

Community Engagement Initiatives and Perceived Implementation Effectiveness of The Linusas Laburak Cooperative: A Mixed Method Study

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Abstract— Higher education institutions have increasingly recognized community engagement as a fundamental pillar of their mission. This study aimed to evaluate the community engagement initiatives implemented by the College of Business and Management and the Graduate School toward the perceived implementation effectiveness of the Linusas-Liburak Cooperative (LILAC) in Ozamiz City, Misamis Occidental, Philippines. The study employed a mixed-methods approach using an embedded research design. For the quantitative phase, 12 respondents participated, while six elected officers of the cooperative were selected as participants in a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) through consensus sampling. The researchers utilized validated questionnaires on Community Engagement Initiatives and Perceived Implementation Effectiveness, alongside a structured interview guide for the qualitative component. Data were analyzed using Mean and Standard Deviation to determine the level of implementation, Pearson Correlation to examine the relationship between variables, and Multiple Regression Analysis to assess the influence of community engagement initiatives on implementation effectiveness. Findings revealed a very high overall effectiveness of the community engagement programs, particularly in the areas of capacity building, governance structure, business strategies, and environmental and social impact. Likewise, the Board of Directors demonstrated effective approach in leadership, decision-making, community relations, and sustainability in managing the cooperative after attending the training. Statistical results showed a significant positive relationship and a strong positive effect between community engagement initiatives and implementation effectiveness. Qualitative findings further reinforced that these initiatives enhanced leadership confidence, accountability, strategic flexibility, and community responsiveness within the cooperative. Thus, higher education-led community engagement plays a vital role in strengthening cooperative capacity and promoting sustainable development. Future research may explore the long-term impact of such initiatives on cooperative sustainability and competitiveness by employing a larger sample size and a longitudinal research approach.

Keywords— business strategies, community engagement, decision-making, environmental and social impact, good governance.

I. INTRODUCTION

The higher education institutions have increasingly recognized the significance of community engagement as a core pillar of their mission (Welch & Saltmarsh, 2023). Universities and colleges are not isolated entities but integral parts of the communities they serve (Kohl et al., 2022). Community engagement in higher education encompasses a range of activities aimed at addressing societal challenges, enhancing student learning, and fostering civic responsibility (Chittum et al., 2022). These activities involve collaborative partnerships between academic institutions and local communities that primarily focus on education, health, environment, and economic development (Coelho & Menezes, 2021). These partnerships are not only instrumental in improving societal outcomes but also in shaping students' growth and preparing them for active

participation in societal development (Van Eeden, 2021).

The community engagement initiatives implementation allows institutions to adopt structured approaches encompassing planning, organizing, directing, and controlling especially in the business sector (Fitzgerald, 2023). Planning involves identifying community needs and aligning them with institutional strengths. Organizing entails mobilizing resources and stakeholders to address these needs (Nwauche & Flanigan, 2022). Directing focuses on guiding the implementation of initiatives, ensuring they are carried out effectively. Whereas, controlling involves monitoring and evaluating the outcomes to ensure objectives are met and to inform future efforts in the extension program (Antwi-Agyei & Stringer, 2021;

Carpio, 2023). In this vein, higher education institutions play a pivotal role in creating active community-based research and service-learning engagement to address societal issues (Rodríguez-Zurita et al., 2025). Consequently, faculty members extend beyond the classroom and research laboratory as they call for community's social, cultural, and economic well-being (White et al., 2024). Community engagement has become an essential component of academic work, collaborative partnerships between universities and local communities (Hurd & Stanton, 2023).

The active involvement of faculty members, administrative staff, and community extension coordinators plays a vital role in carrying out sustainable solutions in the community (Garcia & Uy, 2025; Caillouet et al., 2022). This hands-on experience allows them to understand the challenges and needs of the community. These experiences can enrich their teaching and research while letting them connect academic theories with real-world situations (Malik & Zhu, 2023). Community engagement also encourages a mindset that values research and learning that are rooted in actual community needs while blending classroom learning with application in resolving community-based projects (Cress et al., 2021; Berkey et al., 2023).

In the United States, different academic institutions have developed community engagement programs that promote economic growth and empower disadvantaged populations (Udeh et al., 2024). The Harvard's Kennedy School's Social Entrepreneurship Program encourages collaboration between students, faculty, nonprofit organizations, and local businesses to address issues such as poverty and unemployment (Stahl, 2022). Their faculty members mentor and advise social entrepreneurs in different skill set needed to advance in the business field. They ensure that projects are grounded in sound business practices (Kayyali, 2023). Similarly, the Berkeley Business Academy for Youth provides students with opportunities to train in entrepreneurship and business management toward serving disadvantaged communities. Both faculty and students are encouraged to use their business expertise to support sustainable development for the community where they are involved in (Choida et al., 2021).

In Singapore Management University (SMU), the integration of business education and community service is visible (Thomas et al., 2022). SMU's Community Service Leadership Program encourages students to participate in projects that are focused on

social entrepreneurship and economic empowerment (Odesanmi et al., 2024). Faculty members guide conducted community research with its collaborative initiatives on developing social enterprises that create hands-on learning experiences for students while promoting inclusive economic growth (Adidam et al., 2024). This faculty-student partnership fosters the application of business strategies that directly impact local communities from small business development to financial literacy programs (Totino, 2023).

In the Philippines, universities like Ateneo de Manila University and the University of the Philippines College of Business Administration (UP CBA) have made significant strides in community extension programs (Sayson, 2024). Ateneo's University Community Engagement and Advocacy Council (UCEAC) collaborates with local communities to tackle issues like poverty and environmental sustainability (Abenir et al., 2021). Faculty members in these universities have an active role in providing expertise in areas such as financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and cooperative management. In this vein, local communities grow through their livelihood programs (Kyeyune & Ntayi, 2025). Similarly, UP CBA focuses on improving the financial health and operational capacity of local cooperatives through training programs, business insights, and financial management workshops (Khadka et al., 2024). Faculty involvement in these projects has led to measurable improvements in the economic standing of rural businesses and broader national economy (Sulasula, 2023).

Across different regions and universities, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) substantiate universities' core pillars of research, instruction, and community extension in providing a globally recognized framework that aligns academic initiatives with pressing social and economic challenges (Abo-Khalil, 2024). Faculty-led community extension programs in business schools translate research and classroom knowledge into concrete, sustainable solutions that directly support inclusive development and community resilience. The integration of service-learning and community-based research into the curriculum let the universities foster a culture of collaboration that stimulates economic growth (Batz & Hinestroza, 2025). It also enhances local entrepreneurship and empowers community members to take control of their economic futures (Venter, 2022). While efforts for community extension program are evident, these reflect the broader role of business

education in driving sustainable community development (Magnaye & Ylagan, 2021).

The integration of business principles to address local challenges postulated universities like Misamis University to link academia and real-world solutions. The community-based projects initiated by the university allows students and faculty to contribute sustainable initiatives that support local economies, enhance resource management, and promote environmental stewardship. Business education becomes more than just a tool for economic success as it becomes a catalyst for social change, equipping future leaders with the skills and experiences necessary to drive sustainable growth in underserved communities. The involvement of the College of Business and Management and Graduate School in LILAC exemplifies a practical understanding of how business strategies can create lasting, positive impacts in local communities.

The Linusas-Laburak Cooperative (LILAC) is a rural water service provider established through the Save Labo River Program (SLRP). It is a collaborative project initiative spearheaded by Misamis University in partnership with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and CARE Philippines, with funding support from PACAP-AusAID. Its counterparts from Provincial Government of Misamis Occidental, Local Government Unit of Ozamiz City (LGU), Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), and Misamis Occidental Water District (MOWD) helped in project realization. LILAC delivers potable water to twelve upland barangays in Ozamiz City, playing a crucial role in addressing water accessibility while promoting environmental conservation. Its sustainability is reinforced through community participation and structured governance, with local leaders and representatives from barangay water associations actively managing operations. Capacity-building efforts such as leadership training, technical workshops, and digital literacy programs have been supported by the Misamis University Community Extension Program (MUCEP) and Gitib Incorporated. In this collaborative ecosystem, the College of Business and Management and Graduate School of the university have taken a strong initiative by extending expertise in organizational management, financial systems, technical documentation, and community enterprise development trainings. The business strategies integrated with service-learning and community engagement by the colleges help ensure that LILAC is not only

operationally sound but also economically and socially sustainable. It empowers local communities while offering faculty and students a rich platform for applied learning and meaningful impact.

While community engagement initiatives in higher education have been recognized globally for their role in fostering local development, there is limited research focused on assessing the practical outcomes of such programs in rural areas, especially in the Philippines (Magnaye & Ylagan, 2021). The knowledge gap lies in understanding the specific impact and effectiveness of community extension programs, particularly in the context of rural cooperatives like the Linusas-Laburak Cooperative (LILAC). This study sought to bridge this gap by evaluating the perceived effectiveness of LILAC's implementation as a beneficiary of a community extension program. It examined how the cooperative's operations, supported by the College of Business and Management, have contributed to the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the local community especially the officials of the service cooperative. Specifically, this study aimed to evaluate the community engagement initiatives implemented by the College of Business and Management and the Graduate School toward the perceived implementation effectiveness of the Linusas-Laburak Cooperative (LILAC) in Ozamiz City, Misamis Occidental, Philippines.

The researchers, who were professors from the College of Business and Management and the Graduate School programs for Doctor in Management and Master in Business Administration, are well-positioned to lead this study due to their expertise in business strategies, organizational management, and community development.

Their deep understanding of business principles, combined with their practical experience in community engagement, uniquely qualifies them to assess the perceived effectiveness of the Linusas-Laburak Cooperative (LILAC) as a beneficiary of a community extension program. The study will not only enhance their academic contributions but also provide actionable insights that can inform future community-based projects, making their research relevant to both the academic and the local community. Moreover, this initiative aligns with the College's commitment to foster applied learning in providing students' opportunity to engage students in real-world business challenges and develop solutions that directly benefit the community.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study focuses on the interrelationships between several key factors, both independent and dependent, that influence the success and sustainability of the cooperative. The independent variables of Community engagement encompasses four constructs namely: governance structure, business strategies, capacity building, and environmental/social impact are integral to understanding the effectiveness of LILAC's operations.

Community Engagement refers to the process through which institutions, organizations, and individuals collaborate with community members to address local issues, improve societal well-being, and achieve shared goals (Magnaye & Ylagan, 2021). It is a vital aspect of community-based initiatives and involves active participation in decision-making, planning, execution, and evaluation of projects that directly affect the community (Chittum et al., 2022). Community engagement fosters collaboration, trust-building, and empowerment by ensuring that community members have a voice in the programs that affect their lives (Totino, 2023). It helps to establish meaningful relationships between stakeholders, enhance local capacity, and ensure that initiatives are not only effective but also sustainable.

Governance structure plays a critical role in shaping how decisions are made, how resources are allocated, and how transparency and accountability are maintained within the cooperative (Fitzgerald, 2023). Community engagement reflects the active participation of local members which is crucial for ensuring that the cooperative's initiatives are in line with the community's needs and are well-received by its members (Chittum et al., 2022). The application of business strategies, including financial management,

marketing, and operational structure, helps ensure that LILAC operates efficiently and meets its sustainability goals, while capacity building provides the necessary training and development for both community members and cooperative managers, strengthening the cooperative's overall effectiveness (Coelho & Menezes, 2021).

Lastly, the environmental and social impact considers how LILAC's operations contribute to the broader goals of sustainability, such as improving access to clean water and enhancing the quality of life for residents (Welch & Saltmarsh, 2023). These independent variables collectively shape the dependent variable: Perceived Implementation Effectiveness. This variable assesses how successfully LILAC is perceived to be meeting its objectives in terms of operational sustainability, economic development, and social benefits for the community (Van Eeden, 2021). The perceived effectiveness reflects the cooperative's ability to not only function effectively but also generate tangible, positive changes in the local economy and community well-being, ensuring that the benefits of the program are both sustainable and impactful over time (Kohl et al., 2022).

This framework underlines the importance of integrating these multiple factors into the evaluation of LILAC's success. The examination of the relationships between these variables can uncover insights into how each aspect of the community extension program contributes to the overall effectiveness of the cooperative. Thus, this framework aimed to evaluate how effectively LILAC addresses local needs while promoting long-term sustainability, with implications for future collaborations between universities and rural communities.

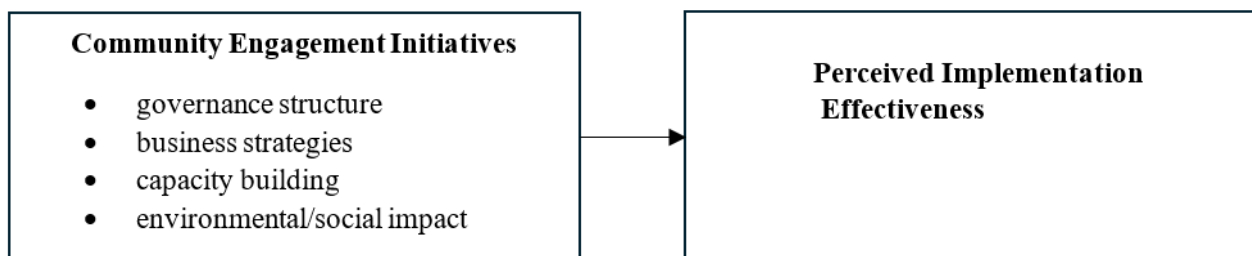


Figure 1. Schematic Diagram of the Study

Statement of the Problem

This study sought to evaluate the community engagement initiatives given by the College of Business and Management and the Graduate School toward the

perceived implementation effectiveness of the Linusas-Laburak Cooperative (LILAC) in Ozamiz City, Philippines. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the level of community engagement initiatives given by the college of business and management and graduate school program for Linusas-Laburak Cooperative in terms of governance structure, business strategies, capacity building, environmental/social impact and how do it help in making a sustainable advantage of the cooperative after joining the community engagement initiated by the college?
2. What is the perceived implementation effectiveness of the community engagement initiatives given by the college of business and management and the graduate school program for Linusas Liburak Cooperative for the Board of Directors?
3. Is there a significant relationship between community engagement initiatives initiated by the College of Business and Management and Graduate School program toward the implementation effectiveness of the program conducted?
4. What is the effect of community engagement initiatives given by the College of Business and Management and the Graduate School toward the perceived implementation effectiveness of the Linusas-Laburak Cooperative (LILAC)?

Null Hypotheses:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between community engagement initiatives initiated by the College of Business and Management and Graduate School program toward the implementation effectiveness of the program conducted.

Ho2: There is no effect of community engagement initiatives given by the College of Business and Management and the Graduate School toward the perceived implementation effectiveness of the Linusas-Laburak Cooperative (LILAC).

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study utilized an embedded mixed-methods design to comprehensively evaluate the community engagement initiatives of the College of Business and Management and the Graduate School toward the Linusas-Laburak Cooperative (LILAC) in Ozamiz City, Philippines. The study involved six elected cooperative officials selected through consensus sampling, all with at least one year of tenure and active involvement in community programs. Quantitative data were gathered using two researcher-made, pilot-tested Likert scale questionnaires on community engagement initiatives and perceived implementation effectiveness, both showing high reliability scores (Cronbach's Alpha:

0.890 and 0.91, respectively). Qualitative data were collected through validated interview guide questions aligned with key constructs such as governance, business strategies, capacity building, and environmental impact. Ethical standards were strictly observed, including informed consent, confidentiality, and cultural sensitivity. Data analysis involved mean, standard deviation, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression to determine the relationship and impact of engagement initiatives on perceived effectiveness.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of Community Engagement Initiatives

Table 1 presents the level of community engagement initiatives implemented by the College of Business and Management in partnership with the Graduate School, which aimed to support and enhance the capacity of the Linusas-Liburak Cooperative (LILAC) in managing their cooperative service enterprise effectively within the community. These initiatives were designed to equip the cooperative with the necessary knowledge, skills, and management approaches to improve their operations, promote good governance, and address both organizational and community needs. Through these collaborative efforts, the cooperative was able to adopt more strategic, inclusive, and sustainable practices in delivering services to their members and contributing to community development. The overall result shows a very high rating (WM=3.58; SD=0.38). It indicated that the initiatives collectively contribute positively and are perceived to have significantly supported the cooperative in achieving a sustainable advantage. The various training programs created by the two departments were highly appreciated and perceived as effective in enhancing cooperative operations and development.

Among the different constructs, capacity building emerged as the highest-rated area, (M=3.75; SD= 0.35) which corresponds to a very high interpretation. The training programs created by the department which were leadership development efforts, and technical workshops were remarkably effective in enhancing the skills, competencies, and professional growth of LILAC's members. Cooperative members gained significant benefits from these capacity-building efforts, which made them capable and confident in performing their roles and responsibilities within the organization.

The governance structure is also rated as very high (M=3.72; SD=0.38). The community engagement initiatives have significantly contributed to improving

the transparency, inclusiveness, and accountability of LILAC's governance processes. The result implies that cooperative members now have clearer roles and responsibilities, and that coordination between local leaders and stakeholders has improved. The consistency in responses reflects a shared acknowledgment of the governance improvements brought about by the College's initiatives.

Whereas, both environmental and social impact also obtained a very high rating ($M=3.70$; $SD=0.39$). The finding revealed that community engagement programs have meaningfully addressed key environmental concerns and enhanced the overall quality of life within the local community. Through the community engagement initiatives, LILAC has been empowered to implement more sustainable and socially beneficial projects that promote environmental conservation and community participation with minimal variability in the responses which ascertains their general agreement on the positive outcomes.

However, business strategies recorded the lowest rating among the constructs ($M=3.15$; $SD=0.40$) corresponding to a high interpretation. The findings reveal that although business strategies received a positive assessment, it ranked the lowest among all the constructs evaluated. This indicates that while the initiatives implemented in this area, such as financial management, marketing strategies, and operational improvements, have been helpful, they are not perceived to be as strong or impactful as the other areas. The result suggests that there is still potential to further improve and strengthen the business strategies provided to LILAC to ensure they effectively support the cooperative's sustainability and competitiveness.

These findings are consistent with the responses of the participants, who collectively recognized the positive impact of the community engagement initiatives while also expressing the need for further enhancement, particularly in business strategies.

"The community engagement programs helped explain the duties of the Board of Directors in a simple way. Because of the trainings, they now better understand their responsibilities in managing the cooperative and making decisions for the members. (P1)"

"Before the initiatives, some Board members were confused about their exact role. But after the training and workshops, they became more confident because

their tasks and authority were clearly discussed and explained. (P2)"

"The leadership trainings gave the Board of Directors and members new knowledge and skills to manage the cooperative properly. They are now more confident when making important decisions for LILAC. (P3)"

"The capacity-building programs taught them how to handle problems better and improve their management skills. As a result, they became more capable and responsible leaders for the cooperative. (P4)"

The participants emphasized that the community engagement programs played a big role in helping the Board of Directors clearly understand their duties and responsibilities. The comprehensive trainings provided helped explained their responsibilities in a simple and easy-to-understand way, which made the leaders more confident in managing the cooperative and making decisions for its members. Before these initiatives, some of the Board members were unsure about their exact roles, but the workshops and capacity-building programs gave them the knowledge and skills they needed to fulfill their tasks properly. The participants also shared that the leadership trainings taught them how to solve problems better and made them more capable, responsible, and confident leaders of LILAC.

The findings of the study corroborate with pieces of literature emphasizing that the structured and intentional approach of higher education institutions through implementing community engagement initiatives involves careful planning, organizing, directing, and controlling (Fitzgerald, 2023). The needs assessment ensures that initiatives like leadership training and capacity-building programs are relevant, effective, and responsive to the actual needs of the cooperative (Nwauche & Flanigan, 2022). The comprehensive trainings strengthened their decision-making and problem-solving skills reflects the idea that community engagement encourages real-life application of knowledge and develops practical leadership abilities (Malik & Zhu, 2023) and Berkey et al. (2023). The gained confidence and clarity in their roles also mirrors the role of faculty and extension coordinators in translating academic expertise into practical, community-driven solutions (Rodríguez-Zurita et al., 2025). The institution's structured, research-informed, and community-responsive approach fosters leadership, accountability, and capability within the cooperative

which reinforced the value of higher education-led community engagement programs (White et al., 2024).

Thus, it can be inferred that community engagement initiatives of the College of Business and Management and the Graduate School have made a meaningful contribution toward the LILAC's operations and leadership among its officials. Through targeted training programs, the cooperative's leaders and members

became more capable, confident, and better equipped to perform their roles and responsibilities. These initiatives have empowered the cooperative to manage its operations more effectively and promote sustainable development within the community. However, it is encouraged that the initiatives of the institution will be done continuously to strengthen the competitive and business strategies of the service cooperative in its business operational approaches.

Table 1. Level of Community Engagement Initiatives for Linusas-Laburak Cooperative (LILAC) n=12 respondents

Constructs	Mean	Std. Dev	Interpretation
Governance Structure	3.72	0.38	Very High
Business Strategies	3.15	0.40	High
Capacity Building	3.75	0.35	Very High
Environmental/Social Impact	3.70	0.39	Very High
Overall Mean	3.58	0.38	Very High

Note: Scale: 3.25-4.0 (Very High); 2.50-3.24 (High); 1.75-1.74 (Low); 1.0-1.74 (Very Low)

Perceived Implementation Effectiveness

Table 2 shows the perceived implementation effectiveness for LILAC's board of directors after they have gained the trainings conducted by the department. The results show that the perceived implementation effectiveness of the community engagement initiatives provided by the College of Business and Management and the Graduate School for the LILAC Board of Directors is very high (WM= 3.76; SD=0.33). These initiatives have been highly effective in enhancing the overall leadership, governance, and management capabilities of the Board. Specifically, the leadership and governance trainings, business strategy workshops, capacity-building efforts, and technical assistance have all contributed significantly to improving the Board's decision-making abilities, financial management, resource allocation, and confidence in handling cooperative operations.

Moreover, the initiatives have empowered the Board to foster stronger community relationships, address key local challenges, and develop a clearer vision for LILAC's role in community development. The consistent very high ratings across all indicators reflect a shared positive perception among the respondents regarding the relevance, quality, and impact of these programs. It also implies that the Board is now better equipped to plan, execute, and sustain initiatives that promote the cooperative's long-term growth and contribute to the welfare of its members and the broader community.

The highest-rated indicator is the Board's participation in the community engagement initiatives, which significantly strengthened their commitment to LILAC's mission and values. This area received the highest score of (M=3.82; SD=0.28) which indicates a very high result. It revealed that the programs encouraged deeper involvement and dedication among the Board members toward the cooperative's long-term goal. Meanwhile, the capacity-building programs follow which also received a very high rating (M=3.81; SD=0.29). The board officers make better strategic decisions for LILAC's long-term sustainability which these training initiatives were highly effective in building the Board's ability to make sound and forward-looking decisions for the organization. The leadership training provided by the College of Business and Management also received a very high rating (M=3.80; SD=0.30). These training sessions played a crucial role in improving the decision-making abilities of LILAC's Board of Directors which equip them with the skills and confidence necessary for effective governance. Subsequently, the leadership and governance training delivered by the College contributed to increased confidence among the Board in managing the cooperative's operations which also received a very high rating (M=3.79; SD=0.30). It indicated that such initiatives strengthened leadership capabilities and operational management among LILAC's key decision-makers.

The capacity-building initiatives aimed at strengthening the Board's ability to manage and sustain LILAC's operations also earned a very high rating (M=3.78;

SD=0.33). This implies that the Board members have developed improved management skills and are better equipped to ensure the cooperative's sustainability. The collaboration between faculty members and the Board to create a shared vision for LILAC's future direction and role in community development also received a very high rating (M=3.77; SD=0.31). This suggests that the partnership with academic experts has positively contributed to LILAC's strategic direction and community engagement efforts. The community engagement initiatives provided by the College and Graduate School were also seen to have contributed significantly to the Board's ability to foster stronger community relationships with a very high rating (M=3.76; SD=0.32). These programs helped build trust and collaboration between LILAC and the wider community.

The integration of community-based research into LILAC's governance structure received a similarly a very high rating of (M=3.76; SD=0.33). This finding indicates that applying research-informed practices has enhanced the Board's ability to plan and execute sustainable projects and initiatives. The overall community engagement initiatives were found to have enhanced the Board's ability to measure and evaluate LILAC's impact on the local community, with a very high score of (M=3.75; SD=0.34). This shows that the programs have equipped the Board with appropriate tools to assess outcomes and make informed improvements.

Subsequently, the marketing strategies introduced by the college designed to increase public awareness of LILAC's services and community involvement which also received favorable feedback with a very high rating of (M=3.74; SD=0.36). The cooperative has been able to improve its visibility and community support through effective promotional efforts. The community service projects supported by the College and Graduate School, which contributed to LILAC's ability to address key local challenges earned a very high rating of (M=3.73; SD=0.34). This reflects that these service projects have produced tangible benefits for both the cooperative and the community.

Whereas, the business strategy workshops facilitated by the College and Graduate School were assessed to have enhanced the Board's understanding of effective financial management, with a very high rating of (M=3.72; SD=0.35). This indicates that the Board members have gained useful knowledge to better

manage LILAC's financial resources. The financial management strategies shared by the College were also seen to have improved the Board's ability to allocate resources effectively within LILAC, with a rating of (M=3.70; SD=0.37). The value of these initiatives strengthened the resource management practices of the cooperative. On the other hand, the technical workshops organized by the college aimed at improving the Board's technical skills related to cooperative management also received a very high rating of (M=3.70; SD=0.37). This suggests that the Board has become more capable in managing technical operations crucial for the cooperative's success. Lastly, the community engagement efforts that improved the Board's understanding of social and environmental issues faced by the local community, while still rated very high, received the lowest mean score of (M=3.69; SD=0.40). This implies that while the initiatives were effective in raising awareness, there remains room for deeper engagement on social and environmental concerns.

The findings of the study were reinforced with relevant responses among the participants that were interviewed:

"The community engagement initiatives have greatly improved how decisions are made in LILAC. The Board and members now have clearer roles, and discussions are more organized and inclusive. (P1)"

"Before the programs created, there was confusion among the leaders. But now, because of the trainings, decision-making has become more transparent and everyone knows their responsibilities. (P2)"

"The initiatives helped LILAC listen more to the people in the community. Because of that, the cooperative was able to adjust its plans and services to what the members and residents really need. (P3)"

"Through the business strategy workshops, LILAC leaders learned how to be flexible with their plans. They now regularly assess the needs of the community and adjust their strategies to meet those needs. (P4)"

"The cooperative now focuses more on projects that help the environment and the community, like clean water and livelihood programs. These help improve the lives of the people. (P5)"

"After the community engagement initiatives, LILAC became more active in promoting sustainable practices."

I noticed they care more about long-term benefits, not just short-term solutions. (P6) ”

Based on the participants' responses, the findings clearly emphasize that the community engagement initiatives played a vital role in strengthening LILAC's governance, decision-making, and community responsiveness.

Participant 1 (P1) highlighted that the initiatives made a significant impact on LILAC's governance by improving how decisions are made. They emphasized the clearer roles of both the Board and members, as well as the more organized and inclusive discussions within the cooperative.

Meanwhile, Participant 2 (P2) reinforced this point by explaining that prior to the initiatives, there was confusion among the leaders. It emphasized that the trainings have provided clarity and improved transparency as everyone was ensured on their responsibilities within the organization.

Participant 3 (P3) pointed out that the initiatives strengthened LILAC's connection with the local community. The cooperative became more attentive to the needs of the people, adjusting their plans and services to ensure they are relevant and beneficial.

Consequently, Participant 4 (P4) would like to stress the importance of the business strategy workshops asserting that these equipped LILAC leaders with the ability to be flexible and responsive to the community's changing needs. They appreciated that the cooperative now regularly assesses and aligns its strategies with these needs.

Participant 5 (P5) focused on LILAC's increased attention to environmental and community welfare. They emphasized that after the initiatives, the cooperative prioritized projects like clean water and livelihood programs, which have directly improved the lives of community members.

Participant 6 (P6) echoed this concern for sustainability, stating that the cooperative has become more active in promoting long-term, sustainable practices.

They would like to emphasize that LILAC's initiatives are no longer just about short-term projects, but are now geared towards lasting, meaningful improvements for the community.

The findings of the study corroborate with pieces of literature emphasizing that faculty members in different universities have an active role in providing expertise in areas such as financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and cooperative management. In this vein, local communities grow through their livelihood programs (Kyeyune & Ntayi, 2025). Similarly, UP CBA focuses on improving the financial health and operational capacity of local cooperatives through training programs, business insights, and financial management workshops (Khadka et al., 2024). Faculty involvement in these projects has led to measurable improvements in the economic standing of rural businesses and their integration in the broader national economy (Sulasula, 2023).

Across different regions and universities, faculty members in business schools are encouraged to lead and guide community extension programs which integrate academic expertise into real-world business solutions that address community needs (Abo-Khalil, 2024). The integration of service-learning and community-based research into the curriculum let the universities foster a culture of collaboration that stimulates economic growth (Batz & Hinestroza, 2025). It also enhances local entrepreneurship and empowers community members to take control of their economic futures (Venter, 2022). While efforts for community extension program are evident, these reflect the broader role of business education in driving sustainable community development (Magnaye & Ylagan, 2021).

Thus, the community engagement initiatives provided by the College of Business and Management and the Graduate School have been highly effective in building the overall leadership, management, and governance capabilities of LILAC's Board of Directors. These programs helped clarify roles, strengthen decision-making, and improve the Board's ability to lead the cooperative towards sustainability and community development.

While all areas showed positive outcomes, the results also suggest the need for continuous and consistent efforts to further deepen the Board's engagement in addressing social and environmental concerns.

The initiatives have made LILAC's governance more transparent, responsive, and aligned with the long-term needs of both the cooperative and the local community.

Table 2. Perceived Implementation Effectiveness for LILAC Board of Directors n=12 respondents

Indicators	Mean	Std Dev.	Interpretation
1. The leadership training provided by the College of Business and Management has significantly improved the decision-making abilities of LILAC's Board of Directors.	3.80	0.30	Very High
2. The business strategy workshops facilitated by the college of Business and Management together with the Graduate School have enhanced the Board's understanding of effective financial management for LILAC.	3.72	0.35	Very High
3. The capacity-building initiatives helped strengthen the Board's ability to manage and sustain LILAC's operations over time.	3.78	0.33	Very High
4. The technical workshops organized by the College of Business and Management have improved the Board's technical skills related to cooperative management.	3.70	0.37	Very High
5. The community engagement initiatives provided by the College of Business and Management together with the Graduate School have contributed to the Board's ability to foster stronger community relationships.	3.76	0.32	Very High
6. The capacity-building programs have empowered the Board to make better strategic decisions for LILAC's long-term sustainability.	3.81	0.29	Very High
7. The marketing strategies introduced by the College have helped the Board increase public awareness of LILAC's services and its community involvement.	3.74	0.36	Very High
8. The community engagement efforts have improved the Board's understanding of the social and environmental issues faced by the local community.	3.69	0.40	Very High
9. The community service projects supported by the College of Business and Management together with the Graduate School have directly contributed to LILAC's ability to address key local challenges.	3.73	0.34	Very High
10. The collaboration between faculty members and the Board has created a shared vision for LILAC's future direction and its role in community development.	3.77	0.31	Very High
11. The Board's participation in the community engagement initiatives has strengthened its commitment to LILAC's mission and values.	3.82	0.28	Very High
12. The financial management strategies shared by the College of Business and Management have improved the Board's ability to allocate resources effectively within LILAC.	3.70	0.37	Very High
13. The integration of community-based research into the governance structure of LILAC has improved the Board's ability to plan and execute sustainable initiatives.	3.76	0.33	Very High
14. The leadership and governance training provided by the College of Business and Management have increased the Board's confidence in managing the cooperative's operations.	3.79	0.30	Very High
15. The overall community engagement initiatives have enhanced the Board's ability to measure and evaluate LILAC's impact on the local community effectively.	3.75	0.34	Very High
Overall Mean	3.76	0.33	Very High

Significant Relationship and Effect of Community Engagement Initiatives and Perceived Implementation Effectiveness

Table 3 shows the significant relationship and effect between community engagement initiatives engagement initiatives and the perceived implementation

effectiveness for LILAC's Board of Directors after attending the training conducted by the College of Business and Management and the Graduate School. The result shows a highly significant positive relationship between community engagement initiatives and the perceived implementation effectiveness for LILAC's Board of Directors (r-value=0.76; p-value =

0.001). The p-value of 0.001 which is below the 0.01 significance threshold confirms that this relationship is statistically significant, meaning there is a very low probability that this observed relationship occurred by chance. Simply put, as the level of community engagement initiatives improves, so does the perceived effectiveness of how LILAC's Board implements their responsibilities and governance practices.

Meanwhile, the analysis further revealed that using regression analysis, community engagement initiatives have a strong positive effect on perceived implementation effectiveness (b-value=0.73; p-value=0.001). This b-value falls within the range of 0.60 to 0.79, which indicates a strong effect. This implies that for every unit increase in the implementation of community engagement initiatives, there is a corresponding positive increase in the perceived effectiveness of the Board's implementation efforts. The consistently low p-value of 0.001 in both the correlation and regression tests emphasized the statistical reliability of these findings. These results demonstrate that the community engagement programs facilitated by the College of Business and Management and the Graduate School have not only strengthened the relationship between the cooperative and its stakeholders but directly influenced the effectiveness with which LILAC's Board manages and sustains its operations. The findings clearly emphasize that initiatives such as leadership training, capacity building, technical workshops, and strategic planning are vital contributors to LILAC's governance effectiveness and overall organizational performance.

Both hypotheses were rejected because the statistical evidence strongly supports that community engagement initiatives significantly contribute to and positively influence the perceived effectiveness of LILAC's program implementation. This reinforces the importance of sustained, well-structured community engagement efforts in enhancing cooperative governance and operations. The findings were reinforced with relevant insights from the participants who were board officials of the cooperative. The initiatives have made the leaders and staff more confident in managing the cooperative.

"The initiatives have made the leaders and staff more confident in managing the cooperative. They now have the skills and knowledge to make decisions and handle challenges properly. (P1)"

"Because of the trainings and workshops, the local leaders became more responsible and capable. They are now more active in leading projects and ensuring that the cooperative serves the community well. (P2)"

"Through the business strategy workshops, LILAC learned how to be flexible with its operations. They no longer stick to one plan but instead update their strategies based on what the community currently needs. (P4)"

"The trainings emphasized the importance of accountability, so leaders and members now follow clear guidelines. As a result, the cooperative's operations became more transparent and trustworthy. (P5)"

The findings revealed key areas that the participants would like to emphasize regarding the positive impact of the community engagement initiatives on LILAC. Participant 1 (P1) emphasized that community engagement initiatives created by the college have built the confidence of the leaders and staff, equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills to make sound decisions and effectively face challenges within the cooperative. Participant 2 (P2) emphasized that the trainings have made local leaders more responsible and capable, highlighting how they have become more active and hands-on in leading cooperative projects and ensuring that services are delivered effectively to the community.

Meanwhile, Participant 4 (P4) pointed out that the business strategy workshops specifically taught LILAC how to be flexible in its business operations. They wanted to highlight that the cooperative no longer follows rigid plans but now regularly adjusts its strategies to meet the changing needs of its members and the local community. Lastly, Participant 5 (P5) emphasized the role of the trainings in promoting accountability and transparency. According to them, the initiatives have helped leaders and members follow clear operational guidelines, making LILAC's processes more open, reliable, and trustworthy. These collective responses reflect the participants' shared desire for stronger leadership, operational flexibility, and a more transparent cooperative system.

The findings of the study were corroborated with pieces of literature that reinforced the positive link between community engagement initiatives and the improved implementation effectiveness within LILAC. Community engagement promotes collaboration, trust-

building, and active participation in decision-making (Chittum et al. (2022). Additionally, the role of governance structure in ensuring transparency, accountability, and proper resource management follow clear operational guidelines, making decision-making processes more transparent and organized (Fitzgerald, 2023). On the other hand, Coelho and Menezes (2021) asserted that applying effective business strategies such as financial management and marketing allows cooperatives to adapt to changing environments and maintain sustainability. Subsequently, the concept of Perceived Implementation Effectiveness as discussed by Van Eeden (2021) and Kohl et al. (2022) encapsulates the observed improvements in LILAC's operations, leadership, community relationships, and project sustainability. These initiatives, when done inclusively

and with proper capacity-building could lead to a more effective, sustainable, and community-driven outcomes.

Thus, the community engagement initiatives implemented by the College of Business and Management and the Graduate School have played a crucial role in improving the leadership and operational effectiveness of LILAC's Board of Directors. These initiatives have equipped the Board and cooperative leaders with the necessary knowledge, skills, and confidence to make sound decisions. It also let them to become responsive to the needs of the community and its members in a more organized and flexible manner. The trainings and workshops have also fostered a stronger sense of accountability and transparency that allow them to operate with clearer guidelines and build greater trust among its members.

Table 3. Significant Relationship and Effect Between Community Engagement Initiatives and Perceived Implementation Effectiveness $n=12$

Variables	r-Value	p-value	Interpretation
Community Engagement and Perceived Implementation Effectiveness	0.76**	0.001	Significant Positive Relationship
	Unstd Coeff b-value	p-value	
Community Engagement and Perceived Implementation Effectiveness	0.73	0.001	Strong Positive Effect of Community Engagement on Implementation Effectiveness

Note:** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).; b-value = 0.00-0.19 Negative Effect; 0.20-0.39= Weak Positive Effect; 0.40-0.59=Moderate Positive Effect; 0.60-0.79 Strong Positive Effect; 0.80 and above= Very Strong Positive Effect

IV. CONCLUSION

The results of the study clearly demonstrate that the community engagement initiatives led by the College of Business and Management and the Graduate School have significantly enhanced the leadership, governance, and operational effectiveness of the Linusas-Laburak Cooperative (LILAC). The initiatives which included leadership training, capacity building, business strategy workshops, and technical assistance, contributed toward the improvement of their decision-making, accountability, and strategic direction of the cooperative. The Board of Directors and members became more capable, confident, and responsive to the needs of both the cooperative and the local community. While the outcomes across all areas were positive, the findings also indicate the need for continuous improvement, particularly in strengthening business strategies and deepening engagement on social and environmental concerns.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Future studies may explore the long-term impact of community engagement initiatives on cooperative sustainability and competitiveness using a larger sample size and longitudinal approach. Researchers may also examine the specific challenges faced during the implementation of business strategies to provide targeted solutions for strengthening this area. For the cooperative and partnered institution, continuous capacity-building programs will be implemented consistently to sustain and enhance the confidence and competence of cooperative leaders. Meanwhile, business strategy workshops can be improved and expanded further to help LILAC strengthen its financial management, marketing, and operational competitiveness. On the other hand, deeper engagement on social and environmental initiatives is encouraged to promote long-term sustainability and community welfare. Finally, regular needs assessments and feedback mechanisms can be established to ensure that

future initiatives remain relevant, responsive, and impactful for both LILAC and the local community.

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