

Business Practices of Online Micro – Entrepreneurs

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ABSTRACT

Today's online business is becoming increasingly competitive. People have more chances to choose different products from different sellers without spending so much time strolling around just like before. With this, an online entrepreneur is facing a challenging opportunity on how to leverage its resources, how to maximize the social media to reach a higher potential market. This also gives an opportunity to those individuals who are seeking for a better source of living at the comfort of their homes. Online business becomes an open door for most people aspiring to become an entrepreneur. This study aimed to explore and discover the stories of online entrepreneurs from Bacolod and Escalante. A series of face-to-face

interview were conducted to gather the data. Qualitative design using narrative inquiry was employed to gather the data from the conversational partners. Trustworthiness of findings were established using member check for credibility, step wise replication and code recode strategy for dependability, rich and thick description for transferability and audit trail using an audio recorder and filed notes for conformability. Results revealed that in order to stay abreast in the online business, an entrepreneur must consider and manage its online customer, secure the business stability and sustainability and manage online marketing effectively. These factors, if not recognized, might lead to business failure in the long run. An entrepreneur must know how to grasp opportunities and face the threat in order to sustain its business.

Keywords: *business administration, online business, narrative inquiry, Negros Occidental*

INTRODUCTION

"In carrying out e-commerce, the most important thing is to keep doing what you are doing right now with passion, to keep it up." - Jack Ma

Entrepreneurship can be explained at its most basic degree as business formation. "Entrepreneurship is the result of individual innovation, passion and tenacity" (Kuratko & Morris, 2018). "Entrepreneurial intention relates to a composite of some demographic, competencies, networks and perception factors" (Khefacha & Belkacem, 2015). This behavior is related with attention to social, societal and personality factors, such as experience, education, economic and political climate (Ozaralli & Rivenburgh, 2016). Indications of entrepreneurs' success are higher revenues, market expansion, and greater profit margins (Matzembacher, Gonzales, & Saldanha, 2019).

There are several reasons why an entrepreneur engages in a business. There are a lot of aspects to be considered. Thus, putting up a business is a big challenge, especially for an aspiring entrepreneur (Sarason, Dean, & Dillard, 2006a; De Clercq, Lim, & Oh, 2013; Omisakin, Nakhid, Littrell, & Verbitsky, 2016). Before starting a business, entrepreneurs uncover, assess, and utilize opportunities, but some of the owners/managers of established firms are not entrepreneurs. Individuals decide to venture in entrepreneurial

activity because of several (combinations of) start-up motivations (van der Zwan, Thurik, Verheul, & Hessels, 2016). Additionally, on top of these motivations is passion.

Passion is a drive train which can “fuel motivation, improve mental activity, and give meaning to everyday work”. It gets people where they are going. Passion drives individuals and helps to surpass obstacles in any business ventures (Ismail, Husin, Rahim, Kamal, & Mat, 2016). Because of entrepreneurial passion, one has the enthusiasm to pursue a business venture. “The passion for entrepreneurial activities, such as exploring new market ideas, sourcing founding capital, and establishing and developing new products “can drive individuals to become entrepreneurs (Kosa & Mohammed, 2017; Cardon, Grégoire, Stevens, & C. Patel, 2013) said and was also cited by (Biraglia & Kadile, 2017).

Consequently, the birth of social media widened the luxurious ways of customers about shopping. One can virtually buy anything from a pin to an elephant through this channel at any given time (Sarkar, 2016). Also, the concept of online business has been all over the world. It observes self-governance and risk-taking (Doody, Chen, & Goldstein, 2016). Entrepreneurs are at the center in the development of new ideas in the market (Zhang, Groen, & Belousova, 2018).

To keep the potential market aware of a product, entrepreneurs manage their online marketing mix. The marketing mix is the most popular marketing term. Kinnear and Bernheerd (2002) define it as the identification of the 4Ps (price, product, place and promotion) to determine the competitive position of a product in the marketplace. Al Badi (2015) defines the marketing mix as “those activities that show similarities to the overall process of marketing, requiring the combination of individual elements”.

In the virtual marketplace, unlike in the physical world, the four elements of the mix come altogether. They are massively interrelated and jointly experienced by the online customer, being merely parts of the content of the company (Constantinides, 2002).

Hence, there is no affirmation that all online home-based businesses are entrepreneurial. The flexibility presented by the online environment, its competitiveness and the pursuit to maximize limited resources make these businesses an entrepreneurial engagement (van Gelderen et al., 2008; Komarkova, Gagliardi, Conrads, & Collado, 2015). In the case of online businesses, those who are involved in the online shop are trying to provide excellent customer value (Shin, 2014). Those operating their online activities from home are additionally seeking to provide value while maintaining little business cost to utilize the company resources and maximize profit (Anwa, 2017; Daniel, Domenico, & Sharma, 2015).

Moreover, identifying and delivering customer value is noted as a critical prerequisite for long-term company survival and success (Herrmann, Huber, & Morgan, 2001). To stay ahead of competitors, entrepreneurs must understand the customer’s desires and value (Graf & Maas, 2008).

In line with security issues of online buying, sellers and buyers closely rely on consumers review or star rating as basis of online business legitimacy. In addition to star ratings, “which indicates an overall assessment of product quality, reviewer’s feedback gives a measure of reviewers’ willingness to suggest the product and comprise another cue indicating the reviewer’s satisfaction with the product (Finn, Wang, & Frank, 2009). As such, it can directly influence other consumers’ purchase intention.

Meanwhile, (Postmus, Plummer, McMahon, & Zurlo, 2013) avert those one out of three businesses fails due to inadequate sales management. According to Josh Jones, as cited by Newswire (2013), many small businesses scuffle in planning, in determining and in tracking cash performance of the business.

The researcher, who is an aspiring online entrepreneur, aimed to explore the world of business through the experiences of two business women who earn a living in the comfort of their homes. This study was undertaken for the researcher to grasp a better understanding of the opportunities and threats of and online business.

Objective

The main objective of this study is to explore the stories of online entrepreneurs.

Framework

This qualitative research is anchored on the three perspectives of online business practices, identified by Ha et al., (2014a) which are: 1) financial perspective (securing business stability and sustainability through legitimacy check of suppliers and buyers, sales and purchase monitoring and payment policy; 2) Internal process perspective (Managing online marketing mix effectively); and, 3) Customer perspective (key factors in managing online customers).

Entrepreneurs are risk takers. They anticipate what the future might be, but they cannot predict it. There are only two results: success or failure. There is no middle ground. However, this does not frightened entrepreneurs to continue their pursuit in business (Ha et al., 2014a).

Moreover, today's online selling is rapidly increasing competitively. Buyers have different options to choose from several online sellers. In other words, shopping becomes convenient for most people to change among several online stores. "At the core of retailing is the development and maintenance of long-term relationships with customers achieved by creating superior customer value and satisfaction, which not simply, a series of discrete transactions" (Ma, Ding, & Hong, 2010).

Many dreamed to become an entrepreneur primarily because of financial reward and freedom (Carter, 2011). Through understanding and delivering customer value an entrepreneur may be able to build customer trust and loyalty (Al-alak, 2014). Also, customers who are well pleased with the organization's service are a pivotal contributor to referrals or through word of mouth (Chollet et al., 2014).

Nowadays, marketing is considered as one of the crucial elements in the success of an organization. Entrepreneurs not only market to promote and sell but to please the customers (Kotler, Adam, Brown, & Armstrong, 2003). Additionally, (Kotler et al., 2003) claim that marketing is considered as one of the major concepts in modern marketing. Moreover, (Singh, 2012) also agrees that the marketing mix is a set of internal variables that the company can utilize to motivate the buyers' responses.

However, online sellers and buyers also consider the security of selling and buying online. Unlike the traditional way of buying, online buying is much more on electronic interactivity with the consumer in the form of emails and FAQs. Through frequently asked questions, the consumer's concerns on shipment, payment, product, policies and other customer issues can be addressed effectively and immediately (Pervaiz Ali, 2011).

A great misapprehension is, those small businesses do not need to know to account. However, if the business owner wants to achieve its desire for the enterprise, then little basic knowledge of accounting is needed (Postmus et al., 2013). What is important is, entrepreneurs know how to manage their cash. According to Pandey (2004), as cited by (Mayzlin, Dover, & Chevalier, 2014), "cash management is a practice of the ability to control the cash inflows and outflows in a business." This implies that cash sales monitoring must be done.

Manual and electronic monitoring are two methods of keeping track of cash flow in the business and utilized by companies in maintaining their records. Some businesses simultaneously utilize both electronic and manual sales monitoring method (Nyathi & Benedict, 2017). Benedict, Refiloe Gladys (2012) highlights that manual monitoring and updating sales and inventory is easy to understand, and is mostly used by small businesses and can be extremely useful.

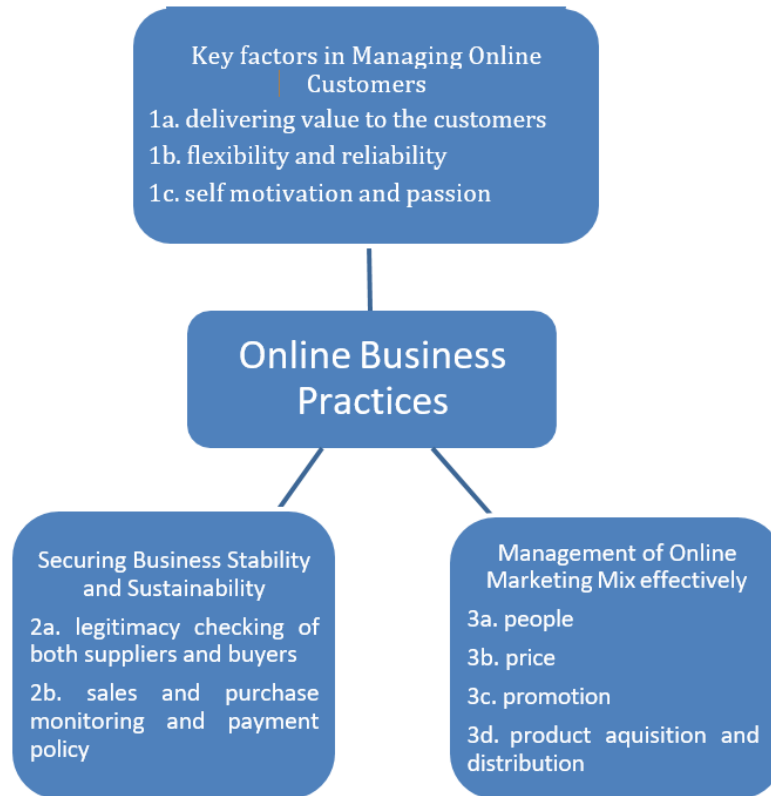


Figure 1. *Schematic Diagram of the Study*

As shown in the schematic diagram, this study focused on online entrepreneurs and the factors that are to be considered in managing an online business successfully. The three (3) themes were identified. First is, „key factors in managing online customers. Under this theme are three (3) sub-themes: a) delivering value to the customer b) flexibility and reliability c) Self-motivation and passion. Another theme is securing business stability and sustainability with two (2) identified sub-themes namely a) legitimacy checking of both online sellers and buyers and, b) sales and purchase monitoring and payment policy. The last theme is managing online marketing effectively. Under this theme, there are four(4) sub-themes as follows: a). people b) price c) promotion and d) product acquisition and distribution.

Scope and Limitation

This study involved qualified online entrepreneurs as conversation partners. The researcher explored the stories of these online entrepreneurs.

Qualitative research through narrative inquiry was applied, using the interview as a primary means of collecting data. This study was conducted from September 2018 to March 2019. Sources of data came from qualified online entrepreneurs as conversation partners. For data analysis, the researcher used the thematic approach using the seven steps advanced by (Colaizzi, 1978).

METHODS

Research Design

The researcher used qualitative research design through narrative inquiry approach. Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2003). The procedures of research involve emerging questions and methods, information basically gathered in respondents „area, data assessment carefully formulated from units of meaning to final themes, and the researcher’s interpretations of the meaning of the data (Creswell, 2003). The final output has an adaptable formation. Those who were involve in this form of study support a way of looking at research that honors an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning, and the importance of rendering the complexity of a situation (Lewis, 2015). Narrative inquiry is a manner to comprehend experience and a process to study experience (Haydon, Browne, & van der Riet, 2018).

Research Locale

This study was conducted in Bacolod and Escalante City, where the conversation partners are bonafide resident of the said cities.

Sources of Data

Conversation Partners. The conversation partners of the researcher were the two online entrepreneurs from Bacolod City and Escalante City respectively, who have been in the industry for more than or at least two (2) years and offer variety of product online.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria. To be qualified and included in this study one must be an online entrepreneur, either a wholesaler or a retailer; has been in the industry for at least two years; with at least three to five daily transactions; and, offers the variety of products online.

Purposive sampling was used in selecting the participants. It helped the researcher focus on the key sources, who are particularly well-informed of the topic under examination (Check & Schutt, 2019; Anney, 2014), because purposive sampling accord decisions to be made about the selection of participants (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010). In addition, it allows the researcher to determine why she or he wants to use a specific category of sources in the inquiry (Ryan & Bernard, 2003), and it presents substantial in-depth findings than other probability samplings methods (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000).

Gatekeepers. There were two gatekeepers in this study. The gatekeepers are common friends of the researcher and the conversation partners and who are online entrepreneurs themselves. The gatekeepers recommended the qualified conversation partners based on the identified inclusion criteria and who have access to the entrepreneurs. The perceived role of gatekeeper is to grant access to qualified participants (Creswell, 2003).

Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection allows researchers to collect information needed to answer or attain the research objectives. Depending on the research type, methods of data collection include documents review, observation, questioning, measuring, or a combination of different methods (Abawi, 2014.). The most commonly known way of data collection in qualitative research is the interview.

In this study the researcher used audio recording and field notes in gathering the needed data.

Audio recording involves using either analogue or digital recording equipment to capture the conversations, the interactions, and the interviews. The most obvious value of audio recording is that it offers an accurate synopsis of everything that the participants expressed during the interview (Given, 2008).

According to (Maykut & Morehouse, 2005), the importance of field notes can be described as follows: The keen observations and important conversations one has in the field cannot be fully utilized in a rigorous analysis of the data unless they are written down. The qualitative researcher’s field notes contain what has been seen and heard by the researcher, without interpretation. In other words, the participant

observer's primary task is to record without hypothesizing feelings of the participants and without concluding why and how something happened.

The process of collecting data is very time-consuming and requires tremendous effort to pour out. Interviews are considered as "the gold standard of qualitative research" (Cobbold, 2015). Interviews enable researchers to access the perspectives of respondents, who are allowed to freely express their thoughts within particular topics (Jacelon & O'Dell, 2005). When integrating with documents, interviews with key participants aid researchers acquire a more in-depth comprehension of the rationale that lay behind the documents, the effect of several individuals and the opposing interests of the different participant (Cobbold, 2015).

Interviews are usually done in a qualitative inquiry (Alshenqeeti, 2014). However, interviews, compared to questionnaires, are more substantial in eliciting narrative data that allow researchers to investigate people's views in greater depth (Kvale, 2006). In a similar vein, (Louis Cohen, 2007) add that interviewing is "a valuable method for exploring the construction and negotiation of meanings in a natural setting". That is, the value of interviewing is not only because it builds an occult snapshot, examines words, delineates individual perspectives of informants; but also, because it enables interviewees to "speak in their voice and express their thoughts and feelings" (Berg, 2004).

The researcher asked an overarching questions and follow-up questions based on the responses of conversation partners. The researcher conducted the interview until data saturation was achieved, with one to three weeks' time gap between each interview on the date and venue agreed upon by both the researcher and conversation partners.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues are critical in conducting research; thus, the researcher adhered to ethical consideration in conducting this research.

To start the process, the researcher sought referrals from the gatekeeper to access the information or data to be analyzed. The participants initially approved the study. Then, the researcher sent the Informed Consent Form where the participants signed and acknowledged that they were informed of the objectives of the study. They were also informed that all the information will be treated with respect and confidentiality of their identities will be kept and will not be disclosed in the research paper.

To protect the conversation partners' identities the researcher used aliases during the conduct of the interview. The researcher saw to it that the participants understood and the terms that were stated in the Informed Consent Form and that they have the power to choose whether to consent or to decline participation voluntarily. Once this inquiry is made, the participants will receive a copy of the research findings.

Trustworthiness of the Findings

Trustworthiness can be described in different ways. Trustworthiness refers to quality, authenticity, and truthfulness of findings of qualitative research. It relates to the degree of trust, or confidence readers have in results. To establish validity and reliability, qualitative research use trustworthiness as a criterion to judge the quality of research design (Riege, 2003; Guba & Lincoln, 1989), and (Lincoln, 1995).

Credibility. Credibility addresses the "fit" between respondents' views and the researcher's representation of them (Tobin & Begley, 2004a). The credibility of findings and interpretations were tested using member check (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Morrow, (2005) asserts that the credibility of a study is undaunted when core searchers or readers are oppressed with the experience; they can concede it.

The researcher used member checking as a method to establish the credibility of the study. Member checks mean that the "data and interpretations are spontaneously tested as they are derived from members of various audiences and groups from which data are solicited" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Morrow, 2005). A member check is a crucial process that any qualitative researcher should undergo because it is the core of credibility (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Birt et al., 2016). The researcher is entitled to incorporate the view,

feeling and wish of the respondents in the scrutiny and connotation of the information. The objective of conducting member check is to abolish researcher prejudice when scrutinizing and explaining the results. This means that the examined and expounded are sent back to the conversational partners for them to assess the explanation done by the researcher if they or they do not confirm the data. Informants may abolish an interpretation made by the researcher, either because it is socially nasty or because of how it is furnished by the researcher (Schwandt, 2016; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007). A member check is deemed as the single most important furnishing that can be made to reinforce a study's credibility. The member check can be done in any part of the research process

Transferability. Transferability refers to the level to which the results of qualitative research can be changed to other contexts with other respondents – it is the interpretive equivalent of generalizability (Bitsch, 2005, Tobin & Begley, 2004b). According to Bitsch (2005), the “researcher facilitates the transferability judgment by a potential user through „thick description“ and purposeful sampling”. The researcher cannot know the sites that may wish to transfer the findings; however, the researcher is responsible for providing full descriptions, so that those who seek to move the findings to their site can judge transferability (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Transferability covers the extent, to which the results of a particular research program can be extrapolated, with confidence, to a broader population (Shenton, 2004). In this study, transferability was achieved by presenting thick elucidation and purposive sampling. According to Li (2004), full elucidation “enables judgments about how well the research context fits other contexts”. Thick descriptive data, i.e. a rich and extensive set of details concerning methodology and context, should be included in the research report. The researcher gives suggestions about transferability, but it is the reader's comprehension of the context that fits his concern. It is the fit of the topic or the comparability of the problem that is of concern (Neuman, 2006). Because transferability will depend on how the readers relate to the contexts, the researcher collected full precise analyzation of statistics in context and outlined them with complete feature and accuracy to permit perception about transferability to be done by the reader.

To fully achieve the range of specific information that can be attained from the key informants, the researcher consciously chose location and information that differ.

Dependability. According to Bitsch (2005), dependability is “the stability of findings over time”. Dependability includes participants scrutinizing the discovery and the interpretation and recommendations of the study to make sure that they are all backed up with the data collected from the source of the inquiry (Cohen et al., 2000, Tobin & Begley, 2004b). Moreover, dependability refers to the stability and reliability of the research findings and the level to which research procedures are recorded, permitting, except the researcher to follow, examine, and appraise the research procedures (Sandelowski, 1986, Polit & Bernadette, 2019; Jeanfreau & Jack, 2010).

In this research, dependability was established using a code-recode strategy and stepwise replication.

Stepwise replication is a qualitative research data explication procedure where two or more researchers examine the same data individually and contrast the results (Chilisa & Preece, 2018). Any instability that appears from these individual examinations requires to be addressed to enhance the dependability of the inquiry, and if the results of analyses are similar, then the reliability of the study is obtained (Ary et al., 2010; Jeanfreau & Jack, 2010).

The code-recode strategy involves the researcher coding the same data three (3) times, giving one or two week's gestation period between each coding. The results from the three coding's are compared to see if the results are the same or different. The code-recode strategy is also referred to as code agreement, whereby the research procedures permit several remarks or findings by the researcher, recommending that the inter-rater or inter-observer input the data and contrast it with the data analyzed by the other party (Ary et al., 2010, S. Jeanfreau & Jack, 2010). If the coding results are aligned, it enhances the dependability of

the qualitative inquiry. This process helps the researcher acquire deep comprehensions of data patterns and refines the presentation of participants' description or narrations.

Confirmability. Confirmability is "concerned with establishing that data and interpretations of the findings are not figments of the inquirer's imagination, but are derived from the data" (Tobin & Begley, 2004b). Studies suggest that confirmability of qualitative inquiry is achieved through an audit trail, reflexive journal and triangulation (Bowen, 2009, Koch, 2006, Guba & Lincoln, 1989). More so, confirmability is founded on the acknowledgement that research is not objective. It concerns with the core issue that "findings should signify", as far as possible, the particular state being studied as opposed to the norms, per theories, or prejudice of the researcher. It is according to the point of view that the uprightness of outcomes is grounded on the data and that the researcher must accurately bind together the data, analytic processes, and findings in a way that the audience is in a place to verify the adequacy of the observations (Kalu & Bwalya, 2017; Morake, 2013).

Confirmability in this study is achieved through an audit trail. This may include all field notes and any other records kept of what the researcher does, hears, sees and thinks.

An audit trail involves an analysis of the study process and product to assess the data, whereby a researcher deemed for all the research decisions and activities to present how the data were gathered, recorded and examined (Bowen, 2009, Li, 2004). For an auditor to perform an exhaustive audit trail the following documents should be kept for verifying the inquiry process: raw data, interview and observation notes, documents and records gathered from the field, test scores and others (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). An audit trail (e.g. different types of personal notes) is a method wherein another researcher should be able to follow the "decision trail" used by the researcher (Yin, 2014, Kalu, 2017)

Data Explication Qualitative data analysis involves the recognition, analysis, and elucidation of patterns and themes in textual data and establishes how these patterns and themes help answer the research questions at hand (Trochim, Donnelly, & Arora, 2016).

Analysis of the data is the act of determining and expounding the core meaning of the data. Sorting and interrelating arising themes, sub-themes and contrasting to get the enormous picture-what it all means, guiding the researcher determine how best to consolidate data from several sources and processes. Interpretation can also help the researcher to make conclusions-providing answers to inquiries of social and theoretical importance and ascertain credible or trustworthy description.

Thematic analysis was used in this study and focused on examining themes within data. This method emphasizes consolidation and rich description of the data set (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2019, Palinkas et al., 2015)

The researcher used the following Collaizi's (1978) seven steps to illustrate the data. The process involves the following steps;

Transcribing all the subjects' descriptions. In this section of the analysis process, participant narratives were copied from the audio-taped interviews held with each. Individual transcriptions of the interview were then checked by the respective participant.

Extracting significant statements. After the data has been transcribed any comments in the participants' narratives that relate directly to the phenomenon under investigation are considered significant. Significant statements are extracted from each of the stories and numbered. The critical statements are numerically entered into a list that is, an assemblage of all essential comments. The researcher cleaned the data either by removing the statements without clear thoughts, explaining to make them significant or merging two consecutive statements.

Creating formulated meanings. In this stage of analysis, the researcher formulated more general restatements or meanings for each significant statement extracted from the participant's narratives. The researcher assigned units of significance for each statement.

Aggregating formulated meanings into theme clusters. Once the definition has been given to units of meaning statements, the researcher assigned or organized created meanings into clusters of similar type.

In other words, the formulated meanings are grouped into theme clusters. Statements with similar units of meanings were assigned with clusters of meaning. Depending on the number of units of meanings, code-recode strategy may also be used by the researcher.

Developing an exhaustive description. An exhaustive description is a comprehensive description of the experience as articulated by participants. This is developed through synthesizing of all theme clusters and associating all formulated meanings explicated by the researcher. In this phase, initial themes were identified by the researcher.

Determining the core formation of inquiry. The core formation refers to the essence of the experiential phenomenon as it is revealed by explication" through a rigorous analysis of the exhaustive description of the phenomenon". Final themes were developed by the researcher.

Returning to participants for validation. A follow-up appointment was made by the researcher with each participant to validate the essence of the phenomenon with participants. Any changes made according to participant feedback to ensure their intended meaning is delivered in the basic structure of the occurrence. Incorporation of additional information provided by participants for inclusion into the final description of the phenomenon occurs at this point.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After the formulation of the topic for this study, the researcher looked for qualified conversation partners to be the sources of data.

May is one of the two conversation partners whom the researcher knew way back when they were in college. She has been in online business for more than two years, and the researcher is one of her regular customers. Rose, the other conversation partner, was referred to the researcher by a friend. May is currently residing in Escalante City, married with two kids. After a series of interviews conducted with her, the researcher perceived her as a business-oriented person. In business, she prioritizes sales and profit, and seldom meets up with her customer. On the other hand, Rose is from Bacolod City, married but without kids. She is a very jolly person and approachable. She emphasizes the value of friendship in business. She is not after the profit but to gain friends and establish a good relationship with her clients. Rose always meets up with her clients and joins in bazaar or concept store.

After rigorous interviews and transcription, examination and interpreting of each conversation statement, the researcher was able to come up three (3) themes that explored the business practices of online micro-entrepreneur. The three (3) themes are as follows: a) keys factors in managing online customers: b) securing business stability and sustainability: c) managing online marketing mix effectively.

The conversation partners considered three major factors affecting their success which include (1) overall of the entrepreneurs" business (managing online customers); (2) the entrepreneurs" health and brain, the entrepreneurs" investment, profit and stability (securing business stability and sustainability); and (3) the entrepreneurs" reputation, image and branding (managing the marketing mix) (Ha et al., 2014b).

Several entrepreneurs describe how online home-based businesses permits or supplies entrepreneurs with the chance to be in necessitate in more than one form of income formation or supported by other sources of income. They may employ their online business alongside other employment, employ more than one business, be supported by savings from previous employment or by the income of a spouse (Anwar & Daniel, 2016).

Based on the series of interviews conducted, nineteen clusters of relevant meanings came up and were grouped into three (3) themes. The clusters of meaning include: 1) business development and management; 2) business legalities and requirements; 3) product originality, reliability and authenticity; 4) business security issues; 5) customer satisfaction management; 6) customers demographics; 7) product

delivery management; 8) distribution channel; 9) personal satisfaction and motivation; 10) financial management; 11) pricing strategy; 12) marketing strategy; 13) payment policy; 14) order management; 15) types of product; 16) suppliers process and management; 17) selling method; 18) time management; 19) marketing strategies, which were trimmed down into three(3) meaningful and core themes of the study.

After listening to all interviews of the two conversation partners, the researcher compared and clustered all similar words and phrases used by the participants. This process was done to make sure that all significant statements were noted and not missed out.

The objective of this qualitative inquiry is to investigate why and how online entrepreneurs engaged in online business. Entrepreneurial commitment involves the formation, assessment, and utilization of opportunities by individuals (Sarason, Dean, & Dillard, 2006b; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; De Clercq et al., 2013). Entrepreneurship gives small businesses with the ability to uncover new business opportunities and the discovery of new opportunities that strengthen their uniqueness from other organizations (Omisakin, Nakhid, Littrell, & Verbitsky, 2015), but some of the owners or managers of the stable enterprise are not entrepreneurs. Individuals decide to engage in the entrepreneurial activity because of different (combinations of) start-up motivations (van der Zwan et al., 2016).

Below are the thorough discussions of the stories of online entrepreneurs exploring their business practices.

Key Factors in Managing Online Customers

“What they consider crucial in managing their online business”

Establishing a business is not easy; there is always the downside of it. There were times when you’re losing your customers because of the intense competition in the industry. If the entrepreneur wants to stay abreast in the business, he or she must accept and embrace that fact. On the contrary, the researcher’s present study shows only three themes that were formulated about online business practices.

The core element that dictates the probability of an e-business model is the number of customers that the value proposition attracts and who return for repeat business. Online shopping encounter diminishes the effect of the apprehended functionality of conduct purpose (Hsieh & Pei Wen, 2011). Many online customers favor having a one-stop-shop for their purchasing needs. Online customers also apprehended value in shopping with a popular and reliable vendor. The most affluent e-business models have been able to win the trust of customers by offering lowest prices, swift and well-ordered service, broad options of products and services, and security of transactions (Combe, 2006). Customer service and a beneficial customer encounter are crucial to sales in the e-commerce marketplace (Musa et al., 2015).

Another element in managing customer is the flexibility of an entrepreneur to divert from one work to another, shifting on to different preferences of different market segments. Flexibility is regarded as focal when dealing for example with different clients with different preferences (Abdul-Aziz & Wong, 2010).

They deliver value to their customers. One of the elements in managing process is to deliver distinctive “value” to the customers. Online business should be very competitive to stay ahead of their competitors. An online entrepreneur must be able to deliver “value” aside from economic value they could obtain from buying goods or services. Based on the theory mentioned by (Kotler et al., 2003), consumers will determine their choice according to their apprehension on the value inserted in a product or service that well please their need.

In this study, however, customer value is not only acquired from buying and owning a certain product but on how the online seller assists from the very beginning a client’s inquiries to after-sales service. Here value does not refer to the price it refers to the recognized benefits positioned to be acquired in the context of price. Based on the suitable apprehension of the customer position and needs a firm should formulate the critical values (Gupta, Lehmann, & work(s), 2004). It is an online pursuit that leads employees, collaborators, suppliers and customers altogether while having the bringing and creation of value as its primary goal (Plessis & Boon, 2004; Lai et al., 2012).

Rose said:

“Accept the fact that not all the time my business will go up. Pero just because naka make kana friendship sa ila sang nabal.an nila nga nag back to business ko, nag ambal man sila sakon, miss okay kana? Pwedi kana ka cater sang amon needs? sang amon orders? Subong na, subong na pagsugod nakon gamay- gamay pa eh syempre waay pa mayo costumer .Subong kay may suki-suki kana nga ano laban kalabanan mga ara sa gwa mo kay ipadala nila sa ila nga ano (relatives here in Philippines). (Accept the fact that not all the time my business will go up. But, because I was able to establish friendship, after they knew that I went back to business they asked me if I could cater their orders. I only had few customers when I started, but now I have regular customers and mostly are OFWs who purchase and send their orders to their relatives here in the Philippines)

May said:

Subong ma n gyapon eh kay sang una ga start ka ang mga tahu indi pana siling mag post- post mo biskan dyutay ang ano ni ang online pa ang tawo mangita gid sang proof na kwan , wala kapa e proof of income or proof of transaction subong ya biskan damo sila kung kis-a may ano kana nga costumer sa imo na na mabalik-balik order. Today because I already established my relationship with my regular customers. (It is still the same today. Since I only had few customers when I started the business, some would ask for proof of income or proof of transaction. I do not have but they go back and make orders from me.)

Moreover, e-business enhances operation effectively and expands the reach of firms (Ash & Burn, 2003, Bordonaba-Juste, Lucia, & Polo-Redondo, 2012). Because customer values are deemed critical elements of shopping behavior and product choice, considering the perceived profit, the main and prime firms continuously provide high-level value to customers as to restore market share, maximize profit and retain customers. In other words to procure and keep customers need an understanding of what those customers value and concentrates on the procedures whereby that value can consistently be provided. Furthermore, customer value delivery can aid customers to attain their goals in any situations (Ma & Ding, 2010). The business owners in this study mentioned unique customer service and consistently delivered what they promised (Corak, 2013). The owners create customer loyalty with resulting high client retention rates (Snider, 2015).

They have to be Flexible and Reliable. Based on the conversation with the conversation partners, they said that they choose to manage an online business because of its flexibility. One said that she manages to look after her kids while managing her online business. The other one said that she was able to manage to hit two birds in one stone. Owing to the flexibility of social networking tools, businesses can recognize several benefits. These according to (Smith & Taylor, 2004) are greater access to several audiences, boost customer service, enhanced products and services and acquisition of favourable pricing practices (Mung“ei, Ombui, & Iravo, 2017)

Rose shared:

“First, I was able to work virtually anywhere in the world. I mean i can make money just sitting in a corner. Post + sell

+ ship or meet up = money. I am able to sell and earn money while i am working at the comfort of my office. It requires flexibility.

May said:

Dali man lang kay kung kis-a. Tapuson mo danay imo ubra eh ga ku-an imo bata tapos mo dayon pakaunon mo paligu-an mo da gahigda ka patiti ti amo na gahigda ka padidi ka kay ga breastfeed man ko ti pahigda ka padidi ti amo na na oras nga gunit ka ah kapyot kana cellphone kag mag dutdut (facebook). Pa tyempo-tyempo lang ah laban man facebook lang ah ari man lang ko di naga higda kada eh naga pa titi ka ga post-post eh, may time ka mag facebook amo na eh . Gapungko pungko ka da imo bata ara sa kuna. Ti post post ka sa facebook kaysa sang sa sige kada kapyot sang facebook wala ka income. Daw wala

man ah basta makakapyot lang ko cellphone kung may time lang sa akon cellphone ti amo na eh .Kis-a kung manglaba ko eh ti off danay.Kay kis-a gatambak na ang labahan. Off danay, so post mo sa facebook nga manglaba ka danay naka off danay basi may ma inquire ba. (It seems easy, because I will finish doing household chores first then feed my baby. While breastfeeding that's the time I'll do the posting on Facebook or while my baby is in the crib, I'll do facebook posting rather than browsing facebook and earn nothing. Whenever I got time, I do the posting. Sometimes, when I do the laundry, I switch off my cellphone.)”

Individuals are continuously more disinclined to take risks and start their firms if they have jobs with high salaries and good social benefits (Solesvik, 2017). While, service reliability involves the combined characteristics of management and concerns a firm's potential to execute all order-related activities, as well as giving customers with important information regarding logistical operations and status. Afar from availability and operational performance, attributes of reliability may mean that shipments will be delivered damage free, invoices are correct and error-free; shipments are delivered to the exact locations, and the expected amount of product ordered is incorporated in the shipment. While these and many other aspects of overall reliability are difficult to itemize, the end is that customers demand that a wide variety of business details be grasped routinely by suppliers. Additionally, service reliability involves a capacity and a desire to provide precise information to customers regarding operations and order status

Hybrid entrepreneurship can be an alternative to obtain extra income in addition to the income from normal jobs or to try a new business idea (Schulz, Urbig, & Procher, 2016). Cross entrepreneurs may be motivated by a drive to “be their boss” but can also work under the management of other people. From the economic view, individuals may find it hard to increase their way of living through salaries and wages earned from having a job (Folta, Delmar, & Wennberg, 2010)

Many women viewed entrepreneurship as a strategy to earn for and better look after their families, rectifying two roles in one strike. Next, working mother who used to work before having kids are more likely to feel bored in staying home. Last, due to inflation and deflation, the husband's income may not be enough for the family expenses (Maritz & Thongprovati, 2010).

They should have Self-Motivation and Passion. Another factor that was revealed during the interview with the conversation partners in managing an online business is the motivation and passion of an entrepreneur.

An increasing number of research studies showed that passion is a critical factor in determining the company's success (Huyghe, Knockaert, & Obschonka, 2016). Moreover, passion is at the core of entrepreneurship (Cardon et al. 2005), since it can foster creativity and the recognition of new information patterns critical to the discovery and exploitation of promising opportunities (Baron, 2008; Tasnim & Singh, 2016; Cardon, 2008)

Rose said:

“I fit in the business world because i embrace it, love it and one must have the eagerness to pursue what she wants and what she loves. If you want to succeed in your business you have to save lot of guts and perseverance in your pocket. At the same time, I'm enjoying selling and meeting new people.Since i want to improve my financial status i decided to hit two birds in one stone. I fit in the business world because i embrace it, love it and one must have the eagerness to pursue what she wants and what she loves. If you want to succeed in your business you have to save lot of guts and perseverance in your pocket. You must be willing to learn and stand up every time you fall down.

May said:

Kanami lang sa feeling nga may income ka nga kwan, maka income ka daku-daku.Ang ga trigger gid sa imo? May income ka biskan ari kalang di sa balay eh.Ma motivate kaman atleast ari ka di sa balay tapos ma post-post kada dayon may ma order kundi may kwarta ka. (It feels good when you have a source of income, and earn a little more. What triggers one? You have an income even though you just stay at

home. You will be motivated. At least, while staying home, after posting, orders will come in, then you have money.)

People decide to venture in the business for different factors (van der Zwan et al., 2016). Business involvement is determined by both individual and institutional conditions. One of the individual conditions that determine entrepreneurial engagement is passion or love. Passion is important in entrepreneurship because it can “fuel motivation, enhance mental activity, and provide meaning to everyday work” (Cardon et al., 2013). Passion helps entrepreneurs overcome the challenges (Ismail, Husin, Abdul Rahim, Mohd Kamal, & Che Mat, 2016). Interest in entrepreneurial passion is growing because passion has been demonstrated to drive the tenacious pursuit of goals and to inspire stakeholders to support ventures (Warnick, Murnieks, McMullen, & Brooks, 2018)

Securing business stability and sustainability

“What they consider as the health and brain of the business

Customers’ confidence when using online channels is a crucial factor that contributes to successful e-business implementation (de Kervenoael, Ozturkcan, & Palmer, 2009). The problems associated with online shopping are more to consumer’s security in undertaking that requires privacy and trust between different geographical locations or countries. There are increasing issues over online shopping because of insecurity, lack of customer’s protection and trust which are vital elements for a successful online transaction between countries, organization as well as individual (Ahmed & Hawaii, 2012a). Concern over online retailer fraud cause by purposeful misrepresentation or non-delivery of goods paid for are among the potential threat over online purchase. Angriawan

and Thakur (2008) define online trust as “when a consumer has confidence in an e-merchant’s reliability and integrity to perform online transactions successfully”. Protecting the consumer’s security in the virtual environment, where the trading of business is carried out, needs the creation of new and exceptionally significant facet regarding the security of the consumer (Dinu & Surcel, 2007). E-commerce includes a broad scope of issues such as security, trust, reputation, legal framework, payment mechanisms, advertising, online catalogues (Iyenger, 2018)

They do Legitimacy check of both suppliers and buyers. Online entrepreneurs did experience security issues in online selling and buying. To check the legitimacy of their suppliers and buyers is mainly based on customer or sellers review or feedbacks. Reviews have established the mainstay of the character of business in virtual shopping. “Retailers (and the products and services they are offering) on online platforms are rated and reviewed by buyers, and buyers can use this information to choose whom to interact with”. Likewise, sellers on some platforms can review buyers. Reviews allow buyers and sellers to make sure they are transacting with someone deemed trustworthy enough to participate in the business dealings (Luca & Zervas, 2015). Aside from the edge brought by customer’s assessment or reviews, different problems may also arise. Anyone can manipulate reviews online (Hoefnagels et al., 2013; Fradkin, Grewal, & Holtz, 2018). Second, reviews can suffer from selection prejudice (Hu et al. 2009; Masterov, Mayer, & Tadelis, 2015), as the people leaving reviews may differ from those who do not. Third, reviews may be disfigured by promotional content in which businesses seek to leave reviews for themselves (Mayzlin et al., 2014; Luca & Zervas, 2013). Moreover, even if all reviews constitute a user’s true experience, some users may be more informative than others (Dai, Spasic, & Andres, 2017)

Rose said:

“So far wala pa man ,Gina check , gina check ko gid na ya ang page nila kung damo-damo like mangita ka sang feedback indi lang basta- basta nga mag ano kalang sa ila nga picture pangitaon gid ang ila nga legalities.Nang ano,nang indi madali dali once nga gabaligya sya gali barato kag dasig sya mag reply it doesn't mean nga Legit sa kay that time gapangita gid ko sang amo na kag sya lang nakahatag sakon teh ginpakita ya man , nag actual man sa gani picture ka mga bayo I don't know ngaa nagpati ko nag picture man sa sang tanan-tanan ginahabl ko sya nga physical picture bi ang mga physical nga bayo

nga gown na ang ginpicturean ya nan then I don't know ngaa nag scam sya gle . So amo na natabo. (So far I didn't experience it (scam). I really check on their page, if it has many likes and look for feedbacks and don't just rely on the picture. Look for the legalities. When looking for a supplier don't rush. It's not because he sells the cheapest and would reply immediately means he is legit. That time he's the one who showed me what I'm looking for. He took and sent the picture to me. I don't know why I trusted the picture he sent me. The physical picture of the gowns. I didn't have an idea that he is a scammer. That's it.)"

May said:

"Or check the likes or viewers of the page. Ah research, research mo ang page dason mamangkot ka kung ga accept sila reseller amo na eh ma reply sila da nga kung ga accept sila ma message mo sila eh kung ga ano sila kung okay lang nga i kwaon i ano mo ang imo nga makwa ka sang ila items nga e post amo na . Dason nangita ko danay sang ila nga ay before ko gali sa ila nag message nag eh ah research ko sa ila nga page eh kung legit sila check mo ila nga mga proof of transactions. Amo na tu ma start nako. That's it. (You research the page and ask if they accept resellers. If they reply, then you'll know if they accept. But before that I did research of their page if it's legit or not. I also checked their proof of transactions. I researched on their legalities through proof of transactions or feedbacks of their customers. In searching for suppliers online, you need to check their legalities first to know if they are legit or not. Search for their proof of transactions or feedbacks of the buyers)"

An increasing number of inquiries have determined several effects of online product reviews on consumer attitudes and behaviors (Mayzlin et al., 2014; Hu, Liu, & Sambamurthy, 2011; Maslowska, Malthouse, & Bernritter, 2017). A current report from the Nielsen Company (2015) says that consumers would rather believe in online reviews rather than the common form of advertising. They are showing the compelling power of online product reviews (Kim, Maslowska, & Malthouse, 2018). Another reason why many consumers do not want to shop online is because of the fear of fraud or theft associated with credit card purchases, the fear of hackers and buying from dishonest sellers (Rudansky-Kloppers, 2017).

They must establish Sales and Purchase Monitoring and Payment Policy. To boost company performance, the firm needs sound and quality financial information which needs to be significant, user-friendly and accessible in a timely process (Abdulraheem et al., 2019a). According to Anderson, G. Covin, & Slevin (2009), records need to be kept for future references and for the company to keep track of the business performances. The entrepreneur in his wisdom should be in authority to track the development of his firm thus the records come in handy for they can depict the health of the business (NderiWaari, Angaine, KaranjaKamaku, & KariukiMathenge, 2016). Effective managing of the business involves sales monitoring which is highly dependent on the record keeping of the business transactions (Maseko & Manyani, 2011).

There are several ways of paying the products ordered online. Among these are through the bank, bayad centre or remittance, and through meet up.

Rose shared:

"Nang thru bank transaction na kami so before nang wala ko gabaton dagku na amount kay ka agi man ko customer, authentic products sold as preorder. payment first via bank transfer. (It is through bank transactions now. Before I don't accept big amount since I've been a customer before. For authentic products sold as preorder, the payment should be done first via bank transfer.)"

May said:

Through Palawan din or any remittances. But mostly Palawan (remittance center) gid ko kay may suki card na ko sa plawan. Mga Palawan, laban palawan kay basta ga online selling ka is pay now nang ga bayad mga seller. Yes kay amo na ang online selling mo, kung ano order ni customer amo man orderon ko pag abot sang order mo amo na pag give mo kay customer. (Payment can also be sent through Palawan or other remittance centers, but I mostly prefer Palawan since I have a suki card. Yes, that is for online. What the customer orders, you will order. When the order arrives that is the time you give it to the customer.)"

In addition,

Rose mentioned:

“First pag enter ko sa business wala ko ga lista then si customer or and reseller ko naghambal sa kay gaka lipat ko mo kung ano na to ila gin pa kwa or pila na to nagkadto sa iya, pakitaan nya ko sang lista nya ambal nya miss tanan nga gina kwa ko simo gina lista ko amo to eh si customer gani ga lista ako ya wala..why not nga malista man ko, daw gaka learn kaman gali sa mga customers .Starting there ga lista na ko,galing daw ka indi nami ang excel file or files kung wala ka trainings sa finance kay daw gin butang ko lang sa excel ang kung ano nga product nag abot, pila ang profit, pila na nag nagbakal kag on hand.may ara gali technique na mas better pagid gali wla ko pa na discover kung ano man gid na para mas easy akon recordings sang akon business.(First, when I enter into the business, I didn’t do record keeping. Then my customers and resellers told me that they keep a list of everything they order from me, because sometimes I would ask them because I don’t have records. Since then I realized if my customers keep a record, why shouldn’t I? You also learn from your customers. From then on, I started to record. But the excel file is hard to maintain if you are not trained because I just record there what products were delieverd, how much is the profit, how many bought, and how many are still on hand. There is actually a better technique for recording of business transactions which I have not discovered.)

One of the best gears that the Internet provides in today’s world is the ability to change one’s business wherever they want using a website. This is the rationale for why it became noticeably important to purchase using the Internet through numerous payment service providers. Payment Service Provider is an organization that offers online services related to marketing. It recognizes online payments by overseeing exchanges amongst seller and buyer. The most well-known payment techniques that are typically provided are by bank transfer, real time orders and credit card (Mehraj, Ahmad, & Assad, 2017).

Since online payment methods differ from each other, buyers and sellers may each have different preferences. Therefore, the seller and buyer jointly decide on a payment choice. Presumably, if they find a mutually acceptable payment method, the transaction will proceed, or the online sale will fail. We define a complete transaction as one where the buyer receives and does not return the product, and the seller receives payment in full amount. If a transaction is completed, the seller gains profits from the sale and the buyer gains utility from the product (Li, Ward, & Zhang, n.d.).

May also shared:

Wala nako ga haha , siling nga bookkeeping kay kung kis'a wala man , mayo man lang may income ka , mayo man lang nga wala mayo-mayo na lang nga may addition ah gamay-gamay ra ka nga makuha kaysa wala nagid .Im not actually accounting my income in online business.Wala lang . Hahaha kung may ma order wala lang gasto liwat hahaha wala gid ko siling nga naga accounting ah kay indi man siling nga damo gid imo nga income indi man siling nga sa isa ka semana damo- damo gid ang ga order wala man . Subong pigaw na ni. Sa accounting, accounting? Ah accounting, daw wala gid man ko siling nga sulumahon sa akon nga ano ya income gamay man lang indi man siling nga kwan gid. Wala ra man wala lang. Daw hobby mo lang daw ano lang eh extra-extra income lang. (I do not do, let us say, bookkeeping because sometimes there are no sales. It is good if you have income, good also when you do not have. It is better that you have additional income, a little extra that you can get instead of not earning anything. I am not actually doing accounting of my income in my online business, nothing at all. (Laughs) If there are orders, I do not spend (laughs). I do not really have a formal accountin because my income is not that big. It is not that in a week you have a lot of orders. I do not have much to account. I only have a little income. Selling online seemed a hobby for me. I just want to have extra income).

However, one man-owned business needs to have flexible sales monitoring so as not to add a burden (Abdulraheem et al., 2019b). However, aspiring entrepreneurs are daunted by the mere idea of sales monitoring and bookkeeping. But in reality, both are pretty simple. Keep in mind that sales monitoring and bookkeeping are two fundamental processes to improve the financial records of the firm. There is no standard requirement that records be kept in any particular way, as long as records accurately reflect the business's income and expenses (Ezejiofor, Emmanuel, & Olise, 2014). In essence, sales monitoring is one thing an entrepreneur cannot afford to ignore (Muchira, 2017).

Managing the marketing mix effectively

“What they do to establish smooth sailing business operation.”

Today's marketers work hard to make sure their customers will keep on buying from them in the longest time as possible. Those were the old days that success is indicated through an increase in sales (Kim et al., 2018). The elements of the marketing mix are correlated, and thus the actions made for these elements increase each other's effectiveness.

Consequently, the collective effect of the elements is much higher than the effect of the separately considered variables (Morozova, 2014). "Marketing mix means the product, distribution, promotion and pricing strategies to produce and carry out exchanges and achieve the target markets". "Marketing mix - interrelated actions and solutions to meet consumer needs and to achieve the company's marketing goals, as a whole" (Sereikienė-Abromaitytė, 2013). "Marketing mix is a set of relevant factors and solutions that enable customers to meet the (national) needs and achieve the goals set by the company" (Pruskus, 2014). According to Singh (2012), "marketing is a complex range of marketing mix solution variables used in the company seeking to sell their goods and services". According to the analysis of marketing mix, it is about how to create, communicate and deliver value to the consumer to make the profit (Al Badi, 2015). In this context, there were only four marketing mix identified by the participants. Implementing an effective marketing strategy concept by offering qualified goods and services of the company will meet and exceeds the expectations of customer needs better than other competitors (Ellis-Chadwick, 2013). Consumers are even more attracted to online shopping due to their attitude as regards to saving time, price flexibility and availability of various products and a range of products on one platform (Guzzo, Ferri, & Grifoni, 2014)

They set the price depending on the type of customers. Online entrepreneurs in the absence of physical contact with their customers, practice the price discrimination which means the price of certain products depend on the type of customers, whom they knew, and their purchasing power. Additionally, the price includes a fair judgment of the product, e.g., a good price for a good product (Ehmke, Fulton, & Lusk, n.d.).

Customers also consider the cost associated with viewing commercial or social sites (Constantinides, 2002). Also, the price plays a vital role in the company to be identified in the market (Owomoyela, Olasunkanmi, and Oyeniyi 2013). Foss (2012) also asserted that effective product development, distribution and promotion positively influence the firm's success; so is the efficient pricing strategy.

Rose mentioned:

“Same lang ga add lang ko like ang item bi 250 , ang dress bi 250 ga add ko 100 amo lang na ang ano like kung magpa ship ko , gina maximize ko gid or gina ano ko nga maka 6 (items) ano ko kay kung may order bi nga duwa man lang kabilog, may ma order bi duwa ka bilog(maximize the orders). Sa inang mga bags lang ta daw may class A kag original mo when it come sa bag syempre kun gina baligya mo is daku ang presyo like 5000 and up may class A nga daw 600. Products from Thailand have their own special price; since they are original i mean quality wise and authentic. (It is just the same. If the same item cost 250 pesos, I would add 100 pesos. When shipping I maximize the order like up to six items. If I only have

two orders in a day, I would ask my clients to just wait until I get at least six orders of the item. I only have CLASS A and original for bags, so they have a higher price like

500 and up or 600. Products from Thailand have their special price since they are original. I mean quality wise and authentic.)

May said:

Dason kwaon mo na imo ginansya , profit mo kwaon mo dason mao man lang na eh ang price sang imo supplier tu kag shipping feor ang price mo ma , mapa lower ka price eh, indi siling nga dako imo nga price , ma lower ka gamay sa ka kompetensya , sa imo competitors. Mostly sa mga ah suppliers ang ila nga patong na 60 ,amo na iban 100 nga ano, amo lang na .Sa online sang una 70 akon patong , subong 60 nalang . Kay depende man ang mga items nga kanang daw tag 300 up below pesos pero kanang mga sapatos nga mahal na libo na ti syempre ma add kaman da taas-taas sa 50 kay mabayad kapa sa palawan pila bay ang isa ka libo magapadala ka kis-a sa kwan bayad kapa sa palawan man .Mapa taas-taas kalang sa sapatos bi 100 pesos kis-a sapatos or bag na ang daw mahal sya nga bag

.Price posted na yung sa supplier ko.I just top up 50.00 up depende sa items. Ikaw nalang bahala mag patong mag add sang imo nga kwan kay may price da sila bi 210 patungan mo lang 50 pesos nang mahimo sya 260. Teh mag bayad ang costumers sa imo kwaon mo na da ang 50 pesos mo mao na na ang ipadala sa imo nga supplier, kwaon mo ang imo nga kwan ginansya. (Then, you deduct the profit from the supplier's price and shipment fee.or your price. Give a price lower than what your competitor gives. Mostly, from the suppliers, they would add 60 pesos, some 100 pesos. In an online before, you can add 70 pesos but now up it is up to 60 pesos only depending on the type of the item like 300 and below. But like for quite expensive shoes you can add higher than 50 pesos. Of course, you still have to pay for the remittance. You can add up like 100 pesos for bags and shoes. It's up to you how much you add up to the prices like for example; the price is 210 then you add up 50 then it becomes 260. When the customer pays you, get the 50 pesos and that would be your profit. The remaining amount will be sent to the supplier.)"

Price is the only element in marketing which is adaptable to environment changes (Išoraitė, 2016). Thus, price is one of the factors influencing customers buying decision process. Singh, (2012), highlights that setting the price of products or services is associated with the distribution cost. Critical evaluation of the price changes in organizations and how this is affected by the target market (Haghkhah, 2011).

People, higher chance to cater to different market segments. Online business with the use of technology reaches different segments of customers of the different demographic reason. Most of the online entrepreneurs carry not just single product rather almost different types of tangible product to cater the different needs of customers. It implies that the people's acceptance is more considered in selling the product and services (Ks, 2016)

Rose mentioned:

"Mga OFW ipadala nila sa ila balay.Uhhmmm within Philippines lang gid kay daw nabudlayan ko basi gina dalian nya ang items ti daw ma abot sa iya pila ka weeks. May ara ko customer nga sa Singapore gusto nya mag deliver so galing kay nabudlayan ko when it comes to shipment kay daw kamahal dayon ang online transaction daw kadugay bla So amo na wala ko ga baton outside Philippines. Yes nationwide. But of course not that much, like from manila i have 5 to 8 customers only.. Mindanao 1 regular customer and 4 most customers are local sa Iligan kag Davao. (The OFW will send (ordered items) to their homes. (OFW will send (ordered items) to their homes. I only accept orders within the Philippines; it's quite hard since the delivery will take for how many weeks. I have my customer from Singapore. She wants to order, but shipping of items seems complicated, and shipment fee and the transaction is quite expensive that is why I don't accept orders outside the Philippines. Yes, nationwide. But of course not that much, like from Manila, I have 5 to 8 customers only.)

May added:

May mga Davao man ko may Cebu may Batangas da basta ara lang da. Mga friends' nakon sa facebook ga order sila. Most of my clients are OFW. They are spread nationwide, some of them are friends of my friends, thru referral, others just browse the fb and found my posts. Damo laban man sa gawas, sa gwa man nga mga kilala ko man iban nga ano OFW? Oo ipadala nila sa ila mga bata. Oo may ara man nga nakilala through facebook. (I have customers from Davao, Cebu, Batangas and my facebook friends also. Most of my clients are OFWs. They are spread nationwide. Some of them are friends of my friends, through referral, and others just browse the FB and find my posts. Mostly, from outside the Philippines, my OFWs friends, send to their kids and others I knew through facebook)".

It is assumed that the online retail market would prosper with the growing number of a potential market using the internet as a medium of buying goods and services. The broader reach of the internet benefits consumers to purchase products and services of different varieties from different sellers." Consumer-oriented electronic commerce is becoming a global phenomenon as consumers worldwide are turning to the internet for the purchase of goods and service" (Akhlaq & Ahmed, 2014).

Online marketing emancipates the potential market to promote the products which they see or view are worth to spend their money considering the desired features of particular products (Riz, 2013). On the contrary, the customer journey describes the "tour" a customer goes through before purchasing, ordering or asking for a particular item. It presents what are the critical points an entrepreneur should consider to make sure the potential market will end up on a company's website finally (Schwarzl & Grabowska, 2015).

Furthermore, the core objective of interaction with customers is to affect their courses of action (Kozinets, 2002; Lammenett, 2012; Codourey, 2013). Social media is now the current trend that helps entrepreneurs market its product reaching a broader scope of the potential market through facebook or google search (Kozinets, 2002).

They promote, using social media. For online marketing, a common tool that online entrepreneurs used is Facebook. They create a Facebook page where they could advertise and promote their products. Appealing the customers directly to a marketing activity has become a well-to-do venue of discovering for possible strategic marketing inputs of marketers, which could associate to a sustainable and strategic edge of a product, service offering in a fierce competition (Nasution, Sembada, Miliani, Resti, & Ambar Prawono, 2014). The chances of doing this has become a lot convenient in the emergence of "social networking platforms like Facebook (Cox & Park, 2014), Twitter, LinkedIn, G+1, StumbleUpon and other social networking platform" (Su, John Mariadoss, & Reynolds, 2015; Atrash et al., 2015; Fuciu & Gorski, 2013). These social networking sites are accessible that at any convenient time and an interested user can sign up for free over the Internet. As noted, Facebook has around 1.23 billion monthly users as of 2014 (Sedghi, 2014). This is a great opportunity perceived by online entrepreneurs.

Rose noted:

"It is more na lang on how you managed, how you advertised your product pra ma kwa ka damo na customers. indi mo pag piliton imo customer nga magbkal sa imo, let them go sa imo, then post ka, ka items then wait nga sila mapalapit sa imo indi kay ikaw. Oo dayon ang technique ya when posting, nang never uhm ambot lang kung amo man na ginaubra sang iban, wala ko ga album. Yes facebook, facebook kag instagram man lang duwa pwede mo..ang facebook kung mag baligya ang instagram kung ay may shoppe, indi ko bi fun sang instagram, travel blog ko lang ginabutang sa instagram. Social marketing since everyone is on facebook, anywhere anytime they can open and see your post (your product) .it requires good content to sell when posting. (It is more on how you manage and advertise your product to get several customers. Don't force your customer to buy; post the items and wait until they come to you and will order. Let them come to you, not you who will go to them. Then the technique when posting, (I don't know if others are doing this), but I don't make an album. Yes, Facebook and Instagram only, Facebook to sell, Instagram for the shoppe. I'm not fond of Instagram. I use Instagram for my travel blog. Since everyone is

on Facebook, anywhere anytime they can open and see your post (your product). It requires good content to sell when posting.

May stated:

Post lang ko nga post sa akon nga facebook Amo man lang dyapon sige man lang ko post nga post dason butangan lang nimo album ang imo products. Post lang sa mga ano , sa mga sa mga page or arang may mga ads bala may ads kis-a sa kwan facebook nan post-post lang da eh . May page man ko ah galing kay mga pila palang gru ang akon nga likes dapat kay kung may page ka dapat may bayad bayadan kana da. Gamay lang ang likes haha kay ee boost mo pa na mo kag daw may ginabayaran ka na sa ila para mag boost na sya kag mag click-click na sya sa mga ano (facebook users). (I just keep on posting on my Facebook. Keep on posting then create an album of your products. You can post it on a page or Facebook ads. I do have the page but it has limited likes, and if you have the page you need to pay for it to boost your page, so a Facebook user will just click it).

Google search has changed the dimensions of an online business (Dehghani & Tumer, 2015). "Marketers are directed towards understanding more on the social and personal details of consumer behavior and micro-targeting technique" (Palma, 2016; Barbu, 2014). Next, new rules and principles have to be followed by marketing on social network sites (Maurer & Wiegmann, 2011). In addition, marketing has to be done in a more innovative way through the social media to focus on purchasing intention (Curran, Graham, & Temple, 2011; Dehghani & Tumer, 2015)

Their product acquisition and distribution process. Online entrepreneurs in this study sell different types of products online which are supplied locally and internationally. Tangible goods are their primary products; therefore, it is very crucial to the success of the business. Online shopping has to become popular, particularly to younger generations who have more access to many kinds of technologies (Andrews & Bianchi, 2012). Part of the reasons is because of the convenience and flexibility (Chua, Harn, Khatibi, & Ismail, 2006). "To be successful in conducting a platform strategy as an online entrepreneur, it is inevitable to place products and services in a unique way within online networks connecting multiple businesses and consumers" (Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018).

Rose shared:

"Ang suppliers ko is from Thailand kay may friend ko to gapdala di, then ang paryente ko sa manila, gina papangita ko na sila then pa picturan nila ang mga kiosk sa Baclaran or Divisoria, then gina contact ko na sila. Nang , nang may two kinds ko nga ginakwaan suppliers first nang , gina search ko sa online kay sa divi second ginakadtuan ko tu or gakadto di akon sister sya ga help skon divi. Oo didto ko ga kwa kay mas less , makakita ka lesser kag matawaran mo pa kay kung online lang uhm indi kaman ka ano sa iya. Ano ni gani tawag nang basta daw letter b, Baclaran . Ga post nada sila mo ga online sila dira ko ga kwa suppliers pangita supplier indi kaman ka ayu kag ma less shipping fee ka pero magkadto ko tu sa manila , mahapit nalang ko sa divisoria .Supplier ko is from manila then thailand , ang sister ko bi gahatag sakon from Thailand ,sang ga work to sya sa Thailand. Through facebook also, there are several suppliers online you just have to check its page, their legalities. (My suppliers are from Thailand because I have a friend there, then my relative who is in Manila. I ask them to look for products and then they would take a photo of the kiosk in Baclaran or Divisoria. Then, I contact them. I have to types of suppliers. Frist, I search online and second, at Divisoria. I either go there or my sister buys there. I get my stocks at Divisoria because the price is lesser. You can find cheaper products and you can ask for discounts. If you get online, you can ask discount. Stores in Baclaran post online. I choose my suppliers from there. You cannot ask for discount of course or lessen your shipment fee. But, when I go to Manila, I go to Divisoria to buy products. My supplier is from manila and Thailand. My sister who works in Thailand sends me products, Through Facebook, you can choose from an array of suppliers. You just have to check its page and the legalities.)"

May added:

I contacted them once we both agree then that start of doing business with them.nag ask ko sa ila kung how to start?? then they told me na humanap ka nang legit na supplier online then I did research sa mga page nga ga online direct sila to supplier in Manila, then that's it. (I contacted them once. We both agreed and that was the start of my doing business with them. I asked them how to start. They told me to look for legit supplier online then I did my research on their pages and verified if they are legit suppliers. And, that was it.)

Rose added:

"May instances na nga nga gina ubra kung damo ang orders ni costumer ang supplier ko ginapa direct ko nalang sa costumer. Naka save nako sa shipping fee, convenience pa kay costumer. Depende man kay first thing ipadeliver mo kay lbc or ninja van COD, mo or cash on delivery. Ti sge natuto nako gin pa sa balay ko nalang ginpa deliver gina pick up ko nalang then indi ko mag baton bayad kung wala pa ang product like kadto ka sa LBC kay ako amo man pag ship ko sang items mo. Ti daw nanamian sila sakon kay ako mismo ga deliver sang ila order sa ila mismo office kay ang iban ga meet up ,may handling fee. (There are instances when my customers have lots of orders. What I do is I ask the supplier to give the orders direct to the customer. In that way I have saved from the shipping fee and it is more convenient for the customer. It also depends. First you have it delivered through LBC or ninja van COD or cash on delivery. I have learned from that. So, I have the products delivered at home I do not receive payment payment not until I have the product on hand. My customers like it because I deliver their orders in their office because other sellers would prefer meet up and charge handling fee.)

May highlighted:

Ang isa ako ka supplier dapat may cut off sya, may cut off na sya sunday, sunday na mabayad. So pagka Monday na i process na nila ang order. Pag ka Tuesday packing, Wednesday shipping. Pag shipping nila 2 to 3 days pa na sya ma abot LBC or JRS 2 to 3 days gid na sya .Depende na kung delayed ang ano ang delivery .So ga advise man sila kung may delay sa deliveries na. Ah ang ano , wala man sila ga ano basta 2 to 3 days lang gid na or 2 to 4 days. Halimbawa kung may ulan ulan or bagyo- bagyo ti delayed gid na ang items. (My other supplier has a cut off. Sunday is the cut off day for orders and the payment is done that day also. By Monday, I process their orders. On Tuesday, I do the packing. Wednesday is for the shipping. The shipping takes two to three days, either through LBC or JRS. It sometimes, depends on the delivery so there is delay. I advise my customers if there is a delay in the delivery. It is okay with them as long as it will take only two or three days or even four days. For example, there is rain or there is a storm, then the delivery is delayed.)

The product is defined as a physical product or service to the consumer for which he is willing to pay. It includes half of the material goods, such as furniture, clothing and grocery items and intangible products, such as services, which users buy (Singh (2016). Moreover, Dang (2015) emphasizes that the product is the first and one of the key marketing elements. Another essential element of marketing is a place that is also called the distribution, which is defined as the process and methods by which products or services reach customers (Martin, 2009)

In online shopping, the buyer does not need to go physical store pick anything they wanted and queue at the counter to pay. In online shopping they need to browse online and select the product and pay it through any convenient bills payment online (Hashim, Janor, Sidek, & Nor, 2018). "Unlike physical shopping, online shopping is quicker and a lot convenient. It provides shoppers to quickly compare similar products and prices through visiting multiple stores online" (Koble, 2014). Obviously, online shopping makes it convenient to both online shopper and buyer (Rudansky-Kloppers, 2014). Aside from direct selling to the online customer, an online entrepreneur may decide to sell through an intermediary such as a wholesaler or retailer who will resell their product. Doing this may provide them with a wider distribution than selling directly while decreasing the pressure of managing their distribution.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study revealed three (3) business practices of online micro-entrepreneurs to ensure its sustainability. These were a) key factors in managing online customers, b) securing business stability and sustainability and c) managing the online marketing mix.

The results of present study suggest that for an entrepreneur to be successful in online business, he or she must take into account the different factors; otherwise, failure is inevitable.

In general, participants in this study revealed key personal and motivational factors that help them stay in the business for almost six years now. These factors drive the entrepreneurs to compete in the industry aggressively. It must be emphasized that the entrepreneurs' motivation plays a critical role in entrepreneurial activities (Antonites & Van Vuuren, 2014). Grant and Berry (2011) highlighted that entrepreneurs' desire is one of the key factors in ensuring business success

Online business has security issues when it comes to online buyer and supplier since there is no physical contact between the two parties. To secure the business one must be very keen on checking the legitimacy of the supplier and seller, and this study suggests that customers reviews and Facebook page checking is important.

In business, it is not only about generating profit, but also about delivering value to the customers which in result satisfies their needs and wants. This will ensure a repetitive buying among satisfied customers, which in turn contributes to the success of the business.

There are several reasons why people shop online. For example, consumers can buy anything at any time without going to the store; they scan through browsing different page or website to compare product quality and price, and thus avoid the in-store traffic jam, queuing at payment counter, etc.

The participants' primary tool in marketing their product is the use of social media, specifically the Facebook. This marketing platform help reach different potential online shoppers thus, they should manage marketing mix effectively. How they advertise their product online will greatly influence the buying decision of online shopper. Every post made on a social media platform is an opportunity to convert facebook users into customers. This provides entrepreneurs with a higher chance to attract new customers and retain the existing market (Iblasi, 2016).

Social media is hot. Social Media is now the trend. And for businesses it represents a marketing opportunity that transcends the traditional middleman and connects companies directly with customers (Neti, 2011).

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