Cultural Values and Entrepreneurship: An Enabling Intervention for Curriculum Development and Community Extension Services

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Abstract *–A deeper understanding on how cultural values manifest in entrepreneurship is the focus of this study. Further, it also explored whether cultural values are an enabling or vulnerable factor to the local micro entrepreneurs (MEs) of Naga City, Region V, Philippines. A representative coming from sixteen selected barangays were gathered for the focus group discussion as well as barangay officials for a key informant interview. A qualitative research approach was used to explore specific data with greater understanding of their context through focus group discussion and key informant interview. Significant findings were: (1) cultural values of ME's are both enabling and vulnerable factors of entrepreneurship; (2) there seems to be a gap among different institutions in the conduct of educational activities, trainings, coaching and mentoring, and other relevant facilities for existing and aspiring MEs; (3) the need for entrepreneurial management capability building to address the vulnerability of cultural values and entrepreneurship; (4) there is a need for expanded information campaign on programs and services focused on finance, marketing, e-commerce, and other services appropriate to the grassroots level. Public and private groups may collaborate with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and develop frameworks leading to inclusive and sustainable programs for MEs. Possible curriculum integration may also be developed to strengthen enabling cultural values and see opportunity in its vulnerability.*

Keywords –Cultural values, Curriculum Development, Entrepreneurial Activities, Enabling and Vulnerable factors.

INTRODUCTION

Potential entrepreneurs can surface in a community that encourages entrepreneurship. Our desire for a self-driven entrepreneur is hindered by the traditional assumptions of entrepreneurship where entrepreneurial activity is somehow determined by social and cultural norms [1]. The visionaries of social and cultural norms studied how these two variables influence entrepreneurial activity. A supportive culture can make an entrepreneurial career more recognized thus creating a favorable socially recognized community. A culture with shared values for entrepreneurship would lead to individuals sharing the same cultural values. However, as the focus of entrepreneurship shifted in a borderless world, people should also find out what makes these micro entrepreneurs vulnerable and anxious towards entrepreneurship despite the interventions of public and private organizations. Storr and Butkevich [2] explored the tales of marginalized but enterprising characters, argued that, to get a sense of the economic culture in a particular context, it is important to understand entrepreneurship amongst the marginalized sector. The research highlighted how entrepreneurs are influenced by culture such as colonialism, corruption, and racial discrimination. Linan, Romero, and Serrano [3] expounded the mediating role of cultural values in explaining the total entrepreneurial activity (TEA) and entrepreneur's motivation – differentiating opportunity versus necessity motives in different levels of development.

Entrepreneurs are cultural creatures and culture affects how they conceive their opportunities and how they determine and pursue their interests [2]. Understanding entrepreneurship in any particular context thus requires attention to be paid to prevailing cultural beliefs as well as the formal and informal institutions that affect economic behavior. This may be the reason why empirical studies show that micro and small enterprises never develop beyond what is expected of them especially that they have been recipients of such capability-building programs [4].

Only a small number of them manage to move to the next level of income generation and productivity. This is manifested in the study of Veciana and Urbano [5] that entrepreneurship is inclusive of all institutional factors. The process of becoming entrepreneurs is highly conditioned by the formal and informal institutions, composed of behavior patterns which contains elements enforced by regulatory processes. One element is the normative dimension consists of social norms, values, beliefs, and assumptions about human behavior shaped by culture.

Stephan, Uhlaner, and Stride [6] posited that social entrepreneurship is a joint effect of formal regulatory (government activism), informal cognitive (cultural values), and informal normative (socially supportive cultural norms) institutions. The study underscored the importance of resource support from both formal and informal institutions, and highlighted motivational supply side influences on social entrepreneurship. Even before empirical research, Davidson and Wicklund in 1997 [7] have already placed the emphasis on the recurrent claims that culture, understood as prevailing values and beliefs, is an important determinant of the level of entrepreneurship in a society. It was found that possible cultural and economic-structural determinants of the new firm formation rate were positively correlated. The study suggested that both values and beliefs do have an effect on new firm formation. Further, Stephan and Pathak [13] explored the role of culturally-endorsed implicit theories – which is on the cultural expectations about outstanding, ideal leadership on individual entrepreneurship. It was predicted that charismatic and self-protective, culturally imposed leadership theories affect entrepreneurship. It enables the entrepreneurs to be co-operative, to initiate change, and safeguard their venture and avoid being exploited.

The framework of Hofstede's Cultural Dimension is used to understand what distinguishes one culture from another. The views and perceptions of individual entrepreneurs may vary across different localities, provinces, and even across countries. Hayton, George, and Zahra [8] posited that researchers have hypothesized that entrepreneurship is facilitated by cultures that are high in individualism, low in uncertainty avoidance, low in power- distance, and high in masculinity. Holding all other factors constant, the greater the cultural distance from this ideal type, the lower the average individual, and aggregate levels of entrepreneurship. While many researchers argue on cultural value dimensions, Tang and Koveos [9]

emphasized that changes in economic conditions are the source of cultural dynamics, and cultural stability is grounded on the endurance of institutional characteristics. Culture can define entrepreneurial success of an individual. A supportive culture leads to social legitimation, Davidson [10] walks through social recognition, thus creating a favorable environment. The present study also aims to know whether these are generic in developing cities like Naga City.

The local government of Naga City, Region V, Philippines, shows a booming record of businesses classified as microenterprise. Some stories may include underground pre-entrepreneurs who also engage in business but cannot sustain profitability due to limited resources and capabilities [11]. Further, the local government of Naga has partnered with other agencies in promoting and advocating entrepreneurship among the grassroots and marginalized sectors for inclusive economic development specifically for MEs. The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Metro Naga Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MNCCI), and number of private organizations, share the same vision of generating employment as well as improving the quality of life of their respective stakeholders.

On the other hand, the academic sector is likewise adamant in promoting the same vision. Section 3 of CHED Memorandum No. 18, series of 2017 or the Revised Policies, Standards and Guidelines for Bachelor of Science in Entrepreneurship, states that a variety of curriculum delivery methods should be employed to effectively provide a learner-centered and outcomes-based education, such as Immersion Environments where students are placed within a setting or situation they become that role and their communications and actions comply with that role. With this, an effective tripartite can transform this common vision into a collaborative context specifically mandated to perform tasks relative to impactful capability-building along different cultural dimensions. Making universities a strong agent in providing vital incubation support for start-ups, and are great sources of skills training, product improvements, and process enhancements that will boost business potential.

The context of understanding the dynamism of individual micro entrepreneurs (MEs) despite the presence of efforts of public and private sectors of the community is imperative. Costs might be outweighing the benefits of these efforts, thus, could lead to futile exercises of mandated services. Considering the above facets, the researcher is keen on finding out the emerging and specific needs of local micro

entrepreneurs brought about by their cultural values and whether these greatly affect their entrepreneurial mindset. This will highlight varied needs and concerns of microenterprises and would be business persons to facilitate impactful conduct of training, mentoring and coaching until they have grown as small and medium enterprises.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This paper hopes to proactively engage the peripheries and the urban leaders to entrepreneurial activity within the area of Naga City by understanding deeply where these potential income catalysts are coming from. That cultural differences, social dynamism founded by values and beliefs could enable MEs to develop entrepreneurial mindset. However, the same forces could also be a vulnerable factor that can affect an individual MEs to limit his capabilities and potentials. In this premise, the public and private organizations with programs leading towards entrepreneurial success could design capability building and skills training framework that would bridge the specific needs of MEs in their respective communities.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A phenomenological approach was used to define each individuals' lived perception. The study gathered data through a key informant interview and a focus group discussion (FGD) that was facilitated with a semi-structured and open-ended questionnaire. The study was facilitated among the sixteen selected barangays in Naga City with the highest poverty incidence and with the highest productivity rate. Bradbury, Sambrook, and Irvine [14] posited that the use of focus groups can provide a greater understanding of the phenomenon under study.

To determine whether the researcher-made questionnaire will help interpret the purpose of the questions, it was randomly distributed and reviewed by similar prospective participants from nearby municipalities. It was also translated into their own vernacular to further elaborate their context. An open-ended and semi-structured questionnaire dealt with the cultural values dominant among these micro entrepreneurs and whether these are vulnerable and enabling factors of entrepreneurship. It also delved on the perceptions of the respondents on some life experiences. It also dealt and explored the individual and how they are shaped by their cultures that subsequently form their perceptions. For some that

cannot verbally express their opinions were given the option whether to discuss verbally or just write down their views and opinions after every question. An informed consent from each respondent was solicited and explained from voluntary participation to data collection procedure. The researcher has established personal rapport to engage in sincere views and perceptions with full confidentiality and anonymity as a rule.

Interview results and findings from the focus group discussion were systematically analyzed by arranging interview transcripts, observation notes, and other observed phenomena actualized by respondents. Similar data were grouped and other raw information were categorized in order to build significant patterns and logical analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study zeroes in on the impact of capability-building programs provided by different organizations specifically for micro entrepreneurs (MEs) by espousing the idea that cultural values may be a significant factor and barrier in realizing the purpose and objectives of these programs. The researcher based her assumption that with the help of deep understanding of the cultural beliefs of micro entrepreneurs, the parameters of success and hindrances would be easily identified. A strategic framework may be developed as a mechanism focused on achieving results, improving performance, and integrating lessons learned into management decisions, and academic administration. For example, the programs and services provided by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in collaboration with the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Naga may not impact a fish vendor with business located in one barangay because of his/her beliefs and perceptions founded within the context of cultural values. Further, one of the respondents admitted he is a self-made entrepreneur being a product of strong family ties that exhibit stewardship and propriety. Indeed, strong family ties can be an enabling factor to entrepreneurship.

Cultural Values and Entrepreneurship

While we are advocating entrepreneurship amongst us, the forces of the environment may seem to influence decisions and actions in most of the different classes of entrepreneurs. The marginalized and the peripheries may seem to neglect the economic impact of entrepreneurship in the sense that the community

hardly manifests development and progress. On the other hand, the urban leaders and active entrepreneurs may seem to appreciate the impact of risk-taking and long-term orientation. Table 1 shows the result of the FGD and interviews.

Table 1. Observed cultural values

Cultural Values	Enabling factor	Vulnerable factor
Family values and orientation, strong family ties	/	/
Value of honesty	/	/
Spiritual belief	/	/
Teamwork / "bayanihan"	/	/
Hospitality	/	/
Procrastination / "manana habit"		/
Not accepting full responsibility / "bahala na"		/
Crab mentality	/	/
Strong work ethics	/	/
Economic status	/	/
Gender gaps and inequality	/	/
Multiculutural values	/	

Since the study is focused on the cultural values which are closely relative to the social norms of the community, observations of external environments such as local community leadership, built relationships, location set-up, and product display was also qualified. Some respondents who were not comfortable answering questions verbally were given a piece of questionnaire to carry out their honest perceptions on the said topic.

In the low-level income respondents, they would say that engaging in total entrepreneurial activity can only be a success if backed up with necessary funds. They will only bear fruits if somebody would be able to support and sustain their ventures. Likewise, those in the city proper would agree more especially when they are surrounded with families and peers that support their endeavors. However, there are cultural beliefs that really enable one to pursue entrepreneurship like the spirit of teamwork, strong work ethics, and the foundation of multicultural values, hospitality, and the value of honesty. Other cultural values may seem to be both an enabler and a vulnerable factor in entrepreneurship at the same time. A family that owns a business for many years now may seem to have not displayed their characteristics to their children. They were not trained to deal with business and management, of finance and stewardship, making it difficult for them

to be risk-takers contrary to the traits of their successful fore founders. While their parents are doing it a hard way, on the other hand, children were taught abundance and freedom, contrary to stewardship and propriety. Some would even suffer from paralysis in doing business because of fears and risk aversion. We could note that many of the cultural values of individuals in Naga City are negative in nature but they can turn it into business challenges and windows for opportunities. Thus, making it an enabler for entrepreneurs to value the diversity of people with people, and people with nature. This is manifested by Baughn et al. in 2006 [12] as they emphasized the importance of developing both self-efficacy and close social supports in enhancing potential for entrepreneurial activity.

In the pursuit of continuously empowering and enabling our stakeholders through the provision of mandated services, the academe is challenged to become a substantial agent in shaping cultures and breed of micro entrepreneurs. This study is a timely endeavor that can bring greater understanding on the cultural values of micro entrepreneurs leading to their specific and emerging needs. The study focused on the cultural values, their perceptions, and beliefs on entrepreneurship in Naga City, Region V, Philippines.

Public and private organization's intervention

Naga City works in close coordination with other agencies with programs that promote inclusive economic development such as the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), and Metro Naga Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), and other private organizations. A shared vision of generating employment as well as improving the quality of life of their respective stakeholders.

The services provided by the public and private organizations may seem to have taken for granted the very specific needs of these MEs because despite the support and mechanisms provided by these organizations, there are some challenges in the monitoring and evaluation of the expected outcomes of these activities. Moreover, there seems to be a gap among different institutions in the conduct of educational activities, training, coaching and mentoring, and other relevant facilities for existing and aspiring MEs. One respondent was even trying to define each program that has been implemented by the government and private sector with its perceived benefits. *"Small businesses like us who come from*

marginalized sectors of the community who are not confident in dealing with new ventures are given the opportunity to expand our products and services, and eventually become productive."

Emerging and Specific Needs of Micro Entrepreneurs in Naga City

By understanding the specific needs of MEs in the different barangays and income levels, there may be a harmonization of programs and services addressing these specific and emerging needs. The need for entrepreneurial management capability building to address the vulnerability of cultural values and entrepreneurship may be given priority. There is a need for an expanded information campaign on programs and services focused on finance, marketing, e-commerce, and other services appropriate to the grassroots level affected by their cultural values. Economic culture greatly affects an individual in starting up a venture, and is a driving motivation to pursue entrepreneurship. Thus, we may give priority on financial literacy that will teach MEs and prepare them for income generation in the long-run. Secondly, it is wise to spearhead the significance of marketing and basic market research that would give them maximum returns. Mentoring and coaching, follow-up and follow through, are some of the identified needs that should also be given proper attention.

Curriculum Development and Community Extensions Service

"What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?" Ralph Tyler's model of curriculum development asks this question. It would be noted that to achieve desirable educational outcomes, one must be engaged in related learning experience. Hilda Taba on the other hand improved on Tyler's model which to develop a curriculum it should be participatory. She emphasized that curriculum development should start from the bottom, a grassroots approach. It would be realizable if students are actively engaged in activities such that they will be exposed to a purposive and more meaningful learning. One should understand the specific and emerging needs of the community specifically those who are inclined to becoming future entrepreneurs. Thus, a teacher should design a curriculum that is responsive to the actual needs of the community such that it would be culturally bound, thus preparing the students to the bedrock of entrepreneurship. Possible curriculum integration may also be developed to strengthen enabling cultural

values and see opportunity in its vulnerability. Figure 1 shows the framework of collaboration among the public and private organizations, and the academe in achieving a shared vision leading to a sustainable entrepreneurial activity.
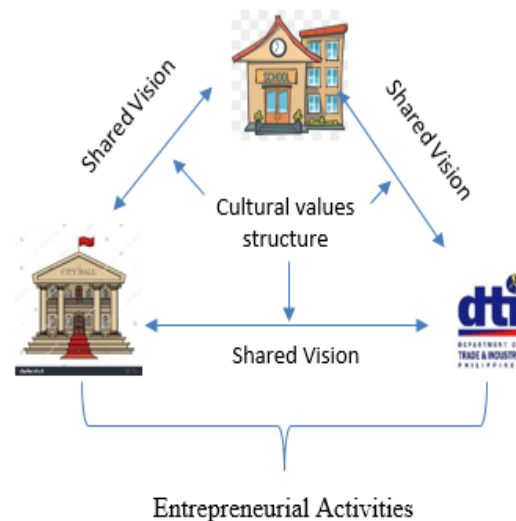

Figure 1. Tripartite Model of Public and Private Organization

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Cultural differences are both an enabler and vulnerable factor of entrepreneurship. Our cultural biases are drivers of success and failure depending on how we look at entrepreneurship. The study confirmed existing literatures on institutional theory of entrepreneurship [6] of informal cognitive (cultural values) that entrepreneurial activity is somehow determined by social and cultural norms [1]. Among the marginalized sector, economic culture dictates entrepreneur's perceptions; motivational supply; and social recognition. This is both an enabler and a vulnerable factor. Those who find economic culture as a vulnerable factor, are yet to convince themselves that there are opportunities in entrepreneurship. And the way to get there may be the interventions that public and private groups can provide. A tripartite collaboration with the local government, government and non-government groups, and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) may be a framework which could lead to an inclusive and sustainable program for MEs. Possible curriculum integration may also be developed to strengthen enabling cultural values and see opportunity in its vulnerability. The study confirmed

existing literatures on institutional theory of entrepreneurship [6] of informal cognitive (cultural values) that entrepreneurial activity is somehow determined by social and cultural norms [1].

It is recommended that further study shall be conducted to validate the general probability of a given population. It is therefore theorized in this study that understanding the cultural values whether it is an enabler or a vulnerable factor may lead to a harmonized framework in producing impactful programs and services through the collaboration of public and private organizations including higher learning institutions to better deliver their common services. This is also an opportunity for other academic-related programs to revisit their curriculum whether it promotes entrepreneurship.

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