

Experiential Learning in Managing CBPA Community Extension Cooperatives: Students' Skills and Community Benefits

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Abstract

This study examined experiential learning in managing CBPA Community Extension Cooperatives and its relationship with students' skills development and community benefits. Anchored on experiential learning as active participation, reflection, and application in real-world contexts, the study assessed experiential learning in terms of economic and business support, educational outreach, social development, and relevance to academic and marketing programs. A descriptive research design was used, with data gathered through a researcher-made structured survey questionnaire administered via Google Forms. The respondents were fifty (50) purposively selected participants composed of thirty (30) CBPA students, ten (10) community cooperative members, and ten (10) faculty members and program coordinators. Data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, weighted mean, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient, and p-value. Findings showed that experiential learning was highly evident, with an overall weighted mean of 4.21; students' skills were highly developed, with an overall weighted mean of 4.42; and community benefits were highly evident, with an overall weighted mean of 4.53. A significant strong positive relationship was found between experiential learning and students' skills ($r = 0.6455$, $p = 0.0001$), while no significant relationship was found between experiential learning and community benefits ($r = 0.3575$, $p = 0.0524$). The study concludes that experiential learning significantly enhances students' communication, critical thinking, leadership, entrepreneurial, and financial management competencies, while community benefits may also depend on institutional support, stakeholder participation, resources, and program sustainability. The study recommends strengthening experiential learning activities, training and mentoring programs, sustainability plans, partnerships, and continuous monitoring and evaluation. The study supports SDG 4, SDG 8, SDG 11, and SDG 17 by promoting competency-based education, cooperative economic participation, sustainable communities, and institutional partnerships. Its sustainability impact lies in strengthening educational practice, community development, cooperative operations, and long-term institutional engagement.

Keywords: Experiential Learning, Community Extension Cooperatives, Students' Skills, Community Benefits, CBPA

1. Introduction

Experiential learning is an essential approach in higher education because it connects classroom instruction with direct participation in real-world activities. In the context of CBPA Community Extension Cooperatives, it allows students to apply academic and marketing concepts, participate in cooperative management, and contribute to community development. This study focuses on experiential learning as a mechanism for developing students' skills while supporting economic, social, educational, and sustainability-related benefits within partner communities.

Experiential learning enables students to acquire knowledge and practical competencies through active involvement in real-life situations. Unlike traditional classroom instruction, it strengthens understanding, critical thinking, leadership, problem-solving, communication, and interpersonal abilities by allowing students to apply theories in actual community and cooperative settings. Community extension programs provide a practical avenue for this learning process because they involve students in development initiatives, cooperative operations, and community engagement. The College of Business and Public Administration (CBPA) of Eulogio "Amang" Rodriguez Institute of Science and Technology (EARIST) promotes experiential learning through its Community Extension Cooperatives. These cooperatives expose students to business operations, cooperative management, social development, educational outreach, and leadership opportunities while also supporting partner communities in addressing economic, social, and educational concerns.

Related literature emphasizes that experiential learning strengthens student competencies through direct participation in authentic community contexts. Passarelli and Kolb (2023) emphasized that experiential learning enhances critical thinking, adaptability, and problem-solving through real-world participation. Sellers et al. (2020) found that community-based extension programs strengthen communication, leadership, and organizational competencies. Local studies by ICOPED

(2023) and the Cooperative Development Authority (2022) likewise highlighted the positive contribution of cooperative programs to students' competencies and cooperative development. Students' skills development is also linked to participation in community initiatives. Stearns and Rao noted that experiential learning enhances students' interpersonal, leadership, and analytical abilities. Sharma et al. found that participation in community initiatives develops both technical and social competencies necessary for professional success. Local studies by Serrano et al. and Garay et al. further emphasized that extension activities strengthen communication, teamwork, leadership, and project implementation skills among students. Community-based experiential learning also contributes to social and institutional development. Warner, Reece, and Zhang emphasized the value of community-based projects in strengthening collaboration and participation. Nebel et al. highlighted that cooperative partnerships contribute to sustainable community development. Local studies by Asio et al. and Loso also support the importance of extension programs and institutional partnerships in promoting community empowerment and sustainability.

Locally, the study is situated within CBPA-EARIST's Community Extension Cooperatives in Manila, where students, faculty members, coordinators, and community cooperative members participate in cooperative and extension activities. These programs provide opportunities for students to apply classroom knowledge while assisting communities through business support, educational outreach, social development, and cooperative operations. At the national level, cooperative and community extension programs are relevant to the development priorities of educational institutions and community-based organizations. ICOPED (2023) and the Cooperative Development Authority (2022) show the importance of cooperative participation and training in developing competencies and strengthening cooperative initiatives. Asio et al. and Loso also emphasize the role of extension programs in community empowerment and institutional sustainability. Globally, experiential learning and community-based education are recognized as mechanisms for linking higher education with social development. Passarelli and Kolb (2023), Sellers et al. (2020), and Sharma et al. (2025) emphasized that experiential and community engagement activities strengthen practical, technical, interpersonal, and professional competencies. Nebel et al. (2021), Warner, Reece, and Zhang (2022), and Asio et al. (2022) highlighted the importance of collaboration, institutional support, and community engagement in achieving sustainable development outcomes.

The study is anchored on experiential learning as a process in which students develop knowledge, skills, and professional competencies through active participation, reflection, and application in real-world contexts. Passarelli and Kolb (2023) stated that experiential learning promotes critical thinking, adaptability, and practical competence through active participation. Conceptually, the study examines experiential learning in managing CBPA Community Extension Cooperatives in terms of economic and business support, educational outreach, social development, and relevance to academic and marketing programs. These dimensions are linked to two major outcomes: students' skills development and community benefits. Students' skills include entrepreneurial, financial management, communication, critical thinking, leadership, and organizational competencies. Community benefits include social benefits, economic benefits, sustainability, capacity building, and education.

Although experiential learning is widely recognized as valuable in higher education, there remains a need to determine the extent to which CBPA Community Extension Cooperative activities contribute to students' skills development and community benefits. The rationale for the study lies in assessing whether participation in cooperative management and community extension activities enhances students' competencies while also producing meaningful benefits for partner communities. The study also recognizes that community outcomes may depend on broader factors beyond student participation, including institutional support, stakeholder participation, available resources, and program sustainability. Muya (2022) emphasized that the success of community extension programs depends on the collective efforts of multiple stakeholders. Serrano et al. (2022), Garay et al. (2021), and Muya (2022) also support the need for continuous improvement, enhancement programs, institutional support, stakeholder collaboration, and continuous evaluation to ensure long-term program success.

This study aligns with SDG 4 – Quality Education because it promotes experiential learning, skills development, and practical application of classroom knowledge in cooperative and community settings. By strengthening students' communication, leadership, critical thinking, entrepreneurial, and financial management skills, the study supports applied and competency-based education. It also supports SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth because the cooperative extension activities involve economic and business support, entrepreneurial initiatives, financial management, and cooperative operations. These activities help prepare students for professional work while supporting community-based economic development. The study contributes to SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities because it focuses on community extension, social development, capacity building, sustainability, and community benefits. Through cooperative engagement, students and partner communities work together to strengthen local participation, social relationships, and development initiatives. The study further aligns with SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals because it emphasizes collaboration among educational institutions, community cooperatives, faculty members, coordinators, local stakeholders, and community members. Muya (2022) and Nebel et al. (2021), Warner, Reece, and Zhang (2022), and Asio et al. (2022)

highlight the importance of collaboration, institutional support, and stakeholder engagement in achieving sustainable development outcomes.

The study is important to educational sustainability because it strengthens the link between academic learning and real-world practice. By engaging students in cooperative management and community extension, the study supports learning models that develop practical, professional, and socially responsive competencies. It also contributes to socio-economic sustainability by supporting cooperative development, entrepreneurial skills, financial management, and economic benefits within partner communities. Through community-based cooperative activities, students gain business-related experience while helping communities address economic and organizational needs. The study is relevant to community sustainability because it emphasizes social development, capacity building, education, and long-term community benefits. Cooperative engagement helps strengthen participation, collaboration, and empowerment among community members. Finally, the study supports institutional and governance sustainability by emphasizing continuous improvement, monitoring, evaluation, stakeholder collaboration, and sustainable program planning. Serrano et al. (2022), Garay et al. (2021), and Muya (2022) show that community extension programs require sustained institutional support, enhancement activities, and stakeholder participation to ensure long-term effectiveness.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study used a descriptive research design to examine respondents' perceptions and experiences regarding experiential learning in managing CBPA Community Extension Cooperatives. This design was appropriate for assessing cooperative management activities, students' skills development, and the benefits derived by partner communities.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in the context of the College of Business and Public Administration Community Extension Cooperatives of Eulogio "Amang" Rodriguez Institute of Science and Technology, located in Nagtahan, Sampaloc, Manila. The setting involved cooperative operations and community extension activities connected to students, faculty members, coordinators, and community cooperative members.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents were fifty (50) individuals who had direct involvement in CBPA Community Extension Cooperative programs. They consisted of thirty (30) CBPA students, ten (10) community cooperative members, and ten (10) faculty members and program coordinators.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling was used to select respondents with relevant experience and active participation in cooperative operations and community extension activities. This sampling procedure ensured that the participants could provide meaningful assessments of experiential learning, students' skills development, and community benefits.

2.5 Research Instrument

Data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire developed by the researchers. The instrument was designed to gather information on experiential learning activities, students' skills development, community benefits, and proposed action plans. It was constructed to ensure that the data collected were aligned with the objectives of the study and reflected the respondents' actual experiences and assessments.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

The survey questionnaire was administered through Google Forms and distributed to the identified respondents. After the responses were collected, the data were organized and tabulated for statistical analysis.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, weighted mean, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient, and p-value. These tools were used to determine the level of experiential learning, the extent of students' skills development, the degree of community benefits, and the significance of the relationships among the variables examined in the study.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Main Findings on Experiential Learning, Skills Development, and Community Benefits

3.1.1 Experiential Learning in Managing CBPA Community Extension Cooperatives

The findings showed that experiential learning in managing CBPA Community Extension Cooperatives was highly evident, with an overall weighted mean of 4.21. Among the dimensions, relevance to academic and marketing programs obtained the highest rating of 4.60, followed by social development with 4.37, educational outreach with 3.95, and economic and business support with 3.89. These results indicate that students were given meaningful opportunities to apply classroom knowledge in actual cooperative operations and community-based activities. The findings support Passarelli and Kolb (2023), who emphasized that experiential learning enhances critical thinking, adaptability, and problem-solving through real-world participation. Similarly, Sellers et al. (2020) found that community-based extension programs strengthen communication, leadership, and organizational competencies. Local studies by ICOPED (2023) and the Cooperative Development Authority (2022) likewise highlighted the positive contribution of cooperative programs to students' competencies and cooperative development.

3.1.2 Students' Skills Developed Through Experiential Learning

The students' skills developed through experiential learning were also highly evident, with an overall weighted mean of 4.42. Communication and interpersonal skills received the highest rating of 4.65, followed by critical thinking with 4.62, leadership and organizational skills with 4.59, entrepreneurial skills with 4.19, and financial management skills with 4.03. These findings show that participation in CBPA Community Extension Cooperatives enhanced students' communication, critical thinking, leadership, entrepreneurial, and financial management skills through active involvement in cooperative and community activities. These results support Stearns and Rao, who noted that experiential learning enhances students' interpersonal, leadership, and analytical abilities. Similarly, Sharma et al. found that participation in community initiatives develops both technical and social competencies necessary for professional success. Local studies by Serrano et al. and Garay et al. further emphasized that extension activities strengthen communication, teamwork, leadership, and project implementation skills among students.

3.1.3 Community Benefits Derived from Experiential Learning Programs

The community benefits derived from experiential learning programs were highly evident, with an overall weighted mean of 4.53. Community benefits received the highest rating of 4.68, followed by social benefits with 4.61, sustainability with 4.51, economic benefits with 4.45, and capacity building and education with 4.38. These findings suggest that cooperative engagement and extension activities contributed to community development by strengthening social relationships, promoting sustainability initiatives, and supporting learning opportunities within partner communities. The results are consistent with Warner, Reece, and Zhang, who emphasized the value of community-based projects in strengthening collaboration and participation. Likewise, Nebel et al. highlighted that cooperative partnerships contribute to sustainable community development. Local studies by Asio et al. and Loso also support the importance of extension programs and institutional partnerships in promoting community empowerment and sustainability.

3.2 Relationships Between Variables

3.2.1 Relationship Between Experiential Learning and Students' Skills

The results showed a significant relationship between experiential learning and students' skills, with an r -value of 0.6455 and a p -value of 0.0001. This indicates a strong positive correlation, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This finding means that increased participation in experiential learning activities contributes to the development of entrepreneurial, financial management, communication, critical thinking, and leadership skills among students. The findings support Passarelli and Kolb (2023), who stated that experiential learning promotes critical thinking, adaptability, and practical competence through active participation. Likewise, Sellers et al. (2020) and Sharma et al. (2025) emphasized that community engagement activities strengthen students' technical and interpersonal competencies necessary for future professional success.

3.2.2 Relationship Between Experiential Learning and Community Benefits

The results showed no significant relationship between experiential learning and community benefits, with an r -value of 0.3575 and a p -value of 0.0524. Although the relationship was weak and positive, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This result suggests that while experiential learning contributes positively to community development, community outcomes may also depend on other factors such as institutional support, stakeholder participation, available resources, and program sustainability. This finding is consistent with Muya (2022), who emphasized that the success of community extension programs depends on the collective efforts of multiple stakeholders. Similarly, Nebel et al. (2021), Warner, Reece, and Zhang (2022), and Asio et al. (2022) highlighted the importance of collaboration, institutional support, and community engagement in achieving sustainable development outcomes.

3.3 Proposed Action Plan

The proposed action plan was highly supported by the respondents, with an overall weighted mean of 4.59. The highest-rated priorities were improving experiential learning activities within the community extension cooperative and enhancing community benefits from the cooperative program, both with a weighted mean of 4.70. These were followed by strengthening students' skills based on identified gaps with 4.60, formulating sustainable plans to improve cooperative operations and student engagement with 4.53, and developing training and support mechanisms with 4.40. These results indicate the need for continuous improvement of experiential learning activities, enhancement of students' competencies, and implementation of initiatives that maximize community benefits and program sustainability. These findings support Serrano et al. (2022), who emphasized the importance of continuous improvement in community extension programs. Likewise, Garay et al. (2021) highlighted the need for enhancement programs that address identified challenges, while Muya (2022) advocated institutional support, stakeholder collaboration, and continuous evaluation to ensure long-term program success.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concludes that experiential learning in managing CBPA Community Extension Cooperatives was highly evident and served as an effective avenue for applying classroom concepts to real-life cooperative and community activities. Students' skills were highly developed, particularly in communication, interpersonal relations, critical thinking, leadership, organization, entrepreneurship, and financial management. Community benefits were also highly evident, especially in terms of social development, sustainability, economic growth, and capacity building. A significant positive relationship was found between experiential learning and students' skills, confirming that active participation in community extension cooperative activities enhances student competencies. However, no significant relationship was found between experiential learning and community benefits, suggesting that community outcomes may also depend on institutional support, stakeholder participation, available resources, and program sustainability.

The College of Business and Public Administration should continue strengthening experiential learning activities in community extension cooperatives by providing students with more hands-on opportunities in cooperative management, community engagement, and entrepreneurial initiatives. Faculty members and program coordinators should develop training programs, workshops, and mentoring activities to further enhance students' entrepreneurial, financial management, communication, leadership, and critical thinking skills. Community extension programs should include long-term sustainability plans, stronger partnerships among educational institutions, community cooperatives, local government units, and other stakeholders, and continuous monitoring and evaluation to improve implementation based on the needs of students and community beneficiaries.

The study was limited to the respondents and setting involved in the CBPA Community Extension Cooperatives. Future researchers may conduct similar studies involving larger populations, additional variables, and different educational institutions to further validate and expand the findings of the present study.

Compliance with ethical standards

The study was conducted in accordance with institutional ethical standards and responsible research practices. Prior to data gathering, appropriate permission was secured from the concerned authorities, and the respondents, composed of CBPA students, community cooperative members, and faculty members/coordinators, participated voluntarily after being informed of the purpose of the study. Their responses were treated with confidentiality and used only for academic research purposes. The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in the conduct of the study. All contributions to the completion of the research were properly acknowledged, and the authors remain responsible for the accuracy, integrity, and originality of the work, including copyright ownership and proper use of all research materials.

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