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The Philippine Grains Standardization Program (PGSP) of the National Food Authority in Negros Occidental

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Abstract

This study assessed the level of effectiveness of Philippine Grains Standardization Program (PGSP) of the National Food Authority in the areas of advocacy, quality standards, packaging, labeling, and color-coding, enforcement, and regulatory through data triangulation from among the external assessors and implementers in Negros Occidental. Moreover, when the program is assessed according to external assessors composed of millers, wholesalers, retailers, and farmers, they have evaluated the level of effectiveness of the program as an average while implementers assessed it as high. There was no significant difference in the level of effectiveness of PGSP in the areas of advocacy, quality standards, enforcement, and regulatory

while there was a significant difference in packaging, labeling, and color-coding when grouped according to external assessors. On the other hand, when the assessors are grouped into implementers and external assessors, there was no significant difference in the level of effectiveness in the areas of packaging, labeling, and color-coding, enforcement and regulatory whereas, there was a significant difference in advocacy and quality standards. From the narrative of key stakeholders of the grains industry, PGSP has disclosed issues and gaps that need to deal with by the implementers to enhance its effectiveness. The result of the study was the basis for planning a proposed program for the enhanced implementation of PGSP in Negros Occidental.

Keywords: Data Triangulation, Effectiveness, Standardization, PGSP, Development Plan

Introduction

Standards and standardization aspire to provide the world equivalent across cultures, time, and geography. Globally, trading of grain with a standard is possible if the countries involved are aware of each others' requirements.

As the Philippines faces up to the challenges and opportunities of globalization in the 21st century, grains standardization is one of the schemes for the agriculture sector modernization particularly in upgrading the efficiency and universal competitiveness of the grains industry. This case is about the deregulation and trade liberalization policies of the country as a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The Philippine Grains Standardization Program (PGSP) is an effort spearheaded by the National Food Authority (NFA) that aspires to efficiently implement or institutionalize the national grains standards through continuing advocacy, enforcement, and monitoring activities of the grains industry (National Food Authority Primer on PGSP, Accessed January 29, 2018).

In eighteen years of being in the national agency, the researcher has been into field monitoring and witness how the grains industry embrace the program with identifying issues and problems towards development.

As the government lays down the fundamentals for a stable republic, these shared endeavors and aspirations assume greater significance. The researcher considered the necessity of this study, focused on the level of effectiveness of PGSP to ascertain specific interventions for enhanced implementation, which may be essential to optimize its usefulness as a guide to uplift the grains industry performance.

The study assessed the level of effectiveness of Philippine Grains Standardization Program (PGSP) of the National Food Authority among the implementers, grains entrepreneurs and farmers in the Province of Negros Occidental. This assessment covered the provisions of the program using specific groups of stakeholders' point of view, which aims to obtain a plan for enhanced implementation of PGSP.

Specifically, this study sought to find answers to the following questions:

1. What is the level of effectiveness of PGSP in the areas of advocacy, quality standards, packaging, labeling and color-coding, enforcement and regulatory as assessed by external assessors composed of millers, wholesalers, retailers, and farmers?
2. What is the level of effectiveness of PGSP in the areas of advocacy, quality standards, packaging, labeling and color-coding, enforcement, and regulatory as assessed by implementers composed of NFA employees?
3. Is there a significant difference in the level of effectiveness of PGSP in the areas of advocacy, quality standards, packaging, labeling and color-coding, enforcement and regulatory when the assessors are grouped into millers, wholesalers, retailers, and farmers?
4. Is there a significant difference in the level of effectiveness of PGSP in the areas of advocacy, quality standards, packaging, labeling and color-coding, enforcement and regulatory when the assessors are grouped into implementers and external assessors?
5. What are the challenges/problems encountered by the grains businessmen and NFA personnel in the implementation of PGSP?
6. What are the factors that contribute to the effectiveness of Philippine Grains Standardization Program (PGSP)?
7. What are the contributions of PGSP in the attainment of the general objective of NFA in attaining integrated growth and development of grains industry?

This study was anchored on pertinent laws and presents relevant literature, reviews, and studies that provided the researcher varied perspective and proper direction in the analysis and formulation of a proposed program for the enhanced implementation of PGSP.

Republic Act 7394 "The Consumer Act of the Philippines" (1992) "declares that it is a policy of the State to defend the interest of the consumer, promote his general welfare and to begin standards of conduct for business and industry."

Republic Act 10611, otherwise known as the "Food Safety Act of 2013". "An Act to Strengthen the Food Safety Regulatory System in The Country to Protect Consumer Health and Facilitate Market Access of Local Foods and Food Products, and for Other Purposes." Section 9, Article XVI provides that the State shall protect consumers from trade malpractices and substandard or hazardous products. In the end, the government shall reserve a food safety regulatory system that assures a high level of food safety promotes fair trade and advances the global competitiveness of Philippine foods and food products.

The Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (AFMA) is a document that provides the policy structure that protects agriculture and fisheries stakeholders from the ill effects of GATT. The Philippine experience proves that the safety nets are not working or are not fully implemented (Republic Act 8345, 1997).

Agricultural marketing policies and decisions are regularly crucial before industry and government. There is a need to "bridge" research with the system and the creation of National Food Authority through Presidential Decree no. 4 mandated a roadway for the development of grains industry. The agency aimed to ensure a reasonable rate of return to Filipino farmers, provide an adequate supply and inexpensive rice and corn for the country, and endorse the

integrated growth and innovation of the corn and rice marketing industry to allow it to compete in the global market (National Food Authority Handbook, 1972).

The National Grains Standards is a set of official rules suggesting standard specifications on the quality, labeling, packaging, including test and analysis of rice and corn and other grain supplies to help ensure productivity, order and fair trade in the grains production and marketing system. It is a common language envisioned to facilitate transactions between buyers and sellers, particularly in the domestic grains market (National Food Authority Primer on PGSP, 2018).

Advocacy means representing, promoting, or defending some person(s), interest, or opinion. This concept encompasses many types of activities such as rights' representation and social marketing. Other types of advocacy activities, it is often referred to as "policy advocacy" (International Centre for Policy Advocacy, 2014) [3].

There have been growing requests for community-academic collaboration to enhance the capability of partners to connect in policy. Community-based participatory research (CBPR) is a collaborative approach that can assist capacity building and policy modification through reasonable engagement of different partners (Israel, 2018) [4].

Many difficulties encountered in the trading of goods. Some of these are due to diversity in standard quality specifications, as well as tests and specification methods between many exporting and importing countries. Orderly domestic and export marketing of grains requires standardized grades and quality specifications. Commodity standards and classes provide a mean for measuring levels of quality and value for agricultural commodities. These rules provide a basis for domestic and international trade and promote efficiency in marketing and procurement.

In his article, National Commission on Agriculture clarified that "standardization is the determination of basic limits or grades in the form of specification to which manufactured goods must conform." (Chavan, Accessed January 29, 2018) Patindol (Accessed January 29, 2018) paper highlights the current methods and standards applied by the stakeholders of the Philippine rice industry—the improvement of rice variety. The study showed the four significant aspects of the quality of rice, namely, (1) milling potential, (2) physical attributes, (3) physio-chemical properties, and (4) organoleptic attributes.

The study of Deliya and Parmar (2012) [2] revealed that the buying behaviour of the consumer is dependent on the packaging and its features like packaging color, background image, packaging material, and font style, the design of wrapper, printed information and innovation taken as predictors. Due to increasing self-service and changing consumer's lifestyle, the packaging is considered a tool for sales promotion and stimulator of impulsive buying behaviour. In the point of sale, package performs a vital role in marketing communications and one of the most critical factors influencing consumers purchase decision.

Federal organizations incorporate federal, state, and local political demands at the equipped level of service delivery. They keep upright contradictory political claims and undertaking requirements as they try to improve feasible enforcement practices capable of attracting assistance and resources on numerous grounds without discouraging central help for budgetary resources and statutory authority.

Enforcement activities answered most consistently to daily enforcement links with concerned groups (Scholz, 2014)^[13]. Present societies require effective regulations to sustain development, venture, modernization, and market openness. Governments utilize protocols as a channel to influence or pointed cognitive and behavioural modifications in consumers and industries toward attaining particular policy objectives. The policy goals vary from economic to political to social policy purposes. Government employs regulations to intercede diverse, challenging interests in complicated, evolving societies. An efficient rule is essential both at the macro level and at the level of industries and consumers. The primary objective of such government involvement is to sustain public interest and the general welfare. In several developing countries where various institutions are vulnerable and missing markets result in ineffectiveness, regulation is one of many policy instruments exercised by the government to tackle market failure to produce favorable social outcomes (Llanto, 2015)^[5].

Methodology

This study used the mixed method of research. Mixed methods research is a methodology for piloting research that encompasses collecting, scrutinizing, and integrating or mixing quantitative and qualitative studies in individual study or a longitudinal program of inquiry. The purpose of this form of analysis is that both qualitative and quantitative research, in amalgamation, deliver a better understanding of a research problem or issue than either research approach alone (Bulsara, 2018)^[1].

This research design adopted because of its nature and direction in which results are measured and evaluated against some known or assumed standards. The assessment of the level effectiveness of PGSP and its innovative programs by various stakeholders must direct towards the characterization of these programs using quantitative measures. It leads towards the identification of best practices or the determination of inappropriate field practices in program implementation.

The study generated data from primary sources. The primary sources are the groups of stakeholders, namely: millers, wholesalers, retailers, and farmers, as well as the implementers directly involved in the implementation of PGSP and, will be done through the questionnaire, focus group discussions, interviews and document analysis. All samples are determined using the stratified proportional random sampling scheme.

Appropriate tools such as descriptive and inferential statistics used in interpreting the quantitative data of this study.

For problem 1 and 2, the statistical tool used is Mean to determine the level of effectiveness of PGSP in the areas of advocacy, quality standards, packaging, labeling and color-coding, enforcement and regulatory as assessed by external assessors composed of millers, wholesalers, retailers, farmers and the implementers comprising NFA personnel.

For problem 3 and 4, it is to determine the significant difference in the level of effectiveness of PGSP in the areas of advocacy, quality standards, packaging, labeling and color-coding, enforcement, and regulatory. When the assessors are grouped into implementers and external assessors, the researcher used the T-test because this tool determines the probability of difference between two variables. However, analysis of variance (ANOVA) is in use

in determining the significant difference in the level of effectiveness of PGSP in the areas of advocacy, quality standards, packaging, labeling and color-coding, enforcement and regulatory when the assessors are grouped into millers, wholesalers, retailers, and farmers.

Results, Discussion, and Implications

The level of effectiveness of PGSP in the areas of advocacy, quality standards, packaging, labeling and color-coding, enforcement and regulatory as assessed by 325 external assessors composed of millers, wholesalers, retailers, and farmers. The result shows that the level of effectiveness in the area of advocacy as evaluated by millers got a lowest while wholesalers had the highest among all external assessors. The result reflects that PGSP awareness of millers is limited and they are not exposed most of the time to advocacy medium used by the implementers.

Based on the focus group discussion, farmer-millers disclosed that they are not aware that PGSP exists and this program has sanctions and penalties for non-compliance with its provisions.

Even so, in the areas of quality standards and regulate the level of effectiveness as assessed by external assessors, farmers got the lowest and implied that farmers are not directly in concern on the output of their palay produced after it is disposed.

In the level of effectiveness of packaging, labeling, and color-coding as well as in regulatory as assessed by external assessors, farmers got the lowest score while retailers got the highest. The result reveals that farmers are less exposed to standard packaging and labeling and do not consider it of sufficient importance as compared to retailers who are the last recipient of the end product of supply chain and exposed most of the time to various packaging materials of rice.

Based on the focus group discussion, it the disclosure that packaging, labeling, and color-coding of milled rice does not source from the farmers and compliance in this area is not workable among farmers considering that packaging of palay harvest is not subject to packaging standards required by the program.

In the level of effectiveness of enforcement, millers had a lowest mean score and retailers had the highest. For compliance, implementation has to be adequately tough for a given sanction level. It implies that monitoring was done inside the market in which sanctions and penalties based on the document provided by NFA Negros Occidental are strictly imposed.

In an interview with Grains Retailers Confederation (GRECON), they revealed that retailers are monitored during enforcement activities while millers are not given attention, which is in contrast since millers are much required to the provisions of the program because they are the grains producers while retailers are ending outlet of the output for distribution.

External assessors *mean* scores denote an average level of effectiveness which means that the program is functioning reasonably and 80% to 89% of its components are effective and implemented. The results still suggest that there is a need of stakeholders' engagement in the implementation of PGSP.

The level of effectiveness of PGSP in the areas of advocacy, quality standards, packaging, labeling and color-coding, enforcement and regulatory as assessed by the implementers composed of NFA employees. The level of effectiveness of

PGSP in the area of advocacy has the lowest *mean* score while quality standards had the highest. The *mean* scores interpretation was high for the level of effectiveness as assessed by implementers which means that the program is functioning well and 90% to 99% of its components are effective and implemented.

Among the areas of PGSP, quality standards have the highest mean score which denotes that implementers emphasize promoting ethical and safe quality rice for public consumption through the quality standards. It also implies that grains classification, variety, and grades are advocated and implemented in the grains industry.

Based on the focus group discussion, quality assurance is essential to demonstrate uniformity, transparency, visibility, and assure the quality of the product and other consumer expectations.

However, advocacy has the lowest mean, which implies that aggressive campaign in all medium of communication not consistently implemented. The result of the study suggests that aggressiveness in imparting knowledge to stakeholders about the program is limited. Based on the interview, it was revealed that advocacy campaign is inadequate considering that this activity is being conducted only by one person in the provincial office.

The significant difference in the effectiveness of PGSP in the areas of advocacy, quality standards, packaging, labeling and color-coding, enforcement and regulatory when grouped according to external assessors which composed of millers, wholesalers, retailers, and farmers, analysis of variance used.

There was no significant difference in the effectiveness of PGSP in the areas of advocacy, quality standards, enforcement, and regulatory when grouped according to external assessors.

There was a significant difference in the effectiveness of PGSP in the area of packaging, labeling, and color-coding. Post hoc test revealed that the assessment of the farmer is significantly lower than the retailers.

It implies that farmers familiarity and awareness of the packaging, labeling, and color-coding component of PGSP is inadequate to implement the proper standards compared to retailers who are directly exposing to grains end products in the market.

Based on the focus group discussion, they disclose their lack of knowledge of standard packaging and labeling instead they are satisfied in their conventional rice packaging practice like the packaging of rice in white sacks regardless of classification, variety, and grade.

Based on the focus group discussion with technical personnel, standard packaging, labeling, and color-coding are not in practice in the present market situation due to non-compliance of millers to these standards, who are the source of produced milled rice sold in the market.

Independent samples t-test was used to determine the significant difference in the level of effectiveness of PGSP in the areas of advocacy, quality standards, packaging, labeling and color-coding, enforcement, and regulatory when the assessors are grouped into implementers and external assessors.

There was no significant difference in the level of effectiveness of PGSP in the areas of packaging, labeling, and color-coding, and regulatory when the assessors are grouped into implementers and external assessors.

There was a significant difference in the areas of advocacy

and quality standards in the level of effectiveness of PGSP when the assessors are grouped into implementers and external assessors.

The significant difference in advocacy as assessed by implementers and external assessors implies that implementers have an existing advocacy program of PGSP which is not absorbed by the stakeholders and was not continuously and adequately conducted. In an interview, advocacy is not aggressive due to lack of personnel. In quality standards, the significant difference implies that despite the implementer's enormous campaign of the application of quality standards, external assessors were not strictly and consistently complying with the required standards due to lack of motivation, especially in pricing benefit.

The significance of quality standards relates to its demand as economies develop. However, in different aspects of grain handling, including harvesting, threshing, drying and milling the quality of milled rice is low due to improper management techniques. Quality management approach in the postproduction has given little emphasis, and the majority of key players are not familiar with the general principles for maintaining grain quality. These principles are simple that convey the essence of the management of grain moisture content in the entire postproduction system.

Based on the discussion, quality standards are not prevailing in the market which is traditionally influenced by simplified practice on classification and variety. In local dialect, "humok or hamot" is used in price tags to satisfy consumer preferences and for clarity purposes.

Challenges/problems encountered by grains businessmen and NFA personnel in the implementation of PGSP in the areas of advocacy, quality standards, packaging, labeling and color-coding, enforcement and regulatory determined from the survey conducted among 332 respondents to be addressed by the management. Similarly, grains entrepreneurs and NFA personnel encountered the same challenges/problems in the implementation of PGSP which implies that both parties have the same perceptions of PGSP.

Identified challenges/problems are the following: in advocacy, the absence of a collective commitment among stakeholders, GOs, NGOs, LGUs, schools, and the media to educate the people on the benefits of PGSP; while in quality standards, lack of access to NFA-Negros Occidental regarding analyzing grains quality standards. However, in packaging, labeling, and color-coding, lack of monitoring of strict compliance/observance of packaging, labeling, and color-coding regulations while in enforcement, the strict observance of proper grading, packaging and labeling of products sold in the market. Lastly, in regulatory, lack of cooperation of government agencies, schools, and LGUs in the strict observance of PGSP rules and regulations.

The problems identified in the areas of advocacy and regulatory implies that there is a need for stakeholders' participation and commitment in the compliance of national grains standards. Greater participation is significant to enhance project efficiency and effectiveness, to promote participants self-reliance and to increase the number of potential people who will benefit from development (Oakley, 2018)^[8].

Based on discussions, in a big industry involving grains marketing stakeholders have multiple priorities and are constrained by time especially most of them are directly

handling the business. Stakeholders are more likely to take time if they are aware of the benefits of PGSP. They should have clarification on the purpose of the program in proper timing for them to know their specific roles. This case is one of the reasons that there is a gap regarding time and cooperation. Unfortunately, this is something we have to live and accept that change is constant in this world. Implementers must ensure to devote enough time to monitor, revisit the stakeholders, and ensure they are updated and consistently complying with the rules and regulations of PGSP. The researcher believes that dedicated communication line can help in effective implementation of PGSP. Implementers should communicate openly and encourage feedback to produce more significant commitment among participants.

In the area of quality standards, lack of access to NFA-Negros Occidental regarding analyzing grains was not adequately disseminated to stakeholders according to some farmers-millers and confirmed during a discussion. Implementers have not satisfactorily coordinated the access provided to stakeholders and ensure reliable and cost-effective grains analysis. There is a need to improve coordination and impart best practices, information, and experience to stakeholders. However, capacity lost when there is no continuity in the activities and if enough resources (including technology and equipment) are not available.

In an interview, despite millers' eagerness to comply in standard grading, the equipment used to determine the grades is costly and expensive unless the government through the Department of Agriculture will provide this required technology and training for the benefit of the farmers, millers, and the consuming public.

In packaging, labeling, and color-coding as well as in enforcement, the problem regarding the lack of monitoring of strict compliance of regulation exists in the grains industry. There is a need for more proactive compliance and consistent tracking to achieve program objectives. Many stakeholders agree that monitoring and enforcement are essential to guarantee that PGSP continues within the legal framework—and thus that the risks and opportunities of the program are spread appropriately—these essential activities often neglected. Insufficiency in capacity, transparency and government monitoring incentives all contribute to inadequate and unsatisfactory monitoring and enforcement activities.

The constraints were identified in my interviews with NFA personnel assigned to advocate and enforce the rules and regulations of PGSP. Lack of service vehicle has identified as a significant hindrance to enforcement activities. Monitoring activities deliver data about the progress of PGSP and the effect of policy measures. Providing regular information to the management and stakeholders can validate that the program has achieved, or will deliver, benefits to the grains industry in particular and the country in general, give value for money and whether it is worth continuing or requires enhancement to be successful.

This revelation supported by the document provided by the provincial office which shows the accomplishment of NFA-Negros Occidental regarding enforcement activities which reveals that despite the increase in the number of establishments identified from years 2015 to 2017, violations and fines collected decreases as recorded. Performance speaks; therefore, it implies that enforcement

activities are not consistently done and the employee assigned to do the task is lenient in imposing sanctions. Identified top two violations detected inside the market such as no NFA license which covers 65% and nonrenewal of NFA license which is 19% of the total apprehensions made. Registration and licensing performance of NFA-Negros Occidental implies a decreasing trend of production from 2014 to 2017 as regards to the number of licensees.

The need for more staffs to carry out the main tasks of PGSP implementation is necessary particularly in the areas of advocacy, enforcement and regulatory considering that only three (3) personnel are assigned to do.

The frequency distribution of responses based on interviews and focus groups discussions concerning the factors that contribute to the effectiveness of PGSP reveals that regular monitoring is the primary factor that makes the program efficient.

Primarily, PGSP is using the goal model of effectiveness which means effectiveness is measured by accomplishing goals.

In a focus group discussion made, the presence of unlicensed entrepreneurs in the grains industry affects the effectiveness of PGSP, and that consistent monitoring should be done to provide the management and principal stakeholders a continuing intervention with early indications of deficiency in the compliance of rules and regulations. An intervention might be an activity, training or another kind of support needed to achieve PGSP effective implementation.

Commitment is essential in any relationship. It is the value that inspires different entities so that all can unilaterally function. Securing commitment is challenging from all parties involved, many barriers and levels of engagement that may not necessarily guarantee that parties would enjoy expected rewards. In an interview, it emphasized that the effectiveness of PGSP implementation rely on the commitment and cooperation of the grains businessmen, Local Government Units, government offices, non-government organizations, and the public in general to apply and avail the benefits of grains standardization.

Sustainability of stakeholder's commitment developed by instituting a feedback system concerning their perceptions and concerns about PGSP, in which case, citizen's complaints desk is practiced in National Food Authority-Negros Occidental. The feedback data will be useful in driving to the next level of high-quality performance and in developing compelling and trusting relationships with them.

Advocacy is the realistic use of knowledge for reasons of social changes that are intended for government policies, laws, procedures, or sometimes to us and it is time-consuming, requires sacrifices, patience, involvement, teamwork both internal and external, communication and openness. It is, therefore, an undertaking of sustaining an issue and persuading the decision makers on how to undertake to maintain that issue. It is clear that advocacy is an efficient manner and not a one-way activity aimed at achieving some specific objectives.

Discussions revealed their lack of awareness and understanding of PGSP and the policy existence resulted in the improper practice of national grains standards specifically in quality standards as well as in packaging, labeling, and color-coding. Increasing awareness that leads to the effectiveness of PGSP is not only informing the stakeholders what to do – it is explaining questions and disseminating knowledge to them for decision-making

purposes.

High public awareness occurs when an essential part of the grains industry agrees that grains standardization is an issue of high importance to all citizens. This situation can be done through specific planned events like Ugnayans-the advocacy medium of NFA Negros Occidental, tarpaulin, internet websites, documents, newspaper articles, in schools and workplaces – any publicly available avenues. Stakeholders who access support and experienced advocacy express a high level of satisfaction. This satisfaction will lead to empowerment by enabling them to have their voices and opinions heard. This sense of empowerment can result in an improved personal well-being as well as increased self-confidence.

Discussions disclosed that penalties and sanctions not strictly implemented in the course of PGSP implementation. The imposition of a penalty, an amount which is determined by the extent of violations is likely considered to be the key for persuading compliance particularly for the millers who are the producers and source of milled rice sold in the market. Miller's responsibilities are the substance of PGSP in view of quality standards in addition to packaging, labeling, and color-coding.

To highlight the importance of rice in Philippine society, the National Food Authority created with the purpose of protecting the interests of both farmers and consumers. A vital grains industry development endeavor to institutionalize an efficient, profitable, orderly, and fair grains production and marketing system envisioned through the nationwide implementation of PGSP.

The NFA-Negros Occidental adheres to the implementation of PGSP in the province corresponding to its mandate to uphold the integrated growth and development in the grains industry. Thus, PGSP has a significant contribution toward nurturing food quality and safety consciousness as a primary concern to the incorporated growth of the grains industry.

NFA's general programs are intended to establish food security, protect consumers' welfare, and enhance the rice industry performance indicators in the context of the domestic and international economies.

Basically, in PGSP advocacy two significant programs of NFA are already given emphasis. Through its aggressive campaign, NFA will have an opportunity to capture a more significant sector of society for awareness of PGSP and introduce the two major programs of the agency which are palay procurement and rice distribution to address the agency's mandate.

Procurement program is accomplished to ensure and determine manageable buffer stock for food security while the agency's stabilization function is in focus on the price and supply of rice.

During procurement operations, essential features of PGSP had applied regarding quality standards specified in palay classification, varieties as well as grades when this palay is converted into milled rice. Farmers palay samples delivered to NFA were analyzed and graded at grain laboratories located in NFA provincial office to ascertain the accurate classification and variety of palay. When the farmers decided to sell their produce to NFA Negros Occidental, they receive pay at a support price of P17.00 per kilogram for the 14% moisture content clean and dry palay. Additional to this support price, farmers are given other incentives such as P0.20/kg for drying, P0.20 to P0.50 per kilogram for delivery depending on the distance of farm

from buying station and P0.30/kg for cooperative development incentive fee in the case of farmers' organization. Grain farmers, millers, and traders get the assurance of fair and reasonable earnings or revenues because of reliable basis in determining the quality and price of products sold in the market. This improved profitability will encourage investors in new grain production and marketing technologies that will enhance efficiency, lessen post-harvest losses, and enable the grain industry to be globally competitive.

In its distribution operations, standard packaging, labeling, and color-coding are implemented to present the adequately classified milled rice to the public. The agency offers a grant for rice consumption that is; it distributes rice at a price lower than the market-determined retail rate to assure the consuming public that affordable rice is accessible, available, and visible in the market. Low-priced rice is being sold by the agency at P27.00 per kilogram for regular milled rice and P32.00 for well-milled rice in the market. This case undertakes through the different distribution strategies such as accredited retailers, government agencies, and private institutions/others. PGSP contributes in the manner that proper classification of rice is determined by adequate pricing mechanism where the ultimate recipients of this low-priced rice are the low-income families of the country. According to the social contract theory, the welfare of the least benefited group must be the basis for the redistribution of benefits for as long as the interests of the rest of the stakeholders are not affected. In the context of the distribution program of the PGSP, the poor, who benefits least from the rice trading, will have to be protected. Hence, policies, programs and strategic interventions that will affect the modern application of Rawls social contract theory are needed enhancements to the PGSP implementation, which should be taken into consideration when designing such policies, programs, or strategic interventions (Rawls, 2018). Grains standardization contributes to the agency's stabilization mandate through the following parameters: quality standards on milled rice such as classification, variety, and grades. In the standard packaging, labeling, and color-coding, specifications must accurately identify regarding packaging size in the metric system, packaging materials and color of the price tag, and the necessary information appropriately used.

National grains standards will uphold consumers' rights and welfare because of transparent and fair marketing practices where consuming public gets the assurance of product quality and safety. More importantly, consumers can exercise their power of choice.

As part of the broader development strategies of the country, grains marketing policy like PGSP necessitates understood that can affect food security and poverty alleviation. The results of the study suggest that government should draw on the private sector in the management of the grain industry and the market system made an integral part of grains marketing policy.

Implementers and stakeholders are the keys to an effective PGSP policy and compliance program, and they must understand their particular roles and responsibilities in the program. With the establishment of a meaningful policy foundation, opportunities, and requirements, awareness must pass on to right training and testing of knowledge. The implications of establishing an effective policy are to ensure proper communication, compliance activities among

stakeholders, influence behavior, set understandable requirements, and guide people in decision making.

The researcher believes that research could also be carried out to inquire further how will government address insufficient technology advancement on grains production that will support PGSP policy.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, in the areas of advocacy, quality standards, packaging, labeling and color-coding, enforcement, and regulatory as assessed by 325 external assessors. They are composed of millers, wholesalers, retailers, and farmers, the PGSP level of effectiveness is evaluated to be average which implies that the program is functioning moderately, and 80% to 89% of its components are effective and implemented. It concludes that in all areas of PGSP implementation enhancement or improvements need to be done to achieve its full implementation.

On the other hand, the PGSP components such as advocacy, quality standards, packaging, labeling and color-coding, enforcement, and regulatory as assessed by implementers composed of NFA personnel, is highly effective which means that the program is functioning well, and 90% to 99% of its components are effective and implemented. Therefore, it concludes that implementers' undertaking in executing the PGSP is inconsistent and the staff gets no full support regarding resources.

Additionally, when grouped according to millers, wholesalers, retailers, and farmers in the analysis of variance, there was no significant difference in the level of effectiveness of PGSP in the areas of advocacy, quality standards, enforcement, and regulatory. However, in the field of packaging, labeling, and color-coding there was a significant difference in the level effectiveness. The assessment of farmers was significantly lower than the retailers using the post hoc test.

There was no significant difference in the areas of packaging, labeling and color-coding, enforcement, and regulatory when the assessors are grouped into implementers and external assessors. Conversely, in the areas of advocacy and quality standards, there was a significant difference in the level of effectiveness using the independent samples t-test. It concludes that in the areas of advocacy and quality standards, the external assessors and implementers have different views and awareness of the program.

Meeting these challenges or problems need a sustained concentration on the regularity, efficiency, and quality of implementation of a government program. Frequently, the challenges involved in turning policy into practical outcomes, and the skills necessary to do so, are not entirely acceptable. Too often the results fail of expectations. We know that deficiency in implementation deprives the community of the full benefits of the policy and waste community resources. The clear message is that management support is a crucial requirement for successful implementation. This situation necessitates an agency-wide outlook of service delivery awareness and agility and the coherence of vision and commitment as a vital element in driving change.

Data triangulation was used in the study so that diverse viewpoints and standpoints cast light upon the assessment of the PGSP level of effectiveness, and to help in cross verifying the same information in various places at different

times. Therefore, through the mixing of methodologies and after identifying the mean score of 3.56 when taken as a whole, the study concludes that PGSP of the National Food Authority in Negros Occidental is highly effective aspiring for continual improvement for the attainment of the objective.

Based on the results of the study, the researcher has formulated the following recommendations in the areas of advocacy, quality standards, packaging, labeling, and color-coding, enforcement and regulatory:

For the Millers, Wholesalers, Retailers, and Farmers, it is in a recommendation that they continually engage themselves in PGSP participatory programs that are meant to develop integrated growth and modernization of the grains industry.

For NFA-Negros Occidental, it is recommended to conduct PGSP orientation or briefing to NFA employees and other stakeholders specifically millers-who are the producers or processors in the cereal supply chain.

For the provincial office to utilize tri-media advertising campaign in advocating the PGSP, and to continue the Ugnayan meetings to different sectors of society.

For the Academe, it is recommended that they will help advocate grains standards awareness among students and professionals by incorporating grains standardization in their health and nutrition courses and other related subjects on consumerism.

It is recommended that capacity building should be developed among stakeholders through awareness and skills training particularly on quality standards to increase their capacity to perform their social responsibilities, solve quality standard issues, achieve program objectives, and enhance sustainable development and in making the relevant decision for the improvement of the industry.

For NFA-Negros Occidental to organize and conduct orientation and technical training on quality standards among grains industry stakeholders, schools, LGUs and other government agencies.

For the Producers, as the primary source of grains end-product, it is recommended to strictly observe the proper grading, packaging, and labeling of their products, by using the metric system.

It is further to recommend that producers must closely coordinate with the implementing agency, packaging material suppliers regarding prescribed packaging and labeling of grain commodities for sale.

For the National Food Authority-Negros Occidental, it is at this moment recommended to implement the proposed program for enhanced implementation of PGSP and to uphold effective and strict monitoring and evaluation of the proposed enhancement.

For the National Food Authority-Regional Office, it to recommend that the regional office will implement region-wide the proposed program for enhanced implementation of PGSP to launch interchangeability of products, processes, and services, or shared an understanding of information imparted according to these standards.

Further, for the Provincial Office, it is recommended to establish a partnership with LGUs in monitoring and giving sanction to violators and to implement strict monitoring and evaluation of compliance.

For NFA-Negros Occidental, it is recommended to coordinate with LGUs on PSGP commitment and cooperation in requiring NFA license to all grain's businessmen before issuance of the local business permit.

For the Local Government Units, it is recommended that they go into possible partnership with the implementing agency on the regulatory aspect that can help in improving the existing PGSP policy for the transformation and upgrading of the grains industry.

For the National Food Authority-Central Office, it is recommended that the agency will re-examine the specific provisions of PGSP particularly on the components that it is not already applicable in the present market system like the use of grades in price tags for simplification and avoid confusion of the consuming public.

For the Policy Makers, it is recommended to review existing PGSP policy for possible improvement and formulate a separate system based on demand-driven or technology advancement in support to PGSP for the integrated growth and modernization of the grains industry.

For the Department of Agriculture, it is suggested to consider a progressive concept change regarding grains production taking into consideration the advanced technical support and infrastructures to millers or processors, who is the source of grain end-product as well as new farming methodologies that can support PGSP policy to have a viable grains industry.

For the Consumers, it is recommended to practice their fundamental rights, exercise vigilance, and assist in exposing unfair trade practices. Moreover, to familiarize the PGSP rules and regulations and be actively involved in the advocacy campaign of the national grains standards.

It is recommended for the provincial office to promote leadership support in transforming organizational culture.

For the provincial office, it is recommended to review the organizational structure and the distribution of personnel to enhance the operational efficiency and effectiveness of NFA relative to the implementation of PGSP.

For the Public Administrators, it is recommended to consider the relevance of management principles applied including efficiency in utilization of resources, stakeholders' orientation, dependence on market forces, and sensitiveness to public needs.

For the Local Government Units, to use the study as a guide in planning development programs that affect the local farmers and consumers of the cities and municipalities.

For the Researchers, it is recommended that they continue researching to build and improve knowledge as well as to facilitate new learning using varying approaches and processes and encourage people to discover possibilities, to be familiar with existing issues, and to reveal truths and fabricated ones.

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