

## Needs Assessment of Women Entrepreneurs in the Province of Tarlac, Philippines: Basis for the Creation of a Business Development Center for Women

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### ABSTRACT

The study aimed to identify and describe the needs of women entrepreneurs in the province of Tarlac, Philippines. Recognizing the crucial role of women entrepreneurs in economic growth has inspired the researches to focus on this particular sector. Key quantitative and qualitative data were gathered to capture their characteristics, concerns, capabilities and needs. Results of the study were made bases in crafting an intervention program to address their problems and what they lack as business owners/leaders to become truly instrumental in stimulating economic activity that will spur growth in the area. Eventually, the creation of a Business Development Center for Women is proposed to serve as a comprehensive unit to address the needs of women for them to become viable and sustainable business owners/mangers and become effective partners towards inclusive growth and eventually development.

Keywords: Business development center, Women Entrepreneurs, Roles of Women

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship creates new jobs and stimulates economic activity vital to the development of a country. In the Philippines, where female labor force participation as well as unemployment rates are found to be increasing, entrepreneurship can offer new opportunities for women to generate their own income, and help others as they do it. Hence, women entrepreneurship is increasingly being recognized as one of the important factors for economic growth.

However, despite increasing economic activity, there is a dearth of quantitative information on the profile of women-owned enterprises from which policy making bodies as well as program developers can get input from. There is a growing need for primary data that could capture the characteristics, concerns, capabilities and needs of women entrepreneurs which could help policymakers and other institutions like banks, non-government organizations, and trade associations to design interventions that can provide assistance in the development of women entrepreneurship. It was noted that one of their problems in the business operation is the lack of management skills and skilled workers, since they are in the introductory stage; they lack the experience to operate and manage, Catubay-Panlilio, J., (2014), Rufino, H.D. (2015).

Hence, this study was conceptualized primarily and initially to identify and describe the needs of the women entrepreneurs in Tarlac as basis in crafting a development program and eventually in creating a center that will provide assistance and address their concerns through researches, advocacies and linkages with government and non-government organizations.

### **General Objective**

The study aimed to identify and describe the needs of women entrepreneurs in the management of their respective businesses. The result is intended to provide initial data towards the creation of a Business Development Center for Women at the College of Business and Accountancy under the umbrella of the – Gender and Development Center of the Tarlac State University.

### **Specific Objectives**

The study intended to find answers to the following specific questions:

1. How is the demographic profile of the women entrepreneurs in the province of Tarlac described?
2. How are the needs of women entrepreneurs in the province described?
3. How may the Business Development Center for Women address the needs of the women entrepreneurs in the province?

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

The approach used in the study was the descriptive survey design with the questionnaire as the main gathering tool employed. Data retrieved from the questionnaires were supplemented by observations and interviews with the respondents. One hundred fifty (150) women entrepreneurs were randomly selected all over the province however, only 132 questionnaires were returned resulting to 88% retrieval rate. Data were analyzed using simple frequency counts and percentages. Moreover, weighted means were computed to describe how much of the different management skills are needed by the respondents. Correspondingly, a plan of action was proposed to address the immediate needs of the women entrepreneurs.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The demographic profile of women entrepreneurs was taken to provide baseline information on the key quantitative and qualitative details from which insights about them may be gained.

**Table 1. Age of Women Entrepreneurs**

| Age          | F          | %          |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| 29 and below | 20         | 15         |
| 30-39        | 41         | 31         |
| 40-49        | 44         | 33         |
| 50-59        | 21         | 16         |
| 60 & above   | 6          | 5          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>132</b> | <b>100</b> |

The age distribution of the women entrepreneurs as shown in Table 1 reveals that 46% are relatively young falling below 39 years of age. While 6 or 5% of them are already in the senior citizen's age bracket. The actual lowest age is 22 and the highest is 70 years old.

**Table 2. Marital Status**

| Marital Status | F          | %          |
|----------------|------------|------------|
| Single         | 17         | 13         |
| Married        | 106        | 81         |
| Widowed        | 3          | 2.2        |
| Separated      | 5          | 3.8        |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>132</b> | <b>100</b> |

On marital status, Table 2 shows that 81% of the women entrepreneurs are married with a small percentage of singles and traces of widowed and separated.

**Table 3. Number of Children**

| Number of Children | F  | %  |
|--------------------|----|----|
| 1-2                | 70 | 53 |
| 3-4                | 60 | 45 |
| 5- 6               | 2  | 2  |

Table 3 shows that majority of the respondents or 53% have only one to two children and only 2% have 5 and above number of kids.

**Table 4. Educational Attainment**

| Educational Attainment | F          | %          |
|------------------------|------------|------------|
| Doctorate              | 1          | 0.76       |
| Master's Degree        | 3          | 2.28       |
| College Degree         | 80         | 60.1       |
| College Undergraduate  | 8          | 6.06       |
| Vocational Graduate    | 6          | 4.55       |
| High School Graduate   | 31         | 23.48      |
| Elementary Graduate    | 3          | 2.27       |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>132</b> | <b>100</b> |

Sixty percent (60%) of the women entrepreneurs are college degree holders. Interestingly, 23.48% of them are just high school graduates as shown in Table 4.

**Table 5. Seminars Attended**

| Seminars Attended | F   | %   |
|-------------------|-----|-----|
| With seminars     | 29  | 22  |
| Without           | 103 | 78  |
| Total             | 132 | 100 |

It is sad to know that 78% of the respondents did not have any seminar at all as revealed by Table 5. Only less than one-fourth of them are lucky to have attended a business-related seminar.

**Table 6. Previous Employment**

| Previous Employment | F   | %   |
|---------------------|-----|-----|
| Local               | 52  | 40  |
| Abroad              | 18  | 13  |
| None                | 62  | 47  |
| Total               | 132 | 100 |

Table 6 shows that most of the respondents 47% of them have no previous employment. However, 40% had experienced working locally, while some 13% had previous employment abroad.

**Table 7. Affiliation in Organization**

| Affiliation      | F   | %     |
|------------------|-----|-------|
| With affiliation | 6   | 4.55  |
| Without          | 126 | 95.45 |
| Total            | 132 | 100   |

Shown in Table 7 is the affiliation in organizations of the women entrepreneurs in the province. Data revealed that there are only 6 or barely 5% of them are affiliated in organizations and the rest, 95% had no organization whatsoever. This implies that most women entrepreneurs do not have any organization from which to turn to in times of need. Organizations may help them find opportunities in terms of marketing, financial sources, and useful linkages valuable to keep them alive in business.

**Table 8. Years in Business Operation**

| No of years | F   | %   |
|-------------|-----|-----|
| 1-5         | 76  | 58  |
| 6-10        | 27  | 20  |
| 11-15       | 14  | 11  |
| 16-21       | 9   | 7   |
| 22-25       | 4   | 3   |
| 26 & above  | 2   | 1   |
| Total       | 132 | 100 |

Data in Table 8 reveal that 76 or 58% of the women entrepreneurs had been in business in just 1-5 years, which means that they are still in a stage of discovery, or trial and error approach especially so, that most of them had no seminars and had no organizations to turn to.

**Table 9. Type of Industry**

| Types of Industry        | F          | %          |
|--------------------------|------------|------------|
| Agriculture              | 14         | 11         |
| Fishing                  | 5          | 4          |
| Mining and Quarrying     | 1          | .76        |
| Manufacturing            | 18         | 14         |
| Electricity              | 1          | .76        |
| Construction             | 3          | 2          |
| Wholesale and retail     | 68         | 52         |
| Transport and storage    | 1          | .76        |
| Financial Intermediation | 4          | 3          |
| Real Estate, Renting     | 6          | 5          |
| Education                | 5          | 3          |
| Repair Service           | 5          | 3          |
| Health and Social Work   | 1          | .76        |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>132</b> | <b>100</b> |

Table 9 shows the type of industry the respondents are engaged in. Sixty-eight or 52% of them are engaged in trading business or wholesale and retail, on the other hand 18 or 14% are engaged in manufacturing business commonly food. Furthermore, 14 or 11% are engaged in agriculture since Tarlac province is basically a rural area, there a number of farmers among the women respondents. While there are traces who are engaged in other fields not common to women like mining and quarrying, electricity, construction, transport and storage and real estate.

**Table 10. Form of Business Organization**

| Form                | F          | %          |
|---------------------|------------|------------|
| Sole Proprietorship | 107        | 81         |
| Partnership         | 17         | 13         |
| Corporation         | 8          | 6          |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>132</b> | <b>100</b> |

On form of business organization, 81% of the women entrepreneurs still prefer to do business by themselves alone rather than partner with others. Only 6% went into corporation as shown in Table 10.

**Table 11. Status of Business Location**

| Status        | F   | %   |
|---------------|-----|-----|
| Rented/Leased | 39  | 30  |
| Owned         | 93  | 70  |
| Total         | 132 | 100 |

Among the women entrepreneurs, 70% own the place where they conduct business as shown in Table 11. This is explained by the fact that most respondents do their business at home converting a portion of their house for the purpose thereby freeing themselves of rental expenses.

**Table 12. Compliance with Business Requirements**

| Nature            | F   | %   |
|-------------------|-----|-----|
| Barangay License  | 82  | 62  |
| Municipal License | 13  | 10  |
| BIR Registered    | 25  | 19  |
| SEC Registered    | 12  | 9   |
| Total             | 132 | 100 |

Table 12 shows the compliance of the women entrepreneurs with the different business requirements. Eighty-two or 62% complied with barangay requirements like barangay licenses, 13 or 10% had their municipal licenses, while 25 or 19% of the respondents have complied with BIR requirements and only 12 or 9 % had their SEC certificates.

**Table 13. Number of Employees**

| Number  | F   | %  |
|---------|-----|----|
| 0-9     | 122 | 93 |
| 10-99   | 8   | 6  |
| 100-199 | 2   | 1  |

Table 16 shows the number of employees hired by women entrepreneurs. Ninety-three percent of them have 0-9 employees, meaning, the proprietor himself is the boss at the same time the worker. The results imply that majority of the women entrepreneurs employed less or no employees at all since they are operating as micro enterprises.

**Table 14. Sources of Capital**

| Sources of Capital | F   | %  |
|--------------------|-----|----|
| Personal Savings   | 100 | 75 |
| Borrowings         | 32  | 25 |

Above table shows that with regard to the sources of capital, 75% used personal savings as their source of capital. While the other 32 or 25% resorted to borrowings. This implies that women entrepreneurs contend themselves with what they have generated as savings to keep their businesses going rather than borrow from others which will add the burden of having to pay amortization and interest on the loan received.

To describe the needs of the women entrepreneurs in the province, along areas of: leadership and people management; communication skills, collaboration skills, business operations skills; financial management skills; project management skills and technology skills, a Likert scale instrument was used for the purpose.

The respondents were asked to give their ratings as to how they put importance on the different skills under the given business components to gather insights as to what particular skills are vital to address their needs for their business to become sustainable.

**Table 15. Leadership and People Management**

| Leadership and People Management             | Weighted Mean | Adjectival Description |
|--|---------------|------------------------|
| Ability to attract people                    | 4.59          | Very much needed       |
| Ability to retain people                     | 4.56          | Very much needed       |
| Ability to motivate people                   | 4.46          | Very much needed       |
| Ability to coach people for high performance | 4.58          | Very much needed       |
| Ability to develop people strength           | 4.48          | Very much needed       |
| Sub Mean                                     | <b>4.53</b>   | Very much needed       |

On leadership and people management, the skills given as essential to a leader were rated by the respondents as *very much needed* with a sub mean of 4.53. Leadership skill is a crucial factor as far as taking the organization to where it is envisioned to be is concerned. Since the women entrepreneurs are the ones leading their business organization it is imperative that they should have the skills of attracting people, retaining them, motivating them to perform excellently for the business to stay amidst stiff competition in the business landscape.

**Table 16. Communication Skills**

| Communication Skills             | Weighted Mean | Adjectival Description |
|----------------------------------|---------------|------------------------|
| Ability to communicate to people | 4.56          | Very much needed       |
| Ability to present ideas         | 4.46          | Very much needed       |
| Ability to assert point of views | 4.42          | Very much needed       |

|                                       |             |                         |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Ability to speak with firmness</b> | 4.56        | Very much needed        |
| <b>Sub mean</b>                       | <b>4.50</b> | <b>Very much needed</b> |

Communication skills are equally important as leadership skills. Table 16 shows the rating given by the respondents on the importance of the different related skills in communication. With a sub mean of 4.5 corresponding to *very much needed*, they deemed communications skills similarly vital in the organization. A major error in communication may become incurable and may create chaos in the whole organization.

**Table 17. Collaboration Skills**

| <b>Collaboration Skills</b>           | <b>Weighted Mean</b> | <b>Adjectival Description</b> |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Ability to influence</b>           | 4.25                 | Very much needed              |
| <b>Ability to build relationships</b> | 4.48                 | Very much needed              |
| <b>Ability to navigate politics</b>   | 4.04                 | Much Needed                   |
| <b>Ability to negotiate</b>           | 4.31                 | Very much needed              |
| Sub mean                              | <b>4.26</b>          | <b>Very much needed</b>       |

Equally important is the collaboration skills expected of the women entrepreneurs. They gave a sub mean of 4.26 with a slightly lower mean but still within the range of very much needed. Only one skill was rated *much needed* since they felt that this skill has a lesser importance than the other three skills.

**Table 18. Business Operations Skills**

| <b>Operations Skills</b>                                    | <b>Weighted Mean</b> | <b>Adjectival Description</b> |
|---|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Ability to understand strategy</b>                       | 4.56                 | Very much needed              |
| <b>Ability to conduct business functions</b>                | 4.52                 | Very much needed              |
| <b>Ability to make decisions in the conduct of business</b> | 4.54                 | Very much needed              |



|  |             |                  |
|--|-------------|------------------|
| <b>Ability to make decisions in the workflow</b> | 4.44        | Very much needed |
| Sub mean   | <b>4.52</b> | Very much needed |

The heart of the business organization is the operations function because it is here where the transformation of products or services is performed. All of the listed skills are very essential to be possessed by the women entrepreneurs, that is why they rated them all as *very much needed* with a sub mean of 4.52.

**Table 19. Financial Management Skills**

| Skills                                    | Weighted Mean | Adjectival Description  |
|---|---------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Ability to prepare budget</b>          | 4.63          | Very much needed        |
| <b>Ability to prepare forecasts</b>       | 4.58          | Very much needed        |
| <b>Ability to manage cash flows</b>       | 4.70          | Very much needed        |
| <b>Understand financial statements</b>    | 4.36          | Very much needed        |
| <b>Ability to manage business metrics</b> | 4.32          | Very much needed        |
| Grand mean                                | <b>4.52</b>   | <b>Very much needed</b> |

The same degree of importance was placed by the women entrepreneurs on the financial management skills since this is the lifeblood of the business organization, Rufino, H.D., (2015). The business will not run without money. They rated all of the skills as *very much needed* with a sub mean of 4.52. The key to a sustainable business is a sound financial management.

**Table 20. Project Management Skills**

| Project Management Skills                   | Weighted Mean | Adjectival Description |
|---|---------------|------------------------|
| <b>Able to develop plans</b>                | 4.54          | Very much needed       |
| <b>Able to implement and maintain plans</b> | 4.50          | Very much needed       |

|                             |             |                         |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Able to manage risks</b> | 4.42        | Very much needed        |
| <b>Able to manage costs</b> | 4.58        | Very much needed        |
| <b>Able to manage time</b>  | 4.57        | Very much needed        |
| Grand mean                  | <b>4.52</b> | <b>Very much needed</b> |

Project management skills take care of assuring quality in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. Plans and targets must be met within the targeted time and working within the allotted budget. Collectively, the skills were rated by the respondents as *very much needed* with a sub mean of 4.52.

**Table 21. Technology Skills**

| <b>Technology Skills</b>                           | <b>Weighted Mean</b> | <b>Adjectival Description</b> |
|--|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Able to promote and sell goods online</b>       | 3.50                 | Much needed                   |
| <b>Able to order materials online</b>              | 3.68                 | Much needed                   |
| <b>Able to promote and entice customers online</b> | 3.74                 | Much needed                   |
| <b>Able to avail goods and services online</b>     | 3.65                 | Much needed                   |
| <b>Able to perform online banking</b>              | 3.61                 | Much needed                   |
| Grand Mean   | <b>3.64</b>          | Much needed                   |

Technology skills are the skills required of the manager in this digital era. The women entrepreneurs were not able to see these skills as equally important as the other business functions, that is why they rated them as *much needed* with a relatively lower sub mean of 3.64.

In this period where everybody is doing business online, selling, procuring, paying, it is but necessary for women entrepreneurs to go online and learn to capitalize available technology to be able to reach the most number of clients possible.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

Women entrepreneurs are in the mid age group, greater percentage are married with children. Majority of them are college degree holders. A greater number had no seminars attended. Many of them are not affiliated with any organization and have been in business from one to five years yet. Most of them are engaged in trading and the greater majority are the sole proprietors of their businesses. Most of the women entrepreneurs do not lease their business

place but provide a space within their homes. Most of the respondents have minimal compliance on government requirements. They belong to micro business in terms of employees involved and most of them used personal savings as a major source of capital.

As to the needed management skills, all of the components were rated by the women entrepreneurs as *very much needed* and only the technology skills component was rated as *much needed*.

The creation of the Business Development Center for Women is envisioned to address the needs of women entrepreneurs in the Province of Tarlac to empower them to be strong partners in stimulating business activities towards poverty alleviation and economic growth and development. The need for an organization that will train and enhance their business skills is a vital key for the sustainability of their businesses. The Business Development Center for Women is proposed to become a part of the TSU GAD (Gender and Development) Center. The BDCW is envisioned to become the center for all researches, advocacies and linkages for the benefit of the women entrepreneurs in the whole province.

### **The Business Development Center for Women**

The BDCW will be a comprehensive center to cater to the needs of women entrepreneurs. It will provide assistance to those would-be entrepreneurs, and existing women entrepreneurs.

The Center will hold trainings and seminars that will address the needs based on the findings of this study.

The program will also release journals about women in the province guide to business plan, events for women business development, market and finance.

Specifically, some of the activities that would be programmed are the following:

1. Workshops on business plan preparation, marketing, and online business resources and orientation on expanding opportunities for networking, counseling, Ramirez, S. D., Amurao, E. A., & Mercado, R. T. (2014)
2. Offering of short courses such as International Cuisine, Baking, etc.
3. Assistance in accessing capital and determining their financial needs and assistance in the preparation of loan packages (linkage on banks and other FI's (Financial Institutions))
4. Technical assistance in product improvement, packaging, nutrient content analysis, and others
5. Accounting and financial management assistance, workshops on taxation, learning accounting the easy way, how to save money and the use of money wisely.

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