

BUSINESS STRATEGIES OF SELECTED FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS BEFORE AND DURING PANDEMIC: BASIS FOR BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine the various strategies used by selected food establishments in Dipolog City. The goal of this research is to develop a business continuity plan that will then be useful for small businesses in the food establishments in Dipolog City. The study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to obtain the data needed. Five (5) food establishments participated in the study through a face-to-face interview. The research looked into the various strategies utilized by food establishments before and throughout the pandemic. The information gathered from the literature is used to (1) understand the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on food establishments, (2) provide a deeper understanding of the strategies used and the capabilities in responding to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and (3) developed a business continuity plan that will then be useful for small businesses in the food industry in Dipolog City. Through systemically utilizing the company's assets, resources, and capabilities, the owners can develop and retain a competitive edge. This is done by aligning the firm with its environment. According to the results of the study business owners must develop a vision, objective, and goals for strategic plans inside a business, formulate the pricing of items at break-even profit level, offer incentives and promos at least once a month, offer flexible scheduling, and then reward and motivate employee development for the business to continue thriving even if there are unforeseen events that can hinder its operation.

Keywords: *Small business, Food Establishment, Business Strategies, Business Continuity Plan, Pandemic*

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, Dipolog City has witnessed phenomenal growth in the number of new businesses. This is especially true when it comes to the operation of the food establishments that is currently registered in Dipolog City. It contributes to the national

economy of the said City in various ways, such as employment creation and adding value to the gross domestic product of the country. The food industry is one of the most significant industrial areas in any country's economy, with high employment, turnover, and value-added investment. However, the food business has seen significant changes in recent decades. To begin with, the food business is facing greater competition both domestically and internationally. In addition, the food business has been subjected to a number of risks. Finally, environmental and cultural considerations have been brought into the food issue. In order to adapt to these changes, the food business must innovate and enhance the quality of its goods while also encouraging modernity, technical advancement, and environmental sustainability. Proper management, innovation, technology advancement, and other effective business techniques are used to meet these criteria. According to Titus (2008), given the importance of SMEs in global economies, knowing why they fail (or succeed) is critical to the global economy's stability and health.

A thriving small business sector contributes significantly to the country's economy by increasing production capacity, creating additional job opportunities, fostering entrepreneurship and inventive talents, and increasing exports. In the food sector, innovation is one of the most important factors of long-term success, high performance, and survival. The active participation of small business in developing countries defines them as vehicles for attaining the aims of developing country governments, namely, expansion and flourishing. Competition, scarcity of resources, deregulation, and consumer demand are all factors that encourage organizations to innovate.

In this situation, business strategies are the means through which organizations disseminate the information that they have gained via their study. As a result, the paper will examine the history of open business tactics, as well as existing and future developments, as well as how openness has influenced the food sector in general. Recommendations can also assist business owners in enhancing and thriving their enterprise, particularly the business continuity plan.

Objectives

This study determined the strategies that the food sector in Dipolog City used before and during the pandemic. Specifically, this study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the strategies that food establishments in Dipolog City applied before COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What are the strategies that food establishments in Dipolog City applied during the COVID-19 pandemic?
3. What business continuity plan can be created from the result of the study?

Review of Related Literature

Small business

The fundamental motivation for starting a business is the expected income that a small business owner anticipates from the business' operation (Yusuf & Schindehutte, 2000). If a company can turn a profit by collecting more money than it needs to run the firm, then revenue is possible. To do this, the business owner needs spend more time focusing on the business's strengths and less time on its weaknesses (Lan, Bo, & Baozhen, 2014). Small business performance is influenced by several variables, such as business strategy, company characteristics, and owner-manager qualities (Blackburn, Hart, & Wainwright, 2013). Through systemically utilizing the company's assets, resources, and capabilities, the owners can develop and retain a competitive edge. This is done by aligning the firm with its environment (Gumusluoglu & Acur, 2016; Palmer, Wright, & Powers, 2001). Small business operators must devote their little resources to tasks that advance their corporate plans

(Blackburn et al., 2013; Lan et al., 2014). Financial, economic, and even ethical activities can improve small business tactics (Garza, 2013). The number of employees, the company's financial situation, and the company's age are examples of business characteristics (Blackburn et al., 2013; Uhlener, van Stel, Duplat, & Zhou, 2013). The age of the business frequently affects the organization's procedures and product attributes (Blackburn et al., 2013). Aspects of an owner-manager include their age, gender, level of education, and business philosophy (Blackburn et al., 2013). Owner-managers of newly established businesses typically have middle-aged or post-retirement backgrounds (Blackburn et al., 2013).

Because they are more nimble, less rigid, and have lower sunk cost components, smaller businesses are better able to adjust to the economic slump (Tan & See, 2004). Thus, these smaller enterprises can strategically restructure during economic downturns to use their strengths and get around several environmental obstacles. Small businesses must adopt a highly positive and targeted approach in the face of the current economic slump and its accompanying environmental constraints. With this approach, they should be able to develop the necessary competitive opportunities and come out stronger after every economic slump (Tan & See, 2004). To stop the drop in their profitability, small businesses would need to make severe cost and asset reductions (O'Neill, 1986; Tan & See, 2004).

Strategy

All businesses strive to be successful and work toward achieving the goals they have set for the short, medium, and long terms. A growth strategy is necessary to attain these goals. The idea of strategy is linked to growth since growth is the end objective and strategy is the method to get there.

Rahmady and Andi (2007: 1) define the strategy as a unified, comprehensive, and integrated plan that connects the superiority of corporate strategy with environmental challenges. The strategy is intended to ensure that company objectives can be achieved through effective implementation by the organization. In some situations, such as winning the competition, controlling the market, etc., strategies are typically used. Management is required for the strategy to carry out the plan that has been made. While the term "strategic management" can be used to refer to the art and science of developing, putting into practice, and assessing cross-functional decisions that help an organization accomplish its objectives.

In addition, according to Rangkuti (2001: 6), in principle, strategies can be grouped based on three types of strategies, namely: 1.) The management strategy contains macro-level strategies that can be implemented by management with a strategy development perspective, such as financial strategies, acquisition strategies, pricing strategies, and market development plans. 2.) Investment strategy is a term used to describe investment-focused activities, such as whether a corporation pursues an aggressive expansion strategy or aims to penetrate the market, defensive measures, and plans for reorganizing a new division or divesting assets, among other things. 3.) Because it is focused on management functions including marketing, production or operational strategies, distribution strategies, organizational strategies, and financial-related strategies, business strategy is frequently referred to as a functional business strategy.

Business Continuity Plan

Academics have taken a keen interest in organizational solutions to difficult circumstances recently. Organizations now need to build resilience to withstand a wide range of occurrences that threaten the continuity of their business operations. (2018) Sahebjamnia et al. These include both natural occurrences (such as earthquakes and hurricanes) and man-made factors, such as cyberattacks, geopolitical crises, and terrorism (e.g., Castillo, 2005; Sheffi, 2001), corporate crises (e.g., Yang & Jiang, 2015), and supply chain and market crises

(e.g., a significant body of literature has examined the issue of planning and anticipating emergency preparedness and management) (Turoff et al., 2013).

To preserve their reputation, grow stronger, and ensure continuity, organizations try to handle crises and significant occurrences. Rezaei Soufi and colleagues, 2019; Parker & Ameen, 2018). Since the 1970s, business continuity management has developed as a sort of crisis management in response to the various hazards that pose a threat to an organization. Business continuity plans have been developed primarily to decrease the impact of unanticipated events on the company's ability to satisfy customer requirements. It is a comprehensive management strategy that offers a structure for efficient response (Herbane, 2010). Zsidisin and others, 2005

Researchers and practitioners have developed a number of strategies to help firms improve their business continuity (e.g., Botha & von Solms, 2004; Gibb & Buchanan, 2006; ISO, 2012; Lindström et al., 2010; López & Ishizaka, 2019). Risk and impact assessment, design of a continuity plan or process, implementation and measurement, testing, and ongoing measure updating are among the activities (Cerullo & Cerullo, 2004; Pitt & Goyal, 2004; Speight, 2011). The literature places a strong emphasis on organizational culture, risk management, and compliance with continuity requirements (Freestone & Lee, 2008; Tammineedi, 2010). (Alesi, 2008; Rapaport & Kirschenbaum, 2008). Typically, the emphasis has been on maintaining a particular business area, such as IT infrastructure (Bajgoric, 2006), supply chain (Benyoucef & Forzley, 2007), or outsourcing (De Luzuriaga, 2009).

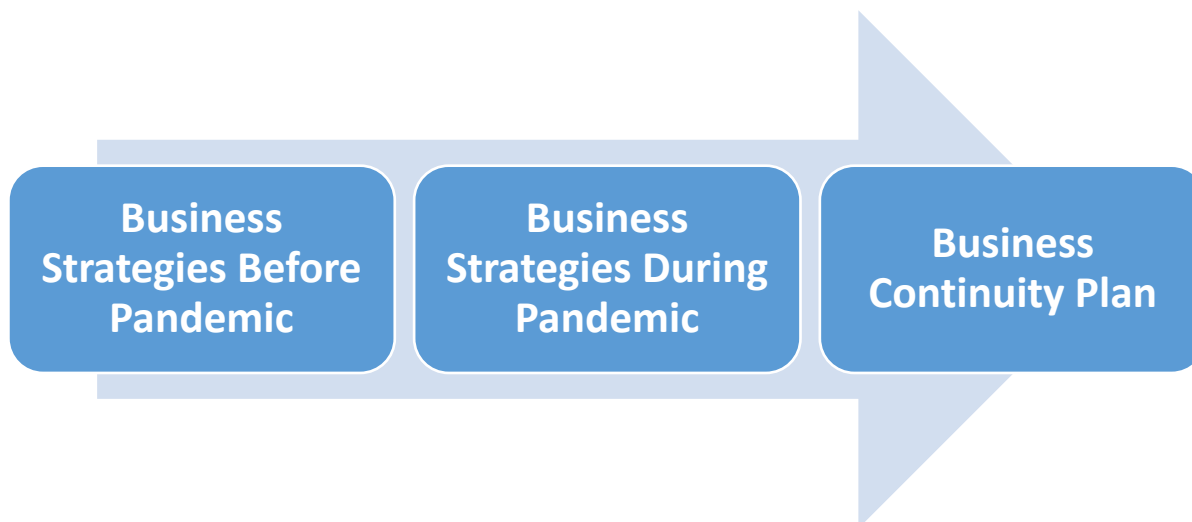
With a particular focus on supply chain and business continuity, Zsidisin et al. (2005) By addressing crucial ideas like risk, uncertainty, and vulnerability, it was made clear how crucial it is to create business continuity plans. The authors looked at how and why companies develop business continuity plans to manage this risk, and they emphasized how different isomorphic constraints led companies to adopt comparable risk management procedures integrated in their supply management procedures. The authors discovered consistency in the approaches taken by businesses operating in various situations to continuity planning and the four interconnected tasks that make up a 684 A (awareness, preventive, remediation, and knowledge management). A framework for effective continuity planning by Margherita and M. Heikkila (Zsidisin et al., 2005).

Theoretical Background

This study is anchored on the competitive advantage theory that was introduced by Porter (1979b) to explore the effect of competitive advantage. The competitive advantage theory's three basic strategies—cost leadership, differentiation strategy, and focus strategy—are all influenced by low cost and differentiation, as mentioned in the study by Porter (1979a). Azim & Azim (2012) further elaborated that an organizational leaders use marketing strategies to boost growth and to improve competitive positioning in the market. Porter's competitive advantage analysis also helps firms better understand their firm's external position in the environment in relation to competitors (Evans, 2016).

Managers use the competitive advantage idea to develop competitive strategies (Evans, 2016). The competitive advantage idea, often known as the competitive advantage approach, contends that businesses should produce goods and services for customers at prices higher than those customers are prepared to pay (Porter, 2008). Therefore, according to Garg (2012), business executives should continue to be adaptable with their organization's marketing tactics in order to be competitive and relevant in a constantly changing market.

Conceptual Framework



The study provides a framework on the effect on the performance of food establishments when it comes to strategic intelligence, competitive intelligence, artificial intelligence, business intelligence, knowledge management, and business process management. The framework is meant to give ideas for improving the performance of food establishments.

As a result, this research adds to the body of information about the performance of food establishments. Furthermore, the study gives knowledge of food establishments' business plans before and during, as well as a continuity plan for every company sector's management of their business strategy.

Scholars, small business owners, managers, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) will benefit from the research. As a result, it is suggested that more research be done to offer empirical evidence and scientific data on the framework.

METHODOLOGY

Research Methods

The researchers employed a descriptive qualitative approach to determine the different strategies used by food establishment owners before and during the pandemic. The researchers also conducted an interview, taken in the form of a face-to-face setup with the use of a semi-structured interview questionnaire with the owners of the food establishment, to acquire the information the researchers seek. The vast majority of published studies and student projects in education that used questionnaires as a data collection tool attest to the popularity of this instrument in the field of educational research (Nworgu, 2006).

Research Environment and Participants

For this study, the researchers conducted five (5) interviews at selected food establishments around Dipolog City. The researchers conducted face-to-face interviews with them in order to gather enough information to develop a business continuity plan that will be used to assist future entrepreneurs who are considering launching a small firm. Interviews were done with five (5) people who were either managers or owners of the restaurants. One-on-one interviews were used to conduct the interviews. The participants were chosen based on whether the participants' restaurant was open prior to the pandemic. The people were approached using a purposive sampling technique. This method is employed since it successfully accommodates a limited number of responders (Marshall, 1996). The study specifically selected those people as our study participants who voluntarily participated in the study and answered all questions as accurately as possible to be in line with the study's

primary objectives. The interview results are based on the answers of the participants in terms of their experiences and strategies in the business industry. The study's participants were chosen based on two criteria. First, only managers and owners whose companies were in operation prior to the pandemic were chosen. Second, interviews with participants were limited to those who were able to share the many tactics their businesses have utilized both before and after the pandemic. Using personal contacts, the people were contacted.

Research Procedures

In the study, the interview location was determined by the manager and owners of the business. The interview was conducted by a maximum of three interviewers. The primary reason for using additional interviewers was that just one person asked the pertinent questions required to meet the study's objective. The second interviewer would then ask follow-up queries to further advance the study's goal. In order for the interview to follow the interviewee's lead and serve as a backup in the event that the recorder malfunctions, follow-up questions should be guided (DeJonckheere & Vaughn). The third interviewer would then take notes on the important points made by the participants and record the dialogue. In order for the interview to be simply transcribed, audio recording equipment needs to capture the conversation clearly (DeJonckheere & Vaughn). The duration of the interviews was about 10–15 minutes.

Data Gathering Techniques

The task was to find food establishments in Dipolog City. As a result, the selections of stories were mostly based on personal contacts with food establishment owners in order to obtain reliable information about their establishments' real-world problems. Personal interviews and direct observation during on-site visits were used to obtain data. The majority of the information was gathered through interviews, which were guided by a semi-structured questionnaire. The questions concern the firms in order to obtain key figures and facts, the characteristics and attitudes of the owners, and the problems that the business faces in terms of strategy. Three (3) primary sections made up the interview guide's layout. The first section primarily consists of attribute questions, such as how long the participant has been involved with the company. The second segment concentrated on the many types of strategies employed by the participants prior to the pandemic. For example, what was their approach to marketing their businesses? What types of financial strategies did they employ to avoid becoming overburdened with liabilities? Finally, some questions were used but then the focus is during the pandemic, what strategies they applied in order for them to stay afloat during the pandemic.

Data Analysis

The necessary information was acquired through thematic analysis. A set of pre-made questions were asked of each participant. An audio recording of the interview is part of the data. The captured audio will subsequently be coded and transcribed using a qualitative data analysis program. According to supporters, the advent of qualitative analysis software heralded a new era in qualitative research. These researchers benefit from the software's improved data management, time-saving features, and increased flexibility. They believe that this electronic data analysis will increase accuracy and transparency (Welsh, 2002). The themes that are created from the resulting coded data will aid academics in identifying the various tactics employed by owners of food establishments both before and after the pandemic.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Strategies of the Food Establishment

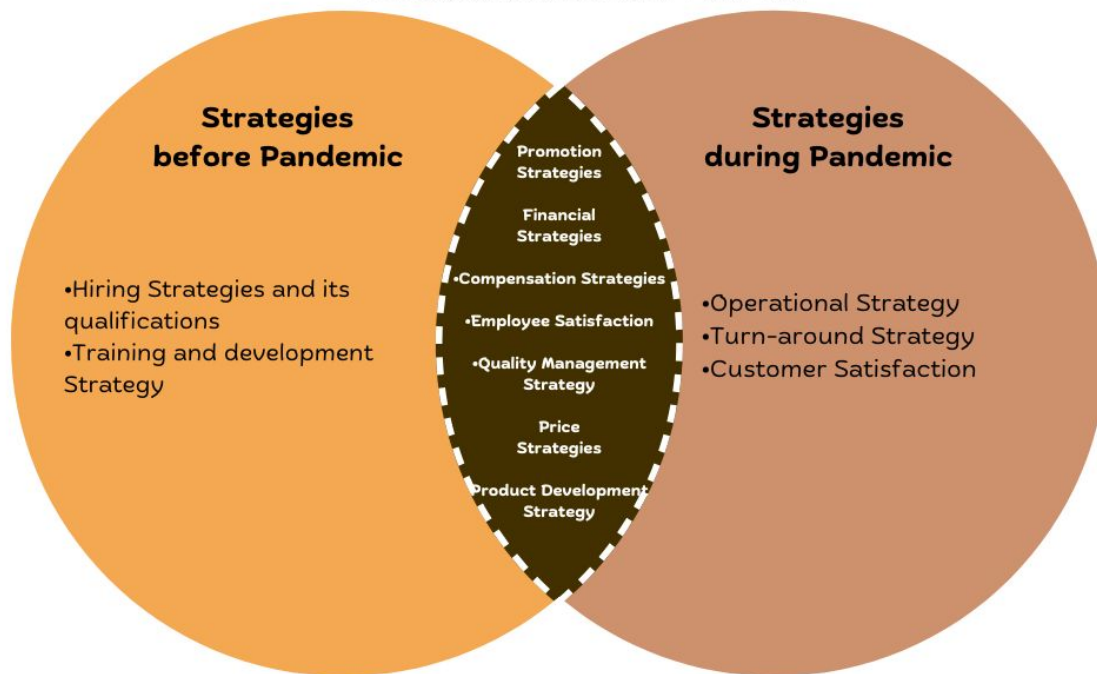


Figure 1: Summary of Strategies used of the Food Establishment

Business Strategies before pandemic

Before the pandemic, food firms were typically concerned with operational and food-related performance such as food safety, food quality, food integrity, and food security (Bakalis et al., 2020; Manning & Soon, 2016; Smith et al., 2016). Based on the interview, the results show that even before the pandemic happened, there are already strategies applied to businesses for them to operate. These include. (i) Promotional strategy by disseminating flyers, and the limit use of social media; (ii) Product development strategy by conceptualizing new ideas and marketing the newly created products to gain a competitive advantage over its rivals; (iii) Financial strategy by generating more earnings and limit expenses and can pay liabilities; (iv) Hiring strategy by having simple qualifications if a person is hardworking and knows how to read and write; (v) Compensation strategy by giving the minimum wage every day, weekly, monthly or every after two weeks; (vi) Employee’s satisfaction was applied by giving enough benefits, incentives, and bonuses especially for those hardworking individuals; and (vii) Quality Management Strategy by ensuring any quality standards, procedures, techniques, and tools that will be used to achieve greater consistency in tasks and activities that are involved in the production of products and services.

Promotion Strategies

Companies utilize promotional strategies to market, promote, and sell their products. A company's promotional strategy is determined by elements such as product kind, marketing budget, target demographic, and so on. It is a crucial activity for increasing product awareness

and, as a result, sales. With that said, most of the participants stated that they used promotional marketing tactics such as social media- Facebook and Instagram. The establishment also used flyers as a form of marketing. Flyers are excellent for attracting new clients because they are inexpensive, simple to produce, and only printed on one side. To offer diversity or appeal to different demographics in their target market, some businesses would print many flyers for a single ad campaign. Many scholars examined the relationship between promotion and market share to determine whether the effective promotion would improve sales and profit. In comparison to competition initiatives, promotion is relatively effective (Thirkell & Dau, 1998). The portion of social media in promotion is used as an interaction device that creates the companies available for those fascinated by their item and creates them noticeable to those that don't know their item.

Financial Strategies

The participants claimed that prior to the pandemic, they had implemented a number of strategies to effectively manage their finances, including paying their debts on time to avoid accruing interest and being aware of the business' purchasing power for raw materials. One participant claimed that they only buy enough raw materials to last them for a day, which is also a good way to keep their goods fresh.

Hiring Strategies

One of the most important elements in ensuring that the company expands and succeeds is having competent and trustworthy staff. Here is where the hiring strategy comes into play. Having said that, the majority of participants claimed that the only requirements for a person to work for them are the ability to read, write, cook, and serve. One participant even claimed that no educational background is necessary for a person to be able to work for them.

Compensation Strategies

The way the company pays its personnel is through a compensation strategy. In terms of compensation strategy, one participant asserted that they pay wages on a daily basis, while others claim that they pay wages based on the position of the employee in their business; for example, they pay daily wages to their cooks while giving them weekly or fifteen (15) day pay periods to their servers.

Training and Development Strategy

The business objectives of the organization are matched with the skills of the workforce through training and development strategies. The participants claim that they have no training and development plans at all because they think that everyone eager to work for them is already familiar with the details of the specific role they are applying for.

Employee satisfaction

Employee satisfaction is something that a business must never forget for it determines how productive and dedicated an employee is to its business. Businesses achieve employee satisfaction by providing bonuses and benefits to its employees. They do, however, sometimes depend on the employee's rank in the organization, his achievements, and the length of time he has worked there (Stalmašeková, Genzorová, et al.). In spite of that low level employees of the business can still receive bonuses; these advantages could include group insurance (health, dental, life etc.).

Quality Management Strategy

Quality management systems (QMS) are required in all areas of the food industry to ensure that consumers receive safe, high-quality food. The majority of the selected food establishments being interviewed attest to using customer focus as a quality management strategy. Participants also use supplier focus, looking at how they select and oversee suppliers to ensure they meet the high-quality standards they set.

Price Strategies

Monroe (2003) asserts that pricing decisions are among the most crucial management choices because they have an impact on a business profitability, return on investment, and ability to compete in the market. Furthermore, pricing is seen as the simplest marketing tactic, maybe because many businesses set their prices primarily on instinct and the manager's knowledge of the industry (Simon, 1992). Having said that, the food establishments chosen for this study claim to have very affordable products. Some participants stated that the low cost of raw materials purchased from their suppliers is the reason for their low price.

Product Development Strategy

The focus on the needs of the current customers and larger customer markets has been described as product development. (Ansoff, 1987). And in order to succeed in the market, the business must have a process in place that details how to advance the product through each stage, from concept to launch. In order to meet market demands, new product development methods would continually look for existing items that could be improved. In addition to that, the chosen establishments affirm that they have utilized product uniqueness that includes quality, taste, product knowledge and innovation, as well as the ingredients they used in their business. The product's flavor also affects consumer purchasing decisions, according to Angela (2006). Customers are inspired to buy by the quality of the products. The development of new products is another factor influencing customer purchase patterns. Additionally, it has been noted that ingredients play a role in sways a consumer's decision to buy.

Business Strategies during pandemic

The interviews reveal that business owners or managers use multiple synchronous strategies to ensure the continuity of their operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Several strategies were used, including: (i)A promotional strategy that employs digitalized marketing via mobile applications such as Facebook and other social media platforms. (ii)Operational strategy via work arrangements (iii)Pricing strategy based on remaining competitive and on customer behavior and needs, and then providing a differentiated offering and prices (iv)Turn-around strategy based on layoffs, in which the entity converts the period of loss into one of profitability and success while stabilizing its future. (v)Financial strategy, which includes minimizing expenses and assessing financial needs and resources needed to support and meet objectives, as well as planning for future growth to ensure business success and sustainability. (vi)Customer satisfaction is achieved by providing good and convenient services such as free delivery, "cash on delivery" or "cash on demand" transactions for the sale of goods, and receiving payment via bank transfer or e-wallet.

Promotional Strategies

The Covid-19 epidemic caused a significant slowdown in economic activity. Thoughtless business owners now have hope thanks to technology. Due to the internet nature of the promotion campaign, this circumstance may arise. The majority of participants confirmed that they used marketing tactics, mainly social media, during the COVID-19 pandemic's peak and makes food delivery services and used "no delivery fee" as one of their coping mechanisms

for the pandemic. Online food delivery has become popular in the food industry. Social media allows for a range of communication methods, including posts, private messaging, etc. Scholars have investigated that the social media can be useful not only in customer relationship management, but also in customer service management, order fulfillment, and product development (Iftikhar & Khan, 2020). Additionally, internet delivery providers offer customers daily supply distribution services so they may manage and survive the Covid-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that these additional services are helpful in maintaining social distance, extending the reach of services, and reducing the time and distance between sales and consumption procedures (Perumal I., Nair S., et al., 2021).

Financial Strategies

The cash budget strategy is one of the financial strategies used by food industry owners during the pandemic. The majority of the Dipolog City participants interviewed confirmed that they used the cash budget strategy. One of the participants stated that in order to keep their business budget on track, they try to minimize their expenses when purchasing raw materials.

Operational Strategy

The COVID-19 epidemic brought about a situation that no one had ever seen before. Employees in the food service industry have been going through a lot of changes and tribulations, much like food industry consumers. Numerous food industry workers have been let go, furloughed, or have had their hours of work curtailed as a result of the lockdowns and stringent limitations on operations brought on by the pandemic. One of the participants made it clear that one of their operational initiatives throughout the pandemic was the usage of working arrangements. Despite the fact that the epidemic has also affected his company, he decides to improve the working conditions for his staff rather than fire them. Workers' freedom of movement was also restricted as a result of COVID-19, and facilities in the relevant industry were required to modify safety procedures in order to safeguard workers' health and safety. In addition, Two out of five participants have confirmed that employed lay-off employees due to the fact their business losses and costs are unbearable. Layoffs are a common response for organizations to the current economic difficulties. The argument for firms choosing to downsize is simple: executives aim for increased company profitability by cutting costs.

Compensation Strategies

A compensation strategy outlines how your company will pay its personnel. It outlines the methods used to decide compensation as well as the sorts of benefits that are provided to employees, such as base pay and non-cash compensation. The participants claim that they decide on working schedules and layoffs for the employees as well as the money they give to clients who work that day.

Employee Satisfaction

Employee satisfaction refers to how satisfied employees are with their jobs and working environment. Companies must ensure that their employees are satisfied, as this is a prerequisite for enhancing productivity, responsiveness, quality, and customer service (Sager, Rafat, et al. 2012). The more satisfied an employee is, the less turnover and absenteeism occurs (Maloney & McFillen, 1986) the more productive they get. Even during the pandemic business establishments still provide bonuses for it heavily determines their employees' productivity. Most of the participants stated that they provide incentives and bonuses when a certain quota is achieved in order for them to properly satisfy their employees.

Turn-around strategy

With the emergence of the pandemic, businesses suffered the most, particularly those in the food industry; many were forced to close temporarily, while others were more unfortunate and decided to file bankruptcy because the sudden changes in consumer behavior proved to be too great to handle for their business. Those who survived and thrived during the pandemic employed a variety of strategies to ensure their survival. With that said, some of the food establishment participants stated that they used a type of turnaround strategy, which is laying off employees, because the losses and costs to maintain them are unsustainable.

Quality Management Strategy

Quality can be described as a value or compliance to specifications, which can lead to an emphasis on efficiency in the company. Also, quality refers to the consumer's expectations of a product, which are always changing over time, forcing management to stay up with what the customer wants (Reeves and Bednar, 1994). With that being said, even if we are in the middle of a pandemic and there is a clear problem when it comes to the prices of raw materials and other necessary commodities all of the participants that we have interviewed said that they put great emphasis on the quality of their products in both taste and looks for it is the thing that attracts their customers.

Customer Satisfaction

Companies boast a variety of strategies in order to maintain a reasonable level of customer satisfaction. The majority of those interviewed stated that one of their strategies for dealing with the pandemic was to use food delivery services. Not only that, but some of the participants who provided a delivery service for their products charged a "no delivery fee" only when the order was in their immediate vicinity. To help consumers manage and survive the Covid-19 pandemic, online delivery services provide daily supply distribution services.

Price Strategies

If your company's goal is to increase revenue, one of the most important aspects to consider is pricing strategies. Pricing strategies are the methods and methodologies that organizations use to set prices for their products and services. If price refers to how much you charge for your products, product pricing strategy refers to how you arrive at that figure. The most common strategy is to raise the price of the product. Although some participants claim that increasing product prices makes customers think twice about purchasing their products, they instead reduce the quantity of food served by an acceptable amount to compensate for rising raw material prices.

Product Development Strategy

Even with the threat of the COVID-19 Virus, businesses still think of ways to further increase their revenue and compensate for their losses for the lack of customers. Developing a new product is one of them. Some of the participants are having their own unique twist that gives them the edge from other competitors. The procedures and actions used to bring new products to market or improve existing ones to produce new business are referred to as product development strategy. From generating a concept to selling products to clients, there are various processes involved in developing a product. Lages et al., (2009) stated in their study that managers acknowledged product quality and innovation as major determinants, and that product innovation and quality linked to improved business performance.

Common Strategies used both before and during the pandemic

Promotional Strategies

Promotional strategies are required for the company to make sales. An effective advertising strategy is extremely beneficial to the business. Because almost everyone nowadays has access to social media, using it as a means of promotion is a very effective strategy. Prior to the pandemic, social media was a common method of advertising a company's product, and it proved to be effective. Nowadays people are forced to stay indoors due to the pandemic, and without anything else to do, they are drawn to use social media, increasing its effectiveness during the pandemic.

Financial Strategies

A financial strategy is a way to assess a business' current cost and budget. Before COVID-19 came to be businesses applied financial strategies such as proper paying of liabilities and being aware of the business' purchasing power of raw material and with the appearance of the pandemic businesses applied similar financial strategies but with stricter focus on their purchasing power because of the increase in the prices of raw materials.

Employee Satisfaction

Employee satisfaction is a major concern for human resource academics and management experts because it affects how profitable business operations are. It was stated that the participants used remuneration as well as the relationship between the business's supervisors and employees. Participants also emphasized that supportive and trustworthy relationships with coworkers include mentoring and involving workers in job planning, making recommendations, and mutual assistance with emotions.

Quality Management Strategy

A quality management plan is used throughout the project to outline the quality standards and techniques that will be applied, as well as the various roles for achieving the stated quality levels. The quality management strategy's aim, content, derivation, format, presentation, and quality standards are all spelled out there. The majority of participants indicated that they consistently offer high quality and always verify that it is outstanding before serving it to customers. Anything that may be sold to satisfy a market's need or desire is referred to as a product. Understanding the definition of quality is necessary before it can be measured. Quality can be characterized as a value or conformity with requirements, which can promote efficiency in the workplace. Also, quality refers to the consumer's expectations of a product, which are always changing over time, forcing management to stay up with what the customer wants (Reeves and Bednar, 1994).

Price Strategies

Pricing strategies are the methods and procedures that businesses use to determine the prices of their goods and services. If price is the amount you charge for your goods, product pricing strategy is the method you use to determine that figure. The most common strategy is to raise the price of the product. Many businesses calculate the cost of producing a product and then add a profit margin. According to one participant, even though they offered low prices for their products prior to the pandemic, they still made reasonable sales. Another participant stated that they will not raise their product prices, but will instead reduce the serving portions to compensate for the increase in raw materials.

Product Development strategy

Product development is the act of bringing innovations to the business. The participants of the study said that both before and during the pandemic they were thinking of ways to further enhance the taste since consumer buying behavior is influenced by the taste of the product (Angela, 2006) or create other eye-catching products.

Business Continuity Plan

There are many studies that have been conducted on business continuity strategy among large manufacturing-based companies (Kepnack, 2007) or in the developed region (Herbane, 2013). However, there are limited studies examining micro-enterprise in the less developed countries. Furthermore, most studies on crisis management processes are focused on managing the impact of epidemic disease outbreak (e.g. Ritchie, 2003). As a result, the researchers made some tips for surviving the pandemic which includes setting a goal for them, which might be daily or monthly. Improve their social media marketing by publishing their products as frequently as possible, including costs, so that customers can rapidly determine whether to buy them. They can also reduce the size of their menu to the point where the current days earnings cover the next day's expenses with plenty to spare. They can also find cheaper equivalents for specific products that have the same quality and taste as the original to fight the evident drop in sales. The continuity plan also suggests safety precautions for the business, especially for the safety of customers, safety of all human resources and a safe working environment. (Appendix A)

CONCLUSION

Considering the sudden dangers posed by the Covid-19 problem, it can be said that the situation is challenging for establishments. In the chosen food establishments in Dipolog City, Zamboanga del Norte, this study investigates the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as its mitigation measures.

The findings demonstrate that small firms specifically food establishment, prior to the pandemic, offered more chances for employment among the population, allowed for more competitive marketplaces, were able to adjust to shifting consumer tastes and trends more quickly than bigger enterprises, and provided chances for prospective business owners, especially those who are unemployed. However, the COVID-19 epidemic caused food enterprises to close, laying off employees, and a lack of operating cash, which made it impossible to carry out operational tasks, the costs, business interruptions, and operational closures at distributors. The researchers also came to the conclusion that the chosen food establishments continue to employ some of the earlier techniques. These consist of finance strategy, price strategy, and promotion plan. Some companies didn't offer incentives or other forms of pay to their workers even before the epidemic, according to compensation plan. The researchers also developed business continuity strategies that might aid an organization's long-term survival.

RECOMMENDATION

The study looks at the important changes in business strategies with an emphasis on the selected food establishments in Dipolog City, Zamboanga del Norte. But the research found that certain organizations do not adhere to the tenets of business management. The following suggestions can aid a firm achieve long-term sustainability:

Management

- Create a vision, a mission statement, and objectives for business-related strategic planning.
- Examine a strategy plan to satisfy corporate operating requirements.

Human Resource Management

- Identify the steps involved in hiring, evaluating, training, and terminating personnel.
- Evaluate motivating processes and programs and characterize the nature of motivation.

Financial Evaluation

- Determine the pricing of the product at the break-even profit level.
- Be prudent with your capital and cash flow.
- Describe the value of purchases and produces and their bearing on an organization's success.

Promotional Strategy

Business should be more active on networks that are effective and stop using others that aren't.

- Education-based brand enhancement.
- At least once each month, provide incentives and promotions.

Operating Program

- Offer flexible schedule; the leading businesses are made up of committed teams of diligent workers.

Make retaining customers a high concern.

- Get opinions from clients and potential clients.

Compensation Plan

- Offer insurances and other employee perks like SSS, PAG-IBIG, and PHILHEALTH.
- Reward and encourage employee progress; this will encourage them to keep trying to achieve more.
- The food establishments must put their business continuity plans into action.

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Appendix A

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

BUSINESS PROFILE

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Table 1. Contacts

NAME	POSITION	HOME ADDRESS	CELLPHONE
Participant 1	Owner	H8PW+V2G, Bonifacio St, Dipolog City, Zamboanga Del Norte	0920-763-1695/0905-678-9921
Participant 2	Manager	Aguillar Street, 7100 Dipolog City, Zamboanga del Norte	0907-741-2641
Participant 3	Supervisor	Rizal Avenue, Dipolog City	N/A
Participant 4	Owner	Magsaysay Street, Dipolog City	N/A
Participant 5	Manager	Carmela Dulce, H8PV+VXP, Bonifacio St, Dipolog City, Zamboanga del Norte	(065) 908-1214 0948-0972-555

Table 2. Priorities of food Industry

Priorities of Food Industry in times of Disruption	
Priority 1	Safety of Customers
Priority 2	Ensure the safety of all human resource
Priority 3	Safe working environment

HAZARDS THAT RARELY HAPPEN, BUT WITH HIGH IMPACT

Table 3. Hazard Assessment Matrix (High Impact)

Hazard	Frequency	Magnitude	Impact
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	(low, med, high)	(low, med, high)	(Describe impacts on people, buildings, property, environment)
Pandemic	Low	High	Disruption on operations, loss of revenue
Fire	Low	High	Casualty, Damaged property and equipment
Flood	Low	High	
Earthquake	Low	High	Disrupting power to critical equipment and damaging property, disrupting transportation, and damaging infrastructure Loss and injury of family members and workforce.
Food poisoning	Low	High	Can result in immediate harm to the consumer or can cause long-term health effects if they are exposed to it over time.
Physical Hazards	Low	High	
Chemical Hazards	Low	High	
Allergenic Hazards	Low	High	

HAZARDS THAT OCCUR ALL THE TIME, BUT WITH MEDIUM IMPACT

Table 4. Hazard Assessment Matrix. (Medium Impact)

Hazard	Frequency (low, med, high)	Magnitude (low, med, high)	Impact (Describe impacts on people, buildings, property, environment)
Power Interruptions	High	Med	Interruption of cooking dishes; damages on equipment that are crucial to operations
Typhoon	High	Med	Financial loss; Damaged property; environmental damage

Table 5. Risk Assessment Matrix.

		Consequences		
		Minor	Moderate	Major
Likelihood	High		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interruption of cooking dishes; damages on equipment that are crucial to operations. - Financial loss; Damaged property; environmental damage 	
	Medium			
	Low			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disruption on operations, loss of revenue. - Casualty, Damaged property and equipment Disrupting power to critical equipment and damaging property, disrupting transportation, and damaging infrastructure Loss and injury of family members and workforce. - Can result in immediate harm to the consumer or can cause long-term health effects if they are exposed to it over time.

Table 6. Core Process

CORE PROCESSES			
STRATEGIES	Critical	Not Critical	Remarks
Marketing Strategies			
Product Marketing Strategy	✓		
Price Strategy	✓		
Promotion Strategy	✓		
Place Strategy		✓	
Financial Strategies			
Financial Management Strategies	✓		
Human Resource Strategies			
Hiring strategies and its qualifications		✓	
Training and Development strategies		✓	
Compensation Strategies	✓		
Operational Strategies			
Quality Management	✓		
Customer-Driven Strategy	✓		
	✓		

Table 7. Identified Critical Operations

Identified Critical Operations (COs)	
CO 1	Acquiring ingredients
CO 2	Storing
CO 3	Applying preventive measures to prevent, reduce or eliminate any food safety hazard, such as bacterial growth or chemical contamination
CO 4	Preparation
CO 5	Cooking
CO 6	Plating
CO 7	Serving
CO 8	Waste Handling, Storage, and Disposal Process