

Journal of Rural and Community Development

Improving Business and Management Practices For Sustainable Development of Selected Livelihood Associations In Baybay City, Leyte, Philippines

Authors: Vince Lao & Marlon Andrino

Citation:

Lao, V., & Andrino, V. (2025). Improving business and management practices for sustainable development of selected livelihood associations in Baybay City, Leyte, Philippines. *The Journal of Rural and Community Development*, 20(4), 89–113.

Publisher:

Rural Development Institute, Brandon University.

Editor:

Dr. Doug Ramsey

Open Access Policy:

This journal provides open access to all of its content on the principle that making research freely available to the public supports a greater global exchange of knowledge. Such access is associated with increased readership and increased citation of an author's work.



**BRANDON
UNIVERSITY**
Founded 1899



Improving Business and Management Practices For Sustainable Development of Selected Livelihood Associations In Baybay City, Leyte, Philippines

Vince Lao

Visayas State University
Philippines
vince.lao@vsu.edu.ph

Marlon Andrino

Visayas State University
Philippines
marlon.andrino@vsu.edu.ph

Abstract

Leading businesses are adopting sustainability, but livelihood associations as micro-enterprises still struggle for survival. Hence, our study was aimed at assessing the business development services (BDS) of the livelihood associations with the goal of improving their businesses for sustainable development. Several studies have identified factors affecting the long-term sustainability of livelihood associations, such as external shocks and geographic location. However, few studies have examined their needs to ensure sustainability. A face-to-face survey and interview using a semi-structured questionnaire that includes the association's profile and knowledge, attitude, and practice (KAP) for management practices was conducted with 78 selected officers and members of the different livelihood associations in Baybay City, Leyte, Philippines. A Spearman correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between knowledge, attitude, and practice. Results showed that members of livelihood associations were knowledgeable, had a positive attitude, and practiced most management functions. However, they lacked knowledge in defining their organization's Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives (VMGOs) and had difficulty developing performance evaluation methods. Correlation analysis showed that knowledge significantly correlates with attitude and practice. BDS providers focused on training in production and processing due to the associations' involvement in food processing. Livelihood associations faced production and finance issues as BDS recipients. These issues included time constraints, training mismatches, and operational incompatibility. Respondents recommended enhancing technical skills, maintaining coordination, timely training budgets, and focusing on financial management and record-keeping. The study's findings help BDS providers prioritize and address livelihood associations' needs for sustainable development.

Keywords: Business Development Services (BDS); livelihood associations; sustainable development; management practices; Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP)

Amélioration des pratiques commerciales et de gestion pour le développement durable d'associations de subsistance sélectionnées à Baybay City, Leyte, Philippines

Résumé

Les grandes entreprises adoptent le développement durable, mais les associations de subsistance, en tant que micro-entreprises, peinent encore à survivre. Notre étude visait donc à évaluer les services de développement commercial (SDC) offerts aux associations de subsistance afin d'améliorer leurs activités pour un développement durable. Plusieurs études ont identifié des facteurs affectant la viabilité à long terme des associations de subsistance, tels que les chocs externes et la situation géographique. Cependant, peu d'études ont examiné leurs besoins pour assurer cette viabilité. Une enquête et des entretiens en face à face, utilisant un questionnaire semi-structuré portant sur le profil de l'association et les connaissances, attitudes et pratiques (CAP) en matière de gestion, ont été menés auprès de 78 responsables et membres sélectionnés de différentes associations de subsistance à Baybay City, Leyte, aux Philippines. Un questionnaire portant sur le profil de l'association et les pratiques de gestion (CAP) a été utilisé. Une analyse de corrélation de Spearman a permis d'examiner la relation entre les connaissances, les attitudes et les pratiques. Les résultats ont montré que les membres des associations de subsistance possédaient des connaissances, une attitude positive et mettaient en pratique la plupart des fonctions de gestion. Cependant, ils manquaient de connaissances pour définir la vision, la mission, les buts et les objectifs (VMBO) de leur organisation et éprouvaient des difficultés à élaborer des méthodes d'évaluation des performances. L'analyse de corrélation a révélé une corrélation significative entre les connaissances, les attitudes et les pratiques. Les prestataires de SDC ont privilégié la formation à la production et à la transformation, compte tenu de l'implication des associations dans le secteur agroalimentaire. Les associations de subsistance bénéficiaires des SDC ont rencontré des difficultés de production et de financement, notamment des contraintes de temps, des inadéquations entre les formations et des incompatibilités opérationnelles. Les répondants ont recommandé de renforcer les compétences techniques, de maintenir la coordination, d'allouer des budgets de formation en temps opportun et de se concentrer sur la gestion financière et la tenue des registres. Les résultats de cette étude aident les prestataires de SDC à prioriser et à répondre aux besoins des associations de subsistance en matière de développement durable.

Mots-clés : Services de développement commercial (SDC) ; associations de subsistance ; développement durable ; pratiques de gestion ; connaissances, attitudes et pratiques (CAP)

1.0 Introduction

The concept of sustainability has become an important theme for business organizations in recent years. Sustainability refers to a long-term perspective based on meeting the present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. It takes into consideration environmental, social and economic dimensions (Petrini & Pozzebon, 2010). In fact, several leading companies worldwide have exerted efforts to integrate sustainability into their business practices (Cici & D’Isanto, 2017). With leading companies recognizing the importance of integrating sustainability into their businesses, micro and small businesses could also follow the example and integrate this concept. Operating as micro-scale enterprises, about 23 livelihood associations in Baybay City, Leyte have been receiving business development services from LGU-Baybay and the Visayas State University, mostly in the form of training on food processing, farm production, marketing, and financial management, among others. Business development services are services that improve the performance of the enterprise, its access to markets, and its ability to compete. This includes training, consultancy, marketing, information, and technology development and transfer among others (Committee of Donor Agencies for Small Enterprise Development, 2001). Actual engagements with some of these livelihood associations have given signals that their business practices need more improvement, specifically in the areas of resourcing, product innovation, cost-effective production, product distribution and promotion, and financial management. Despite having been in business for a while, some associations are still struggling to survive and manage their day-to-day operations. According to Statista (2023), the majority (51%) of small businesses in the Philippines have only been in business for 1–5 years, with only 16% having been in business for more than 10 years, as compared to Thailand, which has 26% of small businesses that have been in business for more than 10 years and only 39% having been in business for 1–5 years. The survey revealed the need to incorporate sustainability into micro and small businesses in the country, especially livelihood associations like farmers' and women's, by providing them with the necessary business development services to ensure their long-term viability. Hence, the initial step should involve assessing the appropriate BDS aside from the usual assistance they have been receiving and evaluating their knowledge, attitude, and practice of the four functions of management, namely: (a) planning, (b) organizing, (c) leading, and (d) controlling. The assessment of their needs is crucial to identify what areas of the livelihood association need improvement and to aid them in developing certain management practices if some are deemed to be lacking. Thus, study aimed to assess the business development needs of livelihood associations to improve their business and management practices for sustainable development. Specifically, it sought to evaluate their current business and management practices, their access to business development services, and identify their needs in marketing, production, organization and management, and financial management.

2.0 Review of Literature

2.1 Sustainable Livelihoods Approach

According to the Serrat (2008), “the sustainable livelihoods approach is a way of thinking about the objectives, scope, and priorities for development activities. It is based on evolving thinking about the way the poor and vulnerable live their lives

and the importance of policies and institutions” (p. 1). This approach aids in crafting development activities that are people-centered, responsive and participatory, multilevel, conducted in partnership with the public and private sectors, dynamic, and sustainable. Moreover, the sustainable livelihoods framework provides an overview of the different factors affecting the livelihoods of people and how they link and relate to one another (FAO, n.d.; Serrat, 2008). There are five livelihood assets that people use to earn a living: (a) human capital—health, nutrition, education, knowledge and skills, capacity to work, capacity to adapt, and so on, (b) social capital—networks and connections, and so on, (c) natural capital—land and produce, water and aquatic resources, and so on, (d) physical capital—infrastructure, tools and technology, and so forth, and (e) financial capital—savings, credit and debt (formal, informal) remittances, pensions, and wages. In this context, the study is focused on the development of human capital, specifically on educating, equipping, and capacitating members of livelihood associations. Through an assessment of their BDS needs, the government and other stakeholders could prioritize and identify the areas of concern critical to the sustainability of these livelihood associations.

2.2 Sustainability of Livelihood Associations

At present, the volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity in the business world have prompted the attention of leading business owners and managers towards the concept of sustainability. With this, businesses can adapt and act swiftly on the rapid changes in the market and technology, thereby maintaining competitive advantage and sustaining market share. While the leaders in the market are now incorporating sustainability into their organizational plans and operations, smaller businesses or enterprises are still struggling to adapt and internalize this new concept. Operating as a micro-enterprise, livelihood associations in Baybay City, Leyte, are having a hard time sustaining their operations due to some gaps in their knowledge and relevant skills, as well as their vulnerability to external threats since Baybay City is located in Region 8 (Eastern Visayas), Philippines, which is part of the typhoon belt. Several studies highlight the measures and factors that influence the sustainability of livelihood associations and their related forms. For instance, Cui et al. (2025) emphasized the negative effect of external shocks and geographical disadvantages on mental and financial capital which, in turn, affect the sustainability of rural households’ livelihoods in China. In addition, external shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic decrease the income of households with low-income earners (Munthali et al., 2022). In the case of village savings and loans associations in Ghana, while respondents highlighted the benefits of joining these associations to their livelihoods, as they can easily access funds to acquire equipment and machinery for their farms, portions of their funds were also spent for food, health, and education, resulting in a reduction in expenditures on investment items and more productive assets (Abdulai et al., 2022). Furthermore, in terms of food security, households that were members of a village savings and loans association owned land, had higher wealth, and were less likely to have severe food insecurity (Pienaaah & Luginaah, 2024). Hence, administering interventions through BDS is crucial for livelihood associations to be sustainable as they are the most vulnerable to external shocks and food insecurity due to poverty.

2.3 Business Development Services

The term ‘business development services’ describes a range of non-financial services to micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) such as (a) consulting,

(b) training, (c) skill building, (d) technology integration, (e) policy advocacy, (f) marketing, and (g) infrastructure support to reach new markets, compete, and improve the performance of their businesses (Goyal et al., 2017). The wide scope of BDS encompasses operational services that address the daily routines of the business, advisory services that focus on medium-term or long-term issues, and advocacy services that work to improve the business environment through policy enhancement (UNESCAP, n.d.). The study by Beyene (2018) underscores the importance of BDS in improving business performance as it moderately contributes towards job opportunity creation, enterprise growth, expansion, and the transfer of technology. Hence, it is imperative that businesses, particularly MSMEs, access these BDS to improve their overall performance and make them sustainable.

Few studies have focused on assessing the needs of livelihood associations with the goal of making them sustainable. Thus, this study contributes to the gap in the literature through its findings as well as its recommendations for the improvement of these livelihood associations.

3.0 Methodology

This study was conducted in Baybay City, Leyte, from November 14, 2022, to September 21, 2023. It used a convergent parallel mixed-methods research design with a semi-structured questionnaire for face-to-face surveys and interviews, including open-ended and Likert scale questions. This design allows simultaneous gathering of quantitative and qualitative data to gain comprehensive insights from the respondents (Alele & Malau-Aduli, 2023). The questionnaire covered the profiles of associations, BDS access and needs, and the KAP of different management functions. The KAP questionnaire was adopted from the final report of the project entitled “Impact Evaluation of The Agrarian Reform Infrastructure Support Project–Phase III (ARISP-III) In Eastern Visayas” (2020) to assess the management practices of livelihood associations. To ensure validity and reliability, the questionnaire was pre-tested on four members of Baybay Dairy Cooperative, an association not included in the sample. The pre-test was primarily qualitative purposely conducted to evaluate the clarity and relevance of the questions as well as the appropriateness of wording. Because of the small pre-test sample size, no statistical analysis was done; instead, the questionnaire was refined based on qualitative insights.

The face-to-face survey and interviews involved 78 officers and members from 12 livelihood associations in Baybay City. The list of registered livelihood associations in Baybay City was obtained by the researchers in collaboration with the City Agriculture Office. Based on the following criteria—active operations, accessibility, and willingness to participate—12 active and registered associations were purposefully chosen from a total of over 30 associations. Purposive sampling was used to select 78 respondents—both officers and members—from these associations based on availability and consent. Officers filled out the profile section, while all members answered the KAP questionnaire. The associations included (a) Gacat Women's Association (GAWA), (b) Gabas Vegetable Growers Association (GaVeGA), (c) Federation of Rurban Women's Association for Reforms and Development, (d) Masagana Rice Producers Cooperative, (e) Bunga Women's Association (BUWA), (f) United Plaridel Weaver's Association for Rapid Development (UPWARD), (g) San Agustin Vendor's Association, (h) Cacao Growers Association of Baybay, (i) Barangay Hipusngo Farmer's and Fisherfolks Association, (j) Gabas Fisherfolks Association, (k) Baybay Food Processors, and (l)

Kilim Farmers Integrated Farmers and Irrigators Association. Data was analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 23, employing descriptive analysis (totals, averages, frequencies, percentages) and mode for Likert scale data. Results were presented using tables, charts, graphs, and pictures. Correlation analysis via the Spearman method was used to identify relationships between variables. Moreover, the entire research process was conducted with ethical considerations in mind. Every participant voluntarily consented to participate after being made aware of the study's objectives. Confidentiality of respondents' identities and responses was preserved, and verbal informed consent was obtained. There was no recording or reporting of personally identifiable information.

4.0 Results and Discussion

4.0 Profile of Associations

Table 1 captures the demographic and socioeconomic information about the associations that are part of the study, including their respective locations, estimated total membership, number of respondents, and primary products or livelihoods. Association membership varies greatly, with small groups like Baybay Food Processors having only three members and large associations like the Federation of Rurban Women's Association for Reforms and Development having over 7,000 members. Some of these groups begin with about 30 members, but membership usually drops to an average of 22, representing a 27% decline. External migration, members prioritizing personal income opportunities elsewhere, and inconsistent engagement as a result of the limited benefits of association activities are frequently responsible for this decline. Interestingly, the number of interviewees for each association does not exactly match the total number of members, indicating differences in active participation or difficulties encountered during the data collection process. The active associations display a wide range of economic activities, evidencing the diversity of local resources and the level of expertise available. Agricultural production and processing dominate the activities of several associations, for example, the production of rice-based products at Masagana Rice Producers Cooperative, cacao products by the Cacao Growers Association of Baybay, vegetable production by GaVeGA, integrated livestock, poultry, vegetable production, and vermicomposting by the Barangay Hipusngo Farmer's and Fisherfolks Association, and root crop processing by the BUWA. Other associations include the GAWA and the Gabas Fisherfolks Association.

4.2 Products of the Livelihood Associations

Table 2 shows that livelihood associations offer diverse products due to their varied activities. Production-focused associations produce vegetables, layers, and vermicompost. Processing is divided into food and non-food products. Food items include *tocino*, burger patties, RICEMO Blend, vacuum-fried jackfruit, fish lumpia, *takudo* chips, and sweet potato-based products like noodles and juice. Non-food items include door mats, potholders, rugs, placemats, aprons, slippers, and various bags like eco-bags and wine bags. Marketing efforts focus on fresh jackfruit and hog fattening. The services sector includes sewing services, supporting non-food item production and custom repairs. Overall, the survey highlights a balanced mix of food production, innovative processing, practical non-food products, strategic marketing, and essential services, ensuring resilience and adaptability to market demands.

Table 1. *Profile of Participating Livelihood Associations and Federation in Baybay City, Leyte*

Association Name	Location	Total Members (estimated)	No. of Respondents	Products and Livelihood Activities
GAWA	Brgy. Gacat, Baybay City, Leyte	25	6	tocino, burger patties, pork lumpia (meat processing)
GaVeGA	Brgy. Gabas, Baybay City, Leyte	30	5	vegetables (vegetable production)
FORWARD	Baybay City, Leyte	7000+	6	door mats, potholders, rugs, bags, eco-bags, aprons, sewing services
Masagana Rice Producers Cooperative	Zone 1, Baybay City, Leyte	21	9	RICEMO blend, RICEMO curls (rice-based product processing)
BUWA	Brgy. Bunga, Baybay City, Leyte	14	3	sweet potato chips, fries, noodles, juice, takudo chips (rootcrop processing)
UPWARD	Brgy. Plaridel, Baybay City, Leyte	25	6	bags, mats, slippers, placemats, wine bags (weaving products)
San Agustin Vendor's Association	Brgy. San Agustin, Baybay City, Leyte	30	7	vendor marketing and retail activities
Cacao Growers Association of Baybay	Baybay City, Leyte	30	7	cacao production and processing
Barangay Hipusngo Farmer's and Fisherfolks Assoc.	Brgy. Hipusngo, Baybay City, Leyte	23	11	hog fattening, layer poultry, vegetable production, vermicomposting

Table 1 continued

Gabas Fisherfolks Association	Brgy. Gabas, Baybay City, Leyte	69	6	fish nuggets, fish lumpia, fish empanada (fish processing)
Baybay Food Processors	Brgy. Cogon, Baybay City, Leyte	3	2	vacuum fried jackfruit, dehydrated jackfruit, fresh jackfruit (fruit processing)

Table 2. Different Products of Livelihood Associations

Production	Processing		Marketing	Services
	Food	Non-food		
Vegetables	<i>Tocino</i>	Door mats, Potholders, Rugs	Fresh jackfruit	
Layer	RICEMO blend S.P chips, S.P fries Fish nuggets Vacuum fried jackfruit Fish lumpia	Bags Placemat Mats Bags, eco-bags		
Vermicompost	<i>Takudo</i> hips Burger patties Sweet potato Noodles RICEMO curls Dehydrated jackfruit Sweet potato Juice Fish empanada	Aprons Refrigerator covers Slippers Wine bags	Hog fattening	Sewing services

4.3 Training Attended by Livelihood Associations

Training, workshops and seminars are crucial for the development of skills necessary for the associations' operations. Association officers and members have attended training with a duration of mostly 2–3 days; however, most of these training were related to production or operations. The findings, as shown in Table 3, suggest that the training conducted by BDS (see Table 4) providers has placed more emphasis on developing the technical skills of the associations' members.

Table 3. *Training Attended by Members of the Livelihood Associations*

No.	Organization and Management	Production/ Operations	Marketing	Finance	Other training attended
1	Organization and management training	Meat processing	Marketing	Financial management	Workshop of FB school
2		Food processing	Packaging	Bookkeeping and stock control	Self-awareness training
3		Good agricultural practices		Bookkeeping	Business continuity management
4		Good manufacturing practices			Capacitating urban communities for peace and development
5		Basic farming			Entrepreneurship
6		Climate smart			Business planning
7		High quality Inbred rice production			
8		Fish processing			
9		Cacao fermentation process			
10		Training in integrated nutrient management			

Table 4. *BDS Providers*

BDS Providers	
Agricultural Training Institute	Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research
Visayas State University Ecological Farm and Resource Management Institute (Eco- Farmi)	Department of Agriculture
The Department of Labor and Employment	City Agriculturist Office
The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)	
Department of the Interior and Local Government	Department of Business and Management
Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR)	

4.4 Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of the Four Management Functions

4.4.1. Knowledge. In terms of planning, the respondents were moderately knowledgeable in most of the items (5 out of 7 items), while they considered themselves to be extremely knowledgeable in creating members’ assignments, and schedules. However, they lack knowledge about defining their organization’s vision, mission, goals, and objectives. Crafting a well-defined vision, mission, goals, and objectives is crucial to the sustainability and success of the organization. Without these, particularly the vision and mission statements, the organization’s members won’t have a guide and can’t imagine what it could become in the future. A vision statement emphasizes the organization’s hope for what it will become in the future and helps guide its strategies while a mission statement states the reasons for an organization’s existence and its purpose (Kennedy et al., 2020). On the other hand, in terms of organizing, leading and controlling, most respondents considered themselves to be moderately and extremely knowledgeable on the items indicated in Table 5.

Table 5. *Knowledge of the Four Functions of Management*

Knowledge	Mode	Interpretation
Planning		
1. Defining the association’s vision, mission, goals and objectives.	2	slightly knowledgeable
2. Preparing the budget for the association’s activities.	3	moderately knowledgeable
3. Establishing goal-related tasks.	3	moderately knowledgeable
4. Creating member assignments and schedules.	4	extremely knowledgeable

Table 5 continued

5. Establishing evaluation methods for measuring performance.	3	moderately knowledgeable
6. Identifying alternative courses of action.	3	moderately knowledgeable
7. Formulating strategies to improve business performance.	3	moderately knowledgeable
Organizing		
1. Delineating duties and responsibilities of the association's officers and members.	4	extremely knowledgeable
2. Identifying activities required to achieve the association's objectives.	3	moderately knowledgeable
3. Grouping similar activities for efficient operation of the association.	4	extremely knowledgeable
4. Providing the members with all requirements for achieving the association's objectives.	3	moderately knowledgeable
5. Defining responsibilities of each association member.	4	extremely knowledgeable
6. Defining authority relationship between superiors and subordinates.	4	extremely knowledgeable
7. Coordinating efforts of all for achieving the association's objectives.	4	extremely knowledgeable
Leading		
1. Understanding the role of association leaders in the implementation of activities for the association's benefits.	4	extremely knowledgeable
2. Setting incentives or motivation schemes for the association.	3	moderately knowledgeable
3. Providing guidance and building confidence in performing tasks among association members.	4	extremely knowledgeable
4. Know how to double-check if the association's environment is suitable for the planned activity or project.	4	extremely knowledgeable
5. Mobilizing resources of the association's activities	3	moderately knowledgeable
6. Giving instructions to team members in relation to the completion of the association's planned activity or project.	4	extremely knowledgeable

Table 5 continued

7. Supervising and coaching association members and adjust during activity execution if needed.	3	moderately knowledgeable
Controlling		
1. Devising strategies to be able to adhere to the association's plans.	3	moderately knowledgeable
2. Instilling disciplines and submission to authority within the association.	3	moderately knowledgeable
3. Keeping records of the association's activities and finances.	4	extremely knowledgeable
4. Measuring actual performance of the association, its officers and members.	3	moderately knowledgeable
5. Comparing actual performance with the standards.	3	moderately knowledgeable
6. Analyzing deviations of the association's performances against standards being set.	3	moderately knowledgeable
7. Taking corrective actions in case of significant deviations.	3	moderately knowledgeable

Figure 1 shows the livelihood association members' level of knowledge of the four functions of management. Among other associations, the BUWA was the most knowledgeable, followed by the Barangay Hipusngo Farmers and Fisherfolks Association and Masagana Rice Producers Cooperative. Based on the survey, BUWA attended 10 training sessions from 2017 to 2020 on the four management functions conducted by PhilRootcrops and the Department of Business and Management at Visayas State University, as well as from other government agencies such as the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Department of Agriculture (DA). Aside from being participants in training, BUWA is a partner and beneficiary of the extension services of these BDS providers. This shows that the training conducted by BDS providers positively contributes to the knowledge of association members and officers about the activities of the four functions of management.

4.4.2. Attitude. Respondents strongly agreed with all the items under planning, organizing, leading, and controlling (see Table 6). The findings suggest that respondents viewed the four management functions as crucial factors in improving and sustaining their organization. Having a positive attitude is important since there is a strong correlation between attitude and behavior (Kim & Hunter, 1993). Furthermore, leaders who constantly engage, inspire, and connect with their employees play a crucial role in promoting positive attitudes among their employees towards management practices and work (Mazzetti & Schaufeli, 2022).

Figure 1. Knowledge of the four management functions among livelihood associations.

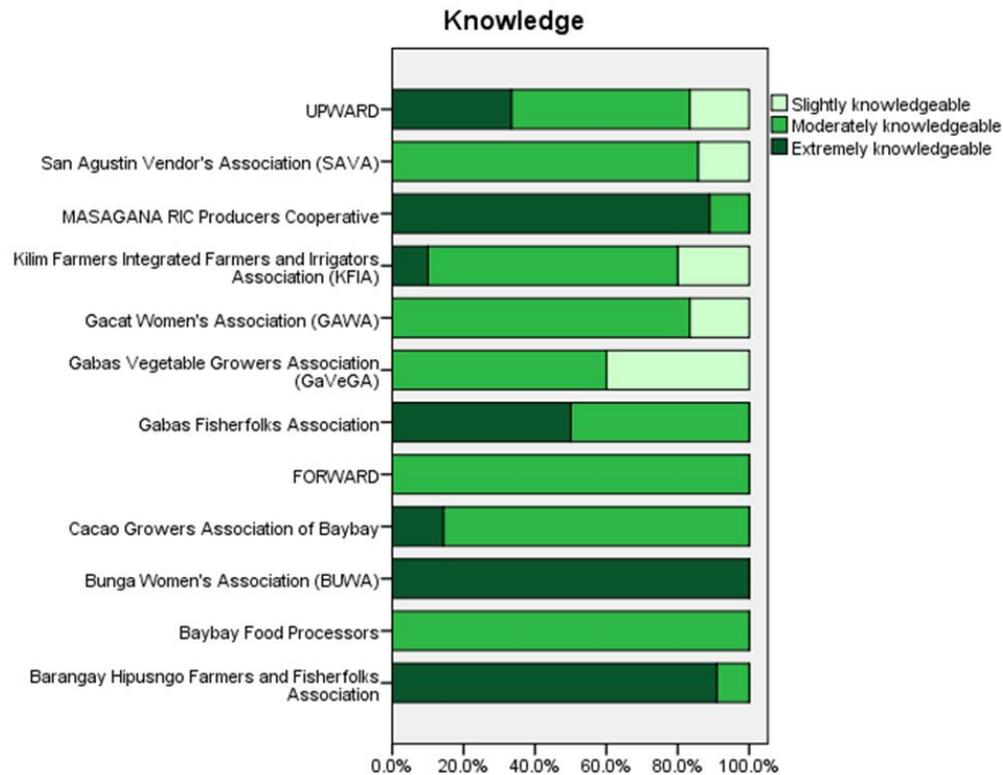


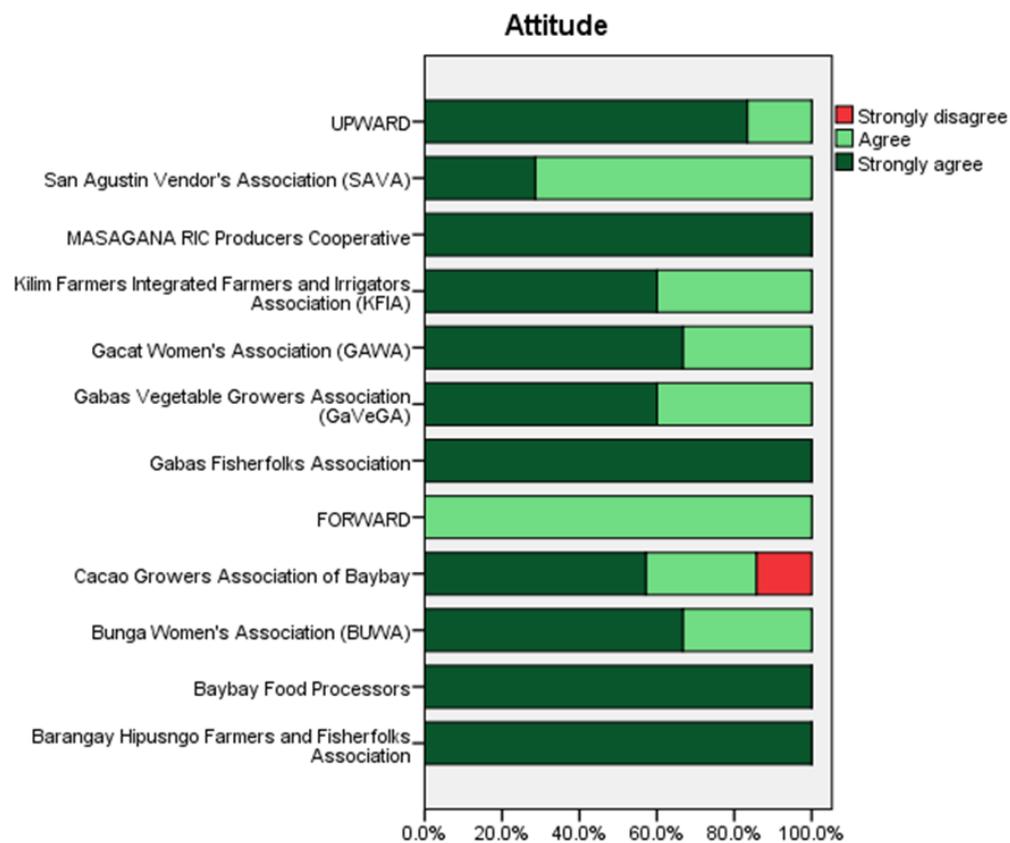
Table 6. Association Members' Attitude Towards the Four Functions of Management

Attitude	Mode	Interpretation
Planning		
Set vision, mission, goals, and objectives during the formative stage.	4	Strongly agree
Prepare an activity budget, even for small associations.	4	Strongly agree
Establish goal-related tasks for all associations, big or small.	4	Strongly agree
Have clear member assignments and schedules.	4	Strongly agree
Establish evaluation methods for small associations.	4	Strongly agree
Identify alternative actions during the planning process.	4	Strongly agree
Develop strategies, even for small businesses.	4	Strongly agree

Table 6 continued

Organizing		
Know your responsibilities and those of your co-members.	4	Strongly agree
Identify activities needed to achieve the association's objectives.	4	Strongly agree
Group similar activities for more efficient operations.	4	Strongly agree
Clearly spell out the procedures for operating the association's business.	4	Strongly agree
Officers can delegate authority to members.	4	Strongly agree
Define authority relationships between officers and members, even in small associations.	4	Strongly agree
Officers should coordinate members' efforts to achieve the association's objectives.	4	Strongly agree
Leading		
Select capable leaders.	4	Strongly agree
Give incentives to workers or members.	4	Strongly agree
Leaders should guide and build confidence among members.	4	Strongly agree
Leaders and members should check if the environment suits the association's activities or projects.	4	Strongly agree
Leaders and members should mobilize resources for activities or projects.	4	Strongly agree
Members should follow officers' instructions.	4	Strongly agree
Leaders should supervise and coach members to improve business performance.	4	Strongly agree
Controlling		
The association should stick to its plans.	4	Strongly agree
Discipline officers and members for any violations.	4	Strongly agree
Keep records of activities, transactions, and finances.	4	Strongly agree
Measure the association's performance.	4	Strongly agree
Compare actual performance with set standards.	4	Strongly agree
Analyze deviations from the plan.	4	Strongly agree
Take corrective actions for significant deviations.	4	Strongly agree

Figure 2. Attitude on the four management functions among livelihood associations.



4.4.3. *Practice.* In terms of organizing, leading, and controlling, most of the activities under these management functions were practiced “every time” and “almost every time” by the respondents (see Table 7). However, in planning, only the activity about establishing methods for evaluating the association's and the members' performance was indicated as “almost never” by most of the respondents. The findings suggest that livelihood associations had difficulty developing performance evaluation methods for the association and its members, which is a crucial part of the planning process.

These performance evaluation methods provide alignment and clarity to the goals of the organization, ensuring individual goals match the organizational objectives. Furthermore, it will be the basis for giving rewards or incentives if the employee exceeds the targets set, thereby providing motivation and active engagement while at the same time improving the overall organizational performance (DeNisi & Smith, 2014).

Table 7. *Practice of the Four Functions of Management*

Practice	Mode	Interpretation
Planning		
1. Setting the association’s vision, mission, goals and objectives.	4	Every time
2. Making activity or project budget.	4	Every time
3. Establishing goal-related tasks.	3	Almost every time
4. Creating assignments and schedules for association members.	4	Every time
5. Establishing methods of evaluating performance of the association and its members.	2	Almost never
6. Identify alternative courses of action.	3	Almost every time
7. Setting sales quota to improve business performance.	3	Almost every time
Organizing		
1. Assigning responsibilities and specific tasks to association members and workers.	4	Every time
2. Identify specific activities to achieve objectives of the association.	3	Almost every time
3. Grouping similar activities to optimize efforts and resources.	4	Every time
4. Establish clear procedures to follow in operating the business.	4	Every time
5. Delegating authority to association members or employees.	4	Every time
6. Defining authority relationship between association officers.	4	Every time
7. Coordinate efforts of all members or employees to achieve the association’s objectives.	4	Every time
Leading		
1. Selecting capable set of leaders	4	Every time
2. Providing motivations or incentives to association members or workers.	4	Every time
3 Association officers initiate actions pertaining to the implementation of the association’s projects and activities	3	Almost every time
4. Double-checking the environment to see if the project or activity is suitable to be implemented.	4	Every time

Table 7 continued

5. Mobilizing resources to ensure full implementation of a planned activity.	4	Every time
6. Giving clear instructions to association members or employees on what to do effectively implementing the association's projects and activities	4	Every time
7. Clear supervision and coaching by association officers.	4	Every time
Controlling		
1. Disciplining members if they do not perform as expected.	4	Every time
2. Disciplining members in case of violation or if they do not perform as expected.	3	Almost every time
3. Keeping records of the association's activities, transactions and finances.	4	Every time
4. Measuring or assessing actual performance of the association and its officers and members.	3	Almost every time
5. Comparing actual performances with the standards.	3	Almost every time
6. Analyzing deviations of the association's output and its members' performance from that of the standards.	4	Every time
7. Taking corrective actions to significant deviations.	4	Every time

4.4.4. Correlation of knowledge with attitude and practice. Based on the correlation analysis using Spearman's rho (see Table 8), knowledge shows a significant correlation with both attitude and practice at the $\alpha = 0.01$ level. Specifically, knowledge has a moderate association with attitude ($r = 0.438$) and a strong association with practice ($r = 0.667$). These results indicate that greater knowledge leads to a more positive attitude and better practice of activities within the four functions of management. This aligns with similar studies that have found significant correlations between knowledge, attitude, and practice (Maude et al., 2021; Yesuf & Abdu, 2022; Ayyad et al., 2024).

Figure 3. Practice on the four management functions among livelihood associations.

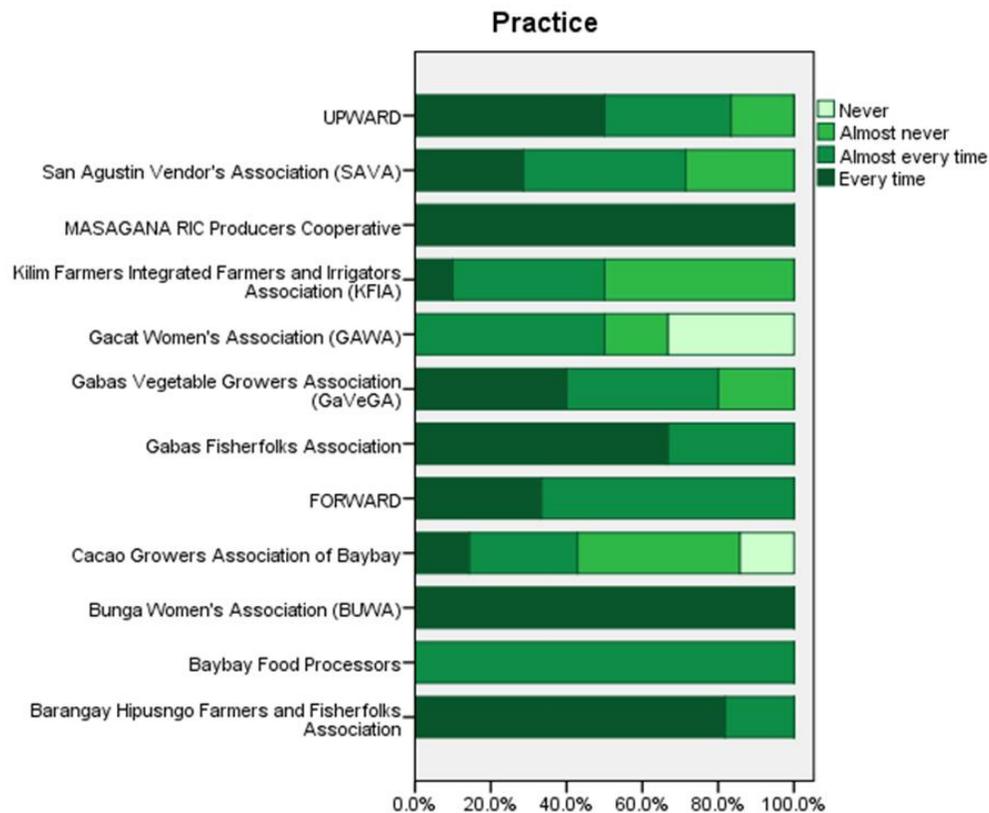


Table 8. Correlations of Knowledge with Attitude and Practice

Spearman's rho			
		Attitude	Practice
Knowledge	Correlation Coefficient	.438**	.667**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	78	78

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.4.5. Problems encountered as recipients of BDS. Several problems were encountered by the livelihood associations as recipients of BDS, particularly in production and finance, as well as other problems that involved the time constraints, inapplicability, and incompatibility of the training to their operations (see Table 9). Addressing these problems will improve its operations, making it more sustainable.

Table 9. *Problems Encountered by Member of the Livelihood Associations as BDS Recipients*

No.	Organization and management	Production/operations	Finance	Others
1	Cooperation/unity among members	Lack of knowledge and skills in using their equipment	Financial problems	Some learnings from the training were not applied in the actual operations
2	FDA license, Coop rules and regulations	Production	Limited/lack of budget	Training was useful only for members with stores
3	Decreasing number of members	Irregular operations	Lack of bookkeeping skills	Time constraints and busy schedules
4		Limited supply of raw materials	Delayed releasing of budget	Some training was not fit for the association
5		Wrong variety of seeds given Seeds didn't germinate	Timing of budget release	Short notice on training and seminars

4.4.6. *Recommendations from the livelihood associations to improve BDS.* Table 10 highlights members' recommendations for improving BDS delivery. Most suggestions focus on enhancing technical skills in production. Members also emphasize the need for constant coordination with BDS providers in organization and management, quick budget releases for training attendance, and more training in financial management and simple record-keeping.

4.4.7. *Business development needs of the livelihood associations.* Based on the recommendations of the respondents and taking into account the findings of KAP, access to BDS, and problems encountered, the business development needs are presented in Table 11. The BDS needs include training in team building, operations, marketing, financial management, breadmaking, meat processing, bookkeeping, organization and management, production, performance evaluation methods, and strategic planning. Additionally, assistance is needed for processing business permits and licenses (FDA, BIR, DTI, etc.), and more technicians are required to support the growing number of farmers. Regular monitoring and assessment are also necessary to ensure that the training is effectively implemented. By providing these needs, livelihood associations could improve their overall operations, long-term profitability and sustainability.

Table 10. *Recommendations to improve BDS*

Organization and management	Production/operations	Finance	Others
Constant coordination	More training for the association members that are applicable in their operations	Fast releasing of budget	We are hoping that the women's association will not be abolished
	There must be an assessment to know if the technical assistance is being implemented in the association	More training in financials, bookkeeping, simple record keeping	Advance notice of the training/workshop
	Lack of technicians to assist and help the increasing number of farmers		More training
	Training on breadmaking		Monitoring of activities
	Training on meat processing		Suggestions for improving our products
	Technical assistance must be delivered regularly		

4.5 Limitations of the Study

Although the study gave helpful information regarding the business development concerns of the livelihood associations in Baybay City, it suffers from a lack of broader context due to its localized setting, purposeful sampling, and self-reported data, affecting generalizability. Moreover, using a self-selected small pre-test sample hampered willingness to statistically validate the tool's reliability. Incorporating a wider range of associations from different locations would improve external validity, but other studies may do better with longitudinal or comparative designs.

Table 11. *BDS Needs of Livelihood Associations*

Organization and Management	Production/operations	Marketing	Finance
Training in team building	Training related to their operations	Training in marketing	Training in financial management
Assistance on the processing of business permits, FDA license, BIR, DTI etc.	Training in breadmaking and meat processing		Training in bookkeeping
Training in organization and management	Regular training in production/operations		
Training in developing performance evaluation methods for the association and its members	Additional technicians to aid the increasing number farmers		
Training in strategic planning	Regular monitoring and assessment to ensure that the training conducted is actually practiced		

5.0 Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Summary

This study assessed the BDS needs of selected livelihood associations in Baybay City, Leyte, with the goal of enhancing their sustainability. Findings revealed that while association members were generally knowledgeable and had positive attitudes, they lacked skills in defining organizational goals and in evaluating performance. Many associations engaged in food processing and had attended technical training, yet challenges in production, finance, and relevance of training persisted. This study found significant correlations between knowledge, attitude, and practice, and emphasized the need for capacity building in strategic planning, financial management, and monitoring. These insights help guide BDS providers in tailoring interventions to improve the long-term viability of livelihood associations.

Most of the livelihood associations were involved in processing activities, while some focused on production and marketing and served as vendor organizations. They offer a variety of food products, such as *tocino* and burger patties, as well as unique items such as RICEMO Blend, vacuum-fried jackfruit, fish lumpia, *takudo* chips, and sweet potato-based products like noodles and juice, as well as non-food products such as door mats, potholders, rugs, placemats, aprons, slippers, eco-bags, and wine bags. Some also offered marketing of fresh jackfruit and hog fattening,

while others also offered sewing services. With most associations producing food products, there is no doubt that BDS providers, primarily government agencies, conduct more training related to production or processing. However, several problems were also encountered by the livelihood associations as recipients of BDS in the areas of production and finance, as well as other problems such as time constraints, training inapplicability, and incompatibility with their operations. Lastly, recommendations were made by the respondents to improve the delivery of BDS. Respondents emphasized that improving technical skills in production or operations is crucial, and they also stressed the need for consistent coordination between the association and the BDS provider. Additionally, they recommended a timely budget allocation for training attendance and further training in financial management and record-keeping.

5.2 Conclusion

The study highlighted the importance of targeted BDS that address the needs of livelihood associations. Through the assessment of their needs, BDS providers could prioritize the activities to be conducted for the livelihood associations. By developing the technical skills in production and financial management of the associations' members and officers, providing them with relevant training, and maintaining constant BDS and association coordination, these livelihood associations can be sustainable.

5.3 Recommendations

To promote sustainability among livelihood associations, BDS providers should prioritize training programs that enhance technical skills in production, processing, and financial management. Additionally, workshops focused on developing performance evaluation systems and clearly defined vision and mission statements are crucial. These initiatives will be more effective with continuous coordination between BDS providers and associations, along with regular monitoring and evaluation of the training programs' progress and impact.

References

- Abdulai, I. A., Adams, A. M., Abdulai, M. E., & Bukari, S. (2022). Contributions of village savings and loans associations to rural livelihoods' development in the Upper West Region, Ghana. *SN Social Sciences*, 2, Article 73. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43545-022-00377-w>
- Alele, F., & Malau-Aduli, B. (2023). *An Introduction to Research Methods for Undergraduate Health Profession Students*. James Cook University. <https://doi.org/10.25120/fh2z-yva8>
- Ayyad, A., Baker, N. A., Oweidat, I., Al-Mugheed, K., Alsenany, S. A., & Abdelaliam, S. M. F. (2024). Knowledge, attitudes, and practices toward patient safety among nurses in health centers. *BMC Nursing*, 23, Article 171. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12912-024-01831-1>
- Beyene, M. Y. (2018). Business development service (BDS) role in improving the performance of SMEs in case of selected manufacturing SMEs in Adama Town, Ethiopia. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 10 (31), 34–38. Retrieved July 22, 2024, from <https://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/EJBM/article/view/45170/46612>

- Cici, C., & D'Isanto, D. (2017). Integrating sustainability into core business. *Symphonya. Emerging Issues in Management*, 1, 50–65. <https://doi.org/10.4468/2017.1.05cici.disanto>
- Committee of Donor Agencies for Small Enterprise Development. (2001, February). *Business development services for small enterprises: Guiding principles for donor intervention*. World Bank Group. Retrieved June 25, 2024, from <https://www.enterprise-development.org/wp-content/uploads/BDS-Guiding-Principles-2001-English.pdf>.
- Cui, H., Wang, Y., & Zheng, L. (2025). Livelihood sustainability of rural households in response to external shocks, internal stressors and geographical disadvantages: Empirical evidence from rural China. *Environment, Development and Sustainability*, 27, 18221–18250. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10668-024-04666-7>
- DeNisi, A., & Smith, C. E. (2014). Performance appraisal, performance management, and firm-level performance: A review, a proposed model, and new directions for future research. *Annals*, 8(1), 127–179. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19416520.2014.873178>
- Department of Economy, Planning, and Development. (2020). *Impact evaluation of the agrarian reform infrastructure support project – Phase III (ARISP-III) in Eastern Visayas: Final report*. Republic of the Philippines. <https://share.google/IFDIX1QawNUhJiz55>
- FAO (n.d.). *Building on gender, agrobiodiversity and local knowledge: A training manual*. Retrieved July 6, 2024, from <https://www.fao.org/4/y5956e/Y5956E04.htm>
- Goyal, S., Sergi, B. S., & Kapoor, A. (2017). Evaluating the BDS providers and MSMEs: Challenges and strategic actions. *European Journal of Development Research*, 29, 725–744. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41287-016-0058-z>
- Kennedy, R. B., Jamison, E., Simpson, J., Kumar, P., Kemp, A., Awate, K., & Manning, K. (2020, August 14). *2.2 Vision, mission, and goals*. Pressbooks. <https://pressbooks.lib.vt.edu/strategicmanagement/chapter/2-2-vision-mission-and-goals/>
- Kim, M.-S., & Hunter, J. E. (1993). Attitude–behavior relations: A meta-analysis of attitudinal relevance and topic. *Journal of Communication*, 43(1), 101–142. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01251.x>
- Maude, R. R., Jongdeepaisal, M., Skuntaniyom, S., Muntajit, T., Blacksell, S. D., Khuenpetch, W., Pan-Ngum, W., Taleangkaphan, K., Malathum, K., & Maude, R. J. (2021). Improving knowledge, attitudes and practice to prevent COVID-19 transmission in healthcare workers and the public in Thailand. *BMC Public Health*, 21, Article 749. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-10768-y>
- Mazzetti, G., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2022). The impact of engaging leadership on employee engagement and team effectiveness: A longitudinal, multi-level study on the mediating role of personal- and team resources. *PloS One*, 17(6), Article e0269433. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0269433>

- Munthali, G. N. C., Wu, X., Dzimbiri, M. N. W., Zolo, A., Mushani, J. K. B., & Banda, L. O. L. (2022). An investigation of the sustainability of village savings and loans associations (VSLAs) amidst Covid-19 and its impact on household income levels: lessons from Malawi, Sub-Saharan Africa. *BMC Public Health*, 22. Article 1072. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-022-13303-9>
- Petrini, M., & Pozzebon, M. (2010). Integrating sustainability into business practices: Learning from Brazilian firms. *BAR–Brazilian Administration Review*, 7(4), 362–378. <https://doi.org/10.1590/s1807-76922010000400004>
- Pienaah, C. K. A., & Luginaah, I. (2024). The impact of village savings and loan associations as a financial and climate resilience strategy for mitigating food insecurity in Northern Ghana. *Risks*, 12(4), Article 58. <https://doi.org/10.3390/risks12040058>
- Serrat, O. (2008). The sustainable livelihoods approach. *Knowledge Solutions*. <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/27638/sustainable-livelihoods-approach.pdf>
- Statista. (2023, September 8). Business tenure of small businesses Asia 2023, by country and length. Retrieved June 26, 2024, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1411235/asia-business-tenure-of-small-businesses-by-country-and-length/#:~:text=Business%20tenure%20of%20small%20businesses%20Asia%202023%2C%20by%20country%20and%20length&text=According%20to%20a%20survey%20conducted,of%20one%20to%20five%20years.>
- UNESCAP. (n.d.). *Business development services*. Retrieved July 7, 2024, from <https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/12%20-%20VI.%20Business%20development%20services.pdf>
- Yesuf, M., & Abdu, M. (2022). Knowledge, attitude, prevention practice, and associated factors toward COVID-19 among preparatory school students in Southwest Ethiopia, 2021. *PloS One*, 17(1), Article e0262907. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0262907>