

Evaluating Catering Services in Rinconada: A Framework for Community Extension Programs

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ABSTRACT

This study will guide present and future caterers in managing their catering services appropriately, and this will become a framework for community extension programs of the college. The study aims to identify the business profile of the catering services in Rinconada; assess the business practices of the catering services in Rinconada; identify the problems encountered by catering services in Rinconada; test the significant relationship between the practices and problems encountered by the catering services in Rinconada; test the significant relationship of the business practices with the profile in terms of years, inflow and outflow; test the significant relationship of the problems encountered with the profile in terms of years, inflow and outflow and; to propose an extension project to enhance the business practices catering services in Rinconada. The study was conducted in Rinconada and was on totally enumerated to 33 registered catering services in Rinconada for over 3 years. The descriptive method was used in the study. A significant positive moderate relationship exists between marketing management practices and outflow and inflow. However, a significant negative moderate relationship exists between problems in financial management and the outflow and inflow.

Keywords: Business Practices, Catering Services, Food Service, Community Extension, Rinconada

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Problem

A catering service is one of the most competitive company groups in the food and beverage sector (Umbler, Amoguis, Bas, Ybanez, Quiambao, Insik, and Bautista, 2016). One of the highest failure rates in the restaurant sector has resulted in numerous business owners and their investors experiencing severe difficulties (Parsha, Self, Njite, & King, 2005). This is because today's business environment is thought to be more complex and varied than in the past. Businesses must embrace innovation to create and maintain a competitive edge if they are to thrive in the new millennium (Aqeel, Bin, Awan, & Riaz, 2011).

The catering business is a dynamic, fast-paced sector that is expanding annually. All kinds of event caterers are in great demand. No matter how big the company is, there is always potential for profit. However, to succeed, the caterer must know what a caterer does, learn how to run a catering service, develop a business plan, and buy all the goods they need. The key components of a successful firm are producing high-quality goods or offering exceptional services. However, these alone do not ensure success; they must be combined with sound business practices, such as having an adequate understanding of the necessary investment and staff, other costs, food pricing and profit, and other factors (McDonald, 2017). The catering services in Rinconada are growing due to the success of the previously established caterers in the town that garnered profit since the people in this city are very busy and love to celebrate with their family, friends, and relatives (Philippine Statistical Authority, 2018). Entrepreneurs have seen a potential market in the catering industry, hence venturing into the catering service industry. Most of the catering services owners of Rinconada ensured that before they ventured into this type of business, they had ample knowledge,

background, and skills in catering. Catering service is a service-oriented industry, and caterers ensure they can satisfy their customers.

The researcher had been into catering services as a part-time worker, and he observed that the business practices of the catering services in the locality are mixes of standard practices and experience-based ones. Some are effective, but some need to be improved to maximize the profitability of catering services effectively and efficiently. Some of the practices the researcher experienced during his tenure as a part-time catering service crew, which effectively makes catering services successful, is that caterers give many customer loyalty programs and freebies. They are very particular, offering excellent service that can be rendered to every customer, and one problem caterers in the locality face is the financial practices of the business. Along with this purview, the researcher, a food service management graduate of CSPC in Rinconada, investigated the business practices of different catering services in the locality. This study will shed light on the issue and find appropriate measures to overcome the problems encountered by catering services in Rinconada. It would help entrepreneurs who want to pursue a catering service in the future. This study will guide present and future caterers in managing their catering services appropriately, and this will become an extension project of the college.

1.2. Objectives

The study aims the following: To identify the business profile of the catering services in Rinconada; To assess the business practices of the catering services in Rinconada; To identify the problems encountered by catering services in Rinconada; To test the significant relationship between the practices and problems encountered by the catering services in Rinconada; To test the significant relationship of the business practices with the profile in terms of years, inflow and outflow; To test the significant relationship of the problems encountered with the profile in terms of years, inflow and outflow and; To propose an extension project to enhance the business practices catering services in Rinconada.

1.3. Hypotheses

H1 There is a significant relationship between the practices and problems encountered by the catering services in Rinconada.

H2 There is a significant relationship of the business practices with the profile in terms of years, inflow and outflow.

H3 There is a significant relationship of the problems encountered with the profile in terms of years, inflow and outflow.

1.4. Scope and Delimitations

The study will be conducted in Rinconada along the profile of the businesses and the assessment on the business practices being implemented by the catering services in terms of technical, human resource, marketing, and financial aspects. This further looked into the problems encountered by catering services.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the National Association of Catering Executives (NACE), catering services can achieve a better success rate than restaurants due to significantly lower overhead costs and the requirement for personnel only during scheduled events. In an article by Sikri (2011) titled "Caterers: Not Only For Corporate Events," the concept of catering companies has evolved over time and is no longer confined to merely being food providers for events. Currently, the majority of catering companies provide a comprehensive package for gatherings, encompassing event organizers who coordinate the venue, cutlery, furniture, decorations, and more party necessities, as well as disc jockeys, technicians, and waitstaff. The quality of work and the conduct of waitstaff receive particular attention and are meticulously managed by numerous firms. Enhancing customer satisfaction significantly contributes to increasing profitability; nevertheless, issues such as cost management, productivity, and marketing strategy all influence financial outcomes. Enhancing customer satisfaction can augment the potential for recurring purchases while minimizing sales and marketing expenditures. Customer satisfaction enhances customer loyalty, hence diminishing the necessity to invest marketing resources for acquiring new clients. Satisfied customers may endorse your products or services to other prospective clients, so enhancing the potential for increased revenue and profit (Linton, 2017). Commence by extensively reading about general small business management and the catering industry in particular. Numerous accomplished caterers have released startup guidelines, providing an opportunity

to learn from their errors rather than repeating them, while also gaining from their expert counsel and intimate insights.

Significant financial gain in the catering industry is attainable with dedicated effort. Achieving a six-figure income from your catering service is totally feasible within your initial two years of operation. In Weinberg's (2008) book, "The Everything: The Guide to Starting and Running a Catering Service," it is stated that a proficient and well-organized caterer can anticipate allocating 30 percent of sales to food costs, 10 percent to overhead, and 20 percent to production labor, yielding a gross profit margin of 8–12 percent. Consequently, tiny enterprises often resort to unorthodox strategies due to their inability to finance conventional resources. Unconventional tools are more economical and, by definition, novel and unproven. Guerrilla tools can exert a significant impact and effectively rival larger, conventional marketing strategies.

3. METHODOLOGY

The researcher used the descriptive method since the study's primary objective is to collect and identify the business practices and the problems encountered in the operation of the catering services. This study tapped all the catering services in Rinconada using total enumeration. All the 33 catering services in Rinconada is the respondents.

The proponent identified the catering services through formal visitation and personally asked the catering service' owners/managers/supervisors/persons in charge for their consent to conduct the study and agree to answer the survey questionnaire. Their responses would be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Pertinent sites are also consulted to quickly identify the catering service's location, such as consulting the local government unit office to give the list of catering services in Rinconada. The questionnaires are formally distributed, administered, and retrieved on the same day. The data gathered will be analyzed after administering, tallying, tabulating, and encoding.

The researcher administered a self-made questionnaire. The first part helped identify the respondents' profiles; the second refers to their business practices. The third part identifies the problems encountered by the catering service. The statistical method used to characterize the survey's outcome is the weighted mean. The profile of the respondents was described using frequency count and percentage. In order to ascertain the correlation between business practices and issues faced by catering services, as well as the relationship between business practices and issues faced with a profile in terms of year, inflows, and outflows, this study employed the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the geographic location. Out of 33 respondents, most of the catering services are from Iriga and Nabua, with 13 or 39.4 percent. This means that most of the catering services in Rinconada are from Iriga and Nabua.

Table 1. Geographic Location

	Frequency	Percent
Iriga	13	39.4
Nabua	13	39.4
Baao	7	21.2
Total	33	100.0

Table 2 presents the form of business organization. Twenty-nine, or 87.9 percent, of the 33 respondents are solo entrepreneurs, while one, or 3.0 percent, are partners or cooperatives. 6.1 percent, or two, did not respond. As a result, it suggests that most catering businesses in Rinconada operated as sole proprietorships rather than partnerships or corporations because they were easier to manage and did not have to split profits, which could lead to disputes between partners. This allowed for the maximization of profits. One benefit of a sole proprietorship is that the owner has complete decision-making authority. The owner is not obliged to confer with anyone when it

comes to deciding the location of the business, who to hire, what to sell, and others. Another advantage to an owner of a sole proprietorship is that he or she is the recipient of all profits generated by the business. The owner is not legally bound to share the profits with anyone else. Typically, there are low start-up costs and low operational overhead.

A sole proprietorship type of business organization is the best organization to be formed by a catering service since it is easy to form and the least complicated type. In terms of profit-seeking, it is not subjected to higher taxes, especially today in the Philippines, with the newly signed TRAIN Law that exempts businesses that earn PhP250,000 annually from income tax (BIR, 2018).

Table 2. Form of Business Organization

	Frequency	Percent
Sole Proprietorship	29	87.9
Partnership	1	3.0
Cooperative	1	3.0
Total	31	93.9
DNA	2	6.1
Total	33	100.0

The business location of the business is shown in Table 3. Out of 33 respondents, 22 or 66.7 percent of the catering services are located within the Población Area. In contrast, eleven, or 33.3 percent, are located outside the Poblacion Area or not within the center as the people or the customers call it. This implies that the entrepreneurs preferred their businesses within the Poblacion Area or downtown, and those catering services that are located within the Poblacion Area generate more income compared to those catering services that are located outside the Poblacion Area. A strategic location is an essential key to the profitability of a business. Businesses located within the Poblacion Areas are strategic to attract clients/customers compared to businesses located outside Poblacion Areas; hence, catering services within the Poblacion Area earn more profit.

According to the British Broadcasting Corporation (2017), finding a site that is easily accessible to customers and close to business districts can significantly impact a company's profitability. This is supported by the study of Federis (2012), who stated that locating the business within the Poblacion Area yielded a good business result. For this reason, clients are more inclined to avail themselves of products and services if a business is conveniently located in one area that can be reached easily.

Table 3. Location of the Business

	Frequency	Percent
Within the Poblacion Area	22	66.7
Outside the Poblacion Area	11	33.3
Total	33	100.0

Table 4 shows the length of operation of their catering services. Out of 33 respondents, it is shown that the majority of catering services have been in operation for 11 years or more and three to four years. These indications received the highest answer of eight, or 24.2 percent, followed by nine to ten years, with six, or 18.2 percent. While some of the responders are new to the catering sector, the majority have been providing catering services for a considerable amount of time.

Table 4. Number of Years in Existence

	Frequency	Percent
"2 years below"	5	15.2
"3 years - 4 years"	8	24.2
"5 years - 6 years"	4	12.1
"7 years - 8 years"	2	6.1
"9 years - 10 years"	6	18.2
"11 years and above"	8	24.2
Total	33	100.0

This implies that catering services are indeed in demand, just like what Ebay.com (2016) mentions in an article that catering is a fast-paced and exciting industry growing yearly. Catering services that are operating longer are the businesses that earn more profit than catering services that are just starting up since these catering services have already returned their investments. This is why catering services are growing each year: the longer the catering service is operating, the more profit increases, encouraging entrepreneurs to start a catering service.

Sikri (2011) asserts that the catering industry is a thriving sector that has become a brand in recent years. Convenience food and eating out have become more popular, which has led to a steady rise in demand for caterers. Professional caterers have been increasingly in demand as the catering services industry has expanded. These days, society accepts the catering industry, and more people are entering the field to meet the requirements of others. Sikri (2011) asserts that the catering industry is a thriving sector that has become a brand in recent years. Convenience food and eating out have become more popular, which has led to a steady rise in demand for caterers.

As Table 5 shows, out of 33 respondents, ten, or 30.3 percent, have 4-6 full-time employees; one, or 3 percent, has 7-9 full-time employees; and nine, or 27.3 percent, do not have full-time employees.

Table 5. Number of Employees (Full Time)

	Frequency	Percent
"1-3 Workers"	7	21.2
"4-6 Workers"	10	30.3
"7-9 Workers"	1	3.0
"10-12 Workers"	6	18.2
Total	24	72.7
DNA	9	27.3
Total	33	100.0

As Table 6 shows, out of 33 respondents, six, or 18.2 percent, had 4-6 and 10-12 part-time employees, which were the most responses, and 2 or 6.1 percent had 15 part-time employees, which were the least. Eleven of the respondents refused to answer.

Table 6. Number of Employees (Part-Time)

	Frequency	Percent
"1-3 Workers"	5	15.2
"4-6 Workers"	6	18.2
"7-9 Workers"	3	9.1
"10-12 Workers"	6	18.2
"15 Workers"	2	6.1
Total	22	66.7
Missing	11	33.3
Total	33	100.0

The data implies that most catering services hire part-time employees because hiring part-timers costs less, and this can maximize the profitability of the catering business compared to hiring a full-time worker. Hiring full-time workers can significantly affect the profitability of the catering services because paying them 40 hours a week plus different benefits compared to hiring part-time workers means catering services will need to pay the number of duty hours rendered during the operation.

Similar to what Kokemuller (2017) reaffirmed in his paper, one of the most well-known advantages of employing part-timers is reduced expenses. Part-time workers can be scheduled for as many hours as the business wants and are usually paid on an hourly basis. Furthermore, part-time workers sometimes do not get any benefits. Even people who put in much effort could only be eligible for retirement benefits. When compared to the complete compensation packages offered to full-time or regular employees, this lack of perks saves businesses a significant amount of money. Flexibility is a second important advantage of employing part-timers. If the workload does not demand it, the employer is obliged to schedule part-timers for 40 hours a week. As a result, managers only need to plan when work is required. The data implies that most catering services hire part-time employees because hiring part-timers costs less, and this can maximize the profitability of the catering business compared to hiring a full-time worker.

In Table 7, the data indicated that catering service owners prefer to put up a business with their personal savings. This suggests that own funds are an excellent source of funding. Acquisition costs are low since a business owner already has them and will not have to pay interest on a bank loan or split profits with investors (Jennings, 2017).

Table 7. Sources of Capital

	Frequency	Percent
Personal Savings	30	90.9
Loaned from Relatives/Friends	1	3.0
Lending Company	1	3.0
Loaned from Bank	1	3.0
Total	33	100.0

All new businesses have start-up costs that need to be funded. Personal savings are commonly used as start-up capital as they are immediately available and interest-free. In addition, all investors and lenders will usually look to see whether catering services have personally invested in the business before they will provide finance. While personal savings are a good way to get a business off the ground, they are usually not sufficient to fund long-term growth, and plans need to be made to bring in additional outside capital or debt at a later stage (2018 Plan Projections).

Table 8 shows the cash inflows and outflows. Eleven, or 33.3 percent of catering services, acquired an annual average income of Php 50,000.00-100,000.00, and only one or 3 percent of catering services acquired an annual average income of 1,500,001-2,000,000.00 from catering services. On the other hand, ten or 30.3 percent of the catering services spent an annual average of PhP 25,001-50,000.00 during operation, and only one or 3 percent of the catering spent an annual average of PhP 1,000,001-1,500,000 in their operation. This implies that most catering services cater to the average class of society, and these catering services are part of micro-enterprises. The larger the money an entrepreneur spends, the more significant the amount of income it can get.

Table 8. Annual Cash In-Flows (Income) and Outflows (Expenses)

Cash In-Flows (Income)	Frequency	Percent
50,001-100,000	11	33.3
100,001-200,000	6	18.2
200,001-500,000	7	21.2
500,001-750,000	3	9.1
750,001-1,000,000	2	6.1
1,000,001-1,500,000	2	6.1

1,500,001-2,000,000	1	3.0
25,000 below	1	3.0
Total	33	100.0
Cash Outflows (Expenses)		
25,001-50,000	10	30.3
50,001-100,000	8	24.2
100,001-200,000	7	21.2
200,001-500,000	3	9.1
500,001-750,000	3	9.1
1,000,001-1,500,000	1	3.0
Total	32	97.0
DNA	1	3.0
Total	33	100.0

Table 9 summarizes the catering services with an average weighted mean of 3.59 or Always practiced. Based on the data above, the topmost practiced sub-variable is the technical practice (3.79), followed by the human resource practices (3.72), ranked ^{second}. Both sub-variables were always practiced. The least practiced among the catering practices is financial practices (3.14), which were only frequently practiced. It is therefore implied that catering services in Rinconada are very technical in managing their business and operation, and they know well what they need to do in their catering services. Additionally, catering services in Rinconada know how to take care of and handle their human resources while they need to be more financially literate.

Excellent knowledge and proficiency in hygienic food handling are essential for food handlers (Kibret & Abera, 2012). This is due to the fact that more knowledgeable food handlers are more likely to adhere to correct food handling protocols.

Table 9. Catering Services Practices

	Mean	VI	Ranking
Technical Practices	3.79	Always	1
Human Resources Practices	3.72	Always	2
Financial Practices	3.14	Frequent	4
Marketing Practices	3.70	Always	3
Average Weighted Mean	3.59	Always	

3.50 - 4.00 Always 2.50 - 3.49 Frequent 1.50 - 2.49 Rarely 1.00 - 1.49 Never

Table 10 summarizes the catering problems encountered by catering services in Rinconada with an average weighted mean of 2.49 or problems rarely encountered. The frequently encountered problems in the catering services in Rinconada are technical problems (2.61) and human resources problems (2.56), which ranked 1st and 2nd, respectively. This implies that although catering services have better technical and human resources practices, they still face or encounter problems in that area. This is because the more they know about the area, the more the problem they are also keen on, while the less the catering services know about an area, the less keen on the problems encountered.

Table 10. Catering Services Problems

	Mean	VI	Ranking
Technical Problems	2.61	Frequent	1
Human Resources Problems	2.56	Frequent	2
Financial Problems	2.33	Rarely	4
Marketing Problems	2.47	Rarely	3

3.50 - Always	Average Weighted Mean	2.49	Rarely	4.00 2.50 -
3.49 Frequent	1.50 - 2.49 Rarely	1.00 - 1.49 Never		

No significant relationship exists between business practices and problems encountered. The business practices do not affect the problems encountered since most catering services are doing well in their practices, and only a few problems are frequently encountered. Most problems are just rarely encountered. Catering services encounter no significant problems; all businesses face minor problems despite success.

Table 11. Relationship Between Practices and Problems Encountered by the Catering Businesses in Nabua, Camarines Sur

		Problems			
Business Practices		Technical	HRM	Financial	Marketing
Technical	r-value	-.190	-.177	-.133	-.126
	p-value	.290	.326	.468	.493
HRM	r-value	.196	.077	.091	.300
	p-value	.274	.670	.620	.095
Financial	r-value	.157	.190	.210	.166
	p-value	.383	.289	.248	.363
Marketing	r-value	-.016	-.031	-.163	.090
	p-value	.931	.864	.372	.623

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

A significant positive moderate relationship exists between marketing management practices and outflow and inflow. This implies that marketing affects the financial flow of the catering services in Rinconada. Indeed, marketing is the lifeblood of a business. It depends on a catering service's marketing practices and its financial performance. Investing in marketing will increase the profits of a catering service.

Table 12. Relationship of Business Practices With Profile in Terms of Years, Inflow, and Outflow

Practices		Years	Outflow	Inflow
Technical	"r-value"	.144	.074	.212
	"p-value"	.425	.689	.236
HRM	"r-value"	-.054	.123	.278
	"p-value"	.764	.502	.117
Financial	"r-value"	.091	.054	.186
	"p-value"	.613	.768	.299
Marketing	"r-value"	.011	.434(*)	.410(*)
	"p-value"	.951	.013	.018

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

A significant negative moderate relationship exists between problems in financial management and the outflow and inflow. This only shows that encountering problems in the financial aspects will affect the finances of catering services. This is due to the inconsistency of the expenses throughout the operation. This affects the profitability of a business. Nevertheless, planning the finances carefully before spending is important to avoid profit breakeven and financial losses. Being financially literate is important in any business in order to succeed.

Table 13. Relationship of Problems Encountered With Profile in Terms Of Years, Inflow, And Outflow

Problems		Years	Outflow	Inflow
Technical	"r-value"	-.045	-.250	-.332
	"p-value"	.802	.168	.059

HRM	"r-value"	-.039	-.324	-.413(*)
	"p-value"	.831	.071	.017
Financial	"r-value"	.078	-.380(*)	-.415(*)
	"p-value"	.671	.035	.018
Marketing	"r-value"	-.036	-.115	-.284
	"p-value"	.846	.537	.115

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

5. CONCLUSION

1. Most of the catering services in Rinconada are from Iriga and Nabua and operate as sole proprietorships instead of partnerships and corporations running their catering service. Entrepreneurs preferred their businesses within the Poblacion Area or downtown. The majority of the respondents have already been operating in catering services for quite some time, and some are new in the catering industry. Catering services hire part-time employees. Personal savings make a great source of capital for entrepreneurs venturing into the catering service business. Most catering services are for the average class of society, and these catering services are part of the micro-enterprises. The larger the money an entrepreneur spends, the more significant the amount of income it can get.
2. Catering services in Rinconada are very technical in managing their business and operation, and they know well what they need to do in their catering services. Additionally, catering services in Rinconada know how to take care of and handle their human resources while they need to be more financially literate.
3. Though catering services have better practices in technical and human resources, they still face or encounter problems in that area. This is because the more they know about the area, the more the problem they are also keen on, while the less the catering services know about an area, the less keen on the problems encountered.
4. No significant relationship exists between business practices and problems encountered. A significant positive moderate relationship exists between marketing management practices and outflow as well as the inflow. A significant negative moderate relationship exists between problems in financial management and the outflow and inflow.
5. An extension project to enhance the business practices of catering services in Rinconada was proposed.

6. RECOMMENDATION

1. Since most respondents engaged in sole proprietorship, if it is hard for them to run the business on their own, they can also look for partnerships to lessen the business's burden. Caterers should undergo business activities that will help develop their business skills, like attending training seminars and trade fairs, reading business articles, and watching television or live shows about business information based on the experiences of business experts. It is encouraged to hire part-time employees to lessen the cost of expenses. However, caterers should hire knowledgeable staff with the skills that can help the catering service, for instance, hiring part-time food service management working students. This will benefit both parties: for the catering, this will help them to operate the business smoothly and efficiently and may minimize the turnover and their expenses in sending staff to training since food service management students are already equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge in operation. This will be an excellent opportunity for the students to be exposed to the food industry and gain experience in the field of catering service.
2. In the presence of the newly developed catering services and the rapid change in environment and technology, old catering services should be more aware and take action on how they will improve their strategies in running a business for them to cope with the competitive market and also to attract customers in the market. Catering services should expand their capitalization and business to become more competitive, such as taking a loan from banks, offering a lower interest rate, and building partnerships. The bigger the business, the greater the possibility of attracting many clients from the market.
3. The catering services should monitor their cash inflows and outflows to improve and increase their profitability. They need to learn how to budget their finances properly and control expenses by prioritizing and

maximizing their resources. Having a financial adviser/consultant would be a great help in further improving their finances.

4. To avoid the frequently encountered problems, caterers must make an intervention program and attend training/seminars on technical management aspects of the business, such as menu planning, safety, hygiene, sanitation, and amenities and services. Additionally, how to maximize the production of the staff efficiently. Improving the quality of business means satisfying the clients, therefore improving the profitability of the business.

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