

Strengthening the Cooperative Development of Coconut Farmers in Relation to Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Plan Programs and Services of the Department of Trade and Industry Laguna: Basis for Redesigning the Program

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Abstract

The study examines the status of the programs and services under the Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Plan (CFIDP) undertaken by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in Laguna province, Philippines, with a particular focus on their cooperative development. It entails to find out the profile of the CFIDP beneficiaries, status of the implementation of the program, and the status of the programs being implemented by the DTI. In addition, this study aims to find whether the perception of the employees is the same as with the beneficiaries. The findings reveal demographic trends among respondents and significant disparities in perceptions between beneficiaries and employees. While beneficiaries perceive DTI's programs as somewhat effective, somewhat accessible, somewhat sustainable, and somewhat satisfied, employees rate them all highly, indicating a potential gap in understanding and expectations. Based on the results, the study concludes that no statistical differences were found in the variables of effectiveness, accessibility, sustainability, and satisfaction when grouped by demographic profiles, except for income level, which showed differences in effectiveness and accessibility. On the other hand, significant differences were observed between the perceptions of beneficiaries and employees across strategic planning, product development, and trade fairs, except for seminars, where no statistical difference was found. Thus, it is recommended that the DTI may refine communication strategies, enhance program offerings, and engage stakeholders effectively. Further research replication in other provinces is encouraged to validate findings and ensure their applicability across diverse settings.

Keywords: Cooperative Development, Government Program Assessment, Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Fund.

Introduction

In the agricultural landscapes of the Philippines, where coconut is a crucial crop, there has been a notable focus on sustainable development and economic empowerment in recent years. This study explores the many aspects of organizational growth in the coconut farming industry, specifically in relation to the Coconut Farmers and Industry growth Plan (CFIDP) undertaken by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in Laguna province.

On a big scale, the Philippines is recognized as a significant participant in the global coconut business, solidifying its status as the second-largest coconut grower globally. Despite making significant contributions to the national economy, coconut farmers sometimes endure marginalization, which stands in stark contrast to the popularity of the coconut industry. The coconut industry's development over the past decade demonstrates a deliberate endeavor by the government to update and improve its methods. The strategies involved the cultivation of more trees, the increase of farming areas, and a deliberate transition from raw to processed coconut goods. The promotion of intercropping beneath coconut palms was used to enhance these efforts, indicating a holistic approach to agricultural growth.

When examining the regional level, the province of Laguna stands out as a significant contributor to the country's coconut production. The significance of comprehending the local dynamics and issues encountered by coconut growers is emphasized by its distinctive position in the coconut industry environment. The DTI's implementation of the CFIDP in Laguna demonstrates the proactive approach to these difficulties, emphasizing the importance of regional initiatives in addressing the specific requirements of coconut producers.

The coconut industry has been a fundamental pillar of the Philippine economy, making a substantial contribution to the country's agricultural sector. Indonesia is the only country that produces more coconuts than the Philippines, making the Philippines the second-largest coconut producer in the world. Over the past ten years, the government has introduced significant initiatives with the goal of modernizing and improving the coconut sector. These activities involved implementing a range of measures, such as planting additional trees, expanding areas dedicated to coconut agriculture, shifting from raw to

processed coconut products, and encouraging the establishment of intercrops beneath the coconut trees. Laguna province is a significant contributor to the country's coconut production, playing a crucial part in the overall growth of the industry. 332

Although the coconut business holds significant economic value, numerous coconut farmers throughout the nation continue to encounter ongoing difficulties, resulting in their marginalization and limited access to the sector's advancements. The government implemented the Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Plan (CFIDP) as an important policy initiative to address the demand for comprehensive support. The DTI in Laguna has actively undertaken the implementation of the CFIDP to promote sustainability and economic advancement among coconut producers in the region. The primary objective of the CFIDP is to effectively tackle the difficulties encountered by coconut farmers, improve their means of living, and make a valuable contribution to the holistic advancement of the coconut sector.

The Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Plan (CFIDP) comprises a range of comprehensive initiatives and support systems aimed at enhancing the economic and organizational empowerment of coconut farmers. These initiatives encompass monetary aid, instruction, facilitation of market entry, and a range of other services. This study focuses on evaluating the success and impact of these initiatives on the recipients, specifically in terms of brand visibility, sales, and organizational development. The DTI Laguna has played a crucial role in executing these efforts, collaborating closely with coconut farmers to enhance their skills and enhance their economic status.

This study examines the efficacy and influence of the CFIDP programs and services on coconut farmers in Laguna, with a particular focus on their organizational growth. The objective is to thoroughly assess the results of these projects and offer evidence-based insights that can guide future plans and policies. This study seeks to contribute to the continuing discussion on sustainable agricultural development and economic empowerment in the Philippines by comprehending the dynamics of the CFIDP and its impact on coconut growers in Laguna.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is based on the Resource Dependency Theory. It focuses on the relationship between organizations and their external environment. It suggests that organizations depend on external resources and need to manage their dependencies in order to survive and thrive according to Kudret (2020). Powell and Rey (2015) suggest that RDT has been applied in various fields, including international organizations, public and nonprofit management, and healthcare management. Understanding the dependency of organizations on external resources is crucial in addressing the challenges faced by coconut farmers. This theory informs the exploration of how resource dependencies shape the organizational dynamics within the coconut farming community. The theory provides valuable guidance for managers in understanding how organizations obtain critical resources from the environment, such as through merging, forming alliances, and co-opting.

Materials and Methods

The research procedure unfolds in a systematic and ethical manner, encompassing various stages to ensure the comprehensive exploration of organizational development, program impact, and relationships within CFIDP beneficiaries.

The initial phase involves the meticulous development of research tools, with a primary focus on designing a structured questionnaire tailored to the study's objectives. This questionnaire becomes a pivotal instrument in gathering quantitative data that sheds light on the intricacies of the CFIDP beneficiary experience. To enhance the questionnaire's effectiveness, a pre-testing phase was undertaken. A subset of CFIDP beneficiaries was selected to participate, allowing for the identification and resolution of any issues or challenges. The questionnaire undergoes revision based on valuable feedback obtained during this pre-test, ensuring clarity and relevance. The subsequent stage revolves around the selection of participants. A diverse group of CFIDP beneficiaries was identified and recruited, aiming for representation from farmers, cooperatives, and MSMEs. This diversity ensured a comprehensive understanding of the varied perspectives within the beneficiary community.

Prior to engaging in data collection, a critical step involves obtaining informed consent from participants. The study's purpose was clearly communicated, and participants were assured of the voluntary and confidential nature of their involvement, fostering a sense of trust and cooperation. The data collection phase involved the administration of the finalized questionnaire. A consistent and standardized approach was employed, ensuring the gathering of both demographic information and quantitative data pertaining to organizational development and program impact among CFIDP beneficiaries. Following data collection, meticulous data entry and coding processes were implemented. The data was coded and entered into a secure database, employing rigorous procedures to minimize errors and enhance the accuracy of the dataset. Moving into the analysis stage, statistical methods were employed to derive meaningful insights. Specific statistical treatments were employed. Frequency, % were used to provide an insightful distribution of responses across the demographic profile, offering a nuanced

perspective on patterns and trends within the dataset. Descriptive analysis using the mean and standard deviation was utilized 333 to evaluate the status of the programs and services of DTI under CFIDP and the perception of the respondents on the programs and services being implemented by DTI under CFIDP. Mann Whitney U Statistics was used to assess the difference between the perception of the CFIDP Beneficiaries to the programs and services of DTI Laguna when grouped according to Sex, difference in the perception of the CFIDP Beneficiaries and DTI Laguna Employees and PCA employees to the programs and services of DTI Laguna, and difference in status of the programs and services of DTI Laguna under the CFIDP. Kruskal Wallis H Test was used to assess differences among the perception of the CFIDP Beneficiaries to the programs and services of DTI Laguna when grouped according to Age, Income Level, Educational Attainment, farm size, and membership to cooperative. These statistical tools contribute to the rigor of the analysis, ensuring that the study's findings were not only robust but also reflective of the nuanced relationships and variations within the CFIDP beneficiary community.

Results and Discussions

Table 1: Perception of the CFIDP Beneficiaries and DTI Laguna and PCA Employees to the Programs and Services of DTI Laguna in terms of Effectiveness

Statements	CFIDP Beneficiaries			DTI Laguna Employees and PCA Employees		
	WM	SD	VI	WM	SD	VI
1. The programs and services offered by DTI under CFIDP have effectively contributed to the development of the coconut industry.	4.22	0.72	EE	4.43	0.71	EE
2. The DTI's initiatives under CFIDP have been successful in achieving their intended outcomes.	4.11	0.63	SE	4.43	0.74	SE
3. The programs implemented by DTI have positively impacted the overall performance of coconut-related activities within the community.	4.11	0.72	SE	4.26	0.85	SE
4. DTI's efforts have effectively addressed the needs and challenges faced by CFIDP Beneficiaries.	4.16	0.77	SE	4.43	0.80	SE
Composite Mean	4.15		SE	4.38		SE

Note. The mean is interpreted using the following: 4.20-5.00=Extremely Effective (EE), 3.40-4.19=Somewhat Effective (SE), 2.60-3.39=Neither Effective nor Ineffective (NEI), 1.80-2.59= Somewhat Ineffective (SI), 1.00-1.79= Ineffective (I)

The data presented in Table 1 illustrates the perception of CFIDP beneficiaries, DTI Laguna employees, and PCA employees regarding the effectiveness of DTI Laguna's Programs and Services. According to CFIDP beneficiaries, DTI's programs and services are viewed as somewhat effective, with a composite mean score of 4.15. Additionally, beneficiaries perceive the programs and services offered by DTI under CFIDP as positively contributing to the development of the coconut industry, WM = 4.22, SD = 0.72. Similarly, DTI's efforts in addressing the needs and challenges of CFIDP beneficiaries received a similar assessment, WM = 4.16, SD = 0.77. However, their perception of the impact to the overall performance of coconut-related activities within the community of the programs implemented by DTI fall slightly below their general perception of the effectiveness of the DTI programs and services, WM = 4.11, SD = 0.72.

Generally, CFIDP beneficiaries have a positive perception on DTI Laguna's Programs and Services but there are areas where further attention and improvement may be warranted to enhance their overall impact and effectiveness.

On the other hand, the perception of DTI Laguna employees and PCA employees regarding the effectiveness of DTI Laguna's Programs and Services differs from that of CFIDP beneficiaries. They view these programs and services as highly effective, both in terms of their contribution to the development of the coconut industry and in addressing the needs and challenges of CFIDP beneficiaries. Additionally, they perceive the programs and services to have a significant impact on the overall performance of coconut-related activities within the community, as implemented by DTI. This perception contrasts with that of the CFIDP beneficiaries.

In essence, the difference in how the beneficiaries and employees see things highlights the need for a more comprehensive and open-minded approach to evaluating and enhancing programs and services of DTI. When the affected stakeholders are involved and their diverse viewpoints are taken into consideration, DTI Laguna can make its Programs and Services even more effective and beneficial. This way, DTI can truly meet the needs of the community they serve. The effectiveness of project management can be reflected in the achievement of the project's objectives, including time, budget, and user satisfaction goals. Sarker et. al. (2020) in their work "SQ-Framework for Improving Sustainability and Quality into Software Product and Process," discuss the importance of effective project management, emphasizing user satisfaction as a key measure of project effectiveness, particularly in relation to quality and sustainability factors.

Table 2. Perception of the CFIDP Beneficiaries and DTI Laguna Employees to the Programs and Services of DTI Laguna in terms of Accessibility

Statements	CFIDP Beneficiaries			DTI Laguna Employees and PCA Employees		
	WM	SD	VI	WM	SD	VI
1. Services of DTI under CFIDP is easily accessible to all interested parties.	4.08	0.69	SA	4.43	0.65	EA
2. The accessibility of DTI's support services in terms of reaching out to a diverse group of coconut industry stakeholders is commendable.	4.01	0.65	SA	4.53	0.65	EA
3. DTI has effectively communicated and made its programs (information caravan) known to potential beneficiaries.	4.19	0.79	SA	4.49	0.66	EA
4. The application process for availing DTI's CFIDP services is user-friendly and straightforward.	4.17	0.78	SA	4.49	0.62	EA
Composite Mean	4.11		SA	4.48		EA

Note. The mean is interpreted using the following: 4.20-5.00=Extremely Accessible (EA), 3.40-4.19=Somewhat accessible (SA), 2.60-3.39=Neither Accessible nor Inaccessible (NAI), 1.80-2.59= Somewhat Inaccessible (SI), 1.00-1.79= Inaccessible (I).

The data shown in Table 2 demonstrates the perception of both CFIDP beneficiaries, DTI Laguna employees, and PCA employees regarding the accessibility of DTI Laguna's Programs and Services. According to CFIDP beneficiaries, DTI's programs and services is rated somewhat accessible, with a composite mean score of 4.11. Additionally, they find DTI's communication of programs to be somewhat effective, WM = 4.19, SD = 0.79. Furthermore, CFIDP beneficiaries perceive the application process for accessing DTI's CFIDP services to be user-friendly and straightforward, WM = 4.17, SD = 0.78. However, the perception among beneficiaries regarding DTI's support services in reaching out to a diverse group of coconut industry stakeholders is rated somewhat lower in terms of accessibility, WM = 4.01, SD = 0.65.

The overall perception of CFIDP beneficiaries is positive but there are areas where DTI Laguna can focus on improvement, particularly in enhancing stakeholder engagement and outreach strategies. By addressing these areas, DTI can further enhance the accessibility and effectiveness of its programs and services. They will better serve the needs of CFIDP beneficiaries.

The perception of both DTI Laguna employees and PCA employees regarding the accessibility of DTI Laguna's Programs and Services differs somewhat from that of CFIDP beneficiaries. According to the employees, DTI's programs and services are perceived as highly accessible. They view DTI's communication of programs as extremely effective, and the application process for accessing DTI's CFIDP services is considered exceptionally user-friendly and straightforward. Additionally, DTI's support services for reaching out to a diverse group of coconut industry stakeholders are highly commendable. However, their perception of DTI's services under CFIDP does not align completely with the general perception of accessibility of DTI's programs and services, WM = 4.43, SD = 0.65.

Relating the results of employees' perceptions to those of beneficiaries helps identify discrepancies, understand beneficiaries' experiences, and highlight opportunities for alignment and improvement in DTI Laguna's efforts to enhance accessibility and effectiveness in delivering its programs and services.

Table 3. Perception of the CFIDP Beneficiaries, DTI Laguna Employees, and PCA Employees to the Programs and Services of DTI Laguna in terms of Sustainability

Statements	CFIDP Beneficiaries			DTI Laguna Employees and PCA Employees		
	WM	SD	VI	WM	SD	VI
1. The programs and services offered by DTI under CFIDP demonstrate a commitment to long-term impact.	4.01	0.73	SS	4.51	0.66	ES
2. The initiatives by DTI contribute significantly to the sustainable development of the coconut industry.	4.07	0.76	SS	4.43	0.80	ES
3. DTI's programs under CFIDP consider environmental and social sustainability aspects effectively.	4.12	0.83	SS	4.47	0.72	ES

4. The strategies employed by DTI are conducive to maintaining the continued growth and resilience of coconut-related businesses.	4.10	0.76	SS	4.34	0.82	ES	335
5. DTI ensures that the benefits of CFIDP are sustained over an extended period.	4.14	0.74	SS	4.45	0.80	ES	
Composite Mean	4.09		SS	4.44		ES	

Note. The mean is interpreted using the following: 4.20-5.00=Extremely Sustainable (ES), 3.40-4.19=Somewhat Sustainable (SS), 2.60-3.39=Neither Sustainable nor Unsustainable (NSU), 1.80-2.59= Somewhat Unsustainable (SU), 1.00-1.79=Unsustainable (U).

In terms of sustainability, CFIDP Beneficiaries perceive the Programs and Services of DTI Laguna as somewhat sustainable, Composite Mean = 4.09. This perception stems from several factors: Firstly, DTI's assurance on the benefits of CFIDP is seen as somewhat sustained over an extended period, WM = 4.14, SD = 0.74. Secondly, DTI's programs under CFIDP are perceived to consider environmental and social sustainability aspects somewhat effectively WM = 4.12, SD = 0.83. Lastly, the strategies employed by DTI are viewed as highly conducive to maintaining the continued growth and resilience of coconut-related businesses, WM = 4.10, SD = 0.76. However, the beneficiaries' assessment of the programs and services offered by DTI under CFIDP demonstrating commitment to long-term impact, WM = 4.01, SD = 0.73, falls below the general perception of the beneficiaries to the programs and services of DTI Laguna.

The beneficiaries' strong commitment to long-term effect emphasizes the importance of sustainability and long-term benefits in evaluating DTI programs and services. This implies that initiatives should not just meet urgent needs, but also contribute to long-term constructive transformation in the community.

Employees of DTI Laguna and PCA, on the other hand, believe that DTI Laguna's programs and services are quite sustainable. In contrast to CFIDP beneficiaries, employees believe that DTI's CFIDP programs and services demonstrate an uncommon dedication to long-term effect. Furthermore, employees believe that DTI's assurances about the benefits of CFIDP will hold up remarkably well over time. Furthermore, DTI's programs under the CFIDP are recognized as taking environmental and social sustainability concerns especially seriously. Toljaga-Nikolić et. al. (2020) highlighted how applying project management methodologies can introduce sustainability dimensions into projects, particularly concerning the social aspect. This study underscores the critical need for project managers to understand sustainability and integrate it into project management. Additionally, Bal et. al. (2013), explores the role of stakeholder engagement in achieving sustainability-related targets in projects, signifying the importance of systematically engaging stakeholders with high salience in relation to sustainability.

Table 4. Perception of the CFIDP Beneficiaries, DTI Laguna Employees, and PCA Employees to the Programs and Services of DTI Laguna in terms of Satisfaction

Statements	CFIDP Beneficiaries			DTI Laguna Employees and PCA Employees		
	WM	SD	VI	WM	SD	VI
1. Level of satisfaction with the support and guidance received from DTI in relation to the involvement in the coconut industry is considerable.	3.90	0.78	S	4.57	0.58	HS
2. The responsiveness of DTI to the needs and concerns of CFIDP Beneficiaries meets the expectations.	4.01	0.79	S	4.40	0.83	HS
3. DTI has fulfilled its commitments in delivering quality assistance and resources to those involved in the coconut industry.	4.02	0.73	S	4.38	0.85	HS
4. DTI's programs and services under CFIDP is commendable.	4.12	0.70	S	4.49	0.69	HS
Composite Mean	4.01		S	4.46		HS

Legend:

Rating Score	Rating Scale	Descriptions
5	4.20 – 5.00	Highly Satisfied (HS)
4	3.40 – 4.19	Satisfied (S)
3	2.60 – 3.39	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied (NSD)
2	1.80 – 2.59	Dissatisfied (D)
1	1.00 – 1.79	Highly Dissatisfied (HD)

According to the results shown in Table 4, CFIDP beneficiaries' express satisfaction with the programs and services of DTI Laguna, Composite Mean = 4.01. It is noteworthy that DTI's programs and services under CFIDP are commendable, WM = 4.12, SD = 0.70. However, their perception of the support and guidance received from DTI regarding involvement in the coconut industry, WM = 3.90, SD = 0.78, falls below their general level of satisfaction with DTI's programs and services. 336

In contrast to this result, DTI Laguna Employees and PCA Employees express high satisfaction with the support and guidance received from DTI concerning involvement in the coconut industry. They also report high satisfaction with DTI's programs and services under the CFIDP program, perceiving them as commendable. However, although their perception of DTI fulfilling its commitments in delivering quality assistance and resources to those involved in the coconut industry falls below their general level of satisfaction, they still express high satisfaction with this aspect. This suggests a need for DTI to ensure that its actions align closely with its commitments and objectives to maintain high levels of satisfaction among stakeholders. User satisfaction is a measure based on the quality criteria of projects, and sustainability is among these criteria, as suggested by Sarker et. al. (2020). It also states that project management is evaluated in part based on user satisfaction, reiterating the centrality of this variable to project success

Overall, these results imply that there is a need for identification of areas for improvement in communication, support, and alignment with commitments to enhance satisfaction levels among beneficiaries and maintain stakeholder engagement and effectiveness of DTI's initiatives.

Table 5. Status of the Programs and Services of DTI Laguna under the CFIDP in terms of Strategic Planning

Statements	CFIDP Beneficiaries			DTI Laguna Employees and PCA Employees		
	WM	SD	VI	WM	SD	VI
1. The Strategic Planning on the 5-year CFIDP program conducted by DTI Laguna have significantly affect its operation based on the vision, mission, goals, and objectives of the organization.	4.09	0.68	VG	4.43	0.77	E
2. The Strategic Planning on the 5-year CFIDP program facilitated by DTI Laguna have effectively aligned our team's understanding of our organization's vision, mission, goals, and objectives.	4.01	0.69	VG	4.55	0.65	E
3. The Strategic Planning on the 5-year CFIDP program organized by DTI Laguna have positively influenced the development and refinement of our organization's vision, mission, goals, and objectives.	4.18	0.65	VG	4.45	0.77	E
4. The Strategic Planning on the 5-year CFIDP program led by DTI Laguna have enhanced our organization's strategic direction for the future.	4.10	0.69	VG	4.49	0.72	E
5. The Strategic Planning on the 5-year CFIDP program led by DTI Laguna have been a good tool on sharing information about the program.	4.20	0.71	E	4.53	0.75	E
Composite Mean	4.12		VG	4.49		E

Legend:

Rating Score	Rating Scale	Descriptions
5	4.20 – 5.00	Excellent (E)
4	3.40 – 4.19	Very Good (VG)
3	2.60 – 3.39	Good (G)
2	1.80 – 2.59	Fair (F)
1	1.00 – 1.79	Poor (P)

The status of DTI Laguna's programs and services under the CFIDP, specifically in terms of Strategic Planning, is detailed in Table 5. According to CFIDP beneficiaries, the status of strategic planning is rated as very good, Composite Mean = 4.12. They perceive the strategic planning for the 5-year CFIDP program led by DTI Laguna as an excellent tool for sharing information about the program, WM = 4.20, SD = 0.71. Additionally, they believe that the 5-year CFIDP program has positively influenced the development and refinement of their organization's vision, mission, goals, and objectives, WM = 4.18, SD = 0.65.

However, while the Strategic Planning for the 5-year CFIDP program facilitated by DTI Laguna has effectively aligned the beneficiaries' understanding of their organization's vision, mission, goals, and objectives, its status is perceived to

be slightly below the general perceived status of DTI Laguna's programs and services, WM = 4.01, SD = 0.69. This contrasts with the perceived status of strategic planning given by DTI Laguna employees and PCA employees, who rate it as excellent. They also view the strategic planning for the 5-year CFIDP program led by DTI Laguna as an excellent tool for sharing information about the program. Furthermore, the employees' assessment of every aspect of strategic planning is rated as excellent.

The findings indicate a divergence in perception regarding the status of strategic planning, with CFIDP beneficiaries rating it lower compared to the overall assessment by the employees. This highlights an opportunity to foster alignment and improve strategic planning efforts through enhanced communication and engagement. Petersson (2019) describes strategic planning as an integral part of any kind of business, including agriculture, to ensure long-term success. It helps in identifying goals, crafting strategies to achieve these, and allocating resources efficiently. Specifically, strategic planning can be crucial for farmers to navigate the challenges of the agricultural sector, such as market volatility, climate change, and technological advancements.

Table 6. Status of the Programs and Services of DTI Laguna under the CFIDP in terms of Product Development

Statements	CFIDP Beneficiaries			DTI Laguna Employees and PCA Employees		
	WM	SD	VI	WM	SD	VI
1. The Product Development organized by DTI Laguna have played a crucial role in enhancing the quality of our products.	4.24	0.70	E	4.60	0.61	E
2. The Product Development consultations facilitated by DTI Laguna have significantly contributed to the improvement of our product designs.	4.10	0.71	VG	4.53	0.65	E
3. The Product Development assistance provided by DTI Laguna has positively impacted the development of our logo and branding.	4.27	0.68	E	4.57	0.65	E
4. The Product Development support from DTI Laguna has effectively contributed to the overall improvement of our new product offerings.	4.03	0.63	VG	3.94	0.48	VG
5. The Product Development organized by DTI Laguna have significantly contributed to the marketability of our products.	4.20	0.67	E	4.57	0.65	E
Composite Mean	4.17		VG	4.44		E

Legend:

Rating Score	Rating Scale	Descriptions
5	4.20 – 5.00	Excellent (E)
4	3.40 – 4.19	Very Good (VG)
3	2.60 – 3.39	Good (G)
2	1.80 – 2.59	Fair (F)
1	1.00 – 1.79	Poor (P)

In terms of product development, the status of the programs and services of DTI Laguna under the CFIDP is very good, Composite Mean = 4.17. This suggests that the Product Development assistance provided by DTI Laguna has positively impacted the development of our logo and branding, WM = 4.27, SD = 0.68. Also, the Product Development organized by DTI Laguna have played a crucial role in enhancing the quality of our products, WM = 4.24, SD = 0.70. Moreover, the Product Development organized by DTI Laguna have significantly contributed to the marketability of our products, WM = 4.20, SD = 0.67.

On the other hand, DTI Laguna employees and PCA employees have provided similar assessments of the status of product development, but with slightly higher ratings on all the mentioned indicators. However, beneficiaries provide a higher rating on the aspect of Product Development support from DTI Laguna effectively contributing to the overall improvement of beneficiaries' new product offerings.

While both beneficiaries and employees give positive feedback, beneficiaries give a better rating for the overall improvement of new product offerings. This suggests that there may be space for future improvement or expansion of Product Development initiatives in order to better satisfy beneficiaries' changing requirements and expectations. By recognizing this perception gap and addressing any areas for improvement, DTI Laguna may continue to expand its Product Development activities and optimize their impact on beneficiaries and the community. Product development allows businesses to adapt to consumer demands and market trends. In agriculture, product development can lead to higher value-added products, increased revenue for farmers, and more sustainable farming practices. This approach is supported by the "Ansoff Matrix Pros and Cons List," which outlines product development as a vital strategy for business growth and expansion, which could be applied in

an agricultural context (Ansoff Matrix Pros and Cons List, 2016). Wahyurini et. al. (2023) proves that the knowledge and 338 cooperation of farmer women group is vital in the product development process.

Table 7. Status of the Programs and Services of DTI Laguna under the CFIDP in terms of Trade Fair

Statements	CFIDP Beneficiaries			DTI Laguna Employees and PCA Employees		
	WM	SD	VI	WM	SD	VI
1. Participating in Trade Fairs organized by DTI Laguna has helped in effectively promoting our products to a wider audience.	4.21	0.68	EE	4.51	0.69	EE
2. Trade Fairs organized by DTI Laguna have significantly contributed to the generation of income for our organization.	4.02	0.70	SE	4.40	0.80	EE
3. Participation in Trade Fairs facilitated by DTI Laguna has positively impacted the visibility and market reach of our products.	4.12	0.71	SE	4.62	0.57	EE
4. Trade Fairs organized by DTI Laguna have played a crucial role in establishing new connections and partnerships for our organization.	4.07	0.77	SE	4.47	0.78	EE
Composite Mean	4.10		SE	4.50		EE

Legend:

Rating Score	Rating Scale	Descriptions
5	4.20 – 5.00	Extremely Effective (EE)
4	3.40 – 4.19	Somewhat Effective (SE)
3	2.60 – 3.39	Neither Effective nor Ineffective (NEI)
2	1.80 – 2.59	Somewhat Ineffective (SI)
1	1.00 – 1.79	Ineffective (I)

In terms of the effectiveness of participating in Trade Fairs, the Status of the Programs and Services of DTI Laguna under the CFIDP is somewhat effective, Composite Mean = 4.10. Participating in Trade Fairs organized by DTI Laguna has helped up to a certain extent in effectively promoting our products to a wider audience, WM = 4.21, SD = 0.68. But to the DTI Laguna employees and PCA employees, participating in trade fairs is extremely effective. They see that the participation in Trade Fairs facilitated by DTI Laguna has positively impacted the visibility and market reach of the products, WM = 4.62, SD = 0.57.

The beneficiaries gave the lowest assessment regarding the significant contribution of trade fairs organized by DTI Laguna to the generation of income for their organization. However, the employees viewed this aspect as extremely effective, despite also giving it the lowest assessment. This suggests a need for improved communication and alignment between beneficiaries and employees regarding the effectiveness of participating in trade fairs under the CFIDP. Engidaw (2021) proves that trade fair has a positive significant effect to the enterprises' performance in Ethiopia. Ogbodo et. al. (2023) also found a statistically significant effect on the sales generation of quality products in Nigeria.

Table 8. Status of the Programs and Services of DTI Laguna under the CFIDP in terms in terms of Seminars

Statements	CFIDP Beneficiaries			DTI Laguna Employees and PCA Employees		
	WM	SD	VI	WM	SD	VI
1. The Seminars organized by DTI Laguna have been effective in enhancing leadership skills within the organization.	4.20	0.61	EE	4.40	0.71	EE
2. The Seminars facilitated by DTI Laguna have significantly contributed to the acquisition of theories relevant to the industry.	4.19	0.66	SE	4.47	0.69	EE
3. The Seminars organized by DTI Laguna have positively influenced the business readiness of the organization.	4.16	0.63	SE	4.49	0.66	EE
4. Participating in Seminars organized by DTI Laguna has been valuable in preparing our team for various challenges in the business landscape.	4.23	0.68	SE	4.64	0.57	EE
Composite Mean	4.19		SE	4.50		EE

Legend:

Rating Score	Rating Scale	Descriptions
5	4.20 – 5.00	Extremely Effective (EE)
4	3.40 – 4.19	Somewhat Effective (SE)
3	2.60 – 3.39	Neither Effective nor Ineffective (NEI)
2	1.80 – 2.59	Somewhat Ineffective (SI)
1	1.00 – 1.79	Ineffective (I)

Table 8 shows the status of the programs and services of DTI Laguna under the CFIDP in terms in terms of Seminars. According to the beneficiaries, seminars are effective to some extent, Composite Mean = 4.19. They perceived that their participation in Seminars organized by DTI Laguna has been valuable in preparing their team for various challenges in the business landscape, WM = 4.23, SD = 0.68. Moreover, both the beneficiaries and employees see seminars sponsored by DTI Laguna as extremely effective in enhancing leadership skills within the organization. Although, the employees give a higher rating on this aspect. Overall, the findings suggest that seminars organized by DTI Laguna play a valuable role in preparing teams for business challenges and enhancing leadership skills within the organization. In the editorial Marketing Using Personal Interactions published in streetdirectory.com, it emphasizes seminars as a tool in providing educational opportunities to learn and exchange ideas. For farmers, seminars can be a source of the latest agricultural techniques, sustainability practices, and market opportunities. It exemplifies the importance of seminars and personal interactions in today's market. By holding seminars, farmers can stay informed and adapt their practices to meet market demands. Kabir et. al. (2023) believes that organizing seminar for farmers can also improve their productivity, profit, and satisfaction.

Table 9. Difference in the perception of the CFIDP Beneficiaries to the programs and services of DTI Laguna when grouped according to Sex

	Gender	Mean	Mann-Whitney U Statistic	p - value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Effectiveness	Female	4.19	4005	0.238	Fail to reject Ho	Not Significant
	Male	4.13				
Accessibility	Female	4.06	4309.5	0.701	Fail to reject Ho	Not Significant
	Male	4.14				
Sustainability	Female	4.01	4392	0.868	Fail to reject Ho	Not Significant
	Male	4.12				
Satisfaction	Female	3.97	4438	0.964	Fail to reject Ho	Not Significant
	Male	4.03				

Note: p-value < 0.05 is significant. ^a Mann-Whitney U Statistic was used due to violation of the assumption of homogeneity of variance.

Referring to Table 9, there is no significant difference in the perception of the CFIDP beneficiaries to the programs and services of DTI Laguna when grouped according to sex, p-values > 0.05. Male and female beneficiaries have the same level of perception on the programs and services of DTI Laguna in terms of effectiveness, accessibility, sustainability and satisfaction. This finding aligns with a study conducted by Bulfa (2020), which concluded that sex does not play a significant role in evaluating the impact of DTI programs on businesses. Similarly, a study by Tuczynska et. al. (2022) found no statistical difference when grouping participants by gender. This could mean that DTI Laguna's programs and services might be designed and implemented in a gender-neutral manner, catering equally to the needs of both male and female beneficiaries.

Table 10. Difference in the perception of the CFIDP Beneficiaries to the programs and services of DTI Laguna when grouped according to Age

	Age	Mean	χ^2	p - value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Effectiveness	18-30	5.00	4.611	0.203	Fail to reject Ho	Not Significant
	31-45	4.08				
	46-59	4.25				
	60 and above	3.97				
Accessibility	18-30	5.00	3.224	0.358	Fail to reject Ho	Not Significant
	31-45	4.04				
	46-59	4.17				

Sustainability	60 and above	4.03	6.415	0.093	Fail to reject Ho	Not Significant
	18-30	5.00				
	31-45	3.97				
	46-59	4.20				
Satisfaction	60 and above	3.91	5.991	0.112	Fail to reject Ho	Not Significant
	18-30	5.00				
	31-45	3.94				
	46-59	4.09				
	60 and above	3.88				

Note: p-value < 0.05 is significant. Kruskal Wallis H test was used since there is not enough observations for each group.

Based on the findings presented in Table 10, there is no notable disparity in the perception of CFIDP beneficiaries towards the programs and services of DTI Laguna when categorized by age groups, p-values > 0.05. Regardless of age, beneficiaries hold consistent views regarding the effectiveness, accessibility, sustainability, and satisfaction levels of DTI Laguna's programs and services.

This finding is consistent with research conducted by Hashemi et. al. (2011), which found no significant relationship between age and the importance of safety measures or competence on safety measures, attributing this to the influence of other mediating variables. Similarly, Bulfa (2020) concluded that age does not significantly influence the evaluation of DTI programs on businesses, corroborating the lack of age-based disparities in perceptions of government programs.

Overall, these findings underscore the uniformity of perception across different age groups among CFIDP beneficiaries, highlighting the consistent effectiveness, accessibility, sustainability, and satisfaction with DTI Laguna's programs and services, irrespective of age.

Table 11. Difference in the perception of the CFIDP Beneficiaries to the programs and services of DTI Laguna when grouped according to Income Level

	Monthly Income	Mean	χ^2	p-value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Effectiveness	40,001 - above	4.33	10.790	0.029	Reject Ho	Significant
	30,001-40,000	3.99				
	20,001-30,000	4.13				
	10,001-20,000	4.26				
	10,000 and below	4.17				
Accessibility	40,001 - above	4.30	10.300	0.036	Reject Ho	Significant
	30,001-40,000	4.00				
	20,001-30,000	4.17				
	10,001-20,000	4.14				
	10,000 and below	3.94				
Sustainability	40,001 - above	4.20	9.384	0.052	Fail to reject Ho	Not Significant
	30,001-40,000	3.93				
	20,001-30,000	4.15				
	10,001-20,000	4.15				
	10,000 and below	4.08				
Satisfaction	40,001 - above	4.12	3.926	0.416	Fail to reject Ho	Not Significant
	30,001-40,000	3.89				
	20,001-30,000	4.09				
	10,001-20,000	3.97				
	10,000 and below	4.04				

Note: p-value < 0.05 is significant. ^aKruskal Wallis H test was used due to violation of the assumption of homogeneity of variance.

According to the results shown in Table 11, there is a significant difference in the effectiveness and accessibility of the programs and services of DTI Laguna when grouped according to income level, as indicated by p-values < 0.05. Post-hoc analysis displayed in Table 26 (see appendices) reveals that beneficiaries whose income level is at least 40,000 have a higher level of perception of the programs and services of DTI Laguna in terms of effectiveness and accessibility compared to beneficiaries whose income level is between 30,001-40,000. 341

This means that recipients' perceptions of the effectiveness and accessibility of DTI Laguna's programs and services are influenced by their socioeconomic level. Beneficiaries with higher income levels, in particular, have a more positive impression of the programs and services, implying that there may be income gaps in access and effectiveness. The same finding was found on the study made by Jiang et. al. (2023), it is found that there is a significant difference between the results of the subjective evaluation of income and objective criteria. Compared with individuals in the middle-income group, individuals in the low-income group have a significantly worse overall evaluation of local government and a considerably lower trust in local government officials. On the other hand, individuals in the high-income group have a substantially better assessment of local government and a significantly higher trust in local government officials.

This finding emphasizes the necessity of including socioeconomic considerations in program formulation and execution to guarantee fair access and effectiveness across income groups.

Table 12. Difference in the perception of the CFIDP Beneficiaries to the programs and services of DTI Laguna when grouped according to Educational Attainment

	Educational Attainment	Mean	χ^2	p-value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Effectiveness	College Graduate	4.23	5.232	0.264	Fail to reject Ho	Not Significant
	College Undergraduate	4.18				
	High School Graduate	4.02				
	High School Undergraduate	4.22				
	Elementary	4.11				
Accessibility	College Graduate	3.96	9.191	0.057	Fail to reject Ho	Not Significant
	College Undergraduate	4.22				
	High School Graduate	3.92				
	High School Undergraduate	4.19				
	Elementary	4.13				
Sustainability	College Graduate	4.05	5.350	0.253	Fail to reject Ho	Not Significant
	College Undergraduate	4.22				
	High School Graduate	3.91				
	High School Undergraduate	4.20				
	Elementary	3.97				
Satisfaction	College Graduate	4.13	8.724	0.068	Fail to reject Ho	Not Significant
	College Undergraduate	4.17				
	High School Graduate	3.84				
	High School Undergraduate	3.96				
	Elementary	4.00				

Note: p-value < 0.05 is significant. ^aKruskal Wallis H test was used due to violation of the assumption of homogeneity of variance.

According to the findings in Table 12, there is no significant difference in the perception of CFIDP beneficiaries towards DTI Laguna's programs and services when categorized by educational attainment, as indicated by p-values > 0.05. Regardless of their level of education, beneficiaries maintain consistent views regarding the effectiveness, accessibility, sustainability, and satisfaction levels of DTI Laguna's programs and services.

Contrary to these findings, a study conducted by Lalosa (2018) observed significant differences in the level of education concerning awareness, knowledge, access to information, and satisfaction with PhilHealth's programs and services. This discrepancy highlights the variability in how educational attainment may impact perceptions of different government agencies' initiatives.

Overall, while educational attainment does not seem to influence perceptions of DTI Laguna's programs and services among CFIDP beneficiaries, the contrast with Lalosa's (2018) findings emphasizes the importance of considering contextual factors and agency-specific dynamics when evaluating the relationship between education and perceptions of government programs. 342

Table 13. Difference in the perception of the CFIDP Beneficiaries to the programs and services of DTI Laguna when grouped according to Farm Size

	Farm Size	Mean	χ^2	p-value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Effectiveness	20,001 and above	4.16	1.179	0.882	Fail to reject Ho	Not Significant
	15,001-20,000	4.20				
	10,001-15,000	4.10				
	5,001-10,000	4.09				
	0-5,000	4.19				
Accessibility	20,001 and above	4.12	1.550	0.818	Fail to reject Ho	Not Significant
	15,001-20,000	4.15				
	10,001-15,000	4.14				
	5,001-10,000	4.12				
	0-5,000	4.01				
Sustainability	20,001 and above	4.09	2.431	0.657	Fail to reject Ho	Not Significant
	15,001-20,000	4.12				
	10,001-15,000	4.09				
	5,001-10,000	3.95				
	0-5,000	4.10				
Satisfaction	20,001 and above	4.04	0.842	0.933	Fail to reject Ho	Not Significant
	15,001-20,000	4.07				
	10,001-15,000	3.94				
	5,001-10,000	3.97				
	0-5,000	4.03				

Note: p-value < 0.05 is significant. ^aKruskal Wallis H test was used due to violation of the assumption of homogeneity of variance.

According to the findings in Table 13, there is no significant variation in CFIDP beneficiaries' perceptions of DTI Laguna's programs and services based on the size of the farm they cultivate, p-values > 0.05. Regardless of farm size, beneficiaries have consistent perspectives on the effectiveness, accessibility, sustainability, and satisfaction levels of DTI Laguna's programs and services.

Size of the farm cultivated by CFIDP beneficiaries does not significantly impact their perceptions of DTI Laguna's programs and services. Regardless of the farm size, beneficiaries maintain consistent perspectives on the effectiveness, accessibility, sustainability, and satisfaction levels of DTI Laguna's programs and services. The findings align with the research conducted by Hashemi (2011) that there was no significant difference as regards to the perceived importance of the safety measures when scaled according to their farm size. Additionally, Palis (2020) observed that farm size is not a predicting factor on the farmers' aspiration for their children to become a farmer. This suggests that DTI Laguna's initiatives are perceived similarly by different groups of varied farm sizes, indicating a level of consistency and uniformity in the delivery and impact of its programs and services within the CFIDP beneficiary community.

Table 14. Difference in the perception of the CFIDP Beneficiaries to the programs and services of DTI Laguna when grouped according to Membership to Cooperative

	χ^2	p - value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Effectiveness	12.914	0.679	Fail to reject Ho	Not Significant
Accessibility	12.301	0.723	Fail to reject Ho	Not Significant
Sustainability	14.456	0.565	Fail to reject Ho	Not Significant
Satisfaction	16.027	0.451	Fail to reject Ho	Not Significant

Note: p-value < 0.05 is significant. Kruskal Wallis H test was used since there is not enough observations for each group.

Based on the results presented in Table 14, there is no notable difference in the perceptions of CFIDP beneficiaries regarding DTI Laguna's programs and services based on their membership to cooperatives, p-values > 0.05. Regardless of

their affiliation to different cooperatives, beneficiaries maintain consistent perspectives on the effectiveness, accessibility, sustainability, and satisfaction levels of DTI Laguna's programs and services. 343

This finding aligns with the research conducted by Jiang et. al. (2023), which suggests that individuals who are members of various organizations, such as the Communist Party, trade unions, religious faith associations, and individuals' associations, tend to have a better overall evaluation of local government. The absence of significant differences in perceptions based on cooperative membership indicates a similar pattern, where membership to specific organizations does not significantly influence perceptions of government programs and services.

Overall, these findings underscore the stability and uniformity in the perceptions of DTI Laguna's programs and services among CFIDP beneficiaries, irrespective of their cooperative affiliations. This suggests a consistent level of satisfaction and effectiveness across different beneficiary groups, emphasizing the inclusive nature of DTI Laguna's initiatives.

From the findings above, we can infer that at 0.05 level of significance, there is no statistically significant linear relationship was detected between any of the profile variables and any of the quality of service variables with all p values greater than .05. In contrast with the study of Mahat (2024), the demographic profile does not have a significant relationship with the quality of service in this study.

Table 15. Difference in the perception of the CFIDP Beneficiaries and DTI Laguna Employees and PCA employees to the programs and services of DTI Laguna

	Group	Mean	Mann-Whitney U Statistic	p - value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Effectiveness	Beneficiaries	4.15	3718.5	0.02394	Reject Ho	Significant
	Employees	4.38				
Accessibility	Beneficiaries	4.11	3028.5	0.00011	Reject Ho	Significant
	Employees	4.48				
Sustainability	Beneficiaries	4.09	3155.5	0.00037	Reject Ho	Significant
	Employees	4.44				
Satisfaction	Beneficiaries	4.01	2851.5	0.00002	Reject Ho	Significant
	Employees	4.46				

Note: p-value < 0.05 is significant. ^aMann-Whitney U Statistics was used due to violation of the assumption of homogeneity of variance.

Based on the findings presented in Table 15, there is a significant difference in the perceptions of beneficiaries and employees in the effectiveness, accessibility, sustainability, and satisfaction of the programs and services of DTI Laguna, p-values < 0.05. DTI Laguna employees and PCA employees exhibit a significantly higher level of perception of DTI Laguna's programs and services compared to the beneficiaries. This implies that employees may have slight advantage in the amount of information about the programs and services of DTI Laguna.

This finding is supported by a study conducted by Gupta and Sharma (2020), which also observed that employees tend to possess more knowledge and understanding of an organization's programs and services compared to beneficiaries. Additionally, the study revealed that while both employees and beneficiaries acknowledged the importance of the programs and services, their perspectives differed regarding efficacy and impact.

Similarly, the study conducted by Shek et. al. (2007) yielded the same result, indicating that employees tend to have a higher perception of their organization's services compared to customers or beneficiaries. This difference in perception may stem from employees' belief that they are directly contributing to the effectiveness of the programs and services.

Overall, these findings highlight the disparity in perceptions between employees and beneficiaries regarding DTI Laguna's programs and services, underscoring the importance of communication and transparency in ensuring that all stakeholders have a clear understanding and appreciation of the organization's initiatives.

Table 16. Difference in status of the programs and services of DTI Laguna under the CFIDP

	Group	Mean	Mann-Whitney U Statistic	p - value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Strategic Planning	Beneficiaries	4.12	3002.5	0.00009	Reject Ho	Significant

Product Development	Employees	4.49				
	Beneficiaries	4.17	3431.5	0.00361	Reject Ho	Significant
Trade Fair	Employees	4.44				
	Beneficiaries	4.10	3521	0.00697	Reject Ho	Significant
Seminars	Employees	4.49				
	Beneficiaries	4.19	3863	0.05289	Fail to reject Ho	Not Significant
	Employees	4.50				

Note: p-value < 0.05 is significant. ^aMann-Whitney U Statistics was used due to violation of the assumption of homogeneity of variance.

Based on the findings presented in Table 16, there is a notable disparity in the perceptions of beneficiaries and employees regarding strategic planning, product development, and trade fairs under the programs and services of DTI Laguna, p-values < 0.05. DTI Laguna employees and PCA employees demonstrate a significantly higher level of perception on the status of strategic planning, product development, and trade fairs compared to the beneficiaries. However, both beneficiaries and employees hold similar perceptions regarding the status of seminars.

This finding suggests that employees, particularly those within DTI Laguna and PCA, possess a more favorable perception of strategic planning, product development, and participation in trade fairs compared to beneficiaries. The discrepancy in perceptions may stem from differences in knowledge, expertise, and involvement in these areas between beneficiaries and employees.

Moreover, this aligns with existing literature on effective management of products and services. De Sordi et. al. (2016) emphasizes the importance of effective versioning actions, considering content, technological, and process platforms, which may influence perceptions of product development within DTI Laguna. Additionally, Baines and Lawton Smith (2020) highlight the skills and capabilities required for product and service development, suggesting that differences in perceptions between beneficiaries and employees may arise from varying levels of expertise and understanding. Furthermore, Meyer et. al. (2013) addresses the lack of systematic and technical support for product-related services, which could contribute to differences in perceptions between beneficiaries and employees regarding strategic planning and product development within DTI Laguna's programs and services.

Conclusion

This study examined the status of the Department of Trade and Industry's (DTI) programs and services, revealing key demographic and perceptual insights among respondents, who were primarily male, aged 46-59, with high school education and incomes between 20,000 to 40,000 pesos. The findings highlighted a significant disparity in the perceptions of DTI's effectiveness, accessibility, sustainability, and satisfaction between beneficiaries and employees. Beneficiaries generally rated these programs as somewhat effective and accessible, while employees rated them highly. This gap underscores the need for improved communication and engagement strategies to better align expectations and enhance satisfaction among beneficiaries. Additionally, except for income level, demographic factors did not significantly impact perceptions of DTI programs, and no statistical differences were found in seminar perceptions between groups.

Recommendation

Based on the study's results, it is recommended that DTI refine its communication strategies by incorporating regular feedback sessions with beneficiaries and employees, enhance trade fairs through targeted feedback collection, and emphasize continuous monitoring and evaluation for timely improvements. Structured stakeholder engagement should be formalized with clear objectives and action plans, and program diversification should be prioritized based on market research and needs assessments. Conducting comprehensive needs assessments will help tailor programs to beneficiaries' requirements, while strategic expansion should focus on high-demand areas considering resource constraints and sustainability. Targeted promotion and awareness campaigns should be implemented to increase program visibility and uptake. Reviewing proposed action plans with stakeholders and experts will ensure feasibility and alignment with goals, and replicating the study in other regions will validate findings and enhance their generalizability.

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