

RESEARCH ARTICLE

HOME BAKING INDUSTRY: BASIS FOR MICRO-ENTREPRENEURIAL STUDY

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ARTICLE DETAILS

Article History:

Received 10 October 2024
Revised 28 November 2024
Accepted 14 December 2024
Available online 24 January 2025

ABSTRACT

The home baking industry blends commerce with tradition, offering a diverse range of flavors from micro-entrepreneurs worldwide. Despite its appeal, starting a home baking business faces its challenges. Hence, this study aims to bridge the research gap in micro-entrepreneurship within the home baking sector. Considering this, a descriptive-quantitative research design was employed in the study to determine the primary challenges faced by micro-entrepreneurs in accessing market opportunities within the home baking industry, how competitive pressures impact pricing strategies among micro-entrepreneurs in the home baking sector, the marketing and branding strategies are most effective in attracting customers for micro-entrepreneurs in the home baking industry, and how technological advancements and digital platforms influence the operations of micro-entrepreneurs in the home baking sector. A total of 53 respondents were chosen in the study using a cluster sampling techniques and a self-made research questionnaire was used to gather the data needed in the study. Based on the findings, demographically, the majority of respondents were middle-income earners with bachelor's degrees, mostly self-employed, and had moderate access to capital, kitchen equipment, and ingredients. They predominantly resided in urban areas, facing moderate demand for their products. Challenges identified included competition from larger bakeries and brands, with pricing strategies being a major concern. Marketing strategies focused on visually appealing packaging and personalized offerings, while social media was heavily utilized for promotion. However, email marketing and participation in online baking competitions were less commonly employed strategies

KEYWORDS

Market opportunities, Competitive pressures, Pricing strategies, Marketing and branding strategies, Technological advancements, Digital platforms

1. INTRODUCTION

The Home Baking Industry has developed as an enthralling combination of tradition and business, where the delectable aroma of freshly baked sweets blends with the dreams of micro-entrepreneurs. A subtle revolution is unfolding in kitchens around the world, as people use their culinary skills to launch business ventures from the comfort of their own homes. From artisanal bread and luscious cakes to gourmet cookies and savory treats, the home baking sector offers a diverse range of flavors that appeal to consumers seeking authenticity and excellence in their culinary experiences.

However, entering the world of home baking entrepreneurship is not without its hurdles. Despite the overwhelming preference for handcrafted confections, gaining a footing in the market is a daunting endeavor. The business already has several established bakeries, making it difficult for newcomers to build out a distinct brand. Furthermore, establishing the most successful ways to advertise and reach target demographics can be a difficult task. Furthermore, negotiating the dense web of laws and regulations governing food production and sales complicates the entrepreneurial journey. In this environment, ambitious entrepreneurs must tread carefully, balancing their creative goals with the necessity of compliance (Kushwah and Kumar, 2017).

Nonetheless, amidst these hurdles, there is a wealth of potential for those with the foresight and ability to successfully negotiate the terrain. While the appeal of home baking entices promises of creativity and fulfillment,

success in this competitive profession necessitates strategic planning, imaginative thinking, and a firm dedication to quality and customer happiness. Thus, while the voyage may be difficult, it is also loaded with opportunities for growth, creativity, and business success.

This study aims to close the research gap in the field of micro-entrepreneurship in the home baking business. While current literature sheds light on several aspects of entrepreneurship and culinary arts, there is a scarcity of thorough studies that particularly investigate the complexities of micro-entrepreneurship in the context of home baking. Individuals working in this specialist area have distinct issues that necessitate a detailed investigation to uncover the underlying dynamics and offer practical answers for supporting long-term progress.

The rationale for this study is based on a twin commitment: to understand the multifaceted obstacles that micro-entrepreneurs confront in the home baking industry, as well as to examine methods to improve their success and resilience. This study aims to provide actionable insights that can inform strategic decision-making and policy formulation by shedding light on the primary challenges in accessing market opportunities, the impact of competitive pressures on pricing strategies, the effectiveness of marketing and branding strategies, and the influence of technological advancements. In doing so, it hopes to accelerate positive change in the home baking scene, enabling micro-entrepreneurs to prosper in an increasingly competitive and dynamic market.

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Website:
www.myecommercejournal.com

DOI:
10.26480/mecj.02.2024.88.94

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Today, bakeries can be found everywhere, which is no surprise. Though there are numerous bakery product exporters in Finland, not all are successful in making their items become viral on the market. The primary factor could be the product's quality. Furthermore, they did not use the proper equipment to ensure that the products were produced quickly without losing quality. To achieve successful outcomes, baking products must be made with high-quality tools and equipment. Because of the delicate nature of the materials or product, baking certain things is extremely difficult without the proper equipment. Furthermore, the manufacturing process has a significant impact on whether business owners experience success or failure. Some major challenges that small businesses face include product selection, supply-demand imbalance, financing, access to and availability of starter materials, technical points of interest, marketing and profitability, marketing plan, monitoring negative or false statements, accidental disclosure of private information, and unauthorized employees representing the company (Naqvi, 2022).

Agreed to a study, becoming a huge commercial bakery requires a significant amount of capital to purchase equipment, and you will face intense competition from established well-known brands (Woodruff, 2019). Opening a small retail bakery involves less capital and is easy to establish. Smaller bakeries can establish themselves by offering unique items like whole-grain breads and attracting a loyal following of local customers.

Similarly, in an article by a researcher the bakery industry is currently facing severe challenges, including growing energy costs, difficulty recruiting suitable workers, inflation, and company management issues (Gaux, 2024). High energy use during bread production is a key challenge, straining bakery budgets and necessitating energy-saving methods. Finding talented people is difficult because many choose alternative jobs, resulting in a deficit of incompetence. Inflation drives up ingredient costs, affecting retail pricing and profits. Some bakeries maintain their competitiveness by implementing effective energy-saving techniques and running efficient operations. However, controlling these difficulties remains difficult for bread operations.

In connection with this, Finding the proper selling price is more of an art than a science, as it involves balancing customer attractiveness and a fair profit margin. As you extend your menu with these tantalizing goodies, let's look at the essential tactics for pricing your baked goods wisely, ensuring your baking business succeeds in a competitive market. The bakery industry is broad, with many sorts each with its particular economic potential. For example, an Artisan Bakery specializing in high-quality, handcrafted goods frequently attracts a premium market prepared to pay more for specialist products (Padkowska, 2024).

According to Amari, choosing the correct pricing plan is critical to the success of your organization (Amari, 2020). It enables you to target the proper audience and attract clients who are willing to pay for your products or services. For example, utilizing an economy pricing strategy for luxury items may turn away potential purchasers who anticipate superior quality at higher rates. A premium price plan, on the other hand, may not appeal to buyers on a tight budget. Pricing correctly assures profitability and keeps you from selling at a loss. Understanding your specialty and choosing the right pricing approach will allow you to set prices that will create money and sustain your firm (Kumar, 2024).

Moreover, Marketing is a crucial component of any business, particularly for one that manufactures items or goods. Marketing allows a company to present its items to a wider audience and persuade purchasers to be

interested in the offerings. Because businesses confront strong competition, they must have marketing techniques that can be tailored to their own businesses. A group researches define a marketing strategy as a marketing attitude that assists a business unit in meeting marketing objectives (Wiguna et al., 2022). It includes a target market-specific strategy, product positioning factors, marketing mix, and marketing expenditures. The advancement of information and communication technology has an impact on the marketing plan that an organization might implement. There are numerous ways to target a product, both directly and indirectly (Kumar, 2009).

In addition, the capacity to establish and implement a strategy determines a company's progress because it needs business leaders to think long-term and improve all aspects of its implementation more innovatively. Entrepreneurs use marketing strategies to sustain business continuity, develop, and generate profits (Dellia Mila Vernia et al., 2020). Marketing strategy is defined as the analysis, planning, implementation, and oversight of programs that try to build contacts with a target market to achieve organizational goals. According to a study, a marketing strategy may be defined as a sequence of activities aimed at accomplishing predetermined goals, which are, of course, the result of a policy that becomes a rule that is followed for a specific length of time (Taufik, 2021).

Lastly, the bakery products industry has undergone technological breakthroughs that have increased production efficiency and quality. It is vital to remember that the development of technology equipment in the bakery products industry is a continuing process, with new improvements being presented regularly. These technologies are intended to expedite production, increase product quality, decrease waste, and improve overall efficiency in bakery operations (BBM, 2023).

Technology in bakery systems has worked to enhance the efficiency and manufacture of baked goods, while also facilitating consumer interactions and providing remote assistance during the pandemic. As trends emerge in the confectionery and bakery industries, machinery must adapt to meet the demands of these developments, assisting producers in discovering more effective ways of producing products, streamlining processes, and maximizing customer profitability (in-confectionary, 2021).

3. METHODS

A descriptive-quantitative research design was applied to assess the variables of the study which were to determine the primary challenges faced by microentrepreneurs in accessing market opportunities within the home baking industry, how competitive pressures impact pricing strategies among micro-entrepreneurs in the home baking sector, the marketing and branding strategies are most effective in attracting customers for microentrepreneurs in the home baking industry, and how technological advancements and digital platforms influence the operations of micro-entrepreneurs in the home-baking sector. The respondents of this study were the micro-entrepreneurs engaged in the home baking industry of Quezon Province with a total population of 53. The research instrument used the form of a researcher-made survey questionnaire which was administered in Quezon Province.

This study focused on quantitative research in which surveys were the primary method of data collection, allowing for the collection of numerical data that can be analyzed statistically. Descriptive statistics such as mean, median, and standard deviation were used to summarize the responses of the micro-entrepreneurs.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Household Income Levels		
High Income	1	1.9
Middle Income	45	84.9
Low Income	7	13.2
Educational Attainment		
High School Graduate	1	1.9
4th Year College Student	1	1.9
BSED Undergraduate	1	1.9
Vocational Training	10	18.9

Table 1 (cont): Demographic Profile of the Respondents		
Bachelor's Degree	34	64.2
Masteral Degree	6	11.3
Employment Status		
Full-time Employment	15	28.3
Part-time Employment	6	11.3
Self Employed	27	50.9
Unemployed	5	9.4
Access to Resources in terms of Capital		
Abundant Access	1	1.9
Moderate Access	41	77.4
Limited Access	11	20.8
Access to Resources in terms of Kitchen Equipment		
Abundant Access	4	7.5
Moderate Access	37	69.8
Limited Access	12	22.6
Access to Resources in terms of Ingredients		
Abundant Access	12	22.6
Moderate Access	36	67.9
Limited Access	5	9.4
Location		
Rural	13	24.5
Suburban	6	11.3
Urban	34	64.2
Market Demand		
High Demand	7	13.2
Moderate Demand	42	79.2
Low Demand	4	7.5
TOTAL	53	100.0

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of household income levels, educational attainment, employment status, access to resources in terms of capital, kitchen equipment, and ingredients, location, and demand. The data was gathered from a total of 53 respondents and a percentage analysis was used to analyze the data of the study.

With this, the household income levels of the respondents were determined using a category of high income, middle income, and low income. Concerning this, the majority of the respondents were middle-income earners with a frequency of 45 or 84.9%. Whereas, the minority of the respondents were high-income earners with a frequency of 1 or 1.9%. This data shows that the micro-entrepreneurs are financially capable of supporting their small businesses in home baking considering that middle-earners in the Philippines are those that can have a monthly income of PHP18,200 – 109,200. This was supported by an article written by Divina wherein, the middle class income is divided into lower middle, middle middle, and upper middle class (Divina, 2024). The lower middle class have a family income of PHP18,200 – 36,400, the middle middle class have a family income of PHP 36,400-63,700, and the upper middle class have a family income of PHP63,700 – 109,200.

With regard to the educational attainment of the respondents, it was determined that the respondents were distributed among high school graduates, 4th year college students, BSED undergraduate, vocational training, bachelor's degree, and masteral degree. Specifically, the majority of the micro-entrepreneurs were those who have a bachelor's degree with a frequency of 34 or 64.2% while, the minority of the respondents were those who are high school graduate, 4th year college student, and BSED undergraduate with a frequency of 1 or 1.9%. This data suggests that most

of the respondents who pursue micro-entrepreneurial businesses particularly in home baking were those that belonged to the population of people who have a bachelor's degree.

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Aside from the educational attainment of the respondents, the employment status was also determined. The employment status of the respondents was categorized based on full-time employment, part-time employment, self-employed, and unemployed. About this, the majority of the respondents were self-employed with a frequency of 27 or 50.9% whereas, the minority of the respondents were categorized unemployed with a frequency of 5 or 9.4%. This data indicates that since the respondents were micro-entrepreneurs and were focused on home baking, mostly were self-employed. Based on an article written by Manahan, since the emergence of the pandemic and the closure of food establishments across the country have paved the way for the start of home-based businesses such as home-based baking (Manahan, 2021). It was also noted in the article that there have been circulating online recipes that enabled Filipinos, who have lost their jobs, to have a different way of

earning money at home during the pandemic.

In connection to the access to resources in terms of capital, the responses of the participants were categorized as abundant access, moderate access, and limited access. Considering this, the majority of the respondents have moderate access to capital with a frequency of 41 or 77.4%. While the minority of the respondents have abundant access with a frequency of 1 or 1.9%. Considering the data analyzed, this signifies that since the respondents belonged to middle-income earners, their access to financial capital is also moderate. This means that the respondents can financially sustain their business considering their household income levels.

In relation to access to resources in terms of kitchen equipment, the responses of the participants were also categorized as to abundant access, moderate access, and limited access. With this, the majority of the respondents have moderate access to kitchen equipment with a frequency of 37 or 69.8% while the minority of the respondents have abundant access to kitchen equipment with a frequency of 4 or 7.5%. The data suggests that the locality of the respondents can provide them moderate access to kitchen equipment while also considering their household income levels which enabled them to have the capability to purchase the necessary equipment needed for home baking.

The access to resources in terms of ingredients was also categorized as to abundant access, moderate access, and limited access. Based on the data shown in the table, the majority of the respondents have moderate access to ingredients with a frequency of 36 or 67.9% while the minority of the respondents have limited access to ingredients with a frequency of 5 or 9.4%. In line with this, the access to ingredients may be linked to the availability of raw materials in the respondents' locality. Based on the data gathered from the respondents, the respondents have moderate access to raw ingredients thus, they can start a home baking business.

The location of the respondents was also determined based on the locality of their community as categorized as rural, suburban, and urban. Based on the data gathered from the respondents the majority belonged to the urban community with a frequency of 34 or 64.2% while the minority of the respondents belonged to the sub-urban community with a frequency of 6 or 11.3%. Considering this, since the respondents belonged to an urban community, they were able to access the necessary kitchen equipment and raw materials that they needed for a micro-entrepreneurial business such as home baking. Based on an article written by among the benefits of living in a city provides individuals access to factories that can provide goods and materials that are needed by people (Jagannath, 2020). This can also provide them with better educational opportunities and books that will be able to provide them with relevant information for their learning.

Lastly, the market demand was also determined and the responses of the participants of the study were categorized as high demand, moderate demand, and low demand. With regards to this, the majority of the respondents shared that their home baking business has a moderate demand within their community with a frequency of 42 or 79.2% while the minority have a low demand with a frequency of 4 or 7.5%. In line with this, since the majority of the respondents belonged to the urban community, it can be concluded that having a micro-entrepreneurial business such as home baking has a moderate demand within the community considering the number of individuals living in the same community. However, some of the respondents have low market demand thus, leading to challenges in their home baking business. According to an article written by determining the market demand of a business that you are about to start is a crucial skill that entrepreneurs should have to ensure a successful venture (Graver, 2024).

Table 2: Primary Challenges Faced by Micro-Entrepreneurs in Accessing Market Opportunities within the Home Baking Industry

Indicators	M	SD	Interpretation
1. My home baking business faces considerable challenges in identifying and reaching out to potential customers.	3.87	0.810	Encountered
2. Obtaining permissions and licenses to conduct my home baking business prevents me from taking advantage of market prospects.	3.26	1.273	Moderately Encountered
3. Competing with big bakeries and brands presents a significant barrier for my home baking business.	3.89	1.060	Encountered
4. Finding dependable sources of goods and materials is tough for my home baking business.	3.40	1.132	Moderately Encountered
5. Navigating marketing channels and venues to sell my home baking items is difficult.	3.47	1.085	Moderately Encountered
6. My home baking business faces a significant issue in managing production expenses while maintaining product quality.	3.62	1.113	Encountered
7. Understanding and adhering to food safety rules is a barrier to market entry in the home baking industry.	3.32	1.298	Moderately Encountered
8. It's difficult to balance baking time with administrative chores like accounting and inventory management.	3.62	1.113	Encountered
9. My home baking business has challenges in terms of brand recognition and commercial credibility.	3.68	0.915	Encountered
10. Adapting to shifting consumer preferences and trends presents difficulties for product creativity and individuality in the home baking market.	3.60	1.007	Encountered
Overall Mean	3.57	0.831	Encountered

Legend: 4.50 – 5.00 = Highly Encountered; 3.50 – 4.49 = Encountered; 2.50 – 3.49 = Moderately Encountered; 1.50 – 2.49 = Least Encountered; 1.00 – 1.49 = Never Encountered

Table 2 presents the primary challenges faced by micro-entrepreneurs in accessing market opportunities in the home baking industry. A total of ten (10) indicators were used to determine the primary challenges experienced by the micro-entrepreneurs. Considering this, an overall mean of 3.57 was obtained from the responses of the participants of the study which indicates that the following indicators used were encountered by the micro-entrepreneurs in home baking.

Specifically, the most often experienced among the challenges provided was “Competing with big bakeries and brands presents a significant barrier for my home baking business” which gained a computed mean of 3.89 which was interpreted to be encountered by the respondents. Whereas, the least often encountered among the challenges provided was “Understanding and adhering to food safety rules is a barrier to market entry in the home baking industry” wherein this obtained a computed mean of 3.32 and was interpreted to be moderately encountered by the respondents.

The results indicate that many home baking businesses struggle with competing against larger, more established bakeries and brands. This

challenge likely stems from factors such as brand recognition, pricing competition, and marketing resources available to larger companies. For home bakers, standing out in a crowded market and attracting customers can be particularly daunting when facing such stiff competition. On the other hand, while still recognized as a barrier, the challenge of understanding and adhering to food safety regulations appears to be less prevalent among respondents. This suggests that while compliance with food safety rules is important, it may not pose as significant a hurdle to market entry or ongoing operation for home bakers as the competition

from bigger players in the industry.

Considering this, according to Woodruff, growing a large commercial bakery involves investing a sizable sum of money to buy equipment, and you'll have to contend with fierce competition from well-known, well-established businesses (Woodruff, 2019). It is easier to start and requires less capital to open a small retail bakery. Smaller bakeries can make a name for themselves by drawing in a devoted local clientele and providing distinctive products like whole-grain breads.

Table 3: Impact of Competitive Pressures on Pricing Strategies among Micro-Entrepreneurs in the Home Baking Industry

Indicators	M	SD	Interpretation
1. Due to competing pressures, I frequently modify	3.85	.886	Agree
2. I believe pricing is an important aspect of being	4.45	.774	Agree
3. Competition from other home bakers has a huge	4.06	.929	Agree
4. I frequently perform market research to assess the	3.83	.975	Agree
5. When I see competitors selling similar things for less money, I feel compelled to cut my prices.	3.06	1.134	Moderately Agree
6. When deciding on costs, I assess the quality of my	4.08	1.107	Agree
7. The arrival of new participants in the home baking	3.55	1.084	Agree
8. I carefully employ discounts and promotions to	3.70	1.067	Agree
9. I believe that frequent price adjustments are required to remain competitive in the home baking business.	3.64	.982	Agree
10. My price selections are influenced by my brand's	4.13	.900	Agree
Overall Mean	3.83	.664	Agree

Legend: 4.50 – 5.00 =Strongly Agree; 3.50 – 4.49 = Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Moderately Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 – 1.49 =Strongly Disagree

Table 3 presents the impact of competitive pressures on pricing strategies on micro- entrepreneurs in the home baking sector. Ten (10) indicators were used to determine the impact of competitive pressures on pricing strategies in which these indicators gained an overall mean of 3.83 from the responses of the participants of the study. This indicates that the respondents agree that the indicators used were regarded to have an impact on their pricing strategies as micro-entrepreneurs in the home baking industry.

In line with this, based on the data analyzed by the respondents, it was determined that the most often encountered competitive pressure experienced by the respondents was from the statement which says that "I believe pricing is an important aspect of being competitive in the home baking sector" which gained a computed mean of 4.45 which was interpreted to be agreed by the respondents as a competitive pressure which affects their pricing strategies. Whereas, the least often experienced was from the statement which says, "When I see competitors selling similar things for less money, I feel compelled to cut my prices" which obtained a computed mean of 3.06 which was interpreted to be moderately agreed by the respondents.

The findings suggest that a significant number of home bakers perceive pricing as a key determinant of their competitiveness in the market. This implies that they believe setting the right prices for their products is crucial for attracting customers and staying competitive against other businesses in the home baking sector. On the other hand, while some respondents acknowledge the pressure to lower prices when competitors offer similar products at a lower cost, it appears to be less prevalent compared to the emphasis placed on the importance of pricing itself. This suggests that while pricing pressure exists, home bakers may not feel as compelled to engage in price-cutting strategies as they do in ensuring that their pricing strategies align with perceived value and market positioning.

Accordingly, determining the right selling price requires striking a balance between a fair profit margin and the attraction of customers, making it more of an art than a science. As you add these delicious treats to your menu, let's examine the key strategies for properly pricing baked goods so that your baking company may thrive in a cutthroat industry. There are many different types of bakeries, each with a unique economic potential, making the business vast. For instance, a premium market willing to pay extra for specialized items is usually drawn to an artisan bakery that specializes in fine, handcrafted foods (Padkowska, 2024).

Table 4: Marketing and Branding Strategies that are Most Effective in Attracting Customers for Micro-Entrepreneurs in the Home Baking Industry

Indicators	M	SD	Interpretation
1. I frequently utilize social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook to promote my home-baked goods and interact with potential consumers.	4.51	0.775	Highly Employed
2. I believe that developing visually beautiful packaging for my baked goods increases their perceived value and draws in more customers.	4.57	0.636	Highly Employed
3. Offering personalized/customized baked items boosts consumer interest and loyalty in my home baking business.	4.57	0.605	Highly Employed
4. Influencer marketing and collaboration with local influencers assist me in promoting my home baking items to a larger audience.	3.42	1.393	Employed
5. Maintaining an active presence at local farmers' markets and community events allows me to reach out to potential customers and promote my brand.	3.68	1.283	Employed
6. Implementing a referral program that rewards existing customers for introducing new customers has helped me grow my client base.	4.04	1.018	Employed
7. Sending out regular e-newsletters with updates, advertisements, and special offers will help keep customers engaged and returning for more.	3.42	1.379	Moderately Employed

Table 4 (cont): Marketing and Branding Strategies that are Most Effective in Attracting Customers for Micro-Entrepreneurs in the Home Baking Industry

8. Participating in online baking competitions or challenges allows me to demonstrate my baking abilities and draw attention to my business.	3.38	1.417	Moderately Employed
9. Giving away free samples or tastings at local events or pop-up shops is an excellent method to expose new customers to my baked goods.	3.66	1.270	Employed
10. Collaborating with related businesses, such as coffee shops or gift stores, to sell my baked goods helps boost brand awareness and attract new customers.	3.79	1.291	Employed
Overall Mean	3.90	0.791	Employed

Legend: 4.50 – 5.00 =Highly Employed; 3.50 – 4.49 = Employed; 2.50 – 3.49 = Moderately Employed; 1.50 – 2.49 = Least Employed; 1.00 – 1.49 =Not Employed

Table 4 highlights the marketing and branding strategies that are most effective in attracting customers for micro-entrepreneurs in the home baking industry. To determine this, ten (10) indicators were used to assess the marketing and branding strategies used by the micro-entrepreneurs to attract customers. The indicators gained an overall mean of 3.90 which was interpreted to be employed by the respondents.

In connection with this, the most often used marketing and branding strategy of the micro-entrepreneurs in the home baking sector were from the statements “I believe that developing visually beautiful packaging for my baked goods increases their perceived value and draws in more customers” and “Offering personalized/customized baked items boosts consumer interest and loyalty in my home baking business” which gained a computed mean of 4.57 and was interpreted to be highly employed by the respondents. While the least used marketing and branding strategy used by the respondents was described from the statement which says “Participating in online baking competitions or challenges allows me to demonstrate my baking abilities and draw attention to my business” which obtained a computed mean of 3.38 and was interpreted to be moderately employed by the respondents.

Based on the data analysis, it appears that micro-entrepreneurs in the home baking sector commonly employ marketing and branding strategies

focused on enhancing the visual appeal of their products and offering personalized/customized baked items. These strategies, including developing visually beautiful packaging and providing personalized options, are perceived to be highly utilized by respondents, suggesting their effectiveness in attracting customers and fostering loyalty to their businesses. Conversely, participating in online baking competitions or challenges emerged as the least employed marketing and branding strategy among respondents. While still moderately utilized, this approach seems to be less common compared to other strategies mentioned. This indicates that while some micro- entrepreneurs may recognize the potential benefits of showcasing their baking abilities through online competitions, they may not be as actively leveraging this strategy as they are others.

A company's ability to develop and execute a strategy also impacts its level of success because it requires business executives to look forward and enhance every facet of the implementation process in a more creative and long-term manner. According to a group researchers entrepreneurs employ marketing tactics to ensure the continuity of their business, foster growth, and produce profits (Dellia Mila Vernia et al., 2020). The study, planning, execution, and supervision of initiatives aimed at establishing relationships with a target market in order to accomplish organizational objectives is known as marketing strategy. A study defines a marketing strategy as a series of actions intended to achieve predefined objectives, which are naturally the outcome of a policy that is turned into a rule and adhered to for a set amount of time (Taufik, 2021).

Table 5: Technological Advancements and Digital Platforms that Influencing the Operations of Micro-Entrepreneurs in the Home Baking Industry

Indicators	M	SD	Interpretation
1. For my home baking company, I use technology (such as baking apps and recipe websites) to explore new recipes and baking techniques.	4.02	0.909	Employed
2. I use social media channels (such as Instagram and Facebook) to promote my homemade baking items and attract clients.	4.55	0.722	Highly Employed
3. I sell my homemade goods to customers through internet platforms (such as a website or an online marketplace).	4.43	0.821	Employed
4. I utilize email marketing software to contact consumers and promote special deals or discounts for my home baking business.	3.13	1.272	Moderately Employed
5. I use e-commerce platforms to simplify the ordering and payment processes for my home baking items.	3.72	1.199	Employed
6. To improve the efficiency and quality of my baking process, I use technologically advanced baking equipment and tools (for example, stand mixers and ovens with digital controls).	4.21	1.026	Employed
7. I use internet platforms (such as baking forums and online groups) to interact with other home bakers and seek assistance and guidance.	3.98	1.101	Employed
8. For my home baking business, I use scheduling and organization tools to manage orders, deliveries, and inventory.	4.21	0.988	Employed
9. I use digital payment systems (e.g., PayMaya, Gcash) to enable transactions with customers for my homemade goods.	4.49	0.800	Employed
10. I use photography and editing software to make visually appealing photographs of my homemade products to market them on internet sites.	4.08	0.978	Employed
Overall Mean	4.08	0.632	Employed

Legend: 4.50 – 5.00 =Highly Employed; 3.50 – 4.49 = Employed; 2.50 – 3.49 = Moderately Employed; 1.50 – 2.49 = Least Employed; 1.00 – 1.49 =Not Employed

Table 5 shows the influence of technological advancements and digital platforms in the operations of micro-entrepreneurs in the home baking sector. A total of ten (10) indicators were used to assess the influence of technological advancements and digital platforms among micro-entrepreneurs of home baking which gained an overall mean of 4.08 and

was interpreted to be employed by the respondents.

Based on the data gathered from the respondents, it was determined that the most used technological advancements and digital platforms by the micro-entrepreneurs was described from the statement which says “I use social media channels (such as Instagram and Facebook) to promote my homemade baking items and attract clients” which obtained a computed mean of 4.55 which was interpreted to be highly employed by the respondents. Whereas, the least used technological advancements and

digital platforms by the micro-entrepreneurs was described from the statement which says "I utilize email marketing software to contact consumers and promote special deals or discounts for my home baking business" which gained a computed mean of 3.13 and was interpreted to be moderately employed by the respondents.

Based on the data collected, it appears that micro-entrepreneurs in the home baking sector predominantly utilize social media channels like Instagram and Facebook as their primary technological advancements and digital platforms for promoting homemade baking items and attracting clients. This strategy received a high mean score, indicating widespread adoption among respondents and suggesting its effectiveness in reaching and engaging with customers. Accordingly, the use of email marketing software to contact consumers and promote special deals or discounts emerged as the least employed technological advancement among micro-entrepreneurs in this sector. While still moderately utilized, this approach seems to be less common compared to leveraging social media channels for marketing purposes. This suggests that while some micro-entrepreneurs may recognize the potential benefits of email marketing, they may not be as actively incorporating it into their promotional strategies as they are with social media.

Technology in bakery systems has improved productivity and baked-goods quality while promoting customer engagement and offering remote support during the pandemic. In order to help producers find more efficient ways to make goods, streamline operations, and maximize customer profitability, machinery in the bakery and confectionery industries must evolve to meet the expectations of emerging trends (in-confectionery, 2021).

5. CONCLUSION

This study offers both practical and theoretical contributions to the understanding of challenges faced by micro-entrepreneurs in the home baking sector. The empirical findings provide valuable insights into the primary challenges, the impact of competitive pressures on pricing strategies, and the effectiveness of various marketing and branding strategies. These insights can inform practical decision-making processes for micro-entrepreneurs, helping them navigate competitive landscapes and optimize their business strategies. The theoretical contribution lies in enriching existing literature on entrepreneurship and small business management by offering empirical evidence on the specific challenges and strategies prevalent in the home baking industry.

The findings of this study hold significant importance for micro-entrepreneurs operating in the home baking sector, as well as for broader society and communities. Understanding the primary challenges faced by home bakers can aid in the development of targeted support programs and resources tailored to address these specific needs. Moreover, insights into effective marketing and branding strategies can empower micro-entrepreneurs to better promote their businesses, thereby contributing to economic growth and job creation within local communities. Additionally, by identifying the prevalent use of social media platforms, the study underscores the importance of digital marketing literacy for small business owners in today's digital age.

Based on the findings, several recommendations can be made to support micro-entrepreneurs in the home baking sector. Firstly, efforts should be made to provide resources and assistance to help home bakers effectively compete against larger, established brands, such as offering workshops on branding and marketing strategies tailored to small businesses. Secondly, there is a need to raise awareness about food safety regulations and provide guidance and support to ensure compliance among micro-entrepreneurs. Thirdly, while social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook are widely utilized, there is potential to further enhance digital marketing efforts by exploring additional channels such as email marketing.

Aside from this, future research could employ more diverse sampling techniques and utilize qualitative methods to gain deeper insights into the experiences of micro-entrepreneurs in the home baking sector. Additionally, further investigation into the effectiveness of emerging

marketing channels and technologies, such as influencer marketing or e-commerce platforms, could provide valuable insights for small business owners.

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