



Sustainability of Online Merchandising Business in the Province of Cavite

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Abstract – Starting an online business in the Philippines is the best option to gain experience in managing an enterprise. It does not require much capital, and the risks associated with running an Internet-based business are manageable. As with all businesses, there is great potential for income, and this directly corresponds with your productivity. In the business world, sustainability is a company's capacity to grow while minimizing negative impact on the local community or the environment at large. It goes beyond corporate social responsibility (CSR). This research has been conducted to determine the strategies used by business owners, to attain sustainability of online merchandising business patterned on the Attention-Interest-Desire-Trust-Action-Satisfaction (AIDTAS) theory of selling. It uses a descriptive type of research using a survey questionnaire as the main research instrument. The participants of the study were the online merchandising business owners in the province of Cavite. Weighted mean, Mann-Whitney U Test and Kruskal Wallis Test was utilized as the primary tool for statistical treatment of data and SPSS was employed for statistical analysis. Findings disclose that most business owners highly preferred to use the trust domain indicators which includes offering meet-ups, pick-ups and door-to-door delivery services to customers, customer testimonials, moneyback guarantees, cash-on-delivery (COD) payment terms and private policy for securing data of customers. The results likewise reveal that the strategies used by business owners to attain sustainability of merchandising business in terms of AIDTAS are the same regardless of their sex, age, length of existence and social media platform used. Based on the salient findings, an action plan was formulated in order to find out the reasons on the significant differences based on age bracket of usual customers in terms of trust and action domain, action domain for kinds of products offered and attention domain in terms of average monthly income.

Keywords – Business Sustainability, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Online Merchandising Business, Strategies, Sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, setting up an online shop to sell the products can be a useful and profitable way of doing business. It allows to operate without necessarily needing a traditional shop front and gives the customers more flexibility because they can buy products at any time of the day. That's what online merchandising offers, it is about focusing on detail to ensure that customers find what they are looking for conveniently, so that business owners can sell more products and attain business success.

However, regardless of the advantages this kind of business is offering, the sustainability is more complicated and unsure. A capitalist must take note that

a traditional business setting can still decline and not sustain profit thus succeed if not managed efficiently and properly. It doesn't mean that investing in an online business is a sure success. Online entrepreneurs still take risks and are still in a trial and error stage especially in this kind of platform due to the fast paced development in technology that affects all the opportunities, users and beneficiaries of the internet.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main aim of this study was to determine the strategies used by business owners, to attain sustainability of online merchandising business patterned on the Action-Interest-Desire-Trust-Action-Satisfaction (AIDTAS) theory of selling. Specifically,



this sought to answer the following research queries; (1) What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, length of existence of the business, frequently used social media platform, age bracket of usual customers, kinds of product offered and the average monthly profit; (2) What are the strategies of the business owners used in order to attain sustainability of the merchandising business in terms of attention, interest, desire, trust, action, and satisfaction? (3) Is there a significant difference between the strategies used by business owners to attain sustainability of merchandising business when grouped according to sex, age, length of business existence, social media platform used, age bracket of usual customers, kinds of product offered, and average monthly profit? and lastly, based on the findings, what proposed action plan for ensuring sustainability in an online merchandising business can be proposed and/or formulate?.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research problems and objectives posed at the beginning of the study was answered through a descriptive-correlational research design. The researcher used of descriptive method to obtain the respondents' demographic and socioeconomic variables. The proponents also used correlational design to determine significant difference between strategies used by business owners to attain sustainability of merchandising business and demographic and socioeconomic variables. The population of the study were the owners of online merchandising business. Based on the formula utilized by survey companies, a total of one hundred (100) respondents were chosen through simple random sampling at 95% confidence level with ± 10.0 margin of error.

Sources of Data

This study has two sources of data; namely primary sources of data and secondary sources. The primary sources of data are the respondents-participants of the study. The secondary sources of the data will be journals, unpublished thesis, dissertations, internet and manuscripts about the sustainability of online merchandising businesses which will be deemed to be value to the development of this study.

Instrumentation and Validation

The research used a self-made questionnaire which was patterned on the AIDTAS theory of Selling for the purpose of collecting the needed primary data. The

questionnaire designed for the study was subjected to a validation process for face and content validity. In the validation process of this study, copies of the questionnaire and copies of the research questions were given to experts. These experts went through the research questions and the questionnaire carefully to ascertain the appropriateness and adequacy of the instrument. Having validated the questionnaire, a pilot testing was carried out, from the pilot test, the researcher was able to understand the ambiguity of some items and so had to modify it to the level of the questionnaire. That is, the researcher resorted to using questionnaires written in English.

Evaluation and Scoring

The researcher used a self-made questionnaire composed of the different variables of the study, to wit: Attention, Interest, Desire, Trust, Action and Satisfaction. A total of thirty (30) items were answered by the respondents.

The survey form was composed of a five-point Likert scale statements that measured the respondents' strategies used by business owners, to attain sustainability of online merchandising business. The instrument was divided into two parts. Part 1 demographic profile of the respondents and part 2 aimed to determine the strategies used by business owners, to attain sustainability of online merchandising business.

Data Gathering Procedure

After the pilot testing and all necessary modifications, the questionnaires were administered directly to the chosen sample for the study. The researcher explained carefully the instructions to the respondents for a better understanding. Questionnaires were given out and one hundred (100) were successfully completed and returned. The data collected from the field were tallied, tabulated and analysed using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Online merchandising businesses in Cavite was owned mostly by females which is 72% of the total population and were at the age of 26-30 years old. These businesses are running successfully for about 1 to 3 years and the most used platform to market their product is Facebook. Clothing and ready-to-wear (RTW) products topped as the product offered by the sellers. Customers patronizing this kind of business or online merchandising business are from 21-25 years old. This are included in



the Gen Z and Millennials demographical cohort. Data results are similar to the statistical data provided by We Are Social Hootsuite (2019), wherein Facebook remains to be the most used social media platform in online selling in the Philippines and the generation z and millennials to be the top users and customers for this kind of business. Businessmen in this kind of setting earns an average of Php 10,000 to Php 20,000 in a month.

Among the six-domain strategies used by business owners to attain sustainability of merchandising business, “Trust” domain attained the highest average weighted mean of 4.85 with a descriptive equivalent of “Strongly Agree”. This implies that most business owners highly preferred to use the trust domain indicators which includes offering meet-ups, pick-ups

and door-to-door delivery services to customers, customer testimonials, moneyback guarantees, cash-on-delivery (COD) payment terms and private policy for securing data of customers.

The results likewise reveal that the strategies used by business owners to attain sustainability of merchandising business in terms of AIDTAS are the same regardless of their sex, age, length of existence and social media platform used. Based on the salient findings, an action plan was formulated in order to find out the reasons on the significant differences based on age bracket of usual customers in terms of trust and action domain, action domain for kinds of products offered and attention domain in terms of average monthly income.

**Table 1
Proposed Action Plan**

Area/Thrust	Objectives	Strategies	Target Clientele	Time Frame	Persons Involved	Source of Fund	Success Indicator
Engagement of male business owners on online merchandising business	To entice male business owners to engage in online merchandising business	Seminars on Advantages of Online Merchandising Business	Males who wants to do business	January 2020	Organizations who are willing to conduct seminars, trainings and workshop preferably CBP.	Non-Profit Organizations	Heightened Percentages of Male Business Owners engaged in Online Merchandising Business
Business Literacy	To be able for participants to know the process of how to put business entity especially online merchandising business	Seminar and Training tackling about how to start a business and its processes	Start Up Business Owners	Every Saturday of the Month	BIR and DTI Personnel	Non-Profit Organizations	More people have better knowledge on putting up business.
New Trends and strategies in the Online Merchandising Business	To determine New Trends and strategies in the Online Merchandising Business	Follow-up Study	Existing Business owners and Prospects	Semi-Annual	Graduate School Students	Schools, Universities	Identified new set of trends in online businesses



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CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The researchers concluded that there is no sufficient evidence at 0.05 level of significance to show that there is a significant Difference in the Strategies Used by Business Owners to Attain Sustainability of Merchandising Business When They Are Grouped According to sex, age, length of existence and social media platform used. On the other hand, there is a sufficient evidence at 0.05 level of significance to show that there is a significant difference in strategies used by Business owners to Attain Sustainability of Merchandising Business in terms of trust and action domain, when they grouped according to Age bracket of usual customers. In addition, there is a sufficient evidence at 0.05 level of significance to show that there is a significant difference in strategies used by Business owners to Attain Sustainability of Merchandising Business in terms of action domain, when they grouped according to Kind of products offered. In terms of attention domain when group according to average monthly profit, there is a sufficient evidence at 0.05 level of significance to show that there is a significant difference in strategies used by Business owners to Attain Sustainability of Merchandising Business.

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