Business Operations of Micro Enterprises: Challenges, Improvement Strategies, and Best Practices

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ABSTRACT

Micro enterprises play a vital role in local economic development by generating employment, supporting entrepreneurship, and strengthening community livelihoods. Despite their significant contributions, retail construction supply microenterprises continue to face operational challenges that affect their efficiency, competitiveness, and long-term sustainability. This study explored the challenges, improvement strategies, and best practices in the business operations of retail construction supply microenterprises. A qualitative case study design was employed involving three purposively selected managers of retail construction supply microenterprises in Barangay Balintawak, Escalante City, Negros Occidental. Data were collected through validated semi-structured interviews and analyzed using Creswell's thematic analysis. The findings revealed five major themes: Customer-Centered Sales and Service Operations, Workforce Coordination and Role Management, Inventory, Sales, and Financial Control Practices, Operational Challenges and Business Resilience, and Operational Improvement, Adaptability, and Growth. The results showed that customer-oriented service, effective workforce coordination, systematic inventory and financial management, technology-supported communication, and performance-based decision-making enhanced operational efficiency and business sustainability. However, participants encountered supply shortages, price volatility, workforce limitations, workload pressure, and limited technological resources. The study concludes that resilient management practices, customer-centered strategies, effective operational systems, and technology adoption are essential for strengthening the sustainability and competitiveness of retail construction supply microenterprises. The findings provide practical guidance for owners, policymakers, and future researchers in promoting sustainable business operations.

Keywords: Micro enterprises, Business Operations, Operational Resilience, Customer-centered Service, Qualitative-Case Study Approach, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Micro Enterprises refers to small enterprises that make significant contributions to the economy through the production of goods and services, the creation of job opportunities, and the promotion of entrepreneurship in local communities. Microenterprises are crucial for creating employment, alleviating poverty, and driving economic development through community-based enterprises (Gherghina et al., 2020). Even though they help achieve inclusive economic growth, some still face obstacles, such as funding constraints, inefficiencies, and challenges in digital transformation (Yoshino & Taghizadeh-Hesary, 2023). Some of the problems they encounter include supply chain disruptions, workforce shortages, and market competition (Aldaba, 2020). Despite all this, measures such as good customer service, inventory management, adaptability, and technology are very important for increasing efficiency and sustainability (Purnomo et al., 2026).

Business efficiency is achieved through integration of customer service, inventories, workforce, and finance (Slack & Brandon-Jones, 2021).Nevertheless, businesses face difficulties, including supply chain disruptions, resource constraints, increased workload, and changing customer needs (Belhadi et al., 2021). Strategies such as digital transformation, adaptability, and communication can enhance business resilience and competitiveness (Clauss et al., 2021). Additionally, the following best practices will improve microenterprise performance: good record-keeping, customer-oriented services, a flexible workforce, and effective financial management (Reyes & Santos, 2023).

There are persistent problems with the customer-centric approach in sales and service in microenterprises, where scientific findings indicate that customer feedback and customer orientation positively influence service quality and competitiveness, yet microenterprises remain informal in their operations. Thus, their customer-focused approaches remain inconsistent and undeveloped (Mendoza & Abug, 2025). Even though customer-centricity is emphasized in CRM and supply chain integration concepts, there is a lack of more specific studies that explain the actual implementation of customer-centric services in microenterprises (Saad et al., 2023). Regarding workforce coordination and role management, overlapping of roles and owners' multitasking are common practices in microenterprises; however, there is a lack of research on the systematic application of these practices in small retail (Tutica et al., 2024). A similar case is the MSME workforce agility research, where internal role distribution problems are often ignored (Gonzalez-Varona et al., 2024).

Moreover, the literature highlights gaps in inventory, sales, and finance controls, with microbusinesses often using an unorganized system that leads to poor supervision and inefficient financial decision-making (Yuwono et al., 2024). Despite awareness of operational difficulties in studies of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), there is a lack of research on integrating inventory management, sales recording, and financial controls for microenterprises (Andriyanto & Doss, 2020). Speaking of operational difficulties and business resilience, microenterprises are particularly vulnerable to disruptions caused by supply shortages and resource constraints. Nevertheless, most studies focus on crisis management in the context of large-scale or external crises, rather than on operational difficulties (Armas et al., 2024). Most significantly, research indicates that innovation contributes to MSME performance. Nevertheless, microenterprises do not receive sufficient attention in the implementation of continuous operational improvements (Cichosz et al., 2020).

Although there is an increasing body of literature on MSMEs, little is known about the management of microenterprises, particularly in operations, customer service, employee coordination, inventory and financial management, resiliency, and the practical improvement of processes. The available literature provides generalizations about MSMEs and does not cover the distinctive features of micro-enterprise management in detail.

This study addressed this gap by exploring the experiences of micro enterprises in business operations, focusing on how they implement customer-centered practices, coordinate the workforce, use operational systems, and pursue improvement strategies in their day-to-day activities under real business conditions. It aimed to explore the best practices, improvement strategies, and challenges of business operations among retail construction supply microenterprises by understanding how owners manage daily operations, respond to operational challenges, and sustain their businesses through effective, adaptive strategies.

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the best practices, improvement strategies, and challenges encountered in the business operations of retail construction supply micro-enterprises. Specifically, it sought to:

1. Describe customer-centered sales and service operations, particularly customer service and proper customer handling, customer satisfaction and repeat patronage, and customer feedback and demand observation.
2. Describe workforce coordination and role management, including task delegation and role clarity, multitasking, role rotation, flexibility, and employee welfare and workforce needs.
3. Describe inventory, sales, and financial control practices, focusing on inventory monitoring and stock control; sales, cash, and profit tracking; and record-keeping and BIR compliance.
4. Explore operational challenges and business resilience, particularly price volatility and supply shortages, delivery and external transaction risks, and burnout, workload pressure, and perseverance.
5. Explore operational improvement, adaptability, and growth, including communication and technology-based improvements, performance-based planning and decision-making, and expansion, diversification, and long-term sustainability.

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Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study focused on microenterprises operating in Brgy. Balintawak, Escalante City, Negros Occidental. It analyzed the challenges faced, the strategies applied to improve, and the practices that can enhance the operations of retail construction supply micro-enterprises. It sought to increase knowledge of the state of the business environment and the experience of micro-enterprises in the locality. Data were collected through interviews, and the research was conducted in April 2026.

This research is confined to the chosen retail construction supply microenterprises in Brgy. Balintawak, Escalante City, Negros Occidental. The conclusions of the research were drawn exclusively from the responses and experiences shared by the respondents during the interview process. Since it is qualitative research, the results are not meant to be generalized to all microenterprises or businesses. In addition, this research focused solely on the challenges, strategies, and practices related to the business's operations, rather than on financial performance, customer perceptions, or comparisons with other enterprises outside the study's locality.

Significance of the Study

The result of this study may be beneficial to the following:

Micro Enterprise Owners. The findings of this study were useful to micro-enterprise owners, as they helped them understand the difficulties they encountered in their operations and the approaches, they used to ensure business sustainability and growth.

Customers. This research allowed customers to understand the workings of microenterprises and the difficulties they face in running their ventures. It also highlighted how micro-enterprise proprietors improved their services to meet their customers' needs better.

Suppliers of Construction Materials. This research could help suppliers of construction materials understand the challenges of running a retail construction supply micro-enterprise.

Local Policymakers and Government Officials. Policymakers and government officials used the research outcomes to develop relevant programs and policies that addressed the needs of microenterprises.

Local Entrepreneurs and Aspiring Business Owners. Through this study, local entrepreneurs and aspiring business owners learned from microenterprise owners' experiences, gaining ideas for managing and sustaining their own businesses.

Business Consultants and Advisors. Through this study, consultants and advisors working with microenterprises provided more insightful advice to business owners on management, finance, and customer relations.

Researchers. Through this study, the body of knowledge on microenterprises, especially those in local communities, was expanded, thus forming an important reference for future research on entrepreneurship and small business development.

Future Researchers. Through this study, future researchers were given a basis for comparative studies or deeper analysis of micro-enterprise management and development in similar communities.

Definition of Terms

For clarity, the following terms are defined conceptually and operationally:

Adaptability. The ability of an organization to adapt to the changes in the environment, market dynamics, and customer needs while sustaining performance (Reeves & Whitaker, 2020).

This term refers to a small business's capacity to adapt its strategy or products/services to changes in business circumstances.

Best Practices. Represent systematic processes of validation and development that guarantee reliability, accuracy, and consistency under various circumstances or contexts (Heumos et al., 2023).

This term encompasses standardized approaches used by small businesses, including customer orientation, employee training, and quality control systems.

Business Resilience. This refers to a business's capacity to remain resilient in the face of disruptions, adapt to harsh conditions, and remain functional (Iftikhar et al., 2021).

This term describes how a small business remains operational amid economic uncertainty or a crisis.

Challenges. This term describes the challenges businesses face in achieving their objectives, especially in resource management, operations, and market competition (Mhlongo, 2023).

This term describes the financial limitations, competition, market uncertainty, and technological challenges experienced by micro businesses.

Customer-Centered Sales. Mention sales techniques that involve getting to know customers better by knowing their needs, preferences, and expectations (Wang et al., 2023).

This term refers to the strategies small businesses use to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty through personalized service.

Financial Control Practices. Refer to the procedures, policies, and monitoring mechanisms used to manage financial resources, ensure accountability, and achieve financial stability (Nguyen et al., 2022).

This term refers to budgeting, record-keeping, expense monitoring, and financial management practices employed by small businesses.

Growth. Refers to the expansion of an organization's size, performance, profitability, and market presence over time (Rita et al., 2021).

This term refers to the increase in sales, customer base, profitability, and overall business success of small businesses.

Inventory. Refers to the stock of goods, materials, or products maintained by an organization to meet customer demand and support operations (Kumar et al., 2022).

This term refers to the products and supplies that small businesses manage to ensure availability and efficient service delivery.

Micro Enterprises. Refers to small-scale businesses with limited resources and employees, typically focused on local or niche markets (DTI, 2020).

This term refers to businesses with total assets not exceeding ₱3,000,000 and employing fewer than 10 individuals, as classified by the Philippine government's MSME framework.

Operational Improvement. Refers to the systematic enhancement of business processes to increase efficiency, productivity, and organizational effectiveness (Jaklič et al., 2021).

This term refers to the efforts small businesses undertake to improve workflow, service delivery, and operational performance.

Role Management. Refers to the assignment, regulation, and monitoring of responsibilities and authority within an organization to enhance accountability and performance (Raineri & Valenzuela-Ibarra, 2021).

This term refers to the distribution of duties and responsibilities among employees in small businesses.

Sales. Refer to activities involving the exchange of goods or services for monetary value that directly contribute to organizational revenue generation (Alzoubi et al., 2021).

This term refers to transactions conducted by small businesses, such as selling products or services to customers.

Service Operations. Refer to the planning, management, and coordination of resources and processes to deliver services to customers efficiently and effectively (Santos & Brito, 2022).

This term refers to the daily activities performed by small businesses to provide quality services and meet customer expectations.

Strategies. Refer to planned actions and methods adopted by businesses to achieve long-term objectives, enhance performance, and address competitive pressures (Sahoo, 2025).

This term refers to the technique's microenterprises implement, such as technology adoption, market diversification, and partnerships, to improve competitiveness and growth.

Workforce Coordination. Refers to the process of integrating employee activities, communication, and collaboration to achieve organizational objectives efficiently(Bolton et al., 2021).

This term refers to how small businesses organize employees and coordinate tasks to ensure smooth daily operations.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used a qualitative research design, specifically a case study approach, to explore how microenterprises managed and operated their businesses in one city. Qualitative research helped understand participants' personal experiences and perspectives on challenges and business improvement strategies (Tracy, 2020). The case study method was appropriate for examining real-life contexts, as it enabled an in-depth understanding of the unique characteristics and operations of micro enterprises (Yin, 2023).

The case study approach was deemed appropriate because it enabled the researcher to gather detailed information from microenterprises and identify patterns that affected their success and growth. This approach was useful for understanding how micro businesses navigated local market conditions, financial constraints, and technology-related challenges. By focusing on a specific city, the case study provided insights into how microenterprises used strategies to address problems and improve their operations.

Research Locale

This study was conducted in Barangay Balintawak, Escalante City, Philippines. The area was selected due to the active presence of retail construction supply micro-enterprises operating within the community. The study focused on the owners and managers of these microenterprises, who provided relevant insights into the challenges, improvement strategies, and best practices in business operations shaped by local economic and social conditions.

Participants of the Study

The participants of this study consisted of three (3) managers of selected retail construction supply micro-enterprises operating in Brgy. Balintawak, Escalante City, Negros Occidental. The managers were selected through purposive sampling based on the study's inclusion criteria and their direct involvement in the daily operations of their respective enterprises. As key decision-makers, they possessed extensive knowledge and experience regarding the operational aspects of their businesses. They provided valuable insights on the best practices they adopted to maintain business efficiency and customer satisfaction, the improvement strategies they implemented to address operational concerns and enhance performance, and the challenges they encountered in managing their enterprises. Their perspectives and experiences served as the primary data source for achieving the study's objectives.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The study included only retail construction supply micro-enterprises that met all of the following criteria. First, the enterprises were classified as micro enterprises, defined as having fewer than ten employees and total assets not exceeding ₱3,000,000, consistent with established definitions in small enterprise research (Ayyagari, 2021). Second, the enterprises had been operating continuously for at least five (5) years to ensure sufficient business experience. Third, they were currently active and operational at the time of data collection. Fourth, the enterprises were located within Barangay Balintawak, Escalante City, Negros Occidental, to align with the study's scope. Lastly, the enterprises held valid business permits and licenses and were willing to participate voluntarily in the study.

Enterprises that did not meet any of the stated criteria were excluded from the study. Likewise, those who failed to satisfy the classification, operational, location, documentation, or participation requirements were not considered respondents.

Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling was a method in which participants were selected based on specific characteristics that aligned with the study's objectives. In this research, purposive sampling was used to identify microenterprises that met defined criteria, ensuring that the collected data were relevant to understanding the challenges, strategies, and best practices in microbusiness operations (Campbell et al., 2020)

This sampling method was suitable because it helped focus on businesses that could provide the most relevant insights for the study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, recorded, and supported by field notes to ensure accurate data. Participants were informed about the interview process and gave written consent. Each interview lasted about one hour.

Research Instrument

The main research tool applied in the research process was the semi-structured interview guide. The guide was created by the researcher and validated by two experts in the field. The guide consisted of two parts. Part I was aimed at obtaining profile information for respondents, and Part II focused on collecting data on key dimensions of business operations, including operational design, strategy planning, initiative implementation, and business intelligence. Each dimension included general questions and probes to elicit microenterprise owners' experiences, particularly their difficulties, improvement strategies, and best practices.

Rigors of the Findings / Trustworthiness of the Data

In preparation for the rigor of the research findings in the current study, ethical considerations, credibility, and accuracy were considered to ensure that the research findings would be credible and accurate. Trustworthiness is the degree to which researchers can have confidence in the research data and its interpretation. This was achieved through proper research methodology, which ensured accuracy and consistency in conducting the research. Trustworthiness comprises four key components: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, all of which help ensure the reliability and validity of qualitative research findings (Lincoln et al., 2021).

In the research design phase, the researcher ensured that the selected methods aligned with the study's objectives and enabled the collection of reliable, meaningful data from micro-enterprise owners.

Credibility

Credibility is the degree to which qualitative findings accurately represent participants' experiences. Credibility can be increased through methods such as member checking, triangulation, and prolonged involvement with participants (Rodenas and Menes, 2026).

Member checking is a common qualitative research approach to enhance the credibility of findings. Member checking involves presenting the data or the results of data interpretation back to participants to check whether the interpretations are accurate (Stahl & King, 2020).

In this case, member checking was used to ensure that participants' statements and experiences were accurately captured. This was done by reviewing participants' summarized statements after transcribing the interviews to assess their accuracy. The participants were given a summary of the interview results to confirm whether the interpretations accurately captured their experiences regarding the challenges and improvements in their enterprises.

Transferability

Transferability of research refers to the extent to which the study's results can be generalized to different environments or circumstances. While qualitative research usually focuses on particular groups or places, describing the participants, the setting, and the context of the research process enables one to determine if the results can be transferred to other small enterprises (Nowell & Albrecht, 2021).

To ensure the transferability of the research results, the researcher provided a thick description of the participants, their involvement in running the business, and the context in which they operated their small enterprise. Moreover, inclusion criteria were set to ensure that the participants have enough experience in managing small enterprises.

Dependability

Dependability concerns the consistency and reliability of research data. The findings that emerge through the research process will be the same when the process is repeated with the same participants. Dependability could be ensured by documenting the research process and procedures (Saunders et al., 2022).

In this research, the researcher documented the research process and procedures, including data collection, data analysis, and interviews. The researcher has also used the code-recode approach in the data analysis. Initially, the researcher coded the collected data, labeled the codes, and then recoded them again.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the extent to which research results are not influenced by the researcher's personal bias and assumptions, but rather by participants' responses and experiences. This can be achieved through transparent research and interpretation based on the collected data (Nowell et al., 2022).

In this study, the researcher used an audit trail to ensure transparency throughout the research process. It implies recording all the steps of the research process, including interviews, coding, and interpretations.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher first gained permission to undertake the research from the relevant authorities. Once permission was granted, the researcher selected retail construction supply microenterprises that met the inclusion criteria. Participants were then requested to participate in the research. Participants were informed about the research

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objectives before giving their consent to participate. Semi-structured interviews were conducted using the prepared interview guide. Follow-up questions were asked where necessary.

Data Explication

Analysis of qualitative data is a methodological term for the process of studying, organizing, and interpreting qualitative data to understand better participants' experiences and viewpoints (Creswell & Poth, 2021). In this study, the researcher analyzed the interview data using Microsoft Excel.

Creswell's Thematic Analysis was used in the current study. The procedure included transcribing and analyzing interview data several times in order to become more familiar with the content of responses, identifying important responses that were linked to the research goals, coding such responses, grouping codes into themes reflecting patterns in the data, and interpreting themes that revealed problems and best practices of micro enterprises of the selected city. In this way, the study provided valuable information about micro-enterprises ' experiences.

Data Analysis

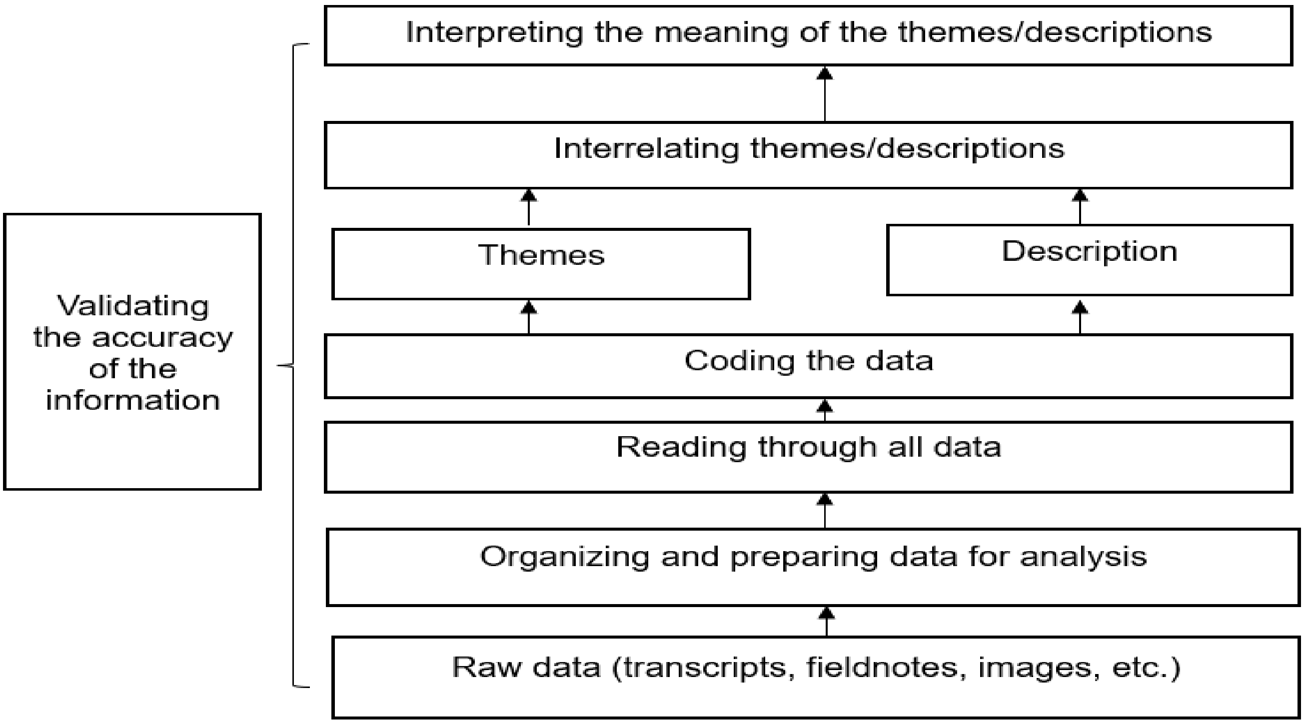

Figure 1: 7 steps of data analysis (Creswell, 2018)

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were followed throughout the study. All participants were properly informed of the purpose, process, and potential risks of the study before providing their consent. Pseudonymity was ensured by not disclosing any names when handling the data. In accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173), the collected data were kept in safe custody and used solely for research. Participants voluntarily joined the study and could leave at any time.

Social Value

The research recognized the value and societal contribution it would make. The research was expected to generate useful information on the difficulties, ways to improve, and practices to follow for retail construction supply micro-enterprises in the area of study.

Informed Consent

Participants were thoroughly informed about the purpose, process, and research prior to their participation. Informed consent meant that all participants knew what the research was about before participating.

Vulnerability of the Participants

The participants in the current study were retail construction supply microenterprises, all composed of adults who could provide relevant responses during the interviews. No vulnerable groups were included in this study. All participants in the study were treated with dignity, respect, and fairness throughout the research process.

Risk and Benefits

There was minimal risk associated with this study, as it focused on participants' experiences, problems, and business methods. No physical, legal, or psychological risks were expected to arise from the study. Some anticipated benefits of this research include gaining valuable insights to improve businesses and decision-making processes.

Privacy and Confidentiality

The privacy of all subjects was maintained throughout the study. All personal data gathered during interviews was kept confidential and used only for scholarly work. Pseudonyms were used to ensure the subjects' identities remained anonymous in the final report. All data were securely stored and protected from any unauthorized access.

Justice

In this study, justice was observed in the selection and treatment of participants. Subjects' inclusion was purely objective and unbiased, and no discrimination was practiced while choosing participants. All respondents were treated equally and fairly throughout the research.

Transparency

The study was conducted in an entirely transparent manner. All participants were fully aware of the purposes and procedures of this research and were informed of how their data would be used.

Qualification of the Researcher

The researcher had all the required academic qualifications and training in conducting qualitative research. Qualitative researchers should be able to conduct interviews and analyze the data collected. This helped conduct the research effectively and ethically.

Adequacy of Facilities

Proper facilities and resources were used to conduct the research and ensure accurate data collection. Proper locations for interviews were employed, and appropriate means of documenting data were employed. All collected data were appropriately stored to preserve their accuracy and confidentiality.

Community Involvement

The study recognized the role played by the local business community in making the findings meaningful. The study's findings might have been shared with relevant parties, such as business owners and local authorities, to improve their business practices.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The managers of microenterprises faced several experiences, including difficulties, improvement methods, and good practices in business operations in retail construction supply businesses. In this section, the experiences of three managers of microenterprises, with varying levels of managerial experience and views on operational aspects of business activities, were reviewed. The responses they gave provided deep insight into how small retail construction supply businesses address operational challenges and improve.

The study included three conversation partners who served as primary sources of experiential insights relevant to the research. All participants had sufficient exposure to the context being studied, enabling them to provide meaningful and comprehensive perspectives. The first participant, CP1, was a single female who had been working in her role for 3 years and 4 months. The second participant, CP2, was a single male with 4 years and 7 months of experience. The third participant, CP3, was a single female who had been in service for 9 years, making her the most experienced among the respondents. Collectively, these participants contributed diverse yet complementary experiences. Their varying lengths of service provided a range of viewpoints that helped shape the themes and insights presented in the results and discussion.

Following the interviews, the researchers transcribed and analyzed the data, identifying five key themes along with their respective sub-themes.

Qualitative data analysis generates five themes and fifteen sub-themes. (1) Customer-Centered Sales and Service Operations (1.1) Customer service and proper customer handling (1.2) Customer satisfaction and repeat patronage (1.3) Customer feedback and demand observation. (2) Workforce Coordination and Role Management (2.1) Task delegation and role clarity (2.2) Multitasking, role rotation, and flexibility (2.3) Employee welfare and workforce needs. (3) Inventory, Sales, and Financial Control Practices (3.1) Inventory monitoring and stock control (3.2) Sales, cash, and profit tracking (3.3) Record-keeping and BIR compliance. (4) Operational Challenges and Business Resilience (4.1) Price volatility and supply shortage (4.2) Delivery and external transaction risks (4.3) Burnout, workload pressure, and perseverance. (5) Operational Improvement, Adaptability, and Growth (5.1) Communication and technology-based improvement (5.2) Performance-based planning and decision-making (5.3) Expansion, diversification, and long-term sustainability.

The Results and Discussion section presented the study's findings through the identified themes, supported by verbatim participant responses. The discussion integrated relevant literature to strengthen data interpretation and explain how the findings relate to existing studies. It also highlighted the study's implications by showing how the participants' experiences and insights contributed to a deeper understanding of the topic under investigation.

Theme 1: Customer-Centered Sales and Service Operations

Customer-Centered Sales and Service Operations is a business approach that prioritizes customer needs and expectations across all aspects of sales, delivery, and service execution. It is reflected in how organizations design and implement sales and service processes that are responsive, accessible, and customer-focused. It encompasses the consistent application of customer-focused practices during service encounters, ensuring that concerns are addressed promptly and effectively. It also involves aligning strategic decisions with customer feedback and behavioral data to improve service quality and operational efficiency. The Customer-Centric Approach to Sales and Service Operations is all about creating relationships based on trust, responsiveness, and value-added engagement.

Several recent studies underscore the importance of a customer-centric approach to improving business performance. According to (Lemon & Verhoef , 2022) customer experience management creates value at multiple points of contact. According to (Kumar & Reinartz , 2021) customer-oriented approaches enhance customer retention and profitability. As noted by (Payne & Frow , 2021) organizational processes must align with customer needs for successful service delivery. The importance of customer behavior analysis through analytics is highlighted by (Wedel & Kannan , 2022).

Customer service and proper customer handling

Customer service and proper customer handling involve communication, attention to customers' needs, and the provision of the right services during interactions. Proper customer handling leads to greater customer satisfaction and stronger customer relationships by providing better service (Rather & Hollebeek, 2021).

One participant shared: *"Ang among negosyo kay para makatabang sa mga tawo nga nanginahanglan ug materyales sa ilang balay. Gina-ensure gyud namo nga mahatagan sila ug sakto nga serbisyo."* ("Our business is meant to help people who need materials for their homes. We make sure that they are given proper service.")

In addition, one participant added: *"Importante kaayo ang communication sa customer ug staff para masabtan ang ilang kinahanglan. Kung klaro ang sabot, mas maayo ang serbisyo nga among mahatag."* ("Communication between customer and staff is very important to understand their needs. When understanding is clear, we can provide better service.")

Another participant stated: *"Sa amoang tindahan, ginahatagan namo ug time ang customer para matabangan sila. Dili lang kay baligya, kundi serbisyo gyud ang among giuna."* ("In our store, we give time to assist customers. It's not just about selling, but prioritizing service.")

These results showed that customer satisfaction and loyalty played an important role in ensuring stable business operations and long-term business growth. The interviewees noted that when customers are satisfied, they are more likely to return and become loyal clients. This means that providing good customer support and quality service leads to increased customer loyalty, trust in the company, and further transactions with it. These results also indicated that loyal customers played a key role in ensuring business operations, as their loyalty provided stability and income for the company.

Recent studies have validated the outcome, showing that service quality, especially responsiveness, empathy, and assurance, enhances customer satisfaction and loyalty (Halim, 2025). Effective communication and favorable customer interactions fostered customer loyalty, as clients appreciated the support and accurate information provided during transactions (Kyurova, 2021). Satisfied customers were more likely to revisit the business, underscoring the crucial role of customer satisfaction in fostering loyalty (Mugova, 2025).

Nonetheless, some studies challenge the results, arguing that customer loyalty depends not only on customer service but also on factors such as product quality, pricing, and overall business worthiness. External service constraints and limitations can affect customer satisfaction despite high levels of customer service (Panniello et al., 2024). Besides that, customer behavior and loyalty may be influenced by online reviews and customer experiences, suggesting that personal service is just one factor among many that affect satisfaction (Camilleri, 2023).

Customer satisfaction and repeat patronage

Customer satisfaction and loyalty refer to the level of satisfaction customers achieve, which makes them want to return and buy from the business. Increased customer satisfaction and loyalty lead to repeat patronage, which is essential for business stability and growth (Ji et al., 2022).

One participant shared: *"Makita namo nga satisfied ang customer kung mubalik sila sa tindahan. Kana nga balik-balik nga patronage importante kaayo sa negosyo."* ("We can see that customers are satisfied when they continue coming back to the store. That repeated patronage is very important to the business.")

Another participant stated: *"Kung maayo ang serbisyo, mobalik gyud ang customer ug mahimong suki. Mao na among goal nga ma-maintain ang ilang trust."* ("If the service is good, customers will surely return and become regular customers. That is our goal, to maintain their trust.")

In addition, one participant expressed: *"Ang success sa negosyo makita sa loyal customers. Sila ang nagpadayon sa among operasyon."* ("The success of the business can be seen through loyal customers. They are the ones who sustain our operations.")

The results showed that the relationship between customer satisfaction and repeat purchase was crucial for sustaining business operations and customer loyalty. According to the interviews, customers who received excellent service often returned, which ensured steady sales and further business growth. This meant that trust and satisfaction had already been established through the positive interaction between customers and the services provided. Moreover, loyal customers helped sustain the operation through continuous purchases and by recommending the business to others.

Several studies have demonstrated the significance of customer satisfaction and repeat patronage as key factors in ensuring business continuity and customer loyalty among micro-businesses. Satisfied customers are more likely to return and build a relationship with the business, thereby contributing to the business's stability and growth (Ali et al., 2021). Likewise, repeat patronage was found to be significantly affected by positive service experiences and customer trust, which would ensure business sustainability and a competitive edge (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2022). Loyal customers also help sustain operations through ongoing purchases and positive recommendations to others (Rahman et al., 2023).

Nevertheless, other research has contradicted these results, suggesting that merely being satisfied with the service does not always ensure customer loyalty or repeat business. Consumers may change their minds and switch to another company for more competitive pricing, convenience, or other changes in the marketplace, despite their high level of satisfaction (Kim & Lee, 2020). Besides, external factors, such as market competition and the economic climate, may influence customer retention even when customer-company relationships are strong (Ahmed et al., 2024). The above analyses reveal that although customer satisfaction is crucial, other factors also determine customer retention and loyalty.

Customer feedback and observation

Customer Feedback and Observation involve collecting customer feedback and analyzing customer purchasing behavior to support business decision-making. Customer feedback and observations are used to understand customer demands and preferences, thereby improving service delivery and inventory management (Seyedan & Mafakheri, 2020).

One participant shared: *"Ginapaminaw namo ang feedback sa customer para ma-improve among serbisyo. Importante nga masabtan unsa ilang gusto ug reklamo."* ("We listen to customer feedback to improve our service. It is important to understand their wants and complaints.")

Another participant stated: *"Makabantay mi sa demand base sa ginapangita sa customer adlaw-adlaw. Kana among gamiton sa pag-adjust sa stock."* ("We observe demand based on what customers look for every day. We use this information to adjust our stock.")

In addition, one participant expressed: *"Kung naay reklamo, amo dayon aksyonan para dili na mausab. Feedback gyud ang guide sa improvement."* ("If there are complaints, we address them immediately so they will not happen again. Feedback truly serves as a guide for improvement.")

The data analysis showed that customer feedback and observations played an important role in businesses' decision-making. In light of the information gathered from participants' responses on customer opinions, complaints, and purchasing behavior, customer feedback and observations played an important role in improving service delivery and inventory management. It was evident that the business organization focused on understanding customer needs and demands through the decision-making process. In addition, the data collected showed that by monitoring customer demand daily, the business was able to manage the stock of the items customers demanded.

The current literature supports these findings by emphasizing the importance of collecting customer feedback and making observations to improve service quality, inventory control, and the organization's overall performance. It has been found that organizations that regularly collect and analyze customer feedback can respond quickly to customer needs and improve their services (Hassan et al., 2022). In addition, observing customers' demands and buying behavior helps small firms manage stock levels more accurately and reduce operational inefficiencies (Lee & Kim, 2023). Besides, promptly responding to customer complaints can help resolve the issue, improve customer satisfaction, and build trust (Oliveira et al., 2024). Furthermore, feedback-driven decision-making was identified as a key factor in improving business adaptability and competitiveness (Singh & Patel, 2021). Also, decision-making through feedback was determined as a major contributor to increasing business adaptability and competitiveness (Singh & Patel, 2021).

However, contradictory research indicated that customers' responses may not necessarily reflect true market needs owing to the subjective nature of their opinions (Brown & Taylor, 2020). Another set of literature indicates that excessive reliance on customer opinions can lead to reactive management practices that may disrupt future inventory plans and efficient operations (Zhang et al., 2025). Furthermore, companies may be unable to incorporate all customer responses into their practices due to budgetary and supply chain constraints (Martinez & Rivera, 2022).

Theme 2: Workforce Coordination and Role Management

Workforce Coordination and Role Management involves organizing work activities, roles, and communication among team members to ensure work proceeds smoothly and organizational goals are achieved. This includes assigning appropriate roles to individuals based on their skill levels and ensuring a clear distribution of duties to avoid overlap. Workforce coordination can be seen in collaboration among workers, reporting procedures, and the smooth flow of information across the firm's departments. Role management shows the level at which workers understand, perform, and are responsible for their roles within the organization.

New research underscores the need for workforce coordination and role management as key factors in organizational effectiveness and performance. (Lameijer et al., 2021) underlined the fact that organizational coordination is instrumental in the successful improvement of processes and project execution. (Vugec et al., 2020) stated that coordination of business intelligence activities with business processes facilitates organizational performance and decision making. (Torres et al., 2020) emphasized the role of business analytics and intelligence in enhancing operational capabilities and organizational flexibility. (Jaklič et al., 2021) emphasized that effective management practices enhance organizational performance through improved process orchestration. At the same time, (Lim et al., 2021) highlighted the importance of workforce scheduling and allocation in enhancing organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

Task delegation and role clarity

Aspects of delegating tasks and clarifying roles involve assigning duties to workers to facilitate organization and avoid confusion in their everyday work. Role clarity promotes accountability, effectiveness, and efficiency, thereby contributing to organizational performance (Khan et al., 2020).

One participant shared: *"Ang kada empleyado adunay klaro nga responsibilidad aron dili magkasinabot ug sayon ma-monitor ang trabaho. Mas organize ang among operations kung kabalo ang tanan sa ilang buhaton."* ("Each employee has clear responsibilities to avoid confusion and make work easier to monitor. Our operations become more organized when everyone knows what they need to do.")

Correspondingly, another participant stated: *"Kung klaro ang assignment sa trabaho, mas paspas mahuman ang mga buluhaton ug malikayan ang delay sa operations. Importante nga sakto ang pag assign sa tasks sa matag empleyado."* ("When work assignments are clear, tasks are completed faster and delays in operations are avoided. Proper delegation of tasks to each employee is important.")

Additionally, one participant expressed: *"Gina-assign namo ang trabaho base sa abilidad sa empleyado aron mas efficient ang performance sa matag usa. Nakatabang usab kini aron mahimong accountable ang employees sa ilang responsibilidad."* ("We assign tasks based on the employee's abilities so that each one can perform more efficiently. This also helps employees become accountable for their responsibilities.")

The data revealed that task delegation and role clarification were important factors in facilitating an organized and effective workflow within the organization. According to participants' assertions, duties were delegated among employees, ensuring that each employee had an individual responsible for their duties. This meant that role assignment helped eliminate confusion and enhance coordination in day-to-day activities. The data showed that assigning specific duties, such as cashiering, stocking, and deliveries, facilitated effective business operations. In addition, where roles were clearly assigned, tasks were completed easily without delays caused by a lack of clarity.

These findings have been confirmed by recent research, underscoring the importance of task delegation and role clarification in improving workflow efficiency, accountability, and overall business productivity. Task clarification helps minimize misunderstandings and ensure that each employee knows exactly what he or she should do at work (Roberts & Allen, 2021). Likewise, proper role allocation in small businesses was found to increase coordination and accelerate task accomplishment, especially in routine business operations (Kumar & Singh, 2023). It was found that clear role definition increases employee effectiveness and reduces process delays (Nguyen et al., 2024). In general, structured delegation was considered one of the most important factors for conducting a smooth business process and increasing efficiency (Brown & Davis, 2022).

Still, other sources dispute the above results and argue that rigidly defined roles limit workers' flexibility, particularly in small firms where multitasking is essential (Hernandez & Lopez, 2020). Additionally, excessive rigidity in task delegation has been shown to decrease adaptability during peak workload (Wilson et al., 2025). Moreover, it was emphasized that role overlap among employees in microenterprises can occur in practice (Mendoza, 2022).

Multitasking, role rotation, and flexibility

Multitasking, role rotation, and flexibility involved having employees perform many tasks at once and changing roles in line with operational needs to ensure the continuity of operations with a limited workforce. Although these approaches enhance efficiency and ensure operational continuity, multitasking and role rotation can affect employee performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2020).

One participant shared: *"Usahay mag-ilis-ilis mi ug trabaho depende sa kinahanglan. Flexible gyud dapat ang empleyado sa negosyo."* ("Sometimes we switch roles depending on what is needed. Employees in the business really need to be flexible.")

Another participant stated: *"Kung kulang ug tao, ang uban mag-multi-task para matabangan ang operations. Dili pwede nga usa lang ang trabaho buhaton."* ("When there is a lack of staff, others multitask to help support operations. It is not possible to do only one task.")

In addition, one participant expressed: "*Ang role rotation makatabang para makakat-on ang empleyado ug lain skills. Maka-adjust sila sa bisan unsang situation."* ("Role rotation helps employees learn different skills. They are able to adjust to different situations.")

Based on the findings, multitasking, role rotation, and flexibility were critical to maintaining continuous business operations, especially in circumstances with a limited workforce. According to the participant responses, employees were expected to change their roles to align with the business's needs. This shows that by being flexible in allocating tasks to employees, continuity of operations could be maintained even when the number of employees was limited. Employees would multitask across different functions within the business to ensure all tasks are completed without neglecting others. Role rotation allowed employees to learn new skills beyond those they initially possessed.

Recent research has supported these results and highlighted that multitasking, role rotation, and flexibility are crucial approaches to ensuring efficient operations, particularly in small and micro businesses with few employees. Employees who multitask are more likely to help maintain efficiency and avoid disruptions in the process during peak periods, when resources are constrained (Hernandez et al., 2022). In addition, role rotation has been shown to help workers develop necessary skills and increase their ability to adapt, thereby making them more qualified overall (Singh & Patel, 2023). Flexibility is another approach that helps maintain efficient business operation as it enables workers to adapt to changes in business conditions (Kim & Lee, 2024). All in all, such approaches contribute to organizational resilience and reliable service delivery (Wilson & Garcia, 2020).

On the other hand, the literature provides conflicting evidence suggesting that excessive multitasking can lead to fatigue, distraction, and long-term employee inefficiency (Wilson & Garcia, 2020). Another body of research stressed that constantly changing roles can be confusing and hinder task performance if adequate training is not provided (Martinez et al., 2025). Moreover, flexibility in small organizations can sometimes lead to unbalanced workloads and employee stress (Nguyen & Tran, 2022).

Employee welfare and manpower needs

Employee welfare and manpower requirements refer to management efforts to ensure employees are well cared for, have appropriate workloads, and are adequately staffed to support efficient operations. By doing so, a good balance is achieved, creating a conducive working environment that prevents burnout and ensures performance (Kulikowski, 2021).

One participant shared: *"Importante nga atimanon ang empleyado kay sila ang backbone sa negosyo. Kung okay sila, okay pud ang performance."* (It is important to take care of employees because they are the backbone of the business. If they are doing well, performance is also good.)

Likewise, another participant stated: *"Kung kulang ang manpower, maapektuhan ang serbisyo ug operations. Mao nga kinahanglan sakto ang number sa staff."* (If manpower is lacking, service and operations are affected. That is why the number of staff must be sufficient.)

Furthermore, one participant expressed: *"Gina-consider namo ang welfare sa empleyado aron dili sila ma-burnout. Importante ang balance sa trabaho ug pahulay."* (We consider employee welfare to prevent burnout. Maintaining a balance between work and rest is important.)

The findings indicated a need to address employee welfare and manpower needs to achieve effective business operations. From the responses, it is clear that employees were viewed as key to business operations, and their well-being played a significant role in performance and productivity. It means that caring for the employees positively affected the outcomes of their work. In addition, insufficient manpower was found to have affected service delivery and operations. This highlights the significance of appropriate staffing.

Latest studies have confirmed this theory by emphasizing that employee well-being and adequate manpower are necessary to sustain productivity and proper operations within the organization. Employee well-being is vital for increasing job satisfaction and performance (Roberts & Kim, 2022). Similarly, appropriate staffing levels help in the effective delivery of services without any delay in small businesses (Nguyen et al., 2023). Moreover, work-life balance helps reduce burnout and enhance productivity (Singh & Lopez, 2024). Thus, employee well-being increases performance and sustainability of the organization (Garcia & Santos, 2022).

On the other hand, literature found that these studies were countered by pointing out that small firms tend to have difficulty maintaining their staffing ratios due to a lack of funds, despite compromising service quality (Hernandez & Cruz, 2020). Some studies also emphasized that, although efforts were made to enhance workers' welfare, the burden of work in microenterprises could lead to employee burnout due to manpower shortages and multitasking (Kim & Park, 2025). (Mendoza & Lim, 2022) further pointed out that owners focus more on business sustainability than on the welfare of employees

Theme 3: Inventory, Sales, and Financial Control Practices

Inventory, Sales, and Financial Control Practices are the methods organizations use to manage inventory levels, track sales performance, and control financial transactions. The concept entails effective recording, tracking, and control of inventory movement, sales transactions, and financial flows within the organization. This practice indicates an organization's capacity to maintain sufficient stock, achieve sales efficiency, and avoid financial errors. It also entails the use of various control measures, including audits, reports, and tracking. In conclusion, the practice highlights the combination of inventory management, sales, and financial controls.

A few recent studies emphasize the need to integrate sales, inventory management, and financial controls to improve business performance. (Gozali et al., 2026) stressed that business intelligence systems help in making more accurate sales forecasts and optimizing inventories, resulting in improved operational decisions. (Toroba et al., 2025) demonstrated that proper inventory management systems have a significant impact on the financial performance of retail firms. In turn, (Mudau et al., 2026) stated that business intelligence systems strengthen management controls and improve both financial and non-financial performance in organizations. (Mittal, 2024) added that optimized sales and inventory management systems help improve order management and planning. Also, (Rautaray et al., 2022) stressed that predictive analytics can be used to automate inventory management and to make financial decisions based on data. Thus, the mentioned research demonstrates the significance of inventory, sales, and financial management practices in business management.

Inventory monitoring and stock control

Inventory monitoring and stock control refer to the practice of regularly assessing stock levels and controlling product availability to ensure neither shortages nor excesses. Proper inventory control is vital for operational ease, reduced costs, and efficient planning (Khan et al., 2021).

One participant explained: *"Gina-monitor namo ang stock kada adlaw para malikayan ang kakulang. Importante nga updated ang inventory."* (We monitor stock daily to avoid shortages. It is important to keep inventory updated.)

In addition, one participant added: *"Kung ubos na ang stock, mag-order dayon mi para dili mawad-an. Dili pwede nga walay baligya tungod sa kakulang."* (If stock is low, we immediately reorder to avoid running out. We cannot afford to have nothing to sell.)

Furthermore, one participant opined: *"Ang proper stock control makatabang sa smooth nga operasyon. Dili maguba ang serbisyo sa customer."* (Proper stock control helps maintain smooth operations. Customer service will not be disrupted.)

The results showed that inventory monitoring and stock control were critical to maintaining uninterrupted business operations. According to participants' responses, stock levels were regularly monitored to avoid any shortage or inventory issues. Regular monitoring of goods prevented stockouts and ensured continuous product availability. From the responses, it was found that the process of immediate reordering was followed when stock levels fell short, to avoid disruptions in business operations. Moreover, proper stock control enabled efficient service delivery by meeting customer demands.

In recent times, several studies have confirmed the above findings by emphasizing the importance of stock observation and inventory control to ensure smooth operations and product availability in small businesses. Consistent stock observations ensure that there are no shortages and continuous service provision (Lee & Park, 2022). Instantly reordering stock once it is depleted improves responsiveness and reduces the risk of losing potential clients (Nguyen & Tran, 2023). Efficient inventory management can support better planning and minimize operational inefficiencies (Singh et al., 2024). In general, stock control results in smooth operations and customer satisfaction (Kim & Park, 2025).

However, some literature challenges the findings, arguing that inventory control remains a challenge for microenterprises due to limited financial resources and storage capacity (Hernandez & Lopez, 2025). Other research found that stock imbalance can occur even with consistent observations, due to fluctuations in consumer demand and supply chain disruptions (Oliveira & Ramos, 2024). Additionally, regular restocking increases costs for small businesses (Martinez & Rivera, 2022).

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Sales, cash, and profit tracking

Sales, cash, and profit tracking involve monitoring financial activities such as revenue, expenses, and cash flows to determine whether the business is profitable. Effective tracking contributes to sound financial decision-making and improves financial management (Al-Mamun et al., 2022)

One participant shared: "*Gina-track namo ang sales adlaw-adlaw aron makita ang kita. Importante nga kabalo mi sa flow sa kwarta.*" (We track sales daily to monitor income. It is important for us to understand the flow of money.)

In addition, another participant stated: "*Ang profit makita pinaagi sa klaro nga record sa sales ug expenses. Mao na basehan sa negosyo performance.*" (Profit can be determined through clear records of sales and expenses. That serves as the basis of business performance.)

Moreover, one participant expressed: *"Kung dili i-track ang cash, lisod mahibal-an ang loss ug gain. Kinahanglan gyud ang monitoring."* (If cash is not tracked, it is difficult to determine losses and gains. Monitoring is truly necessary.)

The findings suggested that tracking sales, cash, and profits was critical for assessing business performance and managing finances effectively. Respondents reported that sales were tracked daily to determine revenue and cash flow. It implies that continuous tracking of financial activities enabled the company to monitor its financial status. The information also revealed that profit was determined by the accurate calculation of sales and expenses, which, in turn, determined business performance. In addition, effective cash flow monitoring enabled the identification of profits and losses, leading to sound financial decisions.

Recent research has confirmed that sales, cash, and profit tracking are critical for assessing business performance and ensuring the accuracy of financial data. Tracking daily sales will help business owners to know how much money is coming in and will keep them informed about their finances (Al-Mamun et al., 2021). Similarly, accurate bookkeeping of expenses and income will help determine profits precisely and support decision-making for small firms (Delgado et al., 2023). Systematic financial monitoring has also been shown to increase accountability and reduce errors in cash flow management (Fernandez & Morales, 2024). Overall, financial monitoring helps to assess business performance and plan more effectively (Yamamoto, 2025).

Nevertheless, some research articles challenged the findings, indicating that micro and small firms experience difficulties complying with all requirements due to a lack of information about taxes and record-keeping (Villanueva & Ortega, 2020). Some other studies have noted that record-keeping may not always be systematic in informal firms, leading to problems during government audits and inspections (Salazar et al., 2025). It was also mentioned that compliance requirements may be burdensome for small business owners (Lim & Navarro, 2022).

Record-keeping and BIR compliance

Proper record-keeping and BIR compliance ensure accurate financial records and compliance with government regulations, facilitating transparency and accountability. Proper documentation is also important for facilitating auditing and strengthening the financial reporting system (Lim & Navarro, 2022).

One participant emphasized: *"Importante nga kompleto ang records para sa BIR compliance. Dili pwede nga walay dokumento."* ("It is important to maintain complete records for BIR compliance. Documents should always be available.")

Another participant explained: *"Ginakeep namo ang resibo ug transactions para legal ang negosyo. Mao na requirement sa gobyerno."* ("We keep receipts and transaction records to ensure the legality of the business. That is one of the government's requirements.")

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Furthermore, one participant stated: "*Ang proper recordkeeping databank sa audit ug monitoring. Dili mi maglisod kung naay inspection.*" ("Proper recordkeeping helps during audits and monitoring. We do not experience difficulty whenever there is an inspection.")

The results showed that record-keeping and BIR compliance were important for ensuring the legality and transparency of business activities. Based on the participants' responses, complete financial records and documents were maintained to comply with government regulations. It was clear that documenting transactions made business operations legitimate. The results also showed that properly maintained records ensured business accountability. In addition, proper record-keeping has made audits and inspections easier and more convenient.

New studies corroborate the findings, underscoring the importance of record-keeping and tax compliance as key factors in ensuring transparency, accountability, and the legitimate conduct of business activities. Keeping full accounting records is important for controlling transactions and meeting government requirements (Alvarez & Cruz, 2021) Furthermore, proper documentation of receipts and sales records was reported to ease audits and minimize compliance risks in small enterprises (Reyes & Santos, 2023). Studies found that maintaining adequate records increases the efficiency of financial controls and enhances the business's reputation during regulatory inspections (Dela Peña & Gomez, 2024). Thus, regular documentation practices help to maintain the legitimacy of business processes.

Nevertheless, some scientific works contradict the findings and argue that micro and small enterprises experience difficulties in meeting all compliance requirements due to their lack of knowledge regarding tax and documentation issues (Villanueva & Ortega, 2020). Other scholars emphasized that record-keeping may be inconsistent in informal businesses, leading to problems during audits and government inspections (Salazar et al., 2025). Moreover, compliance requirements impose an additional administrative burden on small-business owners (Mendoza & Lim, 2022).

heme 4: Operational Challenges and Business Resilience

Operational Challenges and Business Resilience describe the problems and interruptions in business operations that challenge an organization's ability to perform and recover from them. Some of the challenges faced include resource problems, inefficient processes, market turbulence, and other operational challenges that pose difficulties to business operations. Business resilience is seen as the capability of an organization to cope with these challenges without compromising its operations through adaptation and recovery. Business resilience can be demonstrated through proactive solutions, adaptable processes, and the ability to sustain operations despite challenges.

Emerging literature highlights the growing importance of resilience capabilities in addressing disruptions. (Duchek, 2020) defines organizational resilience as a dynamic capability that helps firms anticipate, respond to, and adapt to unforeseen challenges. (Ivanov & Dolgui, 2021) emphasize that resilient systems, especially those in supply chain management, have flexible operations that enable them to remain functional despite disruptions. (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2020) point out the fact that resilience results from the compatibility of human, operational, and strategic resources that can enable decision-making. Additionally, (Reis et al., 2021) emphasize that business intelligence and analytics play a crucial role in developing resilience by converting information into insights for decision-making.

Price Volatility and Supply Shortage

Price volatility and supply shortages lead to fluctuations in product prices and material availability, negatively impacting operations and decision-making, including procurement decisions. These problems require changes to business procurement strategies and inventory control to maintain continuity (Christopher, 2022).

One participant shared: *"Usahay taas kaayo ang presyo sa supplies mao nang maglisod mi ug kuha ug stocks. Kung kulang ang stocks, maapektuhan ang among baligya."* ("Sometimes the prices of supplies are too high, making it difficult for us to acquire stocks. When stocks are insufficient, our sales are affected.")

Another participant stated: *"Dili pirmi stable ang presyo sa mga produkto. Mao nga kinahanglan gyud mi mag-adjust depende sa supplier."* ("The prices of products are not always stable. That is why we really need to adjust depending on the supplier.")

In addition, one participant expressed: *"Usahay ma-delay ang supply tungod kay kulang ang available nga produkto. Makaapekto gyud siya sa operation sa negosyo."* ("Sometimes the supply is delayed because the available products are limited. It truly affects the operations of the business.")

According to the data, price volatility and supply shortages were the major operational stability problems faced by retail construction supply microenterprises. The respondents reported that unstable product prices and material scarcity had impacted procurement, inventory, and sales. Therefore, companies need to adjust their operations to remain in business. In particular, the sourcing of products was one of the major activities that should be adjusted. Additionally, supply delays and cost increases have made operations inefficient. However, due to high adaptability and prompt response, it is possible to maintain performance and operational stability.

The results of recent research confirm the above conclusion about the negative effect of volatile prices on cost planning, pricing tactics, and inventory management within small firms operating in volatile markets (Ivanov & Dolgui, 2020). It was also found that supply shortages and disruptions negatively affected operational efficiency, product availability, and customer satisfaction (Choi, 2021). Firms that used adaptive strategies and supplier cooperation managed to address uncertainties and maintain smooth operations amid supply chain disruptions (Paul & Chowdhury, 2021). In addition, volatile markets and supply chain disruptions were identified as external factors that influenced business sustainability and performance (Belhadi et al., 2021). Successful inventory management and supplier cooperation helped ensure business resilience amid unstable market conditions and supply shortages (Queiroz et al., 2022).

However, there was some evidence to the contrary, suggesting that supply shocks and price volatility would not always affect business performance, as some firms could minimize operational risks through supplier diversity and effective sourcing strategies (Bag et al., 2021). Other research indicated that inventory management tools and digital forecasting could help businesses sustain operations despite supply shocks and price fluctuations (Dubey et al., 2021). (Wieland, 2021) has also argued that resilient supply chains and supplier relationships would minimize the impact of any supply disruption on business. In addition, (Kamble et al., 2021) believed that consumer demands and business management would be more important factors than supply shocks.

Delivery and External Transaction Risks

Delivery and external transaction risks are challenges in logistics, transportation, and supplier or service provider relationships that may lead to delivery delays, damaged goods, and communication issues. These risks need to be appropriately coordinated and monitored for effective business operations (Mentzer et al., 2021).

One participant explained: *"Usahay naay problema sa delivery labi na kung layo ang lugar. Kung ma-delay ang delivery, maapektuhan pud ang customer."* (Sometimes there are problems with delivery, especially when the location is far. If delivery is delayed, the customer is also affected.)

In addition, one participant added: *"Risky ang delivery kay usahay naay damage or delay sa items. Kinahanglan gyud bantayan ang transaction para malikayan ang problema."* (Delivery is risky because sometimes there is damage or delay in the items. Transactions must really be monitored to avoid problems.)

Furthermore, one participant opined: *"Lisod usahay ang external transaction labi na kung daghan ang proseso. Maka-delay siya sa trabaho ug sa paghatag sa serbisyo."* (External transactions can be difficult sometimes, especially when there are many processes. It can delay the work and the delivery of service.)

Data analysis revealed that delivery and external transaction risks have been influencing the efficiency and reliability of business operations at the retail construction supply microenterprise firms. The interviewees stated that delivery delays, product damages, and complications in transactions and service delivery have negatively influenced business processes and customer service. The results showed that logistical problems, particularly in remote areas, have worsened transactions and service delivery. The answers also revealed that monitoring transactions and coordinating with suppliers and delivery staff were critical in preventing operational problems and keeping customers satisfied. Despite these risks, the companies have tried to make operational changes and monitor their activities.

This assertion was supported by recent research indicating that inefficiencies in logistics and transportation delays negatively affected service reliability and operational performance in organizations (Christopher, 2021). Damage to products and delivery disruptions were additional risks that affected the efficiency of the supply chain and customer satisfaction (Khan et al., 2021). It was noted that external transactions, involving interactions with suppliers and institutions, increased the complexity of business operations in organizations (Khan et al., 2021). Coordination, transaction monitoring, and risk management techniques improved operational efficiency and minimized interruptions caused by logistical issues (Pettit et al., 2021). In addition, organizations that enhanced communication and coordination with their external partners were able to manage delivery risks and ensure customer satisfaction.

On the other hand, the literature stated that the impacts of transportation and transactional risks did not necessarily negatively affect performance, as companies with strong logistics and reliable supplier relationships could avoid such issues (Wieland, 2021). There was also literature arguing that using digitalized logistics platforms and transactional systems allowed better coordination and fewer delays and transaction errors (Queiroz et al., 2022). (Ivanov and Dolgui, 2020) also mentioned that a resilient supply chain and proper planning helped mitigate the negative impact of the risks mentioned above. Moreover, (Bag et al., 2021) stated that internal operational efficiency and coordination played a larger role than logistical risks.

Burnout, Workload Pressure, and Perseverance

These concepts of burnout, workload pressures, and perseverance relate to the physical and emotional stress experienced by managers due to the immense workload and insufficient workforce. Effective management of these issues is very important for maintaining productivity and service continuity, as well as for ensuring the survival of microenterprises (Bakker & De Vries, 2022).

One participant shared: *"Kapoy gyud usahay ang negosyo labi na kung daghan kaayo ang trabaho. Pero kinahanglan magpadayon kay mao ni ang among panginabuhi."* (Business can be tiring sometimes, especially when there is too much work. But we need to continue because this is our livelihood.)

Moreover, one participant stated: *"Naay times nga ma-pressure mi tungod sa daghang customer ug kulang nga tao. Pero ginapaningkamotan gihapon namo nga mahuman ang trabaho."* (There are times when we feel pressured because of many customers and limited staff. But we still try our best to finish the work.)

Similarly, one participant expressed: *"Dili malikayan ang burnout sa trabaho pero kinahanglan gyud ug patience. Kung naa kay determination, mapadayon gihapon ang negosyo."* (Burnout at work cannot be avoided, but patience is really needed. If you have determination, the business can still continue.)

From the results collected, there was an indication of an immense workload, customer demands, and an insufficient workforce, all of which are creating significant pressure on managers. In addition, there was an implication of fatigue and burnout resulting from continuous operations, yet, because of their dedication to their business, they persevered. There was also an implication that patience and perseverance have been critical to keeping these enterprises' operations running even when conditions are difficult.

This result was confirmed by recent studies, which indicated that increased job demands would increase burnout rates and lower employees' performance in small businesses (Maslach & Leiter, 2021). The negative impact of workload stress on performance and emotional well-being has been well documented when it is not properly addressed (Demerouti, 2021). On the other hand, resilience and perseverance have been considered to be the most important qualities that enable individuals to cope with workplace stress and continue performing effectively (Luthans et al., 2021). Additionally, the use of adaptive coping strategies enhances employees' ability to address stress effectively.

However, some literature refuted the finding, stating that burnout does not stem solely from workload but also from inadequate organizational support and poor leadership structures (Demerouti, 2021). Some literature showed that job satisfaction and motivation helped reduce the incidence of burnout in high-pressure environments, indicating that workloads alone did not determine the issue (Bakker et al., 2021). Moreover, some researchers argued that effective resource management and workforce planning could eliminate burnout, even under high workloads (Albrecht et al., 2021).

Theme 5: Operational Improvement, Adaptability, and Growth

Operational Improvement, Flexibility, and Development are the organization's continuous activities aimed at increasing operational efficiency, adapting to internal and external changes, and developing through strategic initiatives. It includes improving processes, procedures, and systems to increase the efficiency and quality of services provided, as evidenced by daily business activities. It is connected to the organization's flexibility in adapting to changing market conditions, customer expectations, and technological developments as it develops strategies and implements initiatives. Business Intelligence and Performance are also mentioned here since it is the use of this information that makes the difference.

Modern research emphasizes adaptability in operations and data-driven growth as crucial factors for business success in volatile environments. According to (Teece, 2023) dynamic capabilities are key to sensing opportunities and leveraging them by reallocating an organization's resources to maintain its competitiveness amid change. The ability to leverage data analytics improves business agility and decision-making, especially in the digital era. It is also stated in (Mikalef et al., 2021). (Clauss et al., 2021) note that business agility facilitates responsiveness to disruption through flexible processes and adaptive measures. Similarly, (Tallon et al., 2022) claim that digital transformation allows for continuous improvement of operations through aligning information systems with changing business needs. Moreover, (Kane et al., 2021) conclude that developing digital maturity and practices of adaptive execution increases chances for sustainable growth.

Communication and Technology-Based Improvement

Communication and technology-based improvements involve using effective communication and technology to enhance coordination and productivity in a business organization's operations. This is done through efficient, timely information exchange and the use of technology to improve record-keeping and decision-making. Research studies have shown that adopting a digital communication system greatly increases the efficiency of small and micro organizations and reduces operational delays (Vial, 2021).

One participant shared: *"Importante ang klaro nga communication sa staff para mas paspas ang trabaho. Kung nagkasinabot ang tanan, mas maayo ang dagan sa negosyo."* (Clear communication among staff is important so work becomes faster. When everyone understands each other, business operations become better.)

Another participant mentioned: *"Gigamit namo ang radio para dali ang communication sa bodega. Nakatabang siya para mas paspas ang pag-coordinate sa trabaho."* (We use radios for easier communication with the warehouse. It helps make work coordination faster.)

Additionally, one participant highlighted: *"Naa na mi laptop para sa records ug uban nga transactions. Nakatabang ang technology para mas organized ang trabaho."* (We now have a laptop for records and other transactions. Technology helps make the work more organized.)

The data collected showed that communication and technology-based improvements were critical to improving coordination, efficiency, and overall business operations. Participants highlighted that the workflow improved due to proper communication among staff. The findings also revealed that the use of communication devices, such as radios, helped improve coordination, particularly in warehouse operations. Also, the use of technology, such as a laptop, has improved record-keeping and transaction management. In general, the findings suggest that communication and technology helped in improving business operations in micro-organizations.

Indeed, recent findings have supported this assertion by indicating that digital communication tools and technologies significantly increase efficiency, coordination, and information exchange within the organization (Verhoef et al. , 2021). It was also noted that effective internal communication increased cooperation, reduced errors, and increased productivity in small companies (Ruck et al. , 2021). Moreover, the use of digital technology facilitated process automation, good record management, and decision-making in day-to-day activities (Vial, 2021). Digitalization also led to increased organizational agility and workflow efficiency in small and medium-sized organizations (Bouwman et al., 2021).

Nevertheless, other literature indicates that adopting technology was not always associated with enhanced performance, due to factors such as a lack of digital skills, resource constraints, and staff reluctance to adapt to change (Awa et al., 2021). Other literature indicates that excessive reliance on digital communication can lead to problems due to technological failures (Dwivedi et al., 2021). In addition, (Nguyen et al. , 2022) suggested that the effectiveness of communication technology depends on users' capabilities and preparedness within an organization, thereby yielding different benefits for organizations from the use of digital platforms. Moreover, some literature indicates that informal communication methods are more efficient than technology-based approaches in small-scale companies with relatively simple operations (Kraus et al., 2021).

Performance-Based Planning and Decision-Making

Performance-Based Planning and Decision Making is the use of performance data in a business environment to inform strategy and decision-making. This includes analyzing sales trends, customer behavior, and other operational factors to develop evidence-based plans and improve forecast accuracy. Data-driven decision-making has been proven to boost organizational efficiency, enabling efficient resource allocation and strategy alignment (Mikalef et al., 2020).

One participant explained: *"Ginatan-aw namo ang dagan sa sales para makahimo ug sakto nga plano. Kung makita namo ang resulta, mas kabalo mi unsay dapat buhaton."* (We observe the movement of sales to make proper plans. When we see the results, we know better what should be done.)

In relation to this, one participant added: *"Mag-base mi sa performance sa negosyo kung unsa among next step. Importante nga naay basis ang decision para dili sayang ang effort."* (We base our next step on the performance of the business. It is important that decisions have a basis so effort will not be wasted.)

Likewise, one participant stated: *"Kung makita namo nga stable ang sales ug customers, mao na among basehan sa goals. Dili mi basta-basta magdesisyon kung walay observation."* (When we see that sales and customers are stable, that becomes our basis for goals. We do not make decisions without observation.)

It was found that performance-based planning and decision-making have significantly increased the accuracy of operations and strategic decisions in microenterprises, and, according to participants' responses, sales performance and customer trends served as important sources of information for determining actions and the business's future objectives. Thus, the research also suggests that using performance data from the business helped managers reduce uncertainty and avoid poor decisions. At the same time, it also implies that the business became more effective because decisions were based on real performance rather than assumptions.

Recent research has shown that data-driven decision-making significantly increases planning accuracy and operational efficiency in small and medium-sized businesses (Provost & Fawcett, 2021). It was also revealed that performance measurement systems could enhance managers' effectiveness by providing a reliable basis for strategic planning and evaluation (Mikalef et al., 2020). Moreover, evidence supports the effectiveness of evidence-based management, showing that it improves decision quality and reduces uncertainty in business operations (Shmueli et al., 2020). Research also shows that digital analytics tools improve forecasting accuracy and support decision-making in changing market conditions (Davenport & Harris, 2021). Furthermore, it was observed that performance monitoring systems help businesses increase their adaptability and sustainability by continuously evaluating their performance (Kitchens et al. , 2021).

Nevertheless, some literature sources oppose this research outcome. They state that PBP is restricted in micro-firms due to the lack of data-collection systems and an informal decision-making approach, thereby hindering analytical precision (Bag et al., 2021). Moreover, (Dubey et al., 2021) stressed out that too much focus on performance indicators would cause a delay in decision-making process whenever fast response was needed in case of an unstable market environment. Furthermore, (Wieland, 2021) stated that exogenous shocks and unexpected environmental conditions could affect the reliability of past performance data used to forecast future performance. Besides, (Kamble et al. , 2021) claimed that managerial experience and intuition had more impact in decision-making situations than performance data itself.

Expansion, Diversification, and Long-Term Sustainability

Expansion, diversification, and long-term sustainability are strategic business methods that help an organization grow continuously and sustain itself by developing products/services and improving its operations. Microenterprises can use these methods to build resilience and competitive advantage by adapting to market changes (Felin & Powell, 2021).

One participant explained: *"Gusto namo nga magpadayon pa ang negosyo sa dugay nga panahon. Kinahanglan gyud ug patience, hard work, ug sakto nga pagdumala."* (We want the business to continue for a long time. It really needs patience, hard work, and proper management.)

In line with this, one participant added: *"Ang goal namo karon kay mahimong stable ang negosyo. Kung magpadayon ang growth, mas dako pa ang chance nga mo-expand."* (Our goal now is for the business to become stable. If growth continues, there is a bigger chance to expand.)

Furthermore, one participant stated: "*Ang hardware business parte sa among improvement ug expansion. Gidugang namo siya para masuportahan ang existing business."* (The hardware business is part of our improvement and expansion. We added it to support the existing business.)

The study implied that expansion, diversification, and long-term sustainability are key strategies to ensure the survival and growth of microenterprises. From the participants' responses, it was clear that business continuity depended on patience, effective management, and hard work to sustain stable business operations. The findings showed that business stability was an important factor in ensuring success before expanding operations. Besides, the results indicated that diversification, such as offering related businesses, for example, hardware supplies, is a method used to sustain business operations.

Recent research has confirmed this, showing that business growth and diversification decrease risk and increase long-term profitability in small firms (Ansoff, 2021). Strategic resource management and long-term planning have contributed to business growth and sustainability by enhancing organizational stability and performance (Hesterly, 2021).

Dynamic capabilities such as innovation and adaptability have been emphasized as important for sustaining competitiveness and long-term sustainability in market environments (Teece, 2022). Similar results have been obtained by (Kraus et al., 2021), whose research indicated that small businesses practicing diversification strategies are better at resisting market disruption and achieving stable business growth. Finally, (George et al., 2023) have identified that strategic growth is crucial for small and micro-firms in order to maintain strong market positioning and sustain business growth.

However, contrary to this, other literature refuted the finding, arguing that growth and diversification did not always ensure business success, as insufficient capital and operational barriers could impede the effective implementation of growth strategies (Baporikar, 2021).

Also, some researchers stated that excessive growth could be risky for financial health, complicate operations, and affect business stability (Camisón & Villar-López, 2020). Moreover, (Davidsson et al., 2022) pointed out that although the small companies resorted to diversification, sustainability was absent because of the absence of management ability and the unstable environment. Additionally, (Audretsch & Belitski, 2021) indicated that the level of the micro businesses was not uniform concerning the growth strategy implementation because of the influence of external factors. Finally, (Hitt et al., 2021) stated that hasty diversification can cause resource constraints and low efficiency.

Figure 2: Simulacrum

Figure 2 presents the major themes and sub-themes identified in the study regarding the business operations of micro enterprises. The figure shows that micro enterprise operations revolve around five interconnected areas: customer-centered sales and service operations, workforce coordination and role management, inventory, sales and financial control practices, operational challenges and business resilience, and operational improvement, adaptability, and growth. The findings indicate that customer satisfaction, proper customer handling, and

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feedback observation are essential in maintaining repeat patronage and sustaining business performance. It also highlights the importance of effective workforce coordination through task delegation, role flexibility, and employee welfare to ensure smooth daily operations despite limited manpower. In addition, the figure emphasizes the significance of inventory monitoring, financial tracking, and proper recordkeeping in supporting business stability and decision-making.

The study further reveals that micro enterprises commonly experience challenges such as price fluctuations, supply shortages, delivery risks, and workload pressure, requiring business owners to develop resilience and perseverance.

Lastly, the figure demonstrates that continuous improvement through communication, technology adoption, planning, diversification, and long-term sustainability strategies plays a vital role in helping micro enterprises adapt to changing market conditions and achieve business growth. Overall, the figure reflects how these operational practices and challenges are interconnected in shaping the sustainability and success of micro enterprises.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

It has been found that customer-centered sales and service activities are very important for ensuring business stability, as consistent communication, responsiveness, and consideration of customer feedback build trust and encourage customers to use services again.

The above-mentioned aspects enabled continuous transactions and improved the company's reputation. On the other hand, customer behavior depended on factors such as prices, product quality, and market competition, which influenced retention and decision-making. In other words, although the approach is one of the factors that promote sustainability, companies should also consider other factors to compete effectively.

Moreover, it was found that workforce coordination and role management helped ensure business efficiency by delegating tasks, assigning responsibilities to particular people, and fostering cooperation among them. The flexibility of the roles and employees' multitasking ensured continuity, especially when an insufficient workforce required it. However, the need to perform multiple tasks and assume different roles was associated with additional pressure on employees.

Also, the findings showed that inventory, sales, and financial controls were important in ensuring operational accuracy and making effective decisions. Enterprises used monitoring of stocks, financial transactions, and recording for evaluation and planning purposes. However, issues such as changing demand, limited funds, and compliance requirements affected the accuracy of monitoring and recording. In this case, it can be concluded that whereas control systems help to improve operational efficiency, it is important to strengthen resources and systems.

Furthermore, the findings show that operational challenges and resilience played a critical role in sustaining day-to-day operations. Factors such as price volatility, supply chain issues, delayed deliveries, and work pressure disrupted workflow and service delivery.

Despite the difficulties mentioned above, enterprises were able to keep up with the process thanks to their adaptability and persistence. However, the continuous presence of such challenges resulted in operational burden and constant adjustments. It means that, whereas resilience ensures business continuity, its long-term stability requires improvement in risk management and operational planning.

Finally, the findings indicate that operational development, adaptability, and growth ensured business sustainability through communication, technology, and performance-based decisions. The use of digital technology and performance data made it easier to coordinate, be more efficient, and develop effective plans for business development and growth. Nevertheless, the lack of resources, data systems, and technologies became an obstacle to consistent implementation and the decision-making process. In other words, even though innovation and adaptability are key factors for growth, proper planning and development of systems are also important.

Conclusion

The results indicate that the major weaknesses of retail construction supplies micro-enterprises are clustered into five major operational weaknesses that impact the efficiency and sustainability of the businesses. The first is the resource constraint, especially the shortage of capital, workforce, and technological capabilities, which affects the efficiency of customer-focused sales and service processes, workforce coordination, and operational improvements.

This makes it difficult for enterprises to use formal systems, provide efficient customer responses, and improve their operations in the long term. The second weakness is the inconsistency of operational systems, especially in inventory, sales, and financial control, where documentation and control procedures are unstable, inconsistent, and unreliable.

Thirdly, issues related to employee overload and inefficient task allocation are evident, as multitasking and flexible roles are necessary in small businesses but can lead to employee stress, fatigue, and inefficiency. These problems are associated not only with decreased productivity but also with employee well-being and the overall stability of the work environment.

Fourthly, there is evidence of inefficiency in risk management and supply chain stability due to firms' high vulnerability to external shocks, such as price changes, shortages, delays, and other market transformations, which require reactive responses rather than proactive actions.

Finally, inefficient use of digital technologies undermines the consistency of decision-making and the operational planning and monitoring of business growth. Despite enterprises' adaptability and ability to cope with various problems and difficulties, the above-mentioned weaknesses require further attention and improvement in system design, resource allocation, task management, risk planning, and the use of digital technologies.

Recommendation

To address the weaknesses identified above, micro enterprises engaged in retail construction supply should focus on improving their resource capabilities, operational systems, and staff management. Microenterprise managers might offer financial literacy courses, provide microfinance opportunities, or work with local support institutions to strengthen capital stability. Hiring and developing multi-skilled workers and continuously training them will help reduce workload and enable better task distribution. Additionally, standardizing processes for inventory, sales, and finance is needed to ensure the accuracy of daily procedures.

Additionally, microenterprises should improve their risk management to minimize the effects of supply chain disruptions, pricing issues, and delivery problems. Good supplier relationship building and maintaining a certain buffer stock will help avoid operational interruptions and ensure its continuity. Increased use of digital resources is also advised, as simple tools for inventory control, sales registration, and financial reporting can considerably facilitate business activities and support decision-making. Moreover, regular monitoring of business performance and customer demand is important for identifying areas for improvement and adapting to new market conditions. Innovation and continuous improvement enhanced the competitiveness and sustainability of retail construction supply micro-enterprises.

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