

A CASE STUDY OF A FOUR DECADE FOOD BUSINESS IN CATEEL

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ABSTRACT

The food service industry is a rapidly growing industry where competition lies not only in product quality but in service quality as well. Using a qualitative case study approach employing in-depth interviews, 1 food business owner was interviewed to determine their lived experiences, challenges they encountered, ways to overcome the challenges, and insights into the food industry. After analyzing the data gathered, the researchers found out that the informant's reasons for engaging in the food business were family and personal motivation, prioritizing business, interest and passion in cooking, and the marketability of the food business. Further, the informant also shared that non-payment customers, competition in the market, and adverse events were the challenges she encountered in her food business. Moreover, she overcomes those challenges by having faith and trust in God, being resilient, and focusing on her own business. In addition, the insights shared by the informant for the food industry were to have perseverance and determination, resiliency, focus on service, resilience in prayer, and give importance to customer relations.

Key words: *Case study, food business, four decades, resiliency theory*

1. INTRODUCTION

The food service industry is rapidly growing, where competition lies in product and service quality. Small businesses create new jobs within the community and contribute to economic growth by providing 63.3% of net new jobs from 1992 to 2013. The success of small businesses is essential to the economy, but the number of viable small businesses is declining (SBA, 2016). Millan et al. (2014) state that some factors contributing to successful small businesses are strong management skills, education, and a mind background. Furthermore, Kritikos (2014) found that the food business positively influences economic growth by introducing innovative technologies, products, and services and raising the productivity of firms and economies.

Meanwhile, Samujh (2012) pointed out that the general business problem was that small business owners need more training or preparation to sustain a profitable business. The problem was that some small business owners needed more strategies to maintain a competitive advantage that sustains their business beyond 5 years (Garravan & Barra, 2014). The main problem was identified to be slow food service time, which caused losses in sales due to the gap between target and actual satisfaction (Grover et al., 2015).

Although there have been many studies existing in the context of observing the cases of food businesses that will help enable small food business owners to avoid committing mistakes that bears have committed, there is still a gap in the existing body of knowledge that should be addressed regarding why business owners engaged in food businesses, what challenges they faced, how they overcame those challenges, and what insights they can impart in the food industry.

As a result, this research broadens current understanding. It provides relevant literature, results, discussion, conclusions, and recommendations, particularly on why business owners engage in such businesses, their challenges, how they overcame them, and the insights they can impart in the food industry. It will assist readers and

future researchers who wish to study this topic in a different context and serve as a reference to gain a broader understanding of the food business.

1.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this case study was to provide an in-depth understanding of how people come to understand, act, and manage their businesses, as well as to discover why business owners engage in such businesses, the challenges they face, how they overcome those challenges, the insights they can impart in the food industry, and despite the competition, how the business owner was able to continue to be successful. This would help readers and future researchers who want to study this topic in a different context and serve as a reference to gain a broader understanding of the food industry. Moreover, this research also investigated small food business owners' strategies to gain a competitive advantage in maintaining business with their competitors. The target audience is a small business owner in Cateel, Davao Oriental, who has been successful for over four decades. The observation and interview resulted in positive business change, including the potential for business growth and long-term sustainability to create jobs for the community.

1.2 Research Problem

This case study aims to answer the following questions:

1. Why did the business owner engage in the food business?
2. What are the challenges the business owner encountered in the food business?
3. How did the business owner overcome the challenges he/she encountered?
4. What insights can the business owner share with the food industry?

1.3 Theoretical Lens

As a theoretical lens, this paper utilizes the Resilience Theory of Norman Garmezy, a psychology professor known for his work in developmental psychopathology. According to this theory, it is not the nature of adversity that is important, but how individuals deal with it (Ledesma, 2014), just like in the case of the participant of this case study who, despite the rising competition and struggles, was, still able to continue the business for four decades. Moreover, resilience allows an individual to recover when faced with adversity, misfortune, or frustration (Southwick et al., 2014). It helps us survive, recover, and even thrive in adversity, but that is not all it does.

This theory is a complex concept with numerous operational definitions. According to van Breda (2018), resilience theory studies the factors contributing to this phenomenon: what 'adversity' and 'outcomes' mean and the scope and nature of resilience processes. Meanwhile, according to Fletcher and Sarkar (2013), strengths such as gratitude, kindness, hope, and bravery have been shown to act as protective factors against life's adversities, assisting us in positively adapting and coping with difficulties such as physical and mental illness. Some character strengths can also be significant predictors of resilience, with specific correlations between resilience and emotional, intellectual, and restraint-related strengths (Kalleberg & Leicht, 2011).

In this paper, resiliency theory serves as a framework for understanding how the participant can bounce back in her business after experiencing adversity, with a focus on the challenges she faced and how she overcame them. Resiliency theory in this case study is appropriate as the theoretical lens since this paper delves deeper into the experiences and strategies of the business owner, the participant in this study, who has been running her business for a long time—four decades, specifically. Despite the rising competition, possible threats to the business, and other struggles, the business has been dealing with them, which can be seen as the resiliency of the owner.

1.4 Importance of the Study

Many studies have been conducted in the context of observing food business cases and assisting small food business owners in avoiding knowledge that should be addressed regarding why business owners engaged in food businesses, what challenges they faced, how they overcame those challenges, and what insights they can impart.

This research provides an in-depth understanding to the business owners of the context of the resiliency of the participants in this study, who have been running the food business for forty years. Also, the results of this study provide the struggles and challenges that a four-decade-old business faced, how it overcame them, and what insights the business owner can impart to other small business owners, especially the new ones in the food industry.

1.5 Delimitations and Limitation

This paper was limited to a case study of a four-decade food business in Cateel, Davao Oriental. Hence, in justification of this study's research design, only the responses of the informant from the interview were the ones that were subjected to analysis and discussion.

The interview was done face-to-face and observed following the standard health protocols. In any case, where the informant was not comfortable having her real name flaunted, the researchers gave her a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality and conceal her identity.

2. REVIEW RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter discusses the review of related literature on the topics of this research. The discussion includes the nature of good business, problems and challenges in the food business, ways and strategies in addressing problems and challenges, and the relevance of resiliency theory in addressing problems and challenges in the food business. Since this is a review of related literature, the researchers of this paper will include topics from various reliable sources such as books, articles, journals, and other research. .

2.1 Nature of Food Business

The food industry is a complex, global network of diverse businesses that provide most of the world's food (Boyden, 2015). Food industries refer to a wide range of industrial activities involving the production, distribution, processing, conversion, preparation, preservation, transportation, certification, and packaging of foodstuffs (Sovacool et al., 2021).

Food business refers to any food preparation, processing, manufacturing, or packaging business. It could be a private or public enterprise, for profit or not (Wilkinson & Rocha, 2012). It has become extremely competitive because many people have entered the food industry. However, if quality, taste, and hygiene are maintained, making much money in this business is possible (Poulston & Yiu, 2012). Meanwhile, food business refers to any business involved in food preparation, processing, manufacturing, or packaging. It could be a private or public enterprise, for profit or not (Silverstein & Fiske, 2013).

Today's food industry is highly diverse, with manufacturing ranging from small, traditional, family-run, labor-intensive activities to large, capital-intensive, and highly mechanized industrial processes. Furthermore, the food business industry includes all activities, services, and business functions associated with preparing and serving food to people eating out. This includes restaurants of all types, from fine dining to fast food. It also includes institutional food operations in schools and hospitals and specialty vendors like food truck operators and catering companies. On a general note, the food industry is a profitable one. People will always want to eat so that food demand will stay strong. As a result, food production pays off quickly. Adherence to technology and well-established equipment is required for proper organization.

2.2 Challenges of Food Business

Food business failure rates have been consistent since government administrators first tracked it to the present (SBA, 2016). In 1981 there was a suggestion that research on business failure in the small business sector would prove useful (Marin & Lussier, 2014). Food business owners need help keeping their businesses from failing because only some can access enough financial and non-financial resources (Falkner & Hiebl, 2015). Undercapitalization is another reason for business failure; business owners should have financial and accounting knowledge to avoid this obstacle (Lafuente et al., 2013).

New businesses failed at a significantly higher rate than existing businesses, and small businesses have failed at a significantly higher rate than large corporations (Goetsch & Davis, 2014). The failure is the subject of considerable debate; however, there is no single accepted theory (Blower & Mahajan, 2013). Meanwhile, according to Besser (2013), the lack of uniformity or consensus on a definition of failure contributed to the confusion about the causes. In addition to this, Cassar (2014) stated that first-time entrepreneurs are as likely to fail in a new business venture as a seasoned one. With this, food business failure can be an opportunity to plan since poor strategic planning results in a high failure rate of new businesses (Alstete, 2014). Stayer (2014) also suggested that a lack of proper business planning often results in small business failure. Additionally, business survival increases with measured operational growth, as suggested by (Fan et al., 2014).

2.3 Strategies for Addressing Challenges of Food Business

Yamakawa et al. (2013) explored how entrepreneurs rebound and learn from failure. Abdulkarim (2013) noted that failure motivates entrepreneurs to seek new venture creation. Further, Alstete (2014) found that entrepreneurs renew themselves after a business failure. When business strategy is presented, strategy is developed as steps that provide direction in conducting business and maintaining external relations (Aeron & Jain, 2015).

Strategies enable small businesses to gain a favorable position in the marketplace. Strategic planning begins when a business opportunity is developed. The strategy should combine creativity, analysis, planning, and learning (Abdalkrim, 2013). The goal is to enhance the small business owners' performance regarding both the financial outcome and survival.

Strategies reduce the failure rate of small businesses and promote entrepreneurial skills among leaders (Kyndt & Baert, 2015). Entrepreneurial skills include creativity, adaptability, technological skills, innovativeness, and management ability (Mitchelmore et al., 2014). According to (Osiri, 2013), products or services are determined by the business owners understanding the needs of their customers. With a pricing strategy, owner executives decide on a competitive price for the market, which would then correlate with profit margins (Aristi et al., 2014). Reaching potential customers and turning them into clients requires a suitable place or channel of distribution, such as wholesalers, retailers, supermarket chains, shopping centers, showrooms, or online websites (Mayr et al., 2017). Promotion is communicating with customers, providing them with information, and assisting them in purchasing the product or service (Osiri, 2013). Finance is key for small business operations. Despite limited financial resources, small business owners must find new and creative ways to pay for every business's start-up and operation tasks (Turner & Endres, 2017). Many small business owners use bootstrapping as an internal source of funding for the start-up and growth of their business when traditional sources of funds are not available. Bootstrapping is starting and growing a business without external funding or resources from outside (Grichnik et al., 2014). Bootstrapping may include personal income, savings, home equity, credit cards, stock/bonds, retirement annuities, potential grants, and personal labor or sweat equity (Winborg, 2015). Strategy creation and the entrepreneurial orientation measure of competitiveness are indicators of optimal performance for small businesses (Lechner & Gudmundsson, 2014). According to Zacca, Dayan, and Ahrens (2015), businesses fail due to the lack of commodity marketing and their inability to adapt to the changes essential to maintaining a competitive advantage. Bulley, Baku, and Alan (2014) recommended using competitive intelligence in decision-making and strategic planning. Competitive intelligence includes acquiring and analyzing product, customer, and competitor information to establish core competencies (Bulley et al., 2014). Block et al. (2015) suggested using differentiation and cost leadership strategies for core competitive advantages. Differentiation strategies include acquiring capabilities to create a unique market, products, and services. Entrepreneurship involves creating, growing, transforming businesses, and investigating the effectiveness of different attributes and actions to gain a competitive advantage to achieve business goals (Banker et al., 2014). Small business owners should know how to create value for their clients and differentiate their products and services (Wilson, 2015).

2.4 Relevance of Resiliency Theory in a Food Business

Resilience has been defined as our ability to deal with and recover quickly from challenges in general. Because they can turn challenges into successes, resilience strategies benefit corporations and employees, for instance, in the food business industry (Mayunga, 2012).

Indeed, several theories have been published, and as a result, they provide a forum for discussion. One of these theories holds that resilience is a mental strength we may or may not have. As research progressed, scientists' perspectives shifted, and we now have a clearer picture of this topic (Christopherson et al., 2012). Furthermore, resilience encompasses general skills humans can learn, practice, and improve. Being resilient or implementing a few practices can help workers improve client relationships and connections (Greene & Seung, 2014).

On the other hand, according to Prouty et al. (2014), even the most skilled and competent employee is likely to fail; in this case, they can benefit greatly from resilience. Furthermore, research has shown that employees and people open to new experiences should learn resilience strategies and skills because it can help them recognize failures or weak points (Budak et al., 2014). Employees can learn from it, be resilient, and grow. A resilient worker can concentrate on a problem while contributing to change (Greene, 2014). Given that "customers are the center of a business," nothing is more important than being reassured in a difficult situation. Last but not least, it is critical to promote honest interpersonal connections between clients or the community at work (Rosenstein & Stark, 2015). As previously stated, employing this strategy will assist employees in growing and being helpful to customers without blaming them. Resilience can be combined with psychological safety at work, allowing people to speak up without fear.

As a result, when a risk or a change appears in the food business, resilience will allow the owners to manage the crisis and continue with their business goals. Natural disasters, economic or market disruption, and even pandemic threats are risks and crisis events (Caruso & Salovey, 2014). Companies will benefit greatly from learning and implementing resilient plans in this case. They will be able to deal with any bad event that may arise (Epstein, 2018). As observed, the recent sanitary crisis and lockdown have highlighted the need for businesses to be resilient.

Indeed, the food business community and food industry should have replaced a more comprehensive resilient approach to avoid the crisis resulting in long-term damage and financial costs (Bloom & Farragher, 2013).

To summarize, this paper will delve deeper using some compelling participant responses related to the challenges her business faced and how the business overcame them and will provide insights for the food industry and the effect on groups that resilience can have a powerful impact on employees and humans in general, due to performative strategies and skill building. Nowadays, we recognize the value of resilience at work more than usual, and as a result, people will be more open to change and the idea of overcoming difficult times. This theory, as the framework of this paper, can develop resilience-promoting factors with some motivation and process practices. Last but not least, this paper can provide knowledge that, despite being useful for businesses, it is also an effective concept because it can help people to work with ethics and become more authentic.

3. **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter presents the methodology of this study. In this chapter, the following sections are discussed: research design, research participants, data sources, data collection procedure, data analysis, trustworthiness and authenticity, the role of the researchers, and ethical considerations.

3.1 **Research Design**

The research design used in this paper was the qualitative case study research. The case study design is an empirical study of modern phenomena in a real-world context, and this is the preferred research design when studies involve unique and revelatory cases involving an individual, event, or program (Ridder, 2017).

The purpose of a case study design was to collect the data and information from a natural environment without external constraints (Gerring, 2014). The case study design includes an interpretive approach to analyzing data based on participants' responses (Verleye, 2019). This research design is appropriate in this paper for the following three reasons: First, the research question deals with how small business owners use competitive advantages to sustain their businesses; Second, controlling the behavior of the event is not a need. We collected data by interviewing business owners in the service industry; third, the focus was on contemporary events.

The three reasons met the criteria Sarajevo (2019) specified for choosing a case study. Multiple case studies increase the possibility of direct replication, making independent cases more powerful than conclusions from a single case (Runeson et al., 2012). Paying attention to participant responses and stopping data collection when the responses become repetitive is an appropriate action to ensure saturation for this study.

3.2 **Research Participants**

The informant in the study was a food business owner in Cateel, Davao Oriental. This research only has one informant, the interviewee in an in-depth interview living in Poblacion, Cateel, Davao Oriental. Up to today, the business was still operating actively. The informant must have owned a food business for four decades.

The researchers served as the interviewers and ensured that the interviewee understood the procedure for collecting her responses, and the informant must agree to the interview before conducting it.

4. **RESULTS**

This chapter presents and discusses the data gathered from an in-depth interview with the informant of this paper. The discussion is based on the order of the statement of the problem, including why did the business owner engage in the food business, what challenges the business owner encountered in the food business, how did the business owner overcome the challenges he/she encountered, and what are the insights that the business owner can share to the food industry. Also, this chapter presents the themes in each statement of the problem.

4.1 **Reasons Why the Business Owner Engage in Food Business**

Based on an in-depth interview conducted, the informant gave her response when asked the reason why did she engage in the food business. Shown in Table 1 are the themes and core ideas of the business owner's reasons,

namely, family and personal motivation, prioritizing the food business, interest and passion in cooking, and marketability of the business.

Table 1. Reasons Why the Business Owner Engage in Food Business

Theme/s	Core Ideas
Family and Personal Motivation	Motivated by a desire to improve their own and them family's quality of life - Build a business that could provide for their family - Make lives easier.
Prioritizing Food Business	- Food is one of the most important needs for people - Food is a priority for many individuals - They saw food as a marketable business opportunity - Prioritized food business over other potential ventures
Interest and Passion in Cooking	Had a personal interest and passion for cooking which motivated them to focus specifically on the food business - They enjoyed cooking different types of foods - Saw the food business as an opportunity to pursue them passion while also making a living
Marketability of Food Business	-Believed that the food business is one of the most marketable types of business given the importance of food to people's daily lives - They saw it as a practical and profitable business venture that could provide for their family's needs

4.2 The Challenges that the Business Owner Encountered in Food Business

As every business has challenges that business owners encounter, food business owners face challenges that are not new in the business world. Presented in Table 2 are the challenges encountered by the business owner in this paper in the food business.

Table 2. The challenges that the Business Owner Encountered in Food Business.

Theme/s	Core Ideas
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Non-payment of customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- Non-payment of customers who lend their food - Customers forgot to pay orders - Faced challenges with getting paid in a timely manner
Competition in the Market	<p>Faced challenges with competition in the market</p> <p>indicating that it is difficult to stand out and attract customers in a crowded market</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presence of many food businesses in the locality
Adverse Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Husband falling ill and the - Pandemic which resulted in a slowdown in business sales - Reduced customer demand due to restrictions

4.3 Ways of Overcoming the Challenges Encountered

Leading business development specialists throughout the world must continue to move deals forward despite supply chains being backlogged, inflation rising, and the great resignation approaching (Green, 2013). In order to cope, some businesses are changing their marketing strategies in order to partner with new customers, while others are focusing on how to remotely enhance employee morale across their entire staff (Manko, 2021).

Table 3. Ways of Overcoming the Challenges Encountered

Theme/s	Core Ideas
Faith and Trust to God	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Turned to God in the face of trials - Trust God to overcome hardships and face trials
The need to focus on one's own business	<p>Recognizes that competition exists and that customers have the power to decide where to buy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It's essential to focus on one's business and work towards making it better - Despite the existence of competition, the business owner emphasizes the importance of concentrating on one's business and working towards improving it.

4.4 Insights Shared by the Informants to the Food industry

Business owners often encounter various obstacles and challenges along their journey toward success. These hurdles must be overcome in order to achieve their goals. As a result of facing these challenges, business owners gain valuable insights and experiences that allow them to offer knowledge and suggestions to others in their industry. Their expertise can be valuable for those seeking guidance and advice in navigating similar challenges and achieving their entrepreneurial aspirations.

Table 4. Insights Shared by the Informant to the Food Industry

Theme/s	Core Ideas
Persevere and have determination	- Emphasizes the importance of striving and never giving up, despite the challenges that may arise
Being resilient	-Acknowledges that failure is always a possibility in business but also notes that there are times when success can be achieved
Focus on service	-Stresses the importance of providing good service to customers, rather than focusing solely on competition.
Giving Importance of Customer Relations	-Emphasizes the importance of treating customers well. - Not being too strict with customers.

5. DISCUSSION

This chapter contains the researcher's parted discussion and conclusion from the themes that emerged from the study's findings.

5.1 Reasons the Business Owner Engaged in Food Business

Based on an in-depth interview conducted, the informant gave her response when asked the reason why did she engage in the food business. Shown in Table 1 are the themes and core ideas of the business owner's reasons, namely, family and personal motivation, prioritizing the food business, interest and passion in cooking, and marketability of the business.

Family and Personal Motivation. According to the data gathered, the informant is involved in the food business because she wants to improve the quality of life for her family. In addition, the informant believes she needs to start a business to provide for their family and make their lives easier.

This data coincides with the result of the investigation of Ganz (2013), which states that the secret weapon for achieving one's goals is family and personal motivation. It impacts both professional and personal life (Weiner, 2013). Life could be difficult without it. While having a support network is important, an individual cannot rely on others to push him through her entire life. Goals necessitate a great deal of concentration, which can be difficult to maintain.

Interest and Passion in Cooking. The business owner was involved in the food business because she had a personal interest and passion for cooking, which motivated her to specialize in the food business. The participant enjoys cooking various dishes and saw this as an opportunity to combine her passion with a source of income.

Meanwhile, just like the informant, according to Poppi (2012), owners of food businesses think that people's fundamental need is food. It will be difficult for people to overcome hunger, but they can resist buying new

clothes (Poppi, 2022). The food industry is one of the most lucrative industries in the world because of this (Monteiro et al., 2013).

Marketability of Food Business. The informant believes the food business is practical and profitable because food is essential and one of every individual's primary needs. As a result, the participant identified food as a marketable business opportunity and prioritized it over other ventures.

Food businesses becoming successful is the key market-driving aspect, consumers' growing preference for quick, portable eating options (Shamsudin et al., 2020). Customers are spending money at various kinds of international cuisine-based food service restaurants due to shifting food consumption habits and the growing influence of other cuisines on food consumption (Peppers & Rogers, 2016).

5.2 The Challenges that the Business Owner Encountered in Food Business

As every business has challenges that business owners encounter, food business owners face challenges that are not new in the business world. Presented in Table 2 are the challenges encountered by the business owner in this paper in the food business.

Non-payment of Customers. The informant in this study faces challenges that include customers not being able to pay for what they ordered, either forgetting to pay or getting paid promptly for the food lent to them.

According to Ryan (2018), one of the challenges faced by food business owners is that customers cannot pay for what they ordered or bought, which can be related to "dine and dash". This refers to the illegal act of failing to pay for services to defraud the owner of a hotel, restaurant, campground, or any other facility that serves food and/or beverages (Khamrang et al., 2022). This has been rampant, usually in establishments that are big and the busiest (Bricoe & Tripp, 2015). For instance, in the US, ordering food and drinks at a restaurant or other comparable place to leave without paying became a norm (Testa & Paton, 2020). The act often entails the customer ordering a meal, eating it, and leaving the restaurant before or after the bill is given (Mears, 2015).

Competition in the Market. The business owner encounters challenges with competition in the market, indicating that it is difficult to stand out and attract customers in a crowded market and is challenged by the presence of many food businesses in the locality.

Another challenge that food business owners face is competition. A group of enterprises vying for customers' attention in the same market is called competition (Stalk et al., 2012). Competition exists in all businesses (Ford & Hakanson, 2013). From a business standpoint, it makes sense to believe that competition threatens an organization when it has many closely related rivals (Johanson & Mattsson, 2015). However, the various competition sectors also offer many advantages to the industry, particularly to customers (Apolloni et al., 2022).

Adverse Events. The business owner was also able to experience adverse events like her husband falling ill and the pandemic, which resulted in a slowdown in business sales, reducing customer demand due to health restrictions.

Natural disasters, economic downturns, and health crises are adverse events (Dieppe et al., 2020). The informant's case includes the husband becoming sick and the pandemic, which slowed down the income of the business caused to the restrictions during this time. According to Bhardwaj & Vogl (2016), an adverse event is meant as a development materially detrimental to the business or financial health of the target company. In other words, any event, change, circumstance, effect, or state of facts materially averse to the target company's business or financial situation (Shafi et al., 2020).

5.3 Ways of Overcoming the Challenges Encountered

Despite backlogs in supply chains, rising prices, and the impending Great Resignation, the world's top business development experts must keep moving agreements forward (Green, 2013). While some organizations are working on boosting employee morale throughout their entire crew to cope remotely, others are modifying their marketing techniques to partner with new clients (Manko, 2021).

Faith and Trust in God. In the particular case of the informant of this paper, presented in Table 3, she overcame her difficulties by turning to God amid adversity and putting her faith in Him to get her through.

The result relates to the findings of Putnam & Campbell (2012), asserting that, since 90% of daily actions are purely based on faith and belief, growing your business is not about luck but faith and trust in your maker. A person would not even be able to get out of bed in the morning if they lacked faith. Their faith fuels every person's basic existence, but when it comes to attracting customers and growing their business, there needs to be more faith (Rothblum et al., 2019). Faith is tested when times are tough, people are fearful, and their carefully made plans do not quite work out as hoped (Lewis, 2014). True faith is the capacity to maintain faith in the face of hardship. True faith, especially in business, is when someone has every reason in the world not to believe (Gard, 2013).

The Need to Focus on One's Own Business. She increased her concentration and attention on it as she did to overcome the obstacles she had in running her firm. Customers still have the power to choose where they shop, despite her being aware of the market's numerous competitors. Customers still control where they buy food and which business they will stick with. Focusing on one's business and making improvements to it is essential. The business owner emphasizes the importance of focusing on one's business and working to improve it despite competition.

According to Schoemaker et al. (2018), today's businesses face more challenges from their customers than from their rivals. Additionally, customer expectations are increasingly fluid and independent of sectoral lines (Atluri et al., 2017). Whether consumers or business purchasers, customers do not evaluate your customer service against your rivals; they evaluate it against the greatest customer service available. They have similar expectations for websites, mobile apps, loyalty programs, branding, and social responsibility commitments (Vickers et al., 2017).

5.4 Insights Shared by the Informant to the Food Industry

The business owner has obstacles and hardships on their path to success, which they must surmount to achieve their goals. As a result, they can impart knowledge and suggestions to the industry they work in.

Persevere and Have Determination. As for the informant in this article, as presented in Table 4, she shared her observations about the food sector, highlighting the value of striving and never giving up on any obstacles that may come up.

As asserted by Kotler (2012) in business, perseverance, and determination allow business owners to move forward in the face of setbacks and difficulties. A firm would succeed with the determination to persist in facing obstacles. However, a key virtue of perseverance drives business owners, staff members, and the company itself to success. Moreover, customers can tell that a company is dependable and efficient when the proprietors persevere in facing challenges rather than changing their opinions to conform to social demands.

Being Resilient. The informant also emphasized the need to develop resilience, by which she meant to realize that failure in business is always a possibility but also underlined that success is sometimes possible. Also, business owners need to be resilient in every possible way. Over the past few years, business leaders have been reminded of how interdependent and unpredictable economies, society, and businesses are. Unexpected effects have been felt on supply chains, markets, employees, and business reputations (Narula, 2014).

Focus on Service. The informant also emphasized that the food business must concentrate on its service, emphasizing the significance of offering clients excellent service rather than concentrating exclusively on competitiveness. Focusing on customer service and relations is important in any business, especially in the food

business. Customer orientation and focus on the customer do not simply show up in one's conduct or activities, as Viio and Nordin (2017) claimed.

Giving Importance of Customer Relations. Customer interactions are crucial; thus, attention should be paid to them. The participant stresses the significance of providing excellent customer service and being lenient with customers. Businesses typically attract more consumers and foster mutual involvement by emphasizing customers and providing excellent customer service. A problem customer initially believed they were confronting suddenly becomes a joint endeavor between the seller (Gratton, 2020). Additionally, the objective becomes one that both you and your client share.

Reliance on Prayer. Business owners must rely on their prayers, as the participant emphasized the significance of doing so for direction and business success. However, it can be tempting for businesses to look for security in a healthy revenue flow, enhance our brand's reputation, or introduce a lucrative new product. However, the inner life needs to be considered more (Jackson, 2014). There have been a lot of successful businesspeople who, at one point in their careers, held much power but have since lost it all due to dishonest business tactics, a major turn of events against them, or falling for the myth that they were "too big to fail" (Miner, 2014). Our good connection with God, not the balance sheet or any other kind of external validation of the business, should provide the stability everybody wants. True prayer involves discipline and concentration, two highly relevant qualities to day-to-day work performance (Schneier, 2015).

5.5 Concluding Remarks

As college students, we are always paralleled with pressure, for we are in the phase of education that hones and arms us to combat the battle of reality. Change is constant. What we can do is bend with change for us to succeed. Studying amid a pandemic is never easy. There are lots of adjustments to be considered and accepted. Conducting this study, "A Case Study of a Four-Decade Food Business in Cateel," taught us not only to be hands-on in academics but also to be relatable to the lived experiences and challenges of food business owners in Cateel. Many of us see them only as owners. We do not see the core status of their lives because we are blinded and overwhelmed by the concept of "modernization for a better nation." We tend to overlook those people affected by this modernization. We often view modernization as progress and advancement that allows us to live easily. Using advanced technological products benefits us as they give us the comfort of doing things easier.

However, after doing this study, we realized that modernization can be subjective and only benefit privileged individuals. Food business owners who depend on their businesses to earn money are highly affected by this modernization as almost all the work is done with technology, disregarding some local food business owners. This means a loss of their sole income, significantly affecting their standard of life.

The study reflected that modernization is not exempt from having the "double blade" characteristic. It does have its pros and cons. Furthermore, as the world views it positively, we are lucky to study and view it differently. We realized that it has been hard for those individuals, especially food business owners, to cope with this modernization as most depend on their businesses to earn money to provide for their family's needs. A loss of income for individuals who belong to the lower classes makes their lives harder and can even send them into hunger. It was a heartbreaking scene to witness their struggles personally. As members of this community, we are also subjected to participating in helping to address this problem. To achieve the pinnacle of success, we have to work hand in hand as one community. As researchers, we persevered in pursuing and publishing this study because this is our little way to tell their story, which is worth being heard and amplified. We learned how important small business managers are as key strategists in managing the factors in their environment and making decisions to grow their businesses.

We realize how much small business industry networking provides support and information to assist small businesses. Lastly, we have gained insight into the importance of continued research on this topic due to the significance of small business performance and growth to society and the local community.

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