

The Lived Experiences of Recipients of Republic Act 9178: A Phenomenological Study on the Implementation of Barangay Micro Business Enterprise Programs

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Abstract:

This research paper explores the lived experiences of recipients of Republic Act 9178, also known as the Barangay Micro Business Enterprise (BMBE) Law, in the implementation of BMBE programs. The study focuses on understanding the benefits and challenges faced by micro-entrepreneurs who availed of the BMBE program. The research used a phenomenological approach to gain insight into the participants' experiences [1]. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with 18 BMBE recipients, and secondary data were obtained from various sources [2]. The findings reveal the participants' perspectives on the significance of seizing opportunities, coping with bureaucratic challenges from the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), utilizing BMBE discounts for business growth, importance of personal knowledge and skills in business operations, the role of marketing assistance in sales growth, and the significance of a positive mental attitude in overcoming challenges [3]. The study highlights the importance of consistent implementation of BMBE programs, the need for information dissemination, and ongoing support for micro-enterprises to foster their growth and contribute to economic development [4].

Keywords: BMBE (Barangay Micro Business Enterprise), Micro-enterprise, Government supports, Economic growth, Entrepreneurship.

Introduction:

The Republic Act 9178, known as the Barangay Micro Business Enterprise (BMBE) Law, was created to provide benefits and grants to micro-entrepreneurs in the Philippines [5]. These benefits include tax exemption, exemption from the minimum wage law, financing assistance, technology transfer, production and management training, and marketing assistance programs. Despite the potential advantages of this law, previous studies have shown that the BMBE Law is not extensively implemented, and micro-entrepreneurs face challenges in availing its benefits [6].

This research paper aims to explore the lived experiences of BMBE recipients in the implementation of BMBE programs. The study seeks to bridge the gap in existing research by investigating the experiences of micro-entrepreneurs who have availed of the BMBE program, the challenges they encountered, and the ways they coped with these challenges. By understanding the realities faced by BMBE recipients, this research can provide insights to improve the implementation and effectiveness of the BMBE Law and support the growth of micro-enterprises in the country.

Methodology:

This research adopted a phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of BMBE recipients [7]. Phenomenological research aims to describe what is common to all participants as they experience a particular phenomenon. The researcher used Psychological Phenomenology, which focuses less on interpretations and more on the descriptions of the participants' experiences.

Data was collected through in-depth interviews with 18 entrepreneurs who are recipients of the BMBE program. Purposeful Criterion Sampling was used to select participants who had a deep understanding of the research issue and the central phenomenon under study. Secondary data were also collected from various sources, such as internet books, newspapers, and articles, to supplement the primary data.

Results:

The data analysis revealed seven theme clusters that represent the lived experiences of BMBE recipients in the implementation of BMBE programs:

1. **Seizing every opportunity:** Participants emphasized the importance of seizing every opportunity to avail of the benefits offered by the BMBE program, even if they had limited knowledge about it [8].
2. **BIR: The Achilles' heel of BMBEs:** BMBE recipients encountered challenges in dealing with the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) and faced inconsistencies in availing tax exemption benefits [9].
3. **BMBE discounts as capital build-up:** BMBE recipients utilized the discounts they received as additional capital for their businesses, contributing to their growth and expansion [10].
4. **BMBE provides an ecosystem for business growth:** BMBE recipients appreciated the support provided by the government through the BMBE program, such as exemption from business tax and assistance in business development [11].
5. **Marketing Assistance as a propeller of sales growth:** Marketing assistance provided by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) helped participants improve their products and reach a wider market [12].
6. **Importance of personal knowledge and skills in business operation:** Participants recognized the significance of having personal knowledge and skills to manage their businesses effectively, especially during staff shortages [13].
7. **Positive mental attitude:** BMBE recipients exhibited a positive mental attitude in dealing with challenges and remaining patient in the face of bureaucratic hurdles [14].

Conclusion:

The study revealed valuable insights into the lived experiences of BMBE recipients in the implementation of BMBE programs. Participants emphasized the need for consistent implementation of benefits across different areas and highlighted the importance of orientation programs for new business registrants. The findings underscore the significance of continued education, workshops, and seminars to equip micro-entrepreneurs with essential management and entrepreneurial skills. Collaboration among different government agencies and periodic monitoring and evaluation were also recommended to improve the BMBE program's efficiency and address recipients

Recommendations:

Based on the findings derived from interviews and observations with the participants, the researcher proposes the following recommendations for potential actions:

1. Addressing BIR Challenges: The most significant and challenging aspect of availing benefits among BMBE recipients is related to dealing with the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR). Participants reported varying treatment and inconsistent tax exemption benefits from different towns in the province. To ensure the full potential and growth of BMBEs, it is recommended to establish an Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) or a citizens' charter specifically outlining the BIR benefits available to BMBE recipients.
2. DTI Orientation Program: Due to the relatively low number of microenterprise registrants applying for the BMBE program, it is suggested to introduce an orientation program at the DTI negosyo center before business start-up. This orientation should educate new registrants about the benefits offered under the BMBE program, as well as promote other government-sponsored initiatives that can support micro-entrepreneurs.
3. Entrepreneurial Skills Development: Continuous education, workshops, and seminars on entrepreneurial skills should be organized to equip BMBE owners with management expertise and entrepreneurial acumen. These initiatives can help microenterprises progress to small enterprises. Inviting successful entrepreneurs to share their experiences can also motivate new entrepreneurs to strive for business success.
4. Inter-Agency Collaboration: Leaders of implementing agencies should collaborate to coordinate changes in implementing rules and regulations. This collaboration will ensure consistency in the benefits provided to BMBE recipients across different towns and areas in the province.
5. Periodic Monitoring and Evaluation: Implementing agencies should conduct regular monitoring and evaluation to assess the progress of BMBE recipients and address their concerns regarding program implementation. This process will allow agencies to develop sub-programs and solutions to address challenges faced by the recipients.
6. Future Research: For future researchers, exploring other aspects of RA 9178 and its impact on local government budgets could be valuable. Analyzing the potential economic opportunities and costs associated with the full implementation of the law can provide a deeper understanding of its effects on the overall economy.

By implementing these recommendations, policymakers and government agencies can strengthen the BMBE program, support micro-entrepreneurs, and foster the growth of small businesses in the region.

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