

The Narratives of Marginalized Women in Samar, Philippines: A Baseline Study for Extension Program Sustainability

Tranie B. Gatil^{1*}, Mary Jane B. Cinco¹, Nathalie Ann A. Acosta¹, Joan J. Baclay¹

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ABSTRACT

With the alarming poverty incidence among families in Samar Province at 27% (PSA, 2021), Samar State University conducted an extension program along entrepreneurship engagement among marginalized families. To better improve the program, an impact assessment was conducted. This study assessed the impact of the capacity building on developing entrepreneurial mindset among marginalized families in Samar. A focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted with the program beneficiaries from Marabut and Basey, Samar. Through Moustaka's (1994) structured method of inductive data analysis, the following themes were identified: Positive attitude and mindset is a requisite to successful entrepreneurship; entrepreneurial knowledge dictates readiness towards entrepreneurship, and; lack of fund impedes entrepreneurial intention. The program was successful in its goal of educating the marginalized families of the significant role entrepreneurial mindset and positive communication play in a successful entrepreneurship pursuit. However, lack of capital to start business is seen as a major impediment. To remedy this, inclusion of financial literacy and entrepreneurial management courses in the program is recommended. Finally, to improve the andragogy, crafting of learning material in mother tongue is recommended.

INTRODUCTION

According to the Philippine Statistics Report (2021), the Samar province recorded 27% poverty incidence among families in 2021 – a significant increase from the 2018 22.2%. This alarming data has pushed the professors from Samar State University to develop an extension program on Entrepreneurial Mindset Capacity Development Among Marginalized Families in Samar.

Entrepreneurial engagement is one of the contributory factors to lessen poverty. According to UNESCO (2016) “a collection of formalized teachings that informs, trains, and educates anyone interested in participating in socioeconomic development through a project to promote entrepreneurship awareness, business creation, or small business development and is usually conceived more broadly, seeking to foster self-esteem and confidence by drawing on the individual's talents and creativity, while building the relevant skills and values”.

The extension program conducted by the College of Arts & Sciences faculty of Samar State University, titled “Capacity Building on Developing Entrepreneurial Mindset of Marginalized Families” has concluded last August 2022. The program covers activities relative to entrepreneurial mindset development such as the psychology of an entrepreneur, positive communication, and communication in organizations. Now, the current research assessed the impact of the program to the beneficiaries and discovered the challenges encountered by the program beneficiaries during the run of the program. This gave the researchers data on the impact of the program to the beneficiaries and identify challenges to revise, implement, and plan a better program based on

the results of this study.

This study will assess the challenges and problems of the implementation of entrepreneurial mindset program and the impact of the program to the beneficiaries. This would provide essential data for program sustainability.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurship education includes the enhancement of broad competencies and the refinement of personal skills and abilities, ranging from knowledge acquisition to skill advancement. It is a method to nurture inventive skills, which are a crucial impetus for future development (Wu *et al.*, 2019; Wei & Duan, 2023). Entrepreneurship enables individuals to earn a respectable income by developing and providing products and services that fulfil the requirements and desires of consumers. Given the increasing significance of entrepreneurship in the economy, the government advocates for the integration of entrepreneurship education into both basic and higher education curricula, with the objective of expanding the entrepreneurial attitude among young (De Carolis & Litzky, 2019).

Social cognitive theory perceives individuals as agents and active participants in shaping the circumstances of their existence (Bandura, 2018). Individuals are motivated to pursue their objectives when they believe their abilities and activities may yield the desired outcomes. Entrepreneurship education enhances individual cognition, continually refines thoughts and actions, and renders entrepreneurial pursuits more focused, coherent, and purposeful.

A subsequent evaluation of a program is crucial, as

¹ English Language Faculty, College of Arts and Sciences, Samar State University, Catbalogan City, Samar, Philippines

* Corresponding author's e-mail: tranie.gatil@ssu.edu.ph

Bornstein (2010) highlighted that impact assessment offers a framework for facilitating community development. It is intended to aid local planners and decision-makers in anticipating the potential implications of a certain development on a community. It provides an opportunity to avert or alleviate any negative consequences of a projected development.

Impact assessment (IA) is a systematic method for evaluating the consequences of proposed activities on individuals and their environment, allowing for modifications or potential abandonment of the ideas while there is still an opportunity (Fortuny, 2015). It is implemented at every tier of decision-making, from policy to specific initiatives. The objectives are to:

- Furnish information for decision-making that evaluates the biophysical, social, economic, and institutional ramifications of proposed actions;
- Enhance transparency and public participation in decision-making;
- Delineate procedures and methodologies for follow-up (monitoring and mitigation of adverse effects) within policy, planning, and project cycles; and
- Advance environmentally sound and sustainable development.

Edwards (2012) examined the possible effects of expansion and development on towns across Wisconsin. Growth is perceived as beneficial and advantageous for communities. Nevertheless, communities are becoming increasingly cognisant that growth may include associated costs. Moreover, development decisions frequently occur without a comprehensive knowledge of their impact on total community welfare. As expansion in a community might have negative consequences, meticulously strategised development is essential to align growth with the group's long-term objectives.

A Social Impact Assessment is a systematic process involving study, planning, and management of social changes or consequences—both good and negative, intentional and unintended—resulting from policies, programs, initiatives, and projects (UNEP, 2007). The primary emphasis of a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) is on the significant effects of projects and developments, extending beyond their influence on natural resources. Instances of societal repercussions encompass (Vanclay, 2003):

- The lifestyle of individuals, encompassing their daily activities, work, recreation, and interpersonal interactions.
- The culture of a group, defined by their collective beliefs, practices, values, and linguistic or dialectical expressions.
- The community's cohesion, stability, character, services, and facilities.
- Their political systems – the degree of public participation in decision-making processes that impact their lives, the level of democratisation occurring, and the resources allocated for this purpose.
- Their health and well-being encompass a state of comprehensive physical, mental, social, and spiritual

wellness, rather than only the absence of illness or disability.

The perspectives of community residents about development, the suggested measures, and their views of community and individual well-being are crucial factors influencing the social impacts of a proposed initiative. Alterations in a community's social well-being can be assessed by soliciting individuals and representatives from groups or neighbourhoods to articulate their perceptions and attitudes towards the expected changes in the social environment. Data regarding attitudes and perceptions ought to be collected from community leaders, as their perspectives may provide valuable insight into the general attitudes of residents, provided that these leaders are attuned to community concerns and interests (Inter-organizational Committee on Guidelines and Principles for Social Impact Assessment, May 1994).

The growing interest in “sustainability” or “sustainable development” during the past two decades, along with the obstacles identified by scholars, has prompted a redefinition of the idea of “impact assessment” (IA). Conceived in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the primary emphasis of IA was on evaluating the environmental impacts of a proposed project. In recent decades, the phrase “impact assessment” has been extended to integrate sustainable development with the social and economic effects of a project (Bond & Pope, 2012). Sustainable impact assessment (SIA) is a mechanism that assists policymakers and decision-makers in addressing the requirements of future generations when formulating policies or making decisions (Devuyt, 2001). The aim of SIA is to guarantee that the “plans and activities” of each proposed project significantly contribute to sustainable development (Bond & Pope, 2012). This chapter delineates the definition of SIA, its benefits and societal contributions, its distinctions from other forms of IA, its methodology and evaluation, and concludes with case studies documented in the literature.

The work by Kumar *et al.* (2020) explores a novel approach to effect evaluation in light of this tendency. Sustainable impact assessment (SIA) examines the economic, social, and environmental effects of a project or plan while maintaining a focus on sustainable development throughout the evaluation process. SIA has numerous advantages, including long-term benefits, enhanced governance, improved decision-making processes, and more stakeholder involvement. The approach for conducting Social Impact Assessment (SIA) and sustainability indicators may differ between projects. Various instruments such as ToSIA, lifecycle analysis (LCA), and multicriteria analysis (MCA) have been created to assess sustainability indicators. It is essential to raise awareness about SIA among local populations to enhance public engagement in the decision-making process for effective SIA implementation.

The entrepreneurship process is intrinsically connected to an individual's traits (Baum *et al.*, 2007), as this individual serves as the primary agent in the decision-

making to undertake entrepreneurial ventures and bears the responsibility for the outcomes. This viewpoint concentrates on the entrepreneur's cognitions, behaviours, decisions, goals, and emotions (Venkataraman *et al.*, 2012).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Design

The study used qualitative research design to account the narratives of the respondents on the impact of the extension program with respect to their entrepreneurial mindset. Qualitative methods of assessment are ways of gathering information that yield results that can't easily be measured by or translated into numbers. They are often used when you need the subtleties behind the numbers – the feelings, small actions, or pieces of community history that affect the current situation (Berkowitz, 1982; Berg, 2007).

Selection

The researchers purposively selected 35 research participants from two study sites: Basey and Marabut, Samar. The researchers established the following inclusion and exclusion criteria: participants is a previous program beneficiary; participant is a member of women's organizations in their localities, and; categorized under the marginalized sector, as identified prior to the program's conduct.

Data Gathering

This research followed the Qualitative Impact Protocol during the data gathering process. The Qualitative Impact Protocol (QuIP) is an approach to impact assessment based on collecting narrative accounts from the beneficiaries of an intervention about what caused changes in specified areas of their life over a defined period (Scholz, 2021). This emerging trend of qualitative impact assessment was used wherein the current research was conducted by field researchers who are not given information about the program to reduce bias (p.1).

Initially, an interview was conducted with randomly selected members of the beneficiaries group. A total of 13 beneficiaries were key informants for the interview, meeting the recommended minimum sample size to reach data saturation (Clarke & Braun, 2013; Fugard & Potts, 2014; Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). Interviews elicit narratives about drivers of change from individuals. This is an essential step that was conducted to reduce contamination of narrative statements across sources (Copestake, 2020).

A focus group discussion (FGD) was facilitated by field researchers to the program beneficiaries through an unstructured questionnaire. Guided by the Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 2018), the researchers were able to understand the narratives of the beneficiaries as agents and active contributors to development through entrepreneurship.

Both the processes epoché (formulation of interview questions) and bracketing (putting away judgements and

biases) was used in this qualitative design, which enabled researchers to understand the impact of the program under study (Martirano, 2016).

Mode of Analysis

Once the data has been collected, the researchers, following the QuIP method, utilized a robust thematic coding method, systematically coding for drivers, outcomes and attribution while incorporating Moustaka's (1994) structured method of data analysis. The results allow analysis of key stories of change - looking for emerging trends and patterns between different respondent types (Remnant & Avard, 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the analysis of the narratives of the program beneficiaries during the interview and FGD, three major themes emerged: positive attitude and mindset as a requisite of entrepreneurship; entrepreneurship knowledge dictates readiness towards entrepreneurship; and lack of fund impedes entrepreneurial intention.

Positive Attitude and Mindset and Successful Entrepreneurship

Participant 1

Kuan Sir, ito nga tama gud nga dapat an usa nga tawo ready hiya dire la nga may puhunan hiya, pati an iya liwat mindset kanan negosyante gud kun magnenegosyo hiya. Kay dire la masayon an pagnegosyo.

(Uhm Sir, it is right that a person should be ready not only financially, but also mentally. A person should have the positive mindset of an entrepreneur if he pursues entrepreneurship. Because entrepreneurship is not easy.)

Participant 2

Ako han panluto didto han DOST ak pagtikang, nagtraining kami gihap, nahibaroan ko an kanan pagluto muffins, fries. Labot la hine, an yana nga training nga mindset kay dako gud ngayan an importansya han kada tagsa ha amon paprehas ba huna huna para han amon organization kay kun бага kami kami la gihap an magbuburublig nga maghikaupay pa ine nga amon produkto.

(At the start, I was present on the training of DOST on making muffins and fries. Aside from this, this training about entrepreneurial mindset is of big importance to each of us to have the same mindset as members of organization, since, we are the members, we are the one to helps each other and the organization to grow and our products to prosper.)

Participant 3

Asya na ngani nga pag may problema dapat gud mamimiling pamaagi, dire nga mawawrayan nala paglaum. Kumbaga, mindset ba, mindset siring pa han kabataan.

(It really should be that, in times of adversity, entrepreneurs find ways/solutions, and will not lose hope type of mindset. Just as the youth says, it's a matter of mindsetting.)

During the interview, majority of the participants expressed understanding of the importance of having the proper entrepreneurial mindset towards success in business. This is especially helpful in times of adversity. As Constable (2021) asserts, entrepreneurial mindset allows the individual to see opportunities, provide solutions, overcome obstacles and develop strategies to implement.

Entrepreneurial Knowledge and Skills and Readiness towards Entrepreneurship

Participant 1

Dapat gud kun magnenegosyo ka, maaram ka han kalakaran han imo ginsusudlan. Kay paano ka man mababaro pagnegosyo kun dire ka maaram paano magluto, diin nakuha suplay, hain an mas barato nga kuan, mga sugad hito.

(It should be that, when you go into business, you know the ins and outs. Because how would you know business if you do not know how to cook, where to get supplies, the cheaper one, and the like.)

Participant 2

Dako gud ka importante nga sugad hine nagkakaada kami hin training paano pag hosting, pricing ngan return investment kay ako nagluluto sura tapos sari-sari store. Tapos yana naa-apply ngan natututdo ko na ha akon anak pati an panluto.

(The conduct of these trainings are important for us to have knowledge in hosting, pricing, return of investment because I both cook food and has sari-sari store. And I apply this knowledge and teach this to my daughter.)

Participant 3

Ako ma'am ha dati kun baga nahadlok paak pagtinda kay tungod haak kaawdunon nawara tas nabaro ako pag sales talk dara nagihap iton akon negosyo kay syempre kun nagnenegosyo karugod kita nagsisales talk. Tapos tungod liwat hine nga mga trainings baga nadudugngan ak aram ngan confidence pagnegosyo.

(As for me ma'am, before, I was scared to sell goods because I was so shy then. And because I was in this business, I

learned how to do sales talk, as my business requires sales talk. And through these trainings, my knowledge and confidence in entrepreneurship was improved.)

Participants expressed the significance of having the knowledge and skills about the kind of business for them to be confident in business, which appears to be equated to their readiness for entrepreneurial venture. Entrepreneurial knowledge and skills significantly impact entrepreneurial intention (Miralles, 2016; Hutasuhut, 2018; Karyaningsih, 2020; Ferreira *et al.*, 2022). Furthermore, Dela Cruz, *et al.* (2023) highlights that the respective entrepreneurial competencies will decide how much success they can achieve, hence these competencies must be strengthened or improved continuously.

Lack of fund and Entrepreneurial Intention

Participant 1

Tama na ma'am, basta an akon deri ak maaram kun ngain kami kukuha financial ansya la ito an nakakaulang sobra na akon nahibaruan.

(It's enough ma'am. My concern is where to get finances to start business, since it's the only impediment to me pursuing my business.)

Participant 2

Makuri gud makatikang negosyo ma'am kun waray puhunan. Kun baga, bisan ngani amon ig-iiklop tirighon pa.

(It really is hard to start business, ma'am, if you do not have capital. Even our dinner, is still hard to find.)

Participant 3

Tama gud ma'am. Siyempre, bisan ano pa nga trainings kay pananglitan ako may lima nga anak nga nadeponder ha akon, dire ko gud matutukan an pagnegosyo labi na nga an ak kita pangalayon paglaba nahingangadto la amon pankaoon, kulang pa ngani.

(That's right, ma'am. Even with all the trainings, if, for example, as for my case, I have five dependents, I cannot focus on my business venture, since my salary as a laundrywoman all goes to our food expenses, and is still insufficient.)

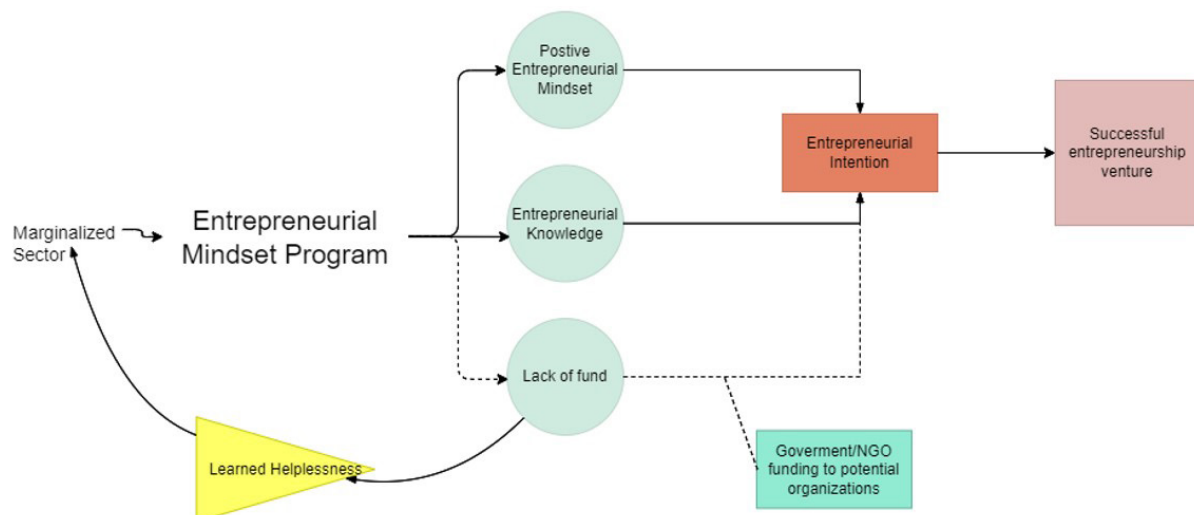


Figure 1: Causal Map of the Entrepreneurial Mindset Program qualitative impact assessment

Coming from the marginalized sector, it is undeniable that the culture of poverty is deeply ingrained and projects as learned helplessness (Rabow *et al.*, 1983). Despite their strong desire to start their entrepreneurship venture, participants, confronted with the dilemma of lack of fund, succumb to learned helplessness, in their defense. The general lack of fund or capital to start a business is a major setback to production leading to slow progress (Singh, 2022). Similarly, this is one of the constructs identified by Irene *et al.* (2017) along conditioning, low education, and habits as key areas in understanding poverty in the countryside.

This causal map illustrates the interconnections between the identified themes and how they contribute to the impact of an entrepreneurial mindset program among marginalized groups. Positive attitude and mindset, entrepreneurial knowledge, and overcoming financial barriers play crucial roles in fostering entrepreneurial intention and success within marginalized communities. Both positive attitude and mindset and entrepreneurial mindset – gained through the program – results in improved readiness towards business and leading to higher likelihood of engaging in entrepreneurial activities. Furthermore, limited financial capacity hinders entrepreneurial intention which leads to reduced motivation and helplessness, lessening the chances of the beneficiaries to escape the vicious cycle of poverty. However, with the assistance of government and non-government organizations, business ventures seen with potential are given capital to start off in their venture.

CONCLUSIONS

Entrepreneurship is one of the key areas policy-makers invest on in the fight against poverty. This study was successful in understanding the drivers of change among the participants of the program. One of the key constructs for successful entrepreneurship is having an entrepreneurial mindset. The study analyzed the narratives of program-beneficiaries who have undergone the Capacity Building on Developing Entrepreneurial Mindset of Marginalized Families. Through Moustaka's (1994) structured method of inductive data analysis, three themes emerged: attitude, mindset and successful entrepreneurship; entrepreneurial knowledge and skills and readiness to entrepreneurship, and; lack of fund and entrepreneurial intention. The program was successful in its goal of educating the marginalized families of the significant roles entrepreneurial mindset plays in a successful entrepreneurship pursuit. However, lack of capital to start business is seen as a major impediment. To remedy this, inclusion of financial literacy and entrepreneurial management courses in the program is recommended. While this research reveals insights in the entrepreneurial intentions in women, further studies may focus on male demographic for a represented output. Finally, to improve the andragogy, crafting of learning material in mother tongue is recommended.

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