Santa Cruz in terms of the nine centers of youth participation weighted mean and standard deviation were also utilized.

To find out the significant relationship between the type of youth participation based on the TYPE Pyramid and the levels of youth involvement in the programs, projects, and activities (PPAs) of the LGU Santa Cruz in terms of the nine centers of youth participation, Pearson-R product moment of correlation was used.

Overall, these statistical treatments facilitated a comprehensive analysis of the data, enabling the researchers to draw meaningful conclusions regarding youth participation in LGU Santa Cruz PPAs.

III. Results

3.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The analysis of the demographic profile of respondents provides valuable insights into the characteristics

of the core youth population in the Municipality of Santa Cruz, Laguna.

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents Demographic Profile

Demographic Profile	Frequency	Percentage
AGE		
○ 18 years old – 19 years old	95	32.0
○ 20 years old to 22 years old	150	50.5
○ 23 years old to 24 years old	52	17.5
SEX		
○ Male	126	42.4
○ Female	171	57.6
Youth Category		
○ In-of-School Youth (ISY)	248	83.5
○ Out-of-School Youth (OSY)	25	8.4
○ Working Youth	24	8.1
Total	297	

The majority of respondents fall within the age range of 20 to 22 years old, comprising 50.5% of the total sample, followed by those aged 18 to 19 years old at 32.0%. This concentration within the 20-22 age group suggests a higher level of engagement in the survey, possibly due to their transition from adolescence to early adulthood, characterized by increased social awareness and community involvement. However, respondents aged 23 to 24 years old represent the smallest proportion at 17.5%, indicating potentially lower participation rates or decreased interest among older youth.

In terms of gender distribution, there is a slight predominance of female respondents, accounting for 57.6% of the total sample, while male respondents make up 42.4%. This gender imbalance underscores the importance of considering gender dynamics in youth participation initiatives, as it may imply specific needs or preferences among female youth that should be addressed to promote inclusivity and gender equity in community programs. Furthermore, the demographic data reveal that the vast majority of respondents are categorized as In-of-School Youth (ISY), constituting 83.5% of the total sample. Out-of-School Youth (OSY) and Working Youth represent smaller percentages at 8.4% and 8.1%, respectively. While educational institutions serve as key avenues for youth engagement and empowerment, the presence of OSY and Working Youth highlights the importance of tailoring participation opportunities to accommodate their diverse circumstances and needs.

Overall, these demographic insights inform the design and implementation of targeted interventions to foster meaningful youth participation and inclusivity within the local community. Strategies should be developed to engage older youth, address gender disparities, and ensure that participation opportunities are accessible and relevant to all segments of the youth population, including those who are out of school or engaged in employment. These findings align with existing literature on Generation Z, which characterizes them as digitally savvy and socially conscious individuals. Cilliers (2017) categorizes generational trends, emphasizing Generation Z's familiarity with technology and their inclination towards social activism. Schwieger and Ladwig (2018) discuss the impact of technology on youth development, suggesting that Generation Z's digital proficiency influences their engagement with community initiatives.

3.2 Level of Youth Participation in the PPAs of the municipality of Santa Cruz, Laguna based on the TYPE Pyramid

Table 2. Composite Table in the Level of Youth Participation in the PPAs of the Municipality of Santa Cruz, Laguna based on the TYPE Pyramid

Youth Participation	Overall Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Adult-Driven (Controlled) Participation	3.65	High
2. Youth-Driven (Controlled) Participation	4.15	High
3. Youth-Adult Shared Control (Driven)	4.18	High

The overall mean score for Adult-Driven (Controlled) Participation is 3.65, falling within the "High" range. This indicates a relatively strong level of adult-led initiatives in the PPAs. According to Wong et al. (2010b), adult-driven participation often reflects traditional approaches where adults hold significant control over decision-making processes. However, this could potentially limit youth empowerment and ownership of the projects. The Youth-Driven (Controlled) Participation scored an overall mean of 4.15, also falling within the "High" range. This suggests a high level of youth-led initiatives and decision-making in the PPAs. Smith & Johnson (2018) highlight that youth-driven participation promotes empowerment and accountability. With an overall mean of 4.18, Youth-Adult Shared Control (Driven) falls within the "High" range, indicating a balanced approach to decision-making. The similarity in scores between Youth-Driven (Controlled) Participation and Youth-Adult Shared Control (Driven) suggests a strong Youth-Adult Partnership, as noted by Clark & Owen (2013). This partnership fosters collaboration, leading to inclusive outcomes. However, it's essential to prevent Adult-Driven initiatives from overshadowing youth voices.

3.3 Level of Youth Involvement in the PPAs of LGU Santa Cruz in Terms of the Nine Centers of Youth Participation

Table 3. Composite Table in the Level of Youth Involvement in the PPAs of LGU Santa Cruz in Terms of the Nine Centers of Youth Participation

Youth Involvement in the Nine Centers of Participation	Overall Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Health	3.36	Moderately Involved
Health (Sports)	3.30	Moderately Involved
Education	3.57	Involved
Economic Empowerment	3.31	Moderately Involved
Social Inclusion and Equity	3.26	Moderately Involved
Peace-Building and Security	3.30	Moderately Involved
Governance	3.27	Moderately Involved
Active Citizenship	3.46	Involved
Environment	3.58	Involved
Global Mobility	3.26	Moderately Involved

Legend:

Scale	Range	Remarks	Scale	Range	Remarks
5	4.20-5.00	Very High	2	1.80-2.59	Low
4	3.40-4.19	High	1	1.00-1.79	Very Low
3	2.60-3.39	Moderately High			

The areas with the highest levels of youth involvement, falling under the "Involved" category, include Education with an overall mean of 3.57, Active Citizenship at 3.46, and Environment at 3.58. These results align with the findings of Smith & Johnson (2018), emphasizing the importance of education and civic engagement in youth development. On the other hand, Health (3.36), Sports (3.30), Economic Empowerment (3.31), Social Inclusion and Equity (3.26), Peace-Building and Security (3.30), Governance (3.27), and Global Mobility (3.26) all fall under the "Moderately Involved" category. This suggests that while there is some level of youth engagement across these areas, there is room for improvement. Clark & Owen (2013) highlight the significance of social inclusion and economic empowerment in youth participation, indicating a need to focus on these areas to enhance youth involvement. The findings indicate a varying degree of youth involvement across different centers of participation in LGU Santa Cruz's PPAs. While education, active citizenship, and environmental initiatives show promising levels of youth involvement, areas like health, economic empowerment, social inclusion and equity, governance, and global mobility require more attention. To foster holistic youth development and ensure comprehensive youth participation, LGU Santa Cruz should prioritize enhancing youth engagement in these less-involved areas, leveraging the strengths of existing programs and potentially revising strategies to align with youth interests and needs.

3.4 Significant Relationship between Demographic Profile and Centers of Youth Participation

Table 4. Significant Relationship between Demographic Profile and Centers of Youth Participation

Centers of Youth Participation and Involvement	Demographic Profile		
	Age	Sex	Youth Status
Health	$r=.110$ $p=.049$	$r=.145$ $p=.012$	$r=.075$ ns $p=.198$
Sports	$r=.119$ $p=.040$	$r=.235$ $p<.001$	$r=.047$ ns $p=.419$
Education	$r=.144$ $p=.013$	$r=.147$ $p=.011$	$r=.024$ ns $p=.679$
Economic Empowerment	$r=.185$ $p=.001$	$r=.196$ $p=.001$	$r=.054$ ns $p=.356$
Social Inclusion and Equity	$r=.212$ $p<.001$	$r=.064$ ns $p=.268$	$r=.099$ ns $p=.088$
Peace Building and Security	$r=.144$ $p=.013$	$r=.048$ ns $p=.410$	$r=.070$ ns $p=.232$
Governance	$r=.135$ $p=.020$	$r=.093$ ns $p=.111$	$r=.083$ ns $p=.156$
Active Citizenship	$r=.119$ $p=.041$	$r=.084$ ns $p=.151$	$r=.069$ ns $p=.234$
Environment	$r=.080$ ns $p=.171$	$r=.088$ ns $p=.129$	$r=.044$ ns $p=.453$
Global Mobility	$r=.151$ $p=.009$	$r=.114$ ns $p=.50$	$r=.076$ ns $p=.190$
Asterisk means significant		ns means not significant	

The data analysis reveals several significant relationships between demographic profiles (age, sex, and youth status) and various centers of youth participation and involvement. For Health-related center of participation, there is a significant positive relationship with age ($r=.110$, $p=.049$) and sex ($r=.145$, $p=.012$), indicating that youth ages 20-24 and females tend to be more involved in health-related activities. However, no significant relationship was found with youth status. The implications suggest that targeted health programs and initiatives may need to consider age and gender differences to effectively engage youth. In Sports-related center, there is a significant positive relationship with age ($r=.119$, $p=.040$) and sex ($r=.235$, $p<.001$), suggesting that youth ages 20-24 and males are more likely to participate in sports activities. Similar to health, no significant relationship was found with youth status. This indicates a need for tailored sports programs to attract younger participants and promote gender inclusivity. In Education-related center, there is a significant positive relationship with age ($r=.144$, $p=.013$) and sex ($r=.147$, $p=.011$), indicating that youth ages 20-24 and females tend to be more involved in educational activities. Again, no significant relationship was found with youth status. This underscores the importance of considering age and gender dynamics in educational programs to enhance youth engagement. For Economic Empowerment-related center, there is a significant positive relationship with age ($r=.185$, $p=.001$) and sex ($r=.196$, $p=.001$), suggesting that youth ages 20-24 and females are more engaged in economic empowerment activities. No significant relationship was found with youth status. This implies the need to tailor economic empowerment initiatives to attract younger participants and ensure gender equality in participation. In Social Inclusion and Equity-related center, there is a significant positive relationship with age ($r=.212$, $p<.001$), indicating that youth ages 20-24 are more involved in promoting social inclusion and equity. No significant relationship was found with sex or youth status. This highlights the importance of considering age diversity in efforts to promote social inclusion. For Peace Building and Security-related center, there is a significant positive relationship with age ($r=.144$, $p=.013$), indicating that youth ages 20-24 are more engaged in peace-building activities. No significant relationship was found with sex or youth status. This suggests the need to encourage more young people to participate in peace-building initiatives. In Governance-related center, there is a significant positive relationship with age ($r=.135$, $p=.020$), indicating that youth ages 20-24 are more involved in governance activities. No significant relationship was found with sex or youth status. This highlights the importance of encouraging youth participation in governance processes. For Active Citizenship-related center, there is a significant positive relationship with age ($r=.119$, $p=.041$), indicating that youth ages 20-24 are more engaged in active citizenship activities. No significant relationship was found with sex or youth status. This underscores the importance of promoting active citizenship among younger age groups. In Global Mobility-related center, there is a significant positive relationship with age ($r=.151$, $p=.009$), suggesting that youth ages 20-24 are more involved in global mobility activities. No significant relationship was found with sex or youth status. This indicates the need to encourage more young people to participate in global mobility initiatives.

Overall, these findings emphasize the importance of considering demographic factors such as age and gender when designing and implementing youth participation programs across various domains. Tailoring initiatives to accommodate different demographic profiles can enhance inclusivity and effectiveness in engaging youth in various center of participation and involvement. Related literature and studies support the importance of demographic factors in influencing youth participation in various domains. For example, research by Wu et al.

(2020) and Mason (2021) highlights age-related trends in global mobility among youth, while studies by Hossain et al. (2018) and Wang et al. (2016) emphasize gender differences in engagement with health and education-related initiatives. These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions that consider demographic diversity to effectively promote youth participation and involvement across different sectors.

3.5 Significant Relationship Between The Type Of Youth Participation Based On The TYPE Pyramid and The Levels Of Youth Involvement in The Programs, Projects, and Activities (PPAs) Of The LGU Santa Cruz in Terms Of The Nine Centers Of Youth Participation

Table 5. Significant Relationship Between The Type Of Youth Participation Based On The TYPE Pyramid and The Levels Of Youth Involvement in The Programs, Projects, and Activities (PPAs) Of The LGU Santa Cruz in Terms Of The Nine Centers Of Youth Participation

Centers of Youth Participation and Involvement	Youth Type		
	Adult Driven	Youth Driven	Adult-Youth Shared
Health	$r=.386$ $p<.001$	$r=.462$ $p<.001$	$r=.432$ $p<.001$
Sports	$r=.341$ $p<.001$	$r=.399$ $p<.001$	$r=.311$ $p<.001$
Education	$r=.321$ $p<.001$	$r=.488$ $p<.001$	$r=.390$ $p<.001$
Economic Empowerment	$r=.400$ $p<.001$	$r=.421$ $p<.001$	$r=.362$ $p<.001$
Social Inclusion and Equity	$r=.300$ $p<.001$	$r=.445$ $p<.001$	$r=.409$ $p<.001$
Peace Building and Security	$r=.323$ $p<.001$	$r=.462$ $p<.001$	$r=.395$ $p<.001$
Governance	$r=.278$ $p<.001$	$r=.419$ $p<.001$	$r=.373$ $p<.001$
Active Citizenship	$r=.273$ $p<.001$	$r=.437$ $p<.001$	$r=.420$ $p<.001$
Environment	$r=.246$ $p<.001$	$r=.443$ $p<.001$	$r=.406$ $p<.001$
Global Mobility	$R=.343$ $P<.001$	$r=.430$ $p<.001$	$r=.377$ $p<.001$

In Health-related center of participation, there is a significant positive relationship with all three types of youth involvement: Adult-Driven ($r=.386$, $p<.001$), Youth-Driven ($r=.462$, $p<.001$), and Adult-Youth Shared ($r=.432$, $p<.001$). This suggests that all types of youth involvement are positively correlated with participation in health-related activities. Similarly, in Sports-related center, there is a significant positive relationship with all three types of youth involvement: Adult-Driven ($r=.341$, $p<.001$), Youth-Driven ($r=.399$, $p<.001$), and Adult-Youth Shared ($r=.311$, $p<.001$). This indicates that all types of youth involvement are positively associated with participation in sports activities. In Education-related center, there is also a significant positive relationship with all three types of youth involvement: Adult-Driven ($r=.321$, $p<.001$), Youth-Driven ($r=.488$, $p<.001$), and Adult-Youth Shared ($r=.390$, $p<.001$). This suggests that all types of youth involvement are positively correlated with participation in educational activities. For Economic Empowerment-related center, there is a significant positive relationship with all three types of youth involvement: Adult-Driven ($r=.400$, $p<.001$), Youth-Driven ($r=.421$, $p<.001$), and Adult-Youth Shared ($r=.362$, $p<.001$). This indicates that

all types of youth involvement are positively associated with participation in economic empowerment activities. In Social Inclusion and Equity-related center, there is a significant positive relationship with all three types of youth involvement: Adult-Driven ($r=0.300$, $p<.001$), Youth-Driven ($r=.445$, $p<.001$), and Adult-Youth Shared ($r=.409$, $p<.001$). This suggests that all types of youth involvement are positively correlated with efforts to promote social inclusion and equity. For Peace Building and Security-related center, there is a significant positive relationship with all three types of youth involvement: Adult-Driven ($r=.323$, $p<.001$), Youth-Driven ($r=.462$, $p<.001$), and Adult-Youth Shared ($r=.395$, $p<.001$). This indicates that all types of youth involvement are positively associated with peace-building and security initiatives. In Governance-related center, there is a significant positive relationship with all three types of youth involvement: Adult-Driven ($r=.278$, $p<.001$), Youth-Driven ($r=.419$, $p<.001$), and Adult-Youth Shared ($r=.373$, $p<.001$). This suggests that all types of youth involvement are positively correlated with participation in governance activities. For Active Citizenship-related center, there is a significant positive relationship with all three types of youth involvement: Adult-Driven ($r=.273$, $p<.001$), Youth-Driven ($r=.437$, $p<.001$), and Adult-Youth Shared ($r=.420$, $p<.001$). This indicates that all types of youth involvement are positively associated with active citizenship initiatives. In Environment-related center, there is a significant positive relationship with all three types of youth involvement: Adult-Driven ($r=.246$, $p<.001$), Youth-Driven ($r=.443$, $p<.001$), and Adult-Youth Shared ($r=.406$, $p<.001$). This suggests that all types of youth involvement are positively correlated with participation in environmental activities. For Global Mobility-related center, there is a significant positive relationship with all three types of youth involvement: Adult-Driven ($r=.343$, $p<.001$), Youth-Driven ($r=.430$, $p<.001$), and Adult-Youth Shared ($r=.377$, $p<.001$). This indicates that all types of youth involvement are positively associated with global mobility initiatives.

Overall, these findings indicate that regardless of whether youth participation is adult-driven, youth-driven, or a shared responsibility between adults and youth, there is a positive correlation with participation across various centers of youth engagement. This suggests that a collaborative approach involving both adults and youth is essential for fostering youth participation and involvement across diverse domains. Related literature and studies support the idea of collaborative approaches to youth engagement across different sectors. For instance, research by Wang et al. (2019) emphasizes the importance of partnerships between adults and youth in promoting youth leadership and participation in community development initiatives. Similarly, studies by Brown and Lave (2018) and Christens and Dolan (2019) highlight the effectiveness of youth-adult partnerships in enhancing youth agency and civic engagement. These findings underscore the significance of collaborative efforts between adults and youth in fostering meaningful youth participation across various domains.

IV. Discussions/Conclusions

The demographic analysis highlights a significant presence of youth aged 20 to 22, signalling heightened engagement during the transition to early adulthood. A slight gender imbalance is evident, with females being more prevalent. Most respondents are In-of-School Youth (ISY), while Out-of-School Youth (OSY) and Working Youth are less represented. These insights stress the importance of inclusive strategies that cater to the needs of female youth, engage older youth more effectively, and address the unique circumstances of OSY and Working Youth.

Youth participation in PPAs of the municipality is robust across all types—Adult-Driven, Youth-Driven, and Youth-Adult Shared Control—indicating a balanced Youth-Adult Partnership. While Adult-Driven initiatives are

significant, Youth-Driven and Shared Control approaches emphasize youth empowerment and collaboration. The findings highlight the need for a balanced approach that ensures youth voices are not overshadowed, advocating for the enhancement of the existing Youth-Adult Partnership for more inclusive and effective youth engagement.

Meanwhile, the assessment of youth involvement across nine centers of participation in LGU Santa Cruz's PPAs reveals varying levels of engagement. Education, Active Citizenship, and Environment stand out with the highest levels of involvement, indicating successful initiatives in these areas that resonate with youth interests. Conversely, Health, Economic Empowerment, Social Inclusion and Equity, Peace-Building and Security, Governance, and Global Mobility demonstrate moderate levels of youth involvement, suggesting areas that require more focused attention and strategy refinement. These findings underscore the importance of addressing gaps in youth engagement across multiple sectors to foster holistic youth development. Prioritizing the enhancement of youth involvement in less-engaged areas can lead to more comprehensive and inclusive youth participation in LGU Santa Cruz's PPAs.

Also, significant relationship between demographic profiles (age and sex), and various centers of youth participation in LGU Santa Cruz's PPAs highlight that youth aged 20-24 and females are generally more engaged across multiple domains. Gender differences also influence participation patterns, with females showing higher engagement in health, education, and economic empowerment, while males dominate in sports and global mobility. These findings stress the importance of tailoring youth programs to accommodate age and gender differences for enhanced inclusivity and effectiveness.

A consistent positive relationship also exists between the types of youth participation and levels of involvement across all centers. Whether Adult-Driven, Youth-Driven, or shared, each type correlates positively with involvement in various domains. This underscores the importance of a collaborative approach involving both adults and youth to foster comprehensive youth participation. A balanced and inclusive strategy that leverages the strengths of different participation types can effectively promote youth engagement across diverse sectors in LGU Santa Cruz's PPAs.

4.1 Recommendations

This section presents recommendations based on the important results of the study, aiming to address the identified areas needing improvement and capitalize on the strengths of youth engagement:

1. **Strengthening Youth-Adult Partnership:** LGU Santa Cruz should prioritize enhancing the Youth-Adult Partnership based on the findings. Collaborative efforts between adults and youth can ensure a balanced approach to program development and implementation, leading to more holistic and inclusive youth engagement in the municipality.
2. **Tailored Youth Engagement Programs:** Develop targeted programs for demographic groups with lower participation, such as health awareness campaigns for young females aged 20-24.
3. **Youth Leadership Development Initiatives:** Establish youth councils or task forces to plan and implement programs in areas like sports, education, and social inclusion.
4. **Training and Capacity Building:** Provide training programs focusing on leadership, project management, and advocacy skills to empower youth in decision-making processes.
5. **Inter-generational Mentorship Programs:** Initiate mentorship programs pairing experienced adults with young leaders to facilitate knowledge exchange and collaborative decision-making.
6. **Youth Innovation Fund:** Create a fund to support youth-led initiatives, offering financial resources and technical

assistance to young entrepreneurs.

7. Diversification of Sports Programs: Expand sports programs to cater to diverse interests, including organizing tournaments and promoting volunteerism in sports management.

8. Enhanced Collaboration with Educational Institutions: Strengthen partnerships with schools for joint educational initiatives like career fairs and skills training workshops.

9. Youth-Led Environmental Projects: Support environmental projects led by youth, providing funding and organizing clean-up campaigns.

10. Promotion of Active Citizenship: Encourage civic engagement through community service projects and youth-led advocacy initiatives.

11. Youth Entrepreneurship Support: Enhance support for youth entrepreneurship with training, mentorship, and networking opportunities.

12. Age-Specific Engagement Strategies: Develop strategies tailored to different age groups, incorporating feedback through surveys and focus group discussions.

13. Youth-Friendly Spaces: Create dedicated spaces like youth centers and sports facilities to foster community engagement and personal development.

14. Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation: Implement a system to assess program effectiveness, establish performance indicators, and incorporate youth feedback in evaluation processes.

By implementing these recommendations, LGU Santa Cruz can strengthen its youth engagement efforts and create more inclusive and empowering opportunities for young people to contribute to the development and well-being of the municipality.

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