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Community Extension as a Branding and Institutional Image Strategy: Its Influence on Stakeholder Perception and Enrollment Decision

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ABSTRACT

This study examined community extension as an institutional branding strategy and its relationship with institutional image, stakeholder perception, and enrollment decisions at Northeastern College in Santiago City, Isabela, Philippines. A quantitative descriptive-correlational design with a predictive component was employed, involving 480 respondents comprising students, parents or guardians, alumni, faculty and staff, and community partners or beneficiaries selected through stratified proportional random and purposive sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed through descriptive statistics, nonparametric tests, Spearman's rho correlation, and multiple linear regression. Findings revealed high assessments of community extension implementation (M = 3.97), institutional image (M = 3.95), stakeholder perception (M = 3.97), and enrollment decisions (M = 3.94). However, no significant differences emerged across respondent profiles. Community extension showed no significant relationships with institutional image ($\rho = 0.042$, $p = .354$), stakeholder perception ($\rho = -0.049$, $p = .282$), or enrollment decisions ($\rho = 0.009$, $p = .840$). Regression analyses likewise revealed no significant predictive influence of its four dimensions. These findings indicate that favorable community extension assessments did not correspond to statistically significant institutional branding outcomes. Strengthening needs-based planning, program visibility, stakeholder participation, and impact assessment is recommended. The single-institution, cross-sectional design and extremely low instrument reliability limit the interpretation and generalizability of findings. The study provides an empirical basis for refining community extension strategies and strengthening evidence-based institutional branding initiatives.

Keywords: *Community Extension, Enrollment Decisions, Higher Education, Institutional Branding, Institutional Image, Stakeholder Perception*

1. INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions (HEIs) increasingly compete for students, institutional credibility, and stakeholder trust, making branding and reputation essential to institutional sustainability. Although universities have adopted marketing approaches, educational services require strategies that reflect their distinctive social responsibilities (Snadrou & Haoucha, 2024). Institutional image and reputation play important roles in shaping student satisfaction, loyalty, and retention (Seow & Hussain, 2024). Enrollment decisions are also influenced by multiple institutional, personal, and contextual factors. Chapman (1981) conceptualized college choice as a process shaped by student characteristics and external influences, including institutional attributes and communication efforts. Similarly, Hossler and Gallagher (1987) described college choice as a developmental process involving predisposition, search, and choice. These perspectives provide a foundation for examining whether community extension initiatives, as expressions of institutional social responsibility, contribute to stakeholders' perceptions and enrollment decisions. In the Philippines, community extension is a mandated function of HEIs under Republic Act No. 7722, emphasizing institutional responsiveness to community needs (Cristobal, 2023). CHED Memorandum Order No. 52, s. 2016 further promotes research, innovation, extension, and partnerships for inclusive development (Commission on Higher Education [CHED], 2016). Beyond community development, extension programs may strengthen institutional identity, social responsibility, and stakeholder relationships. Previous studies have documented improvements in beneficiaries' knowledge, attitudes, living conditions, and socioeconomic well-being through community extension (Angco, 2026; Cristobal, 2023; Esteban, 2025; Malibiran, 2023). International research also suggests that university social responsibility can influence institutional image, identification, and loyalty, although it may not be a primary consideration in university selection (Chung, 2026; Lessa & Coelho, 2024). Despite these findings, limited Philippine research has examined community extension as an institutional branding strategy and its relationship with stakeholder perception and enrollment decisions. This study addresses that gap by examining Northeastern College in Santiago City, Isabela, particularly its community extension initiatives implemented through the Community Extension Program and Services (CEPS) Office.

Research Problem

Community extension programs are commonly evaluated according to their benefits to participating communities, with limited attention to their potential contributions to institutional image, stakeholder perception, and student enrollment. Philippine studies have emphasized community development outcomes (Angco, 2026; Cristobal, 2023; Esteban, 2025; Malibiran, 2023), while international findings indicate that social responsibility may support institutional loyalty without necessarily determining university choice (Chung, 2026; Lessa & Coelho, 2024). At Northeastern College, community extension activities serve 16 adopted communities, yet their influence on institutional branding and enrollment decisions remains insufficiently established. Accordingly, the study investigates the extent of community extension implementation in terms of relevance and responsiveness, visibility and communication, stakeholder participation and partnership, and sustainability and impact. It also examines institutional image, stakeholder perception, and enrollment decisions, including differences across respondent profiles, relationships among variables, and the predictive influence of community extension dimensions. The study further seeks to provide an empirical basis for developing a five-year strategic roadmap to strengthen the CEPS Office's community engagement and institutional branding initiatives.

Assumptions of the Study

The study is guided by the assumption that community extension, as an institutional social responsibility function, may contribute to institutional image, stakeholder perception, and enrollment decisions. Visible and relevant community initiatives may communicate institutional values and quality (Spence, 1973), while stakeholders' associations with these activities may contribute to institutional brand equity (Keller, 1993). To examine these proposed relationships, the study tests three null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance, assuming that there are no significant differences in respondents' assessments of community extension, institutional image, stakeholder perception, and enrollment decisions when grouped according to profile; no significant relationships between community extension implementation and institutional image, stakeholder perception, and enrollment decisions; and no significant predictive influence of any community extension dimension on these outcomes. These hypotheses provide the basis for determining whether community extension functions as a measurable institutional branding strategy.

Objectives of the Study

The study generally aims to determine the influence of community extension as a branding and institutional image strategy on stakeholder perception and enrollment decisions at Northeastern College, Santiago City, during the academic year 2026–2027. Specifically, it aims to describe respondents' demographic and stakeholder profiles, including their awareness of and participation in extension programs; assess the implementation of community extension in terms of relevance and responsiveness, visibility and communication, stakeholder participation and partnership, and sustainability and impact; evaluate institutional image through reputation and credibility, social responsibility, perceived academic quality, and trust and emotional attachment; determine stakeholders' cognitive, affective, and behavioral perceptions; and assess the influence of community extension on enrollment decisions or recommendations. Furthermore, the study seeks to identify significant differences in assessments across respondent profiles, examine relationships between community extension and the three outcome variables, determine which extension dimensions significantly predict these outcomes, and propose a five-year strategic roadmap for improving the CEPS Office's community extension and institutional branding initiatives.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored in stakeholder theory, university social responsibility (USR), signaling theory, and customer-based brand equity. Stakeholder theory emphasizes the importance of considering the interests and expectations of individuals and groups who can affect or are affected by institutional activities (Freeman, 1984). Within higher education, this perspective recognizes students, parents or guardians, alumni, faculty and staff, and community partners or beneficiaries as important stakeholders whose perceptions may be associated with institutional practices. University social responsibility further connects universities' social contributions with their institutional identity and responsibilities (Rodríguez-Izquierdo, 2025). Signaling theory explains how visible community extension initiatives may communicate institutional quality and commitment to prospective students and other stakeholders (Spence, 1973). Customer-based brand equity theory further suggests that favorable associations with institutional activities can shape brand image and influence stakeholder preferences (Keller, 1993). Conceptually, community extension serves as the independent variable, comprising relevance and responsiveness, visibility and communication, stakeholder participation and partnership, and sustainability and impact. Institutional image represents a branding outcome, while stakeholder perception and enrollment decisions constitute the principal dependent outcomes. Respondents' demographic and stakeholder characteristics serve as grouping variables for examining differences in assessments. The framework proposes that community extension may

contribute to institutional image, stakeholder perception, and enrollment decisions. These relationships provide the conceptual basis for assessing community extension as an institutional branding strategy.

Sustainable Development Goal and Multidisciplinary Sustainability Relevance

The study aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through Northeastern College's community extension initiatives that address educational, health, socioeconomic, environmental, and institutional development needs. Specifically, it supports SDG 4 (Quality Education) through literacy programs, computer laboratory rehabilitation, and service-learning opportunities that promote educational access and learning experiences; SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) through school feeding, health, and nutrition programs that contribute to community well-being; and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) through livelihood training initiatives that enhance skills development and socioeconomic opportunities. Furthermore, the study relates to SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) through community-based programs addressing local needs and disaster risk reduction, and SDG 13 (Climate Action) through environmental initiatives that promote environmental awareness and community preparedness. It also supports SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) by emphasizing collaboration among the institution, adopted communities, local stakeholders, and partner organizations to strengthen the continuity and sustainability of extension programs. Overall, the study highlights the relevance of community extension to educational, socioeconomic, environmental, and institutional sustainability by examining its relationship with institutional image, stakeholder perception, and enrollment decisions. The proposed five-year Community Extension Program and Services (CEPS) roadmap further supports these sustainability objectives by strengthening needs-based planning, stakeholder participation, program visibility, partnership development, and impact assessment.

2. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study utilized a quantitative, descriptive-correlational design with a predictive component. The descriptive approach assessed the implementation of community extension programs, institutional image, stakeholder perception, and enrollment decisions. The correlational approach examined relationships between community extension and the identified outcomes, while the predictive component determined whether relevance and responsiveness, visibility and communication, stakeholder participation and partnership, and sustainability and impact significantly predicted institutional image, stakeholder perception, and enrollment decisions.

Research Locale or Study Setting

The study was conducted at Northeastern College, a private higher education institution in Santiago City, Isabela, Philippines, during the academic year 2026–2027. Through its Community Extension Program and Services (CEPS) Office, the institution implements extension programs in 16 adopted communities and selected public schools. These initiatives include computer laboratory rehabilitation, school feeding, literacy projects, livelihood training, health and nutrition programs, disaster risk reduction, legal consultation, and environmental activities. These community-based initiatives provided the setting for examining the relationship between community extension and institutional branding.

Participants or Data Sources

The study involved 480 respondents consisting of 180 students, 112 parents or guardians, 60 alumni, 19 faculty and staff members, and 109 community partners or beneficiaries. Using Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error, 371 respondents were determined from a population

of 4,950 internal stakeholders and selected through stratified proportional random sampling. An additional 109 respondents were selected from 150 community partners or beneficiaries through purposive sampling, based on their participation in at least one community extension activity. Respondents were classified according to stakeholder group, age, sex, average monthly family income, place of residence, and awareness of or participation in extension programs.

Research Instruments or Materials

The study utilized a structured 65-item questionnaire organized into five components covering respondents' profiles, community extension implementation, institutional image, stakeholder perception, and enrollment decisions. Community extension was assessed through 20 items measuring relevance and responsiveness, visibility and communication, stakeholder participation and partnership, and sustainability and impact. Institutional image was evaluated using 20 items covering reputation and credibility, social responsibility image, perceived academic quality, and trust and emotional attachment. Stakeholder perception was measured through 15 items addressing cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions. A five-point Likert scale was employed to measure respondents' assessments of the study variables.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data were gathered through the administration of a structured questionnaire to selected internal stakeholders and community partners or beneficiaries of Northeastern College. Internal respondents were selected through stratified proportional random sampling, while community partners and beneficiaries were identified through purposive sampling based on their participation in at least one extension activity. The questionnaire obtained information on respondents' demographic profiles, awareness and participation in extension programs, perceptions of community extension implementation, institutional image, stakeholder attitudes, and enrollment decisions. The collected responses served as the basis for descriptive, comparative, correlational, and predictive analyses.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Frequencies, distributions, and weighted means were employed to describe respondents' profiles and evaluate community extension implementation, institutional image, stakeholder perception, and enrollment decisions. The Shapiro-Wilk test indicated that the data were not normally distributed; therefore, the Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis H test were used to examine differences across respondent profiles. Spearman's rho correlation coefficient determined relationships between community extension and the outcome variables, while multiple linear regression analysis assessed the predictive influence of the four community extension dimensions on institutional image, stakeholder perception, and enrollment decisions. Multiple linear regression analysis was employed to examine the predictive influence of the four community extension dimensions on institutional image, stakeholder perception, and enrollment decisions, following established principles of multivariate data analysis (Hair et al., 2019). Statistical hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

Ethical Consideration

The study involved 480 stakeholders of Northeastern College, comprising students, parents or guardians, alumni, faculty and staff, and community partners or beneficiaries. Respondents were selected through stratified proportional random sampling and purposive sampling, with community beneficiaries included based on their participation in at least one extension activity. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire covering demographic characteristics, community extension implementation, institutional image, stakeholder perception, and

enrollment decisions. The study relied on respondents' self-reported assessments to examine the relationships among the research variables.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Respondent Profile and Assessment of Study Variables

3.1.1 Demographic Profile and Community Extension Participation

The study involved 480 respondents comprising 180 students (37.50%), 112 parents or guardians (23.33%), 109 community partners or beneficiaries (22.71%), 60 alumni (12.50%), and 19 faculty and staff members (3.96%). Most respondents were aged 18–24 years (33.96%), female (55.42%), from families earning ₱10,000–₱19,999 monthly (34.17%), and residents of Santiago City (48.96%). Regarding extension participation, 15.62% were unaware of any program, 28.33% were aware but had not participated, 26.04% had participated once, 20.00% had participated two to three times, and only 10.00% were regular participants or partners. The findings indicate that although 84.38% of respondents were aware of the institution's community extension programs, sustained participation remained limited. Recent Philippine evidence also examines student involvement in extension activities (Ontal & Rabang, 2026). This suggests a gap between program awareness and active stakeholder engagement. The limited participation also highlights the importance of strengthening communication and stakeholder involvement in extension activities.

3.1.2 Extent of Community Extension Implementation

Community extension programs were assessed as highly implemented, with an overall mean of 3.97 (SD = 0.21). Among the four dimensions, sustainability and impact obtained the highest mean (M = 3.98), followed by relevance and responsiveness (M = 3.97), stakeholder participation and partnership (M = 3.96), and visibility and communication (M = 3.95). Programs addressing actual community concerns received a relatively high rating (M = 4.02), while needs-based planning (M = 3.92) and responsiveness to emerging issues (M = 3.88) received lower ratings. These findings suggest that Northeastern College's extension initiatives are generally perceived as relevant and sustainable, particularly because of its continuing involvement in adopted communities. This supports Esteban (2025), who emphasized relevance as a significant strength of community extension programs. However, the comparatively lower ratings for needs assessment and responsiveness indicate opportunities to strengthen community-based planning and timely responses to emerging concerns.

3.1.3 Institutional Image

Institutional image received an overall mean of 3.95 (SD = 0.21), interpreted as high. Reputation and credibility (M = 3.97) and trust and emotional attachment (M = 3.97) obtained the highest ratings, followed by social responsibility image (M = 3.95) and perceived academic quality (M = 3.93). Respondents also rated the institution positively in terms of creating favorable impressions (M = 4.03). The results indicate that stakeholders generally maintain a favorable institutional image, particularly regarding credibility and trust. However, positive institutional assessments do not necessarily establish that community extension directly influences institutional branding. Previous studies have identified institutional image as an important factor in student satisfaction and loyalty (Lessa & Coelho, 2024; Seow & Hussain, 2024), providing a basis for examining whether community extension contributes to these perceptions.

3.1.4 Stakeholder Perception

Stakeholder perception obtained an overall mean of 3.97 (SD = 0.23), indicating a high assessment. Behavioral perception recorded the highest mean (M = 3.99), followed by affective perception (M = 3.96) and cognitive perception (M = 3.95). Speaking positively about the institution received the highest individual rating (M = 4.07), while promoting service and volunteerism also obtained a favorable assessment (M = 4.03). These findings reflect generally positive stakeholder attitudes, particularly in supporting and recommending the institution. Research on community engagement and student social responsibility provides additional context (Schiff et al., 2024). Nevertheless, favorable perceptions alone do not demonstrate that community extension produces stronger institutional attachment. Although previous beneficiary-focused studies reported improvements associated with community extension participation (Cristobal, 2023; Angco, 2026), the present findings require further examination of the relationship between participation and institutional perception.

3.1.5 Influence of Community Extension on Enrollment Decisions

Community extension received an overall mean of 3.94 (SD = 0.30), interpreted as highly influential in enrollment decisions. However, considering institutional social responsibility when choosing a school received the lowest individual rating (M = 3.83). Other relatively low indicators included obtaining information about extension programs (M = 3.86) and recognizing extension activities as real-life learning experiences (M = 3.87). The findings suggest that respondents generally recognize community extension as a favorable institutional characteristic, although social responsibility may not be their primary consideration when selecting a school. Recent research on university branding also examines social media and institutional appeal (Nofrizal et al., 2024). This is consistent with Plungpongpan et al. (2016), who claimed that social responsibility is beneficial but not a leading factor in university selection. Similarly, other works (Lisayen et al., 2025; Plaza, 2023) emphasize the importance of tuition costs and institutional reputation in enrollment decisions.

3.2 Differences in Assessments Across Respondent Profiles

The analysis examined differences in assessments of community extension, institutional image, stakeholder perception, and enrollment decisions according to stakeholder group, age, sex, family income, and place of residence. None of the 24 statistical comparisons showed significant differences, with the smallest recorded probability value of $p = .088$. Consequently, the first null hypothesis (H01) was not rejected at the 0.05 significance level. These findings indicate that respondents generally evaluated the institution similarly regardless of their demographic characteristics or stakeholder classifications. Regular extension participants also did not provide significantly higher institutional assessments than nonparticipants, contrasting with beneficiary-related findings reported by Angco (2026) and Cristobal (2023). This suggests that participation in extension programs was not associated with significantly different institutional assessments among the respondent groups.

3.3 Relationships Between Community Extension and Institutional Outcomes

3.3.1 Community Extension and Institutional Image

Community extension demonstrated a very weak positive and statistically nonsignificant relationship with institutional image ($\rho = 0.042$, $p = .354$). Its individual dimensions also showed nonsignificant correlations: relevance and responsiveness ($\rho = -0.007$, $p = .878$), visibility and

communication (ρ = 0.008, p = .855), stakeholder participation and partnership (ρ = 0.077, p = .090), and sustainability and impact (ρ = 0.025, p = .592). These results indicate that higher assessments of community extension were not significantly associated with stronger institutional image. This contrasts with previous findings linking social responsibility and institutional image to satisfaction, identification, and loyalty (Lessa & Coelho, 2024; Seow & Hussain, 2024). The findings suggest that community extension, despite its favorable implementation ratings, was not significantly related to institutional image in the present study.

3.3.2 Community Extension and Stakeholder Perception

The relationship between community extension and stakeholder perception was very weak, negative, and statistically nonsignificant (ρ = −0.049, p = .282). Relevance and responsiveness (ρ = −0.052, p = .255), visibility and communication (ρ = 0.011, p = .802), stakeholder participation and partnership (ρ = 0.010, p = .833), and sustainability and impact (ρ = −0.030, p = .506) likewise showed nonsignificant relationships. These findings indicate that community extension implementation was not significantly associated with stakeholders' cognitive, affective, and behavioral perceptions. Although stakeholders generally evaluated the institution positively, these assessments were not statistically related to extension implementation. This differs from beneficiary-focused research reporting favorable outcomes from community participation (Cristobal, 2023; Angco, 2026).

3.3.3 Community Extension and Enrollment Decisions

Community extension showed a negligible and statistically nonsignificant relationship with enrollment decisions (ρ = 0.009, p = .840). Similarly, relevance and responsiveness (ρ = 0.054, p = .235), visibility and communication (ρ = −0.049, p = .283), stakeholder participation and partnership (ρ = −0.023, p = .614), and sustainability and impact (ρ = 0.016, p = .721) were not significantly associated with enrollment decisions. Consequently, the second null hypothesis (H02) was not rejected. The findings indicate that community extension was not significantly associated with enrollment decisions despite receiving favorable descriptive assessments. This supports Plungpongpan et al. (2016), who found that social responsibility was not a primary determinant of university choice. Other works (Lisayen et al., 2025; Plaza, 2023) similarly highlight tuition costs and institutional reputation as important considerations in selecting a higher education institution. These findings may also be understood within established college-choice frameworks. Chapman (1981) identified student characteristics and external influences as important considerations in college selection, while Hossler and Gallagher (1987) conceptualized college choice as a multistage process involving predisposition, search, and institutional selection. From these perspectives, community extension may represent only one of several institutional characteristics considered by prospective students. The absence of a statistically significant relationship in the present study suggests that favorable assessments of community extension did not correspond to measurable differences in enrollment decisions among the respondents.

3.4 Predictive Influence of Community Extension Dimensions

Multiple linear regression analysis revealed that the four community extension dimensions did not significantly predict institutional image, stakeholder perception, or enrollment decisions. Recent research has also examined university social responsibility alongside institutional image and student loyalty (Suranta et al., 2026). The regression model for institutional image explained

0.4% of the variance (R^2 = 0.004, adjusted R^2 = −0.004, F(4, 475) = 0.53, p = .713). Stakeholder perception showed an explained variance of 0.7% (R^2 = 0.007, adjusted R^2 = −0.001, F(4, 475) = 0.89, p = .467), while enrollment decisions showed 0.6% (R^2 = 0.006, adjusted R^2 = −0.002, F(4, 475) = 0.75, p = .555). Variance inflation factors ranged from 1.00 to 1.01, and none of the dimensions emerged as a significant predictor. Thus, the third null hypothesis (H03) was not rejected. These findings indicate that community extension dimensions explained less than 1% of the variation in each institutional outcome. Despite favorable assessments of extension implementation, the results did not establish its predictive contribution to institutional image, stakeholder perception, or enrollment decisions. The findings are consistent with the observed weak correlations and suggest that community extension, in its current implementation, does not demonstrate a measurable branding influence.

3.5 Implementation Challenges and Study Limitations

The findings identified comparatively lower ratings for needs-based planning (M = 3.92), responsiveness to emerging issues (M = 3.88), availability of extension information (M = 3.86), and extension as a real-life learning experience (M = 3.87). Furthermore, 15.62% of respondents were unaware of any extension program, indicating limitations in program visibility. Reliability analysis, using the coefficient alpha framework (Cronbach, 1951), also produced extremely low Cronbach's alpha coefficients for community extension (α = 0.003), institutional image (α = 0.041), stakeholder perception (α = −0.080), and enrollment decisions (α = 0.048), all below the acceptable threshold of 0.70. These findings highlight challenges in needs assessment, communication, and stakeholder engagement. More importantly, the extremely low reliability coefficients indicate substantial measurement limitations that may affect the interpretation of the nonsignificant statistical relationships. The absence of significant associations may reflect measurement or data-quality issues or an actual lack of relationships among the variables. The study's single-institution setting, cross-sectional design, and reliance on self-reported assessments further limit the interpretation and generalizability of its findings.

3.6 Implications for Community Extension and Institutional Branding

The findings showed favorable assessments of community extension implementation, institutional image, stakeholder perception, and enrollment decisions. However, the statistical analyses revealed no significant differences across respondent profiles, no significant relationships between community extension and the institutional outcomes, and no significant predictive influence of the four extension dimensions. The results also identified areas requiring improvement, particularly needs-based planning, program visibility, stakeholder participation, and the integration of extension experiences into institutional activities. These findings provide the basis for the proposed five-year CEPS roadmap covering 2027–2031. The roadmap emphasizes strengthening community needs assessment and responsiveness, improving extension communication through digital platforms and annual reporting, integrating service-learning into academic programs, expanding stakeholder partnerships, and evaluating program impact. Partnership renewal is also considered according to existing agreement expiration dates. Future research should prioritize instrument validation, data-quality assessment, broader institutional coverage, and further examination of institutional image as a possible mediating variable. These measures may strengthen the assessment of community extension's contribution to institutional branding and stakeholder engagement.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study examined community extension as a branding and institutional image strategy and its relationship with stakeholder perception and enrollment decisions at Northeastern College, Santiago City, Isabela. Findings revealed that community extension programs were highly implemented, while institutional image, stakeholder perception, and the perceived influence of extension on enrollment decisions received favorable assessments from the 480 respondents. However, no significant differences were found across respondent profiles, and community extension demonstrated no significant relationships with institutional image, stakeholder perception, or enrollment decisions. Furthermore, none of its four dimensions significantly predicted these outcomes. These findings indicate that favorable evaluations of community extension do not necessarily translate into measurable institutional branding advantages or enrollment-related outcomes. Although the institution demonstrates sustained community engagement, weaknesses in needs-based planning, program visibility, and stakeholder participation remain evident. Overall, the study provides an institutional assessment of community extension's potential branding role while emphasizing the need for cautious interpretation of the statistical findings.

Based on the findings, Northeastern College, through its Community Extension Program and Services (CEPS) Office, should implement the proposed five-year strategic roadmap for 2027–2031 to strengthen community extension implementation and institutional branding initiatives. Priority should be given to conducting systematic needs assessments across the 16 adopted communities and establishing procedures for responding to emerging community concerns. Program visibility should be improved through a dedicated extension website, regular social media updates, and annual accomplishment reports. The institution should also integrate community extension activities into academic programs to strengthen students' practical learning experiences and incorporate documented extension activities into recruitment materials. Stakeholder participation should be enhanced through collaborative planning, alumni involvement, partnership renewal, and expanded community engagement. Regular impact assessments should evaluate program outcomes and institutional branding indicators. Future researchers should validate the survey instrument, examine data quality, include multiple higher education institutions, and investigate institutional image as a potential mediating variable.

The study was limited to Northeastern College in Santiago City, Isabela, restricting the generalizability of findings to other higher education institutions. Its cross-sectional design and reliance on self-reported assessments limited the interpretation of relationships among community extension, institutional image, stakeholder perception, and enrollment decisions. Moreover, extremely low Cronbach's alpha coefficients across all measurement scales indicated substantial reliability concerns, requiring caution in interpreting the nonsignificant statistical results. Future studies should prioritize instrument validation and data-quality assessment, include respondents from multiple institutions, and examine institutional image as a potential mediator using structural equation modeling to strengthen the assessment of relationships among the study variables.

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