

Assessment of Implementation of the University of Rizal System Faculty's Extension Activities

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Abstract

At the core of every higher education institutions' aim is strengthening two of their four-fold functions, which are instruction and extension, to enable them to provide free access to functional literacy and livelihood programs among indigent communities. It is along this premise that this study aimed to assess the implementation of University of Rizal System's literacy and livelihood extension activities in one of the communities in the eastern part of Rizal province. The study used a descriptive-evaluative research design, utilizing purposive random sampling technique and the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to further validate the responses of the beneficiaries in the livelihood activities and in the literacy program, respectively. The results revealed that the respondents of the study evaluated the extension activities outstanding in all aspects. Planning and management and strategies both obtained a mean of 4.42, faculty trainer's expertise had a mean of 4.45, and involvement of the participants obtained an average mean of 4.35. It was concluded, therefore, that the URS faculty's culture of conducting extension activities is well-implemented and it truly addressed and augmented the needs of the beneficiaries in the community.

Keywords: focus group discussion, URS, extension activities, beneficiaries

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Introduction

It has been said that time management is not about doing more but it is about doing what is right and necessary to accomplish one's goals and God's desire. Thus, this assessment of implementation for the extension activity is conceptualized to enable the faculty proponents to create a meaningful life for themselves and for the others as well. This can be achieved by sharing the talents and riches that God has given them and it is only through sharing beyond the four corners of the room that they will truly feel a kind of fulfillment because they were able to fill-up others' emptiness.

To intensify the above contention, as stated in Republic Act 8435, Chapter 2, Sec. 90, "The State Universities and Colleges are mandated to primarily focus their extension services on the empowering of the capability of the Local Government Units in the delivery of extension services by providing degree and non-degree programs, technical assistance, extension and research activities, monitoring and evaluating the LGU extension projects and information support services".

Likewise in accordance to the pertinent provisions stated in Republic Act No. 7722, otherwise known as "Higher Education Act of 1994", higher education institutions (HEI's) are encouraged to become self-sustainable and are mandated to give priority to research and development and extension services and serve as the prime mover of the nation's socio-economic growth and sustainable development.

In addition, according to De Leon (2008), the educational system as mandated by the Constitution shall reach out to educationally deprived communities in order to give meaningful reality to their membership in national society and finally enrich their civic participation in program undertaking.

These legal mandates clearly illustrate that conducting extension services does not only respond to the university's mission and vision, but more importantly extension services help augment the needs of the community and other members in the social milieu. It is along these contentions that led the faculty researchers to conduct a needs assessment survey among the target beneficiaries to enable them to identify the extension services which are truly needed by the said community. The result yielded the community's immediate needs which are conducting free literacy and livelihood programs.

To intensify the objective of the study, the faculty researchers reviewed research studies in relation to the conduct of community extension services. One of these was a study conducted by Dilao (2011), wherein she evaluated the impact of the community extension programs on the residents of Barangay Catadman-Manabay, and helped diagnose the programs that need further improvements. A descriptive-evaluative method was used to analyze the data obtained from the sixteen respondents. These respondents believed that the

extension program provided by LSU's Community Extension Service had enhanced their skills.

Furthermore, the respondents of her study believed that LSU's extension programs have contributed a lot to the partner community by enhancing the skills and augmenting the income of the residents. The respondents also perceived the necessity of improving the community extension programs of La Salle University, especially the programs of SHM and College of Education. She recommended therefore that trainings must be planned, organized and systematically implemented in order to have the greatest impact on the clienteles and the community; furthermore, a needs assessment survey must be done first in order to suit the interests of the clienteles.

Another study was done by Shonia (2012). She found out that in developing countries like Bangladesh, personal income of rural women was an essential precondition for enhancing their social income. This led to the main purpose of her research, which was focused on the improvement of their livelihood. She also looked into the women's livelihood situation and assessed their income strategies through structured and semi-structured interview. The results revealed that majority of the women were involved in various activities to earn income, but their personal annual incomes did not suffice their needs. Still, it showed that their income increased by thirty-six percent and somehow augmented their daily needs.

In addition, Rama (2014) conducted an exploratory study with regard to extension-research integration activities utilizing focus group interviews with extension and research faculty and her study revealed several themes, which included: current status of integration activities, perceptions of the roles of extension and research, barriers to integration, and opportunities for integration. Time, funding, administration-related communication challenges, need for clarification regarding respective roles of collaborators, and lack of incentives and structural support were viewed as barriers. Utilizing faculty joint appointments, networking, involving graduate students in extension and research activities, and serving on graduate student committees were strategies suggested. Based on the findings, a framework for integration is proposed.

It is the aforementioned reasons that led the URS faculty researchers to assess the implementation of their extension activities which were based from the needs assessment survey they had conducted with the target community. It is hoped that through the obtained results, they can implement better plans, determine better opportunities among their beneficiaries, and better serve their community through suitable and sustainable livelihood extension activities that will help promote quality practices to ensure productive human life in Rizal province.

Statement of the Problem

The study aimed to assess the implementation of URS extension activities and it specifically sought answers to the following:

1. How do the respondents assess the implementation of URS extension activities in terms of the following criteria:
 - 1.1 Planning and Management
 - 1.2 Objectives
 - 1.3 Topics/Lecture
 - 1.4 Venue
2. How do the respondents evaluate the URS extension activities with respect to:
 - 2.1 Strategies or Techniques
 - 2.2 Faculty Trainers' Expertise
 - 2.3 Involvement of Participants

Conceptual Model and Theoretical Framework

The conceptual model of the study is illustrated by a circle and three arrows. The circle placed at the center is surrounded by three arrows signifying how the extension activities are implemented while the three arrows represent the process of carrying out the academic and social engagement to the community. Specifically, these are through the needs assessment survey, followed by implementation or the actual extension activities and the last cycle is the evaluation phase. It is through this process that the faculty researchers gauged their extension activities.

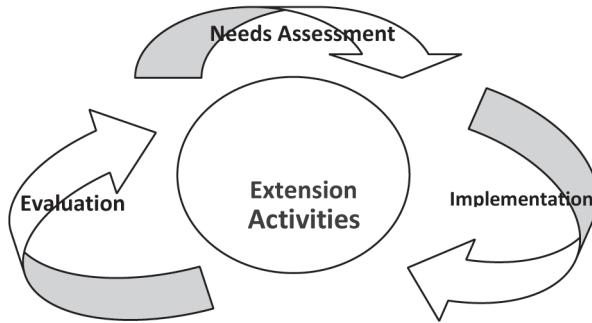


Figure 1 The conceptual model showing the assessment of implementation of URS faculty's extension activities

Furthermore, the study was guided by two theories; the first theory is from Muzafer's (1958) Super Ordinate Goal theory which categorizes some goals of higher importance and others of lesser importance. More important goals can be achieved only if individuals from various situations or conditions in life are brought together and work together in harmony in order to become successful - this also includes combining their knowledge, energy and means. This theory simply implies that shared goals can be achieved through cooperation among individuals or groups.

In addition, the second theory is from Harbizon's (1973) Human Resources theory which assumes that human beings are the most important assets of the nation and of every organization. This is the same premise that the study based its belief that the faculty implementers will be more productive if they extend their time and talents to less fortunate beneficiaries of the extension activities. It was assumed this would enhance their innate skills and help them become productive in their craft, become gainfully employed and help augment their families' basic needs and improve their status in life.

Methodology

The study made use of a descriptive-evaluative research design and utilized questionnaire-checklist as the main tool to gather the needed data of the study. The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was also used to further validate the responses of the beneficiaries in the livelihood extension activities.

According to Padua (2006), the descriptive method is the best method of describing the status of events, people, or subjects as they exist. Furthermore, he said that this is useful in obtaining the prevailing status and conditions of the problems which are essential to understand the present and future conditions.

The questionnaire-checklist was made by the researchers and it was validated by experts in the field of research. It consisted of two parts: Part I dealt with items which assessed the implementation of the URS extension activities in terms of planning and management, objectives, topics/lectures and venue; Part II dealt with items on the evaluation of the URS extension activities with respect to strategies or techniques, faculty trainers' expertise and involvement of participants. The checklist made use of a 5-point scale: 5-Outstanding, 4-Very Satisfactory, 3-Satisfactory, 2-Poor, 1-Needs Improvement.

The respondents of the study were the 36 of the 49 beneficiaries (73%) of the extension activities who were chosen randomly. In order to complete the objectives of the study, mean was the statistical tool used to analyze the data.

Results and Discussion

As reflected from the table 1 below, the general mean obtained on all the criteria was 4.42 and corresponding to "outstanding". It can also be gleaned that among the criteria, "Objectives" got the highest overall mean of 4.52 and also corresponded to "Outstanding". The criteria "Planning and Management", "Topics/Lecture" and "Venue" all obtained an overall mean of 4.39 and which corresponded to "Outstanding". Specifically, among the items for each criterion, items no. 1 and no. 2 of the "objectives" obtained the highest obtained mean of 4.56 and 4.47, respectively.

The results only imply that "objectives" were found to be clear enough and understood by the respondents of the study, since these are what were initially discussed prior to the implementation of the extension activities. However, for the criterion "Planning and Management", item no. 2, obtained the highest mean of 4.46, This may imply that the respondents of the study were the same individuals who participated in the needs assessment survey, which formed the basis of the extension services. Therefore, the table further reveals that the URS extension activities were planned, well-implemented and found indispensable and significant by the respondents. The said result was supported by the respondents during the focus group discussion. According to them, they were grateful to the university for the free education and training, which enabled them to hone their literacy and livelihood skills.

Table 1 Assessment of the Respondents on the Implementation of URS Extension Activities in Terms of the Different Criteria

Criteria	Mean	VI
A. Planning and Management		
1. An orientation is provided to the participants.	4.31	Outstanding
2. The extension activities are based on the needs of the community.	4.46	Outstanding
Over-all	4.39	Outstanding
B. Objectives		
1. Help increase the awareness of the participants.	4.56	Outstanding
2. Provided an opportunity to develop the participants' skill.	4.47	Outstanding
Over-all	4.52	Outstanding
C. Topics/Lecture		
1. Provide sufficient information.	4.40	Outstanding
2. Relevant to the enhancement of one's skill.	4.38	Outstanding
Over-all	4.39	Outstanding
D. Venue		
1. Is spacious and conducive for acquiring knowledge and skills.	4.44	Outstanding
2. Is convenient and accessible to the participants.	4.34	Outstanding
Over-all	4.39	Outstanding
General Mean	4.42	Outstanding

Table 2 Evaluation of the Respondents on the URS Extension Activities with respect to Strategies or Techniques

Strategies or Techniques	Mean	VI
A. Suitability of the language used.	4.43	Outstanding
B. Relevance and importance of the topics.	4.43	Outstanding
C. Depth/degree of the lecture.	4.39	Outstanding
Overall	4.42	Outstanding

As depicted from the table, with respect to Strategy or Technique, the overall mean obtained was 4.42 and is interpreted as “Outstanding”. Among the items, “Suitability of the language used” and “Relevance and importance of the topics” got the highest mean of 4.43 and is interpreted as “Outstanding”. The lowest rated item was “Depth/Degree of the Lecture” with an obtained mean of 4.39 that is interpreted as “Outstanding”.

The table further reveals that, as evaluated by the respondents, the URS extension activities were exemplary as far as strategies or techniques are concerned. This therefore implies that the strategies and techniques used in the implementation of extension activities were appropriate and within the level of understanding of the beneficiaries.

This was confirmed by the respondents during the focus group discussion that through the “strategies”, “relevance and importance of the topics” and the “language used by the faculty experts”, they had easily understood the lectures imparted from the extension activities. They have also attributed these services for their success in passing the National Competency Test conducted by TESDA and the Accreditation and Equivalency Test of the Department of Education.

Table 3 Evaluation of the Respondents on the URS Extension Activities with respect to the Faculty Trainers’ Expertise

The Faculty Expert shows...	Mean	VI
A. Knowledge and expertise on the topics presented or discussed	4.48	Outstanding
B. Rapport with the participants	4.43	Outstanding
C. Strengthening the skills of the participants	4.43	Outstanding
Overall	4.45	Outstanding

As shown in the table 3, with respect to Faculty Trainers’ Expertise, the overall mean obtained was 4.45 and is interpreted as “Outstanding”. Specifically, the item “Knowledge and Expertise on the Topics presented or discussed” got the highest mean of 4.48, followed by the items “Rapport with the participants” and “Strengthening the skills of the participants” which both obtained a mean of 4.43; all of these values correspond to “Outstanding”.

The finding shows that the faculty trainers who were tapped to conduct the extension activities were experts in the discussion of the topics assigned to them and have demonstrated the appropriate skill which was emulated by their beneficiaries.

The said result is confirmed in an interview conducted with some beneficiaries of the extension activities. Respondents indicated that the topics and the skills imparted by the faculty experts improved their confidence to apply for the job and become employed. Some of them said that they became engaged in their own small-scale businesses which enabled them to earn additional income for the needs of the families.

Table 4 Evaluation of the Respondents on the URS Extension Activities with respect to Involvement of Participants

Parameter	Mean	VI
A. Attendance of participants	4.35	Outstanding
B. Involvement of the participants	4.35	Outstanding
Overall	4.35	Outstanding

As shown in the table, with respect to involvement of participants, the overall mean obtained was 4.35 and which represents “Outstanding”. The two items such as “Attendance of participants” and “Involvement of the participants” both obtained a mean of 4.35, signifying “Outstanding”. The finding reveals that the beneficiaries had actively participated in the implementation of URS extension activities.

The result is supported by the beneficiaries of the program during the focus group discussion wherein they said that attending the extension activities of the university became a part of their weekly routine and they were always excited to attend and to be involved in the said extension undertakings. According to them, these activities served as their avenue to recharge from the stresses and pressures of the entire week.

Table 5 Composite Table on the Evaluation of the Respondents on the Implementation of URS Extension Activities

Category	Overall Mean	VI
Strategies or Techniques	4.42	Outstanding
Faculty Trainers’ Expertise	4.45	Outstanding
Involvement of Participants	4.35	Outstanding

It can be gleaned from table that the overall mean obtained by Faculty Trainers' Expertise was 4.45 and corresponded to "Outstanding". On the other hand, with respect to Strategies or Techniques, it got an overall mean of 4.42 and is interpreted as "Outstanding".

Lastly, Involvement of Participants obtained an overall mean of 4.35 and which is interpreted as "Outstanding". The findings therefore explain that the URS extension activities were well planned, managed and implemented, as evaluated by the beneficiaries.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that the URS extension activities were well implemented and truly addressed and augmented the community's emotional, social, mental and financial needs.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings made in this study, the following were the recommendations offered:

1. Extension activities should be continued and strengthened by providing more engaging livelihood activities among clientele;
2. An impact assessment may also be done to enable the implementers to gauge the extent of implementation and effectiveness of the extension activities on the community's economic and social stability
3. A sequel to this study may also be done using other variables or indicators which were not used in the study. This will further intensify URS social and academic engagements.

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