

Developing Entrepreneurial Skills among Elderly Women: A Case of *Samahang Pangkabuhayan ng Buklurang Pangkababaihan*

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Abstract— Entrepreneurs have become the heroes of economic development and contemporary enterprises. The role of women entrepreneurs, regardless of age bracket in transforming and influencing other people and in organizing resources to bring positive impact to organization and society can be underscored. This research assessed the impact of the Entrepreneurial Literacy Program (ELP) of the College of Business and Accountancy, Columban College, Inc. in developing entrepreneurial skills among elderly women in the adopted community, *Samahang Pangkabuhayan ng Buklurang (SPNB) Pangkababaihan*. The descriptive-case study type of research was used and data were gathered through questionnaire-checklist, in-depth interview, observation and focus group discussion. The respondents were 35 elderly women ages 40 –65 years old who are actively members of SPNB. It was found out that they are potential business leaders despite of age because they perceive opportunities available and are well-positioned to take advantage of them for socio-economic development and transformation. They acquired the leadership character to bring change for improvement. They have the edge to convince and the will to participate in public affairs for social development, have the ability to create new products and services, employment and new market. The ELP is effective in teaching, educating and training elderly women in the field of entrepreneurship. It developed their skills and competence in building a business plan, thinking critically, developing autonomous solution to problems and enhancing their decision making skills. Positive mindset, innovation, risk assumptions and learning as well as creating awareness of the positive effects of entrepreneurship at a societal and economic level were also enhanced.

Keywords— entrepreneurial skills, entrepreneurial literacy program, elderly women, entrepreneurship, descriptive-survey, Olongapo City

I. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship has become a cornerstone of economic development and as such has been perceived as a solution to unemployment and economic crisis. In some countries like the Philippines, with low entrepreneurial intention propensity, entrepreneurship has been considered the solution to high unemployment rates. There is an effort from the local and national government to promote entrepreneurship by

encouraging partnerships with private companies and foundations in the creation and development of new entrepreneurial entities. More favorable regulation, subsidies, training and developing a positive mind-set towards entrepreneurship are their main mechanisms to encourage the creation of new firms. To some extent, an entrepreneurship bubble has been initiated, which pushes people to become entrepreneurs despite they may not be literate to create a new entity nor to run a small business [1].

Women-run enterprises are steadily growing all over the world, contributing to household incomes and growth of national economies. However, women face time, human, physical, and social constraints that limit their ability to grow their businesses.

Women entrepreneurs make significant contributions to economic growth and to poverty reduction. In the United States, for example, women-owned firms are growing at more than double the rate of all other firms, contribute nearly \$3 trillion to the U.S. economy and are directly responsible for 23 million jobs. In developing countries, female entrepreneurship is also increasing – there are about 8 to 10 million formal SMEs with at least one woman owner [2].

While women are making major strides in terms of educational attainment at primary and secondary levels, they often lack the combination of education, vocational and technical skills and work experience needed to support the development of highly productive businesses. Female entrepreneurs were surveyed as being less confident in having sufficient skills to run a business and were more likely to state that fear of failure prevented them from starting a business [3].

The *Samahang Pangkabuhayan ng Buklurang (SPNB) Pangkababaihan* was founded in 2005 as a community organization which aims to empower elderly women, ages 40 to 65 years old by giving them business opportunities in order to earn additional income for their families. Started with 22 members, the organization looks at them as productive member of the community and still capable of doing entrepreneurial activities. From the time of its conception, Columban College, Inc. has been its partner in providing financial, material and technical assistance to the organization. At present, there are 35 members regularly trained by the College through its Entrepreneurial Literacy Program (ELP) as a community extension program.

Components of the program includes fora, symposia, seminars, trainings and assistance to members such as on business planning, financial sourcing, business operations, customer relation building, bookkeeping and simple auditing,

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tax computations, livelihood opportunities, among others. SPNB at present is producing processed meat products and expanding to rags, bags and wallet-making using recycled materials such as tetra-packs and used tarpaulin.

II. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to assess the impact of the Entrepreneurial Literacy Program of the College of Business and Accountancy, Columban College, Inc. in developing entrepreneurial skills among elderly women in the adopted community, *Samahang Pangkabuhayan ng Buklurang (SPNB) Pangkababaihan*. Improvement plan for the implementation of the program was developed based on the findings.

III. METHODOLOGY

The descriptive-case method of research was used and data were gathered through questionnaire-checklist, in-depth interview, observation and focus group discussion. The respondents were thirty-five (35) elderly women of SPNB who have undergone series of workshops and trainings under the ELP.

Analysis of data used the Percentage, Weighted Mean (WX), and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA or F-test) at alpha of 0.05.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Profile of the Respondents

The Mean age of the respondents is 66 years old. Twenty-four (24) or 68.6% are married and 8 or 22.9% are widow., the rest are single. Only 10 or 28.6% finished College where three (3) of which took business-related programs and 16 or 45.7% did not finish high school. Prior their membership to SPNB, fifteen (15) or 42.9% have either formal or informal training on entrepreneurship or other business-related activities; and eight (8) or 22.9% have engaged into micro-scale businesses like owning sari-sari stores, operating beauty parlor/saloon, buy and sell business, and other retailing activities.

B. Entrepreneurial Motives

Motivation is defined as “an inner force that drives individuals to accomplish personal and organizational goals” [4]. A person’s motivation influences their decisions, and therefore plays a key role in predicting which entrepreneurs will pursue successful opportunities. For example, entrepreneurs differ in how they view the risk of expending resources before knowing the distribution of outcomes. Motivations lie at the heart of these different views, and help to explain the variability in decision-making patterns across entrepreneurs. Motivations have been found to help entrepreneurs develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to be successful [5].

TABLE I: ENTREPRENEURIAL MOTIVATION LEVEL OF ELDERLY WOMEN

Motivation Indicators	Overall Weighted Mean	
Need for Achievement	4.32	Very High
Locus of Control	3.15	Moderate
Goal Setting	3.87	High
Self Efficacy	4.01	High
Family and other External Factors	4.25	Very High

They have very high level of motivation in terms of need for achievement where they maintaining high standards and aspire to accomplish difficult tasks. People with a high need for achievement take responsibility for outcomes, engage in activities that have a moderate degree of risk and require skill and effort. This motive has also been found to predict firm founding and the successful performance of firms. Family influence and other external factors such as earning additional income are very high motivating factors for them.

The respondents have high belief in their own abilities. Their high self-efficacy make them persist even in the face of setbacks; they consider negative feedback as opportunity for improvement; they set more challenging goals; and they will exert more effort over a longer period of time [6]. They have high motivation to set goals, and have been found to increase firm growth, along with firm performance and innovation. They have moderate level of motivation on the belief that that their actions can directly affect an event or that they can significantly control an outcome.

C. Entrepreneurial Skills Developed through ELP

Entrepreneurship is the ability to “create and build something from practically nothing. It is initiating, doing, achieving and building an enterprise or organization, rather than just watching, analyzing or describing one. It is the knack of sensing an opportunity where others see chaos, contradiction and confusion. It is the ability to build a founding team to complement your own skills and talents. It is the know-how to find, marshal and control resources and to make sure you don’t run out of money when you need it most. Finally, it is the willingness to take calculated risks, both personal and financial, and then to do everything possible to get the odds in your favour [7].

D. Personal Skills

Results showed that elderly women of SPNB perceived that they have developed to a very high extent the following personal skills through ELP: persistence where they stick with their plan despite others abandon it (WX = 4.65) and independence and self-confidence (WX = 4.43). They developed to a high extent the skill of taking calculated risk (WX = 3.96). To a moderate extent, they have developed idea generation and creative thinking (WX = 3.15) where it is not sufficient just to have lots of ideas but be able to evaluate them, clarify the needs they each meet, estimate what would be required in terms of time, resources and skills to realize them, and to analyze whether this would generate sufficient value in return for the expenditure of time and resources required.

E. Interpersonal Skills

They developed to a very high extent the skill of fulfilling commitment and promises no matter how great the personal sacrifices (WX = 4.57), persuasion and networking where they influence other people to follow them or do something for them (WX = 4.48), and higher level of communication skills – verbal and written as required for communicating with partners, funders, staff, customers, colleagues and other stakeholders (WX = 4.32). To a high extent, they have developed leadership skills or the ability to work in situations where they have to motivate and persuade people over whom they have no managerial authority (WX = 3.89) and teambuilding and motivating effective team (WX = 3.78). To a moderate extent, they have developed their negotiation skills (WX = 3.23).

F. Business Skills

They developed to a very high extent the following business skills because of the Program: seeking opportunities and taking initiative to transform them into business situations (WX = 4.37); setting goals and objectives that are meaningful and challenging (WX = 4.32), systematic planning and monitoring (WX = 4.28). They developed to a high extent the skills of information seeking and research where they could gather information about their customers, suppliers, technology and opportunities (WX = 3.88) as well as the skill on demand for quality and efficiency in doing something better, cheaper and faster (WX = 3.78). They developed to a moderate extent the skills on financial literacy and record keeping such as the need to a basic understanding of forecasting, budgeting, balance sheets, cash flows and profit & loss statements (WX = 3.01), commercial awareness or developing the ability to get into the market place or the environment they want to operate in, understand what is going on there, learn from it and adapt while at the same time thinking strategically and paying attention to the day to day needs of their enterprise or activity (WX = 2.97).

The respondents strongly agreed that they need to acquire the necessary mindset which will help to understand that the problems are part of the process and start working on the problems in the context of the process to which the problems belong to; clear understanding of the fact that every problem has a solution and one must seek for the solution; decision making capability to choose the relevant, contextual and pragmatic solution, among the available multiple solutions for a problem; explore the alternate strategies till the solutions for the imminent problems are found; find or look for resources that would help to solve the problems in an amiable way; and generate new ideas, products, services, visions so that the problems of the similar type do not occur in future.

G. Variations in Developed Skills when Grouped According to the Personal Profiles of the Elderly Women

There are significant variations on the extent of personal skills developed through ELP among respondents when grouped according to their entrepreneurial training (P=0.002) and highest educational attainment (P=0.000). The extent of interpersonal and business skills developed among respondents varied when grouped according to training (P = 0.000 and 0.017) and entrepreneurial experience (P = 0.003) and 0.000), respectively.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The Entrepreneurial Literacy Program is effective in developing the entrepreneurial skills of elderly women of SPNB. It helped that realizing that they are still capable of creating business opportunities where proper training and literacy is needed. They can capitalize and leverage their strengths, understand which skills or competencies they need to develop, and commit to a process or program that will help them build the complete range of skills they need for success. Entrepreneurship can be learnt by anyone despite of age and gender, it is not something that can simply learn in a classroom. Even once key business knowledge has been acquired, the entrepreneur still has to learn how to use it in practice In this respect, ‘leaning by doing’ is useful.

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