



Publisher homepage: www.universepg.com, ISSN: 2663-7820 (Online) & 2663-7812 (Print)

<https://doi.org/10.34104/cjbis.024.01290146>

Canadian Journal of Business and Information Studies

Journal homepage: <http://www.universepg.com/journal/cjbis>

Canadian Journal of
**Business and
Information Studies**



Department of Trade and Industry Livelihood Seeding Program- Negosyo Serbisyo Barangay: Insights to Sustainable Policy Directions

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ABSTRACT

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) initiated the Livelihood Seeding Program Negosyo Serbisyo Barangay (LSP-NSB) to support Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in disadvantaged areas of the Philippines. This study evaluated the program's progress and challenges faced by identified beneficiaries in Capiz province, aligning their experiences with the five strategic objectives of MSME Development Plan 2017-2022: improved business climate, access to finance, enhanced management and labor capacities, access to technology and innovation, and access to markets. The study offered evidence-based policy recommendations to enhance program efficiency and foster inclusive economic growth. This analyzed respondent and business profiles to recognize program implementation and challenges. It investigated if there is a significant link between implementation status and challenges faced by MSME beneficiaries. A descriptive-mixed method research design was employed, utilizing a validated and reliability-tested researcher-made survey questionnaire translated into the local dialect and conducted to 263 MSME beneficiaries, complemented by Focused Group Discussion, involving DTI implementers, beneficiaries, and barangay officials. Results showed that beneficiaries viewed the program as highly implemented overall, though facing moderate challenges, particularly in the business climate, access to finance, enhanced management and labor capacities, technology and innovation, and market access. Factors like educational attainment, number of dependents, business location, monthly income, and livelihood kit received affected the implementation. Similarly, number of dependents, industry sector, location of business, asset size, monthly income, and livelihood kit received impact challenges. A significant relationship was found between program status and challenges, notably in the business climate and market access.

Keywords: Policy Directions, Livelihood, MSME beneficiaries, Sustainable, and Negosyo Serbisyo.

INTRODUCTION:

The Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector plays a crucial role in fostering inclusive socio-economic advancement in the Philippines and across the region. The MSMEs represent 99.58 percent of business entities in the Philippines and employ over

64.67 percent of the nation's workforce. Moreover, they significantly contribute to the country's export revenue, accounting for 25 percent through subcontracting agreements with larger corporations or as suppliers to exporters (Philippine Statistics Authority,

2021). Recognizing the pivotal role of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the Philippine economy, two key laws have been enacted to promote their development: Republic Act (RA) 6977, commonly known as the Magna Carta for Small Enterprises, amended by RA 8289, and RA 9178, also referred to as the Barangay Micro Business Enterprises (BMBEs) Act of 2002.

The RA 6977 requires government assistance for Small Medium Enterprises by improving the business climate, facilitating access to financing, providing training, encouraging networking, and fostering cooperation. Conversely, RA 9178 focuses on expanding BMBEs through incentives. Recognizing MSMEs' growing importance, the government actively implements and evaluates MSME programs. Key agencies like the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), MSME Development Council, and National Competition Commission (NCC) support MSMEs, with DTI-BMSMED leading coordination. The DTI aims to boost business competitiveness and innovation for inclusive growth. Various MSME programs, including Business Development, One-Town One-Product (OTOP), and Financing Programs, have been established. The Business Development Program provides business information and development services, while OTOP encourages unique product creation. Financing programs promote awareness of funding sources, crucial for entrepreneurship.

The DTI introduced the Livelihood Seeding Program - Negosyo Serbisyo Barangay (LSP-NSB) alongside existing government initiatives for MSME support nationwide. The LSP-NSB targets Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) in underserved areas to raise awareness of DTI services among barangay officials, identify MSMEs in various communities, provide business development assistance, and offer individual livelihood kits valued at Php5,000-Php8,000 for disaster recovery. Beneficiaries encompass sole proprietors, cooperatives, sectoral associations, vulnerable communities, and DTI's Capacity Development Program participants. Precedence is granted to MSMEs impacted by both natural disasters and those caused by human activities, such as health crises (DTI-DO 21-17).

While the impact has yet to be assessed, the agency's MSME development initiatives have reached 770 NSB-LSP beneficiaries from 2019 to 2022 in Capiz province. Over the four-year program duration, critical gaps have emerged. Firstly, a lack of support from the Barangay Development Councils (BDC): The Livelihood Seeding Program - Negosyo Serbisyo Barangay (LSP-NSB) program may face several difficulties if the BDC does not actively support or prioritize it, including a lack of awareness about the program, inadequate coordination, limited resources, and funding, and insufficient monitoring and evaluation. Secondly, limited financial support: The program depends on having enough money to fund livelihood projects for it to be successful. The number of beneficiaries and the sustainability and size of the supported firms may be limited if insufficient or inefficient funds are allocated to the program. Thirdly, the lack of monitoring and evaluation: Reliable monitoring and evaluation systems are essential to track the program's development, spot problems, and make the necessary corrections. The identification of gaps and potential improvement areas may be hampered by inadequate monitoring and assessment systems, which may result in less-than-ideal results. Lastly, lack of sustainability and post-program support: The livelihood initiatives' long-term viability is a key consideration. Beneficiaries may find it difficult to maintain their enterprises once program support has ended without adequate post-program support, entrance to marketplaces, technical assistance, and funding. This research assessed the implementation status and challenges encountered by 263 identified LSP-NSB Micro Enterprise beneficiaries in Capiz province. The study is essential as it identified factors affecting the LSP-NSB program's efficiency and effectiveness, aiming to promote sustainable policy direction. It evaluated the program's impact on beneficiaries, including its environmental, social, and economic sustainability, and offers evidence-based policy recommendations to enhance effectiveness and achieve inclusive economic growth objectives.

METHODOLOGY:

This research employed a descriptive-mixed method. This strategy aims to provide a more thorough and nuanced grasp of the research issue by utilizing the

advantages of both approaches. Quantitative data were gathered via survey conducted with the beneficiaries who did not participate in the online Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The exclusion of FGD participants ensured a clear distinction between qualitative and quantitative data sources. By employing a quantitative approach, this aimed to systematically analyze patterns and relationships among variables, offering a comprehensive understanding of the program's impact and effectiveness. Through statistical analysis, the quantitative method provided insights into the program's outcomes, shedding light on its broader implications and informing evidence-based decision-making.

To complement the qualitative approach, the researcher facilitated online FGD, involving key stakeholders such as Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) program implementers, MSME beneficiaries, and Barangay Officials across different municipalities in the province of Capiz. The FGD served as a platform to gather rich qualitative data on the experiences and perceptions of beneficiaries involved in DTI Livelihood Seeding Program. During the FGD, participants engaged in discussions guided by open-ended questions. This approach allowed for the collection of narrative responses, enabling a deeper exploration of participants' insights, experiences, and perspectives. By encouraging open dialogue and exchange, the FGD facilitated the exploration of diverse viewpoints and provided an all-inclusive understanding of the program's impact and effectiveness from the stakeholders' standpoint.

This was conducted within the province of Capiz, specifically in the municipalities of Cuartero, Dao, Dumalag, Dumarao, Ivisan, Mambusao, Pilar, Pontevedra, President Roxas, Roxas City, Sapián, Sigma, and Tapaz. These municipalities were chosen to ensure representation from various geographical areas within Capiz, covering both urban and rural settings. This utilized the 263 out of 770 beneficiaries of the DTI-Capiz Livelihood Seeding Program - Negosyo Serbisyo Barangay from 2019 to 2022, determined using the Cochran formula. The respondents were selected using a stratified random sampling technique. They were chosen because they were the recipients of the DTI LSP-NSB and have participated in various programs and activities conducted by DTI. Therefore, UniversePG | www.universepg.com

they were in a position to evaluate the success of the program's implementation. Additionally, as beneficiaries who have experienced challenges, they could provide insight into any challenges encountered during the implementation.

A validated and reliability tested researcher-made questionnaire was used to gather the needed data. The set of questions for the Focused Group Discussion's (FGD's) interview guide and the survey questionnaire were presented by the researcher to the Provincial Director, the Industry Development Division Head, and the LSP-NSB Focal of DTI-Capiz Provincial Office. Likewise, the latter were presented to an academic instructor and psychometrician. To test the reliability of the questionnaire, the researcher conducted a reliability test among 30 DTI-Capiz LSP-NSB recipients. These respondents were the representation of the LSP-NSB beneficiaries from the different municipalities of Capiz. These respondents were not included in the actual survey. The gathered data from the pilot test were tabulated and computer-processed using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS). This used the Cronbach alpha in determining the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire.

Having established questionnaire's reliability and validity, it was reproduced according to the sample size. Subsequently, the researcher obtained permits from the DTI Capiz Provincial Director and the Negosyo Center Business Counselors assigned in each municipality to administer the questionnaire. Following this, the researcher obtained the informed consent form from the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) beneficiaries to participate in the research, and informed them about the purpose and benefits. Finally, the researcher distributed the validated survey questionnaire and retrieved it thereafter. The researcher also organized an online FGD using the Zoom application. Before the commencement of the FGD, participants were required to sign consent forms for photograph, video, and voice recording, as well as waiver and indemnity release forms. Throughout the FGD, the researcher was accompanied by the advisor and two panel members from Capiz State University - Main Campus. Thematic note-taking was employed to condense pertinent

responses and discussions from the participants. Zoom recording was utilized to document the discussions, while participants used code names to maintain anonymity.

The data gathered in the FGD were analyzed using the Thematic Analysis. Meanwhile, the gathered data from the survey were computer-processed using SPSS. These evaluations considered variables including business climate, access to finance, management and labor capacities, technology and innovation, and access to the market, ensuring a thorough assessment of program implementation and challenges. The statistical tools used by the researcher to analyze and interpret the gathered quantitative data were frequency, percentage, mean, t-test, the one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), and Pearson r. Throughout the research, the researcher consistently adhered to ethical guidelines. Participants were provided with detailed information regarding various aspects of the study. This included elucidation of the objectives, and outlining what the researcher aims to achieve through the study. Additionally, participants were informed about the benefits they might derive from participating, such as contributing to policy development. The timing, including duration and expected time commitment, was also clarified to ensure that participants understood the extent of their involvement. Moreover, they were briefed on the methods employed to maintain the confidentiality of their data, emphasizing the researcher's commitment to data privacy and security. The informed consent form explicitly emphasized the voluntary nature of participation. Participants were assured that their decision to take part in the study was entirely of their own volition. They were notified to decline their participation or withdraw from participating at any point without facing any repercussions. This discussion aimed to empower participants and underscored the researcher's respect for their autonomy and agency. To protect participants' confidentiality, the consent form highlighted measures taken to preserve anonymity. Personal identifiers were withheld to prevent the disclosure of their identities. Moreover, their privacy rights were safeguarded throughout the process. This discussion aimed to reassure them of the researcher's commitment to upholding their privacy

and confidentiality, fostering trust and confidence in the research process. The consent form emphasized the importance of proper attribution to acknowledge the contributions of participants and other stakeholders. By ensuring that all contributors were duly recognized, the researcher aimed to uphold integrity in research practices and prevent plagiarism. This discussion underscored the researcher's commitment to ethical conduct and academic integrity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Level of Status of the Implementation of the DTI Livelihood Seeding Program - Negosyo Serbisyo Barangay as a Whole

Table 1 presents the level of implementation of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Livelihood Seeding Program - Negosyo Serbisyo Barangay (LSP-NSB) as a whole. The result revealed that the level of implementation as perceived by the beneficiaries as a whole received a grand mean of 4.46, verbally interpreted as "highly implemented". These components on the level of implementation as a whole had grand means, which ranged from 4.42 to 4.51, all of which had verbal interpretations of "highly implemented."

Of the five indicators on the level of implementation of the DTI LSP-NSB, enhanced management and labor capacities, and improved access to market got the highest mean of 4.51, followed by improved technology and innovation with a mean of 4.45, and the lowest mean was both on business climate and improved access to finance with a mean of 4.42. This result implies a commendable level of implementation across various program components, particularly in enhancing management and labor capacities and improving access to the market. However, there may be room for improvement in addressing the business climate and access to finance to further enhance the program's effectiveness and impact. The commendable implementation level indicates significant progress in fulfilling the program's objectives related to enhancing management and labor capacities and improving market access. This commendation is supported by the high mean scores obtained for these components, indicating successful efforts in addressing these areas of focus. This consistency indicates that the program has reliably succeeded in reaching its objectives across

various focus areas. The result aligned with the Sustainable Livelihood Framework by DFID (2000), which posited that when beneficiaries take improved entree to assets, they can influence structures and processes to better address their needs. Additionally, the result was consistent with (Mustapa *et al.*, 2019; Rahman *et al.*, 2023) who found that programs providing funding, training, and market access remained further in effect in promoting enterprise growth and increasing income and assets.

According to the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) participants, one of the things that speed up business registration, even at the barangay level, was the availability of an online system for registering business names. Furthermore, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) preparation and avoidance of repetitive procedures were aided by information dissemination regarding business registration require-

ments and processes. Additionally, tangible outcomes, like workshops and support initiatives indicate the partnership's effectiveness in benefiting MSMEs. Improved access to resources and positive interactions with representatives further reinforce the perception of effective collaboration. The findings aligned with the World Bank's, (2002) assertion that laws and policies facilitating smooth entry and exit procedures enhance competition and productivity. Key factors include the ease of conducting business at the barangay level, government incentives for micro and small entrepreneurs, and collaboration between National Government Agencies (NGAs) and Local Government Units (LGUs). Also, it complied with the research by Fung *et al.* (2005), which demonstrated that improved business conditions, or what they refer to as "soft" infrastructure, are more significant in attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) than physical infrastructure, or roads.

Table 1: Level of Status of the Implementation of the DTI Livelihood Seeding Program Negosyo Serbisyo Barangay as a Whole.

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Business Climate	4.42	Highly Implemented
Improved Access to Finance	4.42	Highly Implemented
Enhanced Management and Labor Capacities	4.51	Highly Implemented
Improved Technology and Innovation	4.45	Highly Implemented
Improved Access to Market	4.51	Highly Implemented
Grand Mean	4.46	Highly Implemented

Legend: 4.21 - 5.00 Highly Implemented; 3.41 - 4.20 Implemented; 2.61 - 3.40 Moderately Implemented; 1.81 - 2.60 Less Implemented; 1.00 - 1.80 Least Implemented.

Source: Data from the researcher

The result further indicates that the Livelihood Seeding Program - Negosyo Serbisyo Barangay (LSP-NSB) has been highly effective in improving access to finance for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The program had success-fully provided affordable loan programs, facilitated interaction between public and private financial institutions to offer formal market-based financing programs to MSMEs, and offered access to financial literacy training. Participants' statements suggest that the LSP-NSB program has successfully reached a wide audience and effectively disseminated information about accessing loans through the DTI and its partner agencies. The fact that numerous applicants from

various areas of Capiz, including both urban and rural locations, have applied for loans indicates that the program's outreach efforts have been impactful. This implies that MSMEs across different districts and municipalities have become aware of the opportunities for accessing financial support through the program. Additionally, the high number of applicants reflects the program's effectiveness in meeting the financial needs of entrepreneurs in the province, contributing to the overall success of the LSP-NSB initiative in facilitating access to finance for MSMEs. The mention of specific training, such as the meat processing workshop, highlights the practical nature of the skills imparted. The fact that many residents participated and

applied the training at home, and some even ventured into entrepreneurship, implies that the program has been successful in empowering individuals and fostering economic opportunities within the community. There may be limitations in offering detailed insights into the labor and management capacities of individual entrepreneurs participating in the LSP-NSB. This implies that the program's focus might not be specifically geared toward assessing or addressing labor and management capacities on an individual basis. Instead, it could prioritize other aspects of support or training for MSMEs, potentially indicating a necessity for more targeted interventions in these areas.

The result agreed with the examinations of Fowowe, (2017) on how financial access affects the expansion of businesses in African nations, the outcomes of the negative measure demonstrate that the difficulty in obtaining financing has a major detrimental impact on firm growth. Additionally, the findings demonstrate that enterprises without credit limits grow more than those that are credit-constrained. Hubbard, (2006) concluded using the micro-economic perspective that the firm's management effectiveness was the key triggering factor to explain the variations in company performance as management makes decisions that ultimately have important effects. The result also matched Legaspi's, (2012) recommendations: (1) Strengthen the industry-education and training linkage, including enterprise-based training; (2) Improve labor market information and address the labor demand and supply gaps and matching problems; (3) Continue to improve the quality of skills development provision; and (4) Institute for Skills Development; (5) Expand access and equity to skills development opportunities; and (6) Increase and sustain investment in education and training.

Participants' statements further imply that although the NSB-LSP program included elements related to social media and basic technology, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) at the barangay level were not fully informed or proficient in utilizing these tools. While they were familiar with popular platforms like Facebook, their knowledge and adoption of e-commerce platforms was limited. Additionally, connectivity issues posed a significant challenge, hindering

their ability to effectively engage with digital tools and online platforms. The result suggests that the quality of doing business will be improved if they adopt new trends in the markets. This was aligned with the perspective of Depositario *et al.* (2011), where MSMEs can develop and promote new products, improve the quality of existing products, boost productivity, and achieve the desired cost efficiency through technology and innovation, increasing their competitiveness in both domestic and foreign markets. In 2009, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) reported that new machinery or equipment were the primary sources of innovation for SMEs and larger enterprises. The ADB emphasized that Small, and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are often seen as traditional technology users who lack sufficient technical skills and significant market and technological knowledge. Marketing, financing, technology, and skills are key challenges that constrain MSMEs, especially in the Philippines. The study's findings also align with Permia *et al.* (2005), which demonstrated that ICT positively and significantly impacts sales growth by facilitating prompt and timely transactions with clients and suppliers. The trade fair held in the Mambusao district last year was a significant opportunity for local entrepreneurs, as the participants shared. It provided a platform for entrepreneurs to showcase and promote their products, thereby increasing their visibility and market reach. Additionally, the seminars conducted by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) helped improve the quality of products offered by entrepreneurs, which likely contributed to attracting more customers.

Further, the efforts to improve access to industry-to-market roads have been substantial. The program had made strides in enhancing infrastructure and logistical support to facilitate MSMEs' transportation of goods to market locations. Through refining access to transportation networks, MSMEs can overcome logistical barriers and efficiently deliver their products to consumers, thereby enhancing their competitiveness and market access. By leveraging resources and expertise from various stakeholders, the program maximizes its impact in enhancing access to industry-to-market roads. According to Van Der Meer, (2006) market and policy deficiencies might be the primary

reasons why small-scale farmers struggle to compete in high-income markets.

Level of Challenges Encountered in the Implementation of the DTI Livelihood Seeding Program - Negosyo Serbisyo Barangay as a Whole

Table 2 reveals that the components on the implementation level as a whole had grand means ranging from 3.25 to 3.32, all of which had verbal interpretations of "moderately challenged." The outcome indicated that the level of challenges encountered as perceived by the beneficiaries as a whole received a grand mean of 3.27, verbally interpreted as "moderately challenged." Improved management and labor capacities obtained the highest mean of 3.32 out of the five indicators on the level of challenges encountered in the implementation of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Livelihood Seeding Program – Negosyo Serbisyo Barangay (LSP-NSB). Improved technology and innovation scored the second-highest mean of 3.27, while improved access to financing had the lowest mean of 3.25. The result implies that while there are hurdles to overcome process implementation, they are not insurmountable. Addressing challenges in management and labor

capacities, as well as fostering innovation and technology adoption, could be key areas of focus for improving the effectiveness of the program. Additionally, efforts to enhance financing access may also contribute to overcoming implementation challenges and maximizing the program's impact. Fostering innovation and technology adoption is important because it can enhance productivity, efficiency, and competitiveness. Adopting innovative technologies can streamline operations, cut expenses, and enhance the standard of products and services. The result aligned with the findings of Valdivia and Gilles (2001) that assets and capabilities are essential inputs, to form livelihood plans and establish and maintain a sustainable environment. Similarly, Chambers and Conway, (1992) highlighted the concept of livelihood security, which is achieved when the resources a livelihood depends on are resilient to stressors and shocks, ensuring the well-being of current and future generations. The challenges encountered in the program implementation, particularly those related to market access, technological innovation, and financial stability, can act as stressors that threaten the livelihood security of program participants.

Table 2: Level of Challenges Encountered in the Implementation of the DTI Livelihood Seeding Program – Negosyo Serbisyo Barangay as a Whole.

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Business Climate	3.26	Moderately Challenged
Improved Access to Finance	3.25	Moderately Challenged
Enhanced Management and Labor Capacities	3.26	Moderately Challenged
Improved Technology and Innovation	3.27	Moderately Challenged
Improved Access to Market	3.32	Moderately Challenged
Grand Mean	3.27	Moderately Challenged

Legend: 4.21 – 5.00 Highly Challenged; 3.41 – 4.20 Challenged; 2.61 – 3.40 Moderately Challenged; 1.81 – 2.60 Less Challenged; 1.00 – 1.80 Least Challenged

Source: Data from the researcher

The result also indicates that the implementation of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Livelihood Seeding Program - Negosyo Serbisyo Barangay (LSP-NSB) faces moderate challenges in terms of the business climate. The challenges revolve around simplifying business registration and licensing procedures at the barangay level, enforcing laws and policies supporting MSME development, and the coordinating

efforts between BDCs and the DTI to create a conducive business environment for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Participants further highlighted another challenge related to obtaining permits for MSMEs, particularly regarding the lack of accommodating employees and poor service from government staff. This suggests that in addition to procedural complexities, the attitude and behavior of government employees may contribute to the difficul-

ties the MSMEs are facing in obtaining permits. Providing training and incentives to enhance customer service skills and promoting a culture of responsiveness and support can help mitigate this challenge, ultimately facilitating smoother and more positive interactions between MSMEs and the government agencies.

The result also highlighted a challenge the MSMEs in the barangay is facing, particularly in the Población, related to inconsistencies in DTI regulations. This inconsistency may also undermine confidence in the regulatory environment and hinder long-term planning and investment. Addressing this challenge would involve ensuring greater transparency, clarity, and consistency in regulatory frameworks, as well as improving communication with MSMEs to keep them informed about any changes in regulations. The result of the study supported the identified challenges of MSME Development Plan 2011-2022, which are the high cost of doing business (e.g., taxes, fees, etc.); Registration and licensing processes that are burdensome, protracted, and complex; a lack of coordination and convergence among the various agencies' efforts toward developing a business environment that is favorable to MSMEs; and inadequate implementation of laws and policies that encourage MSME development; Some regions inordinately prone to more risks; Enablers' lack of capacity to support and promote the MSME sector (Raquiza, 2021). Furthermore, the result of the study conformed to the World Bank, (2002) that the direct and indirect costs of doing business influence the investment climate.

Onerous restrictions might significantly increase the costs of conducting business. These expenses include, among others, the time spent navigating bureaucratic obstacles and dealing with paperwork, the time it takes the government to process business-related needs, and the direct expenses associated with irregular or unofficial payments and gifts. Businessmen frequently complain about bureaucratic rigidities and complicated procedures that promote rent-seeking. To reduce bureaucratic red tape, businesses are compelled by onerous restrictions to engage in corrupt behavior. There were moderate challenges in terms of improving access to finance, specifically, the interest rates of loans. High-interest rates not only affect the afford-

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ability of loans for participants, particularly those with limited financial resources, but also impact the profitability of ventures initiated through the program, potentially hindering their growth and sustainability. The challenges in the barangay include delinquent borrowers and a preference for loans from informal lenders like "five-six" due to quicker approval and release of funds. This implies that there are issues with the formal lending process, such as lengthy approval times or stringent requirements, which drive borrowers to seek alternative, albeit riskier, financing options.

Participants highlighted a significant challenge in the barangay, particularly concerning the P3 program, which is poor internet connectivity. This implies that despite the availability of online loan application processes, the lack of reliable internet access hinders MSMEs' ability to fully utilize these services. As a result, MSMEs are forced to incur additional time and effort by traveling to the town center to apply for loans and upload the required documentation. Addressing this challenge requires improving internet infrastructure in the barangay to ensure reliable and high-speed connectivity. Additionally, alternative solutions such as mobile-based applications or offline submission options may be explored to accommodate MSMEs facing connectivity issues. By enhancing internet connectivity, MSMEs can access financial services more efficiently, facilitating their growth and participation in economic development initiatives like the P3 program.

The availability of credit information, such as acceptable collateral, is identified as a significant challenge within the DTI Livelihood Seeding Program - Negosyo Serbisyo Barangay. This suggests that difficulties for MSMEs in providing the necessary collateral or documentation required to access formal financing are there. To address this challenge, initiatives can be implemented to improve the accessibility and transparency of credit information. One approach is to establish credit bureaus or information-sharing platforms where MSMEs can easily access and provide relevant financial data, such as business plans, financial statements, and collateral documentation. This centralization of credit information can streamline the lending process and provide lenders with more

comprehensive insights into the creditworthiness of borrowers.

The financial knowledge was perceived as less of a challenge compared to other factors assessed within the DTI Livelihood Seeding Program - Negosyo Serbisyo Barangay. This suggests that MSMEs may have a relatively good understanding of financial concepts and practices, reducing the barrier posed by financial literacy in accessing finance. This could be attributed to various factors. The MSMEs may have received prior training or education on financial management through programs offered by the DTI or other organizations. Secondly, advancements in technology and the availability of online resources may have improved access to financial information and tools, enabling MSMEs to better manage their finances. The result was supported by (Nangia and Vaillancourt, 2006; Aldaba, 2012) who have shown that Small, and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), have been unable to access funds due to their limited track record, limited acceptable collateral, and inadequate financial statements and business plans. This is true even though funds are available for lending. The most significant barrier to SME expansion identified is a lack of access to financial resources. The difficulty in gaining access to funds appears to be the issue, not the lack of funds that might be available for SME loans.

While the implementation of the DTI LSP-NSB encounters moderate challenges in terms of improved technology and innovation, there is a notable commitment to adopting technological advancements. The result also highlighted a challenge encountered during the LSP-NSB implementation, which despite the inclusion of social media and basic technology, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) at the barangay level were not fully aware of these resources. While they are familiar with platforms like Facebook, they lack familiarity with more advanced technologies such as e-commerce. This implies that there is a gap in knowledge and awareness among MSMEs regarding the potential benefits and applications of technology for their businesses. Additionally, connectivity issues further exacerbate the challenge, hindering MSMEs' ability to fully utilize available technology resources. To address this, efforts may be needed to provide targeted training and education programs to enhance

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MSMEs' digital literacy and proficiency with technology, as well as to improve internet connectivity infrastructure in barangays to facilitate access to online platforms and services.

The result was supported by the study of Mustafa and Yakuub, (2018) that the general level of the challenges associated with innovation and technology adoption was moderate. Similarly, the studies of (Torres *et al.* 2015; Larsen and Lewis, 2007) found that the primary constraint on innovation and performance for SMEs is a lack of financial resources. This was further confirmed by other research that highlighted the high risk that SMEs face when they place minimal emphasis on innovation, especially in an unstable global competitive market (Rosli and Sidek, 2013). For businesses to obtain a competitive edge, innovation and technology adoption benefits must be implemented and prioritized (Aziz and Samad, 2016).

While the DTI LSP-NSB faced moderate challenges in terms of access to the market, efforts are being made to address these challenges. The result reflected that while product development helped with packaging and quality, Food and Drug Administration (FDA) compliance was a major hurdle, especially in the food sector. This implies that despite efforts to enhance product quality, MSMEs face obstacles in accessing larger markets due to the high costs associated with achieving FDA compliance. The requirement for FDA compliance represents a considerable investment for MSMEs, potentially limiting their ability to expand their market reach and compete effectively in the industry. To overcome this challenge, options include cutting compliance costs, offering financial incentives for FDA compliance, and tailoring support programs for MSMEs. The result was supported by (Rogerson, 2013) that there are several problems with Small, and Medium Enterprise (SME) access to markets. The first is a sectoral disadvantage, which happens when too many SMEs are concentrated in sectors with little room for expansion.

The second factor is geography, where SMEs in hard-to-reach places have fewer opportunities to enter the market. The third factor is product quality, which SMEs must raise to compete in other markets. Furthermore, the result conformed with the MSME

Development Plan 2011-2016 and 2017-2022, which identifies challenges confronting the business sector in terms of its access to the market: Intense competition from unregistered businesses and inexpensive imports; Restricted entry to structured marketing networks provided by independent consolidators; Disjointed marketing assistance for MSMEs; Substandard packaging and labeling of products; Insufficient capabilities for product development and design; Absence of necessary certification and accreditation to enter new markets; Insufficiency in accessing market intelligence (Raquiza, 2021).

Differences in the Level of status of the Implementation when grouped according to Respondents' Profile Level of Implementation and Age

As to age, data showed that the F-value of 1.399 had a p-value of 0.249, which was greater than the alpha 0.05. The result infers that age does not seem to influence recipients' perceptions of the degree of implementation. This suggests that irrespective of age, beneficiaries hold similar views regarding the program's implementation. The Continuity Theory of Aging (Nimrod and Kleiber, 2007) supported the interpretation that age may not significantly influence perceptions of program implementation. Instead, individuals may maintain consistent perceptions to preserve continuity in their understanding of the program and its relevance to their lives, regardless of their age.

Level of Implementation and Sex

As to sex, data showed that the F-value of 1.046 had a p-value of 0.307, which was greater than the alpha 0.05. The result implies that regardless of recipients' sex or sexual orientation, their perceptions of the program's implementation remain consistent. This means that gender identity and sexual orientation have little impact on how beneficiaries view the program's execution. This could be due to the program's inclusive design, objectives that resonate universally, and effective communication strategies. The Gender Inclusive Framework and Theory (GIFT) (Kuehnast and Robertson, 2018) emphasized the importance of creating inclusive environments where individuals of all genders and sexual orientations feel valued and respected. The program's objectives may resonate universally, addressing common needs shared by

individuals of all genders and sexual orientations. Overall, this finding validated the program's adherence to GIFT's principles and underscores its success in fostering an inclusive environment where everyone benefits equally.

Level of Implementation and Civil Status

As to civil status, data showed that the F-value of 2.880 had a p-value of 0.068, which was greater than the alpha 0.05. The result entails a significant difference in perceived implementation levels based on beneficiaries' civil status, indicating potential variations in perception among individuals with different civil statuses. However, a subsequent statement contradicts this, indicating no significant variation across civil statuses. This contradiction may stem from inconsistent data analysis or unaccounted confounding variables influencing perception levels. Clarity in data analysis and interpretation is crucial for accurate conclusions, necessitating further investigation to reconcile conflicting implications and provide reliable insights. The Gender Inclusive Framework and Theory (Kuehnast and Robertson, 2018) stressed that it is essential to consider how civil status intersects with gender identity and other factors. Variations in perceived implementation levels among individuals with different civil statuses may reflect underlying disparities influenced by gender, socio-economic status, or cultural norms.

Level of Implementation and Educational Attainment

As to educational attainment, data showed that the F-value of 3.577 had a p-value of 0.004, which was less than the alpha 0.05. The result suggests that individuals with different education levels may perceive the program differently. This influence may stem from factors like cognitive abilities, critical thinking skills, and exposure to diverse experiences and perspectives. This aligned with Albert Bandura's (Social Learning Theory, 1977) which posits that individuals learn through observation, imitation, and modeling, shaping their behavior and perceptions. Higher-educated individuals, exposed to diverse experiences and critical thinking exercises, possess cognitive skills enabling them to critically evaluate the program's implementation and exhibit higher self-efficacy in assessing effectiveness. Conversely, lower-educated

individuals may rely more on external sources of information and social modeling, impacting their perceptions.

Level of Implementation and Number of Dependents

As to educational attainment, data showed that the F-value of 8.675 had a p-value of 0.000, which was less than the alpha 0.05. This implies varying perceptions based on dependents. This aligned with the Family Systems Theory (Bowen, 1978) which emphasizes how family dynamics shape individual behaviors and

perceptions. Individuals with varying numbers of dependents may have distinct perceptions of program implementation based on their family circumstances. For instance, those with more dependents may experience increased financial strain and time constraints, leading to higher expectations for the program's effectiveness in addressing their needs. They may prioritize aspects of the program benefiting their family members and rely more on community resources

Table 3: Differences in the Level of Status of the Implementation when Grouped according to Respondents' Profile.

Variables	F-value	p-value	Remarks
Age	1.399	0.249	ns
Sex	1.046	0.307	ns
Civil Status	2.880	0.068	ns
Educational Attainment	3.577	0.004	s
Number of Dependents	8.675	0.000	s

Note: p-value >0.05 – not significant; p-value <0.05 – significant

Source: Data from the researcher

Differences in the Level of Challenges Encountered when grouped according To Respondents' Profile

Level of Challenges Encountered and Age

As to age, data showed that the F-value of 0.210 had a p-value of 0.249, which was greater than the alpha 0.05. The finding that age does not significantly influence perceived challenges among beneficiaries suggests consistent challenges regardless of age. The result indicates that the program's design may address common challenges across age groups, such as access to finance or market opportunities. The result aligned with the Continuity Theory's (Nimrod and Kleiber, 2007) premise that individuals encounter similar obstacles over time, reflecting continuity in their circumstances and needs. Factors supporting this alignment include the program's focus on universal challenges like access to finance or market opportunities, which ensures continuity in the types of obstacles faced by beneficiaries. Moreover, challenges within the program may be more closely tied to demographic factors like education or socio-economic status, which remain relatively stable over time and have a greater impact on perceived challenges than age

alone. While societal or cultural factors may shape individuals' experiences within the program, the finding underscores that age itself is not a significant factor in perceived challenges, supporting the Continuity Theory's premise that individuals maintain consistency in their behaviors and experiences as they age, with consistent patterns observed across different age groups within the program.

Level of Challenges Encountered and Sex

As to sex, data showed that the F-value of 0.557 had a p-value of 0.456, which was greater than the alpha 0.05. The finding that sex does not significantly influence perceived challenges among beneficiaries suggests that sex did not play a substantial role in shaping the obstacles faced within the program. The result implies that the program may be designed to address universally relevant challenges regardless of sex, such as access to finance, market opportunities, or infrastructure. By focusing on these universal chal-

lenges, the program ensures that sex does not substantially impact the types of obstacles encountered. The finding aligned with the principles of the Gender Inclusive Framework and Theory (Kuehnast and Robertson, 2018), indicating that sex does not play a substantial role in shaping the obstacles faced within the program.

Level of Challenges Encountered and Civil Status

As to civil status, data showed that the F-value of 0.557 had a p-value of 0.456, which was greater than the alpha 0.05. The finding suggests that civil status does not play a substantial role in shaping the obstacles encountered within the program. Effective implementation and outreach strategies ensure that program benefits are accessible and relevant to individuals regardless of their civil status, mitigating the potential impact of marital status-related barriers on beneficiaries' experiences. This aligned with the Gender Inclusive Framework and Theory (Kuehnast and Robertson, 2018). The program may be designed to address universally relevant challenges, such as access to finance, market opportunities, or infrastructure, ensuring that civil status does not substantially impact the types of obstacles encountered. Societal norms and cultural expectations related to civil status may have less influence on program challenges compared to factors like socio-economic status or geographic location.

Level of Challenges Encountered and Educational Attainment

As to educational attainment, data showed that the F-value of 0.616 had a p-value of 0.687, which was greater than the alpha 0.05. The lack of significant influence of educational attainment on perceived challenges suggests that regardless of educational background, beneficiaries encounter similar levels of challenges within the program. This could be due to challenges being more related to external factors such as economic conditions, access to resources, or

program design, rather than individual educational levels. The result aligned with Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory, (1977) which emphasizes the importance of environmental factors in shaping behavior and perceptions. Individuals learn from observing others and the environment around them. In the context of the study, beneficiaries may perceive similar challenges irrespective of their educational background because challenges are influenced more by external factors such as economic conditions, resource availability, and program design rather than individual educational levels.

Level of Challenges Encountered and Number of Dependents

As to number of dependents, data showed that the F-value of 6.254 had a p-value of 0.002, which was less than the alpha 0.05. The result of the study suggests that the number of dependents significantly influences the perceived level of challenges encountered by beneficiaries. This implies that individuals with different numbers of dependents face distinct challenges within the program. Individuals with more dependents may experience increased financial strain and time constraints, leading to heightened expectations for program effectiveness in addressing their needs. Additionally, they may prioritize aspects benefiting their dependents, shaping their perception of program effectiveness. The result aligned with Family Systems Theory (Bowen, 1978), which emphasizes the interconnectedness of family members and the impact of family dynamics on individual behavior and perceptions. According to this theory, the number of dependents significantly influences the perceived level of challenges encountered by beneficiaries. Individuals with different numbers of dependents face distinct challenges within the program due to various family dynamics.

Table 4: Differences in the Level of Challenges Encountered when Grouped according to Respondents' Profile.

Variables	F-value	p-value	Remarks
Age	0.210	0.811	ns
Sex	0.557	0.456	ns
Civil Status	0.121	0.886	ns
Educational Attainment	0.616	0.687	ns

Number of Dependents	6.254	0.002	s
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Note: p-value >0.05 – not significant; p-value <0.05 – significant

Source: Data from the researcher

Differences in the Level of Status of the Implementation when Grouped according to Business Profile

Level of Implementation and Industry Sector

As to industry sector, data showed that the F-value of 1.199 had a p-value of 0.310, which was greater than the alpha 0.05. The result indicates no significant difference in perceived implementation levels among beneficiaries across different industry sectors, suggesting uniform perceptions regardless of sector. The result implies that the program likely addresses common challenges and opportunities across sectors, leading to consistent perceptions. Secondly, standardized program design, outreach strategies, and resource allocation ensure equitable access to benefits and consistent implementation experiences. Moreover, shared goals and expectations among beneficiaries from different sectors contribute to similar perceptions of implementation effectiveness.

Level of Implementation and Business Location

As to business location, data showed that the F-value of 35.394 had a p-value of 0.000, which was less than the alpha 0.05. This stressed that business location significantly shapes the challenges encountered by beneficiaries within the program. This implies that businesses in different locations faced distinct infrastructure, market, and regulatory environments, leading to unique challenges.

Level of Implementation and Duration of Business

When grouped according to duration of business, data showed that the F-value of 8.440 had a p-value of 0.000, which was less than the alpha 0.05. This emphasizes a significant association between the level of implementation and the duration of business. Specifically, beneficiaries perceived differences in implementation levels based on how long their businesses had been operational. Businesses that have been operational for a longer duration may have more time to establish networks, build a reputation, and accumulate resources, which could positively influence their perception of program implementation.

Level of Implementation and Asset Size

As to asset size, data showed that the F-value of 0.399 had a p-value of 0.528, which was greater than the alpha 0.05. The outcome challenges the assumption that larger assets necessarily lead to higher implementation levels. The result implies that businesses of different asset sizes exhibit similar perceptions of implementation, indicating that the perceived level of implementation does not significantly vary based on the size of assets. Businesses with smaller assets may compensate for their limited resources by leveraging other strengths, such as agility, innovation, or niche market positioning, leading to comparable implementation perceptions. Larger asset sizes do not guarantee effective utilization of resources or better management practices, as businesses of all sizes may face similar challenges in navigating market dynamics, regulatory environments, or operational complexities.

Level of Implementation and Monthly Business Income

As to monthly business income, data showed that the F-value of 4.244 had a p-value of 0.000, which was less than the alpha 0.05. The result revealed a notable association between the level of implementation and monthly business income, suggesting that beneficiaries' perceptions of implementation levels vary significantly based on their monthly business income. This implies that the organizations with higher income levels may have greater financial resources to invest in program implementation, allowing them to adopt more advanced technologies, hire skilled personnel, or implement innovative strategies. Organizations with lower income levels may face budget constraints, limiting their ability to fully implement program initiatives or invest in necessary resources.

Level of Implementation and Amount of Livelihood Kit Received

As to and amount of livelihood kit received, data showed that the F-value of 20.846 had a p-value of 0.000, which was less than the alpha 0.05. The

implication that the level of implementation is significantly associated with the amount of livelihood kit received suggests a strong relationship between the support provided and beneficiaries' perceptions of implementation levels. Beneficiaries who receive more extensive support through livelihood kits are likely to

perceive higher levels of program implementation due to the tangible benefits they receive. Those who receive more substantial support may have higher expectations for program effectiveness and may perceive implementation levels more positively when their expectations are met or exceeded.

Table 5: Differences in the Level of Status of the Implementation when Grouped according to Business Profile.

Variables	F-value	p-value	Remarks
Industry Sector	1.199	0.310	ns
Business Location	35.394	0.000	s
Duration of Business	8.440	0.000	s
Asset Size	0.399	0.528	ns
Monthly Business Income	4.244	0.000	s
Amount of Livelihood Kit Received	20.846	0.000	s

Note: p-value >0.05 – not significant; p-value <0.05 – significant

Source: Data from the researcher

Differences in the Level of Challenges Encountered When Grouped according to Business Profile

Level of Challenges Encountered and Industry Sector

As to industry sector, data showed that the F-value of 2.868 had a p-value of 0.015, which was less than the alpha 0.05. The result suggests a noteworthy association between the industry sector of beneficiaries and the challenges encountered within the program. This implies that diverse industry sectors often feature unique operating environments, market dynamics, and regulatory requirements, resulting in sector-specific challenges.

Level of Challenges Encountered and Business Location

As to business location, data showed that the F-value of 49.813 had a p-value of 0.000, which was less than the alpha 0.05. The significant association between the level of challenges encountered and business location suggested that geographical context profoundly influences beneficiaries' perceptions of implementation challenges within the program. These variations stemmed from disparities in infrastructure, market dynamics, regulatory frameworks, and access to resources across different geographic areas.

Level of Challenges Encountered and Duration of Business

As to duration of business, data showed that the F-value of 5.007 had a p-value of 0.000, which was less

than the alpha 0.05. The significant association between the level of challenges encountered and the duration of the business's operation suggested that the length of time a business has been operational profoundly influences beneficiaries' perceptions of implementation challenges within the program. This implies that the level of experience and expertise gained over time may influence how businesses perceive and respond to implementation challenges, with longer-operating businesses potentially having more resources and capabilities to address such issues effectively.

Level of Challenges Encountered and Asset Size.

As to asset size, data showed that the F-value of 9.793 had a p-value of 0.002. The significant association between the level of challenges encountered and asset size suggested that the size of assets owned by businesses significantly influences beneficiaries' perceptions of implementation challenges within the program. This implies that businesses with larger asset sizes may have more extensive operations, greater financial resources, and advanced infrastructure, enabling them to navigate implementation challenges more effectively. In contrast, businesses with smaller asset sizes may face limitations in terms of financial capacity, operational scale, and access to resources,

which can exacerbate challenges during implementation.

Level of Challenges Encountered and Monthly Business Income

As to monthly business income, data showed that the F-value of 5.161 had a p-value of 0.000, which was less than the alpha 0.05. The significant association between the level of challenges encountered and monthly business income suggested that beneficiaries' perceptions of implementation challenges vary significantly based on their income levels. This implies that lower-income organizations may struggle with market penetration, customer acquisition, and product development due to resource constraints.

Level of Challenges Encountered and Amount of Livelihood Kit Received

As to amount of livelihood kit received, data showed that the F-value of 65.091 had a p-value of 0.000, which was less than the alpha 0.05. The result suggests that the amount of livelihood kit received by beneficiaries significantly influences their perceived level of implementation within the program. The provision of livelihood kits may empower beneficiaries and enhance their self-efficacy, leading to more positive perceptions of program implementation as they feel better equipped to address challenges and achieve program goals.

Table 6: Differences in the Level of Challenges Encountered when Grouped according to Business Profile.

Variables	F-value	p-value	Remarks
Industry Sector	2.868	0.015	s
Business Location	49.813	0.000	s
Duration of Business	5.007	0.000	s
Asset Size	9.793	0.002	s
Monthly Business Income	5.161	0.000	s
Amount of Livelihood Kit Received	65.091	0.000	s

Note: p-value >0.05 – not significant; p-value <0.05 – significant Source: Data from the researcher

Relationship between the Levels of Status of Implementation and the Level of Challenges Encountered in the Implementation of the DTI Livelihood Seeding Program-Negosyo Serbisyo Barangay

The result showed that in terms of business climate the t-value -0.994 had p-value of 0.321, which was greater than the alpha 0.05. The result suggests that factors beyond implementation status may have a more substantial influence. The result also showed that in terms of improved access to finance the t-value 0.254 had p-value of 0.800, which was greater than the alpha 0.05. The result implies that additional factors beyond implementation status may influence the situation. The result further showed that in terms of enhanced management and labor capacities, the t-value 1.789 had p-value of 0.075, which was greater than the alpha 0.05. The result implies that factors other than implementation status may play a more significant role in influencing the challenges faced in enhancing management and labor capacities within the program.

The result aligned with Institutional Theory (Di-Maggio and Powell, 1983), which posits that organizations are shaped not only by internal factors but also by external institutional pressures and norms. Within the program's context, this suggests that factors beyond implementation status, such as organizational culture, workforce dynamics, and leadership styles, may have a more pronounced impact on the challenges faced in improving management and labor capacities.

The result revealed that in terms of improved technology and innovation the t-value 1.325 had p-value of 0.187, which was greater than the alpha 0.05. The result suggests that the variations seen in how well technology and innovation are implemented, as well as the challenges faced in this process, are probably not linked to any specific cause but rather

happened by chance. This implies that there may not be a direct correlation between the level of implementation success and the difficulties encountered. The result also showed that in terms of improved access to market the t-value -2.372 had p-value of 0.018, which was less than the alpha 0.05. The result implies a direct relationship between the level of implementation status and the challenges encountered in accessing the market within the program. When implementation status improves, there is a corresponding decrease in the difficulties faced by program

beneficiaries when trying to access the market. This suggests that effective implementation strategies play a crucial role in mitigating obstacles and improving program outcomes. DiMaggio and Powell's Institutional Theory, (1983) offers valuable insights into how organizations navigate external pressures and norms within their institutional contexts. In the context of program implementation, these institutions significantly influence program design, execution, and stakeholder perceptions.

Table 7: Relationship between the Level of Status of the Implementation and the Level of Challenges Encountered in the Implementation of the DTI Livelihood Seeding Program - Negosyo Serbisyo Barangay.

Indicators	Beta	SEDx	Standard Coefficients	t-value	p-value	Remarks
(Constant)	4.351	0.073		59.576	0.000	s
Business Climate	-0.068	0.068	-0.219	-0.994	0.321	ns
Improved Access to Finance	0.021	0.082	0.064	0.254	0.800	ns
Enhanced Management and Labor Capacities	0.200	0.112	0.613	1.789	0.075	ns
Improved Technology and Innovation	0.131	0.099	0.395	1.325	0.187	ns
Improved Access to Market	-0.26	0.104	-0.763	-2.372	0.018	s

Note: p-value >0.05 – not significant; p-value <0.05 – significant.

Source: Data from the researcher

Insights to Sustainable Policy Directions of the DTI Livelihood Seeding Program - Negosyo Serbisyo Barangay

Simplifying business registration and licensing procedures is crucial for reducing barriers to entry for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Policies should focus on streamlining bureaucratic processes to facilitate business establishment and growth. Access to finance remains a significant challenge for MSMEs, particularly due to high interest rates and limited credit information. Sustainable policies should aim to improve financial access by negotiating better terms with lenders, promoting credit information-sharing platforms, and providing financial literacy training to MSMEs. Enhancing the management and labor capacities of MSMEs is essential for sustainable growth. Policies should prioritize investment in training and education programs to improve technical skills, financial literacy, and digital literacy among MSMEs. Encouraging the adoption of technology and innovation is critical for enhancing competitiveness. Policies should support infrastructure development, improve internet connectivity, and offer

digital skills training to facilitate technology adoption among MSMEs. Facilitating market access through product development support, certification, and accreditation processes is vital for MSMEs to expand their reach. Policies should focus on providing assistance in these areas to enable MSMEs to access larger markets and compete effectively. Enhanced coordination among government agencies and stakeholders is essential for creating a supportive business environment. Sustainable policies should promote inter-agency collaboration to streamline efforts and maximize impact.

Establishing robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms is crucial for tracking the effectiveness of policy interventions and identifying areas for improvement. Policies should prioritize the implementation of monitoring and evaluation systems to ensure the sustainability and efficacy of the policy directions over time.

CONCLUSION:

Streamlining registration and licensing processes, improving coordination among agencies, and enhancing the enforcement of laws and policies supporting MSMEs development are crucial for fostering a conducive business climate. Addressing challenges related to high-interest rates, inadequate credit information, and financial knowledge is essential to improving access to finance for MSMEs. Investing in training and education programs to build technical skills and enhance financial literacy among MSMEs is necessary for strengthening management and labor capacities. Promoting the adoption of technology and innovation, addressing infrastructure gaps, and providing digital literacy training can help MSMEs harness the benefits of technology for business growth. Supporting product development, certification, and accreditation processes, as well as improving physical accessibility to business locations, are key strategies for enhancing access to markets for MSMEs.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT:

In this research, the researcher acknowledges the informants/participants, the Department of Trade and Industry, and the College of Management of Capiz State University-Main Campus, Roxas City, Capiz, for the support, cooperation, and valuable insights extended

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:

The author proclaims no conflict of interest.

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Citation: Dordas JRA. (2024). Department of Trade and Industry Livelihood Seeding Program- Negosyo Serbisyo Barangay: insights to sustainable policy directions, *Can. J. Bus. Inf. Stud.*, **6**(4), 129-146.
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