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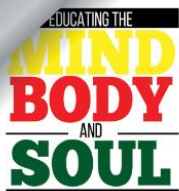


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## FOREWORD



Welcome to the second volume of OCT-Business Synergy, our research journal. I am thrilled to serve as the Editor-in-Chief. This journal is a testament to our commitment to intellectual research and collaboration, reflecting the academic excellence and innovation we strive to cultivate at Olivarez College Tagaytay.

The pages of this journal contain a rich collection of research projects that our students have worked on in diverse fields, including business, economics, and others. Each contribution showcases the collaborative efforts between academia and industry and our students' dedication and intellectual curiosity. Through meticulous investigation and astute evaluation, these studies aim to tackle current issues, foster significant discourse, and pave the way for forthcoming innovations.

As we embark on this exciting journey together, I want to express my gratitude to everyone who has contributed to this project. I also warmly invite all our readers to join us as we explore the fascinating intersection of industry and academia through the pages of OCT-industry Synergy.

**Joselito G. Dela Cruz, MBA, MSIT**  
**Editor-in-Chief**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Article	Page
<i>Editorial Board</i>	
<i>Foreword</i>	
<b>Gaining Sustainability in Digital Business in the Lens of Pandemic-Induced Online Sellers</b>	<b>1</b>
Researchers: De Luna, Erika Mae M. Erce, Lawrence Kobe C. Javier, Dannah Marie D. Lacbayo, Karen Joy L. Medina, Mary Joy R. Panganiban, Aljohn A.	
<b>Success Elements of SMEs in Tagaytay City: An Explanatory Sequential Mixed Method Approach</b>	<b>18</b>
Researchers: Ambunan, Liezel S. Damaso, Christian D. Juan Joshua D. Humarang, Kervin T. Tafalla, Angela R.	
<b>Exploring Online Delivery Services Among Selected Providers Toward A Proposed Online Business Service Quality Mechanism</b>	<b>51</b>
Researchers: Demingoy, Krizian Ann A. Griño, Roneth O. Maravilla, Rosa Mae T. Oña, Ronald T. RodisJesson P. Tolentino, Rochelle C.	

OCT – BUSINESS SYNERGY



Research, Survey, and Publication of the  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION  
OLIVAREZ COLLEGE TAGAYTAY

## Gaining Sustainability in Digital Business in the Lens of Pandemic-Induced Online Sellers

De Luna, Erika Mae M., Erce, Lawrence Kobe C., Javier, Dannah Marie D.,  
Lacbayo, Karen Joy L., Medina, Mary Joy R., Panganiban, Aljohn A.

### I. ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the digital platform, online selling strategy, and challenges in gaining sustainability through the lens of pandemic-induced online sellers. In the analysis of this study, it became clear that social media was used daily, and awareness was high. Gathering seven (7) online sellers who started their online business through the lens of the pandemic in different locations and product categories. The researchers generate an output from the findings concerning the post-pandemic online selling strategy that assists online sellers concerning online selling strategy, inventory, a social media platform, and customer relationship management. It may serve as a directory of online sellers in the context of running an online business amid a pandemic. The researcher recommends that online sellers provide gratification to their customers, maintain an effective customer relationship, value the customers, and provide comprehensive information to consumers. Furthermore, purposive sampling was employed to identify the possible compatible participants who fit the study's objectives. The data were gathered through in-depth interviews via Google Meet and were analyzed using transcribing and thematic analysis. Researchers revealed that Shopee and Facebook are the most powerful tools they use to make their online business more profitable and accessible. Researchers revealed that Shopee and Facebook were the most powerful tools they used to increase the profitability of their online businesses more efficiently. Moreover, it distinguishes the participants' effective and efficient online selling strategy to increase their monthly sales and how online sellers can sustain their online businesses during a pandemic. Referrals from friends, family, and other customers help to sustain their online business. Through the participants' customer interaction and communication skills, the researchers determine whether or not their customers are satisfied with the service quality and product. Altogether, false customer reviews and feedback significantly impacted the company's image. An internet business suffers greatly when it receives false reviews.

**Keywords:** *Digital Business, Pandemic-Induced, Online Seller*

## II. INTRODUCTION

The worldwide health crisis started in 2020 has tremendously impacted businesses of all sizes and industries. One clear aspect is that most people rely on the internet's accessibility, an evident aspect of the current environment. It emerges as a natural force driving everyone along a road where the internet allows people to learn and share information, accept and perform services, and sell and buy products. With all this, the growth of many e-commerce platforms affects the transition from traditional shopping channels to online platforms during quarantine. Specifically, online sellers adapt to utilizing the digital platform to sustain their business despite difficulties. Online sellers find ways to monitor the impact of their operations to ensure that short-term profits do not turn into long-term liabilities. As long as the online sellers continue operating and transacting despite ups and downs portrays the importance of sustainable business strategies in the online business (researcher's definition of sustainability). According to Pastiu et al. (2020) study, new internet technologies directly contribute to the expansion of e-services offered and promote new, personalized, and attractive services, which make information and commerce, new businesses, e-business models, and the dematerialization of products and services. The internet is a market for businesses to conquer, an avenue for new opportunities, including diversifying communication technologies possible, which stimulates competition and competitiveness by new players in traditional markets.

Even with the slowing economic activity since the breakout of the pandemic, its advancement gives massive opportunities to sellers' capacity to maintain a digital business. It has resulted in transforming businesses into digital transformation. The strong uptake of online business became the new normal, and consumers increasingly went digital, providing and purchasing more goods and services online. Along with making things easier for sellers to sell on the digital platform to reach a broad audience instantly rather than creating a physical store and waiting for customers to come in, sellers may do business online. It benefits the sellers from selling online since they may list their goods for free on their preferred online shopping application. As stated in the study of Iva Gregurec et al. (2021), although some industries have shown resilience or even found a new operating niche, most small and medium-sized service industry entrepreneurs have found themselves in "new normal" operating environments. The pandemic's negative impacts have been reported in several aspects of life, including economic, political, social, and psychological consequences.

This study aims to determine the digital platform, online selling strategy, how to gain sustainability, and the challenges of online sellers using the digital platform during the pandemic. The researchers will interview seven online sellers who started their online business through the lens of the pandemic in different locations and product categories to determine the digital platform, online selling strategy, and challenges of every online seller using the digital platform during the pandemic. The findings will help the researchers to give recommendations on what actions might take to redistribute the high involvement of online sellers. Therefore, the researcher will come up with their expected result.



### III. METHODS

This study is a qualitative technique that gives the researchers a unique depth of understanding of the participant's responses in the interview regarding the participant's experiences, thoughts, and feelings without restriction. Moreover, the researcher can follow up on answers given by the participants in real time, generating valuable conversation around the study and allowing participants to elaborate on their answers freely.

A qualitative technique was used in the study as it is the most suited method to understand the phenomenon alternative. This method comprises qualitative data obtained through in-depth interviews virtually. The use of in-depth interview questions allowed the interviewer to ask more open-minded questions allowing the informants to express their knowledge in an accessible manner.

The researcher uses the qualitative descriptive method as a research design of choice when a description of a phenomenon is desired. It is a beneficial approach when researchers want to know about events, who were involved, what was involved, and where things took place. This research approach comprises the method of analysis and interpretation participants must undergo throughout the questionnaire that will be asked of the participants. The researchers aim to examine and assess the nature of the research study's circumstances, systems, experiences, and ideologies. Hence, this method is considered the most suitable research design correlated to the study.

The participants were interviewed virtually via Google Meet as an instrument to gather information. Since the pandemic, researchers have found a way to use the Internet to conduct the interview. The researchers, moreover, seek out participants who are online sellers who started their online businesses through the lens of a pandemic. The study was conducted during the second semester of the academic year 2020-2021.

The purpose of this study is to conduct interviews with seven online sellers who started their online business through the lens of the pandemic in a different location and different product categories to determine the digital platform, online selling strategy, how to gain sustainability, and challenges of every online seller using the digital platform during the pandemic.

This research used purposive sampling and did not aim to generalize findings to a general population. Using purposive sampling in the study to know which online sellers from the public participate in the interview based on the researcher's judgment started selling their products during a pandemic to participate in the interview.

Participants were chosen for the study based on the following criteria: 1) Participants were exclusively those Online Sellers who started their business during the pandemic, 2) Online Sellers who use the digital platform for their business, and 3) Online Sellers who do not have a physical store.

It is significant to select participants who are compatible with the above profile to encompass how they utilize the digital platform in selling their merchandise that influences their business behavior, how participants keep their online business sustainable, and what challenges the participant's experience. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary.

The researchers asked for the profile of the participants before the interview proper. Table 1 shows the profile of the participants of online sellers who participated in the interviews conducted by the researchers.

**Table 1**

*Profile of the Participants*

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Years of Operation</b>	<b>Product Category</b>	<b>Working Capital</b>	<b>Average Monthly Sales</b>	<b>Participant's Background</b>
<b>Participant 1</b>	1 year	Non-food	2,500	40-70K	M,Licensed Pharmacist
<b>Participant 2</b>	2 years	Non-food	5,000	Less than 10K	F, Reseller
<b>Participant 3</b>	2 years	Non-food	1,000	21,000	F, Student
<b>Participant 4</b>	2 years	Non-food	2,000	25-30K	F,Direct Seller
<b>Participant 5</b>	2 years	Non-food	7,000	45-55K	F,Online Seller
<b>Participant 6</b>	2 years	Non-food	2,000	18-20K	F, Student
<b>Participant 7</b>	1 year	Non-food	2,000	10-15K	F,Online seller

Table 1 shows the result of the profile of the participants, which indicates the profile data of online sellers who participated in the interviews conducted by the researchers. It responded to the first statement of the problem, including the years of operation, product category, the participant's working capital, the average monthly sales, and the participant's background. It shows that most of the participant's product categories are non-food. It also shows that the participant's working capital range is 2,000 to 7,000. Then, the average monthly sales reveal that the participant's sales tripled for a month.

The researchers set principles that guide the research designs and practices to ensure researchers adhere to a definite code of conduct when collecting participant data. It often includes understanding the real-life phenomena of the participants in an ethical consideration to protect the rights of research participants. The researchers consider the different ethical issues, such as voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, and results communication. The researchers are free to choose the participants who fit the following criteria that the researchers set. All participants in the study have the freedom to choose whether they want to participate and can withdraw from the study at any time without any negative repercussions. Before beginning the study, the researcher informs all potential participants by sending an email individually. The researchers guarantee the anonymity of the participants by not collecting personal identifying information such as their addresses, physical characteristics, photos, videos, and phone numbers. The researchers ask only about the participant's online business background, not personal

information. Moreover, the researchers informed the participants in the email and interview that all data gathered would be treated with the utmost confidentiality and used for academic purposes only. Lastly, the researchers collected and gathered data from the participants that were transcribed correctly with honesty, reliability, and credibility to make the results transparent.

These are the following procedures for gathering data: First, the researchers pursued the approval of the interview questions from the faculty of Olivarez College Tagaytay. Afterward, the researchers found participants that matched the criteria and contacted the Online Sellers who have an online business by sending an email invitation to participate in the study. The email contained a brief purpose of the study and information regarding participant anonymity and confidentiality of the gathered data. A meeting date was set for the participant's free time and a free day since most participants have a hectic schedule. Interviews were conducted online through Google Meet. The participants were informed of the research and given a letter via email. Participants were asked if they would agree to record the interview sessions. The researchers record the interview and recollect the responses of the participants. Lastly, the researchers will create the study's conclusions, summary, and recommendations.

These are the following data analysis procedures: First, the researcher prepares and organizes the data gathered through interviews and transcribing and decoding the participant's response. Afterward, the researcher used thematic analysis to analyze and familiarize the data gathered. Next, the creation of initial codes and identification of themes and sub-themes. Last, interpreting the result to identify the digital platform, online selling strategy, and the challenges the participants encounter during the pandemic.

To analyze the gathered data, Braun & Clarke's (2006) six-step thematic analysis qualified in the qualitative method was used, which includes analyzing large qualitative data sets and familiarization with data in the first instance, followed by the creation of initial codes and identification of themes and sub-themes. Thematic tables were then created, which acted as an excellent visual guide when repeatedly reviewing and refining the themes, further illustrating how to conduct a trustworthy framework. Finally, a thematic report was created, supported with direct participant quotes.

## IV. RESULTS

### SOP 2: How do study participants utilize digital platforms in selling merchandise?

#### Theme 1: Social Media Marketing as an Effective Marketing Tool

This theme addressed the second problem statement about how participants use digital platforms to sell merchandise. Discovering such a digital platform is the way to success for the participants. Ross (2020) said, "Clearly, the thing that's transforming is not the technology-It is the technology that is transforming you." In this case, the participants managed and viewed their success through the power of using digitals.

**Participant 1:** *Ang ginawa namin para mag stand out kami is I followed more business groups related to our business din. The more followers you have, the more likely consumers will trust your store.*

**Participant 2:** *“ano nag popost lang ako ng nag popost sa facebook tapos share.”*

**Participant 3:** *“Ano po sa pamamagitan po ng pagpapakita ng mga products and then pagpopost po halimabawa every day or every 2 days ganon po”.*

**Participant 4:** *“Ano actually diba Direct Seller ako ang ginagawa ko lang eh ahm matiyaga akong nag aupdate sa GC dun ako nagpopost ng mga products. Inaupdate ko din yung mga reseller ko kung may mga bago akong products na nabili.”*

**Participant 5:** *“Kasi madami kang kalaban sa online, tsaka don pag walang nagmamaine, okay lang then next day, try mo ulet ganon lang yon. so ang mahalaga dito, yung pricing mo. dapat yung price mo, yung kakayanin ng budget lalo na ngayon pagdating sa mga damit dapat ano uhm kaya ng mga estudyante, kaya nga mga. ng mga ano, alam mo yun mga wala pang work pero gusto pumorma, yung kaya ng budget nila.”*

**Participant 7:** *“ahh... siguro ano ah ano lang consistent posting lang nung mga product mo, consistent na pagkausap ng mga clients ahh ano din siguro yung ahh...proof or parang tinatawag nila na proof of legitimacy mo bilang isang business owner.”*

**Participant 6:** *“Ahh ginagamit ko sure for ah ah telling the viewers to share it or nag popost ako na in advance na meron ako Live selling later or nagpopost ako ng meron akong posting ng product ah with the specific date included.*

### **Analysis of the Theme**

The researchers revealed that social media is their primary platform to promote their business. In the study by Kumah (2017) titled "The Role of Social Media as a Platform for E-commerce." Their research looks at the role of social media as a platform for e-commerce. Their main objective is to determine users' awareness and usage patterns of social media tools. Through the analysis of this study, it became clear that social media was used daily and awareness was high.

The researchers confirmed that consistent posting and sharing is one of the online sellers' effective strategies to promote their businesses and keep the online customers informed about their product's type and brand. Made et al. (2018) stated that brand image is an exciting topic that influences a consumer's purchasing decision. According to Wibowo & Karimah (2012), the purchase decision is a process where consumers decide to buy a particular variety of products and brands, starting with needs analysis, seeking information, information evaluation, making a purchase, and then evaluating the decision after purchase. The researchers point out that posting and sharing is the most efficient and effective way to engage customers. By attracting consumers' attention, more ideas can be developed for strategies to attract consumers to buy a product (Aditya & Wardana, 2017).

Gross (2019) stated that "modern marketing is a less expensive game than ever. Social media platforms and email campaigns have made reaching out to consumers a much more finances-friendly possibility" Researchers also revealed that they were using live selling on Facebook and Shopee to reach more customers quickly. Live streamers can demonstrate how clothing items are worn and give guidance on the fabric quality or the occasion to wear them.

According to the study conducted by Wongkitrungrueng et al. (2020), On Facebook (FB), shoppers can use a live streaming feature called FB Live to ask questions, confirm purchases, or interact with the streamers via text chat. They also summarize that several factors enhance consumers' experience and trust in the seller, motivating them to watch and purchase live streaming. Factors are related to product information, communication quality, enjoyment, and social presence. In digital business, competitors are becoming more excellent, and live selling helps the participants to have absolute virtual deliberation with their online customers about their offered products. Participants conclude that following, posting, sharing, and live streaming may help them gain their customers' trust.

### **SOP 3: How do study participants keep their online selling business sustainable despite this pandemic?**

#### **Theme 2: Effects of Online Selling in the Participants**

**Participant 1:** *You know how to communicate and interact well with your buyers. Wala naman kaseng nagtitinda na masungit kailangan talaga in this industry na approachable ka sa lahat yung customer relationship kase yung pinapangalaan dito kung satisfied ba o hindi.*

**Participant 2:** *Through another marketing strat, since may times na di malakas bentahan online, some of my friends or relatives are referring some buyers to me, this is how I sustain na magkaroon pa rin ng benta. May times din na chinachat na ako mismo ng buyers and they are asking for meet up, ayun pumapayag naman ako lalo na kapag malapit lang.*

**Participant 3:** *So, ako po kasi pag may mga umoorder sakin sa online and na memeet ko sila in personal nirerefer ko po yung shop ko na dun sila umorder.*

**Participant 4:** *Ang strategy don eh matyaga ka mag post at yung pakikisama.*

**Participant 5:** *Yung ahm pagka kita mo ngayon, wag ka muna gagastos ng kung ano ano kailangan focus ka muna. kunware pag kumita ka ngayon, kase ginawa namin madam ano eh mga mga ah, ginawa namin yung araw araw naming kinita inipon namin siya as in hindi namin kinuha yung expenses namin dun. So lahat pati puhunan atsaka yung kita namin ah inipon namin para magdagdag kami ah ng mga items namin.*

**Participant 6:** *Sending po sa mga possible buyers privately. nagiipon ka ng orders saka ka kukuha sa suppliers.*

**Participant 7:** *Consistency and marketing strategies like boosting ng fb page or post. Since only some of the time ay palaging may buyers, need rin ng some marketing strategy para mas maging broad yung target market mo.*

### **Analysis of the Theme:**

Communication occurs face-to-face and verbally between a receiver and a communicator, whom the recipient perceives as independent of the brand, product, or service being discussed. This description gives rise to two specific difficulties that need to be addressed. First, it requires direct, verbal interaction between the communicator, the receiver, and the recipient. The responses of the participants of the study revealed their strategies to gain sustainability in their online business. The researchers conclude that referral from friends, family, and other customers supports the sustainability of their online business. That is why those with an online shopping experience likely have a more vital willingness to buy again. Participants said that they are only sometimes marketable. Hence, referral makes their online business more recognizable. The study conducted by Goers (2018), as cited in the study of Chan et al. (2014), suggested that "Word of Mouth referrals are regarded as a critical marketing method for effectively obtaining new customers, establishing long-term relationships, and increasing customer value."

Also, having a principle of proper interactions with the customer was revealed by the participants. Communicating and interacting will help their online business in the long run. Considering the customer's attitude and behavior is one factor in managing a relationship with the customer. It revealed that the value of their online business is equivalent to how they value their customers. Participants utilize interaction and communication skills with the customer to know if their customers are satisfied with the service quality and product. The study by Hassan et al. (2015)

titled "Effect of Customer Relationship Management on Customer Satisfaction" aimed to check the effectiveness of customer relationship management in retaining and satisfying customers. They explained that customer relationship management significantly enhances productivity, improving in-depth customer knowledge and higher customer satisfaction. Improved customer loyalty will also have clear information on customers' needs and what will satisfy them more.

Their characteristics also set up the sustainability of their business. The researchers conclude that the participant's main characteristic is their hardworking skills. Furthermore, they are driven and focused on online selling. Also, their strong attention and dedication to their online business are generally high. Participants said that they are not consistently profitable, so they invest with perseverance. They are being diligent in promoting their products as well as in communicating with customers.

According to Duncan (2010), marketing is not practiced at educational institutions, and marketing practiced in educational institutions tends to be quite essential. Edgett and Parkinson (2013), in a recent review of marketing in service industries, point out that marketing services are generally accepted to be sufficiently different from marketing physical products to deserve separate treatment. This was discussed in the context of the fact that different treatment is warranted. Intangibility, inseparability, perishability, and heterogeneity are the distinctive qualities that set services apart from other goods and activities. As a result of the fact that services cannot be touched, tasted, or possessed in and of themselves, it can be difficult for customers to assess the value of intangible service offerings.

#### **SOP 4: What challenges did the study participants experience?**

##### **Theme 3: Problems with Sales and Technology**

Theme 3 is the problems with sales and technology. This theme responds to the fourth statement of the problem related to the participant's challenges and obstacles in the new normal business set-up.

**Participant 1:** *“Yung obstacles na naencounter ko nung nagsisimula pa lang kami is the reviews and feedbacks of customers. The rates or yung star na binibigay nila can affect us in good and bad ways.”*

**Participant 2:** *“Yung madami akong kalaban, kahit dito samin madami na din nag bebenta ng brilliant eh”*

**Participant 3:** *“Ayun nga po yung katulad nga ng sinabi ko kanina na hindi nga po madali mag benta kung бага na sasambot mo lang yung puhunan mo yung mga products imbis na mabenta sya na iistock lang sya sa bahay ganon.”*

**Participant 4:** *“Dumating ako sa point 180k ang na loss ko in 1 day and nag times two sya in a week.”*

**Participant 5:** *“As in zero ka for a week, naranasan ko yan, zero for a week, naging malumbay ako. Parang ayaw ko na, baka parang di kaya”.*

**Participant 6:** *“Ahm bale yung mga obstacle na na na ahh naranasan ko while selling yung mga ano ah syempre live selling bale ah lost connection ah*

*mahina signal hindi pa tama ah hindi ko alam kung pano ko itatama yung oras ko dun sa mga buyers ko syempre may mga work.*

**Participant 7:** *“uhm yung obstacle is yung mga tinatawag naming na ano na bogus buyer or yung mga joy reserver na... sila yung mga tao na ano nagoorder pero wala silang intension to really buy your product.”*

### **Analysis of the Theme:**

According to the findings of the study, some things continue to be accurate despite the beneficial impact that internet shopping might have. The research findings showed that the reviews and feedback provided by fake customers significantly impacted the company's image. This is because online customers are constantly looking for feedback from previous customers. Customers who shop online mainly evaluate products based on the information they glean from other customers' online reviews. Every internet business is severely impacted when they receive false reviews. According to the findings of the research project "Selling to Millennials with online reviews," which was carried out by Mangold & Smith (2021), it has been found that members of this generation are undoubtedly publishing reviews online and are influenced by these reviews.

Researchers have confirmed that maintaining proper inventory control is one of their challenges in producing income. Sellers operating their businesses online are allowed a certain amount of storage space for their products. As a result of clients not having enough money in their budgets to purchase the product, researchers also incurred a financial loss when the epidemic was brought under control. On the other hand, the revenue from owning a business may not be as steady or predictable as the money from other professions, which might lead to some financial difficulties for a firm. Patil and Divekar (2014) claimed that the obstacles involved in inventory management include demand variations, reverse logistics, seasonal swings, and stockless policy. They also stated that the hazards associated with the same include lost sales, lost customers, and low customer satisfaction.

Participants reported needing better connectivity, which hampered their ability to communicate and manage their time effectively with online consumers. The timing of the participants and the customers is not synchronized with one another. According to Wade (2020), time management is one factor that might affect a worker's performance and productivity in the workplace. Problems with one's internet connection can lead to several undesirable outcomes, including unpleasant transactions and the potential to lose customers. According to Nkgwete IT Solutions (2021), the speed of your network can affect a variety of aspects of your business, including the quality of the experience clients have while accessing your website and their degree of happiness. When a person is unable to connect to the internet, their productivity declines, which is something that nobody wants. In addition, the participants' internet enterprises were confronted with various internal and external problems.

### **SOP 5: What post-pandemic framework can be proposed based on the findings of the study?**





*Figure 1. New Normal Online Selling Framework*

The study's findings present the output of the fifth statement of the problem posed by the investigation, which is the post-pandemic framework that can be proposed based on the findings. In running an online business amid a pandemic, this framework refers to a new normal online selling structure that might serve as the director of online sellers. The researchers investigate and analyze the participant's comments throughout the interview regarding their experiences, motivation, and obstacles in the online business. From this, they can communicate the findings that online sellers need to have to be successful. This structure comprises a total of four (4) distinct systems, which are as follows: an online selling strategy, an inventory management system, a social media platform, and a customer relationship management system. The researchers strongly suggest this framework to online vendors since it will assist and guide an online vendor to operate in an effective and efficient manner.

Although each strategy is constructed uniquely, they all serve the same overarching goal. According to the findings, most participants use Facebook and Shopee as digital platforms, while the least utilize TikTok and Instagram. The findings also suggest that Instagram and TikTok are used the least. According to Jara's (2018) research findings, the Davao City Agriculturist Office (DCAO) has been using Facebook as a medium of negotiation, which may be valuable to those interested in agriculture and business. The farmers and other producers benefited from social media platforms since they allowed them to showcase and promote the products and items they had to offer. iPrice has released a report stating that Shopee currently holds the number one spot as the e-commerce platform that receives the most visitors in Southeast Asia. With an average total of 184.4 million visits, Shopee trounced Lazada, which had been in second place, and Tokopedia, which had been in third place. According to research by App Annie and iPrice Group, Shopee has

seen a rise of 5 percent in the overall number of visits made to the website. This growth has been primarily driven by an increase in the number of visits made in Thailand and Indonesia. Even though the first quarter of 2019 was expected to be a slower period, Shopee could still keep up its growth momentum from the previous quarter.

Participants in online sales utilize live selling, posting, sharing, and liking as their techniques to acquire sales and clients. Live selling is a form of social media marketing. According to Wongkitrungrueng et al. (2020), live selling gives consumers a purchasing procedure that includes rich product information, real-time interactions, and creative entertainment. Live streaming commerce also provides the consumer with an opportunity to shop. In addition, the research conducted by Mark Chi Ho Ng and colleagues (2022) found that live streamers influence consumers not only with product information in using products and the positive image of the attractive streamer but also with social interactions with other live streamers and co-viewers. [citation needed] In addition, friendships in social media provide users with increased access to one another's profile information and communication options (Ellison et al., 2011). This enables users to engage in conversation with one another through the posting of content, the exchanging of messages, and the sharing of experiences (Treem & Leonardi, 2012; Lin & Lu, 2011). Social media are experiencing a meteoric rise in popularity worldwide because of their ability to connect many people with minimal to no initial financial investment required. The user bases of social media platforms are expected to grow even further as the platforms continue their rapid dispersion into previously underserved regions. It is the enormous and continuously expanding user base (Keitzmann et al., 2011) combined with the technological affordances for intimate personal connections (Treem & Leonardi, 2012) that is transforming social media into appealing marketing platforms (Shen & Bissell, 2013).

In order to avoid suffering a monetary loss and after having both of these approaches at their disposal, an online vendor may use the two (2) different strategic techniques of limiting and avoiding stocking up on products. There are two (2) different strategic strategies that the players might apply. These include tie-up products and anticipated demand. An in-depth analysis of the data statistics on social media trends and demand can help an online seller better understand the phase of the cycle that the social media market is currently in. In addition, inventory control makes it easier for online vendors to monitor the products they have listed for sale. It is necessary to be aware of the products in high demand on the market because this will reveal how much stock the participants have and how you can keep track of it to prevent monetary losses. According to the findings of the research conducted by Li Siwei (2020), inventory is not only a significant component of current assets in the assets and seven liabilities section of the balance sheet, but it is also the primary driver of operating income and working capital in the income statement—companies involved in e-commerce need to acknowledge the significance of effective inventory management. Management of inventories has emerged as an essential component of contemporary business administration. Inventory management aims to ensure that every opportunity is taken to determine the optimal balance between the costs of maintaining an inventory and the advantages it provides.

Building a relationship with the consumer regarding customer notice, response, and honesty should be a primary focus for an online retailer concerned with Customer Relationship Management (CRM). Awareness about the product can be increased by providing regular updates to the client by posting, sharing, and creating brief teasers. Customer notice keeps track of all online customer transactions and ensures they are current at all times, regardless of location. As a result, the objective is to strengthen relationships with customers in the interest of customer retention and to propel growth in sales. According to what Panula (2017) found in her research, to increase customers' trust in the company, the website and the information it contains about the products and the business needs to be straightforward and easy to find.

In conclusion, reliability was contingent on providing services related to electronic commerce to online clients, the promptness of delivery, and the promptness of responses to feedback. The authenticity of the online vendor is shown by the availability of complete information regarding the product's quality, price, and condition. Accurate information is stored regarding clients' personal information, as well as their buying preferences, history of purchases, and concerns.

According to Lanford & Hübscher (2014), the guidelines that would help online websites to be called trustworthy sites are to satisfy the customers' expectations, manifest technical abilities and competence, and prioritize the customers' interests. In other words, satisfying the customers' expectations is the first step toward becoming a trustworthy site.

## **V. DISCUSSION**

The study aimed to examine the (1) digital platform, (2) online selling strategy, and (3) challenges in gaining sustainability in the lens of pandemic-induced online sellers that distinguish the moderator variable that was chosen for the study focuses on the emerging problem of 2020, which is the Covid-19 pandemic.

The study confirmed that when Covid-19 increased rapidly, and the lockdown started, participants began to engage in the "new normal" business setup. "The COVID-19 pandemic has forced millions of people to work from home, making workers and corporations more dependent on the digital technology that has long enabled them to handle personal and professional tasks from their smartphones, laptops, and personal computers. The main objective is to determine users' awareness and usage patterns of social media tools. Through the analysis of this study, it became clear that social media was used daily, and awareness was high. Researchers revealed that Shopee and Facebook are the most powerful tools they use to make their online business more profitable and accessible. According to Wibowo & Karimah (2012), the purchase decision is a process where consumers decide to buy a particular variety of products and brands, starting with needs analysis, seeking information, information evaluation, making a purchase, and then evaluating the decision after purchase. The researchers point out that posting and sharing is the most efficient and effective way to engage customers.

Furthermore, the participant's responses to the study revealed that they implemented an online selling strategy to increase their monthly sales. According to the findings of the research project named "Selling to Millennials with online reviews" stated by Mangold and Smith (2021), it has been found that members of this generation are undoubtedly publishing reviews online and are also being influenced by these reviews. Researchers have confirmed that maintaining proper inventory control is one of their challenges regarding producing income. On the other hand, the revenue that comes from owning a business may not be as steady or predictable as the money that comes from other professions, which might lead to some financial difficulties for a firm. Patil and Divekar (2014) claimed that the obstacles involved in inventory management include demand variations, reverse logistics, seasonal swings, and stockless policy.

Despite the positive impact of online selling, there are circumstances in the long run. Participants reported needing better connectivity, which hampered their ability to communicate and manage their time effectively with online consumers. The timing of the participants and the customers is not synchronized with one another. According to Wade (2020), time management is one factor that might affect a worker's performance and productivity in the workplace. According to Nkgwete IT Solutions (2021), the speed of your network can affect a variety of aspects of your business, including the quality of the experience clients have while accessing your website and their degree of happiness. In addition, the participants' internet enterprises were confronted with a variety of internal problems. In verbal communication between a receiver and a communicator whom the recipient perceives to be independent of the brand, product, or service being discussed. It raises two distinct issues that must be addressed. Through the interview, the participant's responses determine the effectiveness and efficiency of their online strategies on how the online seller can sustain their online businesses through the lens of a pandemic. The researchers conclude that referrals from friends, family, and other customers help to sustain their online business. As a result, those who have purchased something online are more likely to repurchase it. According to the participants, they are only sometimes marketable. As a result, referrals increase the visibility of their online business. From the study conducted by Goers (2018), as cited in the study of Chan et al. (2014), it is suggested that "Word of Mouth referrals are regarded as a critical marketing method for effectively obtaining new customers, establishing long-term relationships, and increasing customer value."

The significance of having a principle for proper customer interactions. In the long run, communicating and interacting will benefit their online business. One of the factors in managing a customer relationship is taking into account the customer's attitude and behavior. The value of their online business is proportional to how much they value their customers. Participants use their interaction and communication skills with the customer principal to determine whether or not their customers are satisfied with the service quality and product. Hassan et al. (2015) conducted a study titled "Effect of Customer Relationship Management on Customer Satisfaction" to determine the effectiveness of customer relationship management in retaining and satisfying customers. They explained that customer relationship management plays a significant role in increasing productivity by improving in-depth customer knowledge and also customer satisfaction. Those

responsible for improving customer loyalty will also have clear information on who their customers are, their needs, and what will make them more satisfied.

The research findings revealed that false customer reviews and feedback significantly impacted the company's image. This is because online customers are always looking for feedback from previous customers. Customers who shop online mostly base their product evaluations on information from other customers' online reviews. When an internet business receives false reviews, it suffers greatly. According to the findings of Mangold and Smith's (2021) research project titled "Selling to Millennials with Online Reviews," members of this generation are undoubtedly publishing reviews online and are also influenced by these reviews. Researchers have confirmed that maintaining proper inventory control is one of their challenges in producing income. According to Wade (2020), one of the factors that may influence a worker's performance and productivity at work is time management. According to Nkgwete IT Solutions (2021), the speed of your network can affect many aspects of your business, including the quality of the experience clients have while accessing your website and their level of happiness.

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## Success Elements of SMEs in Tagaytay City: An Explanatory Sequential Mixed Method Approach

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### I. ABSTRACT

This study was designed to determine the success elements of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Tagaytay City. The study aims to provide ideal business models identifying the element of success for SMEs. This study provides valuable information about the level of their perceived success, the different factors, and how influential they are to the business success of the respondents/participants. Specifically, it investigates if there is a significant relationship between the business's perceived success and the level of influence of the factors on the success of SMEs when grouped to the profile of the respondents. Most SME owners are female, and most respondents are between the ages of 31 and 40. The results indicated that the respondents perceived themselves as very successful. In addition, the findings revealed that all the given factors are very influential to the success of SMEs in Tagaytay City. Furthermore, the analysis confirmed the hypothesis and revealed no significant relationship between the owner's perceived success and the level of influencing factors in the respondent's profile. Moreover, loss of sales, strategy formulation, and customer decrease are the main challenges the SME owner shares. However, participants revealed different strategies that helped them cope with and address those challenging situations: reducing workforce costs, borrowing funds, and building social support, which is also related to the two factors explored in the quantitative part of the study. In addition, entrepreneurs highlight other vital factors that enhance SME success. These factors are labeled as quality products and quality people. In integrating quantitative and qualitative results, similar findings were found where the subtheme building social support and borrowing funds reveals as the solution of SME owners to cope with the challenges, and it gives a relationship between the factors to the quantitative part, which is a social network and capital access.

**Keywords:** *SMEs, entrepreneurs, factors, succ*



## II. INTRODUCTION

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play a vital role in the economies of all the countries in the world through their contribution to national economic growth (SKG, 2019). The segment contributed to more than 80% of global economic growth in most countries. According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), SMEs are the backbone of economies in Asia and are considered its driving force. In the Philippines, MSMEs comprise around 99% of businesses in the country. SMEs are part of developing the Philippine economy because they create job opportunities (Canare, Francisco & Labios, 2019). The existence of SMEs helps inefficient consumption of nearby assets and boosts economies all over the world. It is noted that there are barriers to the growth of SMEs, but they have a significant role to play in increasing employment levels. It has been detailed that SMEs offer a high percentage of employment opportunities, especially compared to larger firms in the economy. The impact of Small and Medium Enterprises on development must be addressed in every economy, especially in developing nations where sustainable economic development is highly desirable. Small and medium businesses have such a crucial role in developing an economy in such a way that they cannot be ignored.

Therefore, the success of this sector is dependent on several factors. Some of the most successful SMEs overgrow over a short period. Some entrepreneurial, external, and internal factors are behind the success of SMEs through the business process. In this study, the researchers adapted the theoretical framework of Indarti (2004) in her study entitled "*Factors Affecting Business Success among SMEs: Empirical Evidence from Indonesia*," where the researchers also adapted the research questionnaire. In the theoretical framework, Storey (1994) identified key components to be important in analyzing the success of SMEs: the characteristics of the entrepreneurs, the characteristics of the SMEs, and the type of strategy associated with growth. The theoretical framework is developed in line with the three adjusted components. All three components must be combined appropriately for a firm to succeed. Storey (1994) organizes the evidence into the categories of the entrepreneur, the firm, and the strategy. Instead of the last component, Indarti (2004) explores contextual elements of SMEs' success. It includes nine crucial variables considered key determinants for achieving business success. The study also explored marketing, technology, capital access, information access, social network, business plan, entrepreneurial readiness, and government support.

*Marketing* is getting potential clients or customers interested in offered products and services. The keyword in this definition is "process." Marketing involves researching, promoting, selling, and distributing products or Services. *Technology* is any relevant technical function, including the ability to develop new products, processes, and technological knowledge to obtain higher organizational efficiency. *Capital Access* is the management of money that includes activities such as investing, borrowing, lending, budgeting, saving, and forecasting. It is the funds availed by business owners to meet to operate their business. *Information Access* is a business's access to beneficial information related to its operation. That information includes market

information, information on the source of raw materials, and information on new designs. *Social Network* is an enterprise's connection to a different business association, business partners, and other helpful colleagues. *Legality* is the legal issues and disciplines a business must undertake to operate its business legally continuously. *A business Plan* is a guide that helps businesses outline and highlight their goals and plans for achieving them. It includes a business feasibility study, expansion plan, and product/service development plan. *Entrepreneurial readiness* consists of sets of knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes that a business owner needs to be effective in a wide range of managerial jobs and various organizational settings. *Government Support* is the support the government provides to businesses in terms of finances, in the form of grants and through access to expert advice, information, and services. Business Plan is a guide that helps businesses outline and highlight their goals and plans for achieving them (Indarti, 2004).

In addition, the research paradigm utilizes the Input-Process-Output approach. The conceptual framework of the study was described wherein the input elements consist of the following: profile of the respondents in terms of enterprise and entrepreneur, the factors influencing the success of SMEs, challenges experienced by the participants, response to those challenges, and other factors considered as contributory to business success. Conversely, the process element includes the data-gathering methods and how the researchers will handle the data collected. The processing step is through an adapted questionnaire and open-ended physical interviews. Lastly, the output is the study's results, which served as a basis for the researchers and a key to further strengthening the possible outcome of the study. The output will be a successful business model that will serve as an ideal business framework identifying the element of success for the SMEs to help them strengthen their business.

By conducting this study, the researcher provided evidence about the success elements that influence Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Many studies have been conducted about SMEs, but only some, if any, study the success elements of Small and Medium Enterprises in Tagaytay City. This study seeks to contribute to this area and thus investigate the extent to which different factors have influenced the success of small and medium businesses in Tagaytay City.

### III. METHODS

A mixed-method concurrent design was used in the study. In the concurrent design, quantitative and qualitative data are collected independently simultaneously and in a single phase. In this design, the researchers collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data on the same phenomenon, and then the different results are converged by comparing and contrasting during the interpretation. The main objective is to corroborate and cross-validate findings using quantitative and qualitative studies. Data collection and analysis are done separately but merged afterward. In interpreting the overall merged results, one looks for data convergences, divergence, or any relationship on the separate data analysis reveal. The general aim of this approach is to understand better or obtain a more developed understanding of the phenomenon under study; the data are

collected from the same participants or similar target populations (Creswell et al., 2003).

The study's respondents are the selected successful business owners from different areas of Tagaytay City who own small or medium enterprises. Researchers ensured that the participants of the study are those business owners who only operate their businesses for one year and above because Henricks (2018) stated that businesses operating in months is just a start and the growing years where the business may experience success are from year one to five. Thirty (30) respondents were approached to participate in the study. Fifteen (15) respondents own the small enterprise, and fifteen (15) own the medium enterprise. The sampling of thirty (30) respondents in a study is suitable to amass enough necessary data.

This study used the Purposive sampling technique. It is a non-probability sampling technique that selects participants who provide rich, practical knowledge of the occurrence (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The researcher used purposive sampling to ensure that the selected participants possess the successful experience and knowledge relevant to the research topic. Knowing that the population is vast in number, therefore, for this study, the researcher took only thirty (30) successful SME owners in Tagaytay City. After finishing the quantitative part, the researchers invite seven (7) owners to participate in an open-ended interview to reach data saturation.

This research utilized both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. In quantitative, the study employed questionnaires to collect primary data. The data sources of the said research are conducted through physical interaction. The questionnaires were structured using a Likert scale. All the questions were based on Likert scaling, which proved to be most appropriate for the study. As noted by Sekaran & Bougie (2010), Likert scaling is one of the most frequently used numerical scales to measure attributes and behaviors in organizational research. The modified, adapted Indarti (2004) questionnaire was distributed to selected respondents. The questionnaire is divided into four sections. The first section is the profile of the business, the second section is the profile of the entrepreneur, and the third section is the perceived measure of success. Moreover, the last section of the questionnaire is about the factors influencing the success of SMEs. A descriptive survey research method was employed in the study. Descriptive research was used to determine the demographic profile of the business and the entrepreneur, the measurement of their perceived success, and the level of influence of the factors on the business's success. In this part of the study, descriptive statistical techniques were used to quantify and describe the characteristics of the data set. The researchers used this to serve as a starting point for data analysis. It allows the researchers to organize, simplify and summarize the data by presenting and constructing a table. Descriptive analysis refers to transforming raw data into a form that would provide information to describe a set of factors in a situation that will make them easy to understand and interpret (Zikmund, 2003; Sekaram & Bougie, 2010).

For the qualitative, data was collected through focused individual interviews. The interview focused on participants' subjective experiences exposed to the pre-analyzed situation. The researcher used an audio recorder to record the participant's answers and paper and pens to take notes on the data given. This allowed the researcher to double-check the participant's responses to

enhance accuracy. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with SME owners in Tagaytay about the challenges they experienced in their success, how they addressed them, and the other factors that contributed to and influenced their success. The qualitative data used these questions to identify key concepts subsequently measured in the survey. The data analysis procedure used in this qualitative part of the study is thematic analysis. It concentrated on identifying themes that arise from the transcribed participant interviews. To develop themes, researchers identified patterns and recurring words to form categories of information that directly relate to the research questions. To help discover meaning from interview data, the researcher coded information into clusters of uniform concepts to develop theme clusters, as Lewis (2015) described. The data analysis process required codification and categorization of participants' data to identify themes and patterns and to categorize data with similar meanings. In this study, researchers use subthemes as there is a particular theme element with a particular focus. The result of the data analysis process produced three emergent themes with subthemes.

#### IV. RESULT

##### Quantitative Part

##### SOP 1.1 BUSINESS PROFILE

**Table 1**

*Profile of the Enterprise in terms of Size*

SIZE	FREQUE NCY	PERCENT AGE
SMALL	15	50
MEDIUM	15	50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Business Size.** Table 1 reveals that 50 percent of the respondents are small business owners while the other 50 percent are medium business owners, resulting in 100 percent or 30 respondents. The researchers purposely took 15 respondents for small enterprises and 15 respondents for medium enterprises to make it equal since the study's focus and scope are SMEs.

**Table 2***Profile of the Enterprise in terms of Business Category*

<b>CATEGOR Y</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENT AGE</b>
Retail	15	50
Wholesale	2	6.7
Manufacturin g	4	13.3
Services	9	30
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Business Category.** In Table 2, half of the respondents have a retail business, showing a frequency of 15 or 50 percent. This concludes that the enterprises in Tagaytay City are mostly retail businesses because retailing is one of the growing segments of the economy. According to Euro Commerce (2017), of 5.4 million businesses, there are two-thirds. (3.6 million) operates in retail, making it the most common business category to open up a business. This might also be why most of the enterprises in Tagaytay are retail. Furthermore, because Tagaytay is a popular tourist destination, locals see this as an opportunity to start a retail business. If opening a retail enterprise, it is essential to focus on finding the best retail location for the business (Conlin, 2021), similar to Tagaytay.

**Table 3***Profile of the Enterprise in terms of Years in Operation*

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
1-2 years	8	26.7
3-4 years	4	13.3
5-7 years	4	13.3
8-10 years	4	13.3
11-15 years	6	20
15 years and above	4	13.3

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>
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**Years in Operation.** In Table 3, it appears that 8 or 26.7 percent of the enterprises are operated for 1-2 years, while the least is in year brackets 3-4, 5-7, 8-10, and 15 years and above with a frequency of 4 or 13.3 percent of the total. This concludes that most entrepreneurs in Tagaytay City operate their businesses for 1-2 years. This implies that many new businesses started up during the pandemic. Since the pandemic started two years ago, the residents see this as an opportunity to start a business to survive the unprecedented circumstances surrounding the past years. COVID-19 forced furloughs, layoffs, and business closures, and people responded by starting a business in droves (Grossfeld, 2021). Despite the pandemic-related challenges of 2020 and 2021, many entrepreneurs have identified and launched business opportunities. That is why it is noticeable that entrepreneurs in this study operate and establish their businesses in 1-2 years.

## SOP 1.2 Entrepreneurial Profile

**Table 4**

*Profile of the Entrepreneur in terms of Age*

<b>AGE</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
20 years old and below	1	3.33
21-30 years old	3	10
31-40 years old	12	40
41-50 years old	6	20
51-60 years old	7	23.3
Above 60 years old	1	3.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Age.** Respondents of all ages (20 – 60 and above) were represented in table 4, with large numbers in the age bracket of 31-40 years old accounting for 12 or 40 percent. The table reveals that 40 percent of the entrepreneurs are 31-40 years old which give the highest number of percentages among the other respondents. The analysis demonstrates that middle aged and older entrepreneurs are more likely to succeed than young entrepreneurs. Middle age is defined as the period from age thirty one to fifty (Green & Shalal). A study conducted by Azoulay et. al., (2018) revealed that there are few reasons a middle-aged and older entrepreneur may reap the benefits of start-up a business over a younger one. These include: greater management, marketing and finance experience as well as a richer, deeper knowledge of an industry and larger financial resources to tap and more social networks to mine for support in leveraging their idea.

**Table 5***Profile of the Entrepreneur in terms of Gender*

<b>GENDER</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENT AGE</b>
Male	14	46.7
Female	16	53.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Gender.** Table 5 shows that females got the highest frequency count of 16 or 53.3 percent, while males got 14 out of 30 respondents or 46.7 percent. This is probably because female business owners are significantly more likely to launch and start businesses than male business owners. However, according to the study conducted by Summers and Carter (2013), female-owned businesses are not only fewer in number. However, they are also characterized by lower outcomes than their male-owned counterparts. It also contradicts the statement of Eikhof (2013) and Gottschalk & Niefert (2012) that, in absolute terms, female-owned businesses are less than those owned by men. It has also come to light that women's overall experience, skills, and knowledge of venturing into business activities are below average (Naudé, 2013). It can be argued that despite the entrepreneurship gap between men and women, it is widely considered that women owners in business have specific qualities that make them better entrepreneurs than men.

**Table 6***Profile of the Entrepreneur in terms of Highest Educational Attainment*

<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENT AGE</b>
High School	5	16.7
College	24	80
Post Graduate	1	3.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Educational Attainment.** Table 6 conveys that most participants were college graduates, with a frequency count of 24 or 80 percent of the total. The results presented in Table 6 mean that college graduate entrepreneurs have more significant potential and are more likely to start and run their businesses than entrepreneurs without a college degree. This is probably because they acquired more developed entrepreneurial and innovation skills in their college courses. This aligns with the finding of Etschmaier (2010) that having higher education will increase business goals to

enhance competitive advantage and have the potential to grow their business profit since they save a good education.

## SOP 2.

**Table 7**

*Measurement of Perceived Success*

	<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Verbal Interpretation</b>
1. I consider my business growing	3.63	Very Successful
2. I consider my business successful	3.57	Very Successful
3. I am satisfied with the growth of net-income of the business	3.40	Very Successful
4. I am satisfied with the time needed to reach break even point (payback period)	3.33	Very Successful
<b>Mean Measurement of perceived success</b>	<b>3.48</b>	<b>Very Successful</b>

\*Legend:

3.26 – 4.00 = Very Successful

2.51 – 3.25 = Successful

1.76 – 2.50 = Not so successful

1.00 – 1.75 = Not Successful

The scores that emerged from Table 7 have demonstrated the perceived success of SMEs. The overall mean score of the four items is 3.48, indicating that the entrepreneurs believed they were very successful. The respondents viewed their business as growing, with the highest mean score of 3.63. This may imply that the owners consider their business successful because they are satisfied with the growth of the business's net income, and they are also satisfied with the time needed to reach their break-even point. According to Foley & Green (1989, cited in Chittithaworn et al., 2013), the concept of success is often used to refer to a firm's financial performance. However, there is no universally accepted definition of success, and business success has been interpreted in many ways depending on how the owners view it. They noted that success could be the survival profit, return on investment, sales growth, happiness, and reputation. This signifies that success is not only about financial performance; it can be seen to have different meanings by different people.



**SOP 3.****Table 8***Level of Influence of the Factors on the Success of SMEs*

<b>INDICATORS</b>	<b>MEAN</b>	<b>VERBAL INTERPRETATION</b>
<b>Marketing</b>		
1. Distribution channel of my products is already in place	3.27	Very Highly Influential
2. Market potential of my product are promising	3.53	Very Highly Influential
3. Searching for a new market for my products is not so difficult.	3.17	Highly Influential
4. Marketing of my products is well-planned	3.27	Very Highly Influential
<b>Mean Marketing</b>	<b>3.31</b>	<b>Very Highly Influential</b>
<b>Technology</b>		
5. Existing technology suffices all production processes	3.40	Very Highly Influential
6. Existing technology supports innovation	3.17	Highly Influential
7. Existing Technology is easily maintainable	3.30	Very Highly Influential
8. New technology to support the business is attainable	3.37	Very Highly Influential
<b>Mean Technology</b>	<b>3.31</b>	<b>Very Highly Influential</b>
<b>Capital</b>		
9. Existing capital is sufficient to maintain and expand the business. If needed, it is easy to get additional capital	3.40	Very Highly Influential
10. I have accessible alternatives of capital sources if needed	3.30	Very Highly Influential
<b>Mean Capital</b>	<b>3.35</b>	<b>Very Highly Influential</b>
<b>Information Access</b>		
11. I have access to information on the market/consumer of my	3.47	Very Highly Influential

products.

12. I have access to information on capital sources	3.30	Very Highly Influential
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**Table 8**

*Continued*

INDICATORS	MEAN	VERBAL INTERPRETATION
13. I have access to information on technologies to support my business	3.30	Very Highly Influential
14. I have access to information on raw material sources	3.33	Very Highly Influential
15. I have access to information on government regulations that are relevant to my business.	3.27	Very Highly Influential
<b>Mean Information Access</b>	<b>3.30</b>	<b>Very Highly Influential</b>
<b>Social Network</b>		
16. I have reliable business network to run the business	3.47	Very Highly Influential
17. I have many helpful colleagues and friends who support the business	3.30	Very Highly Influential
<b>Mean Social Network</b>	<b>3.38</b>	<b>Very Highly Influential</b>
<b>Legality</b>		
18. I have all permit to run the business	3.60	Very Highly Influential
19. All policies taken in my business are well-planned	3.60	Very Highly Influential
<b>Mean Legality</b>	<b>3.60</b>	<b>Very Highly Influential</b>
<b>Business Plan</b>		
20. I have a good business plan	3.33	Very Highly Influential
21. All policies taken in my business are well- planned	3.40	Very Highly Influential
<b>Mean Business Plan</b>	<b>3.37</b>	<b>Very Highly Influential</b>
<b>Entrepreneurial Readiness</b>		

22. I have a good leadership skills	3.47	Very Highly Influential
23. I have reliable managerial skills	3.47	Very Highly Influential
24. I have decision making skills	3.57	Very Highly Influential

**Table 8***Continued*

INDICATORS	MEAN	VERBAL INTERPRETATION
25. I have good communication skills	3.50	Very Highly Influential
<b>Mean Entrepreneurial Readiness</b>	<b>3.50</b>	<b>Very Highly Influential</b>
<b>Government Support</b>		
26. Government support to my business is satisfactory	3.17	Highly Influential
27. I got business permit and other permits easily and quickly	3.37	Very Highly Influential
28. During running the, I have no problems when having contact with government	3.13	Highly Influential
<b>Mean Government Support</b>	<b>3.22</b>	<b>Highly Influential</b>
<b>OVERALL INFLUENCING FACTORS</b>	<b>3.37</b>	<b>Very Highly Influential</b>

\*Legend:

3.26 – 4.00 = Very Highly Influential

2.51 – 3.25 = Highly Influential

1.76 – 2.50 = Lowly Influential

1.00 – 1.75 = Very lowly Influential

## Factors Influencing the Success of SMEs

The scores emerged from part IV of the survey have demonstrated the following:

The average mean score from four marketing items is 3.31, indicating that this factor is "Very Highly Influential" to the success of a business. In detail, the analysis shows that the market potential of their product is promising, and it has the highest mean score of 3.53. According to Amin (2021), marketing has been an operational focus and a method for achieving all-inclusive business success. Dzisi & Oforu (2014) concluded that implementing sustainable marketing strategies are important factors that support SME performance and growth. This implies that marketing is one of the leading efficient strategies SMEs should adopt to improve their business success and growth. Adesola & Oyewale (2013) also revealed that marketing was independent and positively influenced business performance.

**Technology.** Table 8 shows that the total mean score obtained in the four technology items is 3.31, interpreted as Very Highly Influential. According to the survey results, technology suffices to support all production processes of SMEs, and it gives the highest mean score, which is 3.40. The findings indicate that technology is very influential in the success of SMEs. These demonstrate that this factor enables businesses to drive growth and improve their operation since they have existing technology to support the business. The result ties nicely with The Boston Consulting Group's (2015) findings. SMEs that adopt new technology have higher business growth and higher revenue growth than low-tech SMEs. The company can gain a competitive edge within the industry through technological capability, particularly in a high-tech environment (Ortega, 2010). This is because when a firm has technological capabilities, it can possess more unique resources and skills and engage in more unique strategic activities that will give them a competitive advantage in return.

**Capital Access.** Table 8 reveals a total mean score of 3.35 that emerged from the two items of capital access, indicating "Very Highly Influential." Based on the survey result, the existing capital is sufficient to maintain and expand the business. If needed, it is easy to get additional. This statement gives the highest mean score of 3.40. This indicates that capital access is very highly influential to the success of SMEs. It is believed that better financial access and information means better control and an improved chance of success. Thus, enterprises should adopt sound financial management practices to prevent business failure (Gawali & Gadekar, 2017).

**Information Access.** The analysis of the scores that emerged from five items of information access determines a total mean score of 3.40, revealing a very high influence on business success. The findings show that SMEs have access to information about the market and consumers of their products/services, giving the highest mean score of 3.47. According to Becchetti and Trovato (2002, cited in Golovko and Valentini 2011), access to business information facilitates access to information on markets which can accelerate growth. This implies that extensive access to the consumer's information can generate growth since the customer is the main asset of a business that can boost its revenue. Generally, access to information significantly influences SMEs' growth (Bunyasi, 2014).

**Social Network.** The total mean score inferred from two items of social networks is 3.38,

indicating a very high influence on business success. The analysis demonstrates that SME owners have a reliable business network to run the business, giving the highest mean score, which is 3.47. Turker (2015) notes that engaging in a social business network of business associations may enable them to establish business contacts and acquire the valuable market information circulated in the network. This aligns with the study of Battisti & Perry (2015) that business association gives access to network-building opportunities and management advice, market information, and assistance in complying with business regulations. This implies that business social networks can link SMEs to potential clients and markets and open doors for potential partnerships and alliances. Generally, a business network's power determines the firm's survival and success, whether it is a new or existing business (Abbas et al., 2019). It means that social networks strongly influence the success of SMEs.

**Legality.** The total mean score from two legality items is 3.60, indicating that this factor is highly influential to their success. In detail, the result shows that SMEs have all permits to run their business, and they fulfill all their duties as entrepreneurs to the government. These two statements have the same mean score, which is 3.60, which makes this factor very highly influential. It contradicts the study of Indarti (2004) that legality is one of the hindrances of success among SMEs since they allocate a significant amount of financial resources due to tax. Only a few studies have examined the direct relationship between the legal aspect and business success. However, based on the study of Mazzarol and Choo (2003, cited in Chittithaworn 2011), the legal aspect is often also used in selecting operating decisions to ensure future business success.

**Business Plan.** Table 8 shows that the total mean score obtained in the two business plan items is 3.37, which is highly influential. According to the survey results, all the policies taken in the business are well-planned, which gives the highest mean score of 3.40. While the statement "I have a good business plan" has the lowest mean score, 3.33. Nevertheless, both statements revealed that this factor strongly influences business success. According to Lesonsky (2016), those who completed business plans were nearly twice as likely to successfully grow their business or obtain capital as those who did not have a business plan. He also stated that having a business plan correlates with increased success. This is aligned with the discovery of Cost Effective Solutions (2013), that a business plan will not only guide the management to success but also provide credibility to the business to the investors, suppliers, and customers.

**Entrepreneurial Readiness.** The total mean score inferred from four items of entrepreneurial readiness is 3.50, indicating a very highly influential effect on the success of SMEs. The analysis demonstrates that owners have developed cognitive attributes and traits for handling the business. Barbosa (2016) observed that enterprise competence encourages the corporate success of SMEs. He noted that entrepreneurial skills can create and develop efficiency, sustainability, and business growth. This implies that entrepreneurial skills and their high-level attributes reflect the overall success of a business.

**Government Support.** The analysis of the scores that emerged from 3 items of government support determines a total mean score of 3.22, revealing a highly influential factor in

business success. The findings conclude that the entrepreneurs got their business and other government permits easily and quickly, giving the highest mean score of 3.37. The analysis of the result implies that the government's support plays a vital role in a firm's success. In the findings of Kambwale et al. (2015), they stated that the government aims to encourage the development of SMEs and ensure that they are sustainable by providing support mechanisms to all businesses. This demonstrates that the government has a significant responsibility to support and make development in an entrepreneur's business that may drive the firm's success.

Overall, these findings indicate that all the given factors are very highly influential to the success of SMEs in Tagaytay, with a mean score of 3.27. These success factors allow the business to focus on increasing its capabilities to achieve success. Businesses can concentrate on achieving their objectives as it gives something to work toward. These success factors also outline what needs to be done to succeed (Mind Team, 2021) by identifying the company's most needed resources. Prioritizing these critical factors can result in improved performance management and strategy.

#### SOP 4.

**Table 9**

*Profile of the Respondents and Perceived Success of an Enterprise*

		<b>Success Factors of SMEs</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>Years In Business</b>	Pearson Correlation	-.107	Accept Null
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.572	
	N	30	
<b>Size Of Business</b>	Pearson Correlation	.209	Accept Null
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.268	
	N	30	
<b>Category</b>	Pearson Correlation	.240	Accept Null
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.201	
	N	30	
<b>Age</b>	Pearson Correlation	.094	Accept Null
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.619	
	N	30	
<b>Gender</b>	Pearson Correlation	.072	Accept Null
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.705	

	N	30	
<b>Education</b>	Pearson Correlation	.071	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.710	Accept Null
	N	30	

**\*Legend: P-value < 0.5 Reject Null Hypothesis**

Table 9 shows the correlation between the profile of the respondents and their perceived success in an enterprise. The data shows that the p-value is more significant than 0.05; therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant relationship between the profile of the respondent and their perceived success of an enterprise. This implies that regardless of the years of operation, size, business category, age, gender, and educational attainment, it does not significantly influence an enterprise's perceived success. This might be because it depends on a business's capability and implemented strategy that visualizes its goals and drives them to success. The above findings contradict many studies, including the research conducted by Nathan et al. (2015), which stated that older firms are more likely to succeed than younger firms because older SMEs grew more rapidly than younger enterprises. Also, Storey (1994, cited in Appiah 2019) stated that smaller firms overgrow than large ones. The findings of Woldie et al. (2019) say that service sector firms had the highest chance of growth. They also found that there is no significant relationship between the success of the firms run by men and women. Their findings show that both men and women can run businesses and experience the same growth level, consistent with the above findings. It also contradicts the study of Bai et al. (2022) that entrepreneurs aged around 50-60 are more likely to be successful. The relationship between age and successful entrepreneurship is essential for classifying how successful an entrepreneur is. In the study of Woldie et al. (2019), it was stated that firms run by owners with secondary-level education were more likely to succeed than would be expected, and firms run by owners with diplomas, university degrees, and professional qualifications had a high propensity from success compared to all other firms. These findings must also be revised to achieve the above result. Table 9 shows that all the variables in this section were found to have no significant association with the perceived success of the firm.

## SOP 5.

**Table 10***Profile of Respondents and the Level of Influence of the Factors on the Success of SMEs*

		<b>Success Factors of SMEs</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>Years In Business</b>	Pearson Correlation	.015	Accept Null
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.937	
	N	30	
<b>Size Of Business</b>	Pearson Correlation	.258	Accept Null
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.168	
	N	30	
<b>Category</b>	Pearson Correlation	.151	Accept Null
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.425	
	N	30	
<b>Age</b>	Pearson Correlation	.182	Accept Null
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.335	
	N	30	
<b>Gender</b>	Pearson Correlation	-.018	Accept Null
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.923	
	N	30	
<b>Education</b>	Pearson Correlation	-.039	Accept Null
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.838	
	N	30	

**\*Legend : P-value < 0.5 Reject Null Hypothesis**

Table 10 is the correlation between the profile of the respondents and the level of influence of the factor on the success of SMEs. The data shows that the p-value is greater than 0.05 therefore the null hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant relationship between the profile of the respondent and the level of influence of the factors on the success of SMEs. This implies that regardless of respondent's profile, it does not have a significant influence on the factors influencing the success of SMEs. This is probably because the profile of the respondents and the influencing factors can't create a positive relationship.



## Qualitative Part

### SOP 6.

#### Theme 1. Success Gets Tough: Problem

These responses pertain to the challenges that SME owners experienced during their operations. The study participants discussed the barriers they have faced during their business operations.

#### Subtheme 1.1 Loss of Sales

Loss of sales, in other words, is also stated as loss of revenue and income due to various reasons. Lost sales are those selling opportunities that a business has lost because an item does not fit the consumer demand or due to the low quality of a product (Vitez, 2019).

*P1: “Andaming nag stop mag manok na ano let’s say pagkamatay ng mga baboy, yung sa sakit ng mga baboy yun ang talagang pinakastruggle namin non kasi wala ganong namimili tapos halos 50% ng aming ano 50-70% wala talaga kaming benta”*

*P7: “Well ano kumbaga at times talagang mahina ang benta sa isang buwan lalo na pag ano April, May, June and July tapos ayun nabawi nalang pagdating ng mga ber season”*

Two participants stated that the loss of sales had become a significant challenge in their operation. Moreover, the participants need help to meet their sales quota for two reasons. First is because of natural phenomena, and second is because of the peaks and worst seasons of the business. Sales are typically the most difficult to manage. They are the ones who take the most hits during recessions (Jorge, 2018), and the causes are usually due to customers because consumer demand and habits gradually change from time to time. Customers are more cautious than ever, to the point where making a purchase is a daunting task (Martin, 2013). This is why it is difficult for them to purchase when livestock and poultry diseases emerge. Furthermore, seasonality is critical in business. It is frequently the cause of otherwise unexplained sales increases and decreases. Those who need help understanding an industry's natural cycle may misdiagnose a sales decline (Caldwell, 2016).

#### Subtheme 1.2 Difficulty in Strategy Formulation

As stated by Constable (2020), difficulty in strategy formulation is about the business needing help in creating a strategy that gives intended direction on a business and actionable steps to reach its goals to meet the organizational objectives and vision. According to him, it is essential to remember that the strategy formulation process can accommodate possible changes.

*P2: “Nahirapan kaming gumawa ng paraan para magbaba ng presyo, since may mga kalaban, so kailangan mong magbaba rin ng presyo para makuha mo yung ibang customers na lumilipat”*

*P5: “Naging challenge talaga samin yung makapag formulate ng tamang plan and strategy na makakagain ng maraming guest para masustain naming yung tuloy tuloy na business”*

The other two participants reported that they experienced difficulty in formulating the right strategy. This may imply that entrepreneurs need a clear vision and adequate knowledge to formulate an appropriate business venture strategy. Kimanthi (2015) argues that a prudent organization needs to formulate a strategy appropriate for the organization, the industry, and the situation. Indeed, all organizations, whether for-profit or non-profit, private or public, have found it necessary to formulate strategies to achieve their corporate goals. Previous studies indicate that strategy formulation is an essential determinant of organizational performance, although it has yet to be addressed in most companies (Elwak, 2013). Many business owners overlook it because they believe anyone can do it; people need to figure out what the strategic formulation process includes, where it begins, and where it ends (Hrebiniak, 2005, cited in Chron, 2020).

### **Subtheme 1.3 Decrease in the Number of Customers**

According to Adoric (2021), the decrease in customers is the rate at which the consumers who purchase or subscribe to your product or service offering end their relationship with you and stop bringing in revenue for the business.

*P3: “Because of the pandemic, medyo talagang nagdown kami bumagsak talaga yung percentage ng customer namin, talagang bumaba”.*

*P4: “Guest kasi yung kalaban dito kumbaga yun yung pinakakailangan namin. 2019 kami nag start then nagsimula di ba yung pandemic ng 2020 ahh yun dun naming nakita na bumaba rinyung sales ng RSM”*

*P6: “By the pandemic, yun yung pinaka naging challenges namin for like 2 years already kase dahil sa pandemic nawalan kami ng guest, dahil din don sa explotion madaming hind iumakyat dito na mga guest”*

Three participants stated they had lost their customers due to the pandemic. This indicates that the pandemic reduced people's willingness to consume besides necessities and immediate needs. The coronavirus is shaking up business and consumer behavior on a massive scale, making consumers less inclined to spend more. According to Sheth (2020), COVID- 19 pandemic and the lockdown and social distancing mandates have disrupted consumer buying habits. She also stated that at times of crisis and uncertainty, the general tendency is to postpone purchasing and consuming discretionary products or services.

## **SOP 7.**

### **Theme 2. Success Gets Going: Solution**

Participants have a variety of ways of addressing and coping with the challenges encountered in their operation. This theme pertains to how the participants handle and make a solution to the challenges amid their success. This theme concerns the actions the owners take

during the difficult and unpleasant situations they have faced to keep carrying on and continuously experience success.

### **Subtheme 2.1 Reducing Manpower Cost**

Reducing Manpower Cost is stated as downsizing the employees to decrease the company's expenses for the budget prepared for the employees required to carry out the operations of the business in order to maximize profits. At this point lot of business owners and managers quickly turn to reduce staff numbers to curb costs (Tamplin, 2021)

*P1: “Cost cutting, nagtanggap kami ng mga tao kami kami nalang muna”*

*P4: “Honestly talaga sa pamamagitan talaga ng nagless kami ng tauhan nagbawas kami ng manpower talaga dun kami bumawi sa labor kasi dati talaga marami kaming tauhan andiyan yung mga waiter namin halos isa nalang talaga ang nagiging schedule nila kasi kailangan namin mamaintain, Makita naming yung sales talaga na hindi kami lulubog dun sa mga expenses. Dun kami talaga bumawi sa mga waiter sa mga tauhan bale nagless kami ng man power ahh actually nagingmulti-tasking ang mga tauhan namin”*

*P6: ‘Uhm nag ano muna nagtanggap ng some employees’ para hindi masyadong madami yung sasagutin na salary, pero ngayon nakaka overcome nang konti kase unti unti nang bumabalik yung mga ibang employees pero at tha time, nagtrim down talaga kami ng employees’.*

Three participants stated that they terminated some employees to reduce business expenses. To reduce the business payout, some of their solutions are to reduce the workforce and limit overtime work; it becomes their strategy so that the amount of the salary wage will be utilized in other expenses in the daily needs of the business as they keep on recovering and also to maintain business continuity. Reddy (2016) stated that downsizing an employee leads to a reduction in organizational size and operating costs to improve efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness. She further explains that to save the business and sustain itself in the market, the business has to use a downsizing strategy to avoid the financial drain and to become steady.

### **Subtheme 2.2 Borrowing Funds**

Many fast-growing businesses would prefer to use debt to support their growth, and according to Kenton (2021), it is the money received from another party with the agreement that it will be repaid. Most borrowed funds are repaid with interest, meaning the borrower pays a certain percentage of the principal amount to the lender as compensation for borrowing.

*P2: “Hmmm una ahh sa financial is ahh nanghiram ako let’s say sa bangko yung mga nagpapahiram ng puhunan nanghiram ako tapos syempre todo tipid naunahin ko munang bayaran yon after non eh saka na saka ko ibinuhos ng ibinuhos dito sa business ng wala na kong utang ”*

One of the participants stated that loans for the fund are a great help in sustaining his business capital requirements as funds are frequently used to cover temporary financial shortages

that arise in a business operation. As a firm's financing needs grow, banks are called upon to provide additional funds (Weston, n.d.). Based on Hilton Board Group (2021), the number of SMEs continues to grow despite current economic uncertainties. Moreover, with all the competition, they must continue investing in growth and development. If businesses do not have the funds to keep up, borrowing money can be the boost needed to stay ahead of the competition and remain steady in business.

### **Subtheme 2.3 Building Social Supports**

Mojika (2019) stated that it is about creating groups of people who gather to share everyday experiences associated with a particular problem, condition, or personal circumstance; as a group facing everyday issues, they share and support what is troubling them. Through the sharing of experiences, they can offer support. It improves productivity, increases employee motivation, and encourages collaboration of people in business.

*P3: “Ahh with the help din ng mga workers, with the help ng friends tyaka mga relatives syempre more on moral nung una moral yung moral support nila kasi syempre pag nadown ka parang yun muna ang lalapitan mo”*

*P5: “Siguro po sa tulongan din ng mga staff kase kapag may dumadating kaming guest dito, pwedeng bumalik balik sila tapos isa pa don yung pwede nilang irefer itong business naming naitry ng mga friends nila ganon”*

Two participants reported that having helpful staff, colleagues, workers, and friends support them is one of the solutions that help them bounce back on business as these people provide support, encouragement, understanding, and even assistance. The article by Uzialko (2020) stated that business owners need much support to succeed, whether it is financial, operational, or emotional. One of the most important sources of that support for many entrepreneurs is their network of friends and family members. Based on him, people are social creatures, and many entrepreneurs face the rigors of the business world either alone or with a small staff of dedicated employees. Friends and family provide that support system that can help entrepreneurs face stress, balance work and play, and generally keep a sense of perspective even amid the stress and responsibility of maintaining a successful business in an often unfeeling situation. Williams (2020) depicts that prior entrepreneurship research shows that entrepreneurs' social groups are important for performance. He stated that the key resource in social networks is informal support through encouragement, empathy, closeness, familiarity, etc.

## **SOP 8.**

### **Theme 3. One Word Says It All: Success**

This theme pertains to the participant's responses about the other vital factors that profoundly influenced their success. These factors and success ingredients include Quality Products and Quality people.

### **Subtheme 3.1 Quality Product**

Armstrong (2012) stated that product quality is anything that can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition, use, or consumption that might satisfy a want or need. When evaluating product quality, businesses consider several critical factors, including whether a product solves a problem, works efficiently, or suits customers' purposes.

*P3: “Well of course yung unang una, yung quality ng ng production namin. Halimbawa kasi samen more on sa marketing site more on referral eh kumbaga maganda yung gawa mo durability and yung quality so may irerefer ka sa ibang kliyente”*

*P7: “Since ayun nga, mobilization kami, naandar kami, kami lang yung parang food track na nag- iikot sa buong tagaytay na nakakapag serve ng pagkain sa ibat-ibang lugar dito”*

Two participants mentioned that the quality of their product/service also drives them to success. This indicates that the owners focused on the features and unique value they provide to make them stand out from the market, as product quality and unique value are among the most important things to catch the customer's attention. Providing quality products or services is crucial for all businesses. Whether it is a small, medium, or large enterprise, high-value quality products are a great way of maintaining customer satisfaction and loyalty (Zhang, 2018). He further explained that quality and differentiation are vital; they are the most significant determinant of success.

### **Subtheme 3.2 Quality People**

Based on Soliman (2021), quality people are the qualities that form the foundation of all other humans, including honesty, integrity, courage, self-awareness, and trust-worthy. Being of good worth, well made, fit for the purpose that a company is looking at.

*P5: “Siguro yung nagcontribute sa success ng business na to is yung cooperation ng mga staff, yung pagkakaroon ng teamwork para mapaunlad yung business na to kase kailangan may team yung isang restau e kase once na parang nagkanya kanya or walang cooperation, dun nagkakaproblema ang business pero kung sakaling buo yung teamwork, lalong mapapadali papunta sa success yung business”*

*P6: "It is the management, the ability of the owner to manage the people, to manage the resources."*

The other two participants reported that one of the factors that contribute to their success is staff cooperation and teamwork, as well as the owner's ability to manage. This implies that in business operations, the most essential factor to consider is management, how they manage employees, and how bringing them together as a team will make them competent, motivated, productive, and qualified. Employees who are more skilled and confident are one of the most significant impacts of management on business success (Chron, 2021). When employees are engaged and feel like they are a part of something bigger than themselves, they perform well and produce positive results (Andriotis, 2018). A great owner's management also affects employee

cooperation, a critical element of success. Working together toward a common goal rather than competing for personal glory results in outstanding achievements (Calin, 2018). According to Chron (2021), a company's success is determined not only by its culture, process, or leadership but also by its employees and their level of involvement in the company's growth.

## Synthesis

Since concurrent mixed methods study design was used. This research design aimed to adequately capture participant experiences by comparing and contrasting qualitative and quantitative results. The results were compared and contrasted to identify data convergence and divergence. Items on the survey were used to design interview questions to ensure semantic consistency. Relatively similar results were found when quantitative and interview data were triangulated. The quantitative study explored factors that were influential to the success of SMEs. The qualitative study sought to capture the voices of entrepreneurs about the challenges they have experienced amid their success, their solution to them, and other factors they perceive as influential to the success of their operation. Researchers compared if the influential success factors in the study's quantitative part can connect to the challenges or solutions of the entrepreneurs emerging in the qualitative section.

Moreover, similar findings were found where the subtheme building social support and borrowing funds reveals the solution of SME owners to cope with the challenges, and it gives a relationship between the factors to the quantitative part, which is a social network and capital access. Other sub themes derived are divergence and were found to be different. These results demonstrated that variables and themes were cross-validated using two data sources and methodological approaches. Specifically, SME owners also considered the factors of capital access and social network as their solutions to their business challenges. In addition, the qualitative study revealed additional perspectives regarding the challenges of SMEs, such as loss of sales, difficulty in strategy formulation, and a decrease in the number of customers that also pertained to SMEs and social contexts. These findings need to be more engaged and aligned with quantitative results. In addition, it became apparent that these challenges of SMEs impact the owner's business operation whether they adopt all the influential quantitative factors. Since the themes emerged as challenges of SMEs were not examined or not associated with influential factors in the quantitative study, these challenges poorly captured factors related to SMEs' success, and examining these variables may be best understood qualitatively only.

On the other hand, the study demonstrated the value of qualitative methods in providing different and additional insights about other critical success factors in the context of Tagaytay City that should have been explored in the quantitative part of the study. Aside from the nine factors examined in the quantitative section, participants reveal important key determinants contributing to their success, labeled as a quality product and people.

It is argued here that the two-methodological approach not only compensates for one method's limitations with the strengths of another but also provides integrated evidence that can lead to confidence in the result of the study, as shown in the figure below.

SOP 9.

The comprehensive model introduced at the commencement of this study has been refined by the key findings relating to this context and is illustrated in Figure 1.

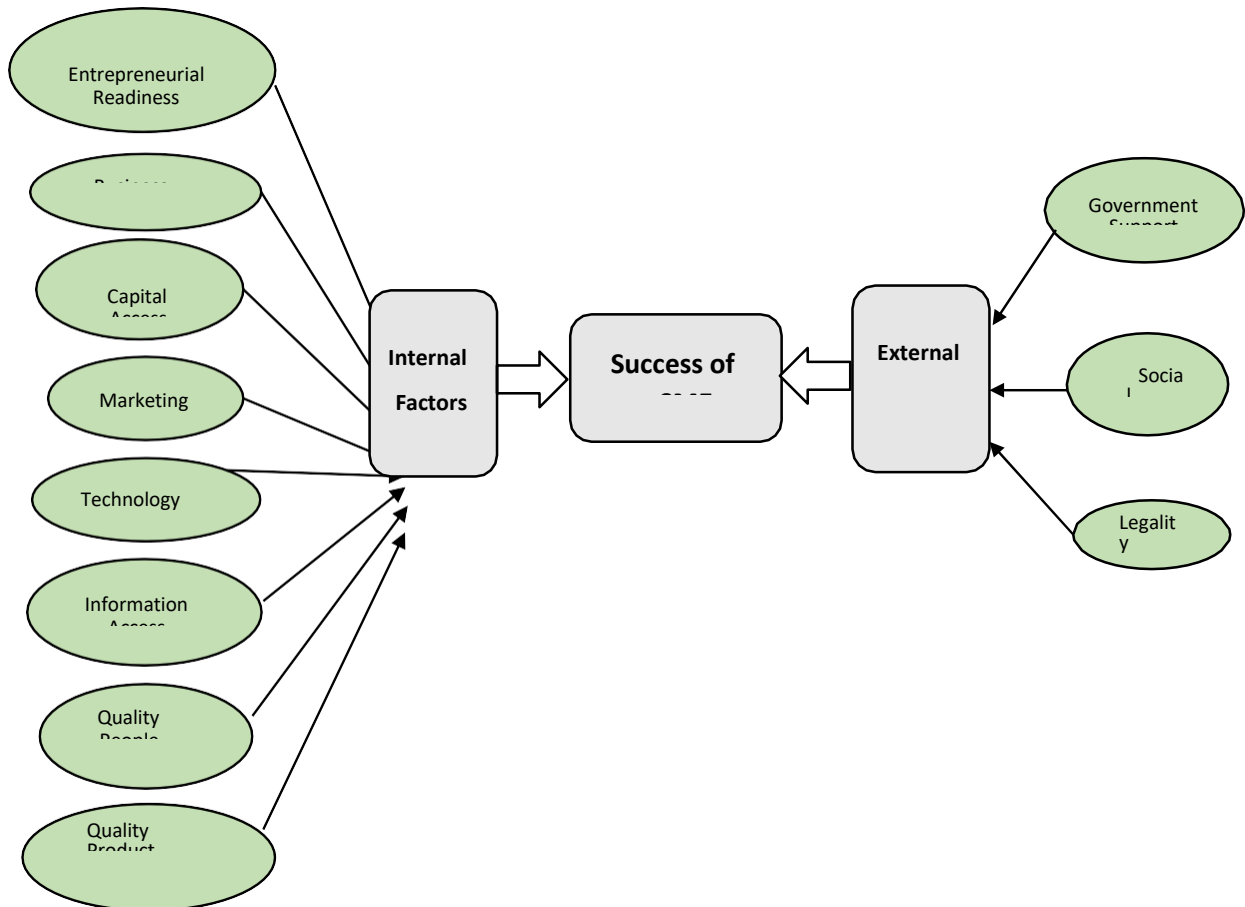


Figure 1. Comprehensive Model of Successful SME developed from the study

Figure 1 shows the key factors that emerged from the study as influential to business success. This comprehensive model, which emanated from the findings, was empirically investigated using a two-stage design incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The model introduces eleven specific factors influencing the success of SMEs in Tagaytay. These eleven factors were identified from the uncovered results in both the quantitative and qualitative phases. The model presented is divided into two parts which specify internal and external factors in business. Surbhi (2020) stated that internal factors refer to anything within the company and under the company's control, whether tangible or intangible. Conversely, external elements affect



factors outside and under the company's control. Based on the results, through these factors, owners of Small and Medium Enterprises may achieve the success necessary for them to grow since these factors emerged as influential elements that were significantly correlated to success. This model will probably guide SME owners to remain steady on their business venture and to have longer sustainability in the market since it can be a guiding model and a way to clearly understand and analyze either the existing business or new business and create a strategy and execution focus on these critical elements. This study identified that this business model would work well for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that can create an advantage in a fast-changing business environment. Having this relevant business model will also help to make the proper process that can be a path to overcome a significant concern for many SMEs. In conclusion, many contributing factors to the company's success come from both outside and inside a business. Internal or external variables are of utmost importance for the company's development. If a business hopes to perform successfully, it can consider all these elements during operation. To follow this model, the company must adequately understand its business environment, the internal and external environment it operates, to determine what key elements in this framework they may adopt. The purpose of this comprehensive model was to enrich current research by offering new insights with rich information

on the factors that tend to be perceived as associated with business success, which has yet to be done before in this geographical context.

## V. DISCUSSION

The present research aimed to examine the success elements of SMEs in Tagaytay in a Concurrent Mixed Method Design and to know the challenges they have experienced and how they cope with them. Thirty (30) respondents were approached to participate in the study. Fifteen (15) respondents own the small enterprise, and fifteen (15) own the medium enterprise.

The results of the study show that the majority of the respondents were from the age range of 31-40. Also, the majority of the respondents are female and are college graduates. The total results of the success factors show that all of these are very influential to the success of SMEs. In measuring perceived success, the results indicate that the entrepreneurs believed they were very successful. In addition, the respondent's profile was found to be significantly irrelevant to the enterprise's perceived success and the level of influence of the factors on the success of SMEs. This implies that regardless of the years of operation, size, category of business, age, gender, and educational attainment, it does not significantly influence an enterprise's perceived success and the level of influence of factors to their success. It makes no difference how much education an owner has or what age or gender they are because the success of a business is always determined by how well it is organized and planned, as well as the strategies it employs (Reddy, 2018). On the other hand, a qualitative study was used to compare and contrast the findings with quantitative results. In the qualitative result, participants stated that loss of sales, difficulty in strategy formulation, and

decreased customer numbers were the challenges and barriers they faced during their operation. In order to cope, they considered alternative solutions; it was reported that they reduced workforce costs, borrowed funds, and built social support. Moreover, the quantitative study's variable capital access and social network were similar in the subtheme of borrowing funds and building social support in the qualitative part of the study after they were triangulated. In addition, entrepreneurs highlight other vital factors contributing to their success. These factors are labeled as the quality of the product and the quality of people. The factors that emerged as influential to the success of SMEs in the quantitative and qualitative part of the study were used to build a meaningful business model.

The results of this study indicate that most of the SMEs owners in Tagaytay City are middle aged and mostly female with college degrees. The owners who served as respondents/participants of this study were all successful. The findings concluded that the owners consider their business successful depending on how owners view success because, as Chittithaworn (2013) stated, there is no universally accepted definition of success. Business success has been interpreted in many ways. This signifies that success is not only about financial performance; it can be seen to have different meanings by different people. In addition, it shows that the success factors highly influence the success of their business, and prioritizing these by every owner will aid in developing their business. In this respect, there is clear evidence that there is a strong possibility that SMEs will grow more, not just financially but also in the overall market, if they are aware of and know how to implement these factors effectively. The study also concluded that the respondent's profile has no significant relation to the perceived success of an enterprise and the level of influence of the factors on SMEs' success. Therefore, if entrepreneurs consider the above factors, even if they are young or their business is new, they can achieve the desired success.

The study fills its research gap and broadens scholarly knowledge about the critical success factors influencing SMEs. This study will give awareness to society on what success factors have the most significant influence on SMEs in Tagaytay City that will give a contribution to this geographical context. The study also seeks to contribute to future developments in the research area of businesses. It will immensely benefit both operating and potential businesses because it will give a thorough insight into the success factors influencing small to medium businesses. Using the insight the researchers can gain from this research, owners can make better-informed decisions that will serve long-term goals. Firms can use this paper to evaluate what success elements influence the operation of small and medium-sized businesses to effective strategic plans and actions. The study adds new knowledge and extends the growing literature on entrepreneurship. This study will also serve as a reference for future researchers conducting studies similar to this topic. It may guide them to gather information and give them a building block for a more extensive study.

In common with any research, the present study has its limitations, and it is essential to discuss these here. The first limitation was the instrument used in the study. The research questionnaire was adapted from the study of Indarti (2004). The researchers modified it after they attempted to contact her multiple times to seek permission to use the instrument but received no

response. The second limitation is the need for previous studies in the research area. The study needs to focus on the most contemporary research problem. Depending on the scope of these research topics, there may be little prior research relating to this study. Therefore, researchers needed help finding more updated scholarly papers addressing the research problem that would give more reliable support for the analysis. Lastly, the sample size is small, and the present research study was conducted in a specific geographical context: Tagaytay. Many of the findings may be specific to this location. For this reason, the generalization of the results could be limited.

The study's findings show that all the respondents are experiencing growth and success, implying that all the given factors are essential determinants that entrepreneurs consider while running their businesses. By this, researchers recommend that they maintain adapting all the factors as it will continuously lead them toward growth and success. However, because market trends change constantly, they must innovate to adapt and overcome the challenges of change. Business growth through innovation will keep the business afloat in a highly competitive market. This study also recommends several courses of action based on the challenges experienced

by the SME owners (Loss of sales, difficulty in strategy formulation, and decrease in the number of customers). For the owners/entrepreneurs, researchers recommend that they should include a proactive search for new opportunities and reactive solutions for existing problems. They must reformulate, revisit and update their business strategy with new plans in mind and introduce the development they have noted to avoid the risk. Entrepreneurs must be genuinely interested in the business strategy, energy, and perseverance to fulfill their ideas. A well-formulated strategy will lead to an increase in sales and customers, which will cover all the revealed problems in this study. To increase sales, researchers recommend providing a broader range of products or services that still match the market needs with a well-conceptualized, unique selling proposition. In addition, researchers also recommend to evaluate their current and potential product offerings and markets. They can introduce new products or services to the current market or introduce current products or services to new markets. Business owners may experience growth in sales by providing a new set of products to the current customers. Also, businesses may have excellent growth potential when introducing their existing products or services to new customers.

It is recommended that similar studies must be undertaken in SMEs in different geographic areas and locations for comparative purposes and to obtain a complete picture regarding the SME's critical success factors. Since the population in the study is small, and the number of respondents is limited to only 30, the results need to be more accurate. They can be a significant barrier to finding a meaningful result. It is suggested that future studies use more and enough respondents to provide a more reliable analysis.

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## Exploring Online Delivery Services Among Selected Providers Toward A Proposed Online Business Service Quality Mechanism

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### I. ABSTRACT

In this study, we focus on how the factors of online delivery services affect customer satisfaction and how customers select product delivery service providers to ensure timely and efficient delivery to them. Based on the Asset-Process-Performance framework, we propose a triadic model that includes e-retailers, delivery service providers, and customers to achieve synergy and customer satisfaction in the era of the IoT (Internet of Things). Substantive selective criteria should include consideration of the service provider's hard and soft infrastructure. In addition, flexibility is a critical criterion that will strengthen the relationship between e-retailers and delivery service providers to improve the competitiveness of service providers and satisfy the customers. We validate the model using data from 50 respondents and 6 participants within Cavite. Our results indicate that hard and soft infrastructures positively influence flexibility, which in turn has a positive impact on customer satisfaction. Indeed, flexibility fully mediates the relationship between hard and soft infrastructures and customer satisfaction. Our triadic model is one of the first attempts at providing product delivery service provider selection and its influence on customer satisfaction. Our findings provide guidelines for e-retailers and product delivery service providers to improve competitiveness.

**Keywords:** *Product delivery service provider, e-commerce, customer satisfaction, triads*

## II. INTRODUCTION

The call for online delivery service is on-demand. Especially nowadays, while more and more people stay home, they shift from traditional to online shopping. Hence, the demand for couriers has increased. The internet's fast growth and extensive practice in business organizations and online shopping have grown speedily in many countries. This has caused a vivid transformation in how customers have altered their shopping in the past decade. Businesses become more customer-centered to survive in the market or have a competitive advantage. The customer maintains market share through solid customer satisfaction Thai (2016); Yuen & Thai (2015). The level of satisfaction plays a vital role in identifying the customer's perception of the products or services offered by a given company. It helps to take corrective measures for customer satisfaction and loyalty at the highest level. Organizations are always looking for innovative ways to maintain and increase their competitiveness and gain market share. One of the most significant initiatives in recent times is the contribution of logistics service levels that aid customers in attaining their goals (2016). The development of the internet has transformed the business landscape with the evolution of online results, which has now become the latest way of buying items by some shoppers in Cameroon there, escalating in advance prominence.

This study aims to measure the level of satisfaction with online delivery services. These criteria are indicated in the review of related literature and studies. Furthermore, this study analyzes future decision-making for online delivery services and consumers. Satisfied customers are the most prominent advocates of every business. It determines how happy customers are with a service. Mark (2004) states, "Satisfaction is an overall customer attitude towards a service provider, or an emotional reaction to the difference between what customers anticipate and what they receive, regarding the fulfillment of some need, goal, and desire."

## III. METHODS

The researchers used the Convergent parallel mixed method in the study. The study used a self-made survey questionnaire for quantitative data to gather a data technique and analysis that creates or uses numerical data. The researchers used a survey questionnaire online using Google Forms for data collection. According to Check & Schutt (2012), a research survey is "the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions." The questionnaire consists of two parts as follows: The questionnaire is composed of a five-point Likert scale that indicates the satisfaction level of the customers aligned with the criteria. The first section is the profile of the respondents, which includes the respondents' age, gender, employment status, family income, and service provider. The last section is about the criteria of respondents' level of satisfaction. The self-made questionnaires were used and underwent validity and reliability testing. Then the researchers interviewed the selected participants through personal or video calls through google meet, skype, or Zoom.

#### IV. RESULTS

This chapter presents the gathered data and the interpretation of the results given by the researchers. Also, the data were explicated and simplified using tables and a brief interpretation using previous related studies and literature.

##### **Quantitative Part:**

A descriptive survey method was employed in the study. Descriptive research was used to determine the satisfaction level and the respondents' demographic profile.

Researchers surveyed a random number of customers of online delivery to determine their demographic profile and satisfaction factors. Fifty (50) customers answered the survey questionnaire.

**Table 1**

*Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Age*

<b>Age</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
18 – 24 Years old	21	42%
25 – 35 Years old	15	30%
36 – 44 Years old	9	18%
45 – 59 Years old	5	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 1 shows the profile of the respondents in terms of age. It shows that most respondents are 18-24 years old, with a frequency of 21 and 42%. Ages 25-35 with a frequency of 15 and 30%. Ages 36-44 with a frequency of 9 and 18%. The ages 45-59 with a frequency of 5 and 10%, respectively. This may indicate that most of the customers of online delivery services are under ages 18-24 years old because they are teenagers or millennials; they tend to be more updated in purchasing online. In addition, According to Gong et al. (2013), there is a resemblance in online purchasing objectives for male and female buyers; younger customers have more important objectives to purchase online than older customers. According to a study by PMW (2022), The younger generation, in particular, is far more concerned about the environmental impact of deliveries. The analysis demonstrates that the majority of the customers of online delivery services come from ages 18-24 years old, with a frequency of 21 and 42%.

**Table 2***Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Gender*

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male	23	46%
Female	27	54%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2 shows the profile of the respondents in terms of gender. It shows that most respondents are female, with a frequency of 27 or 54.0%, while males are 46.0% only, with a frequency of 23, respectively. This may indicate that the number of female customers of online delivery services is higher than males in terms of gender. So, according to the survey, it is clear that female respondents are more interested in ordering online delivery services than males. The results of Bae and Lee (2011) show that the effect of online consumer reviews on purchase intention is more vital for females than males. Based on behavioral studies, females tend to buy online delivery services rather than males because they enjoy the shopping process and spend more time shopping online.

**Table 3***Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Employment Status*

<b>Employment Status</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Self-Employed	13	26%
Employed	20	40%
Unemployed	17	34%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 3 shows the Profile of the Respondents in terms of Employment Status. Data indicate that most respondents are employed, with a frequency of 20 or 40%, respectively. In contrast, the other respondents are unemployed, with a frequency of 17 or 34%, and self-employed got the lowest frequency of 13 or 26%. This may imply that most employment status availability around Cavite requires at least a self-employed level as a minimum requirement. Occupation is a critical human factor determining individuals' online perceptions and behaviors (Venkatesh et al., 2012). Kumbhar (2011) has argued that customers' perceived sales service quality, perceived value, and overall satisfaction in delivery are based on the customers' profession (occupation).

**Table 4***Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Family Income*

Family Income	Frequency	Percent
10,000 and below	9	18%
10,001 – 20,000	11	22%
20,001 – 30,000	14	28%
30,001 – 40,000	8	16%
40,001 and above	8	16%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4 presents the profile of the respondents in terms of family income. It shows that the majority of the respondents are earning between 20,001 to 30,000 with a frequency of 14 or 28.0%, while the minority of the respondents earning 10,001 to 20,000 and 10,000 and below with a frequency of 11 and 9 or 22.0% and 18.0% and 8 and 16.0% earning 30,001 to 40,000 same with 40,001 and above earning with the frequency of 8 or 16.0%. This may imply that a customer's gross family income is above the minimum wage in Cavite because the minimum wage of Cavite based on Cavite.gov.ph as of 2022 is P10,410 or 347 per day. The share of 18–24 year old students living with their parents in the period from 2013 to 2016 has risen from 49.4% in 2014 to 51.9% in 2016 in the total sample of young adults of the same age living with their parents observed by activity status (CBS, 2017). Income and age are the most important predictors of online shopping (Lee et al., 2015). Also, income is a variable linked to other household characteristics such as internet access, credit card access, education levels, and the number of household workers (Cao et al., 2012).

**Table 5**  
*Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Service Provider*

Service Provider	Frequency	Percent
Lalamove	6	12%
Shopee Express	17	34%
JNT	19	38%
NinjaVan	2	4%
Grab	4	8%
LBC	2	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 5 shows the profile of respondents in terms of service providers. The data show that the majority of the respondents are using J&T Express with a frequency of 19 or 38.0%, Shopee Express with 17 or 34.0%, Lalamove with 6 or 12.0%, and Ninjavan and LBC both 2 or 4.0% of the respondents. This may imply that most respondents are using J&T Express as their service provider because, as of 2019, J&T Express served as the top express delivery in the Philippines. Since then, J&T Express has soared among the giants in the logistics service business because of its continuous innovations and developments. According to the Indonesian Journal of Business and Entrepreneurship, 2020. 22% of online shops state that the company provides fast delivery times to consumers, then 18% state that the company has a low price, 17% state that the tracking and tracing information provided is accurate, of 16% due to neat and safe pacing, 15% and 12% online shops like the response and company responsibility for complaints received.

According to MANILA BULLETIN (2022), J&T Express Philippines, one of the best express delivery services in the country and Southeast Asia, celebrates another year of milestones and success as it recently turned three this March. The company officially started its operations in the Philippines in 2019. Since then, J&T Express has soared among the giants in the logistics service business because of its continuous innovations and developments.

**Table 6***Level of Satisfaction of the Customers in Reference to the Satisfaction Factors*

<b>Satisfaction Factors</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Verbal Interpretation</b>
<b>A. Time</b>		
<b>1. availability to meet the scheduled delivery date that they delivered the parcel</b>	3.96	High Level of Satisfaction
<b>2. availability to timely information regarding the status of the order</b>	3.98	High Level of Satisfaction
<b>3. speed of delivery service that the parcel received</b>	4.12	High Level of Satisfaction
<b>4. Flexibility to access the website</b>	3.90	High Level of Satisfaction
<b>5. Time Efficiency</b>	4.06	High Level of Satisfaction
<b>Mean level of satisfaction concerning on time</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>High Level of Satisfaction</b>
<b>B. Quality Service</b>		
<b>1. accuracy and completeness of products</b>	4.00	High Level of Satisfaction
<b>2. quality of product upon delivery</b>	3.88	High Level of Satisfaction
<b>3. packaging of the product</b>	3.92	High Level of Satisfaction
<b>4. Presentability of the delivery men</b>	3.86	High Level of Satisfaction
<b>5. responsiveness of the couriers in answering concerns</b>	3.78	High Level of Satisfaction
<b>6. Accessibility in website/application</b>	3.84	High Level of Satisfaction
<b>7. online websites provide the platform for the feedback and recommendations</b>	3.80	High Level of Satisfaction
<b>8. Know-how and the experience of delivering online market customer service representatives are adequate</b>	3.84	High Level of Satisfaction
<b>Mean level of satisfaction concerning on quality of service</b>	<b>3.86</b>	<b>High Level of Satisfaction</b>
<b>C. Security and Privacy</b>		

<b>1. safety when giving personal information</b>	3.88	High Level of Satisfaction
1. <b>Proof of identity</b>	3.90	High Level of Satisfaction
2. <b>Security of website/application</b>	3.80	High Level of Satisfaction
3. <b>Completeness of information and instructions</b>	3.84	High Level of Satisfaction
4. <b>Discreet Shipping</b>	3.64	High Level of Satisfaction
5. <b>Return Policies</b>	3.50	High Level of Satisfaction
6. <b>Securing parcel</b>	3.88	High Level of Satisfaction
7. <b>Security of website account</b>	3.72	High Level of Satisfaction
<b>Mean level of satisfaction concerning security and privacy</b>	<b>3.77</b>	<b>High Level of Satisfaction</b>
<b>D. Cost</b>		
1. <b>the price preferred shipment type?</b>	3.84	High Level of Satisfaction
2. <b>Hidden/ Additional Fees</b>	3.40	Moderate Level of Satisfaction
3. <b>When making an order on the website the payment method is saved.</b>	3.82	High Level of Satisfaction
4. <b>Cost Reduction</b>	3.74	High Level of Satisfaction
5. <b>Discounts or Vouchers</b>	3.82	High Level of Satisfaction
<b>Mean level of satisfaction concerning on Cost</b>	<b>3.72</b>	<b>High Level of Satisfaction</b>
<b>Overall level of satisfaction</b>	<b>3.84</b>	<b>High Level of Satisfaction</b>

Generally, table 6 shows that the respondents' answers result in a 3.84 total weighted mean, which indicates that the respondents consider their level of satisfaction as high as the majority of the interpretation indicated. This shows that the consumers of online delivery services consider their level of satisfaction depending on these factors, and based on the verbal interpretation, it shows that the customer is highly satisfied with online delivery services.

Table 6 shows *the time* as an indicator with the highest mean score of 4.0, which means that most customers pointed out that the service provider's flexibility in delivering their purchases was essential to customer satisfaction.

An online tracking system lets consumers know the expected delivery time and communicate with the couriers during the delivery process if there is any issue (Gutierrez et al., 2019). Consumers shop online because they think it is more time-efficient than offline shopping. However, any delayed delivery will negatively impact customer satisfaction, contributing to the



appraisal and the influence of consumers (Coşar, Panyi, & Varga, 2017). For instance, Saad (2021) found that delivery time significantly influences consumers' decision to select an OFD service provider. In addition, Alalwan (2020) discovered that online tracking positively impacts customer satisfaction and continued intention to use mobile delivery apps.

The second highest factor is in terms of *quality service*; the respondents have a high level of satisfaction with a mean score of 3.86, in which, overall, the customers were delighted with the accuracy and completeness of products. All the above factors have an important role; however, customer satisfaction could be maintained with high-quality delivery performance. Throughout the delivery, the product must not be damaged. Furthermore, the delivery time should be short and be within the company's promised duration. The package, tracking services, and customer relationship management are other influencing factors. Suppose it can be imagined that people order products from China to Europe or Japan to Brazil. In that case, it can also be imagined how important and challenging it is to keep the delivery performance high to have satisfied customers (Lee & Joshi, 2007).

Rajeswari (2015) observed that customers considered the following factors important while shopping online: payment options, product variety/availability, speed, and quality of delivery, security, and user-friendly presentation. Results concluded that to earn and maintain the trust of the customers, e-sellers needed to focus on more straightforward navigation, secure payment options as per norms, speed and quality of delivery, and also better presentation and categorization of products to provide a more user-friendly interface to the customers to interact with them.

The third important factor influences customer satisfaction regarding *security and privacy*; the respondent's verbal interpretation is a high level of satisfaction with a mean score of 3.77. This implies that most of the customers were highly satisfied with their security and privacy when giving personal information; it is because of the security that the services providers' online application has given them that is why they fully trusted their service providers. According to Rashed (2013), it is one of the main issues of concern in online purchases: two-thirds of the respondents think that the privacy of personal information may be lost during online payment processes. It could be a significant deciding factor in different webshops. Companies should be aware of the significance of this issue to decrease uncertainty among current and future customers (Anas et al., 2016).

The fourth important factor based on the respondents is cost; the respondent's verbal interpretation is a high level of satisfaction with a mean score of 3.72. This implies that most customers were highly satisfied to make orders online based on the price it is because the service providers offer free shipping and discount vouchers that the customers can use when they buy online. Ehsani (2015) states that "price can be used as a resource for consumer satisfaction."

**Table 7**

*Relationship in the Level of Satisfaction of the Customers of Online Delivery Services to Demographic Profile*

Demographic profile		Level of Satisfaction	Decision
<b>Age</b>	Pearson Correlation	-.008	Accept Null
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.956	
	N	50	
<b>Gender</b>	Pearson Correlation	.032	Accept Null
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.826	
	N	50	
<b>Employment Status</b>	Pearson Correlation	.067	Accept Null
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.642	
	N	50	
<b>Family Income</b>	Pearson Correlation	.026	Accept Null
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.860	
	N	50	
<b>Service Provider</b>	Pearson Correlation	-.195	Accept Null
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.174	
	N	50	

Table 7 shows that the significance or p-value is greater than 0.05, meaning the null hypothesis is accepted. The data shows that there is no correlation between the demographic profile and the level of satisfaction of the respondents ( $r = .008$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.956$ ;  $r = .032$ ,  $p\text{-value} = .926$ ;  $r = .067$ ,  $p\text{-value} = .642$ ;  $r = .26$ ,  $p\text{-value} = .860$ ;  $r = .195$ ,  $p\text{-value} = .174$ ). This may imply that the respondent's level of satisfaction is the same regardless of age, gender, family income, employment status, and service provider. %. This indicates that the dependent variable, the demographic profile, and customer satisfaction, can be explained by the four independent variables in this study (time, cost, quality service, and security & privacy). It shows the coefficients for each factor tested. Notice that all factors are statistically significant with a P value less than .05 ( $p < .05$ ), meaning that every single predictor variable contributes to the outcome variable. Obviously, there is no significant relationship between customer demographic profiles and satisfaction with online

delivery services. However, the four factors in the study were positively related to customer satisfaction with online delivery services.

### **Qualitative Part:**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the customers' satisfaction while they are making online delivery services within Cavite.

This chapter provides the results of the interviews conducted with six participants within Cavite, examining their experience and how this would affect their satisfaction. It begins with the following:

1. The statements of the participants and their significant statement that serves as the symbols for theming
2. Themes that emerged as significant statements from primary one-on-one in-depth interviews.

The following presents the different themes that emerged from the in-depth interviews conducted with the participants of the study:

### **Analysis and Interpretation of Data**

#### **SOP 4: How do study participants describe their experiences in the delivery service of the service providers?**

#### **Theme: Satisfaction of effectiveness online delivery services to the customers and its disadvantages**

This theme illuminates the effectiveness of online delivery services to the customers as well as the disadvantages of their experiences with service providers.

#### **Positive Experience**

##### **Subtheme 1.1: Satisfying**

*P1: “For me it’s a little bit exciting because it’s like waiting for a surprise because you have to wait for your package to be delivered whether it’s good or not.”*

*P3: “A lot , I would say I mean you could save gas, parking tickets, avoid traffic, so it’s very convenient to me.”*

*P5: “So far naman I think its excellent experience pa naman sakin, kasi wala pa naman serious na nangyayari sa pag- padeliver ko so its excellent.”*

*P6: “Based on my experience in making online delivery, it is very effective and efficient to get the things I need and want. I never experience a scam and damaged goods or food that is why I continue to order my things I am very enjoying window shop and looking online in buying the things that makes me happy, seeing*

*the parcel is shipped out and arriving in different facility especially near me make me excited to receive and use it.”*

### **Subtheme 1.2 Time Saving**

*P1: “I don’t need to go to any other places.”*

*P4: “For, me it’s makes my life easier, kasi di na tayo pupunta sa physical store. Just one click away na gusto nating item nakukuha na natin in a snap. Ang bilis ng facing.”*

*P5: “It’s convenient and save’s time. Gamit mong device pwede magpadeliver anytime, anywhere.”*

### **Analysis of the Theme**

The responses of the study's participants revealed that their experiences with service providers' delivery services meant a lot to them. Most of them were satisfied because it is convenient, effective, efficient, and an excellent experience for them to get things quickly, and they do not have to deal with the hassle of parking, traffic, and crowds during rush hour if they shop online. The help of online delivery services leads to customers' intention to buy or purchase online. In the study conducted by (the Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services) 2021, The rapid growth of online purchasing in recent years has emphasized the accompanying role of home delivery service provided by delivery personnel in ensuring customer satisfaction. On-time delivery, better service, cheerful customer perceived value, and trust towards service providers contribute to customer satisfaction.

Also, the responses of the study's participants revealed that online delivery services help them a lot to make their lives easier. This is primarily because they efficiently manage their time by purchasing online using their devices. Instead of going to a physical store to purchase their wants and needs, they can place orders or parcels online and deliver them door-to-door by service providers to their homes in just a few clicks and steps. Online delivery services, available at any time and from any location, have made their lives easier and more productive. As a result, they are satisfied. Consumers may find it time-consuming to search for a particular product on online shopping websites due to the availability of a wide range of products and the need for more detailed descriptions and clear images (Duarte et al., 2018).

On the other hand, online shopping saves consumers valuable time by delivering products to their homes. If they shop online, consumers can handle the hassle of parking and the crowd during the rush time (Yaras et al., 2017). They can also save time in long lines at checkout (Duarte et al., 2018).

## Negative Experience

### Sub theme 2.1 Unreachable and inaccessible of tracking service

*P1: “ Some of the problems I have encountered this is not so challenging but, when the rider is already on our area he didn't know which, which is the exact house so I describe one by one the color of the roof, the color of the body of the house and I find it a very awkward situation.”*

*P2: “Well as for the problems, so we surely assure that packages have deliver in a right direction and usually the problem with some service provider like JNT express they don't have a real time tracking a packages instead they are using point to point tracking which could sometimes hassle din kase.”*

*P3 “ While using the other app as I've said there was a problem with the GPS map so it tool long before it finally got delivered and we had no way of knowing where the item is and for surely it isn't helpful at all so I would say 70% is actually efficient 30% is the so .”*

### Sub theme 2.2 Delay of Delivery and Unpresentable parcel

*P5: “Siguro yung mga na e-encounter ko lang na problem is ano lang delay, delay yung pag pick- up ganun pero wala pa naman mga major na na- encounter, delay lang talaga.”*

*P6: “The only problem that I experienced with a service provider is it can be delayed for a longer time or not much with a tracing location. Which makes me angry and frustrated. Another problem is the parcel or food is untidy or unpresentable but I never receive a broken or damaged order and can still be trustworthy to order more via online po.”*

## Analysis of the Theme

This theme pertains to participants' negative experiences in the delivery service of the service providers. The participants' responses of the study revealed that most of them encounter challenges such as delays in delivery of orders or failure to make delivery on time, which is one of unsatisfying things for them. The study participants also revealed that they were included not only in delays but also in the quality of the parcel. The products are often lost or damaged while in transit, and untidy and unpresentable parcel and order tracking systems must be able to locate the product accurately. Home delivery service providers need to meet customers' expectations regarding on-time delivery and special handling of perishable products.

In the study conducted by (Otsetova, 2017), Improving service quality should be tuned for courier service providers, and they should be proactive with customer satisfaction by offering better services (Otsetova, 2017). Today, businesses prefer to sell their products online and in traditional channels. This causes the delivery time to become an essential factor in addition to

product quality. With channel integration, it is essential to offer products and services to consumers at the desired time and place and to deliver them on time.

Ziaullah et al. (2014) stated that in an online shopping environment, reliable, safe, and timely delivery is an integral objective of online buyers. Customers tend to buy products at home, requiring safe, reliable, and quick delivery of desired products at their destinations. In an online environment, timely and reliable delivery plays a critical role in meeting and satisfying customers' expectations. Customers can easily switch from one web page to another just a single click away, or even customers can move towards conventional click-and-mortar retailers due to the late, unsafe, and undesirable product delivery. It can be concluded that delivery service is a service organized by a supplier or a shop to take goods to customers.

**SOP 5. What are the recommendations of the study participants in improving the online delivery services of the service providers?**

NEGATIVE	SOLUTION
<p><b>Ensure Quality Service</b></p> <p><i>P5 ``One thing lang na ma- re recommend ko is they should focus on response time kasi time is gold, customer ex. expect product to arrive on-time na hindi na dedelay.”</i></p> <p><i>P6 “ The best recommendation I want is to provide a vehicle to their rider to help their employee to help their employee to have a vehicle and to be consistent and the quality service they provide.</i></p>	<p>Quality and customer happiness are the top priorities of all organizations to meet customer satisfaction. It is one of the keys to ensuring the firm's success. Commenting with the total quality management will help a lot of online delivery services, and the service providers drive or meet customers' expectation and satisfaction about ensuring quality services when they deliver the product to customers. Total quality management helps a lot online delivery services industry to improve the quality of organizations' output, including goods and services, by ensuring the process of detecting and eliminating errors in the quality of service and ensuring that employees or the service providers are up to speed with training or well trained to improve customers experience to buy or re-purchase online. This aims to hold each party responsible for the whole standard of the finished good or service.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation about Real time tracking</b></p> <p><i>P2 “I would suggest online application like grab and lalamove so we can like have access through online delivery and you know real time tracking of packages mean because</i></p>	<p>Real-time location tracking helps service providers find the exact location and speed up their delivery of parcels to customers. Online delivery services satisfy customers when they accurately deliver their products or parcels on time and to their exact location. The online delivery services industry needs to develop or</p>

<p><i>you know there's a lot of scammers, you know pandemic people need to need a lot of you know people need to have tend to have need to I meant have dirty job during the pandemic provide so we would like to have online services to have real time tracking of packages as well as create an app that is very easy to use."</i></p> <p><i>P4: "I'll suggest na kung sana maparating man sa kanila to sana ano gumawa sila ng sariling nilang parang google map tapos yung maps na iyon maging updated every now and then kase nakikita ko pag online delivery nahahirapan si rider, si delivery man na hanapin yung address mo kase ganto ganyan hindi nila alam so dapat silang mga like sila GRAB sila JNT they have their own map tapos at the same time ma provide nila sana kahit hindi na online kasi may mga offline maps alam ko may offline maps pero hindi sya updated ang hirap e kasi mag loload pa si rider si delivery man so dagdag na naman yun sa gastos nila, so I think dapat mag come up sila nang sarili silang maps na updated so in time table na make our life easier is mas mapabilis iyon lang yung nakikita ko din e and then dagdag kona din yung sana yung data privacy na man hindi na masyadong magamit ng mga scammers yung address natin yung mga info natin parang ganun iyon lang naman."</i></p>	<p>improve the GPS tracking map wherein when the customers place their parcel or product online, they need to develop where the exact landmark or location of every online delivery customer is located. They need to update their real-time location systems wherein the location trackers of every service provider are connected and updated to Google Maps to track the exact landmark of every online delivery customer when they buy their parcel online. Once the customer inputs their address when they buy their parcel online, the GPS tracking map will automatically link the landmark or exact location of the customer to find out easily and quickly from the service provider the accurate location without any hesitation wherein the customer is located. The faster the service provider delivers the parcel to the customer location, the more customers will be satisfied, have positive feedback about that service, and can buy again online.</p>
<p><b>Propose Discount and Free Shipping</b></p> <p><i>P6: "For me the things I will suggest or recommend to the service provider is to push them to propose free shipping anytime to their partner company."</i></p>	<p>For this matter, we will be giving free shipping for our valued customers who meet the maximum amount to be purchased, and we will provide a list of specific items with a discount. With this, we can increase our profits while helping them with their needs without going to the department store.</p>

<p><b>Personality traits must delivery man have</b></p> <p>P3: <i>“I think the riders or the delivery man because their attitude reflects the character of the company they are working for, they are working and they are the one who is facing the customer directly. So, and as we can see on the social media at some point the customer and the rider had misunderstandings so I think the company should provide training for their riders to always be courteous and pleasant.”</i></p>	<p>Quality is the lifeblood of service delivery firms, bringing increased customer patronage, competitive advantage, and long-term profitability. Service delivery organizations can gain a competitive edge through good service quality. However, a reasonable administration focusing on well-trained staff, valuable program offerings, and its influence on customers are also components of quality dimensions. Top management deems it necessary to invest time, energy, required training, and resources to keep their staff sensitive and customer-centric. The process of acquired knowledge showcased by staff in executing their terms of preferences during service delivery can be highly assuring to customers. This gives customers the confidence that the service delivery representative will perform his/her duty professionally and ethically. And not all customers have the expertise to understand the quality of service and values they receive, and as such may require effective communication or personal explanations to understand the value they receive.</p>
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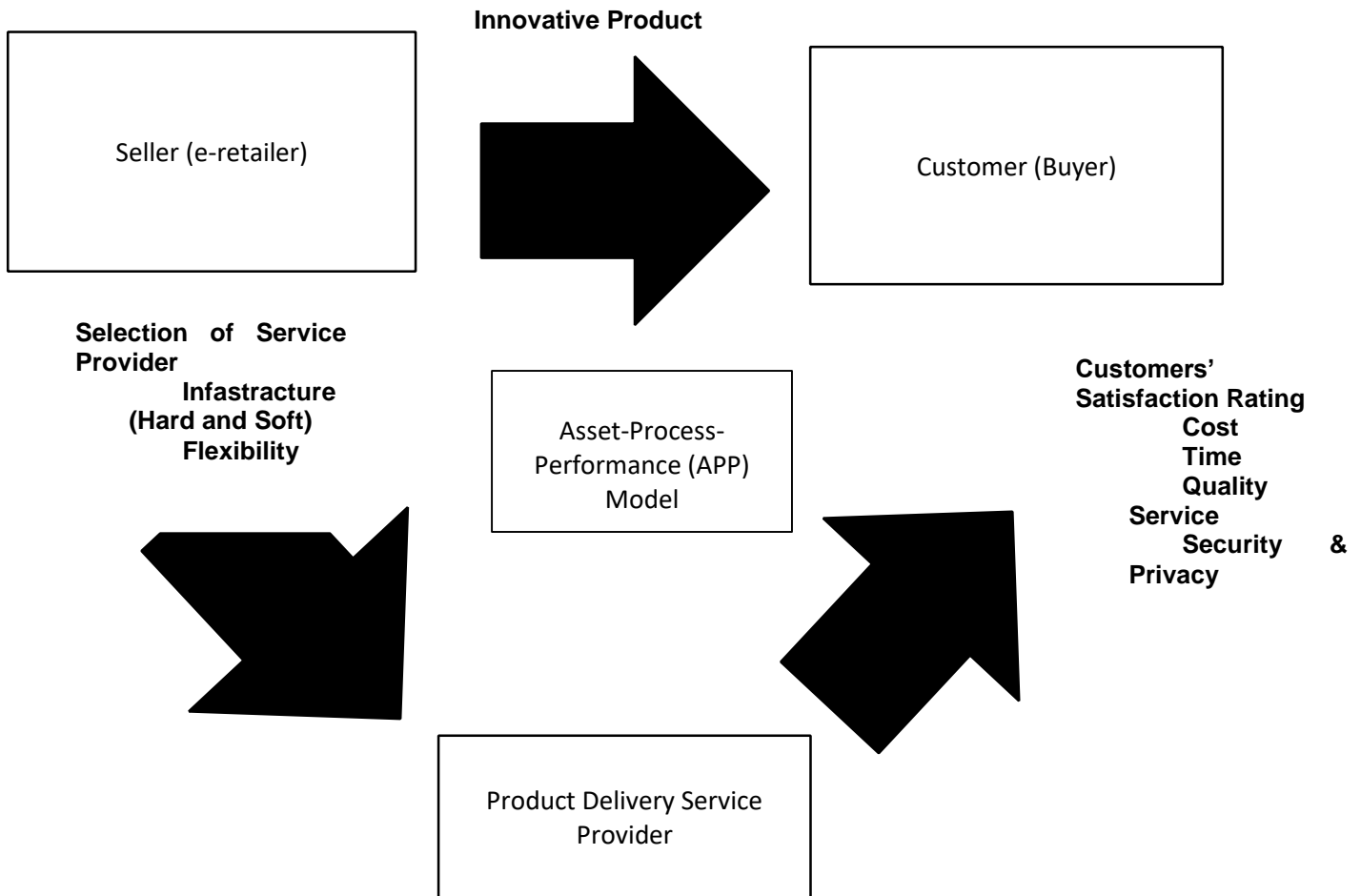
**SOP 6: What service quality mechanism can be proposed based on the study?**

The Asset-Process-Performance (APP) framework is a theoretical framework to understand competitiveness at the firm level and is a combination of assets, processes, and performance (Ambastha & Momaya, 2004). This paper uses the APP framework to study how the asset, process, and performance of the product delivery service provider satisfy both the ends of the triadic link, i.e., e-retailer (seller) and downstream end customer (buyer). Assets can be inherited (natural resources) or created (infrastructure), and process and performance can achieve economic gains from sales to customers toward asset transformation (Subramanian et al., 2014).

Our research wants to develop an APP framework like in China. We relate product delivery service provider selection based on infrastructure (both hard and soft) and flexibility with customer satisfaction. Asset in this study refers to both soft and hard infrastructure of Service providers; process refers to flexibility; and performance refers to the customer satisfaction of the end customers who finally receive products.



Moreover, according to Ambastha et al. (2004) and Subramanian et al. (2014), assets refer to human resources, firm structure, firm culture, technology, and other sources. Processes refer to strategic management processes (competency, competitive strategy, flexibility, and adaptability), technological processes (innovation, systems, IT), operational processes (manufacturing, design, and quality), and marketing processes (marketing, managing relationships, and persuading power). Finally, performance refers to productivity, finance, market share, differentiation, profitability, price, cost, variety, product range, efficiency, value creation, customer satisfaction, and new product development.



## V. DISCUSSION

The call for online delivery service is on-demand. Especially nowadays, while more and more people stay home, they shift from traditional to online shopping. Hence, the demand for couriers has increased. The internet's fast growth and extensive practice in business organizations and online shopping have grown speedily in many countries. Demand for small package delivery services has rapidly increased in recent years, mainly due to the growth of online shopping.

The study and literature were used to determine the satisfaction level and the respondents' demographic profile. The researchers surveyed a random number of customers of online delivery to determine their demographic profile and satisfaction factors. As a result, there is no correlation between the demographic profile and the level of satisfaction of the respondents, meaning the respondents' level of satisfaction is the same regardless of age, gender, family income, employment status, and service provider. On the other hand, the customer's level of satisfaction with the satisfaction factors concerning time, quality service, security and privacy, and cost wherein implies that the respondents consider their level of satisfaction highly satisfied for every factor, meaning the respondents of online delivery services are highly satisfied when they order their parcel or product online.

Moreover, the participants' experiences with online delivery services have positively and negatively affected them. On the positive experience, the responses of the study's participants revealed that their experiences with service providers' delivery services meant a lot to them. It helps them make their lives more accessible since they manage their time efficiently and effectively by purchasing or using online delivery services. However, on the negative experience, they encounter challenges such as delays in delivery of orders or failure to make deliveries on time, which is one of unsatisfying things for them. The products are often lost or damaged while in transit, untidy and unpresentable, and order tracking systems need help locating the product accurately.

According to Thai (2016); Yuen and Thai (2015), the level of satisfaction plays a vital role in identifying the customer's perception of the products or services offered by a given company. It helps to take corrective measures for customer satisfaction and loyalty at the highest level.

This study determines the results of customers' level of satisfaction, demographic profile, satisfaction factors, and customers' experiences with the delivery services, which had a positive and negative effect on them while making online purchases, and how satisfied they are with those online services. This study is similar to quantitative and qualitative research results, which means the customers of online delivery services are delighted with the time factors and their experiences of buying online. Time is the critical determinant of their satisfaction with buying or purchasing online. This is because the flexibility of timely delivery of their parcel or product was attained, leading them to feel highly satisfied with online delivery services. Time-saving means a lot to them, as it leads them to feel convenient, efficient, and effective through the help of online delivery services. Online delivery services help them a lot because of time factors; as a result of this study, they focus more on time to feel highly satisfied when they get their parcel or product on time.

Consumers or participants shop online because they know or think that when they shop online or use online delivery services, they think online shopping is more efficient than offline shopping. Time has a significant favorable influence on the online delivery services customers buy or repurchase online.

An online tracking system lets consumers know the expected delivery time and communicate with the couriers during the delivery process if there is any issue (Gutierrez et al., 2019). Consumers shop online because they think it is more time-efficient than offline shopping. However, delayed delivery will negatively impact customer satisfaction, contributing to the appraisal and the influence on consumers (Coşar et al., 2017). For instance, Saad (2021) found that delivery time significantly influences consumers' decision to select an OFD service provider. In addition, Alalwan (2020) discovered that online tracking positively impacts customer satisfaction and continued intention to use mobile delivery apps.

**To customers:** It would be advantageous if the customer tries to know the online delivery services. Getting advice and recommendations about good sites from third parties is better. The customer must collect enough information about the service provider and its background to avoid getting cheated. Customers should research the online delivery services' information; it would increase the understanding and willingness of customers to shop online. The customer may also try to use only secured transactions. It is good to deal with an online delivery service that uses a secured online transaction system involving credit cards. Verifying whether the service provider site is trustworthy in revealing personal and financial information before submitting credit card details is better. Personal details should not be given in an email as it is not a secure means of transmitting information and can be copied easily to others.

**To future researchers:** It would be better if the future researcher may try to find a broader population and samples that may come in terms of the number of respondents or also the scope of the study. The researcher may also try to find the specific scope to know the results in the area better and become useful for the surroundings. The findings of this study are a high level of satisfaction among the customers about the four satisfaction factors. It would be great for future researchers to find other factors influencing customer satisfaction in online delivery services. Another study on other online delivery services, in general, could also enrich the insights and knowledge of the community.

## **To the Service Providers:**

### **1. Real-time tracking of packages/parcel**

Real-time location tracking helps service providers find the exact location and speed up their delivery of parcels to customers. Online delivery services enable customers' satisfaction when they deliver their products or parcels well on time and accurately to the exact location where they are located. The online delivery services industry needs to develop or improve the GPS tracking map wherein when the customers place their parcel or product online, they need to develop the exact landmark or location of every online delivery customer. They need to update their real-time

location systems wherein the location trackers of every service provider are connected and updated to Google Maps to track the exact landmark of every online delivery customer when they buy their parcel online. Once the customer inputs their address when they buy their parcel online, the GPS tracking map will automatically link the landmark or exact location of the customer to find out easily and quickly from the service provider the accurate location without any hesitation wherein the customer is located. The faster the service provider delivers the parcel to the customer location, the more customers will be satisfied, have positive feedback about that service, and can buy again online.

## **2. Streamlined delivery and customer satisfaction**

Communication is the key. Clear, concise customer communications are crucial to minimizing delivery failure and maximizing customer satisfaction. However, as we have seen, delivery can prove costly when communications go awry. Please proactively communicate with customers about their delivery to ensure their expectations are set appropriately and trust is maintained. What is more, it inhibits the ability of customers to arrange to receive their parcels. Maximizing online profitability depends on retailers exploiting every opportunity for a successful first-time delivery. Whether a customer is collecting from a store or waiting for a delivery in a specific time slot, they will be happier and ultimately more loyal to the retailer if they are confident about when that delivery arrives.

## **3. Successful delivery - customers want reminders and updates**

Timely receipt of goods is a priority for today's time-pressed consumers. Delivery can 'make or break' brand reputation, and getting it right is essential to the profitability of an online business. Ideally, service providers need to 'deliver once, deliver right,' and achieving this goal depends on ensuring customers know when and where to expect their goods – and make arrangements accordingly. Ultimately, customers want to get their hands on their orders with the least amount of hassle. It is why most consumers expect a guaranteed delivery date and want a time slot of when to expect their delivery to arrive. Frequent communications will help remind customers to prepare to receive the delivery of their parcel.

## **4. Employees' Attitude**

Delivery man attitudes play an essential role in the online delivery industry. Even if the consumers are unpleasant, the delivery man should be polite enough to be advised to respect the company's terms and conditions. They are also adequately trained; even if they are also a delivery person, they must qualify to be taught to obey the company's terms and conditions. Record every transaction with the delivery men and customers.

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