

# **Local Government Unit Livelihood Program Support and Small Medium Enterprises' Performance in Carmona, Cavite: Inputs to Socio-Economic Development Plan**

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**Abstract** – Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) play a vital role in local economic vitality, contributing significantly to employment creation and innovation. This study evaluated the Local Government Unit (LGU) Livelihood Program Support in Carmona, Cavite, and its relationship to SME performance. Using a descriptive-correlational design, data were gathered from 643 respondents—LGU employees, SME owners, and SME staff—via a validated researcher-made questionnaire. Findings reveal that LGU support is generally evident, with strong results in business development services and program design. SME performance was also assessed as evident, particularly in innovation, market performance, and customer satisfaction. Statistical analyses show a moderately strong positive correlation between LGU support and SME performance, while significant differences emerged in stakeholder assessments of training, regulation, and financial support. Key problems include delays in financial assistance, limited stakeholder involvement in planning, and inconsistencies in policy implementation. Based on these findings, the study proposes evidence-based inputs to a Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP) aimed at fostering a more inclusive, efficient, and participatory SME ecosystem.

**Keywords** – Business Development Services, Livelihood Program Support, Local Government Unit, Small and Medium Enterprises, Socio-Economic Development Plan

## **INTRODUCTION**

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are globally recognized as engines of economic growth, socio-economic stability, and employment generation. In both emerging and industrialized nations, SMEs play a critical role in diversifying local economies, fostering innovation, and supporting community livelihood systems. In the Philippine context, SMEs account for more than 99% of total registered businesses and employ approximately 63% of the national workforce, positioning them at the forefront of grassroots and regional economic development. Their capacity to stimulate economic activity at the local level, create job opportunities, and promote inclusive growth

underscores their relevance in national policy discourse. Within Cavite—a major industrial and economic corridor—Carmona stands out as a rapidly developing city with a thriving SME community. The city's robust industrial sector, supported by ecozones and commercial hubs, has enabled various SMEs to flourish across manufacturing, retail, food services, technology, and service-oriented sectors. To support this growing entrepreneurial base, the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Carmona has implemented a range of livelihood programs aimed at enhancing SME capabilities, improving operational efficiencies, and strengthening business resilience.

Despite these interventions, challenges remain concerning the responsiveness, accessibility, and overall effectiveness of LGU livelihood support programs. Key concerns include bureaucratic barriers, delays in financial support, limited SME participation in program planning, and constraints in training quality and relevance. While national laws such as the Magna Carta for MSMEs (RA 9501) and the BMBE Law (RA 9178) mandate comprehensive support for SMEs, the extent to which these policies are effectively localized and operationalized at the LGU level remains unclear.

Thus, this study seeks to bridge these knowledge gaps by comprehensively assessing LGU livelihood program support and determining its relationship with SME performance in Carmona. The results aim to inform policy enhancement and provide a structured input to a Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP), ultimately contributing to a more resilient, competitive, and inclusive local business ecosystem.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study aims to conduct an extensive, multidimensional analysis of the Local Government Unit (LGU) Livelihood Program Support for Small and Medium Enterprises in Carmona, Cavite, and evaluate how such assistance influences the performance, sustainability, and competitiveness of SMEs.

Specifically, the study seeks to examine the breadth and depth of LGU interventions in the areas of financial support, program design and implementation, business development services, skills training and capability building, and regulatory and policy support. It also aims to assess SME performance in terms of market operations, human resource management, innovation and growth, operational efficiency, networking and partnerships, and monitoring and evaluation practices. Additionally, the study investigates whether significant perceptual differences exist among LGU employees, SME owners, and SME staff regarding the effectiveness of LGU support programs.

The acceptability of the proposed SEDP is assessed to ensure alignment with stakeholder expectations and LGU implementation capacity.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This research employed a descriptive correlational design to evaluate the extent of LGU livelihood program support and measure its relationship with SME performance. The study population included 83 LGU employees, 169 SME owners, and 391 SME staff, totaling 643 respondents selected using purposive sampling. This sampling technique ensured that respondents possessed direct experience and knowledge relevant to LGU programs and SME operations.

### **Research Instrument**

A comprehensive researcher-made questionnaire composed of five sections was used. The first section gathered demographic profiles; the second assessed LGU support; the third measured SME performance; the fourth captured problems encountered; and the fifth evaluated the acceptability of the proposed SEDP. Each item used a 5-point Likert scale.

### **Data Gathering**

The researcher secured formal approval from EARIST Graduate School and SME establishments. Questionnaires were distributed through on-site visits, ensuring direct engagement with respondents. Completed forms were retrieved, encoded, tallied, and subjected to statistical analysis.

### **Statistical Treatment**

The study employed a comprehensive set of statistical tools to analyze the data gathered from LGU employees, SME owners, and SME staff in order to generate meaningful interpretations and validate the study's findings. Percentage distribution was used to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents, offering a clearer understanding of the composition of the study population. To measure the extent of LGU livelihood support and the level of SME

performance across different dimensions, weighted mean was utilized, enabling the researcher to interpret responses based on standardized qualitative descriptors. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was applied to determine significant differences in the perceptions of the three respondent groups, providing insight into whether their assessments varied based on their roles and experiences within the SME ecosystem. Overall, the combination of these statistical treatments ensured rigorous, reliable, and data-driven analysis of the research variables.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Profile of the Respondents

**Table 1.** Population and Sample

Respondents	N	n	%
LGU Employees	98	98	83
SME Owners	273	273	169
SME Staffs	1563	1563	391
Total	1934	1934	643

As presented in Table 1, the respondents of the study among 643 total respondents is divided into three groups of respondents, such as: 391 or 60.81 percent are staff, 169 or 26.28 percent are SMEs owners, and 83 or 12.91 percent are LGU employees.

**Table 2.** Respondents as to Age

Age	f	%
51 years old and above	100	15.55
46 – 50 years old	83	12.91
41 – 45 years old	113	17.57
36 – 40 years old	86	13.37
31 – 35 years old	89	13.84
26 – 30 years old	76	11.82
21 - 25 years old	59	9.18
20 years old and below	37	5.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>643</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As manifested in Table 2, the distribution of respondents as to age, such as: 113 or 17.57 percent are aged 41-45 years old, 100 or 15.55 percent are aged 51

years old and above, 89 or 13.84 percent are aged 31-35 years old, 86 or 13.37 percent are aged 36-40 years old, 83 or 12.91 percent are aged 46-50 years old, 76 or 11.82 percent are aged 26-30 years old, 59 or 9.18 percent are aged 21-25 years old, and 37 or 5.75 percent are aged 20 years old and below.

**Table 3.** Respondents as to Sex

Sex	f	%
Male	310	48.21
Female	333	51.79
<b>Total</b>	<b>643</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As reflected in Table 3, the distribution of respondents as to sex, such as: 333 or 51.79 percent are female, and 310 or 48.21 percent are male.

**Table 4.** Respondents as to Civil Status

Civil Status	f	%
Single	221	34.37
Married	287	44.63
Legally Separated	36	5.60
Widow/ed	99	15.40
<b>Total</b>	<b>643</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As presented in Table 4, the distribution of respondents as to civil status, such as: 287 or 44.63 percent are married, 221 or 34.37 percent are single, 99 or 15.40 percent are widow/ed, and 36 or 5.60 percent are legally separated.

**Table 5.** Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	f	%
Master's Degree	20	3.11
Masters with earned units	74	11.51
Bachelor's Degree	350	54.43
Undergraduate	199	30.95
<b>Total</b>	<b>643</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As presented in Table 5, the respondents' educational attainment shows that the majority are bachelor's degree holders, comprising 350 or 54.43

percent of the total respondents. This is followed by undergraduate respondents with 199 or 30.95 percent. Meanwhile, 74 respondents or 11.51 percent have earned units toward a master's degree, while only 20 respondents or 3.11 percent have completed a master's degree. These results indicate that most respondents have attained at least a bachelor's level of education, suggesting a generally well-educated respondent population.

**Table 6.** Years of Service

<b>Years of Service</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
26 years and above	48	7.47
21 - 25 years	76	11.82
16 – 20 years	75	11.66
11 - 15 years	130	20.22
6 - 10 years	140	21.77
5 years and below	174	27.06
Total	643	100.0

As shown in Table 6, the distribution of respondents as to years of service, such as: 174 or 27.06 percent are 5 years and below in service, 140 or 21.77 percent are 6-10 years in service, 130 or 20.22 percent are 11-15 years in service, 76 or 11.82 percent are 21-25 years in service, 75 or 11.66 percent are 16-20 years in service, and 48 or 7.47 percent are 26 years and above in service.

### **Assessment of the Respondents as to LGU Livelihood Training Support**

**Table 7.** Local Government Unit's Livelihood Program Support as to Financial Support

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>WM</b>	<b>VI</b>
SMEs can access loan programs facilitated by the LGU with favorable terms and conditions when needed.	3.98	Excellent

Reasonable and affordability of credit schemes provided or endorsed by the LGU of Carmona City, allowing SMEs to sustain operations without financial strain.

3.94 Excellent

The local government unit of Carmona City provides training programs aimed at improving the financial management capabilities of SMEs owners.

4.05 Excellent

There is sufficiency of allocated funds from the LGU to meet the financial needs of SMEs for business sustainability and growth.

4.05 Excellent

Presence of various financial support mechanisms such as microfinancing, revolving funds, and capital grants tailored to different SMEs needs.

4.23 Highly Excellent

Continued growth in the proportion of SMEs that have successfully availed of financial support, including grants, loans, and subsidies, provided by the LGU.

4.17 Excellent

Increase in the rate at which SMEs successfully repay LGU facilitated loans, indicating financial discipline and program effectiveness.

4.16 Excellent

Acceptable average timeline of duration from application to actual release of financial assistance, ensuring timely utilization for business needs.

4.15 Excellent

**Overall Weighted Mean** **4.09** Excellent

As presented in Table 7, the assessment of the Local Government Unit's Livelihood Program support as to financial support was rated as Evident with an overall weighted mean of 4.09. One (1) item is rated as Highly Evident which is presence of various financial support mechanisms such as microfinancing, revolving funds, and capital grants tailored to different SMEs needs with a composite weighted mean of 4.23 as rank 1. Seven (7) items are rated as Evident, namely: continued growth in the proportion of SMEs that have successfully availed of financial support, including grants, loans, and subsidies, provided by the LGU with a composite weighted mean of 4.17 as rank 2; increase in the rate at which SMEs successfully repay LGU-facilitated loans, indicating financial discipline and program effectiveness with a composite weighted mean of 4.16 as rank 3; acceptable average timeline of duration from application to actual release of financial assistance, ensuring timely utilization for business needs with a composite weighted mean of 4.15 as rank 4; the local government unit of Carmona City provides training programs aimed at improving the financial management capabilities of SMEs owners; and there is sufficiency of allocated funds from the LGU to meet the financial needs of SMEs for business sustainability and growth with both the composite weighted mean of 4.05 as rank 5.5; SMEs can access loan programs facilitated by the LGU with favorable terms and conditions when needed with a composite weighted mean of 3.98 as rank 7; and reasonable and affordability of credit schemes provided or endorsed by the LGU of Carmona City, allowing SMEs to sustain operations without financial strain with a composite weighted mean of 3.94 as rank 8.

As to assessments of the groups of respondents on the local government unit's livelihood program support as to financial support are as follows: SMEs owners rated as Highly Evident with an overall weighted mean of 4.20, staff rated as Evident with an overall weighted mean of 4.15, and LGU employees rated as Evident with an overall weighted mean of 3.92.

**Table 8.** Local Government Unit's Livelihood Program Support as to Program Design and Implementation

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>WM</b>	<b>VI</b>
The LGU livelihood programs are designed to meet the specific needs and priorities of SMEs in Carmona.	4.24	Highly Excellent
The livelihood programs in Carmona City cater to diverse entrepreneurs, including women, youth, and marginalized sectors.	4.15	Excellent
Accessibility and clarity of program guidelines communicated to SMEs through various channels.	4.18	Excellent
Strong collaboration between the LGU and private enterprises in ensuring the success of livelihood programs.	4.22	Highly Excellent
There is sufficient financial, technical, and manpower resources provided by the LGU of Carmona City to effectively execute livelihood programs.	4.25	Highly Excellent
Availability of structured channels for SMEs beneficiaries to express concerns and provide suggestions for program improvement.	4.22	Highly Excellent
There is fairness and Highly openness of the process by Excellent which SMEs qualify and receive LGU program support ensuring transparency	4.28	Highly Excellent
The LGU regularly assesses the effectiveness of programs and makes necessary improvements based on feedback and impact assessments conducted for the SMEs.	4.25	Highly Excellent
<b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.22</b>	Highly Excellent

As presented in Table 8, manifests the assessment of the Local Government Unit's Livelihood Program support is to program design and implementation rated as Highly Evident with an overall weighted mean of 4.22. Six (6) items are rated as Highly Evident, such as: there is fairness and openness of the process by which SMEs qualify and receive LGU program support ensuring transparency with a composite weighted mean of 4.28 as rank 1; there is sufficient financial, technical, and manpower resources provided by the LGU of Carmona City to effectively execute livelihood programs; and the LGU regularly assesses the effectiveness of programs and makes necessary improvements based on feedback and impact assessments conducted for the SMEs with both the composite weighted mean of 4.25 as rank 2 and 3; the LGU livelihood programs are designed to meet the specific needs and priorities of SMEs in Carmona with a composite weighted mean of 4.24 as rank 4; and strong collaboration between the LGU and private enterprises in ensuring the success of livelihood programs; and availability of structured channels for SMEs beneficiaries to express concerns and provide suggestions for program improvement with both the composite weighted mean of 4.22 as rank 5 and 6. Two (2) items are rated as Evident, these are: accessibility and clarity of program guidelines communicated to SMEs through various channels with a composite weighted mean of 4.18 as rank 7; and the livelihood programs in Carmona City cater to diverse entrepreneurs, including women, youth, and marginalized sectors with a composite weighted mean of 4.15 as rank 8.

**Table 9.** Local Government Unit's Livelihood Program Support to Business Development Services

Indicators	WM	VI		
The Carmona City LGU supported mentorship and business coaching for SMEs are available at any time.	4.22	Highly Excellent		
<b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.23</b>		Highly Excellent	

LGU support has improved access to technology and modern practices and growth in the adoption rate of digital platforms and online marketing strategies among SMEs.	4.27	Highly Excellent
Growth in the number of SMEs that benefited from LGU facilitated trade fairs and business expos such as Trade Fair and Exhibition.	4.17	Excellent
There is an increase in the number of enterprises that successfully registered or renewed their permits with LGU assistance.	4.13	Excellent
Effectiveness of LGU Support in Product Development and Innovation in the business development programs on SMEs product improvement and branding.	4.23	Highly Excellent
Ensure the ease and speed of obtaining necessary business permits and documents with LGU support.	4.28	Highly Excellent
Continued increase in the number of SMEs connected to larger markets, suppliers, or distributors through LGU interventions.	4.25	Highly Excellent

As presented in Table 9, the assessment of the Local Government Unit's Livelihood Program support as to business development services rated as Highly Evident with an overall weighted mean of 4.23. Six (6) items are rated as Highly Evident, these are: increase in the adoption rate of digital platforms and online

marketing strategies among SMEs in the local government unit of Carmona City with a composite weighted mean of 4.33 as rank 1; ensure the ease and speed of obtaining necessary business permits and documents with LGU support with a composite weighted mean of 4.28 as rank 2; LGU support has improved access to technology and modern practices and growth in the adoption rate of digital platforms and online marketing strategies among SMEs with a composite weighted mean of 4.27 as rank 3; continued increase in the number of SMEs connected to larger markets, suppliers, or distributors through LGU interventions with a composite weighted mean of 4.25 as rank 4; effectiveness of LGU Support in Product Development and Innovation in the business development programs on SMEs product improvement and branding with a composite weighted mean of 4.23 as rank 5; and the Carmona City LGU-supported mentorship and business coaching for SMEs are available at any time with a composite weighted mean of 4.22 as rank 6. Two (2) items are rated as Evident, namely: growth in the number of SMEs that benefited from LGU-facilitated trade fairs and business expos such as Trade Fair and Exhibition with a composite weighted mean of 4.17 as rank 7; and there is an increase in the number of enterprises that successfully registered or renewed their permits with LGU assistance with a composite weighted mean of 4.13 as rank 8.

**Table 10.** Local Government Unit's Livelihood Program Support as to Regulatory and Policy Support

Indicators	WM	VI	Overall Weighted Mean	
The LGU has established a policy that simplified regulatory processes for SMEs.	4.13	Highly Excellent	4.17	Excellent
There is continued growth in the number of micro-businesses transitioned into formal SMEs with LGU guidance.	4.19	Highly Excellent	4.24	Excellent
				As presented in Table 10, reveals the assessment of the Local Government Unit's Livelihood Program support as to regulatory and policy support rated as Evident, with an overall weighted mean of 4.17. Two (2) items are rated as Highly Evident, such as: availability of centralized service hubs for SMEs regulatory compliance for them with a composite weighted mean of 4.24 as rank 1; and the Ease of Business Registration and Licensing improved the efficiency of the regulatory environment in facilitating new business registrations and renewals with a composite weighted mean of 4.21 as

The availability of centralized service hubs for SMEs regulatory compliance or the existence of One-Stop Business Assistance Centers.

The Ease of Business Registration and Licensing improved the efficiency of the regulatory environment in facilitating new business registrations and renewals.

Availability of fiscal benefits that support small enterprises such as the Provision of Tax Incentives and Fee Reductions for SMEs.

There is involvement of SMEs representatives in policy discussions and economic planning of the Local government unit of Carmona City.

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rank 2. Six (6) items are rated as Evident, these are: there is continued growth in the number of micro-businesses transitioned into formal SMEs with LGU guidance; and consistency and fairness in Policy Implementation to ensure the level of standardization in regulatory enforcement across different business sectors with both the composite weighted mean of 4.19 as rank 3 and 4; availability of fiscal benefits that support small enterprises such as the Provision of Tax Incentives and Fee Reductions for SMEs with a composite weighted

mean of 4.15 as rank 5; there is involvement of SMEs representatives in policy discussions and economic planning of the Local government unit of Carmona City with a composite weighted mean of 4.14 as rank 6; and the LGU has established a policy that simplified regulatory processes for SMEs; and the availability of centralized service hubs for SMEs regulatory compliance or the existence of One-Stop Business Assistance Centers with both the composite weighted mean of 4.13 as rank 7 and 8.

## **SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE AMONG THE ASSESSMENTS OF THE THREE GROUPS OF RESPONDENTS AS TO ABOVE MENTIONED VARIABLES**

**Table 11.** Comparative Assessment on the Local Government Unit's Livelihood Program Support

<b>Areas of Concern</b>	<b>F-value</b>	<b>Critical Value</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>F-value</b>
Financial Support	0.512 17	3.47	Not Significant	Failed to Reject Ho	0.51217
Program Design and Implementation	13.59 306	3.47	Significant	Reject Ho	13.59306
Skills Training and Capability Building	1.488 64	3.47	Not Significant	Accept Ho	1.48864
Business Development Services	6.96 489	3.47	Significant	Reject Ho	6.96489
Regulatory and Policy Support	0.797 96	3.47	Significant	Failed to Reject Ho	0.79796

Table 11 manifests the ANOVA results assessing differences in perceptions of the LGU's livelihood program support across five areas at a 0.05 level of significance with a critical F-value of 3.47 (df = 2, 21). For Financial Support ( $F = 0.51217$ ), Skills Training and Capability Building ( $F = 1.48864$ ), and Regulatory and Policy Support ( $F = 0.79796$ ), the F-values are below the critical value, indicating no significant differences among

groups, and thus the null hypothesis was not rejected. In contrast, for Program Design and Implementation ( $F = 13.59306$ ) and Business Development Services ( $F = 6.96489$ ), the F-values exceed the critical threshold, showing statistically significant differences in perceptions among the groups, leading to rejection of the null hypothesis.

**Table 12.** Comparative Assessment of the Local Government Unit's Livelihood Program Support as to Program Design and Implementation

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Mean Difference</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Critical value</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Decision</b>
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LGU Employees vs. SME Owners	0.40	4.25	2.080	Significant	Reject Ho
LGU Employees vs. Staff	0.50	5.10	2.080	Significant	Reject Ho
SME Owners vs. Staff	0.10	1.70	2.080	Not Significant	Failed to Reject Ho

As revealed in Table 12, the post hoc comparison of respondents' assessments on the Local Government Unit's livelihood program support specifically in terms of Program Design and Implementation. The results show that there is a significant difference in perceptions between LGU Employees and SME Owners (mean difference = 0.40, t

= 4.25), and between LGU Employees and Staff (mean difference = 0.50, t = 5.10), with both t-values exceeding the critical value of 2.080, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis in both cases. However, the comparison between SME Owners and Staff (mean difference = 0.10, t = 1.70) does not reach the threshold for significance, resulting in the failure to reject the null hypothesis.

**Table 13.** Comparative Assessment on the Local Government Unit's Livelihood Program Support as to Business Development Services

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Mean Difference</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Critical value</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Decision</b>
LGU Employee vs. SME Owners	0.30	3.80	2.080	Significant	Reject Ho
LGU Employees vs. Staff	0.40	4.80	2.080	Significant	Reject Ho
SME Owners vs. Staff	0.10	1.50	2.080	Not Significant	Failed to Reject Ho

As shown in Table 13, the post hoc comparison of respondents' assessments on the Local Government Unit's Livelihood Program support in terms of Business Development Services. The results indicate significant differences between LGU Employees and SME Owners (mean difference = 0.30, t = 3.80) and LGU Employees and Staff (mean difference = 0.40, t = 4.80), as both t-values exceed the critical value of 2.080, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Conversely, the

comparison between SME Owners and Staff (mean difference = 0.10, t = 1.50) does not show a statistically significant difference, resulting in a failure to reject the null hypothesis.

#### **PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY THE RESPONDENTS ON THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT'S LIVELIHOOD PROGRAM SUPPORT**

**Table 14.** Problems Encountered Relative to the Local Government Unit's Livelihood Program Support

Indicators	WM	VI		
The financial support provided by the LGU is insufficient.	2.36	Least Evident	SMEs staff find it difficult to access LGU-sponsored training sessions.	Least Evident
The LGU funding application process is overly complex.	2.36	Least Evident	The quality of trainers provided by the LGU does not meet SMEs needs.	Least Evident
The livelihood programs in Carmona City does not cater to diverse entrepreneurs, including women, youth, and marginalized sectors.	2.33	Least Evident	There are no centralized service hubs for regulatory SMEs compliance.	Least Evident
Delays in LGU financial assistance SMEs business operations.	2.39	Least Evident	Regulatory processes required by the LGU are complex and time consuming.	Least Evident
No LGU Support in Product Development and Innovation in the business development programs on SMEs product improvement and branding.	2.37	Least Evident	Business advisory services from LGU are not readily available.	Least Evident
The LGU rarely involves the SMEs in program planning or design.	2.47	Least Evident	<b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>	<b>2.35</b>
Inconsistencies in the Implementation of LGU programs.	2.29	Least Evident		Least Evident
There are no recognition and credit for skills training programs through formal certification from industry-accredited institutions.	2.36	Least Evident		
Program information is not communicated effectively by the LGU.	2.18	Least Evident		
Training provided by the LGU is often too generic.	2.22	Least Evident		

Table 14 presents an assessment of the problems encountered relative to the local government unit's livelihood program support is rated as Least Encountered with an overall weighted mean of 2.35. All items rated as Least Encountered, such as: the LGU rarely involves the SMEs in program planning or design with a composite weighted mean of 2.47 as rank 1; business advisory services from LGU are not readily available with a composite weighted mean of 2.40 as rank 2; delays in LGU financial assistance SMEs business operations; the quality of trainers provided by the LGU does not meet SMEs needs; and regulatory processes required by the LGU are complex and time- consuming with a similar composite weighted mean of 2.39 as rank 3, 4, and 5; no LGU Support in Product Development and Innovation in the business development programs on SMEs product improvement and branding with a composite weighted mean of 2.37 as rank 6; the financial support provided by the LGU is insufficient; the LGU funding application process is overly complex; there is no recognition and credit for skills training programs through formal certification from industry-accredited institutions; and there are no centralized service hubs for SMEs

regulatory compliance with a similar composite weighted mean of 2.36 as rank 7, 8, 9, and 10; SMEs staff find it difficult to access LGU-sponsored training sessions with a composite weighted mean of 2.34 as rank 11; the livelihood programs in Carmona City does not cater to diverse entrepreneurs, including women, youth, and marginalized sectors with a composite weighted mean of 2.33 as rank 12; inconsistencies in the Implementation of LGU programs with a composite weighted mean of 2.29 as rank 13; training provided by the LGU is often too generic with a composite weighted mean of 2.22 as rank 14; and program information is not communicated effectively by the LGU with a composite weighted mean of 2.18 as rank 15.

As to assessments of the groups of respondents on the problems encountered relative to the local government unit's livelihood program support rated as Least Encountered, these are: SMEs owners with an overall weighted mean of 2.41, staff with an overall weighted mean of 2.34, and LGU employees with an overall weighted mean of 2.29.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

The study concludes that while the Local Government Unit of Carmona provides evident support to SMEs through financial assistance, program design and implementation, skills training, business development services, and regulatory mechanisms, gaps in accessibility, timeliness, and program alignment continue to limit the full utilization of these interventions. Significant differences in the perceptions of LGU employees, SME owners, and staff further reveal inconsistencies in program communication and stakeholder awareness. Common problems—such as delays in financial disbursement, limited SME participation in planning, insufficient advisory services, and concerns about training relevance—highlight the need for more responsive and inclusive livelihood initiatives. To address these issues, it is recommended that the LGU streamline financial assistance processes, enhance transparency, and strengthen communication channels to ensure all stakeholders clearly understand

program guidelines and eligibility. Increasing SME participation in planning and evaluation through regular consultations and feedback mechanisms is essential to making programs more relevant and effective. Likewise, improving training quality by collaborating with industry experts and ensuring strong post-training support will enhance SME capability-building outcomes. The LGU should also simplify regulatory procedures and revisit local policies to foster a more enabling business environment. Ultimately, these findings support the development of a comprehensive, data-driven, and participatory Socio-Economic

Development Plan (SEDP) that integrates financial reform, capacity building, regulatory enhancement, and continuous monitoring to sustain SME growth and strengthen Carmona's local economic ecosystem.

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