

Diversifying Other New Normal Approach on Livelihood Development: Extension Strategies for Poverty Alleviation

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluates and analyzes the extension projects required in Barangay La Paz, Bayabas, Surigao del Sur, to align effectively with the extension agenda of Northeastern Mindanao State University (NEMSU). The research focused on establishing a set of priority projects aimed at supporting poverty alleviation and improving community living standards. Utilizing a descriptive quantitative approach, data were collected from 146 respondents through a rigorously validated and reliable research instrument over a six-month period. The study posits that a transition toward a market-driven extension system is essential to increase community income, stimulate rural entrepreneurship, and create employment opportunities. The results indicate a strong demand for both soft and hard skills training among the community, highlighting a need for formal education in entrepreneurship and livelihood activities. These findings underscore the potential of the University's extension program to foster sustainable socio-economic development by addressing community-specific needs. The insights from this study inform local legislative and university planning, providing a strategic foundation for selecting extension projects with the highest relevance and impact on beneficiaries.

Keywords: Livelihood, Development, Diversification, Extension Services, Entrepreneurs.

JEL Classification: -

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INTRODUCTION

For an extension project to be effective and impactful, it is essential to conduct a rigorous, research-based training needs assessment. This foundational step ensures that project resources are allocated efficiently and address community-specific needs. Key concerns center on how

extension projects, activities, and policies can be aligned with the actual needs of the community, allowing extension implementers to design initiatives that not only meet immediate needs but also contribute to long-term goals such as poverty alleviation and rural development. Crafting project

proposals with a strategic vision allows extension programs to uplift communities by addressing both livelihood and training needs, positioning the extension agenda as a vital contributor to sustainable rural progress. Within this context, the University, through the BSBA Extension Program, has a robust agenda to support communities, equipped with budgetary resources and a range of extension initiatives that target rural poverty reduction and empowerment. The University's Extension Office has developed a set of priority programs that can be adapted to the unique needs of specific communities; however, it is crucial that these programs are revitalized periodically to stay aligned with evolving local conditions. Input from the community is invaluable in this process, guiding the University's extension initiatives to ensure they remain relevant and responsive. To build resilient and sustainable extension initiatives, the University must develop policies and procedures that align with regulatory standards while promoting long-term impact. This research aims to help synchronize the BSBA Extension Program's priorities with the needs of community beneficiaries, ensuring that each project fulfills both the University's mandate and the community's expectations.

Rural poverty is often exacerbated by limited government support, leaving communities without the resources needed to achieve sustainable livelihoods and improve their living standards. Collaborative efforts are crucial to better serving these underserved communities. Extension services play a vital role in this process, as they provide education, ideas, and livelihood opportunities that empower individuals to sustain themselves in a rapidly changing world. According to Albao, R & Rubi, (2019), the design and focus of extension projects should account for the unique needs of each community, delivering tailored programs that foster self-reliance and sustainability. Research highlights that livelihood strategies among the rural

poor are deeply influenced by transactional vulnerabilities, market risks, and costs. According to Perez, V & Cabrera C (2013) the key considerations include the role of labor markets in income generation and how extension services can provide critical education to help rural communities adapt to technological advances. Extension projects must address not only productivity but also community resilience, helping beneficiaries cope with vulnerabilities while fostering economic growth. An emphasis on market integration and strategic differentiation in extension design is essential, enabling programs to adapt to the specific economic landscape of each community. Moreover, according to Salazar, T. (2020) that poor communities draw on a variety of assets—both owned and accessible—to achieve diverse livelihood outcomes. These outcomes are shaped by the strategic interactions between community and University stakeholders, who implement livelihood strategies that adapt to evolving needs, opportunities, and constraints. The strategies chosen are influenced not only by available assets but also by policies, government programs, and the priority agendas of both community leaders and extension providers. Through such collaborative, context-sensitive approaches, extension services can contribute meaningfully to the long-term well-being and economic stability of rural populations.

The effectiveness of extension service delivery often depends on several critical factors, including the alignment of project goals with community needs, the suitability of consultative approaches, the capability and availability of faculty and students from the academic institution, and the strength of administrative and governance support from both the community and the university. A common research gap in extension services is the absence of comprehensive needs assessments, which can result in programs that do not fully address the actual needs of the target

community. According to Tata, J & Mc Namara, P (2016) Engaging stakeholders from the outset is essential to ensuring program relevance and fostering community ownership. Another prevalent gap is the challenge of limited funding and resources, which restricts the reach, duration, and effectiveness of many extension programs. Addressing this issue requires robust budgeting practices, resource mobilization, and exploration of external funding sources. Additionally, there is often a lack of adequate training for both extension teams and community members, leading to skill gaps that can hinder program sustainability once the primary facilitators are no longer involved. Implementing training and development initiatives for both providers and beneficiaries can improve knowledge transfer and enhance program continuity. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are another area that is frequently overlooked or under-resourced, limiting the ability to assess program impact effectively. A well-defined M&E plan with clear metrics is essential to adapt programs based on real-time feedback and achieve intended outcomes. Communication and outreach also pose significant challenges; miscommunication or inadequate outreach efforts can reduce program acceptance and community engagement. Establishing clear communication strategies, potentially involving local leaders or influencers, can increase program reach and community trust. Finally, the sustainability of extension programs is often compromised due to a lack of long-term planning. Developing strategies for follow-up support and transitioning projects to community-led efforts can enhance the longevity of program benefits. Additionally, failure to understand and respect the local culture or socio-economic context may lead to misunderstandings and reduced community engagement. Culturally sensitive programs that respect local contexts foster inclusivity and improve participation. Addressing

these gaps is vital for enhancing the impact and sustainability of extension services.

The findings of this study will serve as a crucial basis for designing extension proposals that align closely with the specific needs of the community. This approach aims to guide the BSBA extension program in developing sustainable projects that provide relevant training and livelihood activities to uplift the community's current economic conditions. Additionally, this aligns with the university's extension agenda focused on poverty alleviation. The study will provide insights into suitable extension activities tailored to the community and its beneficiaries. It will incorporate fundamental aspects of rural livelihoods, such as the role of labor, technical skills, market dynamics, local entrepreneurial potential, and community vulnerabilities, all of which are essential considerations in designing effective extension initiatives. Furthermore, it will address the challenge of integrating the university's extension policies with broader rural development goals, examining issues relevant to the policy's implementation, especially in relation to previous extension project experiences. This research also aims to clarify the responsibilities of both the community and the university in supporting and realizing these strategies, ensuring the efficient use of university resources and fostering accountability in the implementation process.

Research Questions

The primary objective of this study was to assess the needs of the extension project and the activities to be implemented within the community, with the aim of optimizing the effectiveness of extension services. This assessment seeks to empower community members by facilitating the transfer of knowledge and skills, enabling them to establish and sustain their own businesses through the application of technical expertise provided by

the BSBA Extension program. Additionally, the study aimed to identify the challenges and opportunities presented by these extension projects for the community. It addressed the following specific inquiries.

- 1 What are the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents?
- 2 What specific livelihood needs exist within the community that could be addressed through extension programs?
- 3 What challenges are encountered in the implementation of extension programs within the community?
- 4 What opportunities arise from conducting extension livelihood programs that benefit the community?
- 5 How do respondents perceive the sustainability and long-term impact of the extension project?
- 6 What are the other new normal approaches to livelihood development that can be implemented to enhance community resilience and economic sustainability?
- 7 How do community members perceive the importance and acceptability of extension services, and what specific needs do they identify regarding these services?
- 8 What output from the study can effectively support both extension service providers and the community in enhancing livelihood development?

METHODOLOGY

The research participants for this study comprised community members from Barangay La Paz, where the extension project is set to be implemented. This included registered Micro,

Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), business retailers, and unemployed individuals interested in livelihood opportunities across the seven Puroks of the barangay. According to data from PhilAtlas.com, Barangay La Paz is located in the municipality of Bayabas, province of Surigao del Sur, with a population of 2,563 as recorded in the 2020 Census, representing approximately 28.54% of Bayabas's total population. The statistical analyses employed in this study included frequency counting to assess the demographic profile of the respondents. The weighted mean was utilized to analyze responses to various indicators, facilitating interpretation of the data. Additionally, Pearson product-moment correlation was applied to evaluate the relationships between respondents' profiles, as well as the opportunities and challenges associated with the implementation of the extension project. Data collection was conducted using a researcher-developed survey questionnaire, organized into five distinct sections. Each component of the questionnaire employed a 5-point Likert scale to gauge participants' responses. This study adopted a quantitative research approach, focusing on the collection of numerical data to enable objective analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the questionnaire data, which was subsequently synthesized to yield comprehensive results. The findings of the study were presented in table format to enhance clarity and readability, supported by relevant literature and discussion of the implications derived from the results. This methodology emphasizes the quantitative design of the study, which aims to provide empirical insights into the needs, challenges, and opportunities associated with the extension project.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 Profile of the Respondents

| Sex | | |
|------------------------|------------|------|
| | Total | Rank |
| Male | 88 | 1 |
| Female | 58 | 2 |
| Total | 146 | |
| Age | | |
| Age Group | Total | Rank |
| 18 Years Below | 5 | 6 |
| 19–25 Years Old | 63 | 1 |
| 26–31 Years Old | 28 | 2 |
| 32–38 Years Old | 22 | 3 |
| 39–45 Years Old | 19 | 4 |
| 45 Years and Above | 9 | 5 |
| Total | 146 | |
| Civil Status | | |
| Civil Status | Total | Rank |
| Single | 84 | 1 |
| Married | 43 | 2 |
| Others | 19 | 3 |
| Total | 146 | |
| Educational Attainment | | |
| Educational Attainment | Total | Rank |
| Elementary Level | 24 | 3 |
| Junior High School | 45 | 2 |
| Senior High School | 49 | 1 |
| Vocational Course | 8 | 5 |
| College Level | 13 | 4 |
| College Graduate | 7 | 7 |
| Masters Units | 0 | 8 |
| Total | 146 | |

Table 1 provides an overview of the demographic characteristics of the respondents based on the data collected through the survey instrument.

Gender Distribution: The majority of respondents were male, with a total of 88 participants, while female respondents numbered 58. This significant disparity suggests that many males in the community may be engaged in economic activities rather than pursuing education. The need to contribute financially to their households likely

limits their participation in schooling and training opportunities.

Age Profile: The age distribution reveals that most respondents fall within the 19 to 25 age brackets, indicating a young demographic that is potentially facing challenges in accessing resources for education. Despite government initiatives aimed at providing free education, these individuals may still encounter barriers that hinder their ability to finance their studies. Conversely, the smallest group comprises respondents aged 45 and above, which suggests a lesser representation of older individuals in the educational landscape.

Civil Status: An analysis of civil status shows that a significant proportion of respondents identified as single. This status may reflect the aspirations of youth who are actively seeking opportunities for personal and professional growth yet remain unencumbered by familial obligations at this stage of their lives.

Educational Attainment: Regarding educational levels, the data indicates that the largest group of respondents are currently in Senior High School, totaling 47 individuals, closely followed by 45 respondents in Junior High School. Notably, the

number of respondents who have attained a college degree is minimal. This educational profile underscores the ongoing educational challenges faced by the community, particularly among youth who may not be progressing to higher levels of education.

Overall, the data from Table 1 highlights significant socio-economic factors impacting the respondents, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions that address educational barriers and promote livelihood opportunities within the community.

Table 2 Specific Needs for Extension Livelihood Project

| | Indicator | Total | Rank |
|-----------|---|------------|------|
| A. | Skills Training and Capacity Building | | |
| | Technical Skills | 47 | 2 |
| | Entrepreneurial Skills | 99 | 1 |
| | Total | 146 | |
| B. | Access to Financial Resources | | |
| | Microfinance and Credit | 95 | 1 |
| | Financial Literacy Programs | 51 | 2 |
| | Total | 146 | |
| C. | Market Access and Development | | |
| | Market Linkages | 93 | 1 |
| | Product Development and Branding | 53 | 2 |
| | Total | 146 | |
| D. | Access to Information and Technology | | |
| | Digital Literacy Programs | 59 | 2 |
| | Information Dissemination | 87 | 1 |
| | Total | 146 | |
| E. | Support for Local Industries | | |
| | Promotion of Local Products | 102 | 1 |
| | Capacity Building for Cooperatives | 44 | 2 |
| | Total | 146 | |
| F. | Environmental Sustainability Initiatives | | |
| | Training in Resource Management | 99 | 1 |
| | Climate Resilience Strategies | 47 | 2 |
| | Total | 146 | |

Table 2 presents data on the specific needs identified by respondents for the Extension Livelihood Project, highlighting key areas such as skills training, financial resources, market access,

information technology, support for local industries, and environmental sustainability.

Skills Training and Capacity Building:

Entrepreneurial skills received the highest number of responses (99), indicating a strong need

among respondents to develop foundational knowledge for starting and managing businesses. Technical skills were identified by fewer respondents, suggesting that while technical expertise is valued, a focus on entrepreneurial training is perceived as more immediately beneficial for their livelihood opportunities.

Access to Financial Resources

Microfinance and credit services received high interest, with 95 responses, demonstrating that accessible financial support is essential for respondents as they pursue entrepreneurial activities. Financial literacy programs, with 51 responses, are also recognized as crucial for helping community members effectively manage and leverage financial resources. This need for both credit access and financial education underscores the importance of equipping individuals not only with capital but also with the knowledge to manage it for sustainable outcomes.

Market Access and Development

Market linkages garnered substantial attention with 93 responses, underscoring the necessity of connecting local producers to broader markets. Product development and branding, with 53 responses, were also seen as vital for establishing unique, marketable products. These responses indicate that community members recognize the importance of diversifying and positioning their products strategically to enhance competitiveness and reach.

Access to Information and Technology:

In the era of digitalization, respondents highlighted information dissemination (87 responses) and digital literacy programs (59 responses) as essential. Limited resources, however, restrict their access to the knowledge and tools needed for digital engagement. This highlights a gap in digital infrastructure that, if

addressed, could significantly enhance respondents' market reach and competitiveness, aligning them with the demands of Industry 4.0.

Support for Local Industries

Promotion of local products received strong support, with 102 responses, suggesting that there is a robust demand for initiatives that spotlight and enhance the visibility of local goods. Capacity building for cooperatives and other community organizations is also seen as essential, providing a foundation for organizational development and ensuring that local groups are prepared to contribute meaningfully to the local economy. These responses indicate that with appropriate government support and capacity-building efforts, local industries could be effectively bolstered to drive community economic growth.

Environmental Sustainability Initiatives:

Resource management training received 99 responses, reflecting a recognition of the need for sustainable practices within the community. Climate resilience strategies, while receiving fewer responses, also play a critical role in empowering communities to adapt to environmental challenges. This focus on sustainability highlights a commitment among respondents to engage in practices that protect natural resources, an area in which collaboration with governmental and environmental agencies could further support long-term ecological balance and job creation.

Overall, the data indicates that respondents view entrepreneurial skills, financial support, market access, digital literacy, local product promotion, and environmental sustainability as priority areas. Addressing these needs would provide a comprehensive foundation for community members to build sustainable livelihoods and support broader socio-economic development.

Table 3 Challenges Encountered in the Implementation of Extension Programs Within the Community

| Indicator | Total | Rank |
|---------------------------------------|------------|------|
| Lack of Community Engagement | 17 | 4 |
| Resource Constraints | 29 | 1 |
| Monitoring and Evaluation Challenges | 13 | 5 |
| Market Access and Economic Challenges | 9 | 7 |
| Training and Capacity Issues | 27 | 2 |
| Sustainability Issues | 25 | 3 |
| Communication Barriers | 7 | 9 |
| Infrastructure and Logistics Issues | 8 | 8 |
| Policy and Regulatory Constraints | 11 | 6 |
| Total | 146 | |

The implementation of extension services is often accompanied by a range of challenges that can impact the effectiveness and sustainability of these programs. As indicated in the table, **resource constraints** ranked highest among the challenges, with 29 responses highlighting this issue. This suggests that financial limitations are a significant barrier, limiting the scope and reach of extension activities and the ability to meet community needs effectively. **Training and capacity-building limitations** were identified as the second major challenge, reflecting a lack of adequate knowledge and skills among some extension providers. According to [Saleh, J et al. \(2016\)](#) This gap in expertise can result in the delivery of services that do not fully align with the specific needs of the community. Addressing this challenge is crucial to ensure that extension providers are well-prepared to offer valuable, relevant guidance and support. The third-ranked challenge, with 25 responses, was **sustainability**. Follow-up interviews with respondents indicated that while some extension projects are initially successful, they often lack long-term support and fail to achieve continuity. Local government support was cited as a key factor,

as insufficient collaboration with local authorities can hinder communities from advancing the skills or products developed during the extension programs. Without sustained funding and resources, communities struggle to build on the knowledge gained, limiting the impact of these programs. **Communication barriers**, ranked ninth with 7 responses, were also noted as a considerable challenge in program implementation. Selective and purposive sampling often leaves out individuals who may need the services the most, potentially due to limitations in outreach methods. According to [Purvis, B \(2019\)](#) This exclusion can reduce overall program impact and foster disengagement, as some participants may lack the motivation to fully participate or complete the extension activities, affecting the transfer and retention of knowledge within the community. Continuity of knowledge transfer is further impacted by attendance issues, as some participants are unable to complete the training sessions due to other financial or familial responsibilities. Replacements of participants mid-program can disrupt learning, as new individuals may lack foundational knowledge from previous sessions. While economic pressures

understandably drive individuals to prioritize immediate income-generating activities, the long-term benefits of these extension programs are crucial for community resilience and poverty alleviation, a central priority of both the university's extension office and the broader extension agenda.

According to [Udawatta, et al. \(2019\)](#) these findings underscore the need for enhanced funding, stronger partnerships with local authorities, and improved participant engagement strategies to ensure sustainability and broader impact of extension services within the community.

Table 4 Opportunities Arise from Conducting Extension Livelihood Programs That Benefit the Community

| Indicator | Total | Rank |
|--|------------|------|
| Access to Resources | 15 | 5 |
| Skills Development | 23 | 2 |
| Economic Empowerment | 26 | 1 |
| Innovation and Technology Adoption | 14 | 5 |
| Cultural Preservation | 9 | 7 |
| Business and Sustainability | 22 | 3 |
| Community Cohesion and Social Capital | 17 | 4 |
| Improved Food Security | 7 | 8 |
| Long term and Sustainability Development | 13 | 6 |
| Total | 146 | |

Table 4 highlights the opportunities available to community members who participate in the university's extension activities. These programs are funded by the university's government-allocated budget, which underscores the importance of ensuring that the resources are effectively utilized to foster sustainable community development. Extension services are mandated to provide lasting benefits to the community, empowering individuals and enhancing their quality of life. As shown in the table, **economic empowerment** ranks as the highest benefit (Rank 1), indicating that the extension program's core purpose is to help improve family livelihoods and provide pathways to financial stability. This is achieved by delivering resources and training that support income generation and economic independence. **Skills development** follows closely (Rank 2), highlighting the value of transferring both technical and interpersonal skills to beneficiaries.

This aspect of the program includes training in essential hard and soft skills, covering a broad spectrum of capabilities necessary for personal and professional growth. Through the BSBA Extension Service and Linkages, participants have the opportunity to choose specific activities that best meet their needs, ensuring a tailored approach to community support. Since the BSBA program specializes in business education, the extension activities are designed to address **business acumen and sustainability** (Rank 3, with 22 responses). This focus on entrepreneurship and sustainable practices is aligned with the department's strengths and aims to provide community members with the knowledge and tools to build sustainable businesses. The table also reflects **improved food security** as an identified opportunity (the lowest, with 7 responses), showing that, although secondary to economic and business training, there is an emphasis on improving food availability and

access through certain extension programs. These initiatives are especially beneficial for community resilience.

However, due to budget limitations, these opportunities are accessible to a limited number of participants, underscoring the need for well-designed programs that ensure continuity and sustainability. The university's expectation is that

each extension activity will result in lasting community impact, enabling participants to build on the skills and resources provided well beyond the life of the project. According to [Montenegro, D \(2024\)](#) This emphasis on sustainability is crucial to the long-term success of the extension services and their role in poverty alleviation and economic empowerment.

Table 5 Respondents' Perceptions of the Sustainability and Long-Term Impact of an Extension Project

| Indicator | Total | Rank |
|-------------------------------------|------------|------|
| Relevance to Community Needs | 23 | 4 |
| Economic Benefits | 39 | 1 |
| Support to Local Community | 7 | 6 |
| Capacity Building of Human Resource | 27 | 2 |
| Community Participation | 4 | 7 |
| Awareness of Program Objectives | 22 | 5 |
| Training and Capacity Building | 24 | 3 |
| Total | 146 | |

The table presents respondents' perceptions of the sustainability and long-term impact of the extension project. The findings reveal that **economic benefits** (Rank 1) and **capacity building of human resources** (Rank 2) are seen as the most significant outcomes, highlighting the perceived value of these programs in fostering financial growth and enhancing skills within the community. These top-ranked responses underscore the project's crucial role in promoting both individual and community-level development, as economic empowerment and skill-building are foundational to sustainable improvement. At the lower end, **community participation** ranks last (Rank 7, with only 4 responses), indicating limited engagement and commitment from community members. This low level of participation may suggest challenges

in cultivating a sense of ownership or active involvement among participants, which can hinder the overall impact and sustainability of the project. The findings imply that some participants may struggle with maintaining interest or motivation throughout the program, potentially due to competing responsibilities or a lack of immediate, visible outcomes. This trend calls for strategies to enhance community buy-in and sustained involvement, as engagement is critical for achieving the project's long-term goals. According to [Muridzi, et al, \(2021\)](#) and [Montenegro, D \(2024\)](#) addressing these gaps by fostering a stronger sense of commitment and clearly communicating the benefits of participation could help enhance the project's sustainability and impact.

Table 6. Other New Normal Approaches on Livelihood Development

| Indicator | Total | Rank |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Upskilling and Reskilling Program | 19 | 3 |
| Local Resource Utilization | 36 | 1 |
| Green Livelihoods | 10 | 7 |
| Remote / Flexible Work Opportunities | 6 | 9 |
| Local Networking | 18 | 4 |
| Public-Private Partnership | 9 | 8 |
| Waste Management Initiatives | 12 | 6 |
| E-commerce Platforms | 13 | 5 |
| Entrepreneurship Training | 23 | 2 |
| Total | 146 | |

Table 6 presents the New Normal Approaches to Livelihood Development, outlining innovative strategies and formats designed to enhance the delivery of extension services and facilitate the crafting of new extension proposals. These approaches aim to ensure the impactful utilization of projects and the efficient, sustainable engagement of beneficiaries. The data in the table indicate that the most highly ranked response, identified as Rank 1, is "local resource utilization," which reflects a significant emphasis on leveraging available resources within the community. This finding underscores the importance of utilizing local assets in the development of extension proposals, guiding the design of interventions that address community needs. By focusing on local resource utilization, extension services can effectively provide training and related livelihood development initiatives that are directly aligned with the community's existing resources. Following this,

"entrepreneurship training" ranks second, indicating a strong recognition of the value of equipping community members with the skills and knowledge necessary to start and manage their own businesses. Ranking third is the "upskilling and reskilling program," highlighting the need for comprehensive human resource development across the community. Conversely, "remote or flexible work opportunities" received the least number of responses. Given the localized context of bargains, this approach may not be as applicable or ideal for implementation in this setting. Nonetheless, it remains important to consider all potential avenues for livelihood development, even those that may be less favored in specific contexts. According to Montenegro, D (2023) and Kofi et al. (2015) this comprehensive evaluation of approaches will ultimately contribute to more effective extension services tailored to the unique needs of the community.

Table 7. Importance and Acceptability of Extension Services in a Community, as Well as Their Perceived Needs

| Needs Assessment | Rating | Interpretation |
|---|---------------|-----------------------|
| What are the primary needs and challenges faced by the community that extension services should address? | 4.38 | Extremely Important |
| How do community members prioritize the types of extension services they find most necessary? | 4.14 | Very Important |
| Participation and Engagement | | |
| To what extent do community members participate in extension services, and what factors influence their level of engagement? | 4.15 | Very Important |
| What barriers do community members face in accessing and utilizing extension services? | 3.31 | Moderately Important |
| Acceptability and Trust | | |
| How acceptable are the current extension services among community members, and what factors contribute to their level of trust in these services? | 3.33 | Moderately Important |
| How do community members perceive the qualifications and credibility of extension service providers? | 4.11 | Very Important |
| Effectiveness of Service Delivery | | |
| How effective are the current methods of delivering extension services in meeting the community's needs? | 3.34 | Moderately Important |
| What changes or improvements do community members suggest for enhancing the delivery of extension services? | 3.38 | Moderately Important |
| Impact on Livelihoods | | |
| How have extension services contributed to the economic development and livelihood improvement of community members? | 4.16 | Very Important |
| What measurable outcomes can be identified as a result of the extension services provided? | 4.08 | Very Important |
| Sustainability and Future Directions | | |
| What strategies can be implemented to enhance the sustainability of extension services in the community? | 4.13 | Very Important |
| How can extension service providers better align their programs with the evolving needs of the community? | 4.33 | Extremely Important |
| Community Engagement in Planning | | |
| How can community members be more actively involved in the planning and implementation of extension services? | 4.18 | Very Important |
| What role does community feedback play in shaping the direction of future extension programs? | 4.23 | Extremely Important |
| Total | 3.97 | Very Important |
| Descriptor | 1 | 1.00–1.79 |

| | | |
|----------------------|---|-----------|
| Not Important at All | 2 | 1.80–2.59 |
| Slightly Important | 3 | 2.60–3.39 |
| Moderately Important | 4 | 3.40–4.19 |
| Very Important | 5 | 4.20–5.00 |
| Extremely Important | 1 | 1.00–1.79 |

The table effectively illustrates the significance of extension services and their acceptability within the community, reflecting how residents perceive these services as essential. With an overall mean rating of 3.69, the data indicates that extension services are viewed as "very important." According to Meena M, et al. (2016) and Figueroa (2017) This underscores the vital role that these services play in assisting the community in various ways. Extension services can offer interventions in collaboration with local government units, facilitating training programs and seminars that serve as powerful tools for community upliftment and poverty alleviation—an important agenda for the Extension Services Office. Furthermore, the BSBA Extension aligns its programs and instructional discipline with these priorities, emphasizing commitment to fostering sustainable development in the community.

Findings

Remote bargains in Surigao del Sur face significant barriers, including high transaction costs and considerable risks when accessing new knowledge, innovations, and training in production and trade. These challenges are compounded by limited budget allocations for community skill development and entrepreneurial opportunities. Consequently, many residents remain highly vulnerable, often requiring basic safety nets more than production-oriented interventions. The bargains of the existing programs offer only limited training opportunities to constituents, providing minimal support to improve living conditions or

foster entrepreneurship. This limitation stimulates the potential for residents to develop specialized technical skills that could enhance their income and move them towards a higher standard of living.

In today's rapidly evolving landscape, rural communities face heightened vulnerability in labor markets, particularly as digitalization advances. According to Rivas-Delgado, O. & Libaque-Sanez C. (2022) outdated skills render many residents unprepared for modern job requirements, emphasizing the need for training in relevant, contemporary skills that are crucial for sustainable rural livelihoods. This gap underscores the critical role of the University's extension projects, which, through partnerships, can provide timely interventions to bridge these skills gaps and improve the community's access to labor market opportunities.

The University places rural development at the forefront of its priorities, ensuring that its research outputs serve as a foundation for local policy formulation. These findings can guide local leaders in developing budget priorities and crafting policies that incorporate a sector-wide perspective essential for uplifting the barangay's socio-economic condition. However, challenges remain, as political instability and weaknesses in local governance often hinder policy implementation. Fragmented interventions from external donors and political influences also contribute to inequalities within the community, further complicating efforts to ensure equitable progress.

To address these challenges, both the barangay and the University must adopt a broader

vision for extension projects, focusing on sustainable, inclusive programs that genuinely benefit the intended target beneficiaries. According to [Nsengimana, J. \(2013\)](#), extension projects should aim for gender inclusivity, deliver skills that are timely and relevant, and foster livelihood opportunities that enhance community resilience. By aligning extension activities with the real needs of the community, the partnership between the University and the bargain can drive impactful and sustainable development, ensuring that initiatives have lasting benefits for all.

Policy Implications

1. Alignment with University Extension Agenda

Barangay La Paz should actively align its programs with the University's extension priorities to maximize the impact of resources and initiatives. A comprehensive training needs assessment is essential to identify the specific skills and knowledge gaps within the community, which will enable the University to tailor its extension projects to meet these needs effectively. According to [Gren A, et al. \(2018\)](#) this alignment will help bridge existing gaps, address vulnerabilities, and optimize budget utilization, ultimately encouraging beneficiaries to acquire relevant skills and enhance their productivity. By offering targeted training opportunities, the Barangay and University can provide residents with viable pathways out of poverty and facilitate meaningful socioeconomic improvements.

2. Formalized Partnerships for Strategic Collaboration

Establishing formal partnerships, such as through Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) or Understanding (MOU), between the Barangay and University will foster a sustained, collaborative approach to designing and implementing extension projects. These

agreements can facilitate strategic planning and idea exchange, ensuring that extension projects are both relevant and responsive to the community's needs. According to [Davis K. et al. \(2017\)](#) and [Montenegro, D. \(2024\)](#) that Extension proposals should consider the varying degrees of market integration within the area, enabling low-income residents to capitalize on market opportunities effectively. This approach will better equip beneficiaries with the skills necessary to meet current and future market demands, empowering them for long-term success.

3. Targeted Extension Strategies for Sustainability and Budget Efficiency

University extension strategies must prioritize timely implementation and effective budget allocation, distinguishing between highly integrated areas and those less connected to the market. This requires a balanced approach that supports both production-centered initiatives and broader livelihood extension programs. The University's commitment to sustainable extension projects aligns with government mandates to serve vulnerable communities. By partnering closely, BSBA Extension Services and Barangay La Paz can implement projects that not only alleviate poverty but also foster self-sufficiency and resilience within the community.

4. Expanded Service Scope Through Multi-Departmental Collaboration

The College's Extension Services should offer a broad range of support, coordinating with various departments to address diverse community needs beyond business-related training. While the focus is often on production-oriented support, other livelihood and skill development opportunities are equally valuable for comprehensive

community development. BSBA Extension Services should collaborate with other University departments to provide technical training across different fields, thereby ensuring a well-rounded transfer of knowledge. According to Anil et al. (2024) and Agostino, D (2021) that extension activities should be tailored to each area's level of market integration, vulnerability, and production potential, enabling a diversified support structure that aligns with both government and University priorities for enhancing living standards in rural communities.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The alignment of Barangay La Paz's programs with the University's extension agenda is crucial for optimizing resource utilization and maximizing community impact. Conducting a thorough training needs assessment will allow the University to tailor its extension projects to address specific skills and knowledge gaps, ultimately facilitating socioeconomic improvements and providing residents with effective pathways out of poverty. Establishing formal partnerships between the Barangay and the University through agreements such as Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) or Understanding (MOU) will foster strategic collaboration in designing and implementing relevant extension projects. This collaborative approach ensures that the initiatives are responsive to community needs and that low-income residents can effectively leverage market opportunities.

Furthermore, the University must prioritize targeted extension strategies that emphasize timely implementation and efficient budget allocation. This approach should recognize the differing levels of market integration in the community, supporting both production-centered initiatives and broader livelihood programs.

According to Bebbington et al. (2018) and Adeniran, A. (2020) such commitment to sustainable extension practices aligns with governmental mandates and enhances community resilience. Lastly, a multi-departmental collaboration within the College's Extension Services is essential to broaden the support provided to the community. According to Chua C. & Lim W. (2020) by offering a diverse range of training opportunities beyond business-related skills, the University can facilitate a well-rounded knowledge transfer that addresses various community needs. This diversified support structure will ultimately align with both government and University priorities to enhance living standards in rural areas, promoting self-sufficiency and long-term community development.

Recommendations

The researcher highly suggests the following based on their observations and conclusions:

Implement Comprehensive Training Needs Assessments It is recommended that Barangay La Paz and the University conduct comprehensive training needs assessments on a regular basis. These assessments should identify specific skills and knowledge gaps within the community, allowing for the development of tailored extension projects. Such proactive measures will ensure that the initiatives are relevant and effectively address the pressing needs of the residents, thereby fostering sustainable socioeconomic improvements.

Formalize Strategic Partnerships Establishing formal partnerships between Barangays La Paz and the University is crucial for the successful design and implementation of extension projects. It is recommended that both entities develop Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) or Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) to facilitate ongoing collaboration. This formalization will enhance strategic planning, promote idea

exchange, and ensure that extension projects are responsive to community needs, ultimately improving the efficacy of resource utilization.

Prioritize Targeted Extension Strategies the University should prioritize the development and implementation of targeted extension strategies that account for the varying degrees of market integration within the community. By differentiating between highly integrated areas and those with limited market access, the University can allocate resources more effectively and implement initiatives that support both production-centered and broader livelihood programs. This strategic focus will enhance the sustainability of extension projects and align with government mandates aimed at poverty alleviation.

Expand Service Scope through Multi-Departmental Collaboration To effectively address diverse community needs, it is recommended that the College's Extension Services expand its scope by collaborating with various departments within the University. This collaboration should focus on providing a wide range of training opportunities, including technical skills and knowledge across different fields. By doing so, the Extension Services can ensure a comprehensive approach to community development, thus improving the overall quality of life for residents.

Enhance Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms Developing robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms is essential for assessing the impact of extension projects and identifying areas for improvement. Regular evaluations should be conducted to measure the effectiveness of training programs and the overall success of implemented initiatives. Feedback from beneficiaries should be incorporated into future

project designs to ensure continuous improvement and responsiveness to the community's evolving needs.

Compliance With Ethical Standard

The author declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the outcomes of this study. In conducting this research, the researchers uphold the principles of human dignity and privacy, taking diligent measures to ensure that the advantages and burdens of the research are distributed equitably among all respondents. This study serves as an essential component of a personal research initiative aimed at facilitating the implementation of extension services within the designated community. Specifically, it is intended to inform the development of an Extension Project slated for implementation in the first quarter of 2025. Furthermore, this research was undertaken as part of a training needs assessment for the Extension Services Office, ensuring that the proposed initiatives are aligned with the actual requirements and circumstances of the community served.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest pertaining to this study.

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