

THE IMPACT OF LIVELIHOOD SKILLS TRAINING ON THE MEMBERS OF BARANGAY WOMEN DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION IN CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY

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ABSTRACT. *This study aimed to determine the impact of the livelihood skills training conducted by the Department of Foods, Science, and Technology (DFST), of this University. This study employed a mixed-method concurrent validating quantitative data triangulation design. Two-stage voluntary sampling was used to determine the respondents, and twenty-three trainees volunteered to participate in the study. The researchers used the researchers-made survey questionnaire which includes closed and open-ended questions. The open-ended questions were a follow-up to closed-ended type of questions to validate/expand on the respondents' answers to the closed-ended questions. The data collected from the closed-ended questions were analyzed using the frequency and percentage while the qualitative data obtained from the open-ended questions were analyzed using a directed content analysis approach. Results revealed that more than 39 % of the respondents were engaged in business/work related to food before the training. They rated the training as useful because they experienced changes in their income. They believed that it is due to the training conducted by the DFST. The changes they experience after the training include augmented income and reduced expenses. The researchers recommend that the training designers, may consider the age of the participants in designing training and it must be participants'-centered.*

Keywords: women, livelihood skills training, training, impact

INTRODUCTION

As mandated by law, any university and college must perform three functions, which include instruction, research, and extension. For several years, the University of Science and Technology of Southern Philippines (USTP) conducted extension projects for different institutions within and outside Cagayan de Oro City. An extension is a form of free training services conducted by the faculty of the university/college to extend their expertise to the community nearby. The purpose of the extension is for the betterment of the community or to make an impact on the lives of the participants of the extension activity. However, studies on the impact of the extension projects conducted by USTP is very limited.

One of the extension projects rendered by USTP is the livelihood skills training conducted by the Department of Food, Science, and Technology (FST) to the Members of the BuB Barangay Women Development Associations in Cagayan de Oro City. Training modules for Women's Organizations include Good Manufacturing Practice, Food Processing, Values Formation, Labelling, Bookkeeping, Entrepreneurship, Purchasing, and Marketing. The training was conducted in the Foods and Innovation training Center of USTP in 2017. Each association was trained in one day at a different date and time. The goal of the training was to improve the economic status of the trainees. However, no study shows that the training indeed makes changes in the socio-economic status of the participants. On this lies the overall inspiration of this present study.

The purpose of this study is to assess the impact of the

livelihood skills training conducted by the Department of Food, Science, and Technology on the Members of BuB Barangay Women Development Associations. This study could provide information to all involved in the projects from the management, and training designers down to the participants whether or not the extension project was effective and if its goal was achieved. Although the training is free, it takes away time from the productive work of all involved in the training [1].

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general goal of the study is to provide tangible information on what kind of impact the food processing training has on the trainees. Specifically, it aimed to determine

- (a) the proportion of the trainees who have experience in business/work related to food before the training;
- (b) the extent of the usefulness of the training;
- (c) the proportion of trainees who experienced a change in their income or expenses after the training;
- (d) the proportion of the trainees who believed that the changes in their economic status are attributable to the training; the changes experienced by the trainees; and gather suggestions for future extension projects of the university.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on the theory of change. A theory of change specifies upfront, how activities will lead to interim and longer-term outcomes and identifies the contextual conditions that may affect them [2]. Below is the theory of Change in hand that will guide the researchers in assessing the impact of food processing training.



Figure 1. Theory of Change due to food processing training

Figure 1 reflects the activity, output, outcome, and overall goal of the program. It is hypothesized that since the women were trained in food processing, they gained knowledge in food safety, food packaging and labeling, basic costing and pricing, basic marketing and sales, simplified bookkeeping, and entrepreneurial development and leadership, and generally improved their skills in food processing assuming that they religiously attended the training. Then, the knowledge of the participants on food processing leads them to engage in business. This is because processed foods are feasible for business, especially in urban areas because both parents are working and have little time available to cook food. They tend to subscribe to processed foods for the reason of convenience. Skills training could also enable the trainee to get a job after the training. Finally, having a job and owning a business-even a small enterprise will improve one's income.

Livelihood Skills Training

Training is relevant to the enhancement of growth and well-being of the nation, and the economy. Training is a process of learning and development to improve individual, team, and organizational effectiveness [3]. Also, it is one of the most pervasive methods for enhancing individual productivity and improving job performance in the work environment [4].

In the Philippines, Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) systems became the jurisdiction of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) as legally mandated in RA 7796 otherwise known as the TESDA Act of 1994. The TVET provides education and training opportunities to prepare students and other clients for employment. Both provide training that is efficient using the principle of "economies and scale" in order to prepare trainees, students, and other clients for employment [5].

Community extension services respond not just to the needs of the community but to the Vision-Mission of the University as well as the expectations to make education accessible to the poor and to "pursue an excellent and socially relevant education centered on the young, poor and the youth at risk; and promote the Filipino spirit of solidarity by upholding justice and human dignity" [6].

A study revealed that and has become clear that an integrated extension approach is needed to address multi-faceted community issues by way of integrating efforts across different

program areas. The extension will also enable to address real-life community issues effectively and skills training may help clients develop the critical skills for handling common situations on the job, thereby prolonging job tenure [7].

Community Extension Program of Saint Paul College of Ilocos Sur. Based on his findings, she concluded that the school has a remarkable agenda along with extension services as shown in the administrative capability, the professional and personal characteristics of implementers, and in the participation of development partners. The program was significantly influenced by administrative capability and executive leadership of having a remarkable agenda along extension services, clear goals, and objectives, effective planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the program. The economic, sociocultural, and personal aspects are significant factors in the overall impact of the extension programs.

A two-month Skills Training on Food Processing/NC II was done in Zamboanga with the Collaborative efforts of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), and the Century Pacific Foods Inc., (CPFI) funded by the International Labour Organization (ILO). The aim of the joint project is to foster sustainable development and revenue generation in the targeted communities by providing skills to facilitate employment for beneficiaries. The skills training on food processing for 200 internally displaced Persons (IDP's) of Zamboanga City was made possible [8]. With that skills training, the said beneficiaries are absorbed and employed in Century Pacific Foods Incorporated (CPFI) last August 2016.

The principles applied to teaching and developing these trainees will interestingly provide some useful lessons for workplace training, development, and evaluation. Consider also that the demands of the business environment are not standing still. The competitors, technology, legislation, and regulations are constantly changing. There is a need to conduct skills training which can provide employment for the trainees after the training.

For the training evaluation to be truly effective, the training and development itself must be appropriate for the person and the situation. The Technical Skills Development Authority (TESDA) can be a linkage to implement a Livelihood Skills

Training Program for they offer technical and vocational education and training.

Livelihood training is much more effective if combined with basic literacy. This theory has subsequently resulted in better implementation of the program as supported by the policies of the provincial government [9]. The success of a training program will improve the skills of the beneficiary, it also provides them an avenue for livelihood, and most especially the skills they have acquired from the training will become useful in their personal needs at home like minor troubleshooting or simply awareness of food safety and hygiene.

Training/assessment is the heart of learning; thus, the impact of the Technical training Course is imperative. It is important to know the training effectiveness to ensure that the training conducted gives an impact on the performance of the trainees. Effective training is considered an important factor in determining the efficiency of the program. Evaluation is not just for the trainer or the organization, it is absolutely important for the trainees too [10]. Training must really address the primary needs of the society that directly strengthens the livelihood of the people. The level or complexity of the training should as much as possible be based on the standing of pre-knowledge or skills of the participants to achieve a genuine outcome. Also, Livelihood Skills Development Program makes use of the life skills approach for personal development.

Socioeconomic Status of Women

Socioeconomic status is a complex and multidimensional construct. It encompasses both independent objective characteristics like income or education and subjective perceptions of social status and social class. It includes attributes of quality of life as well as the opportunities and privileges given to people within society.

Socioeconomic status is a key factor in determining the quality of life for women. Say for example when it comes to having coronary heart disease, there was a significantly greater excess risk associated with lower educational attainment in women compared with men [11]. Poor people who lived in poor communities received especially low-quality care. Socioeconomic status also strongly influences the lives of children and families.

Locally and globally, there exists a long-time inequity in wealth and quality of life for women. The U.S. Census Bureau in 2015 shows that women's poverty rates were substantially above the poverty rates for men. This supports the findings of Eichner & Robbins [12]. For all groups of adult women, poverty rates were also higher than for their male counterparts. In retrospect, more than 1 in 7 women - nearly 18.4 million - lived in poverty.

How food secures a woman depends on her socioeconomic status. Food security was significantly correlated with the socioeconomic status of the family, residence area, husband's occupation, number of employed family members, monthly income, and monthly food cost (P value < 0.001). This is according to the study of Yadegari et al (2017). The results of the logistic regression analysis revealed that the husband's occupation (OR = 1.28), economic status (OR = 1.53), and residence area (OR = 1.43) had increasing effects on food insecurity.

In Vietnam, agricultural land acquisition (ALA) for urbanization and industrialization has been implemented since the 2000s. The ALA has significantly improved the occupational status of rural women by creating non-farm job opportunities [13]. It has improved their income, socioeconomic knowledge, and working skills. But the positive impacts are only limited in cases where ALA is applied toward industrial and energy development. In addition, the unclear responsibility of stakeholders and inadequate livelihood rehabilitation programs of ALA projects have obstructed the opportunities of rural women. It was recommended that to improve the SES of rural women, the ALA policy should initiate a flexible livelihoods support plan based on the purpose of ALA and the concrete responsibilities of stakeholders and investors.

On the other hand, another significant study recommended that the women groups in Nigeria should be strengthened and supported by the government through credit availability and training for the group leaders on group dynamics [14]. This recommendation came after the report that women farmers have been disadvantaged in terms of access to land and credit availability among others.

The impacts of crises such as COVID-19 are never gender-neutral. Women are bearing the brunt of the economic and social effects of COVID-19. Women who are poor face an even higher risk of loss of livelihood as well as increased violence and COVID-19 transmission and fatalities. Forty-seven of the 96 million people who will be pushed into extreme poverty by 2021 are women and girls. The gender poverty gap will widen. More women will experience extreme poverty than men. This has revealed the economic insecurity of women. They earn less and hold unstable jobs than men. They are vulnerable to layoffs and loss of livelihoods.

Participating in the training program significantly increased the prospects of being employed outside household farms and the contribution of women to household income in the lean season [15]. Further, the program participants spend more on female-favored consumption goods and have a greater say in household spending decisions. Although, this is only from the women's perspective, not the husbands' or adult sons' viewpoint. So, providing skills training can have positive effects on rural women's overall socioeconomic status even for part-time employment. The factors driving the current operations of the informal dairy sector and the potential of capacity development activities, such as training, to contribute to health and socio-economic outcomes [16].

Theory of Change

The term "Theory of Change" is to describe the set of assumptions that explain the small steps that lead to a long-term goal and the connections between program activities and outcomes at each step. Early presentations of the theory of change are simple illustrations of expected outputs that lead to outcomes and longer-term impacts [17].

One is on the different interpretations of it. Two, the incoherence in relationships among the constituent concepts of it. Three, the limitations in necessary skills and commitment for enacting the theory of change, and four, the limitations in necessary skills and commitment for enacting the theory of change.

The diverse definitions of theory change all indicate that it

makes explicit the logic of how an intervention is expected to produce results. Sources indicate that the term theory of change is used both for the product (the chain of logic) and the process (of collectively identifying the logic). But the process of the Theory of Change covers the assumptions and enablers as well that surround a work [18]. It explains why the activities will lead to the outcomes wanted. Aims and strategies that are clear should be developed and plans should be supported by evidence. A project that makes use of a theory of change should have a clear idea of what it wants to achieve and a strategy to do this.

The formal classification of the Theory of Change approach distinguishes approaches that were taken before intervention and those that support adaptive learning through an intervention. In addition, there is the Theory of Change approach that describes the system where the interaction among participants, the intervention, and its context takes place as opposed to approaches that focus on the causal pathways - from intervention to multiple outcomes [19].

A more recent review of the Theory of Change notes that what makes it distinct from other approaches are the specific causal links among outputs and outcomes, the causal pathways by which interventions are expected to have an effect, and the explicit assumptions like the risks or barriers to success. A good theory of change evolves so that it will include meaningful causal strands and as well as clarity about the area of accountability and consideration of unintended effects.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed-method research design specifically, the concurrent validating quantitative data triangulation design. This research design involves only one phase in which the researcher collects quantitative and qualitative data at the same time, within one survey instrument, and with equal weight. Though the timing of data collection is concurrent, the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data is separate, but the researcher attempts to merge the two data sets, typically by bringing the separate results together in the interpretation. The concurrent validating quantitative data triangulation design is illustrated in figure 4. This design was chosen because, in this study, the researcher wants to validate and expand on the quantitative findings from a survey by including a few open-ended qualitative questions in order to get an interesting quote that can be used to validate and elaborate the quantitative survey findings.

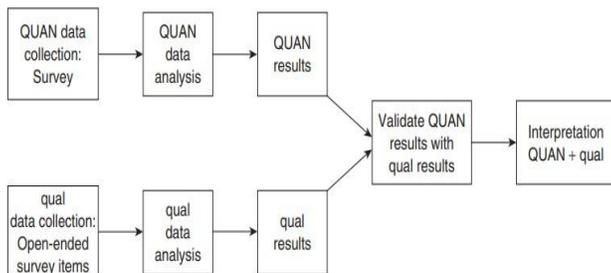


Figure 2. Visual model for concurrent validating quantitative data triangulation design

SETTING

The study was conducted in 9 barangays in Cagayan de Oro City. Particularly in Bayabas, Barangay 10, Brangay 11, Brangay 24, Bugo, Consolacion, Lapasan, Puerto, and Tablon. These barangays are located in the downtown of Cagayan de Oro City and are highly urbanized.

SAMPLING PROCEDURE

This study employed a two-stage voluntary sampling procedure. In the first stage, the researchers' contacted first the presidents of the BuB Barangay Women Development Associations in Cagayan de Oro City because it is the only contact number they had, and they discussed the study. Those presidents confirmed to participate in the survey gave the list of the members of their association with corresponding phone numbers. In the second stage, the researchers then called each member of the association and talked about the study. Only those confirmed to participate were included in the study.

RESPONDENTS OF THE STUDY

The respondents of the study were the members of the BuB Barangay Women Development Association who attended the training conducted by the Department of Food, Science and Technology, University of Science and Technology of Southern Philippines, Cagayan de Oro City in 2017. The frequency and percentage of respondents by barangay are shown in Table 1. It can be seen in the table that the majority of the respondents come from Barangay Lapasan. Also, most of the respondents fall under the age bracket 50-59 years old as reflected in Table 2. This means that during the training, they were three years younger.

Table 1. Frequency and percentage of respondents by barangay

Barangay	F	%
Bayabas	1	4.35
Barangay 10	1	4.35
Brangay 11	1	4.35
Brangay 24	1	4.35
Bugo	1	4.35
Consolacion	2	8.70
Lapasan, CDO	12	52.17
Puerto	1	4.35
Tablon, CDO	1	4.35
Total	23	100.00

Table 2: Frequency and percentage of respondents by age

Age in years	F	%
30-39	2	8.70
40-49	6	26.09
50-59	10	43.48
60-69	4	17.39
70 and above	1	4.35
Total	23	100.00

INSTRUMENTATION

The instrument that was used in this study was a researcher-made survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaire underwent face and content validation from experts in the field. This instrument includes both closed and open-ended questions. The open-ended questions were a follow-up to closed-ended type of questions to validate and expand on the respondents' answers to the closed-ended questions.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researchers obtained written informed consent from individuals who participated in this research. In the consent form, the researchers stipulated why the study was being done, how long it will last, what methods will be used, whether they have the right to not participate or to leave the study at any time, the possible risks or benefits involved, if any, the limits of confidentiality (circumstances under which their identity might be revealed), and whom they can contact for their queries.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

After the approval of this proposal, the researchers sent a message via SMS to the presidents of the BuB Barangay Women Development Associations in Cagayan de Oro City introducing themselves and asking if they can make a call. After the confirmation of the BuB Barangay Women Development Association presidents, the researchers made a phone call and discuss further the study and ask for a list of the members of the association with corresponding phone numbers. Then the researchers call each member and schedule an onsite visit to those who agreed to participate in the survey. On the day of the onsite visit, the researchers secured written informed consent and collected the data using the researchers'-made instrument. The researchers create pseudonyms of the respondents to hide their identities. Their pseudonyms used the P followed by a number. P1 is the pseudonym of respondent 1, P2 is the pseudonym of respondent 2, and so on.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUE

The data collected using the closed-ended questions are nominal, categorical data and so the researchers' used frequency and percentage to summarize and describe this data set. The appropriate statistical procedure to summarize and describe a categorical is by using frequency and percentage [20]. Percentages make it easier to appreciate the proportion of people in each region than simple numbers do.

For the qualitative data obtained from the open-ended questions, the researchers employed Directed Content Analysis Approach. This approach is referred to as a deductive category application [21]. This approach is applicable where “an existing theory or prior research exists about a phenomenon that is incomplete or would benefit from the further description”. The objective of a directed approach to qualitative data analysis is to corroborate or conceptually outspread a theoretical framework, a theory, or a model under study. In this approach, the researchers begin the analysis by identifying important concepts or variables as initial coding groups. Consequently, each category that was identified was operationally defined using the theory [22].

POTENTIAL UTILIZATION AND IMPACT OF THE RESEARCH OUTPUT

This study is useful for the academe and government. The result of this study will inform the academe extensionist and management of the effectiveness of their program. It will serve as the basis for decision-making. An assessment of the training's impact must be undertaken to inform the training

designers about the effectiveness of their program so that they can make decisions on whether to continue, discontinue, replicate or scale up their intervention [23]. Furthermore, in most cases, academe and other government agency are partners in conducting training programs. These agencies provide funds for the training so the result of this training will show whether their contributions are worthy or not.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data gathered were analyzed using the frequency and percentages, and directed content analysis approach. The results of the analysis are presented below.

Table 3: Frequency and Percentage of the Respondents engaged in a business or work that is related to foods before training

The participants...	f	%
with business/work		
Food Related	9	39.13
Others	7	30.43
no business/work	7	30.43
Total	23	100.00

Table 3 presents the frequency and percentage of the respondents who are engaged in a business or work that is related to food before training. It can be observed in the table that before the training, more than 39 % of the respondents were engaged in business/work related to food It can also be seen in the table that there are more than 30 % who have work/business but not related to foods and more than 30% do not have work/business at all. It can be observed further that a big proportion of the respondents are earners, almost 70%. This might be because of global economic and sociological changes. Traditionally, women have been expected to focus on the domestic home unit, which includes mothering and nursing children, cooking, preparing and storing food, and managing available resources to provide for family members. Until recently, women proved themselves that with confidence, determination, a high need for achievement, and hard work, they can be capable of doing equally well what their male counterparts can do. Women are becoming more involved in the construction of businesses and economic development [24].

Figure 3, shows the proportion of respondents' ratings about the usefulness of the training. It can be noted in the figure that the majority (17/23 or 74%) of the respondents rated the training as useful to very useful while only one (1) rated the training as not useful and one (1) as quite useful. This might be because the training was about food, and food is very much a big part of Filipino culture. Filipinos love to eat, so one cannot go wrong when one decides to venture into the food business. Having said that, any training that is related to food is seen as useful [25].

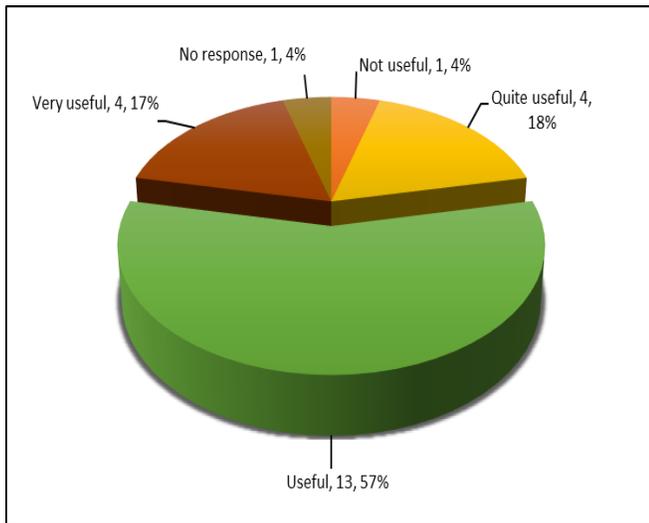


Figure 3. The proportion of respondents' ratings about the usefulness of the training

In Figure 4 below, it can be observed that the proportion of respondents experienced changes and no changes in their income after the training. It can be observed in the figure that 12 out of 22 or 55% of the respondents have been experiencing changes in their income after the training, and 10 out of 22 believed that this change is due to the training as reflected in figure 5. The qualitative data support this finding. There are two themes that arise in qualitative analysis. The first theme is extra income and the second theme is lessened expenses.

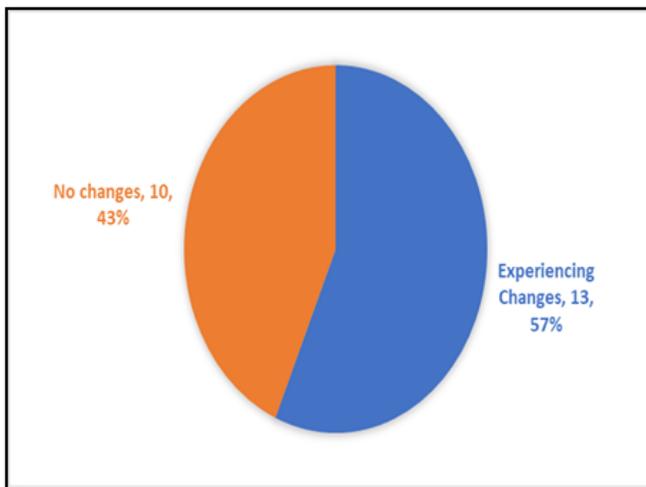


Figure 4. Respondents experiencing changes and no changes in their income after the training

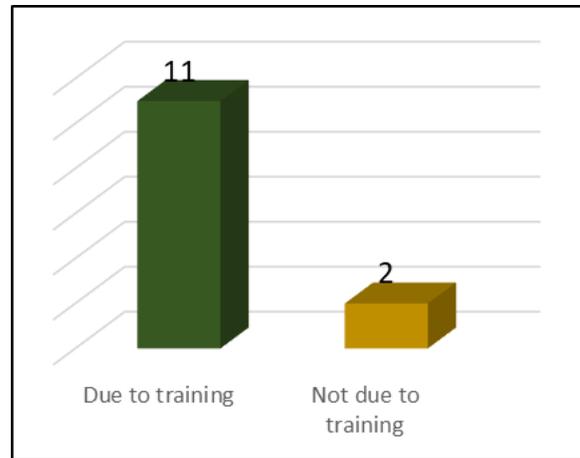


Figure 5. A number of respondents believe that the changes in their economic status are due to the training and not due to the training

Changes Experience After the Training Theme 1. Augmented Income

The respondents wrote examples of how they gained extra income after the training. The top reason is that, after the training, their association started a business applying the knowledge they gained from the training. They gained extra income because of their share in the profit from their business. According to them:

“Every December we divided out profit among us, the members of the association” (P21).

“The money of our association increased to 44, 000 more or less from 17, 000 capital” (P1)

Other respondents also shared that after the training they gain extra income because they gained knowledge of how to manage their own businesses. This is d might be because the training includes entrepreneurship. According to them:

“Before the training, I struggled to manage my meager capital, but after the training, things become easier because I gained knowledge on how to do business” (P18).

“I was able to start my own business, selling sellable food specifically “Siomai”” (P17.)

Theme 2. Reduced Expenses

Respondents of this study also identified examples that because of the training their expenses were reduced. These include preparing/cooking their own food and sewing their own clothes. According to them:

“After knowing food processing, instead of buying processed food, I make it myself” (P7).

“I sew my own clothes so I don't spend money on sewing, it's a huge assistance in terms of money” (P13).

Suggestions for future training:

The respondents' suggestions for future training are categorized into additional training, longer training time

duration, and, hands-on opportunity. According to them”
 “I hope that there should have been more training so that many could be taught how to cook and process the product or how to do business” (P22).

“Maybe one of my suggestions is to have another training besides food processing Like Cosmetology” (P16).

“The training is okay but considering that we are senior citizens, one-day training is not enough” (P21).

“The training must be longer, not just once because it is insufficient to grasp the lesson properly” (P1).

“If possible there will be another training and the training will take a longer time for us to understand and for us to achieve what they will share in the training” (P2)

“I want to suggest that as much as possible, there should be more training, and every trainee should be given time for hands-on activities” (P1).

CONCLUSION

More than 39 % of the respondents were engaged in business/work related to food before the training. The respondents rated the training as useful because the majority of them experience changes in their income and they believed that it is due to the livelihood skills training conducted by the Department of Food, Science and Technology, University of Science and Technology. The changes they experience after the training include augmented income and reduced expenses. They suggested that there might be additional training with longer training time duration and hands-on opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For the training designers, consider the age of the participants as it might be necessary for determining the duration of the training and the phasing of the training. The researchers also recommend that the training design must be participants'-centered, all participants must undergo hands-on activities, not only a few.

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