

Operational Performance of Purified Water Business in Batangas City, Philippines: Basis of Enhanced Business Operation Initiatives

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Abstract - *This study aimed to assess the operational performance of Purified Water Business in Batangas City. The respondents of this study were the owners/managers of Purified Water Business in Batangas City who invested, organized, put up and managed the business. The results revealed that Purified Water Business in Batangas City has a good operational performance in terms of marketing, management, technical, and financial aspects. It was recommended that the management of Purified Water Business may consider the business operation initiatives to improve operational performance.*

Keywords: *Water Business, Operational Performance, Problems Encountered, Operation Initiatives*

INTRODUCTION

The water that is mechanically filtered or processed to be cleaned for consumption is purified water. It minimizes the accidental exposure to toxins because it undergoes several processes that would make the water safe to drink. Purified water can also help eliminate mineral deposit and can build up cells and joints and reduce the possibility of painful gallstones. It also decreases stress load on kidneys and can greatly enhance nutrients efficiently. It also has a cleaner taste that is good for every day intake (“The Health Benefits.”, 2013).

Purified Water Businesses dominate the percentage of all water consumers proven by the growth of this kind of business in terms of population and its continued existence around the cities and even in rural areas. Here in Batangas City, the number of registered Purified Water Business is about forty (40). According to the owners/operators, people nowadays have an access to proper sanitation so they preferred to consume

safe purified drinking water to prevent diseases related to dirty water.

In the study of Magtibay (2011), water refilling stations can be a good source of safe drinking water in the Philippines. Purified water can meet the aesthetic standards easily detectable by the people in terms of taste, odor and color. The efficient water purification processes can make the quality of water superior to the traditional water systems. However, the risk of contamination is possible if the handling practices are not closely monitored.

A study of Hernandez et al. (2006) on purified water business in selected areas of Batangas Province stated that most of the respondents – owners are engaged in manufacturing purified water and in operation for the past five years with an initial investment of Php 750,000 up to Php 1,000,000 which came from personal savings. Their target market is the household. With regards to the problems encountered in the operational aspects of the business is the high cost of facilities and equipment. In the marketing

aspect, poor marketing strategies and high cost of advertisement were accounted as the major problems while in the management aspect, the major problems were work or labor inefficiency of employees and their bad attitudes. Lastly, big amount of utility expenses were accounted as the major problem under the financial aspect.

Based on readings and the known benefits of purified water to the majority, the researchers proposed the assessment of Purified Water Business in Batangas City to provide knowledge and information about the business profile, operational performance; common problems encountered by the owners in terms of marketing, management, technical, and financial aspect; and the business operation initiatives that will enhance the operational performance of the business. Since the researchers are business students, in the future they may consider to venture in this kind of business. Hence, the findings can supplement them necessary knowledge needed to start and operate a Purified Water Business.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aims to assess the operational performance of Purified Water Business in Batangas City, specifically: to describe the business profile of the Purified Water Business in Batangas City in terms of business ownership, length of operation, initial investment, target market and estimated monthly income; to assess the operational performance of Purified Water Business in terms of marketing, management, technical and financial aspects; to identify the common problems encountered by the owners in terms of marketing, management, technical and financial aspects; and to propose some business operation initiatives that will enhance the operational performance of the Purified Water Business in Batangas City.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Starting a business is the dream of millions of Filipinos. Being the boss, getting rich and doing what one likes are among the promised benefits of being an entrepreneur that are hard to resist. This may all come true, but succeeding in a venture is not that easy especially for those with no business background or experience.

For most people who are not business majors, taking a few years off to study business is not feasible. Nevertheless, if one wishes to improve chances for success, it is critical that he supplements his knowledge by studying the necessary skills needed to operate a small or medium-sized business.

According to Manuel (2013), as compared to a sole proprietorship, a greater amount of capital can be accumulated in a partnership because of the number of persons involved. With more resources, there will also be a greater opportunity to expand services. Likewise, better management will result because of the shared managerial skills, efforts and experiences of the partners. A corporation is an artificial being created by operation of law, having the right of succession and the powers, attributes and properties expressly authorized by law or incident to its existence (The Corporation Code of the Philippines, Sec.2).

As mentioned by De Leon and De Leon (2010), the corporation has a legal capacity to act as a legal unit, the business has continuity of existence because of its non-dependence on the lives of those who compose it. The management is centralized in the board of directors and the shareholders have limited liability. The shares of stocks can be transferred without the consent of the other stockholders. The corporation also has disadvantages. It is relatively complicated in formation and management and the credit is weakened by the limited liability of the stockholders. There is ordinarily lack of personnel element in view of the transferability of shares.

In terms of business plan, according to Asor (2009), a business plan is a well-written, honest-to-goodness document prepared by the entrepreneur that will convince the investor to invest or it is a tool to sell the business story to financial resources and should be recognized. It is the direction and guide of the entrepreneur as to what is to be done and how to do it. It details out what should be achieved over a certain period of time.

Also, about entrepreneurship, Hisrich (2008) defines it as the process of creating something new with value by devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming the accompanying financial, psychic, and social risks, and receiving the resulting awards of monetary and personal satisfaction and independence.

Business strategy is about creating value. Value for the customers in the difference between what is received in benefits from the performance of the product or service obtained from the organization. Customers pay the cost of a product and receive a package of benefits (Hubbard, 2011).

Competitiveness according to Stevenson (2009) is how effectively an organization meets the wants and needs of customers relative to others that offer similar goods or services. It is an important factor in determining whether a company prospers, barely gets by, or fails.

Cross (2013) enumerated some tips on how to grow a small bottled water delivery business. The first one is to learn more about the water industry. There are different types of water. According to the International Bottled Water Association (IBWA), this includes artisan water, fluoridated water, spring water, purified water, distilled water, mineral water, sterile water and carbonated water products. Understanding industry variety is essential for this start-up business. Diversify water product offerings for additional sells to existing customers.

Magtibay (2011) noted that to operate the water store, about five employees are needed. One manager to oversee store operations at least 4 hours a day; 1 accountant/bookkeeper who will make financial statement of business operations; 1 administrative assistant who will log and handle cash sales and purchases; 1 front liner who will accept and refill containers of customers; 1 technical assistant who will maintain and run the machine; and 1 driver/delivery man who will transport refilled containers to customer's home.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), about 3.4 million people die annually from water-related diseases. About a million Filipinos get sick with water-borne diseases yearly. And these are diarrhea cases alone.

Chavez (2010), emphasized that Quezon City authorities have asked the public to report water refilling stations selling contaminated water or passing off tap water as mineral or the purified variety to their clients. Councilor Jorge "Bolet" Banal Jr. of the city's third district raised the alarm after receiving complaints that some clients protested the awful taste of the items which presumed to be mineral or purified water. To avert the sale of contaminated drinking water, the councilor make arrangements for concerned local authorities to conduct surprise inspections of water refilling stations in the city.

When one started a new business, the last thing he wants to focus on is failure. Schaefer (2011) enumerates the 7 reasons why businesses fail: one starts the business for the wrong reasons; poor management; insufficient capital; location; lack of planning; overexpansion; no website.

According to Kaizen philosophy (2010), a problem occurred in their business. Although the franchised water store has an established name in the industry, there are some difficulties in marketing it in the area of Bacoor. Based from the conversations with different residents of the area, it seems like the price above quality is highly considered. In addition to that, there

are many independent water stations in the area and it seems to be trapped in a price war. Although the business is still new (2 weeks), the owner got alarmed and frustrated because the sales are very low.

Method

This portion presents the design, the respondents of the study, the data gathering instruments, the data gathering procedures, and the statistical treatment of the data employed in analyzing and interpreting the data.

Design

The study used descriptive method of research in coming up with the profile of Purified Water Business; the operational performance in terms of marketing, management, technical and financial aspects; the problems encountered by the owners in terms of marketing, management, technical and financial aspects; and some business operation initiatives that will enhance the operational performance of the Purified Water Business.

A descriptive research according to Valdez (2013) is concerned with the description of data and characteristics about a population. The goal is the acquisition of factual, accurate, and systematic data that can be used in averages, frequencies and similar statistical calculations.

Participants

The respondents of this study were the owners/managers of Purified Water Business in Batangas City who invested, organized, put up and managed the business. Most likely, they know how the business operates and keep the business records and other information of these water businesses.

The researchers used quota sampling in determining the number of sample. Quota sampling is a sampling method of gathering representative data from a group. It requires that representative individuals are chosen out of a specific subgroup according to businessdictionary.com. The total population of 25 Purified Water Business entities as recorded in the Batangas City Hall served as the respondents of this study.

Instrument

Questionnaire is the basic instrument that was used by the researchers in data gathering. The researchers patterned it from the study of Hernandez et.al. (2006), however it was modified in order to fit the needs of the present study. The questionnaire was divided into four (4) parts. Part I dealt about the business profile of

Purified Water Business in Batangas City with regards to its form of business ownership, length of operation, initial investment, target market, and estimated monthly income.

Part II dealt about the operational performance of Purified Water Business in terms of marketing, management, technical, and financial aspects. Part III dealt about the problems encountered by the owners of Purified Water Business in terms of marketing, management, technical, and financial aspects. Part IV dealt about the business operation initiatives that will enhance the operational performance of Purified Water Business in Batangas City.

Procedures

In order to complete the study, the researchers used the basic method, the utilization of the library. The researchers used most of their time in the library for gathering the relevant information as the primary source of data. The researchers also got information from the internet and from previous theses to gather the historical information of the study.

Upon approval of the thesis proposal, the researchers prepared the letter of request and questionnaires with the help of their adviser, Dr. Imelda An. With the permission granted, and questionnaires validated, the researchers conducted the survey by distributing the questionnaires the earliest time possible. Through the kindness and cooperation of the respondents, the researchers were able to gather necessary information for the study.

A tally was made afterwards to find out the most frequently mentioned item. The initial checklist was based on the sample questionnaire and some comments and suggestions of respondents were put together and come up with the information needed in the study.

Data Analysis

After the collection of the questionnaire, the answers were tallied, tabulated and analyzed. After the answers to the survey question have been recorded different statistical treatment was used. Frequency and percentage distribution are used in determining the business profile in terms of business ownership, length of operation, initial investment, target market and estimated monthly income. Percentage is descriptive statistics that determine what part of the total respondents fall under certain categories. The percentage is determined by dividing the number of responses by the number of respondents multiplies to

100%. Weighted mean and Ranking was used in assessing the operational performance of Purified Water Business in terms of marketing, management, technical and financial aspects; identifying the common problems encountered by the owners in terms of marketing, management, technical and financial aspects; and proposing some business operation initiatives that will enhance the operational performance of the Purified Water Business in Batangas City.

Ranking is also descriptive statistics that shows positioned importance of an item. The researchers used number 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6... to show the degree of importance where 1 signifies the most important and the last number signifies the least. The results were analyzed and interpreted using the Statistical Version 17.0 statistical analysis software package.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Business Profile (n=25)

Form of Business Ownership	F	P
Sole Proprietorship	18	72
Partnership	3	12
Corporation	1	4
Cooperative	3	12
Length of Operation		
Less than a year	4	16
1-5 years	9	36
6-10 years	7	28
11years and beyond	5	20
Initial Investment		
Php250,000 – below	3	12
Php250,001 – Php500,000	5	20
Php500,001 – Php750,000	8	32
Php750,001 – above	9	36
Target Market		
Households	24	96
Office Employees	23	92
Restaurants and Establishments	21	84
Retail Stores	17	68
Estimated Monthly Income		
Php10,000 – below	6	24
Php10,001 – Php20,000	1	4
Php20,001 – Php30,000	6	24
Php30,001 – Php40,000	4	16
Php40,000 – above	8	32

Table 1 shows the business profile of Purified Water Business in Batangas City in terms of business ownership, length of operation, initial investment, target market, and estimated monthly income. It can be seen from the table that most of the Purified Water Business were solely owned with a frequency of eighteen (18) equivalent to seventy two percent (72%). A frequency of three (3) equivalent to twelve percent (12%) of the Purified Water Business were owned by a partnership, and another twelve percent (12%) were owned by a cooperative. However, only one (1) out of twenty five (25) respondents equivalent to four percent (4%) of Purified Water Business is owned by a corporation. This suggests that majority of the Purified Water Business owners were into sole proprietorship because it is easier to establish this type of business since it does not need many employees.

A sole proprietorship is a business structure in which an individual and his/her company are considered a single entity for tax and liability purposes. It is a company which is not registered with the state as a limited liability company or corporation. The owner does not pay income tax separately for the company, but he/she reports business income or losses on his/her individual income tax return (“Sole Proprietorship”). This article give support to the result that most of the Purified Water Business is solely owned. It is because this type of business ownership is easy to manage.

As mentioned by De Leon (2010), the corporation has a legal capacity to act as a legal unit, the business has continuity of existence because of its non-dependence on the lives of those who compose it. The management is centralized in the board of directors and the shareholders have limited liability. This information supports the result that only a frequency of one (1) said that their business is owned by a corporation. It is because this type of business ownership is difficult to establish, and it must be created in operation of law.

In terms of length of operation, it can be seen from the table that nine (9) out of twenty five (25) respondents equivalent to thirty six percent (36%) has been operating ranging from 1-5 years. A frequency of seven (7) equivalent to twenty eight percent (28%) has been operating ranging from 6-10 years. A frequency of five(5) equivalent to twenty percent (20%) that has been operating 11 years and beyond, and the remaining four (4) respondents equivalent to sixteen percent (16%) has been operating for less than a year which indicates their fresh existence in the market. This suggests that even in the latter years, the Purified Water Business is already existing in the market. It can be noted from the

results that venturing in this kind of business is really good because of the trend of stay in the market.

In terms of initial investment, it can be deduced from the table that a frequency of nine (9) equivalent to thirty six percent (36%) of the Purified Water Business have an initial investment of Php 750,001 and above. A frequency of eight (8) equivalent to thirty two percent (32%) have an initial investment ranging from Php 500,001 – Php 750,000. Five (5) out of twenty five (25) respondents equivalent to twenty percent (20%) have an initial investment ranging from Php 250,001 – Php 500,000. However, only three (3) equivalent to twelve percent (12%) entered into Purified Water Business with an initial investment of Php 250,000 and below. This suggests that venturing in this kind of business really requires a large amount of capital.

As mentioned by Hernandez (2013), the maximized capital expenditure when purchasing a water refilling station should be Php 500,00. That may be, the water refilling gear is coming in at Php 250,000 and the rest is used on the construction of the shop (at least 20 sqm.), logistics (pedicab or perhaps e-bike), processing of all the costs, and acquiring all of the essential equipment such as pots as well as stickers. This supports the result of the initial investment needed to put up a Purified Water Business although in the result it is a little bit larger in amount.

In terms of target market, the table suggested that a frequency of twenty four (24) equivalent to ninety six percent (96%) said that the majority of their customers were from the households. The office employees ranked as second major customers with a frequency of twenty three (23) equivalent to ninety two percent. The third rank goes to restaurants and establishments with a frequency of twenty one (21) equivalent to eighty four percent (84%) and last in the rank is the retail stores with a frequency of seventeen (17) equivalent to sixty eight percent (68%). This suggests that all of the people are their target market because everyone needs safe drinking water.

In terms of estimated monthly income, it can be seen from the table that a frequency of eight (8) equivalent to thirty two percent (32%) of the Purified Water Business have an estimated monthly income of Php 40,000 and above. A frequency of six (6) equivalent to twenty four percent (24%) have an estimated monthly income ranging from Php 20,001 – Php 30,000. Another twenty four percent (24%) have an estimated monthly income of Php 10,000 and below. There were four (4) out of twenty five (25) respondents said that they have an estimated monthly income ranging from Php 30,001 – Php 40,000. However, only

one (1) equivalent to four percent (4%) of Purified Water Business said that they have an estimated monthly income ranging from Php 10,001 – Php 20,000. This suggests that this kind of business is really good in generating income.

As mentioned by Hernandez (2013), the manpower fees per month may go as high as Php 16,000, if it will include the wages of the personnel. That is Php 200 per day for the driver, refiller and the other helper. Overall, each will receive a salary of Php 5,200 a month or an estimate of Php 16,000 for all personnel. The per month energy and phone bill combined will cost typically Php 4,000. Allot Php 1,000 for other probable bills, and it will end up with a Php 21,000 operation cost each month. However, if one is able to market 40-50 gallon containers per day at Php 40.00 for thirty days, the business will have Php 60,000 in monthly income. If one takes away the monthly operation charges, the business will still have Php 29,000 revenue left. This supports the result that even though the operational expenses are quite a big amount, Purified Water Business still come up with a larger estimated monthly income because of the great demand for safe drinking water.

Table 2 presents the mean score of the assessment of operational performance of Purified Water Business in terms of marketing, management, technical, and financial aspects. Most of the purified water business respondents agreed that they have proper operational performance with an over-all mean of 3.34. The results also indicated that most of the Purified Water Business have agreed that they have proper marketing operation with a composite mean of 3.32. The respondents strongly agreed that their water prices are affordable (3.80), the business offers high quality drinking water (3.72) and offers free delivery services (3.72). On the other side, most of the respondents disagreed that they advertises on TV, radio and newspapers and distributes flyers to promote the business (2.28). This suggests that in this kind of business, it matters most that the water prices are affordable because the fact that everyone needs safe drinking water gave rise to the increasing numbers of Purified Water Business meaning there is a stiff competition.

The results in the management aspects show that the respondents strongly agreed that Purified Water Business complies with requirements of DTI (3.92) and updates business plan (3.52). The respondents also agreed that they have proper delegation of tasks (3.32) and projective scheduling of delivers to avoid delays (3.28). This suggests that most of the Purified Water

Business have effective management that is the reason why this kind of business still exists in the market.

Table 2. Mean Score of the Assessment of Operational Performance of Purified Water Business (n=25)

Marketing Aspect	WM	VI	Rank
1. The business offers high quality drinking water	3.72	SA	2.5
2. Free delivery services	3.72	SA	2.5
3. The business gives promotional discounts	2.96	A	6
4. It advertises on TV, radio and newspapers and distributes flyers to promote the business	2.28	D	7
5. It is strategically located	3.32	A	5
6. Water prices are affordable	3.80	SA	1
7. The prices of the products are competitive	3.44	A	4
Composite Mean	3.32		
Management Aspect			
1. Complies with the requirements of DTI	3.92	SA	1
2. Updates business plan	3.52	SA	2
3. Projective scheduling of delivers to avoid delays	3.28	A	4
4. Delegation of tasks	3.32	A	3
Composite Mean	3.51	SA	
Technical Aspect			
1. It has modern and updated facilities	3.48	A	4
2. Proper handling of facilities and Equipment	3.60	SA	2
3. Regular maintenance of facilities and equipment	3.76	SA	1
4. Inventory and control of water containers	3.52	SA	3
Composite Mean	3.59	SA	
Financial Aspect			
1. Provision of funds for expenses	3.24	A	1
2. Fund generation through loans from banks and other financial institutions	2.40	D	4
3. Forecasting of demand to avoid excessive supplies	3.04	A	2.5
4. Receive cash payment only on delivery	3.04	A	2.5
Composite Mean	2.93	A	
Over-all Mean	3.34	A	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 –Strongly Agree (SA); 2.50 – 3.49 – Agree(A); 1.50 – 2.49 –Disagree (D); 1.00 – 1.49 –Strongly Disagree (SD)

As mentioned by Cross (2013), one tip on how to grow a small bottled water delivery business is obtaining applicable licenses permit. This may include business license from country or parish government agencies. It includes registering the business with Secretary of State in the state of business operations. Additionally, check with the local government health department to find out if an additional permit or license is required for distributing and storing water for distribution. This related study supports the result of the management aspect regarding the need to comply to the requirements of DTI which is a government agency.

The results indicated that most of the Purified Water Business strongly agreed that they have an effective operation in terms of technical aspects with a composite mean of 3.59. The respondents strongly agreed that they have regular maintenance of facilities and equipment (3.60), proper handling of facilities and equipment (3.60), inventory and control of water containers (3.52). The respondents also agreed that they have modern and updated facilities (3.48). This suggests that in this kind of business, it is really important to have regular maintenance of facilities and equipment for efficient operation as well to avoid technical problems.

As mentioned by Chavez (2010), the personnel manning of the water refilling station should be in uniform and the premises should always be clean as hygienic as possible. To ensure that only safe drinking water are sold, the crew and even the owners of water refilling station should undergo regular seminars where business ethics should be emphasized. This article supports the idea of proper handling of facilities and equipment by starting in the proper hygiene of the employees and the cleanliness and proper sanitation within the area.

The results in the financial aspects showed that the respondents agreed that they have provision of funds for expenses (3.24), forecasting of demand to avoid excessive supplies (3.04), and receive cash payment only on delivery (3.04). On the other side, most of the respondents disagreed that they perform fund generation through loans from banks and other financial institutions (2.40). This suggests that in this kind of business, funds must always be available for the necessary expenses whether expected or unexpected. However, most of the respondents do not believe that fund generation through loans from banks and other financial institutions can greatly help in the operation of the business, instead most of the owner(s) are using their own money.

Table 3. Mean Score of the Problems Encountered in the Operation of the Purified Water Business (n=25)

Marketing Aspect	WM	VI	Rank
1. Location is not accessible	2.28	S	3.5
2. Lack of market research	2.48	S	1.5
3. Poor marketing strategies	2.28	S	3.5
4. High cost of advertisement or promotion	2.48	S	1.5
Composite Mean	2.38	S	
Management Aspect			
1. Fails to comply with the requirements of DTI	1.68	S	4
2. Fails to update the business plan	1.88	S	3
3. Delay of delivery	1.96	S	2
4. Work or labor inefficiency of employees	2.32	S	1
Composite Mean	1.96	S	
Technical Aspect			
1. Frequent malfunctioning of facilities and equipment	2.28	S	3
2. High cost of facilities and equipment maintenance and repair	2.80	O	1
3. Lack of enough water container	2.12	S	4
4. Unreturned water containers or bottles by customers after purchase	2.64	O	2
Composite Mean	2.46	S	
Financial Aspect			
1. Availability of funds for payment	2.68	O	1.5
2. Low investment returns	2.28	S	4
3. Lack of financial analysis and planning	2.36	S	3
4. High business expenses	2.68	O	1.5
Composite Mean	2.50	O	
Over-all Mean	2.33	O	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 –Always (A); 2.50 – 3.49 –Often (O); 1.50 – 2.49 –Sometimes(S); 1.00 – 1.49 –Never(N)

Table 3 presents the mean score of the problems encountered in the operation of Purified Water Business in terms of marketing, management, technical, and financial aspect. With a composite mean of 2.38, the respondents agreed that sometimes they encountered problems in the marketing aspect. The results indicated that there is lack of market research (2.48), high cost of advertisement and promotion (2.48), the business has poor marketing strategies (2.28) and the location is not accessible (2.28).

The verbal interpretation of the results indicated that these problems are encountered sometimes only. The researchers viewed it as a normal situation because in reality, problems are already part of the business.

In terms of management aspects, the results indicated that sometimes the Purified Water Business fails to comply with the requirements of DTI (1.68), fails to update the business plan (1.88), delay of the delivery (1.96) and work or labor inefficiency of employees (2.32). From the results, it can be noted that the problems are encountered sometimes only because some owners assume that one or two workers can provide all of the orders which resulted to work or labor inefficiency of employees. Also, not all Purified Water Business failed to comply with requirements of DTI because sometimes it is the city health where they submit the necessary requirements needed.

Under the technical Aspect, the respondents agreed that oftentimes they encountered problems such as high cost of facilities and equipment maintenance and repair (2.80), and unreturned water containers or bottles by customers after purchase (2.64). The respondents also agreed that sometimes they encountered problems such as frequent malfunctioning of facilities and equipment (2.28), and lack of enough water containers (2.12). This suggests that in this kind of business which requires modern and updated facilities and equipment, the problem that occurs is the high cost of the maintenance of the facilities and equipment.

In terms of financial aspects, the respondents agreed that oftentimes they encountered problems such as availability of funds for payment (2.68), and high business expenses (2.68). The respondents also agreed that sometimes they encountered problems such as lack of financial analysis and planning (2.36), and low investment returns (2.28). This suggests that this kind of business really incurred high operational expenses which became a problem of the owner(s)/manager(s) of the Purified Water Business.

Table 4. Mean Score of Business Operation Initiatives (n=25)

Business operation initiatives	WM	VI	Rank
1. Future additional investments	2.88	A	2
2. Hiring of more employees	2.44	D	5
3. Replacement of facilities and equipment	2.72	A	3
4. Expansion of the operating areas	2.60	A	4
5. Increase marketing and promotional strategies	3.08	A	1
Composite Mean	2.74	A	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 –Strongly Agree (SA); 2.50 – 3.49 – Agree (A); 1.50 – 2.49 –Disagree (D); 1.00 – 1.49 –Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 4 presents the mean score of business operation initiatives. It can be seen from the table that the highest item with a weighted mean of 3.08 agreed

that the management of Purified Water Business must increase marketing and promotional strategies. This suggests that within the following years to come, owner(s)/manager(s) of Purified Water Business will focus more on marketing and promoting the business in order to increase investment returns through acknowledging the potential customers that the business exists in the market.

As mentioned by Cross (2013), advertising the business is one of the tips on how to grow a small bottled water delivery business. This includes advertising in local publications that reach the targeted market such as: staying plugged in to industry trends, establishing a website for customers and potential customers, creating an in-house publication for existing customers that covers information that will be helpful to them in selling water products to the end-users. This supports the result that increasing the marketing and promotional strategies is necessary in order for the Purified Water Business to continue to grow and remain competitive in the market.

Ranked as second, a weighted mean of 2.88 agreed that the management of Purified Water Business must have future additional investments. This suggests that the owner(s)/manager(s) of Purified Water Business are planning to add investments in the future to remain competitive in the market by adopting new trends and innovations.

A weighted mean of 2.72 agreed that the third rank in the business operation initiatives that will enhance the management operations of the Purified Water Business is the replacement of facilities and equipment. This suggests that through replacing the facilities and equipment used in the operation, the business will remain competitive in the market by producing high quality drinking water.

Ranked as fourth, a weighted mean of 2.60 agreed that expansion of the operating areas can enhance the management operations of Purified Water Business. However, a weighted mean of 2.44 disagreed that hiring of more employees can enhance the management operations of Purified Water Business. This suggests that owner(s)/manager(s) of Purified Water Business. As mentioned by Magtibay (2011), to operate the water store, about five employees are needed. One manager to oversee store operations at least 4 hours a day, one accountant/bookkeeper who will make financial statement of business operations; one administrative assistant who will log and handle cash sales and purchases; one front liner who will accept and refill containers of customers, one technical assistant who will maintain and run the machine; and one

driver/delivery man who will transport refilled containers to customer's home. This supports the result of the study that in this kind of business, it is not necessarily needed to have many employees.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Most of the Purified Water Business in Batangas City were solely owned and has been operating ranging from 1-5 years, having an initial investment of Php 750,001 and above, majority of the customers were from the households, and the business earned an estimated monthly income of Php 40,000 and above. The Purified Water Business in Batangas City has a good operational performance in terms of marketing, management, technical, and financial aspects. The common problems encountered in the Purified Water Business include lack of market research, high cost of advertisement, facilities and equipment maintenance, work inefficiency of employees, availability of funds for payment, and high business expenses. To enhance the operational performance of Purified Water Business, some business operation initiatives are proposed.

The management may consider better marketing strategies for restaurants and retail stores to improve sales performance. The management may assess the current operational performance of the business with regards to advertising, delivery, modern facilities, and working capital management. The management may address the identified problems encountered to enhance business operations. The management of Purified Water Business may consider the business operation initiatives to improve operational performance. Other researches may be done to substantiate new information and development regarding this subject matter.

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