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Community Extension Project to Wars Community Development: An Impact Study of the Extension Project of the Marketing Management Program of Surigao Del Sur State University, Philippines

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Abstract:

This paper aims to assess the impact of Marketing and Business Innovation Project, a community extension project of the Marketing Management Program of the College of Business and Management of the Surigaodel Sur State University. Specifically, it identifies the activities conducted within the specified period given in the implementation; it evaluates its impact towards community development; and it determines the recommendations based on the findings of the study. With these objectives, the paper employs a qualitative research design particularly phenomenology through interview with the beneficiaries of the project who serve as key informants. Results reveal that the project enhances and strengthens the potential, knowledge and marketing skills of the beneficiaries. The project, as a whole, definitely contributestowards broader understanding on developing entrepreneurial and marketing skills. Furthermore, results of the study might be used in developing continuing program since it helps in the progress among the beneficiaries through Training Needs Assessment (TNA) as the basis for the implementation of the program. Monitoring and evaluation must also be conducted to ensure the effectiveness of the project implemented.

Keywords: Extension project, marketing, business innovation, community development

1. Introduction

Community Extension Program is an activity where an individual can experience a different way of learning. It deals with an application of theory to practice. It goes beyond from the teaching of what are written in the book, rather to the application in the real world context. Moreover, the meaning of Community Extension Program varies to every person. Regardless of which, extension program is said to be kind and caring to others or to help out those who are less fortunate (Gonzales, 2008).

Generally, extension service is the process by which technology and innovation are transferred to an identified clientele with the ultimate objective of improving their way of life (Felicin, et.al, 2014). Former Senate President Marcelo B. Fernan (2010) defined extension service as a concept that encompasses people empowerment and human resource development geared towards human capital enhancement, and technology and facilities diffusion among the 'masang' Pilipino, if not the poorest of the poor (<http://www.mseuf.edu.ph>).

Community extension program is part of the University's four-fold functions of providing quality education to its students and nearby communities. It is an expression of the university's social corporate responsibility. On the other hand, Surigaodel Sur State University (SDSSU), as a learning institution, is mandated to perform four major functions namely: instruction, research, community extension and production. These four functions are linked harmoniously to produce meaningful learning. The university, together with the different academic departments, students, and faculty and staff organizations, has been involved in providing community extension services to the community. Developing a community with greatest necessity to get some assistance from different agencies like academic institutions is an act of fulfilling the mission of helping people to uplift the standards of living especially those who are deprived. An integrated extension approach is needed to address multi-faceted community issues effectively and it is one of the major functions of the academic community in order to enhance the capacity of the faculty in their field of expertise by way of extending it to the partner community/communities (Gonzalez, 2008).

The Marketing Management (MM) Program of the College of Business and Management of SDSSU responds to social problems with the hope to make any demonstrable difference. Measurement results of community development interventions are very significant for both the school and the beneficiaries since it will indicate growth or negative results. For 2017, the MM program implements Marketing and Business Innovation Project to Barangay San Vicente, Carmen, Surigaodel Sur. The project aims to pursue economic reforms to accelerate poverty reduction and achieve more sustained and inclusive growth. It is an initiative of the Marketing Management Program in response to unending battle towards

poverty. The beneficiaries of this project are the residents of the community particularly the farmers, 4 P's beneficiaries, Unemployed Adults and Women's Organization.

Thus, this study attempts to provide decision makers with information about the likely social outcomes of the implemented projects designed to alter the future. Determining the impacts of a project greatly help improved the planning of a specific program. With these contexts, this study is conducted to assess the impact of community extension activities on the beneficiaries of the Marketing Management Community Extension Program.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

This study aims to assess the impact of Marketing and Business Innovation Project, a community extension project of the Marketing Management Program of the College of Business and Management of SDSSU.

Specifically, it seeks to find the following:

- To identify the activities conducted within the specified period given in the implementation;
- To describe the perceived effects of the extension project to the beneficiaries;
- To determine the perceived reasons of beneficiaries' participation in the extension project; and
- To establish the felt needs for the improvement of the extension project.

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design particularly phenomenology. Phenomenology is a qualitative research method that is used to describe how human beings experience a certain phenomenon. A phenomenological study attempts to set aside biases and preconceived assumptions about human experiences, feelings, and responses to a particular situation. This method allows the researcher to delve into the perceptions, perspectives, understandings, and feelings of those people who have actually experienced or lived the phenomenon or situation of interest. Therefore, phenomenology is the direct investigation and description of phenomena as consciously experienced by people living those experiences (Giorgi, 2012).

2.2. Research Participants and Instrument

To carry out the phenomenological research, an in-depth interview is done with the beneficiaries of the project and the barangay officials of San Vicente, Surigao del Sur where the project is implemented being the adopted barangay of the MM program. By studying the perspectives of these key informants, a researcher can make generalizations regarding the impacts of Marketing and Business Innovation Project to their lives after availing such projects. The in-depth interview is conducted in a more focused and conversational manner so that participants feel degree of freedom in sharing their insights. The questions are semi-structured and re-worded as the case needed to encourage participants to give open-ended and much detailed response. This tool is conducted to provide explanations about some unqualified issues which arise from the observation done.

2.3. Data Collection and Data Analysis

The data collection and analysis involve phases. The first phase is the conduct of the in-depth interview with the beneficiaries and barangay officials. During this process, separate interviews with the beneficiaries and the barangay officials are carried out. The researcher has made two visits to the site of the study for the interviews to gather information as unit for analysis. After completing the series of interviews, the next phase involves the laborious task of transcribing and analyzing the collected materials.

After transcription comes the analysis of the transcribed data to determine the emerging themes. The analysis and formulation of the emerging themes are based on the universal ideas and messages revealed in the interview. These emerging themes show the impact of the extension projects to the beneficiaries; the perceived reasons of beneficiaries' participation in the extension project; and the felt needs for the improvement of the extension project.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Activities Conducted under the Marketing Management Extension Program

Table 1 reflects the different activities conducted under the extension project of the MM Program and the date of their implementations.

Activities	Date
Rice Trading, Retailing, Inventory and Sore Management	January 20, 2018
Business Ideation Seminar	March 13, 2017
Product Development	May 12, 2017
Meat Processing	June 29, 2017
Packaging, Labeling and Pricing	August 14, 2017

Table 1: Activities Conducted under the Marketing and Business Innovation Project

As shown in the table, there are five activities under the Marketing and Business Innovation Project. The activities include Rice Trading, Retailing, Inventory and Store Management, Business Ideation Seminar, Product Development, Meat Processing, and Branding, Packaging, Labeling and Pricing. Marketing and Business Innovation Project was designed to help beneficiaries uplift their way of living by helping them engaged to entrepreneurial activities and acquire marketing skills which are essential in developing entrepreneurship.

The first activity conducted was the Rice Trading, Retailing, Inventory and Store Management. One of the main sources of income of the residents of Brgy. San Vicente is rice production. Thus, the activity was conducted to educate participants on the techniques for rice trading and retailing in order for them to get the life-long customers they desire and to boost their sales and reach the particular success they envision for their business. On the other hand, inventory and store management aims to effectively manage inventory and store, to be exposed to various costs and inefficiencies involved when carrying inventory and store management and to improve store performance. Beneficiaries of the activity were the community residents particularly the farmers.

Business ideation seminar was designed to help the beneficiaries come up with a good business idea which will be useful in boosting their entrepreneurial endeavor. Beneficiaries of the said activity were the residents of the community. After the seminar, participants were expected to acquire knowledge on business ideation, to come up with a good business idea, to determine the potential business opportunities in the community and to develop entrepreneurial skills.

With the abundance of resources in the community of San Vicente, a big potential is seen in creating and developing a new product. Product development typically refers to all of the stages involved in bringing a product from concept or idea. The activity aims to identify market needs and create a product out of the available resources present in the community.

Meat processing is a follow up activity on product development. The beneficiaries of this training will be guided on the process of food production with practical trainings. The activity will demonstrate food processing concepts and exhibit practical applications in the preparation of the product and sanitation of the workplace involve. The training was designed to help beneficiaries create products that would provide additional income to every household.

The last activity conducted was the Packaging, Labeling and Pricing. The objective of the said activity is to enhance the developed products' performance by integrating packaging, labeling and pricing aspects. The seminar will develop the ability of the participants to create their own packages and update their knowledge on the labeling and pricing requirements.

3.2. Perceived Influence of the Extension Project to the Beneficiaries

3.2.1. Skills Enhancement and Income Augmentation

Participants agree that the Community Extension Service of the MM Program has helped them a lot. The participants also confirm that after availing the project, their skills are enhanced. It also helps them engaged into entrepreneurial activities thereby augmenting their income and it helps them stay away from unnecessary undertakings such as gossiping and doing nothing. Through the extension project, beneficiaries are able to provide the basic needs of their family. These imply that the extension project have contributed a lot to the adopted community and enable to enhance the skills and augment the income of the residents. They affirm that they are able to augment their income which signifies that the clientele are empowered and built their confidence due to the knowledge and skills they have gained.

3.2.2. Improvement of Self-Esteem

It is noted that the activities have also created some benefits other than income related because beneficiaries have acquired an improved self-esteem since they have developed business skills which can prepare them to improve their business and to ensure success in the future. Upon acquisition of the skills, as recounted by a couple of the beneficiaries, many of them instead of just gossiping and doing nothing, are now very busy with producing the goods and that even their children and the whole family is helping out with it since it had already become a source of income for the family.

3.2.3. Touching and Transforming Lives

Furthermore, conducting community extension programs has touched and transformed the lives of the beneficiaries. Beneficiaries are inspired because they have felt that there are those people who care for them. They become more proud while attending the different activities and they have expressed gratitude for the happiness they experience because of the skills they have gained. Moreover, they also felt well taken care by the program implementers. According to the beneficiaries, they have no regrets in joining this project because for them the training really worth their time every time there is a scheduled training.

Zwane (2012) notes that the perceived major objective of rural development project is the non-economic goal, like improving the quality of life of the beneficiaries. Extensionists can make significant contribution in rural development provided they are guided by specific policy.

3.2.4. Reasons for the Beneficiaries' Participation and Non-participation in the MM Community Extension Services

Community participation in development projects has become an important element in the design and implementation of development projects. Participation of the community is in the form of Community Based Development (CBD) and is among the fastest growing mechanism for channeling development assistance. The aim of community participation in CBD projects is not only to reverse the existing power relations in a manner that creates agency and voice for the poor but also to allow the poor to have more control over development assistance. It is expected that this will result

in the allocation of development funds in a manner that is more responsive to the needs of the poor, better targeting of poverty programs, more responsive government and better delivery of public goods and services, better maintained community assets, and a more informed and involved citizenry that is capable of undertaking self-initiated development activity (Mansuri and Rao 2003).

3.3. Learning and Gaining New Skills

Based on the interview, beneficiaries participate in the extension activities conducted by the MM program because they are interested to learn and to gain new skills. It also reveals that that the program is beneficial to the community. While others find it beneficial, some says that the reason why they join the project is because their Brgy. Officials recommend them to join. Gboku and Lekoko (2007) expressed that participation is a process during which individuals, groups and organizations are given the opportunity to become actively involved in program development. According to Rogers (2004), there are three main approaches of participation: (1) The first is participation as presence. In the developmental contexts, it means persuading people to take up the inputs offered to them, whereas in educational context participation focuses on access to education. (2) Participatory Action Research (PAR), Participatory Rural Rapid Appraisal (PRRA) and other related activities mean encouraging the local community to join in the pre-determined activities of projects- for example agricultural practices or health. (3) The third approach is participation as control which means encouraging the participants to take control or take responsibility. Participants have significant role in decision-making, implementation and evaluation so that the program does not reflect the concerns of the providers alone but also reflects the concerns of all stakeholders (Walters, 1989).

3.4. Felt Need to Improve the Extension Project

Based on the different activities conducted, participants express that there is a need to improve Marketing Management's extension programs.

3.5. A Need for Advanced or Continuous Trainings

Beneficiaries affirm that there must be advanced or higher trainings especially on livelihood, where trainings must be systematic and consistent to their agreed schedules so that many can also avail the projects. These imply that the trainings must be planned, organized and systematic implementation in order to have great impact to the clientele and to the community. Furthermore, participants also suggest that the trainings must be continuous in order for them not to forget the skills they learned during the training.

3.6. Non-imposed Felt Needs

It is always important that people forming an action group should feel the identified need to be their own (Swanepoel & de Beer 2006). The extension officer, government agent or community development worker should be careful not to impose needs on people or to organize people for what they regard as a good cause. People will not easily be moved to action if they do not feel a need, irrespective of the reality and urgency of that need. For this reason the felt need must receive preference even if the community development worker feels otherwise about their identified felt needs. It is necessary for the community development worker to work through the groups felt needs in order to bring the action group to identify their real need. Felt and unfelt needs refer, according to Düvel (1994), to the needs perceived by the community (beneficiaries) and the extension officer respectively.

4. Conclusions

Marketing Management extension project has improved the lives of the beneficiaries in the partner/adopted community. It brings remarkable impact such as skills enhancement and income augmentation, improvement of their self-esteem and touching and transformation of their lives. However, the Community Extension Services of MM program still needs further improvement to empower sustainably the people in the community. These improvements include a need for advanced and continuous trainings and non-imposed felt needs.

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