

Characterizing Young Ilocano Entrepreneurs

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurial competencies are vital to the success of a certain venture. This study aimed to explore and have a deeper understanding of the characteristics of young Ilocano entrepreneurs in the first district of Ilocos Sur. This study used quantitative research. A total of fifteen (15) young Ilocano entrepreneurs in the First District of Ilocos Sur participated in the research through the use of the snowball technique and convenience sampling. The study focused on Personal Entrepreneurial Competencies and has three (3) clusters.: Achievement, Planning, and Power. Results show that young Ilocano entrepreneurs along power have a high value for power and are motivated by their need for power which capacitates them to lead their organizations; they have a very high value for achievement, which could also mean that it is innate in them to manifest the values of excellent output through quality, efficiency, persistence, and commitment; and they possess good management foundation. Ilocano entrepreneurs are encouraged to strengthen their networking by joining local organizations related to the business they are into, trade associations, and, business incubators.

Keywords: *Achievement, personal entrepreneurial competencies, planning, power*

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurs are considered partners of the government (Ma & Iii, n.d.), and they are drivers in improving the economy and social standing of the country (GEM Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2014). Team (2021) explains that this is because of the job opportunities that they are creating and the tax that they are paying. According to the Youth in Nation Building Act of 1994, which the National Youth Commission created, "youth" is defined as persons between the ages of 15-30 years old who are actively engaging in entrepreneurial activities. In the latest survey conducted by Philippine Statistics Authority on December 2021, the country noted the highest employment rate reaching an estimated rate of 87.2%, and an 11.3% underemployment rate which was reported as the lowest in the year 2021. In connection to this, one of the primary reasons for the increasing rate of youth employment is involving themselves in venturing into business, according to Philippine Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2013) as cited by (Castillo et al., n.d.). Thus, entrepreneurship can greatly help the country's economic growth. Job creation through entrepreneurship is a viable solution to youth unemployment and self-sufficiency.

Personal entrepreneurial competencies (PECs) are individual attributes that enable people to accomplish activities effectively and efficiently (notes, 2016.) These PECs help them maintain the posture of their business in the competitive market exhausting their ideas from what they have acquired (Noor & Ayob, 2021). On the other hand, being a young

entrepreneur is a challenging job (Yoganandan & Vignesh, 2017) that needs specific motivation and influence by someone or something (Employee-motivation-skills.com, 2019, as cited by Valdez, 2021). Young entrepreneurs in the Philippines are experiencing emerging challenges such as access to technology, financing capital, marketing advice and logistical problems, and sustaining their market competitiveness (Ma & Iii, n.d.). According to Rimanelli (2021), the CEO and founder of ASX.US, Innovation, Resilience, and Agility are drivers in shaping the future of business. With proper and appropriate competencies, young entrepreneurs can build a greater future in business.

Historically, the Ilocano people have been resourceful and dynamic, owing to their geographical location and extreme weather patterns. Their propensity to save, misinterpreted by non-Ilocanos as a sign of a typical tightwad, is reflected in the region's high average savings rate over the years. Ilocanos have a complex network of beliefs and practices that they use when dealing with others (Paris, 2015). Similarly, DTI-CAR OIC Regional Director Lucas highlighted the adaptability and resourcefulness of the youth in the Cordilleras in her message in the Youth Entrepreneurship Program sponsored by the Department of Trade and Industry.

With the importance of the abovementioned personal entrepreneurial competencies and their impact on the entrepreneurs, this study explored and made a deeper understanding of the characteristics of young Ilokano entrepreneurs and eventually identified the gap between the innate characteristics of these young entrepreneurs, the needed competencies, and provide entrepreneurial strategies as a coping mechanism to the emerging challenges faced by these young entrepreneurs.

Theoretical Framework

The following related studies helped the researchers widen their knowledge about the study's focus.

These entrepreneurs play a vital role in the economic development of a country. They provide opportunities since everyone is welcome as long as you have the personal entrepreneurial competencies, technical skills, business management skills, and required attributes needed for a certain position. With this kind of initiative or activity, businesses alleviate the number of jobless people, and soon as people get employed, they now have the capability to provide the necessities needed for them to survive in their day-to-day life.

Entrepreneurship is one of the most powerful economic forces in modern societies, according to (Sieger et al., 2016). Thus, current and future entrepreneurial activities are critical to our future well-being. Young people, particularly students, are the entrepreneurs of the future. It is, therefore critical to understand how many students intend to pursue an entrepreneurial career, their reasons for doing so, and how many are in the process of starting or have already started their business. According to Bailetti (2011), students must develop three core entrepreneurship skills: identifying and refining an opportunity, acquiring resources, and championing a venture. The greater the number of university students who launch startups, the greater their entrepreneurship abilities.

It is, therefore important for an entrepreneur that before putting up or in the process of improving their ventures, they should have entrepreneurial competencies.

Moreover, these entrepreneurial skills play a vital role in the different stages of manufacturing products, especially in the introduction and regression stages. In these stages, their entrepreneurial skills will be utilized and tested. It is advantageous to someone with either theoretical background or experience, and practices in management laws and principles when starting a business. Many believe a college degree is required to become a successful entrepreneur (Ditablan & Abad, 2009).

Kerr, Kerr, and Xu (2017) concluded that entrepreneurs are a very diverse group, and it is not surprising that studies of their personalities were mixed. This review emphasizes areas where empirical findings were consistent and acknowledged areas where heterogeneity was evident. Entrepreneurship is a significant but vast field of study. People typically relate the study of entrepreneurship to the economic view. People are drawn to entrepreneurship because it generates wealth. This point of view also restricts the study of entrepreneurship. However, numerous previous studies on the entrepreneur as an individual have been conducted, and a few of these will be discussed later in this thesis. These studies, combined with the theoretical framework of two entrepreneurship, form the foundation of this thesis and provide a solid foundation for a comprehensive conclusion (Chavez, 2016).

Entrepreneurs with selected personality traits such as "risk-taking" and "decisiveness" agreed with the statement, "Entrepreneurs minimize the negative influence of financial risk through reserves," according to Kozubikova, Dvorsky, Capel, and Balcerza (2017). In comparison, the entrepreneurs who chose "optimism" did not agree with the statement. They also discovered that, on average, analyzed entrepreneurs agreed with the statement: "The importance of financial risks has increased during the crisis," regardless of the selected socio-demographic characteristics or personality traits.

In the study by R. Venkatapathy and P. Preheeba (2012), they found out that their respondents perceived that initiative and opportunity-seeking are important entrepreneurial competencies. Moreover, they are interested in seizing unusual opportunities to start a venture, equipment, land, workspace, or assistance and are perceived to do things that meet or exceed standards of excellence. However, in the study of Adegbite, Ilori, Irefin, Abereijo, & Aderemi (2006), they forward there is no attached enthusiasm to the entrepreneurs in exploring better ways to improve the performance of the venture through the advancement of technology, innovative products, and genuine inventions to improve product quality.

On the other hand, in the study conducted by Carland, et al. (1894, as cited by Carland, Carland, Carland, and Pearce, 1995), risk-taking behavior is considered a major aspect of entrepreneurs in today's generation.

Taking risks requires the entrepreneur to see himself as a businessman, not a gambler. He takes moderate risks in situations where he is confident of success. He considers solutions to problems, and alternative means are weighed in terms of risks versus rewards (Calvin, 2003).

Davis (2010, as cited by Laguador, 2013) defined demand for efficiency and quality as the entrepreneur's desire to do things better, faster, or cheaper. He has high expectations of himself and his employees and finds it difficult to compromise on those expectations. An

entrepreneur understands that great accomplishments take time and effort. He commits to a project for the long haul and stays with it until it is completed successfully, and meeting deadlines is critical to him.

According to Wu, Matthews, Dagher, and Grace (2007), the need for achievement is positively related to entrepreneurial persistence.

Labrador (2013) stated that with persistence, their respondents have the capability to be updated with relevant information from different sources. From this, they are aware of previous, current, and future issues that may affect their future business activities. Even if there are challenges that the business is facing, they persevere in order to be successful.

In the study of Jafri & Lhamo (2013), contractual employees are more committed to work for the organization than the regular employees. Thus, contract employees have performance in their job. The regular employees were encouraged to reflect on their performance because this would greatly affect the organization.

Schreiber (2017) found that information seeking is important in establishing an idea. This conforms with the study of Mehta & Gupta (2014) that information seeking is an important entrepreneurial competency because seizing lucrative opportunities will eventually bear the best results.

In the study of Bodenheimer & Handley (2009, as cited by Shilts, Townsend, and Dishman, 2012), they suggested that goal setting could foster improved goal commitment and motivation.

A team can develop acceptance or performance criteria for the quality of the data collected and the quality of the decision through a systematic planning process (VSP Help, 2021).

Many businesses require consistent business reporting and monitoring because the board of directors may request weekly, monthly, quarterly, or annual reports to get a good sense of how the business is performing (Whistl, 2020).

According to Arafeh's (2016) findings, there are three clusters of Personal Entrepreneurial Competencies (PECs): achievement, power, and planning. The first dimension under the accomplishment cluster is perseverance, which requires an entrepreneur to be a decision-maker who solves a specific challenge of the firm and, most of all, leads the human resources. Second, meeting the pledge that an entrepreneur must be diligent in reaching the objective in a proactive manner, and should focus on the business's goals. Third, because of the desire for quality and efficiency, entrepreneurs are perceived as self-motivated individuals who value efficiency and quality. Fourth, taking calculated risks requires that the entrepreneur be ready to take chances and manage them appropriately so that they finally lead to desirable results. Finally, under the achievement cluster, entrepreneurs are required to create unique items and take the initiative to look for ways to develop the firm.

The next PEC cluster is planning, which has three dimensions. First, is goal setting; it is required for an entrepreneur to be goal-oriented and a successful strategist in order for the firm to have competitive strategies. Second, when searching for information, the entrepreneur must be aware of accessible market data or trends and potential rivals. Third,

in systematic planning and monitoring, every entrepreneur must have an ordered process of goal setting and effective intern control for the functioning of the firm.

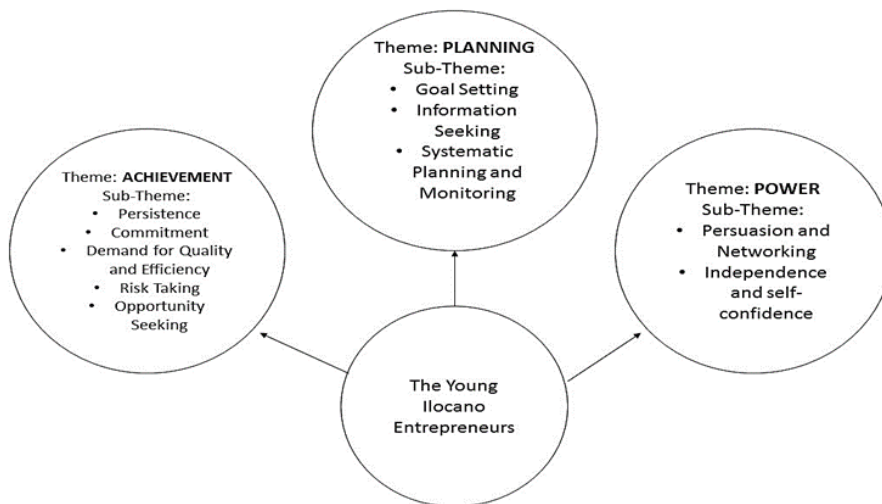
The final cluster focuses on power in two dimensions. First, an entrepreneur should have inspiring charisma to develop harmonious relationships with business partners and clients. Furthermore, secondly, entrepreneurs must be labeled with independence and self-confidence in order to be more effective in interacting with firm stakeholders.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual paradigm that guided the researchers in conducting the study is presented below.

Figure 1

Various personal entrepreneurial competencies



METHODOLOGY

This study used a quantitative research design. This study explored the characteristics of young Ilocano entrepreneurs in the First District of Ilocos Sur through the use of a questionnaire. The respondents of the study were young Ilokano entrepreneurs in the First District of Ilocos Sur. According to R.A No. 8044 Section 4 Par. A. "youth" shall refer to those persons whose ages range from fifteen (15) to thirty (30) years old, and who own and manages the business. Moreover, the respondents have naturalized Ilocanos residing in Ilocos Sur. The respondent's business should be registered in the Department of Trade and Industry or their municipality licensing. There were 15 respondents in the study and the snowball technique was used to determine the number of respondents. Convenience sampling was also employed during the interview. The study used a questionnaire focused on the universal personal entrepreneurial competencies adapted from the study of Briones

(2018). In analyzing and interpreting the data collected from the respondents the following norms were used in the conduct of the study:

Statistical Range	Descriptive Rating Item	Overall
4.21-5.00	Always (A)	Very High (VH)
3.41-4.20	Usually (U)	High (H)
2.61-3.40	Sometimes (S)	Fair (F)
1.81-2.60	Rarely (R)	Low (L)
1.01-1.80	Never (N)	Very Low (VL)

The researchers identified the respondents through referrals. However, upon identifying the list provided by all the municipalities in the 1st District of Ilocos Sur, the researchers have verified whether they are operating legally through the list of proprietors. The researchers reached out to identify respondents through phone calls and their social media accounts. They were asked for their preferred appointments afterward. After this, a personal visit was made to the business site to distribute the questionnaire. The researchers also asked the respondents if they knew someone owning a business based on the qualifications set. A follow-up text message was sent to the respondents to inquire if there are finished with the questionnaire. The researchers collected the questionnaire as soon as the respondents were finished answering, and a short interview was immediately conducted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

On Achievement

Results show that Achievement as a Young Ilocano Entrepreneur's Characteristic yielded a "Very High" level with an overall mean rating of 4.32. This suggests that young Ilocano entrepreneurs have a very high value for achievement. This could also mean that they are innate to put value to excellent outputs by manifesting quality, efficiency, persistence, and commitment.

These findings suggest that Young Ilocano entrepreneurs were molded to be achievers as they are motivated to give their best in everything, they do in order to achieve goals. This is similar to the 'need theory' of David McClelland, which presents the need for achievement, power, and affiliation. Where the need for achievement drives a person to work, and even struggle for the objective that he/she wants to achieve. People who possess high achievement needs always work to excel by avoiding low reward low-risk situations and difficult-to-achieve high-risk situations. They also avoid high-risk situations because they perceive them to be more about luck and chance than one's effort. These people find innovative, clever ways to achieve goals and consider their achievements a better reward than financial ones. They make calculated decisions and always appreciate feedback, and usually work alone. Individuals motivated by the need for achievement usually have a strong desire to set up difficult objectives and accomplish them. They prefer to work in a results-

oriented work environment and always appreciate any feedback on their work. Achievement-based individuals take calculated risks to reach their goals, and may circumvent both high-risk and low-risk situations.

Table 1

Item mean ratings of the entrepreneurial competencies in terms of achievement

Achievement	Mean	Descriptive Rating
Initiative and Opportunity Seeking Competency	4.48	Very High
1. I look for things that need to be done.	4.80	Always
2. I do things that need to be done before asking others.	4.07	Usually
3. I like challenges and new opportunities.	4.67	Always
4. I try things that are new and different from what I have done.	4.40	Always
Risk Taking Competency	3.84	High
1. I only try something new if I make sure that I will succeed.	3.27	Sometimes
2. Worrying about what to do with your life is a waste of time.	3.13	Sometimes
3. In the past, I have had failures and unsuccessful experiences.	4.00	Usually
4. I am not afraid to take risks.	4.53	Always
5. I can make risky decisions.	4.27	Always
Demand for Efficiency and Quality Competency	4.68	Very High
1. I give high value to time.	4.80	Always
2. When I am faced with a major difficulty, I usually have other options	4.67	Always
3. When I do a job for another person, I usually do it to the best I can.	4.87	Always
4. I am not entirely happy with the way in which things are done; I always think there must be a better way.	4.40	Always
Persistence Competency	4.33	Very High
1. When I am faced with difficult problems, I am resolved to find solutions to the problems.	4.47	Always
2. I feel sorry if I cannot find solutions to a problem.	4.13	Usually
3. When something gets in the way I am trying to do, I continue until I accomplish what I want.	4.40	Always
Commitment to the Work Contract Competency	4.37	Very High
1. I always keep my promise.	4.67	Always
2. I practice punctuality and promptness in doing my work.	4.47	Always
3. I prefer activities that I am familiar with.	4.00	Usually
4. My family and personal life are more important than work deadlines I set for myself.	4.07	Usually
5. I find ways to complete tasks faster at work and at home.	4.67	Always
Overall	4.32	Very High

A closer look at the table shows that 'Demand for Efficiency and Quality Competency' rated "Very High," with a mean rating of 4.68. This suggests that young Ilocano entrepreneurs give high value for efficiency and quality of work where timeliness is considered without compromising the quality of outputs. One respondent shared during the interview that everyone in the business is encouraged to do their best; even the owner should be working, "*Amin kami ket agtrabaho... ta uray siak nga makinbagi ket haan nak lang nga agtaktakder agtrabaho nak.*" (All of us work...that even me as the owner also works). The result approves how Davis (2010, as cited by Laguador, 2013) defined demand for efficiency and quality. Entrepreneurs set the standard of high-quality products, which can be done gradually, supported with faster and better performance.

It is also noteworthy that 'Risk Taking Competency' has the lowest mean (3.84) but still described as "high". This denotes that young Ilocano entrepreneurs tend to have hesitations. Thus, they chose to have calculated risk rather than high risk. This conforms with the study of Calvin (2003) that an entrepreneur takes a moderate risk if there is a chance to succeed in the venture. This is also the same in the study of Abalos, Doria, and Villaruz (2016); those young entrepreneurs will surely take the risk if they can feel that there is a greater possibility for success.

On Planning

As exhibited in the table, young Ilocano entrepreneurs yielded a "Very High" level of competency in Planning, as evidenced by the overall mean rating of 4.35. This finding suggests that young Ilocano entrepreneurs possess a good management foundation. Planning, as the first function of management, is an essential factor in achieving certain goals. Making things happen is likely possible with the proper execution of every plan. Thus, it becomes essential for every entrepreneur to know how to plan and execute plans properly.

Thus, planning is deciding in the present on what to do in the future. It directs the efforts and resources of an enterprise toward common objectives. In the words of Drucker, "The planning function of management is the continuous process of making present entrepreneurial (risk-taking) decisions systematically, and with the best possible knowledge of their futurity, organizing systematically the efforts needed to carry out these decisions, and measuring the results of these decisions against the expectations through organized, systematic feedback.

A further scrutiny of the table reveals that "Goal Setting Competency" is the highest level of competency possessed by young Ilocano entrepreneurs (4.46) in terms of planning. This finding suggests that young Ilocano entrepreneurs possess administrative competency, which is an important characteristic that a business manager should possess. 'Setting goals and standards are usually competencies that are required of managerial and supervisory positions. These are the ability to determine activities and projects toward measurable goals, and standards, setting these in collaboration with others so as to arrive at a clear understanding, and elicit commitment.' (Executivebrief, 2008). This conforms to the study of Chalermwan (2015) that before putting up a venture, there should be a vibrant goal that is clearly indoctrinated to the business system.

Table 2*Item mean ratings of the entrepreneurial competencies in terms of Planning*

Planning	Mean	Descriptive Rating
Information Seeking Competency	4.32	Very High
1. I gather a great deal of information before going ahead whenever I want to start a new task.	4.27	Always
2. I get others to support my recommendation.	4.13	Usually
3. I always listen, no matter whom I am talking to.	4.80	Always
4. I seek the advice of other people who know a lot about the tasks I am working on.	4.53	Always
5. I take action without wasting time gathering information.	3.67	Usually
6. I ask many questions to be sure I understand what that person wants.	4.40	Always
7. I go to several sources for information to help me with my tasks or projects.	4.47	Always
Goal Setting Competency	4.46	Very High
1. I think about the advantages and disadvantages or different ways of accomplishing things.	4.67	Always
2. The more specific I can be about what I want out of life, the more chances I have to succeed.	4.47	Always
3. I get important people to help accomplish the	4.40	Always
4. goals.		
5. I think of solutions that benefit everyone involved in the problem to reach my goals.	4.60	Always
6. I try several ways to overcome things that get in the way of reaching my goals.	4.33	Always
7. I am as concerned about meeting my weekly goals as I am about my yearly goals.	4.27	Always
Systematic Planning and Monitoring Competency	4.27	Very High
1. plan a large project by breaking it down into small tasks.	4.40	Always
2. I try to think of all problems I encounter and plan what to do if a problem occurs.	4.40	Always
3. I have a very clear plan for my life.	3.87	Usually
4. If one approach to a problem does not work, I think of another approach.	4.60	Always
5. I develop a system to monitor the progress compliance of my team.	4.13	Usually
6. I conduct a regular business review to evaluate performance.	4.20	Usually
Overall	4.35	Very High

Moreover, “Systematic Planning and Monitoring Competency” is noted to have the lowest mean rating (4.27), but still described as “Very High”. This implies that young Ilocano entrepreneurs have logical ways in planning, and controlling their business activities to ensure success.

Table 3

Item mean ratings of the entrepreneurial competencies in terms of power

Power	Mean	Descriptive Rating
Persuasion and Networking Competency	3.48	High
1. I try several times to get people do what I would like them to do.	3.60	Usually
2. I do not spend much time thinking how to influence others.	3.27	Sometimes
3. I change my mind if others strongly disagree with me.	3.40	Sometimes
4. I take advantage of someone in order that my goals are achieved.	2.73	Sometimes
5. I am able to get people who have strong opinions or ideas to change their minds.	3.73	Usually
6. I attend as much as many social invitations as possible.	3.47	Usually
7. I seek membership with various socially relevant organizations to widen my network.	4.20	Usually
Independence and Self-confidence Competency	4.16	High
1. I feel confident that I will succeed in whatever I want to do.	4.33	Always
2. My own work is better than that of other people I work with.	3.87	Usually
3. When trying something difficult or challenging, I feel confident that I will succeed.	4.20	Usually
4. I do very good work.	4.40	Always
5. I stick with my decisions even if others disagree strongly with me.	3.87	Usually
6. When I do not know something, I do not mind admitting it.	4.27	Always
Overall	3.80	High

Table 3 revealed that the entrepreneurial competencies of the young Ilocano entrepreneurs in terms of power is at a “High” level as proven by the overall mean rating of 3.80. This finding implies that young Ilocano entrepreneurs put high value to power, and are motivated by their need for power which capacitates them to lead their organizations.

According to the need theory of McClelland, the need for power is the desire within a person to hold control and authority over another person, and influence and change their decision in accordance with his own needs or desires. The need to enhance self-esteem and reputation drives people, and they desire for their views and ideas to be accepted, and implemented over the views and ideas of others. These people are strong leaders, and can be best suited for leading positions. They either belong to Personal or Institutional power motivator groups. If they are a personal power motivator, they have the need to control others, while an institutional power motivator seeks to lead and coordinate a team towards an end. Individuals motivated by the need for power have a desire to control and influence

others. Competition motivates them, and they enjoy winning arguments. Status and recognition are something they aspire, and do not like being on the losing side.

It can also be gleaned from the table that indicator 4, “I take advantage of someone in order that my goals are achieved.” received the lowest mean rating of 2.73. This implies that entrepreneurs highly consider the impact of their decisions towards other people, most especially, if it is detrimental for their stakeholders. People who take advantage of the kindness of others are considered selfish and ungrateful (Cuncic, 2021).

As shown in the table, young Ilocano entrepreneurs have a “High” level of entrepreneurial competencies with a mean rating of 4.16. This finding resulted from the “Very High” assessment on Achievement and Planning, and a “High” assessment on Power competencies. This implies that Ilocano entrepreneurs can be characterized as an Initiator and an opportunity seeker, a calculated risk taker, persistent, committed to quality, efficient, goal-oriented, persuasive, and self-confident.

Table 4

Summary of the entrepreneurial competencies of young Ilocano entrepreneurs

Competencies	Mean	Descriptive Rating
Achievement	4.32	Always
Planning	4.35	Always
Power	3.80	Usually
Overall	4.16	High

CONCLUSIONS

Young Ilocano entrepreneurs has ‘high value’ for power, and are motivated by their need for power which capacitates them to lead their organizations. On the other hand, they also have a ‘very high value’ for achievement. This could also mean that innate in them is the value of excellent output manifested in quality, efficiency, persistence, and commitment. In addition, young Ilocano entrepreneurs along the planning process have good management foundation. This is because they acknowledge planning is an essential tool in order for them to create a sound decision, and later can be implemented.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the three clusters, it is noted that the Power Cluster received the lowest mean rating. Specifically, Persuasion and Networking received the lowest mean rating from the sub-themes. This may be attributed to their lack of public relations. Wynne (2016) said that public relation is considered as persuasion business while networking is widening the scope of influence to build a strong foundation of relationship to the external environment of the venture (Lavery & Little, 2020). Ilocano entrepreneurs are encouraged to strengthen their network by joining local organizations related to the business they are into, trade associations, and business incubators.

ETHICAL STATEMENT

Research ethics was properly observed in the conduct of the study. Permission to gather data was sought from the respondents. In order to ensure participant's confidentiality, the researchers used codes. The data gathered were kept in a safe and locked cabinet. The records were destroyed after the printing of the final copy of the paper.

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