

Trade Fair Participation of Small Entrepreneurs in Mountain Province

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to determine the Trade Fair Participation of Small Entrepreneurs in Mountain Province. The study reveals that majority the entrepreneurs participate in trade fairs to a very great extent of participation and these trade fairs have a great impact to entrepreneurs. Maintained company exposure, acquired new customers, increased product awareness, increased sales and maintained regular customers have a very great impact to entrepreneurs. Improved market research/discover market trends & competition, improved business image, improved new product acceptance, and generated new sales channels have a great impact to entrepreneurs. Also, the extent of seriousness of the problems encountered by entrepreneurs in trade fairs is slightly serious. Trade fairs contribute to the growth and expansion of small businesses.

Keywords: Trade fair, Trade fair participation, Impact of trade fair, Small entrepreneurs trade fair participation, Mountain Province trade fairs.

1. Introduction

Trade fairs in the Philippines started in the 1980s by different organizations. Being a developing country, small scale entrepreneurs hardly compete with large companies due to limited technology, financial, and skilled human resources. They suffer from the increasing imports of products coming from other countries like China, Hongkong, Japan, Korea, Thailand, and Taiwan. The entry of international companies in the Philippines is another challenge for these small entrepreneurs in which they need to shut down their businesses when they can no longer cope up with the threat of competition.

In Mountain Province, trade fairs are being organized every year for all entrepreneurs to showcase their products with the incorporation of creative and artistic handicraft works, ethnic designs, and refined organic goods. These are the IMPAKABSAT industrial fair, Lang-ay Industrial Fair and other trade fairs that are yearly organized by each municipality of Mountain Province such as: Begnas Agro-Industrial Fair, Etag Festival, Ayoweng Agro-industrial Fair, Gagayam Agro-industrial Fair, and Am-among Festival Agro-industrial Fair. Entrepreneurs showcase their products like furniture, woven products, potteries, handicrafts, gift and home decors, fashion accessories, garments, fresh and processed foods, food service, ornamental and herbal plants, agricultural facilities, and others. With the participation of entrepreneurs in the trade fair, they can be able to come up with new designs, patterns, flavors, and new ideas from customers and local organizations. Although these are open for all entrepreneurs in Mountain Province, not all entrepreneurs or businessmen actively participate in the trade fair. This have led the researchers to conduct a study on the level of participation of entrepreneurs in the trade fair, problems and the impact of trade fair on small entrepreneurs of Mountain Province in order to come up with recommendations for better participation of local entrepreneurs in any trade fair activities being conducted in Mountain Province.

2. Statement of the Problem

1. What is the profile of participating entrepreneurs in terms of:
 - a. Type of industry
 - b. Years of existence
 - c. Number of workers
 - d. Average annual gross sales
2. What is the extent of participation of entrepreneurs in trade fairs?
 - 2.1. Is there a significant relationship between the extent of participation of entrepreneurs in trade fairs and their profiles?
3. What is the level of impact of trade fairs on participating entrepreneurs?
4. What is the degree of seriousness of the problems encountered by the participating entrepreneurs in trade fairs?

3. Null Hypothesis

1. There is no significant relationship between the extents of participation of entrepreneurs in trade fairs and their profiles?

4. Importance of the Study

The results of the study is very important to entrepreneurs as it provides valuable insights on how trade fairs help in the growth and expansion of small businesses which would be contributory to the success of local small businesses. The findings of the study will provide information to the local authorities for them to continue supporting trade fairs being conducted locally. The results of this study also serve as a springboard for further future researches that is related to this study.

5. Theoretical Framework

Trade fair is related to trade show, trade exhibition or trade expo that is being organized by any organization for companies to showcase their latest products and examine recent market trends and opportunities which involves marketing costs such as space rental, telecommunications and networking, display design and construction, travel and accommodations, as well as promotional items that is given to attendees (Rahman, 2013). Participants in trade fairs bear these marketing costs for their business advantage such as to increase their markets as well as their sales.

According to Luis (2001), business people participate in trade fairs as there is much impact to their marketing activities which includes: (1) generate inquiries and trade leads, the participants can be able to pick up prospective buyers especially for the introduction of highly technical products that need a long discussion and detailed exchanges of information; (2) generate sales, fairs have the capacity to draw a crowd in which the exhibitors have the chance to sell their products; (3) test product acceptance, the fairs is the best testing ground to test the new product market acceptance; (4) introduce new products, all new products can be introduced during the fair or to begin initial marketing with lesser cost than making an introductory sales campaign; (5) maintain company exposure in the market, for the reason that publicity is a major factor in promoting products and it is essential for companies to be seen in fairs in order to maintain their public image as part of their institutional advertising.

Fairs are considered as one of the major part of a marketing strategy for companies. The attendance in trade fairs is an effective method for expanding product awareness and generating sales leads to prospective buyers and visitors of the fair that results to an increase in sales during and after the fair. Acquisition of new customers, increase awareness, care of regular customers, presentation of new products/services, improve the image of the company/brands, opening up new markets, contracts and sales, new cooperation partner, market research, and new sales channels are the exhibitors' goals in participating trade fairs (Prenzel, 2009; AUMA, 2008).

6. Review of Related Literature and Studies

6.1 Trade Fair Participation

According to the AUMA (2015), trade fairs have wide range of functions. First, the business function which includes the development and cultivation of customer relations, searching for partners and staffs, positioning of the business, testing markets for new products, increase public awareness, analysis of market situation, preparing the ground for selling the products, and gaining an overview of the products and performance of competitors. Second, the macro-economic function which is benefiting the local economy in the region where the trade fair is conducted including hotels and restaurants, transport companies, construction and logistics for their services. This would result to the creation of considerable number of jobs in the region. Lastly, the social function allows business participants and the public to exchange knowledge about production and marketing strategies. Thus, trade fair have led to the growth of many small businesses in the country to enter international markets as foreign buyers visit trade fairs and make business relationships with these local businesses.

In addition, Boukersi (2000) discussed that trade fairs provides benefits to the sellers, buyers, and to the community. These benefits are selling benefits, promotional benefits, research benefits, and strategic benefits. The wide array of benefits could result to (a) meeting potential customers as well as regular customers; (b) having trade fair as a platform for the organization's marketing package to be in direct contact with potential customers who can experiment with the desired product and acquire technical information; (c) gaining first-hand information and in-depth feedback that might help measure the outcome of the trade fair through profiling of visitors and pre-launch market and product testing to gain a conducive

environment to conduct trade fair; and (d) adopting 'we cannot afford not to be there' attitude with the sole objective of entertaining existing customers.

Sousa (2002) also cited that participants attend trade fairs for they can (1) keep in touch with customers and distributors, (2) look for new customers and distributors, (3) exchange information with the competition, (4) closer look at the competition, (5) introduce new products and discover the latest novelties/trends of the market. Companies can be able to see easily their competitors and check new products of their existing competitors (Keinonen & Koponen, 2003). Besides, increase sales, gain brand awareness, get contacts and names, researching the competition, and making new contacts are the benefits of businesses in trade fairs (Anz Company, 2015). Further, companies can maintain their relationship with their customers (Jansson, 2007).

On the other hand, the International Trade Centre (2002) discussed that participating in trade fair allows firms to find out good agents to handle products in foreign countries; conduct market test; study competition in relation to prices, quality and packaging; make sales directly to customers; and learn sales and promotion methods. Direct contact with customers during trade fair facilitates exchange of ideas, views, and opinions (Koirala, 2011). Trade fair participation produces new experience, new knowledge, and trends (Petrova, 2014). This is related to the study conducted by Gebarowski & Waizewicz (2014), participation in trade fair permits the participants to present the latest offer and create experiences to customers so they can remember the brand. They can also learn the latest trends, show presence in the market, and monitor competition. Further, they can establish and maintain contacts, recognize customers' demands, gain media retention, and participate in fair-related events. With the participation of businesses in the trade fair, there is a greater opportunity for these businesses in market expansion. Trade fair is the perfect place to showcase products because of the presence of varied customers (Koirala, 2011). However, small firms with fewer resources prevent them to participate in trade shows (Tufail, 2009).

6.2 Problems Encountered in Trade Fairs

Every trade fair, there are some loopholes that hinders the success of the fair. However these can be minimized if not solved by both the sponsoring body and the participants. Koirala (2011) pointed out in his study that problems encountered by Nepalese in international trade participation are the availability of proper information, the suitability of the product to the fair that is being conducted, and the availability of strategic location in the fair. Aside from this, adequacy of government support in terms of funding, cooperation, and market intelligence, competitiveness of mode of payment for export such as consignment and payment documents, mechanism for selecting participants, and decreasing sponsored trade fairs are some of the problems in trade fairs.

Likewise, Miller (1999) disclosed that participation cost is another essential aspect for trade shows. Participation costs are considerably marketing problems for businesses to consider in attending trade fairs. This includes transportation costs, entrance ticket, hotel and food expenditure, stand, construction and design, organizational costs, staffing capabilities, and other costs. These costs are being considered by entrepreneurs in their decisions before they participate in trade fairs. At present, many entrepreneurs use online virtual trade shows. They do not attend trade fairs but can show and sell their products online. This is relatively low cost for both the entrepreneurs and the buyers.

Moreover, Keinonen & Koponen (2003) affirmed that trade fair participation costs like stand rent, participation fee, building and dismantling the stand, transportation, and storage place are part of the participation cost. Stand construction as well as furniture and accessories, electricity, cleaning services, internet connection, space and promotion cost are all expected in the trade fair participation which affects businesses in their participation decisions. Similarly, the AUMA (2013) highlighted that attendance to trade

fair involves cost such as stand rental and utilities like electricity, water, and disposal. Stand construction and outfitting, services on the stand and communication, transport and waste disposal as well as personnel and travel are all cost for the participating company. These costs may hinder participants in joining the trade fair. However, the amount of costs varies depending on the type of trade fair. International trade fair requires higher costs than local trade fair. The local entrepreneurs in Mountain Province incur lesser costs as these fairs are conducted within the province which are sponsored by the local governments in cooperation with some government agencies in the province. But, businesses are still affected by severe global competition and poor market access that leads to fewer sales and profitability (Azarcon, et al., 2005).

7. Research Design and Methodology

7.1 Research Design

The descriptive design of research was used in this study utilizing the descriptive-survey form through the use of a questionnaire to identify the participation of entrepreneurs, impact of trade fair to the participating entrepreneurs, and the problems encountered by the participating entrepreneurs during the trade fair.

7.2 Locale and Population of the Study

The study was conducted in Bontoc, Mountain Province from April 1-7, 2015 during the “Lang-ay Trade Fair” which is spearheaded by the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist (OPAG) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). There are more than 100 entrepreneurs who attended the fair including guest exhibitors who only sell their specialty products. Forty (40) participants were chosen as the respondents of this study who actively attended the trade fair for the whole week. Only the entrepreneurs who have the business license and who registered their business with the Department of Trade and Industry were included. Sellers who were hired by the entrepreneurs are excluded in the sample. Also, those guest exhibitors and those businessmen who are not from Mountain Province are not included in the study since the focus of this research is the participation of small entrepreneurs from Mountain Province in trade fairs.

7.3 Data Gathering Tools

The questionnaire is the primary tool in gathering the information from entrepreneurs. It consists of four (4) parts. Part I comprises the profile of the participating local entrepreneurs. Part II comprises the participation of local entrepreneurs on the trade fair that is being conducted in Bontoc. Part III contains the impact of trade fair on the participating entrepreneurs. In this, the variables used are based on the concepts that are enumerated by Luis (2001), the AUMA (2008), & Prenzel (2009). However, some variables are modified to be more applicable or suitable to the entrepreneur-respondents. Part IV contains the problems encountered by the participating entrepreneurs in attending the trade fair in which the problems are being formulated based on the pre- interview conducted to eight (8) entrepreneurs who regularly participate in any trade fair activities in the province.

In addition, interview and observation were made to get more information from the entrepreneur-respondents.

7.4 Data Gathering Procedures

The researchers personally gave the questionnaire to the entrepreneurs who attended the “Lang-ay” trade fair. The researchers assisted and guided the entrepreneur-respondents in answering the questionnaire. The questionnaires were collected immediately from the entrepreneurs. Interview was also made to the respondents to verify and get more information related to their trade fair participation.

7.5 Treatment of Data

The data gathered from the respondents were treated statistically using frequency, percentage, and weighted mean. The extent of participation of respondents, the level of impact of trade fairs to entrepreneurs, and the degree of seriousness on the problems encountered by participating entrepreneurs were treated with a four point Likert scale. Means and percentage were computed and interpreted using the following scale:

$$\text{Mean: } \mu = AM + \frac{i \sum fd}{n}$$

Table 1. Mean Ranges and their Descriptive Equivalents for the Extent of Participation of Entrepreneurs.

Rating Scale	Mean Ranges	Frequency of Participation	Extent of Participation
4	3.50 – 4.00	Always	Very Great Extent (VGE)
3	2.50 – 3.49	Often	Great Extent (GE)
2	1.50 – 2.49	Seldom	Little Extent (LE)
1	1.00 – 1.49	Never	No Extent (VLE)

Table 2. Mean Ranges and their Descriptive Equivalents for the Level of Impact of Trade Fair and for the Degree of Seriousness of Problems Encountered by Entrepreneurs.

Rating Scale	Mean Ranges	Level of Impact	Degree of Seriousness
4	3.50 – 4.00	Very Great Impact (VGI)	Very Serious (VS)
3	2.50 – 3.49	Great Impact (GI)	Serious (S)
2	1.50 – 2.49	Little Impact (LI)	Slightly Serious (SS)
1	1.00 – 1.49	No Impact (NI)	Not Serious (NS)

To determine the relationship of the level of participation and the profile variables, the Chi-square was used using the critical value 0.05 level of significance.

$$\text{Chi-square : } X^2 = \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

8. Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation of Data

8.1 Profile of Participating Entrepreneurs

The table shows that majority of the entrepreneurs (30%) are in the food industry who participated in the trade fair. The food industry is the most common business in the Philippines considering the growing population of the country. One of the current and thriving businesses in the Philippines are food and recreation (Azarcon et al., 2005). The food vendors can be seen selling in almost every street in cities and towns. Some carry with them their products and sell it in every house or from one office to another.

Table 3
Profile of Entrepreneurs in Terms of Type of Industry

N = 40

Type of Industry	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Food	12	30
Woodwork	3	7.50
Handicraft	6	15
Garments	4	10
Weaving	7	17.50
Agro- business	6	15
Service	2	5
Total	40	100

Further, there are only 17.5% entrepreneurs who are in the weaving industry while 15% for both the handicraft and agro-business. Entrepreneurs are relatively few in the garment industry (10%), woodworks (7.50%), and services (5%). This could be the result of product competition and the Filipino practices to earn a degree and find work in the government or private sectors. There is still the culture among Filipino parents to discourage their children from going to entrepreneurship after taking formal education so they could search job in big companies (Camposano, 2004).

The table 4 below shows that there is growing number of entrepreneurs in Mountain Province with 37.5% businesses that were established from 2012 to 2015. This means that majority of the businesses had been operating up to 3 years. Most of these businesses that attended the trade fair are very young in the industry. It can be deduced from the table that there is an increasing number of entrepreneurs. This could be the result of the different support programs of the government for businesses. The government had various undertakings to help entrepreneurs by providing free trainings and production assistance. Sometimes, short-term loans are also provided to businesses with less interest rate, however, only few who can avail of this loan depending on the funds availability.

Table 4
Profile of Entrepreneurs in Terms of Years of Existence

N = 40

Year Established	Frequency	Percentage(%)	Length of Operation (Years)
Before 1999	3	7.50	More than 17
2000-2003	4	10	12-16
2004-2007	6	15	8-11
2008-2011	12	30	4-7
2012-2015	15	37.5	0-3
Total	40	100	

Moreover, 30% businesses were established from 2008 to 2011. These businesses had been operating from 4-7 years. In addition, there are also 15% businesses that were established from 2004 to 2007 and they had been operating for 8 – 11 years.

Lastly, there are only 10% businesses that were established from 2000 to 2003 and had been operating for 12 to 16 years while 7.50% businesses were established before 1999 and had been operating

for more than 17 years. This means that these businesses have enough experience in marketing their products through trade fairs than those who established their business recently.

Based on the table 5, there are 50% entrepreneurs who employed 1 to 4 workers and 35% entrepreneurs who employed 5 to 9 workers. This indicates that majority of the entrepreneurs employed few workers in their businesses. Most of the respondents revealed that the members of the family who are unemployed help in the business to lessen cost of labor. It is very hard to get good jobs in the government and private companies even with lesser salaries. Thus, family members help in the family business.

Table 5
Profile of Entrepreneurs in Terms of Number of Workers

N = 40

Number of Workers	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1-4	20	50
5-9	14	35
10-14	4	10
15-19	2	5
20 and above	0	0
Total	40	100

There are 10% entrepreneurs who employed 10 to 14 workers and only 2 entrepreneurs who have 15-19 workers. Some of these are in the weaving industry. Nevertheless, none of the entrepreneurs employed more than 20 workers. The respondents claimed that size of the business, high cost of labor, lack of capital, high cost of equipment and machines, and limited market affects their decisions in hiring workers.

Table 6
Profile of Entrepreneurs in Terms of Average Annual Gross Sales

N = 40

Sales Range (Peso)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
below 50,000	8	20
50,001-500,000	16	40
500,001-5,000,000	12	30
5,000,001-20,000,000	2	5
Above 20,000,000	2	5
Total	40	100

The finding shows that majority of the entrepreneurs have an average annual sales of P50,001 to P500,000 with a frequency of 40%. This is followed by P500,001 to P5,000,000 with a frequency of 30%. However, 20% entrepreneurs have an average sales of below P50,000 while only 5% entrepreneurs that have both an average sales of P5,000,001 to P20,000,000 and above P20,000,000. This indicates that the entrepreneurs who participated in the trade fair have limited average annual sales. This could be the reason why the entrepreneurs attend trade fairs so they can increase their sales. Businessmen prepare the ground for selling their products during trade fairs (Auma, 2015).

It can also be gleaned from the table that there are comparatively low annual sales. The low sales of businesses are the effect of severe global competition and poor market access (Azarcon, et al., 2005). This is true because the Philippines is a dumping ground of less quality products coming from industrialized

countries and other neighboring countries particularly China, Japan, and Korea. With the influx of imported and smuggled products, the entrepreneurs hardly sell their products. The government still continues its liberalization, rationalization, and privatization to accommodate globalizing market in which the Philippines can hardly compete against developed countries in terms of production and marketing facilities. The globalization reforms and programs of the government are very detrimental to the growth of small entrepreneurs including the entrepreneurs in Mountain Province.

8.2 Participation of Entrepreneurs in the Trade Fair

Table 7 presents the extent of participation of entrepreneurs in the trade fair. The computed weighted mean is 3.65 which is very great extent of participation. This means that the entrepreneur respondents participate in every trade fair activity that is being held in Mountain Province.

Table 7

Participation of Entrepreneurs in Trade Fair

N = 40

Extent of Participation	Very Great		Great Extent		Little Extent		Very Little	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Participating entrepreneurs	31	77.5	5	12.5	3	7.5	1	2.5
Weighted Mean	3.65							
Descriptive Equivalent	Very Great Extent							

It can be deduced from the table that 77.5% of the entrepreneurs participate in trade fairs to a very great extent of participation while 12.5% of the entrepreneurs participate in trade fairs to a great extent of participation. With the intense competition of consumer goods in Mountain Province, entrepreneurs attend to trade fairs to increase their sales. This is related to table 6, the entrepreneurs have limited annual sales so they need to participate in trade fairs. They could sell more of their inventories and they can also take orders from customers.

Conversely, there are 7.5% of the entrepreneurs participate to a little extent of participation, and 2.5% of the entrepreneurs participate in trade fairs to a very little extent of participation. The little extent of participation of these few entrepreneurs can be traced to table 10 regarding the problems encountered by entrepreneurs during the trade fair.

In terms of relationship between the level of participation of respondents to the profile variables as to type of industry, years of existence, number of workers and average annual gross sales, statistical analysis using chi-square revealed a computed X^2 value of 0.99, 0.092, 0.60, and 0.95 respectively. These are lesser than the critical value as shown on the table 8. This means that there is no significant relationship of the level of participation of respondents to the type of industry, years of existence, number of workers, and annual gross sales. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Table 8
Summary of Table on Relationship of Participation of
Respondents on Trade Fair and the Profiles of Respondents

N= 40

Profile Variables	Computed X ² value	Critical X ² value at 0.05 level of significance
Type of Industry	0.99 Not Significant	12.292 (df=6)
Years of Existence	0.92 Not Significant	9.488 (df=4)
Number of Workers	0.60 Not Significant	9.488 (df=4)
Average Annual Gross Sales	0.95 Not Significant	9.488 (df=4)

8.3 Impact of Trade Fairs to Entrepreneurs

Table 9

Impact of Trade Fairs to Entrepreneurs

N = 40

Trade Fair Impacts	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Increased sales	3.50	Very Great Impact
2. Maintained regular customers	3.50	Very Great Impact
3. Acquired new customers/markets	3.60	Very Great Impact
4. Generated new sales channels	2.88	Great Impact
5. Increased product awareness	3.60	Very Great Impact
6. Improved new product acceptance	2.95	Great Impact
7. Improved business image	3.25	Great Impact
8. Maintained company exposure	3.65	Very Great Impact
9. Improved market research/discover market trends & competition.	3.35	Great Impact
Average/Overall	3.36	Great Impact

The table shows the impact of trade fairs to entrepreneurs. With the overall mean of 3.36, it means that trade fair has a great impact to entrepreneurs.

Looking closely at the table, maintained company exposure has the highest computed weighted mean of 3.65 which is of very great impact to entrepreneurs. Both acquired new customers/markets and increased product awareness has a weighted mean of 3.60 which means both have a very great impact to entrepreneurs. Whereas, both increased sales and maintained regular customers have a weighted mean of 3.50 which means that both have a very great impact to entrepreneurs. This indicates that the entrepreneurs are improving their business exposure at the same time increasing their market share in the industry through trade fair participation. Participating in trade fair allows firms to find out good agents and establish contacts (Gebarowski & Waizewicz, 2014), increase sales and gain brand awareness (Anz Company, 2015), and they can maintain and acquire new relationship with their customers (Jansson, 2007).

It is also deduced from the table that improved market research/discover market trends & competition (3.35), improved business image (3.25), improved new product acceptance (2.95), and generated new sales channels (2.88) have great impact to entrepreneurs. This means that participation in trade fairs is worth benefitting to the entrepreneurs. Participants attend trade fairs for they can have a closer look at the competition and discover the latest novelties/trends of the market (Sousa, 2002). Companies can be able to see easily their competitors and check new products of their existing competitors (Keinonen, 2003) and participating in trade fair allows firms to find out good agents to handle products in foreign countries (International Trade Centre, 2002).

Based on the findings, the impact of trade fair participation to entrepreneurs motivate them to participate in any trade fairs particularly those fairs that are conducted in Mountain Province. This is revealed in table 7 in which the entrepreneurs participate in trade fairs to a very great extent.

8.4 Problems Encountered by Entrepreneurs

Table 10 shows the extent of seriousness of the problems encountered by entrepreneurs in the trade fair. The overall mean is 2.67 which indicate that the extent of seriousness of the problems for the entrepreneurs is serious.

Table 10

Problems Encountered by Entrepreneurs

N = 40

Problems of Entrepreneurs in Trade Fair Participation	Weighted Mean	Qualitative Description
1. Fewer sales than expected	2.60	Serious
2. Limited number of days for the fair	2.95	Serious
3. High cost of registration fee	2.25	Slightly Serious
4. Limited availability of stalls/booths	3.13	Serious
5. Limited stall space, facilities, and lightings	2.90	Serious
6. Limited availability of products/stock shortage	2.25	Slightly Serious
7. Few buyers	3.10	Serious
8. High cost of transportation	2.75	Serious
9. Limited promotion of the trade fair	2.70	Serious
10. Lack of local government support	2.10	Slightly Serious
Average/Overall	2.67	Serious

With the problems presented on the table, limited availability of stalls/booths and few buyers are the most serious problems of entrepreneurs with the weighted mean of 3.13 and 3.10 respectively. The respondents revealed that the number one problem in every trade fair is the limited booths provided by sponsoring agencies. Entrepreneurs apply for any available space where they can put up their temporary tent in order to display their products. This is very risky for they always encounter some missing product displays. Thus, one has to sleep in the tent to watch their products after closing time at night. On the other hand, entrepreneurs experience the problem of few buyers particularly on the third day to the last day. But still they need to display their products up to the last day for the hope that they could be able to make sales. However, this depends on the type of products being displayed. Foods products and vegetables have higher turnover than other products from the first day to the last day of the trade fair.

Other problems are limited number of days for the fair with 2.95 weighted mean and limited stall space, facilities and lightings with 2.90 weighted mean. These are also serious problems for the entrepreneurs. The Rizal Park is utilized for the fair. Booths and tents are set up. The space is not enough for some entrepreneurs to display and their products. Storage space is limited so the entrepreneurs need to go home and bring some products once their displays are all sold. Even the streets in the market are closed for the entrepreneurs to put up their stalls. Every space is being utilized to display their products. This contributes to traffic problems so the municipal government limit the days for the fairs. Also, the entrepreneurs need to install additional lightings to improve the brightness of the stalls and to attract more customers.

The table also shows that high cost of transportation (2.75), limited promotion (2.70), and fewer sales than expected (2.60) are also the serious problems of entrepreneurs. Transportation in Mountain Province is expensive. The rugged roads and high terrains as well as the high cost of oil in the province add to the cost of transportation. The cost of transporting the products for those entrepreneurs who come from far and remote places hinder the entrepreneurs in participating in the trade fair activities. This is especially true for those who have no cars and whose products are bulky to transport like woodcarvings, furniture and others. Also, with limited promotion of the fair, the entrepreneurs are faced with fewer sales problems. This is related to table 6 which shows that majority of the entrepreneurs have an average annual sales of P50,001 to P500,000. The entrepreneurs claimed that the sponsoring agencies have fewer efforts in promoting the trade fair.

Nevertheless, high cost of registration fee and limited availability of products/stock shortage have both mean of 2.25. These are slightly serious problems of entrepreneurs because they consider the registration fee a minimal expense. They disclosed that they can offset this amount from their sales within 2-3 days if there are more visitors come to the trade fair. They also claimed that they have less problems on stock shortages because they have high inventories in the past months production. They further added that their problem is how to sell all their inventories. However, those who are selling fresh and processed foods, ornamental and herbal plants as well as fruits and vegetables face problems on product shortage. Their products normally consumed from the first day to the second day of the trade fair.

Lastly, lack of government support with 2.10 weighted mean is the least problem for the entrepreneurs. The provincial and municipal government of Mountain Province is very supportive in the trade fair activities through the maintenance of peace and order in the province as well as cleanliness of the place particularly where the trade fair is located. Government support to trade fairs attracts more visitors.

9. Findings, Conclusion and Recommendation

9.1 Findings and Conclusion

1. Profile of Participating Entrepreneurs
 - a. Majority of the entrepreneurs are engaged in the food, handicraft, weaving and clothing industry.
 - b. Majority of the entrepreneurs established their business from 2012 to 2015 or they are in the business for 0 to 3 years. Some of the businesses were also established in 2008 to 2011 or they had been in operation for 4-7 years.
 - c. Majority of the entrepreneurs employed 1 to 4 workers. Few entrepreneurs employed 5-9 workers.
 - d. Majority of the entrepreneurs have an average annual sales of P50,001 to P500,000.
2. The entrepreneurs participate in trade fairs to a very great extent of participation. The null hypothesis is accepted.

3. On the average, trade fairs have a great impact to entrepreneurs.

Maintained company exposure, acquired new customers/markets, increased product awareness, increased sales and maintained regular customers have a very great impact to entrepreneurs. Improved market research/discover market trends & competition, improved business image, improved new product acceptance, and generated new sales channels have a great impact to entrepreneurs.

4. On the average, the extent of seriousness of the problems encountered by entrepreneurs in trade fairs is slightly serious.

Few buyers, limited stall/booths, limited stall space, facilities, and lightings as well as high cost of transportation are serious problems for entrepreneurs. While high cost of registration fee and limited availability of products/stock shortage, fewer sales than expected, limited promotion of the trade fair and lack of local government support, and limited number of days for the fair are considered as slightly serious for entrepreneurs.

Therefore, trade fairs contribute to the growth and expansion of small businesses considering that they have limited resources and have limited markets because trade fairs allows them to find new customers, increase their sales, and generate new sales channels while improving their business image.

9.2 Recommendations

1. The local government continued support to local entrepreneurs should to be strengthened like offering more free trainings to local entrepreneurs for them to come up with new designs, packaging, pricing, international marketing, and other related trainings to improve their competitiveness.

2. The Department of Trade and Industry should support the entrepreneurs in the marketing of their products not only in the local market but international market through international market linkages.

3. The sponsoring organizations for the trade fair should improve their trade fair promotions with the use of the different marketing media to inform the public about the trade fair event. In this way, more customers outside the province will visit the fair. Also invitations should be sent to entrepreneurs to attend the trade fairs.

4. Sponsoring organizations particularly the DTI, Provincial Government, and the Municipal Government should provide more stalls, better stall space, facilities and lightings to increase the participation of entrepreneurs in trade fairs.

5. Existing products should be improved if not competitive against commercial products that are produced by large firms outside Mountain Province. This is also to meet the changing preferences and demands of local consumers and to attract international buyers.

10. References

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