

A SWOT ANALYSIS OF BRICK-AND-MORTAR FOR MICRO-BUSINESSES OVER CLICK-AND-MORTAR IN SELECTED BUSINESSES IN BALAYAN, BATANGAS YEAR 2023

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Available Online: February 2024
Revised: January 2024
Accepted: December 2024
Received: January 2024

Volume 2 Issue 1 (2024)
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.10893033
E-ISSN: 2984-7184
P-ISSN: 2984-7176
<https://getinternational.org/research/>

Abstract

This study investigates the dynamics of brick-and-mortar versus click-and-mortar microbusinesses, focusing on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) within the local context of Balayan. Ten purposively sampled microbusiness entrepreneurs were examined using the SWOT method. The findings underscore the significance of product assessment, communication, and customer experiences in cultivating trust. Sensory experiences and competitive pricing emerge as strengths, while challenges such as poor sales necessitate strategic interventions. External factors, particularly technological advancements, exert influence on the retail landscape. Key strategies include competitive pricing, flexibility, and an understanding of customer behavior. The study highlights growth potential in tailored experiences but acknowledges the risks posed by e-commerce competition. Additionally, a SWOT strategic plan is developed to leverage internal and external strengths and opportunities while mitigating weaknesses and threats.

Keywords: *SWOT Analysis, Brick-and-mortar, Click-and-mortar, Microbusinesses*

Recommended Citation:

Aquino, G., Agunos, J. F., Aldave, D. A., Panaligan, K., Magpantay, K.-C., & Mangarin, J. (2024). A SWOT ANALYSIS OF BRICK-AND-MORTAR FOR MICRO-BUSINESSES OVER CLICK-AND-MORTAR IN SELECTED BUSINESSES IN BALAYAN, BATANGAS YEAR 2023. GUILD OF EDUCATORS IN TESOL INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL, 2(1), 165–182. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10893033>

Introduction

The global business landscape witnessed a significant upheaval following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019, leading to widespread business closures and unprecedented challenges across various sectors. Despite these obstacles, the crisis spurred opportunities for innovation and adaptation, particularly in the realm of online marketing and electronic commerce (e-commerce).

A study featured in the *Journal of Business Research* shed light on the pandemic's repercussions, forcing businesses to shutter and pushing traditional retailers to confront a myriad of short-term challenges ranging from health and safety concerns to supply chain disruptions and shifts in consumer behavior. The pandemic-induced economic slowdown favored the rapid expansion of e-commerce, marking a pivotal shift in consumer preferences and business operations worldwide.

E-commerce emerged as a primary avenue for consumers to procure goods and services, offering unparalleled convenience and safety during the pandemic. The surge in online retail sales prompted traditional brick-and-mortar stores to pivot toward digital platforms, embracing e-commerce initiatives to stay competitive in an evolving marketplace.

Facilitated by technologies like electronic data interchange (EDI) and virtual shopping carts, e-commerce not only provided convenience to consumers but also furnished businesses with invaluable insights to refine marketing strategies and customize customer offerings. As internet technologies advanced, e-commerce became a dominant force, empowering consumers to compare prices, explore product options, and access diverse offerings from various online platforms.

This transformative shift prompted a closer examination of the impact on traditional physical stores, particularly in Balayan, Batangas. Recognizing the challenges faced by local businesses during the pandemic, researchers initiated a study aimed at providing practical recommendations for physical store owners to navigate the burgeoning e-commerce landscape. Terms such as "brick and mortar" and "click and mortar" underscored the hybrid nature of businesses blending physical and online operations.

Furthermore, the study delved into key concepts such as marketing and selling, essential components in creating, promoting, and exchanging goods and services, particularly in the pandemic-shaped environment. By exploring successful strategies employed by microbusinesses in the apparel retail sector, the research sought to equip local physical store owners with insights to effectively compete with larger corporations and the rapidly growing e-commerce industry.

To address research gaps, the study applied SWOT analysis, identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats encountered by microbusinesses in the context of e-commerce. These findings not only offered insights into marketing and selling strategies but also served as a valuable roadmap for microbusiness owners to navigate the competitive online market, make informed decisions, and ensure long-term success in the digital age.

Statement of the Problem

This study sought to comprehend the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of physical storefronts over electronic commerce (e-commerce) for microbusinesses. It aimed to make the following points clear in particular:

1. What are the strengths of having a physical store compared to e-commerce, in terms of:
 - a. Marketing
 - b. Selling
2. What are the weaknesses of having a physical store compared to e-commerce in terms of profile variables?
3. What are the opportunities of having a physical store compared to e-commerce in terms of profile variables?
4. What are the threats of having a physical store compared to e-commerce in terms of profile variables?
5. Based on the findings, what plan of action may be proposed for the future entrepreneurs?

Methodology

To achieve the primary objective of the study, which was to scrutinize the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of physical stores for micro-businesses within Balayan, Batangas, compared to e-commerce, the researchers adopted a qualitative-descriptive research approach. This method facilitated a more profound understanding of how social media contributed to the success of micro-businesses, employing semi-structured interviews. The research utilized purposive sampling, establishing specific criteria and qualifications to select study participants – business owners with substantial experience who did not incorporate social media in their operations, and businesses that were widely recognized in this field.

Population and Sampling

The researchers purposefully employed the purposive sampling technique, strategically choosing participants with a meticulous and targeted approach based on predetermined criteria. These criteria mandated that the 10 selected participants must own a brick-and-mortar store, abstain from utilizing social media for promotional purposes, and possess a minimum of five years of experience with recognized standing within the business domain in Balayan, Batangas. This rigorous method ensured the inclusion of participants who precisely met the specified criteria, contributing to a highly focused and intentional selection process.

Instrumentation

For data collection in this study, the researchers employed semi-structured interviews as research instruments, recognizing their effectiveness in gathering reliable and comparable qualitative data from multiple participants. The semi-structured interviews consisted four parts; an introduction to establish rapport and set the context, followed by open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed responses, probing questions to delve deeper into specific topics, and a conclusion to summarize key points and allow participants to provide any additional insights they deemed relevant.

Data Collection

The initial step involved acquiring authorization to carry out the research in the Balayan, Batangas Local Government unit, which required approval from the administrators of the public market. Following this approval, the researchers then sought further consent to perform preliminary surveys and interviews. Once all necessary permissions were obtained, the researchers conducted face-to-face interviews and pre-surveys with owners of micro-businesses. The gathered data from these participants underwent thematic analysis, allowing them to collate and interpret the varied experiences, perspectives, and actions of the individuals involved.

Data Analysis

The researchers used thematic coding analysis to analyze the data, identifying recurring themes through word meanings and sentence structures. This qualitative data analysis method provides deeper insights into the research subject and how various factors influence the phenomenon under investigation. Clarke et al. (2013) stressed the significance of thematic analysis in qualitative data analysis, which entails discovering reoccurring themes within text by looking at word meanings and sentence patterns. This method provides more in-depth insights into the research issue and how various aspects or contexts influence the event being studied. Thematic analysis is frequently advised as the first qualitative method to master because it teaches essential abilities applicable to other types of analysis. The researchers began by reviewing and revisiting transcripts before focusing on establishing overarching themes and higher-level sub-themes while retaining distinctive traits. After determining the important subjects, the interpretation process began.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers sought approval and acquired agreement from the participants. To protect the data's privacy and maintain participant confidentiality, the researchers implemented measures such as using code names instead of real names. This approach aimed to respect the rights of the individuals involved in the study, ensuring that the research adhered to ethical and responsible standards. These measures encompassed securing informed consent, safeguarding privacy and confidentiality, minimizing potential harm, promoting beneficence, and maintaining integrity and transparency.

Results and Discussions

The replies received from the ten participants provided valuable insights and trends, revealing significant findings across various aspects of the study. The interview questionnaire focused on participants' perceptions of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with running a brick-and-mortar business.

Table 2.1

Strengths in terms of Marketing: Product Quality and Assurance

Major Themes	Sub-Themes	Codes
Product Quality and Assurance	Tangible Product Evaluation	- P2: Customers can physically feel and evaluate the product's fabric, ensuring it matches their expectations. - P7: The quality of the product is emphasized.
	What You See Is What You Get (WYSIWYG)	- P5: Customers trust that what they see in the store is what they will receive, eliminating surprises. - P7: The concept of WYSIWYG is reinforced, highlighting the visual consistency of products.
	Honesty and Transparency	- P8: The store's proximity allows for honest representation of products. - P9: Physical stores can show the actual product, promoting transparency.

Table 2.1 provides a summary of the advantages of product quality and assurance for microbusinesses compared to e-commerce in Balayan, Batangas, outlining main themes, sub-themes, and codes identified by researchers. The main theme, product quality and assurance, emphasizes businesses' criteria to ensure their products meet or exceed established standards for excellence. Within this theme, three sub-themes are identified.

The first sub-theme, tangible product evaluation, highlights the importance of hands-on experiences for customers to evaluate products, ensuring they align with expectations. Customers' ability to physically interact with products enhances their sense of ownership and likelihood of purchase, as noted by P7 and reinforced by P2.

The subsequent sub-theme, "What You See Is What You Get" (WYSIWYG), underscores the significance of visual appeal in product presentation. Transparent packaging and well-lit displays allow customers to assess products accurately, fostering trust and confidence in the purchasing process. This transparency eliminates discrepancies between expectation and reality, as supported by statements from P5 and P7.

The third sub-theme, honesty and transparency, highlights the authenticity of physical stores in providing customers with accurate product representations. Customers trust what they see in-store, fostering trust and confidence through an authentic portrayal. This theme emphasizes the importance of physical presence in ensuring customer satisfaction and confidence, as noted by P8 and reinforced by P9.

Table 3.1

Weaknesses in terms of Marketing: Customer Relations and Criticism

Major Themes	Sub-Themes	Codes
Customer Relations and Criticism	Rude Customers	- P2: Sometimes the customers are rude and do not speak to us.
	Customer Criticism	- P3: Occasionally, customers criticize our items and make comparisons to others.
	Customer Decline	- P8: Our customers have decreased.

In Table 3.1, the major themes of customer relations and criticism encompass how businesses interact with customers and address their feedback. Customer relations aim to foster positive relationships, while criticism highlights areas for improvement. Effective management involves using criticism constructively, enhancing the business, and showing responsiveness to customer needs. Wali et al. (2016) emphasize the importance of customer relationship management (CRM) in improving service quality and maintaining satisfaction and loyalty. Within this theme, there are three sub-themes.

The first sub-theme, "Rude Customers," addresses the challenge of managing interactions with discourteous customers. Strategies and staff training in empathetic communication and conflict resolution are necessary to maintain a positive customer experience. P2 highlights instances where customers exhibit rudeness.

The second sub-theme, "Customer Criticism," focuses on handling feedback, critiques, and suggestions from customers. Businesses must actively address such feedback, viewing it as an opportunity for improvement and enhancing customer satisfaction. P3 mentions customers occasionally criticizing items and making comparisons.

The third sub-theme, "Customer Decline," signifies a decrease in customer engagement, indicating potential challenges in retention or market shifts. Understanding the reasons behind this decline is crucial for businesses, requiring strategic efforts to attract and retain customers amidst changing market dynamics. P8 acknowledges a decrease in the customer base due to not reaching target income.

Table 4.2

Opportunities in terms of Marketing: E-commerce Consideration and Trends

Major Themes	Sub-Themes	Codes
E-commerce Consideration and Trends	E-commerce Integration	- P9: Considering the use of e-commerce - P9: Challenges in adopting e-commerce due to age
	Staying Updated with Trends	- P2, P3, P4, P7, P8, P9, P10: Keeping up with trends and seasonal changes - P2, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9, P10: The importance of staying updated to remain competitive - P3: Sourcing trending items
	Online Marketing Strategies	- P5, P9: Using social media or live selling for customer attraction - P5, P6, P9: The possibility of using social media or online platforms

Table 4.2 focuses on the integration of e-commerce into business operations, analyzing trends and practices in the industry. It highlights the importance of website accessibility and usability, as well as the increasing competition between stores. The theme includes three sub-themes, including "e-commerce integration," which emphasizes the consideration of integrating e-commerce into business operations. The first sub-theme, "e-commerce integration," acknowledges challenges associated with e-commerce adoption, particularly those related to age. This includes assessing the potential benefits of online selling and navigating the challenges associated with this integration. Age-related factors may pose challenges for businesses or individuals unfamiliar with digital platforms. Moes et al. (2017) note that while retailers are still searching for the best way to integrate online and offline shopping, many examples already exist of retailers optimizing this integration. As noted by: P9, "Perhaps through live selling and posting items, we can use social media or conduct live selling to attract more customers."

Additionally, the participant also stated, "Maybe an opportunity they see is using e-commerce, but due to our age, we are not familiar with using gadgets and the like." P9.

The participants in the "Staying Updated with Trends" sub-theme emphasize the importance of staying informed about current trends in the retail environment. This involves actively monitoring developments, consumer behavior, and emerging market trends. Businesses must adapt to changing customer expectations and industry dynamics by incorporating these trends into their product offerings. A 2019 study by Kim et al. suggests that fashion brands must employ emotional branding to engage customers and stand out in a highly competitive market, addressing the growing trend of emotional relationships with brands. According to: P2, P3, P4, P7, P8, P9, and P10, "Keeping up with trends and seasonal changes."

Additionally, the participant also stated, "Yes, it's necessary to stay updated with trends, or you'll fall behind. We have designated products for that." P4.

And they also supported the statement, saying, "We travel to buy trending items online. Our supplier has given us instructions". P3

The sub-theme "Online Marketing Strategies" highlights the use of online platforms and interactive methods by participants to engage with their audience and promote their products. However, many business owners struggle to optimize their online platforms, making it difficult to create a digital marketing strategy during the pandemic. This highlights the importance of understanding and implementing effective online marketing strategies. As noted by: P5, "We can use social media or conduct live selling to attract more customers."

Additionally, the participant also stated, "The possibility of using social media or online platforms to promote our products. P5, P6, P9.

Table 5.1

Threats in terms of Marketing: Pricing and Competitive Factors

Major Themes	Sub-Themes	Codes
Pricing and Competitive Factors	Online Shop Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - P3: Convenience for customers using online platforms - P2, P3: Free shipping and freebies offered by online shops - P4: Online shopping impacting physical store visits - P2, P3: Impact on product pricing and offering freebies - P5: Lower profit margins compared to online shop.

Table 5.1 discusses pricing and competitive factors in the market, emphasizing the importance of competitive pricing in revenue management. It also discusses the advantages of online shopping, such as simplified purchasing and time-saving benefits. These incentives, such as free delivery and complementary items, entice customers to make purchases, thereby boosting their motivation to make online purchases. The study emphasizes the significant impact of promotional methods on customer behavior and online sales. As indicated by: P3, "A decline in sales, even though we're relatively new, as customers still look for items online."

Both P2 and P3 are noting that online shops are enticing customers by providing free shipping and additional freebies. The participants suggest that these perks, such as free shipping and extra complimentary items, are contributing to customer willingness to make purchases. Customers are attracted to these incentives, viewing them as discounts or voucher offers, which, in turn, motivates them to buy from online shops. by stating that "Online offers like free shipping and freebies offered by online shops have affected our business." P2, P3.

Additionally, the participant also stated, "Online shopping is impacting physical store visits." P4

The argument that "the lowering of competitors' prices also results in a loss of profit because they prefer it due to it being cheaper and more convenient for them" also supported it. P2. P3.

Also supported the statement saying, "Lower profit margins compared to an online shop." P5.

Table 6.6

Weaknesses in terms of Selling: Low Sales and Revenue Decline

Major Themes	Sub-Themes	Codes
Low Sales and Revenue Decline	Sales Decrease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - P1, P4, P7, P10: Sometimes, sales are slow when there are few customers or during certain periods. - P4, P8: Sales expectations have been adjusted, and they have experienced not reaching their target income. - P4: Sales have decreased due to the trend of online shops. - P9: Sales are declining compared to e-commerce.
	Revenue Decline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - P5: Revenue has been decreasing compared to previous years due to e-commerce. - P6: Sales have been decreasing over time, and 3,000 sales are higher today.

The study indicates that low sales and revenue decline are major themes, reflecting decreased product or service quantity and earnings. Researchers identified two sub-themes and six codes, illustrating that businesses suffer revenue decline due to reduced total income. Following Farrell et al.'s (2020) study, sales dropped by 40% after the national emergency declaration, with minimal recovery. Small business owners' expenditure decreased by 40% initially but partly rebounded within two months. Earlier research showed a decline in small business employment and finances during the early pandemic, consistent with income loss.

In the first sub-theme, sales decrease, driven by changing consumer preferences and the rise of e-commerce, impacting traditional sales channels. This aligns with broader market trends favoring online shopping, posing a competitive challenge to traditional businesses. Jolanta's (2016) study supports this, indicating reduced cross-border sales, increased costs, and profitability drops.

Participants noted decreased sales due to online shopping trends, slow periods, and unmet income targets. The comparison with e-commerce highlighted its appeal across age groups. Additionally, the sub-theme of revenue decline underscores the broader impact of online shopping on overall revenue, reflecting a shift in consumer behavior. P6 noted recent sales improvement despite a historical trend of decline, with P5 echoing revenue decreases due to e-commerce.

Table 7.1

Opportunities in terms of Selling: Opportunities of Physical Store

Major Themes	Sub-Themes	Codes
Opportunities of Physical Store	Word of Mouth Influence	- P2: Offline search leads to physical store visits - P2: People seek desired items offline
	Hybrid Approach	- P3: Contentment with physical store - P3: Open to online posting or live selling
	Preference for Physical Presence	- P7: Preference for physical selling - P7: No plans to use online platforms
	Customer Referral Impact	- P2: Word of mouth from loyal customers - P5: Customer loyalty attracting more customers
	Adaptation to Trends	- P7: Keeping up with trends - P10: Embracing social media and online selling trends

Table 7.1 discusses the opportunities of physical stores for micro-businesses in Balayan, Batangas, focusing on the main theme, five sub-themes, and ten codes. Yang (2022) highlights the advantages of physical businesses in providing authentic purchasing experiences, expanding presence, adapting to market dynamics, improving strategies, integrating online and offline approaches, reducing uncertainties, and increasing competitiveness. Conventional retail is adopting a new retail model that integrates online sales with physical storefronts, potentially affecting distribution channels, transportation methods, and logistical expenses.

The sub-theme of word-of-mouth influence emphasizes the impact of positive recommendations and feedback from loyal customers, who actively share their positive experiences. An effective strategy involves nurturing previous customers to establish strong connections between customers and employees, thereby developing advertising channels through positive word-of-mouth, as per Nguyen et. al., 2019. According to: P2, "People seek desired items offline, and offline search leads to physical store visits."

The hybrid approach in the business plan involves combining physical and online components, indicating a strong commitment to a physical location. This approach signifies contentment and achievement in the physical location, with the business confident in its physical presence and expressing satisfaction with its physical store, indicating a preference for online platforms, as noted by: P3, "Contentment with physical store and also open to online posting or live selling."

The third sub-theme, preference for physical presence, emphasizes the significance of in-person interactions and human connection. It highlights the unique communication elements achieved through physical presence, which can establish profound connections and create a sense of intimacy that ecommerce cannot replicate. As noted by: P7, "Preference for physical selling and no plans to use online platforms."

The fourth sub-theme, customer referral impact, explores the impact of loyal customers on business success. Loyal customers actively share positive experiences, which attract new customers, creating a cycle of growth and expansion for the business. According to: P2, “Word of mouth from loyal customers.”

It was also supported by, “Customer loyalty attracting more customers”. P5

The fifth sub-theme, adaptation to trends, emphasizes businesses' responsiveness to market changes. It highlights the willingness to leverage emerging trends in social media and online selling, recognizing their importance and strategic integration into the business model. This proactive approach allows businesses to tap into a wider customer base and enhance brand visibility, demonstrating readiness to adapt and commitment to staying ahead of competition by leveraging emerging platforms and technologies. According to: P7, “Keeping up with trends.”

It was also supported by the participant saying, “Embracing social media and online selling trends”. P10

Table 8.1

Threats in terms of Selling: Threats to Physical Stores

Major Themes	Sub-Themes	Codes
Threats to Physical Stores	Convenience and Price Disadvantages	- P1: Travel Requirement for Customers - P1: Higher Prices Compared to E-commerce
	Changing Consumer Behavior	- P3: Decline in Sales Due to Online Shopping Trend - P4: Impact of Rapid Technological Change
	Economic Challenges	- P5: Decrease in Income - P7, P10: Slow Sales and Decrease in Customers
	Competitive Pricing and Profit Loss	- P8: Competitors' Lowering Prices - P8: Profit Loss Due to Competitive Pricing

The study identifies threats to physical stores, highlighting challenges in today's business environment, such as e-commerce growth, changing consumer habits, and pandemic disruptions. Increased costs, technological lag, and market saturation intensify competition, impacting profit margins. Cui's (2016) study notes the convenience of online shopping but highlights security risks compromising customer trust.

Three sub-themes align with these challenges. The first focuses on convenience and price disparities, emphasizing higher costs for brick-and-mortar stores due to travel requirements, noted by P1. The second sub-theme addresses changing consumer behavior, with customers increasingly favoring online shopping for security, simplicity, and diverse offerings, supported by P3 and references. The third sub-theme discusses economic challenges, citing declining sales and income due to the popularity of online shopping, as noted by P10 and supported by P5.

Lastly, competitive pricing and profit loss underscore the fierce competition faced by physical stores, leading to potential profit erosion. P8 highlights the impact of competitors' aggressive pricing strategies, emphasizing the need for physical stores to differentiate themselves.

Table 9.

SWOT'S Strategic Action Plan in Marketing and Selling

	STRENGTHS (S)	WEAKNESSES (W)
INTERNAL FACTORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective sales tactics, competitive pricing, strong communication. • Customer loyalty building, positive sales environment, product excellence, adaptability to diverse needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product diversification constraints, adapting to online preferences, resulting in a sales slowdown. • Vulnerability to changing trends, inconsistent sales, difficulties in handling interactions with difficult customers.
EXTERNAL FACTORS		
OPPORTUNITIES (O)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize relationships, adapt sales approaches, deliver high-quality products, implement dynamic pricing, and consistently provide excellence. • Highlight product quality in campaigns, emphasize staff training for communication and customer service, stay informed about customer preferences and online trends. • Establish an online presence to capitalize on opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product enhancement, in-store improvements, and online presence for development and engagement. • Emphasize loyalty programs and prioritize in-store experiences. • Leverage social media for marketing and engagement. • Train staff for excellent customer service. • Align strategies with opportunities for enhanced satisfaction and engagement.
THREATS (T)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough market research, customer-centric promotions, innovative displays, adaptive pricing. • Product trials, exceptional in-store experiences, exclusive promotions, trend awareness. • Maintain flexible inventory management. • Regular market research to address opportunities and threats. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigate challenges with digital marketing and flexible pricing in a competitive market. • Diversify store products to reach a wider customer base. • Create unique in-person experiences to differentiate from online platforms. • Offer special discounts to incentivize choosing physical stores over online options. • Address challenges related to product variety and online competition.

The key strategy for a business is to prioritize positive perception, adaptability, and consistency for customer trust. This involves focusing on product enhancement, improved experiences, and a strong online presence. In sales, effective tactics, competitive pricing, and customer loyalty building are crucial. Staff training, staying informed about customer preferences, and establishing a robust online presence are also essential.

To address challenges to traditional brick-and-mortar sustainability, such as inconvenience and heightened price competition, businesses must employ effective sales tactics, competitive pricing, and strong communication.

Customer loyalty building, maintaining a positive sales environment, ensuring product excellence, and adapting to diverse needs are also essential.

A comprehensive approach includes thorough market research, customer-centric promotions, innovative displays, and adaptive pricing. Additional tactics include product trials, exceptional in-store experiences, exclusive promotions, trend awareness, flexible inventory management, and regular market research.

Addressing challenges like product diversification constraints and adapting to online preferences can lead to a sales slowdown. Strategies include product enhancement, in-store improvements, a robust online presence, loyalty programs, social media, staff training, and aligning strategies with opportunities for enhanced satisfaction and engagement.

The key strategy for a business is to prioritize positive perception, adaptability, and consistency for customer trust, while addressing challenges such as inconvenience and online competition.

Conclusions

The study delves into successful strategies employed by microbusinesses in the apparel retail sector at the Public Market of Balayan, Batangas, aiming to offer insights for local physical store owners on effectively competing with larger corporations and the rapidly growing e-commerce industry. Thematic analysis was utilized to assess and understand the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with physical stores within the context of electronic commerce.

The findings, presented in various tables, provide profound insights into the strategies utilized by brick-and-mortar businesses to maintain competitiveness. These insights encompass enhancing in-store experiences, implementing omni-channel approaches blending online and offline operations, and leveraging local community connections. The knowledge gained empowers aspiring entrepreneurs to make informed decisions and develop effective strategies for navigating the dynamic business landscape.

Table 2.1 highlights "product quality and assurance" as a key benefit of physical businesses, with sub-themes emphasizing tangible product evaluation, transparency in representation, and honesty. These themes underscore the importance of providing customers with a transparent and genuine retail experience, fostering trust and confidence in their purchases.

Table 3.1 focuses on "customer relations and criticism," stressing the significance of actively addressing customer feedback to improve business performance and maintain a positive reputation. Sub-themes highlight the importance of responsiveness to customer needs and the management of customer expectations to foster loyalty and satisfaction.

Table 4.2 explores "e-commerce consideration and trends," indicating businesses' readiness to integrate online selling into their strategies and adapt to evolving market trends. Sub-themes emphasize the importance of staying

updated with e-commerce trends and exploring diverse online marketing strategies to enhance business visibility and customer outreach.

Table 5.1 delves into "pricing and competitive factors," highlighting challenges posed by online platforms and strategies employed by businesses to remain competitive. Sub-themes reflect the impact of changing consumer behavior on pricing strategies and the importance of adding value to products to compete effectively.

Table 6.6 addresses "low sales and revenue decline," prompting businesses to adopt strategies to revitalize sales and strengthen financial performance. Sub-themes underscore the impact of online shopping trends on revenue performance and suggest the need for intensified marketing efforts and cost control measures.

Table 7.1 discusses "opportunities of physical stores," emphasizing their role in personalized customer engagement, brand visibility, and community engagement. Sub-themes highlight essential strategies for business success, including leveraging word-of-mouth influence and adapting to industry trends.

Table 8.1 explores "threats to physical stores," including the rise of e-commerce, shifts in consumer behavior, and economic challenges. Sub-themes underscore the competitive landscape against e-commerce, the struggle to adapt to changing consumer preferences, and the financial strains faced by traditional brick-and-mortar establishments.

Overall, these findings provide valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by physical stores in the modern retail landscape, offering guidance for businesses to adapt and thrive in a dynamic and competitive market environment.

Recommendations

To strengthen customer relationships, prioritize effective communication in customer service, sales interactions, and positive word of mouth. Enhance your business's appeal by implementing competitive and fair pricing, including discounts when feasible. Proactively handle situations where products are unavailable by providing alternatives or solutions, ensuring a smooth customer experience. These steps are crucial for maintaining customer satisfaction and fostering loyalty.

As a future entrepreneur, consistently applying these practices enables businesses to position themselves for long-term success in a competitive market. Additionally, prioritize a positive customer experience by emphasizing appealing product presentation and maintaining consistent quality. Focus on "visual merchandising" to ensure proper product display and showcase high-quality items for a favorable initial impression. Simultaneously, address "Product Security and Integrity" to secure products, prevent damage, and sustain quality over time. Integrating these approaches will not only build customer trust but also contribute to long-term satisfaction, ultimately fostering a successful and enduring retail experience.

Furthermore, prioritize a customer-centric approach by adapting to evolving needs and preferences, fostering stronger relationships. Ensure responsiveness to changing requirements and maintain fair pricing practices. Recognize

the pivotal role customers play in long-term success, emphasizing the importance of customer satisfaction and loyalty. Implementing these strategies will contribute to building enduring customer relationships and laying the groundwork for sustained success in the future.

Additionally, capitalize on the advantages of physical stores for an effective customer experience by utilizing first-hand product interaction, dedicated marketing efforts, and personalized communication. Prioritize competitive pricing, superior quality, and building loyal customer relationships to thrive despite e-commerce competition. Create a positive and welcoming environment with "good vibes" and "effective sales talk" to encourage customers to make purchases and foster a lasting connection with the physical store.

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