

An Ex-Post Evaluation of NESTA's Food Center: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This research presents an ex-post evaluation of NESTA'S food center, an iconic culinary establishment in Roxas City, Capiz, which concluded its 44-year operational journey in September 2024. The study aimed to identify the critical survival techniques and business performance factors that allowed the institution to navigate nearly five decades of market evolution. Utilizing a qualitative case study, the researchers gathered data through online and face-to-face interviews with the owner, long-term employees, and long-term customers to uncover the lived experiences behind the establishment's longevity and eventual closure. The findings revealed that while the business maintained high performance through human-centric leadership and quality consistency, it faced significant challenges, including increasing urban congestion, shifting generational tastes, and the rapid demand for digital integration. The lessons learned from the establishment's journey highlight that survival is anchored on four pillars: the founder's grit, a "family-like" workplace culture, aesthetic and digital modernization, and prioritizing customer satisfaction over aggressive profit. Specifically, the study underscores that a business must balance traditional values with the flexibility to pivot toward a younger, tech-savvy demographic to avoid obsolescence. The study concludes that business performance is not solely dependent on financial metrics but on a purposeful integration of organizational unity and strategic agility. These results offer a strategic blueprint for local small and medium enterprises to build institutional trust, overcome logistical barriers, and maintain social relevance in a competitive landscape.

1. Introduction

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) consistently point out that they are the lifeblood of an economy; they face a staggering failure rate, with many hard to survive beyond their first five years (Gaskins, 2019; Lum, 2017). Present reviews indicate that these enterprises are critical to economic growth, yet they face constant closure risks. In the Philippines, local production and SMEs act as social enterprises that creatively blend community identity with business, thus driving social and economic development. However, the difference between local and global business is becoming harder to maintain due to modern market uniformity and declining survival rates.

Successful long-term survival is often attributed to a business survival paradigm where entrepreneurs leverage vision, innovation, and calculated risk-taking to navigate shifting market environments (Ayeni Adebajji, 2025). Previous studies suggest that human capital, strategic planning, and the ability to exploit entrepreneurial opportunities are the primary drivers of sustained business performance (Gilliard, 2018; Moualawtoua, 2022). Specifically, strategic business planning, financial management, networking, and niche marketing are essential elements affecting sustainability. Successful owners leverage their human capital—including educational background and managerial experience—to set achievable goals. This process is not only theoretical but also a real-life necessity, as global traditional small businesses become endangered by shifting market pressures.

Survival techniques have evolved into a social and strategic movement in which the values of connection and leadership resonate as primary drivers of success. For example, successful entrepreneurs exploit opportunities to improve business performance through effective planning and leadership. The same authors (Fitriati et al., 2023). However, caution that a lack of effective strategies often leads to financial losses and business closures within the first few years. This shows the concern that without a combination of education, training, and flexible financial strategies, the survival of small businesses becomes increasingly difficult.

The present study focuses on how NESTA'S food center avoided such early failure by leveraging its internal resources and adapting to the external environment for over four decades, but failed to sustain. NESTA'S food center—a well-known food icon located on Magallanes Street, Roxas City, Capiz—is a quintessential example of a business that moved beyond mere commerce to become a "third place" for the local community. Founded in 1962 as "Everybody's Inn," it evolved from a humble eatery beside Capiz High School into a multi-industry landmark known for its iconic "lomi," fresh pandesal, and famous caramel cake. It is a Capiz-based enterprise that thrived for 44 years, diversifying its operations into hotels, water stations, and digital photo processing. After serving generations of Capizeños and receiving the Outstanding Entrepreneur in Capiz Award in 2001, the management announced its closure on September 30, 2024. NESTA'S food center practices—from maintaining quality service to its pioneering digital innovations—reflect deliberate choices in business performance. This study is centered on NESTA'S food center to examine how local establishments deeply rooted in culture use survival techniques to not only keep traditions alive but also sustain operations far

beyond the critical five-year threshold. Although NESTA'S food center has recently ceased operations, its decades-long presence in Roxas City provides a valuable case for examining the relationship between survival strategies and business performance. Its longevity, physical expansion, and recognition within the local business community serve as measurable indicators of past performance. The enterprise's growth from a small eatery into a multi-service establishment demonstrates how strategic management decisions can influence organizational sustainability over time.

NESTA'S food center serves as a quintessential case study of this phenomenon in Roxas City, Capiz. Founded in 1962 as "Everybody's Inn," the enterprise evolved from a humble eatery beside Capiz High School into a multi-industry icon known for its "lomi," caramel cakes, and pioneering digital photo processing. For over 44 years, the Magallanes Street location functioned as the heart of its operations, surviving through decades of economic shifts and evolving consumer tastes. Despite being awarded the Outstanding Entrepreneur in Capiz Award in 2001 and maintaining a reputation for innovation and quality service, the management announced the closure of its food center on September 30, 2024. This study is centered on NESTA'S food center to investigate the specific survival techniques in operations, marketing, and customer relationships that enabled it to thrive for nearly half a century, and to analyze the business performance metrics in operations, marketing, and customer relationships that defined its legacy. By exploring the case of NESTA'S food center, this research seeks to understand how local enterprises build an "unparalleled warmth" and community bonds while managing the practicalities of long-term business survival.

This research explores the survival techniques, challenges, and business performance that NESTA'S food center encountered in maintaining its position as a cornerstone of local cuisine and points out the main need to understand the techniques that created such a legacy. The survival of a local culinary icon is no longer just a question of economics; rather, the focus is now on documenting the strategies that allowed a business to thrive for over four decades. Local business icons, as represented by NESTA'S food center, are very important in Roxas City's social structure, where their uniqueness lies in their role as a vessel for communal memory. This process is not only theoretical; it has become a real-life situation: globally, traditional small businesses are endangered by shifting market pressures; nevertheless, strategic business planning and financial management are the most efficient tools for organizational survival. The current research aims to create a collection of localized stories about NESTA'S food center's journey, which, on the one hand, serves as a basis for communal identity and, on the other hand, documents successful entrepreneurial survival.

Despite the importance of SMEs, there is a lack of qualitative research exploring survival techniques and business performance. There are limited empirical, place-specific investigations in provincial settings, particularly within the food and beverage industry in the Philippines. This gap highlights the need to understand the techniques that sustained such a legacy before they reach a terminal phase. Current research is needed to document the techniques that lead to such longevity, as the "warmth and comfort" provided by these local institutions might be diluted or lost as the business landscape evolves. This gap is particularly noteworthy for organizations in the Philippines, highlighting the importance of NESTA'S food center case study, which connects entrepreneurial ability, community identity, and sustainable business practices.

The distinct uniqueness of this study lies in its rigorous use of a qualitative research design, a methodological choice that sets it apart from the existing body of literature, which has predominantly relied on quantitative trends, statistical ratios, and numerical growth. By breaking away from the common trend of data-heavy analysis, this research utilizes a qualitative lens to prioritize lived experiences and localized stories that numbers alone cannot reach. This study is uniquely positioned to investigate the survival techniques in operation as a narrative of adaptation, uncovering the specific strategic pivots and internal management choices that allowed the management to transition from a humble eatery to a multi-industry landmark while maintaining quality for over four decades. Furthermore, it explores survival techniques in marketing through the lens of legacy branding and niche consolidation, moving beyond ad spend to understand how the business stayed popular by building a strong brand name. It shows that instead of just paying for ads, sharing their story and using digital tools helped them stay important to different generations of customers in Roxas City.

Most significantly, the qualitative design allows for a deep exploration of survival techniques in customer relationships, documenting the "unparalleled warmth" and the creation of a "third place" where emotional and social bonds functioned as primary drivers of success. By focusing on the human-centric nuances of leadership, adaptation, and connection, the study offers a specialized perspective on how NESTA's food center leveraged these three pillars to avoid early failure and maintain its position as a cornerstone of local cuisine for nearly half a century. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to apply the business survival paradigm to NESTA's food center, integrating institutional and contingency theories to explain how the enterprise endured environmental changes. This research aims to explore the survival techniques and business performance that enable the practical management of long-term business survival. It seeks to document successful entrepreneurial survival and the strategies that kept early failure at bay for over four decades.

With this, the researchers aim to explore NESTA'S food center's survival techniques, challenges, and business performance, and to examine how these techniques and challenges are associated with its business performance. In this case, the study seeks to contribute to a clearer understanding of sustainable entrepreneurial practices and provide insights that may guide future business professionals and local enterprises in achieving long-term viability.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The main purpose of this qualitative case study is to examine survival techniques used by NESTA'S food center and its actual business performance, challenges, and lessons learned in terms of operations, marketing, and customer relationships. (1) What are the survival techniques of NESTA'S food center used in business operations? (2) What challenges did NESTA'S food center encounter in applying the survival techniques amid the evolving competitive landscape and modernization of the food industry? (3) How did these survival techniques contribute to the overall business performance? (4) What lessons can be derived from NESTA'S food center case on survival techniques and business operation based on the results of the study?

1.2 Assumptions of the Study

The survival techniques employed by NESTA'S food center are assumed to play a significant role in sustaining its business operations and influencing its overall performance. The survival techniques in operation, marketing, and customer relationship management are assumed to help attract and retain customers, maintain customer satisfaction, and support profitability. It is assumed that the owner's experiences, decisions, and reflections will provide accurate and valuable insights into the challenges encountered and the effectiveness of these survival techniques. Furthermore, the study assumes that documenting these techniques and challenges will contribute to a deeper understanding of how small businesses like NESTA'S food center navigate competitive environments and sustain operations, even amid difficulties. Lastly, it is assumed that analyzing survival techniques and their impact on business performance will generate useful insights for other entrepreneurs seeking to improve their business resilience and sustainability.

1.3 Epistemology and Theoretical Perspective

This research takes a constructivist perspective, assuming that knowledge is built on common experiences, communicative activities, and reflective practice. In this regard, the contribution that NESTA'S food center has made to the local culinary landscape and its sustained business performance over 44 years cannot be captured solely through quantitative measurements and objective data. An authentic understanding comes through encounters with the lived accounts, experiences, and thoughts of the sole owner of NESTA'S food center, its employees, and its loyal customers. In this respect, knowledge is produced through the interaction between researchers and participants and is constantly constructed by the organization's sociocultural environment. The conceptualization of truth in this case is fluid and contingent, rather than singular and absolute; it constantly changes with people's and communities' perceptions of local business traditions and identity. In this sense, the researchers are not observers but participants in the interpretive process. Semi-structured interviews are the main method of data collection; the participants are owners, long-time employees, and loyal customers who bear a unique and epistemologically justifiable position. An approach of this kind is compatible with the tradition of qualitative research, which emphasizes a profound understanding of human experience rather than generalized conclusions.

The study used two core theories as a guide for data analysis: the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory and the Business Survival Paradigm (integrating Institutional and Contingency theories), which, respectively, illustrate the role of internal strategies and environmental adaptation in sustaining NESTA's food center over its 44-year history in Roxas City. According to the Resource-Based View, widely used in studies of small business sustainability (Gaskins, 2019; Moualawtowa, 2022), a firm's sustained competitive advantage is influenced by its internal resources and capabilities. These resources originate from the business's unique assets and are continually leveraged through strategic planning. In connection with NESTA'S food center, this theory sheds light on how routine operational choices, such as perfecting the "wet-wet" ginata-an and baking the famous caramel cake, become invaluable strategic assets. Every product holds a deeper meaning, as it represents the entrepreneurial ability to leverage human capital and deliver innovative services. Hence, the establishment turns into a symbolized place where the management could showcase their capability to exploit entrepreneurial opportunities, fostering a sense of belonging and loyalty among their patrons. The habitual quality service and strategic diversification become cultural and economic dialogues through which the business maintains its long-term performance and cultural inheritance.

The second framework, the business survival paradigm rooted in institutional and contingency theories (Ayeni Adebajji, 2025), holds that survival is a fluid concept, dynamically shaped and communicated through a business's ability to adapt to environmental changes and institutional pressures. This theory offers a perspective on how NESTA'S food center transforms into a venue for resilient performance, where the local identity of Roxas City is constantly displayed and reinterpreted alongside modernization. NESTA'S food center, through its expansion into a hotel and digital hub, is not just replicating a business model but also sustaining it through calculated risk-taking. The establishment, through its strategic decisions, service quality, and community storytelling, gives the impression of being authentic and deeply rooted in the community, which, consequently, appeals to generations of Capizeños. Hence, the establishment is basically performing the function of the link between the past and the present. While it is keeping its historical legacy and comfort, it is, likewise, adapting its survival techniques to navigate present-day competitive expressions.

The Resource-Based View theory and the Business Survival Paradigm constitute a powerful theoretical framework for the social and strategic roles of NESTA'S food center. The resource-based view points out the processes through which meaning and competitive advantage come into being in the daily management of unique internal assets (as cited by Mailani et al. 2024 from the theory of Barney, 1991). While the business survival paradigm elucidates how these internal capabilities serve as a basis for long-term sustainability and identity formation in a competitive market (Ayeni, 2025), moreover, these theoretical perspectives are in harmony with interpretivist epistemology, as they highlight that the core of knowledge lies in experience, communication, and shared understanding between the establishment and its patrons.

These theoretical perspectives collectively frame NESTA'S food center as a place where people interpret their experiences, identify themselves, and practice their culture through the lens of local culinary tradition. Through an interpretivist perspective, the research acknowledges that finding out about NESTA'S food center role in sustaining the food culture of Roxas City comes down to interpreting those meanings that the people give to their practices, experiences, and relationships—meanings that in turn continue to influence the community's cultural identity and documented legacy. By exploring these strategies, the study seeks to contribute to positive social change by offering insights that help new businesses thrive, thereby boosting local economies through the preservation of local entrepreneurial spirit.

2. Literature Review

Small business survival is about more than just maintaining daily operations; it is a strategic discipline, a commitment to resilience, and a vital link to the local economy. (Gilliard, 2018) defines business success as the ability of entrepreneurs to actively exploit

entrepreneurial opportunities through vision and innovation. The core concept of survival in the modern market is that a business is not merely a commercial entity but a social enterprise that reflects the entrepreneur's strategic adaptability and calculated risk-taking. Leverage internal resources such as knowledge, skills, human capital, and organizational capabilities to create a competitive advantage. Similarly, Moulawtowa (2022) highlights the importance of environmental scanning, risk management, and cost control strategies in navigating competitive environments. These findings suggest that proactive strategic behavior significantly influences business continuity and performance. Small business survival is about more than just maintaining daily operations; it is a strategic discipline, a commitment to resilience, and a vital link to the local economy. (Gilliard, 2018) defines business success as the ability of entrepreneurs to actively exploit entrepreneurial opportunities through vision and innovation. The core concept of survival in the modern market is that a business is not merely a commercial one. entity, but a social enterprise that reflects the entrepreneur's strategic adaptability and calculated risk-taking.

On top of that, legacy business ventures such as NESTA'S food center reflect the synergy between proactive entrepreneurship and the preservation of communal identity. The study by Ayeni (2025) shows that tradition-based local small businesses not only sustain economic growth but also enact a "business survival paradigm" that keeps the enterprise relevant amid shifting institutional pressures. These legacy institutions become agents of stability as they contribute to the process by which the community develops trust in local brands and their quality.

Business performance is both a non-negotiable metric and a strategic vessel packed with layered meanings of longevity, physical expansion, and service excellence. Therefore, knowledge of the strategic and social aspects of survival techniques serves as an entry point to NESTA'S food center analysis of Roxas City's local culinary staple, which has remained committed to sustaining and strengthening the community for over four decades.

2.1 Business Survival Paradigm

An integrated framework rooted in institutional and contingency theories that explains how enterprises endure environmental changes and market pressures by either conforming to or strategically opposing institutional shifts. This paradigm highlights that long-term survival is not accidental but is driven by the entrepreneur's ability to leverage foresight, innovation, and calculated risk-taking to navigate shifting markets. environments. According to Ayeni (2025), these elements account for a significant portion of corporate success, allowing firms to remain agile as a defense mechanism against environmental changes while maintaining their relevance amidst modern market uniformity.

2.2 Entrepreneurship Theory

Rooted in Aghion et al.'s (2013) view, this theory describes economic development as an evolutionary process driven by 'creative destruction,' where innovations replace old ways. Entrepreneurs are viewed as agents of change who introduce disruptive innovations, leading to economic evolution. According to Lum (2018), modern entrepreneurs embody characteristics of learning and innovation to gain a competitive advantage. This theory applies to small business owners who use new techniques, passion, and internal capabilities to operate successfully and maintain a competitive edge through continuous strategic innovation.

3. Methodology

This study uses a qualitative case study design and is grounded in a constructivist interpretivist paradigm to gain insights into NESTA'S food center's survival techniques, challenges, business performance, and lessons learned. The latter recognizes the importance of exploring and understanding individuals' meanings and experiences across various social contexts. The research employs a case study design, focusing on NESTA'S food center, a legacy establishment that serves as an exemplary case of how business longevity and organizational success can be sustained in Roxas City.

This study used a case study design to provide a comprehensive context for NESTA's food center's survival techniques, challenges, business performance, and lessons learned regarding its operations, marketing, and customer relationships.

3.1 Context of the Study

The research takes place in Roxas City, Capiz. The NESTA'S food center, founded in 1962 as "Everybody's Inn," is unlike any other establishment nearby, as it is a local food icon that, among other things, integrates legacy, cultural appreciation, and consistent business performance in its agenda. The food center was created with the idea not only of promoting Capiz-produced flavors like its iconic "lomi" and caramel cake, but also of helping local suppliers and creating a community where culture, identity, and entrepreneurship come together. In terms of value, NESTA'S food center is a perfect example of how local traditions can be highlighted while the provincial charm is kept intact, and the needs of multiple generations are met through a commitment to quality service and innovation. It was a wonderful and cozy location on Magallanes Street, thus a perfect place for people of different backgrounds, students, professionals, and tourists to come and share, among other things, their common love for Capizeño comfort food and local culture.

The participants in this qualitative case study are the owner of NESTA'S food center, two long-term employees, and two loyal customers, who serve as the primary key informants for the research. In qualitative inquiry, participant selection is not based on large-scale representation but on the depth of information and "experience" they can provide regarding the phenomenon under study. This individual possesses comprehensive knowledge of the establishment's entire lifespan, history, and strategic direction.

As the owner of the business, the informant has a holistic view that encompasses both operational successes and critical challenges. The owner holds the definitive record of the business's transition from its roots as "Everybody's Inn" in 1962 through its multiple expansions into a recognized local culinary icon to the strategic factors surrounding its permanent closure in 2024. The owner's knowledge and experience are essential for validating the narrative of decline and determining survival techniques.

The owner is crucial for understanding the "Business Survival Paradigm," as it allows the researchers to document the internal resources and external adaptations that defined the establishment's legacy. The owner's reflections on the challenges encountered, the marketing strategies employed, and the food center's ultimate closure on September 30, 2024, are documented.

The two long-term employees have also been defined by their longevity and consistent tenure within the organization. Their profile is characterized by "insider knowledge", direct, first-hand experience of the operational culture, internal challenges, and leadership dynamics on a day-to-day basis. Specifically, selection for these participants required that they had served the business for a significant, continuous period (typically over 10 years). This longevity ensures that they witness multiple strategic shifts, peak performance periods, and eventual challenges, allowing them to provide data validated by sustained observation rather than temporary tenure.

The two loyal customers are not defined by employee relationships but by sustained patronage. This participant serves as the external voice of the study. A "loyal customer" in this context is an individual who has been a regular patron of NESTA'S food center for at least 2 years. The sustained relationship with the business allows them to compare changes in quality, service, and accessibility over time, providing essential qualitative data on how the business's external performance and community perception have evolved. These participants validate whether the survival techniques attempted internally resonated effectively with the external target market.

Given that the study explores the 44-year journey of NESTA'S food center, the owner possesses the most comprehensive knowledge of the establishment's history, starting from its roots as "Everybody's Inn" in 1962 to its expansion into a multi-industry icon. The participant was selected through purposive sampling, a nonprobability sampling technique in which a specific individual is selected because they possess the unique qualities and perspective necessary to answer the research questions. The sampling technique used is relevant because the researchers intentionally select participants based on specific characteristics and knowledge of NESTA'S food center survival techniques, challenges, and business performance.

3.2 Data Gathering, Data Analysis Procedures, and Subjectivity of the Researchers

The data-gathering procedure of this study is designed as a systematic, ethically grounded progression, ensuring that every stage of the inquiry respects institutional protocols and participant autonomy. The process begins with obtaining formal institutional clearance, during which the researcher prepares a letter addressed to the college Dean. Upon obtaining the Dean's signature and official approval, the researchers began contacting the authorized individuals associated with NESTA'S food center. This transition from institutional to personal engagement involves distributing formal invitation letters to the targeted participants, including the owner, long-term employees, and a selection of loyal customers who have witnessed the establishment's evolution. These letters serve as a bridge of transparency, clearly stating the research's purpose and the voluntary nature of their participation.

Moreover, the researchers prepared semi-structured interview questions, which were validated by experts. The validation score is 4.33, with an "excellent" interpretation based on the (Good and Scates, 1972) criteria for validating a research instrument.

After validating the research instruments, the researchers provide informed consent to participants, indicating the purpose of the study, type of research intervention, procedures, and duration, participant selection, voluntary participation, risks identified, benefits, confidentiality, sharing the results, right to refuse or withdraw, and who to contact with.

The next phase is the proper data gathering through online and face-to-face interviews with the owner, long-term employees, and long-term customers. This stage centers on a semi-structured, open-ended, conversational interview format that allows participants to share their knowledge, insights, and experiences in a natural way.

For the sole owner, the interview focuses on NESTA'S food center's 44-year journey, tracing its roots from the 1962 founding of "Everybody's Inn" to its current status as a multi-industry landmark. This approach is particularly effective for uncovering the deeper, less visible layers of entrepreneurial resilience, such as strategic planning, calculated risk-taking, and management commitment, which may not be documented in standard business records. By engaging employees and loyal customers as well, the researchers triangulate the data, capturing the sociocultural impact and the "community hub" identity of the establishment through diverse perspectives. The conduct of these interviews emphasizes creating a comfortable environment that encourages the disclosure of authentic experiences. Throughout this interaction, the principles of confidentiality and anonymity remain paramount; the researcher ensures that all personal identifiers are protected and that the data is used strictly for understanding the "Business Survival Paradigm." Ultimately, this detailed procedure is not merely a logistical checklist but a deliberate effort to uncover the cultural values and strategic maneuvers that have sustained NESTA'S food center's legacy in Roxas City. By connecting institutional approval with personal knowledge, insights and experiences, the study achieves a thorough and trustworthy examination of how daily business experiences translate into long-term organizational success.

The data analysis for this study followed the rigorous six-phase framework of Deductive Thematic Analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), a method chosen for its systematic approach to identifying and interpreting patterns within qualitative narratives. The procedure began with the familiarization phase, in which the researchers immersed themselves in the transcribed interview with the owner, long-term employees, and loyal customers of NESTA'S food center, reading the narratives multiple times to grasp the nuances of the establishment's 44-year history. This immersion was followed by the generation of initial codes, in which the data were organized into meaningful segments. Because the analysis was deductive, these codes were informed by the study's research questions, focusing on markers of survival techniques, challenges, business performance, and lessons learned on operation, marketing, and customer relationships. After transcribing the interview results, the researchers seek participants' approval of the transcribed data.

In qualitative research, the researchers are the main tool for both data collection and interpretation. Therefore, it is very important to disclose the researcher's stance, assumptions, and biases to a certain extent, without compromising transparency and credibility. While this personal involvement gave the researcher drive and empathy for NESTA'S food center's legacy, it also called for conscious reflection to avoid becoming too identified with the participant. Acting as a participant-observer, the researcher was deeply involved in the local food scene of Roxas City, but at the same time kept a certain distance to analyze. To track personal

knowledge, thoughts, insights, feelings, and changing views, especially regarding the sentimental value of NESTA’S food center, while at the same time ensuring the researchers do not dominate the participant’s voice in this case. The researchers tried very hard to be open, respectful, and neutral with the owner, long-term employees, and loyal customers, and to better understand their knowledge, insights, and experiences in navigating the business-survival paradigm rather than to confirm preconceived notions.

4. Findings

4.1 Operational Integration and Diversity

The findings revealed that NESTA’S Food Center sustained its operations for over 44 years through operational integration and service diversity. The business functioned as a “one-stop shop” by offering pastries, short orders, turo-turo meals, and other food products that catered to students, workers, elders, and tourists. This diversification enabled the establishment to capture multiple market segments while reducing dependence on a single revenue source. Coordination among staff, management, and service stations emerged as a critical survival technique, ensuring efficiency and seamless operations across departments. Participants emphasized that operational coordination, product diversification, and market segmentation contributed significantly to long-term sustainability and customer loyalty

4.2 Product and Menu Adaptation

The study found that NESTA’S Food Center maintained customer interest through continuous product and menu adaptation. Management strategically rotated turo-turo dishes daily to prevent “umay” or palate fatigue among regular customers. This approach ensured variety while preserving the establishment’s signature flavors and traditional identity. Participants highlighted that menu innovation, customer retention, and responsiveness to changing consumer tastes were central to the business’s longevity. The findings demonstrated that balancing heritage products with menu flexibility enabled the food center to remain relevant to evolving customer preferences across generations.

4.3 Lean Human Capital Management

The findings showed that NESTA’S Food Center relied heavily on lean human capital management and cross-functional staffing to sustain operational efficiency. Employees were intentionally trained to perform multiple roles, allowing the business to continue operating smoothly despite staff shortages or unexpected absences. Participants described teamwork, employee versatility, and collaborative resilience as key internal strengths that prevented disruptions in service delivery. The business cultivated a culture of unity where employees supported one another during periods of operational pressure. This workforce flexibility enabled the establishment to maintain productivity and consistency for more than four decades.

4.4 Resource Efficiency

The study revealed that resource efficiency and waste minimization were essential survival techniques used by NESTA’S Food Center. Management practiced ingredient synergy by redistributing excess raw materials between the bakery and kitchen sections to avoid spoilage and reduce operational costs. Participants emphasized strict inventory control, food waste reduction, and frugal innovation as central strategies for maintaining profitability. The business operated using a localized circular system where resources were maximized and continuously repurposed. These practices allowed the establishment to remain financially sustainable while maintaining affordable prices for customers in Roxas City.

4.5 Relationship-Centric Marketing

The findings highlighted that NESTA’S Food Center sustained customer loyalty through relationship-centric marketing rooted in the Filipino “Suki” system and personalized hospitality. Rather than relying on aggressive advertising, the business focused on treating customers like family and creating emotional connections with the local community. Participants described the establishment as a “home away from home,” where customers experienced warmth, familiarity, and belonging. Hospitality, emotional branding, and customer intimacy became powerful non-financial assets that strengthened loyalty and protected the business from market competition. This strong community connection allowed the food center to maintain relevance and trust for over 44 years.

4.6 Brand Equity Promotion

The study found that NESTA’S Food Center maintained its market position through strong brand equity and word-of-mouth promotion. Participants emphasized that the business’s reputation, consistency, and authentic Capiznon flavors became its most powerful promotional tools. Customers themselves acted as brand ambassadors by recommending the establishment to friends, family, tourists, and balikbayans. Over time, the brand became synonymous with the local culinary identity of Roxas City, transforming the business into a cultural landmark. The findings demonstrated that legacy branding, community trust, and a strong local reputation enabled the establishment to sustain customer demand without heavy reliance on paid advertising.

Table 1: Survival techniques of NESTA’s food center used in business operations.

Major Themes	Emerging Themes	Descriptions	Quotes	Participants
Operational Integration & Diversity	Integrated Food Hub	NESTA’S food center bundled bakery, “turo-turo”, and short-order services in one central Magallanes location.	“One-stop shop” (An unbeatable bundle where variety meets almost any food craving). “Capture different market segments” (A deliberate	P1

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			choice to maximize customer foot traffic and wallet share). "Coordination" (Synergy within a single business ecosystem).	
Product and Menu Adaptation	Strategic Menu Rotation	To provide daily variety, the business rotated the "turo-turo" menu, ensuring it was not repetitive.	"Keep them coming back" (A strategic retention mechanism). "Umay" (Palate fatigue as a risk factor to avoid). "Craving for something different" (Consumer behavior used as an operational guide).	P1
Lean Human Capital Management	Cross-Functional Staffing	NESTA'S food center emphasized teamwork and trained staff to substitute for absent workers to maintain productivity.	"Knowledgeable about almost every task" (A versatility strategy to ensure continuous service). "Collaborative resilience" (Relying on internal staff support as a primary defense against human resource gaps). "Substitute for absent staff" (Operational flexibility).	P1, P2, P3
Resource Efficiency	Ingredient Synergy	The business shared raw materials between departments, like excess sugar from the bakery to the kitchen section.	"Prevents food waste" (A direct, common-sense cost control measure). "Frugal innovation" (Resource bootstrapping by maximizing utility). "circular economy" (A localized waste reduction and cost leadership habit).	P1
Relationship-Centric Marketing	The "Suki" System and Hospitality	Focus was placed on building long-term community relationships based on hospitality, trust, and a familiar home-cooked flavor.	"Suki" (A reciprocal bond of loyalty and community family, not just transactional). "Hospitable" (Unparalleled warmth that transcends purely economic exchange). "Feel at home" (The physical space as a comforting third place).	P1, P3
Brand Equity Promotion	Reputation and Word-of-Mouth	The business relied heavily on its established legendary status and organic, organic community referrals as its primary marketing tool.	"Word-of-mouth" (High-trust, zero-cost promotional model). "Synonymous with the provincial flavor" (Niche consolidation and brand equity as an invisible asset). "not relying heavily on promotions" (Legacy branding).	P1, P2

Source: Data from the researchers.

4.7 Challenges Encountered by NESTA's Food Center

4.7.1 Technological and Aesthetic Lag

The findings revealed that NESTA'S Food Center struggled with technological and aesthetic lag as the food industry shifted toward experience-based consumption. Participants explained that the establishment retained a traditional "90s" appearance, which became

less appealing to younger, digital-native consumers who preferred visually appealing, “Instagrammable” dining spaces. The lack of modern interior design, vlog-friendly aesthetics, and social media-oriented visuals limited the business’s ability to attract new customers and benefit from free online promotion. Although the food quality remained consistent, the outdated physical environment created a perception gap that weakened the establishment’s competitiveness against modern cafes and lifestyle-oriented restaurants.

4.7.2 Digital Invisibility

The study found that digital invisibility became a major obstacle to the business’s growth and accessibility. Despite being a long-standing physical landmark in Roxas City, NESTA’S Food Center lacked a strong online presence, digital marketing strategy, and integration with delivery platforms. Participants highlighted that modern consumers increasingly discover food establishments through social media, online reviews, and food delivery applications. The absence of digital visibility limited customer reach beyond existing loyal patrons and reduced the business’s ability to attract younger demographics. Furthermore, the continued reliance on manual operational systems created inefficiencies and hindered adaptation to the data-driven demands of the contemporary food industry.

4.7.3 Staffing Strains

The findings showed that staffing strains significantly challenged the operational stability of NESTA’S Food Center, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants described how workforce reductions and increased operational demands forced remaining employees to work “double time” under exhausting conditions. The business experienced operational bottlenecks, labor intensification, and physical fatigue while attempting to maintain service quality with a lean workforce. Although teamwork and employee resilience temporarily sustained operations, prolonged labor pressure exposed the limitations of traditional workforce structures during periods of crisis and uncertainty.

4.7.4 Operational Strains

The study revealed that operational strains emerged as the business struggled to align production capacity with declining customer demand and rising operational costs. Participants explained that management was forced to reduce food preparation volumes to minimize waste and avoid financial losses. This “shrink-to-survive” strategy required careful planning, defensive management, and strict resource allocation. While reducing production prevented immediate financial collapse, it also symbolized declining market activity and reduced the vibrant atmosphere that once characterized the establishment. The findings demonstrated that operational downsizing became both a survival mechanism and a sign of long-term business decline.

4.7.5 Brand Deficiencies

The findings indicated that NESTA’S Food Center suffered from brand deficiencies due to weak visual identity and outdated branding practices. Participants explained that the business relied heavily on food quality and reputation while neglecting modern branding tools such as labeled packaging, cohesive visual identity, and professional presentation. The use of plain packaging prevented the brand from gaining wider recognition outside the establishment. Furthermore, the absence of modern visual appeal reduced the business’s ability to connect with younger, trend-conscious consumers. These deficiencies contributed to declining brand visibility and weakened the establishment’s competitiveness in a visually driven marketplace.

4.7.6 Marketing Deficiencies

The study found that marketing deficiencies limited the business’s ability to adapt to modern consumer expectations. Participants emphasized that NESTA’S Food Center relied primarily on passive word-of-mouth promotion and maintained fixed pricing structures without offering bundled meals, seasonal promotions, or event-based discounts. This promotional rigidity reduced the establishment’s appeal to value-seeking consumers who were increasingly influenced by aggressive marketing campaigns from competitors. The lack of integrated marketing strategies, digital engagement, and promotional flexibility contributed to reduced customer acquisition and declining relevance within the modernized food industry.

4.7.7 Competitive Hurdles

The findings revealed that competitive hurdles intensified as modern cafes, malls, and national food chains transformed consumer preferences in Roxas City. Participants explained that customers increasingly favored air-conditioned establishments, aesthetically pleasing environments, and lifestyle-oriented dining spaces. This shift displaced traditional dining patterns and gradually reduced the customer base of NESTA’S Food Center. While the establishment maintained strong local identity and food quality, it struggled to compete with the convenience, speed, and modern ambiance offered by newer competitors. The study demonstrated that changing lifestyle expectations and market saturation significantly weakened the business’s traditional market advantage.

4.7.8 Environmental Hurdles

The study identified environmental hurdles and logistical friction as critical barriers to customer accessibility and business sustainability. Participants emphasized that the lack of parking space and increasing urban congestion around the Magallanes location discouraged potential customers from visiting the establishment. As Roxas City became more vehicle-dependent, physical accessibility became a decisive factor influencing consumer behavior. The inconvenience associated with traffic and parking limitations reduced spontaneous visits and restricted the business’s market reach. These environmental and infrastructural limitations highlighted how external urban developments can negatively affect the long-term viability of heritage food establishments.

Table 2: Challenges encountered by NESTA’s food center in applying the survival techniques.

Major Themes	Emerging Themes	Descriptions	Quotes	Participants
Technological Aesthetic Lag	Aesthetic Obsolescence	The physical layout remained "90s" style, failing to meet the modern demand for "Instagrammable" spaces.	"Visuals for vlogs" (The shift from food-only to experience-based consumption). "Not pleasing to the eyes" (Aesthetic failure as a barrier to entry). "Instagrammable" (The need for social media-ready environments).	P1
	Digital Invisibility	A lack of social media presence and failure to partner with delivery platforms like Foodpanda.	"Limited reach" (Physical boundaries without digital extension). "Inaccessible" (Being offline in an online market). "Manual ways" (Traditional habits resisting modern tools).	P1
Staffing Strains	Crisis Labor Pressure	Pandemic restrictions forced a limited workforce to "work double time" to meet demand.	"Operational difficulties" (Internal stress during external shocks). "Restrictions" (Government-mandated hurdles). "Double time" (The physical toll on staff during a crisis).	P2, P3
Operational Strains	Production Reduction	Sales declines led to a necessary reduction in food preparation volume to avoid financial waste.	"Careful planning" (Defensive management). "Reduce the amount of food" (Shrinking operations in response to lower foot traffic).	P1
Brand Deficiencies	Branding Gaps	Use of unbranded packaging (plain bags) prevented the brand from gaining awareness outside the shop.	"No package name or branding" (Missed opportunity for mobile advertising). "Not attractive in a marketing sense" (Visual identity failure).	P1
Marketing Deficiencies	Promotional Rigidity	Absence of bundled meals or seasonal discounts compared to modern competitors.	"Disadvantage" (The impact of lacking flexible pricing). "No special discounts" (Failure to capitalize on life events like graduations).	P1
Competitive Hurdles	Competitive Displacement	The rise of cafes and malls shifted the customer base away from traditional spots.	"Customers Shifted to other restaurants" (Loss of market share). "Coffee shops or malls" (The emergence of lifestyle-oriented competitors).	P2, P3
Environmental Hurdles	Logistical Friction	Limited parking space discouraged spontaneous customers from stopping at the Magallanes location.	"No Parking Space" (Lost sales due to physical inconvenience). "Major hurdle" (Accessibility as a survival factor).	P1

Source: Data from the researchers.

4.8 Contribution of the Survival Techniques to the Overall Business Performance of NESTA’s Food Center

4.8.1 Market Dominance

The findings revealed that NESTA’S Food Center achieved market dominance through long-term consistency, product quality, and community trust. Participants described the establishment as a cultural and culinary landmark in Capiz, where the brand became synonymous with authentic local food. This iconic market status enabled the business to sustain strong customer recall, reduce dependence on aggressive advertising, and maintain a stable customer base for over four decades. The study demonstrated that survival techniques centered on quality control, trust-building, and reputation management significantly contributed to the business’s sustained leadership within the local food industry.

4.8.2 Peak Success

The study found that NESTA’S Food Center experienced periods of peak success during festive seasons, local celebrations, and pre-pandemic operations. Participants emphasized that the business regularly operated at maximum capacity during holidays and fiesta seasons, where food production consistently sold out. These high-demand periods generated significant revenue and strengthened operational stability during slower months. The findings highlighted that the business’s survival techniques—particularly operational efficiency, quality consistency, and strong community positioning—enabled the establishment to reach a stage of optimized performance and market maturity before the pandemic disrupted its momentum.

4.8.3 Resilience through Customer Loyalty

The findings showed that customer loyalty served as a critical source of resilience for NESTA’S Food Center throughout its 44-year history. Through the Filipino “Suki” system, the business cultivated long-term relationships based on familiarity, trust, affordable pricing, and consistent food quality. Participants emphasized that loyal customers continued supporting the establishment despite economic difficulties and increased competition. This loyalty provided a stable and predictable source of revenue that sustained the business during periods of uncertainty. The study demonstrated that prioritizing customer retention and emotional connection strengthened organizational resilience and contributed directly to long-term business sustainability.

4.8.4 Service-Driven Trust

The study revealed that service-driven trust significantly enhanced the business performance of NESTA’S Food Center. Participants highlighted that personalized service, honesty, consistency, and genuine hospitality created strong public trust and long-term customer satisfaction. Employees developed close relationships with regular patrons, often remembering customers’ preferences and treating them like family. This personalized approach transformed the business into a trusted social institution rather than a purely transactional establishment. The findings demonstrated that trust and customer satisfaction functioned as valuable intangible assets that strengthened brand reputation, customer retention, and overall operational stability.

4.8.5 The Adaptation Gap (Decline)

The findings identified an adaptation gap that contributed to the eventual decline of NESTA’S Food Center. Participants explained that the business struggled to integrate digital technologies, online ordering systems, digital marketing, and modern operational tools during the post-pandemic shift toward digital consumption. While competitors rapidly adapted to online platforms and convenience-based services, the establishment remained heavily dependent on traditional walk-in customers and manual systems. This inability to balance tradition with modernization created operational rigidity and limited growth opportunities. The study demonstrated that survival techniques effective in the past eventually became barriers to innovation when market demands changed rapidly.

4.8.6 Competitive Displacement

The study found that competitive displacement weakened the market position of NESTA’S Food Center as modern malls, coffee shops, and commercial centers transformed consumer behavior in Roxas City. Participants explained that customers increasingly preferred air-conditioned, aesthetically modern, and convenience-oriented establishments. The opening of SM City Roxas and similar commercial hubs redirected foot traffic away from traditional city-center establishments like NESTA’S Food Center. Although the business retained its loyal patrons, changing lifestyle preferences and shifting urban consumer patterns reduced its broader market reach and daily customer volume.

4.8.7 Legacy Performance vs. Growth

The findings revealed that NESTA’S Food Center achieved sustained performance through legacy branding and public recognition rather than aggressive expansion or modern marketing strategies. Participants emphasized that the establishment relied heavily on word-of-mouth promotion, institutional trust, and historical reputation as a city pioneer. The business became deeply embedded within the social and cultural identity of Roxas City, earning recognition from both public and private sectors. However, the study also showed that prioritizing heritage preservation and traditional operations over modernization limited the business’s ability to expand and compete with rapidly evolving market trends. This highlights the tension between maintaining authenticity and pursuing growth in heritage food enterprises.

Table 3: Contribution of the survival techniques to the overall business performance of NESTA’s food center.

Major Themes	Emerging Themes	Descriptions	Quotes	Participants
Market Dominance	Iconic Market Status	NESTA’S food center became a household name in Capiz, synonymous with high-quality local flavor and consistent success.	"Synonymous with 'the food of the province' (Brand saturation). "Business becomes successful" (A long-standing reputation as a metric of performance).	P1
Peak Success	Festive Season Saturation	The business reached its peak during holidays, often selling out all inventory due to extreme demand.	"We’re always completely sold out" (Maximum capacity performance). "We reached peak before the pandemic" (Historical high point).	P1, P2
Resilience through Customer Loyalty	Suki-Based Stability	Maintaining high quality and low prices ensured a steady, loyal customer base that provided a buffer during economic shifts.	"We value the quality and familiarity" (Consistency as a driver of loyalty). "We retained our loyal customers" (Focus on retention as a performance survival tactic).	P1, P2

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	Service-Driven Trust	Long-term relationships and personalized service created a high level of repeat patronage and public trust.	"We build trust" (Social capital as a business asset). "Customers were satisfied with the service" (Customer satisfaction as a key performance indicator).	P2, P3
The Adaptation Gap (Decline)	Digitalization Stagnation	A lack of digital tools led to a decline in post-pandemic sales as competitors pivoted to online platforms.	"We struggled to adapt" (Operational rigidity). "We only have limited growth" (The failure to regain momentum after the pandemic). "Bridge the gap" (The struggle between tradition and new market requirements).	P1
	Competitive Displacement	Modern hubs like SM Mall drew away customers, affecting the traditional performance model of the Magallanes branch.	"Affected because customers were drawn to the new commercial center" (The impact of external market shifts on local performance).	P2
Legacy Performance vs. Growth	Public Recognition	Even without promotions, the brand maintained its success through a legacy of being a city pioneer.	"We gain recognition from public and private sectors" (Institutional brand equity). "We continued to grow without promotions" (The power of reputation).	P2, P3

Source: Data from the researchers.

4.9 Lessons Learned on NESTA'S Food Center Survival Techniques and Business Operation

4.9.1 Human-Centric Leadership

The findings revealed that human-centric leadership was a fundamental factor behind the long-term survival of NESTA'S Food Center. Participants emphasized that the founder's passion, perseverance, and genuine care for both employees and customers created a culture of commitment and resilience within the organization. Leadership rooted in empathy, dedication, and personal involvement fostered employee motivation, loyalty, and service excellence. The study demonstrated that the founder's "grit" and love for the business became the driving force that sustained the establishment through decades of operational and economic challenges.

4.9.2 Family Workplace Culture

The study found that a strong family workplace culture significantly contributed to the operational stability and longevity of NESTA'S Food Center. Employees described the workplace as a supportive environment built on mutual respect, teamwork, and emotional connection rather than rigid hierarchy. Participants highlighted that treating co-workers like family reduced workplace stress, encouraged cooperation, and strengthened employee loyalty. This culture of mutual assistance and open communication created a resilient workforce capable of sustaining high-quality service even during demanding periods. The findings demonstrated that internal organizational relationships were central to the business's long-term operational success.

4.9.3 Modernization and Market Pivot

The findings revealed that modernization and market pivoting became essential lessons for sustaining relevance in a changing food industry. Participants recognized that younger consumers increasingly valued visually appealing, social media-friendly, and experience-oriented dining environments. The study highlighted the importance of balancing tradition with modernization by updating physical spaces, adopting digital-friendly strategies, and catering to evolving consumer preferences. The inability to adapt quickly to aesthetic and digital trends was identified as a major challenge, emphasizing that heritage businesses must continuously realign their operations and branding with the expectations of younger generations.

4.9.4 Digital Readiness

The study found that digital readiness emerged as a critical requirement for business survival in the modern economy. Participants emphasized that online visibility, digital accessibility, and technological adaptation are no longer optional but essential for maintaining competitiveness. The findings showed that consumers increasingly relied on social media, online delivery platforms, and digital payment systems when choosing food establishments. Participants recognized that integrating digital tools would allow the business to expand its reach, improve customer convenience, and remain visible in a technology-driven market. The study demonstrated that digital transformation functions as both a survival strategy and a pathway toward market expansion.

4.9.4 Value-Based Entrepreneurship

The findings revealed that value-based entrepreneurship served as a core philosophy behind the long-term success of NESTA'S Food Center. Participants emphasized that the business prioritized customer satisfaction, community service, and emotional connection over aggressive profit maximization. The establishment became deeply integrated into the social lives and celebrations of the people of Capiz, creating strong emotional bonds with generations of customers. This people-centered approach generated trust, loyalty, and social capital that sustained the business for over four decades. The study demonstrated that businesses rooted in values, integrity, and community connection achieve deeper and more sustainable forms of success.

4.9.5 Quality Consistency

The study found that maintaining consistent food quality was one of the most important survival techniques employed by NESTA'S Food Center. Participants emphasized that preserving the original taste, preparation standards, and product quality built long-term customer trust and loyalty. The business refused to compromise on ingredients or service quality even during periods of rising operational costs. At the same time, participants recognized the importance of innovation and adapting to changing market trends to prevent stagnation. The findings demonstrated that balancing consistency with gradual innovation enabled the establishment to preserve its legacy while remaining relevant to evolving consumer expectations.

4.9.6 Strategic Logistics and Growth

The findings revealed that strategic logistics and infrastructure optimization played a significant role in supporting long-term business performance. Participants highlighted the importance of accessibility, parking availability, and efficient customer flow in maintaining customer convenience and satisfaction. As Roxas City became more urbanized and vehicle-dependent, logistical considerations became increasingly important to sustaining customer visits. The study also emphasized the need for businesses to become more spontaneous, accessible, and responsive to modern consumer behavior. These insights demonstrated that operational growth depends not only on product quality but also on minimizing barriers that affect customer accessibility and purchasing decisions.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

The research concludes that the business's longevity over its 44-year journey was rooted in a powerful "Suki" system and an unwavering commitment to quality. By maintaining the exact same flavors and fair pricing from 1980 until its closure on September 30, 2024, the establishment moved beyond being a simple eatery and became a trusted community institution in Roxas City. This deep-seated trust acted as a protective shield, allowing the business to maintain a loyal following even as the local market began to change. The study concludes that building these personal relationships creates a "reputation anchor" that helps a business survive for decades, proving that the bond between the owner and the customer is the strongest defense against new competition. The study concludes that a human-centric approach was the primary driver of internal stability. The management successfully fostered a family-like workplace culture based on *malasakit*, treating employees as kin rather than just workers. This leadership style resulted in high employee loyalty and a genuine level of service that modern, corporate franchises often struggle to replicate. Furthermore, the research concludes that this clan culture provided a strong internal support system that sustained the business through many years of market shifts. By prioritizing staff well-being and maintaining a family-like atmosphere, the business navigated operational strains with a dedicated team that felt a personal stake in the center's success.

The findings suggest that while traditional relationship-building ensured decades of success, an adaptation gap eventually emerged. As the food industry shifted toward digital readiness, online ordering, and new aesthetic trends, the reliance on purely traditional methods made it difficult to attract younger, convenience-oriented customers. This indicates that while legacy performance creates a strong brand heart, it must eventually be supported by modern tools to stay competitive in a digital economy. The study concludes that the "substitution effect"—where customers replace old habits with new options that fit modern life—is a significant risk for heritage brands that do not update their business model.

For business longevity, highlight the necessity of a market pivot. The study concludes that for a business to survive indefinitely, it must balance its core values with the agility to adopt new technologies like e-payments and social media. While the business stayed true to its roots, the lack of digital transformation toward the end of its operation served as a critical lesson in the importance of staying relevant to the next generation.

Ultimately, the story of NESTA'S food center serves as a vital lesson that true business performance is measured by the ability to keep the "soul" of a tradition alive while evolving to meet the needs of the modern world. Future entrepreneurs must learn that while "Suki" trust is the foundation, digital readiness is the bridge that allows a legacy to cross over into the future.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to ensure that the lessons learned from NESTA'S food center can be applied by relevant stakeholders to improve business performance and longevity. The Business Owner may start by writing down the simple "family rules" that made the workplace feel like home. Since a family-like culture helped the business survive for 44 years, having these values on paper helps new staff understand how to treat coworkers and customers with the same care as the original team.

To keep the brand from feeling "old-fashioned," the owner should do a simple check-up every year to see what younger customers want. Instead of changing everything, the owner can just pick one or two modern habits to adopt, like adding a new popular drink or updating the signs, so the business stays fresh while keeping its classic soul. Local entrepreneurs should focus on building "Suki"

trust by ensuring every customer feels special and recognized. Creating this emotional bond is a powerful way to make sure people keep coming back even when big, fancy franchises open up nearby.

They must also set up basic digital tools right from the start, such as a Facebook page or a GCash account for easy payments. Being "digitally ready" doesn't have to be expensive; it just means making sure customers can find the shop online and pay without needing physical cash. For customers, they may help keep local landmarks alive by choosing to eat at locally owned shops instead of going only to big malls or chains. By bringing their children or younger friends to these places, they pass on the tradition and help the business find a new generation of loyal fans. They should also talk to the owners and give friendly advice on what they would like to see, such as "it would be great if you were on delivery apps". Most small owners appreciate honest feedback because it helps them understand how to close the "gap" between their old ways and what people need today. Government and policymakers may create easy-to-follow training programs that teach older business owners how to use smartphones and social media for their shops. These "digital workshops" can help heritage businesses stay visible and modern without feeling overwhelmed by technology. They could also give heritage awards or small tax breaks to businesses that have served the city for over 30 years. Recognizing these shops as cultural treasures helps protect the city's history and encourage the next generation of the family to keep the business running. Academe may use real local stories, such as NESTA's journey, to teach students about management rather than relying solely on examples from large foreign companies. This helps students understand how business actually works in their own community and city. Schools can also set up "Student Help" projects where marketing or IT students help local shops set up Facebook pages or fix their inventory. This gives students real practice and gives busy business owners the extra hands they need to modernize.

Other food business owners may remember that the taste and quality of the food must never change, even if they decide to grow or open a second branch. Customers come back for the "familiar taste," and if that disappears because the owner got too busy, the loyalty of the "Suki" will disappear too. They should also treat their employees like family, being approachable and kind. When staff feel happy and respected, they work harder and treat customers better, which is a free and easy way to improve business performance. Future researchers may do a simple study on how many local shops in other towns are using delivery apps or Facebook. This would help show whether being "online" is really the most important thing for a business to survive today. They could also interview younger people to find out why they choose new cafes over old food centers. Understanding what drives youth to switch to new brands can help heritage businesses "pivot" and win back younger customers.

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