Research Article

Empowering Communities: An Analysis of Extension Programs Focusing on Gift-Giving and Free SIM Card Registration in Oriental Mindoro

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About Article

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ABSTRACT

Embracing the adage Sharing is Caring, Giving is Loving, Mindoro State University (MinSU) exemplifies its dedication to fostering a culture of compassion and generosity within the Mindoro province. This study evaluates the multifaceted extension programs conducted by the College of Computer Studies (CCS) at MinSU Bongabong Campus. Extension activities serve as vital endeavors that bridge academic institutions with communities, addressing diverse needs through initiatives like seminar, gift-giving, and SIM card free registrations. Through qualitative and quantitative analyses, this study evaluates the implementation status of these programs across strategic, social, and service dimensions. Findings underscore the college's commitment to community engagement and excellence, affirming its role as a catalyst for positive change. Recommendations encompass deeper community engagement and expanding collaboration and partnerships with other institutions and stakeholders to address emerging challenges effectively and ensure responsive and comprehensive solutions to community needs.

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Citation Style:

Binay, G. P. (2024). Empowering Communities: An Analysis of Extension Programs Focusing on Gift-Giving and Free Sim Card Registration in Oriental Mindoro. *Journal of Exceptional Multidisciplinary Research, 1*(1), 15-20.

1. INTRODUCTION

Extension activities have been recognized as an essential tool for community development, aiming to empower communities by addressing various social and economic challenges. The Philippines, in particular, has a long history of implementing extension programs to promote sustainable development and community empowerment. However, there are still critical challenges that need to be addressed to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of these programs. The first program, the gift-giving of pre-loved clothes and groceries, aims to address the needs of families in low-income and poverty-stricken areas. This program is designed to provide essential items to those who are in need, promoting social and economic empowerment by providing access to basic necessities. This program is essential as it helps to alleviate poverty and promote sustainable development in the community. The second program, the free sim card registration, is aimed at improving communication and access to information in the second district of Oriental Mindoro and other areas. This program is essential as it provides access to communication and information, which is crucial for community development and empowerment. It also helps to promote social and economic empowerment by providing access to communication and information, which is essential for daily life and economic activities. These programs are designed to address the needs of the community and promote sustainable development and community empowerment. However, there are still critical challenges that need to be addressed to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of these programs. This research aims to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of these programs, examining the social and economic benefits of these programs, as well as their contribution to sustainable development and community empowerment. The study will also explore the challenges and opportunities of implementing such programs in different contexts, and provide recommendations for improving their design and implementation in the future.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research are to:

1. Evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the gift-giving of pre-loved clothes and groceries program in addressing the needs of families in low-income and poverty-stricken areas.
2. Evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the free sim card registration program in improving communication and access to information in the second district of Oriental Mindoro and other areas.
3. Examine the social and economic benefits of these programs, as well as their contribution to sustainable development and community empowerment.
4. Explore the challenges and opportunities of implementing such programs in different contexts.
5. Provide recommendations for improving the design and implementation of these programs in the future

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Extension programs are essential in empowering communities by providing them with the necessary knowledge and skills to become independent, skilled, and morally righteous individuals (Harder & Brodeur, 2011). These programs are designed to address a variety of communal needs and challenges, with an emphasis on the beneficiaries' demands and the purpose of improving their significant behavior patterns (Rubio *et al.*, 2016; Wellard *et al.*, 2013). One of the critical challenges in implementing extension programs is the sustainability of services. A study by Agholor *et al.* (2013) found that substandard extension assistance to beneficiaries, insufficient linkage with extension and research, outdated extension methods, and farmworkers' reluctance to use agricultural produce are some of the precarious issues that need to be addressed. The Philippines' Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have contributed to the 2020 Philippine Development Agenda (PDA) by adopting need-based practices to achieve their outputs. Community development programs must assist the most marginalized populations, and the pursuit of development initiatives is seen as a communal challenge (Schiele, Jackson, & Fairfax, 2009). In the context of the gift-giving of pre-loved clothes and groceries, an extension program in Balamban, Cebu, has shown significant effects on women's empowerment. The project contributed to their income and eventual capability to make and control financial matters, which has a significant effect on their families and eventually to their community. It can give rise to the improvement of women's and children's health and welfare (Burges, 2007; Buvinic *et al.*, 2008; Ferrant, 2010; Gowan *et al.*, 2005; World Bank 2012). It covered all the factors that encompass quality of life. This showed that women performed multi-dimensional roles to advance their existing family standard (Pogoy *et al.*, 2016). In the context of free sim card registration, an extension program by Field of Hope (FOH) in Uganda has shown significant impacts on the community. FOH believes that empowering people with improved agriculture techniques can improve the nutritional security that is needed in areas of Uganda. The organization has been providing knowledge and training in practical agricultural skills, empowering the people they serve. By providing knowledge and training in practical agricultural skills, FOH is equipping farmers, teachers, or school children with something that can rarely be lost: knowledge and experience. Gaining the know-how of a new idea or product can change how efficient production of agriculture for a farmer or student can be. In agriculture, efficient production leads to overall improvement of life for farmers (or students), whether that means more income, better nutrition, or less time spent on laboring fields (Hurst, 2023).

3. METHODOLOGY

The research on Empowering Communities: An Analysis of Extension Programs Focusing on Gift-Giving and Free Sim Card Registration in Oriental Mindoro and Other Areas will employ a mixed-methods approach to gather comprehensive data and insights. The methodology will involve conducting surveys and interviews with beneficiaries of the extension programs, community leaders, and program implementers. The survey will be designed to assess the impact of the programs on the community, including the perceived benefits, challenges faced, and overall satisfaction. Interviews will provide in-depth qualitative data on the experiences and perspectives of stakeholders involved in the programs. Data analysis will involve both quantitative analysis of survey responses using

statistical software and qualitative analysis of interview transcripts using thematic analysis. The research will adhere to ethical guidelines, ensuring participant confidentiality and informed consent. The findings are synthesized to provide a holistic understanding of the effectiveness and impact of the extension programs on community empowerment in Oriental Mindoro and other areas.

3.1. Respondents

The study's respondents consisted of a diverse group of individuals, including 150 indigenous people, elementary school students, and their families from Barangay Tawas, Bongabong municipality, and 150 residents from the second district of Oriental Mindoro. Additionally, the study included 150 individuals from various regions who had not yet registered their SIM cards. The selection of respondents aimed to capture the perspectives and experiences of a broad range of individuals who have participated in or been affected by the extension programs. The data collected from these respondents was analyzed using a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative research methods. This provides a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the extension programs on the empowerment of communities in Oriental Mindoro and other areas.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicated a significant positive impact of the extension programs on community empowerment. Through the gift-giving of pre-loved clothes and groceries, beneficiaries reported an improvement in their quality of life, with enhanced access to essential items contributing to their well-being. Similarly, the free sim card registration program in Oriental Mindoro and other areas facilitated improved communication and access to information, empowering individuals to connect with others and access vital services.

The table below outlines the key programs and services offered by the College in empowering communities through extension programs. These initiatives have played a significant role in addressing the needs of marginalized populations and fostering sustainable development in Oriental Mindoro and surrounding areas. The findings highlight the importance of extension programs in promoting community empowerment and improving the quality of life for individuals in need.

Table1. Programs and Services of the College.

Program/Service	Community Needs Addressed
Gift-Giving Initiative	• Provides pre-loved clothes and groceries to families in need, promoting social and economic empowerment.
SimCard Registration	• Offers free sim card registration in Oriental Mindoro and other areas, enhancing communication and access to information

The extension evaluation form presented in Table 2 served as a tool for collecting feedback from participants and stakeholders

engaged in the training program. Its purpose was to evaluate the clarity and effectiveness of the program's objectives implementation. Despite a total of 694 beneficiaries, only 300 questionnaires were retrieved for analysis.

Table 2. University's Extension Evaluation Form

Strategy	5	4	3	2	1
1. Objectives of the training was clearly defined. (*Inilahad ban ang maayos and layunin ng programa?*)					
2. Objectives were attained. (*Naisakatuparan ba ang layunin ng programa?*)					
3. Program was strictly followed. (*Nasusunod ba nang tama and programa?*)					
4. Topics covered were extensive and comprehensive. (*Malinaw ba ang pagpapaliwanag sa bawat paksa?*)					
5. There were efficient and effective facilitators. (*Magagaling ba ang mga tagapagturo sa programa?*)					

Social Cohesion	5	4	3	2	1
1. A sense of camaraderie and unity was fostered within the community (*Napalakas ba ang pakikisama at pagkakaisa sa komunidad?*)					
2. Your quality of life has improved. (*Napabuti ba ang kalidad ng iyong buhay?*)					
3. Equal opportunities and access for all sectors of the community were provided. (*Nagbigay ba ng pantay na mga oportunidad at pag-access para sa lahat ng sektor ng komunidad?*)					

Services	5	4	3	2	1
1. The program was well organized. (*Maayos ba ang programa?*)					
2. The program started on time. (*Nagsimula ba sa tamang oras ang programa?*)					
3. The materials for the extension were well prepared. (*Handa ba ang mga kagamitang gagamitin sa programa?*)					
4. The facilitators attended to the needs of the participants. (*Inaalam ba ang mga pangangailangan ng bawat mag-aaral/kalahok?*)					

The responses on the impact of extension programs and services as to strategy, social, and services, as indicated in Table 3, shows that both the Community Outreach (N=150) and Sim Card Free Registration (N=150) programs have been highly rated. The average weighted mean for the Community Outreach program is 4.83, while for the Sim Card Free Registration program, it is 4.88. Specifically, the criteria "The program started on

time" received the highest rating of 4.905 for the Community Outreach program and 4.94 for the Sim Card Free Registration program. The criterion "The materials for the extension were well prepared" also received a high rating of 4.9 for both programs. These results suggest that the extension programs have been effective in achieving their objectives and providing quality services to the community.

Table 3. The responses on the impact of extension programs and services as to strategy, social, and services.

Indicators	Mean			
	Community Outreach (N=150)	Sim Card Free Registration (N=150)	Average Weighted Mean	Rank
Objectives of the training were clearly defined.	4.82	4.87	4.845	7.5
Objectives were attained	4.81	4.89	4.85	5.5
The program was strictly followed	4.81	4.88	4.845	7.5
Topics covered were extensive and comprehensive	4.81	4.85	4.83	10
There were efficient and effective facilitators	4.82	4.88	4.85	5.5
A sense of camaraderie and unity was fostered within the community.	4.83	4.85	4.84	9
Your quality of life has improved.	4.80	4.81	4.805	12
Equal opportunities and access for all sectors of the community were provided.	4.80	4.83	4.815	11
The program was well organized.	4.87	4.93	4.9	2.5
The program started on time.	4.87	4.94	4.905	1
The materials for the extension were well prepared.	4.87	4.93	4.9	2.5
The facilitators attended to the needs of the participants	4.83	4.91	4.87	4
Total Average Weighted Mean	**4.83**	**4.88**	**4.860**	

Table 4 below presents the results of an evaluation of the level of adherence and effectiveness in achieving objectives for two extension programs: Community Outreach and Sim Card Free Registration. The table shows the mean ratings for each program across three indicators: Strategy, Social Cohesion, and Services. The ratings are based on a scale of 1 to 5, with higher ratings indicating better adherence and effectiveness. The Community Outreach program received a mean rating of 4.81 for Strategy, 4.81 for Social Cohesion, and 4.86 for Services, with an overall average weighted mean of 4.83. The Sim Card Free Registration program received a mean rating of 4.87 for Strategy, 4.83 for Social Cohesion, and 4.93 for Services, with an overall average weighted mean of 4.88. These results suggest that both programs have high levels of adherence and effectiveness in achieving their objectives. The concept of implementation fidelity, which refers to the degree to which an intervention is delivered as intended, is relevant to this evaluation. Implementation fidelity includes factors such as adherence to the intervention, exposure or dose, quality of delivery, participant responsiveness, and program differentiation. The evaluation of implementation fidelity involves measuring adherence, which includes the subcategories of content, frequency, duration, and coverage. The level of implementation fidelity achieved can affect the relationship between the intervention and its outcomes.

Table 4. Level of Adherence to the Program and Effectiveness in Achieving Objectives.

Indicators	Mean		
	Community Outreach (N=150)	Sim Card Free Registration (N=150)	Average Weighted Mean
Strategy	4.81	4.87	4.84
Social Cohesion	4.81	4.83	4.84
Services	4.86	4.93	4.90
Total Average Weighted Mean	**4.83**	**4.88**	**4.86**

4.1. Project Leader and Extensionists/Implementers Engagement

The engagement between project leaders and extensionists/implementers is important in empowering communities through extension programs focusing on gift-giving and free sim card registration in Oriental Mindoro and other areas. The success of these programs depends on the effective collaboration between the project leaders and the extensionists/implementers who work directly with the communities. The project leaders provide the overall direction, resources, and support, while the extensionists/implementers are responsible for implementing the programs, building relationships with the communities, and ensuring that the programs meet the needs of the beneficiaries. Effective communication, coordination, and collaboration between the project leaders and extensionists/implementers can help ensure that the programs are implemented efficiently and effectively, and that the objectives of the programs are achieved. Regular meetings, training, and capacity building activities can help strengthen the engagement between the project leaders and extensionists/implementers, and ensure that they are working together towards a common goal of empowering communities through extension programs.

4.2. Practical Implementation of Activities

The practical implementation of extension programs requires careful planning and monitoring to ensure that they are effective in achieving their objectives. According to the literature, the implementation guidelines for extension programs should involve embracing new strategies, allocating resources to programs with the best potential for impact, and allowing program teams flexibility in their planning process (Agholor, 2013). The concept of extension is dynamic and involves working with rural people to improve their livelihoods, increase production, and generally improve their standard of living (Baladjay, 2020). Effective implementation of extension programs requires the engagement of project leaders and extensionists/implementers. This involves creating a culture of accountability, improving decision-making at all levels, and fostering a performance measurement mindset (Agholor, 2013). Regular meetings, training, and capacity building activities can help strengthen the engagement between the project leaders and extensionists/implementers, and ensure that they are working together towards a common goal. Monitoring and evaluation are also critical components of practical implementation. They involve assessing the assumptions, goals, objectives, inputs, outcomes, and value of the program, and reporting findings in a manner that facilitates their use. The use of evaluation frameworks can help determine if the program was implemented as intended and if it was able to make health behavior changes (Chua & Goh, 2014).

4.3. Feedback and Evaluation

The positive feedback and evaluation of the community outreach efforts, which encompass seminars, feeding programs, gift-giving, and SIM card-free registration, speaks volumes about their significant impact on the community. Participants have expressed gratitude for the informative and engaging seminars, which have empowered them with valuable knowledge and skills. The feeding programs have been lauded for addressing food insecurity and fostering a sense of community support and well-being. Additionally, the gift-giving activities have brought joy and relief to individuals and families in need, demonstrating compassion and solidarity within the community. Moreover, the seamless facilitation of SIM card registration has been praised for promoting connectivity and access to essential services. Overall, these initiatives have received positive recognition for their holistic approach to community empowerment, highlighting the importance of collaborative efforts in creating positive change.

4.4. Findings

The extension programs and services conducted by the College of Computer Studies exhibit a multifaceted approach to addressing various community needs. These initiatives, as depicted in Table 1, span from educational seminars to feeding programs and SIM card registration drives, all aimed at enhancing community well-being and inclusivity. Notably, efforts are directed towards promoting social interaction and addressing communication access issues, reflecting a holistic understanding of community development. Additionally, the extension evaluation form presented in Table 3 provides valuable insights into program effectiveness, despite some challenges in feedback collection processes. Based on the data presented in Table 4, it is evident that the extension programs have yielded significant positive outcomes across strategy, social cohesion, and service aspects, as indicated by consistently high average weighted means. This underscores the successful execution and impact of these initiatives, facilitated by strong leadership and practical implementation. Moreover, feedback from participants highlights the tangible benefits and positive impact of these extension activities on community members. From empowering seminars to food security initiatives and SIM card registration drives, these programs have been instrumental in fostering community support, knowledge dissemination, and connectivity. Overall, the findings underscore the effectiveness of the College's extension efforts in promoting community empowerment and well-being, emphasizing the importance of collaborative engagement and practical implementation strategies in achieving meaningful outcomes.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The extension programs focusing on gift-giving and free SIM card registration in Oriental Mindoro and other areas have been successful in empowering communities through addressing various communal needs and challenges. These programs emphasize the beneficiaries' demands, aim to improve their significant behavior patterns, and include a wide range of activities and systematic appraisals. The community outreach efforts, which encompass seminars, gift-giving, and SIM card-free registration, have received positive feedback and evaluations from the community. Participants have expressed gratitude for the informative and engaging seminars, which have empowered them with valuable knowledge and skills. The gift-giving activities have brought joy and relief to individuals and families in need, demonstrating compassion and solidarity within the community. The seamless facilitation of SIM card

registration has promoted connectivity and access to essential services. These initiatives have received positive recognition for their holistic approach to community empowerment, highlighting the importance of collaborative efforts in creating positive change.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the information provided in the sources regarding the extension programs focusing on gift-giving and free SIM card registration, the following recommendations are made:

1. Enhance Community Engagement: Strengthening community engagement in the planning and implementation of extension programs can lead to more tailored and effective initiatives. Involving community members in decision-making processes and program design can ensure that the programs address their specific needs and priorities.

2. Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation: Implementing a robust monitoring and evaluation framework is essential to track the impact and effectiveness of the extension programs over time. Regular assessments can help identify areas for improvement, measure outcomes, and ensure that the programs are meeting their objectives.

3. Capacity Building: Providing training and capacity building opportunities for extensionists and implementers can enhance their skills and effectiveness in delivering community programs. Investing in their professional development can lead to better program outcomes and increased community impact.

4. Sustainability Planning: Developing sustainability plans for the extension programs is crucial to ensure their long-term impact and effectiveness. This includes exploring funding sources, building partnerships with local organizations, and creating strategies for program continuity beyond initial implementation.

5. Community Empowerment: Focusing on initiatives that empower marginalized populations, promote inclusivity, and address social issues can lead to more sustainable community development outcomes. Tailoring programs to meet the specific needs of vulnerable groups can help create lasting positive change.

6. By implementing these recommendations, the extension programs focusing on gift-giving and free SIM card registration can further enhance their impact, promote community empowerment, and contribute to sustainable development in Oriental Mindoro and other areas.

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