Essential competencies of entrepreneurs during the new normal in the province of abra, Philippines

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ABSTRACT
The COVID-19 pandemic had a wide range of implications, including business closures and bankruptcies, to name a few. Entrepreneurs rely on a number of important entrepreneurial capabilities to survive a pandemic, and the study intended to solve this issue by investigating these competencies. An exploratory qualitative-narrative research design was employed in this study, along with a phenomenological approach, and included one focus group discussion with 12 participants and in-depth interviews with ten micro-enterprise owners in Bangued, Abra, the Philippines. According to the study's findings, experienced entrepreneurs' lived experiences highlighted how their entrepreneurial capabilities impacted their lives. In order to ensure the survival of their businesses, they believed in the effectiveness of goal setting, systematic planning and monitoring, independence and self-confidence, opportunity seeking, risk-taking, information seeking, the demand for efficiency and quality, adherence to work contracts, persuasion and networking, and perseverance. One of the study's implications is its impact on business sustainability, defense mechanisms, entrepreneurial competencies, creativity, back to the basics, and business practices, all of which resulted in the discharge of competencies deemed necessary weapons for pandemic survival of the entrepreneurs. In order to further confirm entrepreneurs' methods and lived experiences in Abra province, other researchers may investigate entrepreneurial initiatives in the manufacturing, service, and retail sectors, among others.

Keywords: new normal, entrepreneur, competencies, livelihood, lived experiences, qualitative-narrative research design, philippines, asia.

1 RATIONALE
Entrepreneurship is vital because it improves lives and well-being. Change (Seth, 2020)¹ is felt as entrepreneurs bring innovative and better-quality products and services to the market. Entrepreneurship likely moves the Philippine economy forward to a level similar to some Asian nations. Towards the end of 2019 (Diokno, Benjamin E. 2020)² the peso has been generally stable with enough reserves regarding its serviceability. There was a sustained and uninterrupted growth of the Philippine economy for the past 83 quarters. Today, the growth rate of gross domestic product (GDP) is increasing, making the Philippine economy appreciated in Asia and the world.
The COVID-19 pandemic (Arreola, Renz Homer S. 2020) has exceptionally affected economies, people of all nations and of all ages, from all treads of life, across the planet. In today’s difficult times, the COVID-19 pandemic, entrepreneurs, industries, education, businesses and many of sources of livelihood and income were drastically affected causing them dwindling in capital and resources. Entrepreneurs (Xiaodong, 2020) have tested their ability using new techniques and methods in achieving sales like on-line merchandising, home delivery services and therefore the like. These and a few alternative remedies applied by some businesses weren’t ready to survive after many were closed and bankrupt. the present economic worsening within the Philippines is just a model of the worldwide economic recession due to the raging pandemic. The Philippines has enforced restrictions for over a year so far. Completely different levels of restrictions have seriously affected the economic recovery. The strict restrictions also are the very reason why the Philippine economy is much considerably affected than the other neighboring countries. it's aforementioned that if the pandemic doesn't recuperate, though the Philippine government takes additional economic recovery measures, it will not facilitate to essentially reverse the trend of economic decline.

The business operation is considered complicated in a very competitive business setting that is consistently dynamic with rapid technological advancements. A businessperson (Preeti, 2016) is anticipated to act with these business atmospheres making his move with competence intellectually, attitudinally, behaviorally, technically, and socially. They are provocatively challenged to arrange a group of competencies to realize their entrepreneurial goals. Entrepreneurial proficiencies are characteristics like standard and detailed technical know-how, purposes, behaviors, self-perception, community roles, and craft that lead to development. These characteristics could also be even insensible qualities of a person. A number of these desirable characteristics are distinctive, and others are copied and learned along the process.

This study identifies the challenges of the local entrepreneurs, the entrepreneurial competencies they used for their business to survive during the “new normal” society.

2 OBJECTIVES

The following are the objectives of the study:

1. To identify the entrepreneurial experiences on the impact of a pandemic,
2. To unveil the reasons why entrepreneurs, relate their experiences with fellow entrepreneurs,
3. To divulge the entrepreneurial competencies and the role they play during pandemic times, and
4. To reveal how pandemic experiences transform the life of entrepreneurs.
2.1 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The following are the significance of the study:

1. The paper unveiled the essential entrepreneurial competencies that shielded business people during the pandemic and the new normal,

2. The paper revealed the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on entrepreneurial ventures as reflected in the experiences of the entrepreneurs,

3. The ongoing fight for the survival on the impact of the pandemic and the utilization of entrepreneurial competencies manifesting resiliency of entrepreneurs contained in the paper is worth emulating by other business enthusiasts,

4. The study served as a basis for the inclusion of Sustainability of Business, Défense mechanisms, Entrepreneurial Competencies, Creativity, Back to the Basics, Business Practices as topics in Technology and Livelihood Education, Entrepreneurial, Technopreneurship, Agripreneurship classes, and service industry to ascertain the broader dissemination of entrepreneurial knowledge and application.

3 METHODOLOGY

The researchers used the qualitative-narrative research of investigation to describe the lived experiences of the local entrepreneurs in Abra during the pandemic (new normal) times.

They identified twelve (12), local entrepreneurs as informants; interviewed them on their entrepreneurial challenges and experiences and the defense mechanisms they used during the COVID-19 pandemic; tallied the data gathered on competencies; made a purposive selection of respondents. Due to the pandemic, the researchers were restricted to phone calls and messenger with the semi-structured interview. Responses were themed accordingly using Braun and Clarke's (2006)\textsuperscript{21} Thematic Analysis.

The following are the data gathered for the study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guide Questions</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Codes/Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What were your entrepreneurial experiences on the impact of pandemic?</td>
<td>• Bankruptcy</td>
<td>Varied responses</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Courage is Tested</td>
<td>• The impact of CORONA-virus pandemic</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Experiment on new business ventures</td>
<td>• Fear was felt</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Discovery of new modes of selling products</td>
<td>• Défense Mechanism</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Frightened</td>
<td>• Creativity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Remedy on how to acquire commodities</td>
<td>• Maintain sales</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Run out of goods</td>
<td>• Business Practices</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• “Sudden” increase in prices</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• “Increase” in expenses</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Bankruptcy, ran out of stock, peak season, frightened on the health</td>
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<td></td>
<td>situation, unstable sales happened</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Witnessed other entrepreneurs closed stores, did hoarding, no goods/stocks</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you relate these experiences with your fellow entrepreneurs? Why?</td>
<td>available, reserved funds are spent, loans-re-loan,</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you believe in the role of entrepreneurial competencies during pandemic times?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What were the competencies you apply to survive during the pandemic times?</td>
<td>The following competencies were applied: • Goal setting • Systematic Planning and Monitoring • Independence and self-confidence • Opportunity Seeking and Initiative • Risk Taking • Information Seeking • Demand for Efficiency and Quality • Commitment to Work Contract • Persuasion and Networking • Persistence</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial Competencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did these pandemic experiences transform your life?</td>
<td>• Our faith has increased • Back to basics, planting in the backyard • The Frequent washing of hands, Wearing of face mask/shield, Social Distancing</td>
<td>Faith</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following codes/themes were coined from the responses of the informants:
A. The impact of CORONA-virus pandemic
B. Sustainability of business
C. Defense mechanism
D. Entrepreneurial Competencies
E. Creativity
F. Business practices
G. Back to the basics

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The CORONA-virus pandemic collectively creates a culture of uncertainty, fear, competition, bankruptcy, and hoarding among the entrepreneurs in Abra, Philippines. Consequently, defenses sprout out by using entrepreneurial competencies to survive the pandemic. Informants foretold their experiences as they responded to the interviewers.
Some informants recounted:

“I was so afraid about CORONA-virus pandemic and its impact on my business. The more I trembled when there was a pronouncement of lockdowns.”

“At first, I felt that lockdowns seemed favorable in us entrepreneurs because of the panic buying of people, goods are fast-moving and as if it is always peak season until we ran out of stocks and goods to offer and I find a hard time getting stocks and goods from manufacturers and producers in Manila because of travel restrictions.”

Question 1. What were your entrepreneurial experiences with the impact of pandemic?

A. The Impact of CORONA-virus pandemic

The coronavirus (COVID-19) has uncovered the world's fears and worries that have not been felt before. Every country, including national and local governments, was not prepared for the pandemic.

As some of the informants narrated:

P1 “Yes. I really feel the impact of the pandemic. I witnessed a very abnormal number of customers buying their needs, abnormal time of opening and closing of stores because everybody is afraid to get out of their homes. I noticed a limited supply from agents because supplies are being delivered in the boundaries of the province. I observed an additional cost of commodities resulting to higher prices”.

P2 "Yes, pandemic affected the operation of eateries. Customers were afraid of eating breakfast, snacks, lunch, and dinner. Little by little, the eatery had closed because of the expenses incurred that cannot be sustained with gains. I see a lot of people frightened of coming and dine with us.”

“Workers were terminated because of the inadequacy of customers coming and eat resulting in the closure of stores.”

“I used social media as a means of advertising and offering our products for delivery of services, but still, the business could not sustain sales for the stores' expenses like salaries and benefits, which resulted in bankruptcy”.

Small-Medium Enterprises (SMEs) that intensely rely on patrons, supplies, employees, and resource suppliers (Etemad, Hamid, 2020) were generally affected. Supplies of goods and commodities became scarce. Entrepreneurs were hard up in getting supplies. Essential goods consume the fastest due to lockdowns.
People became afraid of fellow people because of the high and fast transmission of the virus. The situation became a threat and led to the bankruptcy of SMEs. A burden, disturbance, slow-down, and the like anywhere as impacts.

The beauty behind the COVID effects is that people gave priceless lessons that require a review and re-examination from entrepreneurial and group action insights to prepare for the unforeseen effects of the crises, despite its reason, place, extent, and timing. A catastrophe of a large scale happened.

It was unrehearsed, and even when some months have gone by, there is no operational and viable approach (or solution) for the predicaments.

Other informants narrated:

“I have to look for business opportunities while risking my business because the impact of CORONA-virus pandemic is so drastic to business. I resorted to a come what may attitude because of the uncertainty of sales I have to match my goods to the needs of the customers”.

“I was amazed at the start because of the buying attitudes of customers, but I panic when I ran out of goods to offer them. I have to compete with other entrepreneurs in getting goods in Manila. It became tougher when there are already a lot of restrictions in travel and health protocols”.

“I resorted to bankruptcy in my restaurant because people are already restricted to get out of their homes.”

Today, people tend to be tormented with a calamity with no clear solution at all. Covid-19 has disturbed social and economic demand (Georgieva, Kristalina, 2020) quickly and unexpectedly. The virus results in loss of life and government interventions were required to stop the spread. The regular activity of people a couple of weeks ago - going to the educational institution, getting to the workplace, being with relatives and intimate friends - is now a massive risk.

People believe they are going to survive this trial. Front liners are combating it every minute of the day, aware of the danger of their lives, but they vow to help save the lives of others. Researchers were expected to immediately formulate the vaccine to fight the killer virus of COVID-19. There is a cry for all to act cooperatively, to save lives and sources of revenue. These are the times that people need to work as a community to facilitate and defend the most susceptible individuals and rejuvenate the sources of livelihood. Movements of people regulate survival after the drastic economic upturn.

**Question 2. Do you relate these experiences with your fellow entrepreneurs? Why?**

**B. Sustainability of Business**

Maintaining business (Thomas, Daylick & Muff, Katlin, 2015), is commonly outlined as handling the triple bottom line. These have been how companies control their financial, social, and environmental risks, commitments, and opportunities.
As some of the informants narrated:

P3 “I related the story as openly as other entrepreneurs are listening. I asked them where did they get their supply. I told them to share their stocks with me to the point of agreeing to the mark ups to the stocks”.

P4 “I join other entrepreneurs looking for the distributors of goods to the extent that the PNP had to accompany us to suppliers. I noticed that all distributors are “sigurista” as they said, “no cash, no supply.” I see some suppliers who do not accept our cash because they are afraid that the money contained the virus to the point of looking into the deposit slips and ensuring that payments were deposited. I felt hungry with overtime because there was no eatery opened for us to eat”.

If entrepreneurs tend to contemplate sustainability (Courtnell, Jane, 2019) in a very professional sense, business sustainability is the preservation of a business through time. It suggests infinite business success and profit. Business sustainability consists of three principles, also referred to as pillars: the environment, the society, and the economy. There are also four (4) ways to sustain the business. 1) keep efficient. A technique within which to raise your business is to make the most of your functional efficiency. 2) make the most of the brand. Building a prestigious and trusted product will go a long way for the business to grow. 3) keep your clienteles, and 4) connect with the public.

As one of the informants narrated:

“I have to find ways and means to sustained the goods and services I offer to customers. I find it difficult to balance the expenses over the profit I gain from retailing and servicing. There are more expenses than the gains.”

Sustainability (Knut, Haanaes, 2016) is a business approach to making extended costs by considering an association that operates in environmental, social, and financial environments. Sustainability is believed to develop strategies that foster company resilience.

**Question 3. Do you believe in the role of entrepreneurial competencies during pandemic times?**

**C. Defense mechanisms**

Défense mechanisms (Legg, Timothy J., 2019) are actions of individuals safeguarding themselves from disagreeable actions, movements, or views. These rational approaches might facilitate individuals in separating themselves from pressures or undesirable feelings, like guilt or embarrassment.

As some of the informants narrated:
“These competencies are my weapons because I suffered some difficulties during the pandemic, like transportation lack of some products and no customer resulting in low income. This pandemic resulted in the loss of jobs; some became part-time workers”.

“These competencies help me a lot specially persuasion and networking because this time of pandemic I posted my product on my Facebook page, helping me to share what product I offer for free and with the convenience of the customers”.

“These competencies help me a lot, especially persuasion and networking because this time of pandemic I posted my product on my Facebook page, helping me to share what product I offer for free and with the convenience of the customers.”

“Social media, especially FB, help me a lot to survive this pandemic to promote my business and to build my confidence. These competencies help me through mapping up the flow of products and services, discarding the unnecessary ones”.

“It helps me through finding a way to overcome the difficulty of ordering and purchasing the goods and products needed by the customers.”

Over the years, defense mechanisms are the most relevant issue in business. Conversion happens after you convert negative feelings into a better ones to avoid them. Denial happens after you refute that anything that doesn’t exist. Displacement occurs after one gets rid of undesirable feelings or desires on a lesser amount of intimidating target than the cause of these moods or desires.

The defense mechanism (Gunnelius, Susan, 2017) is employed after believing in the choice of a genuine belief that causes pressure or other painful sentiments. Regression happens after avoiding an emotional state by recurring to an earlier state. It could appear in several structures in the workplace.

Sublimation happens after doing intolerable emotional states and desires in an informally acceptable way. Defeat is that the process of deliberately disregarding one thing causing discomfort, worry, blame, or different undesirable feelings.

As one of the informants narrated:

“I have to survive these trying times. I have to review defenses that I could use to overcome bankruptcy. I should not stop hunting for business opportunities. I should be sensitive to the needs and wants of customers because satisfying them would mean gains and profits.”

Defense mechanisms aren’t treacherous. Applying them is exceptionally healthy, but problems happen after not using them successfully. Abuse and misapplication will cause several issues in life and the profession. If one wishes his career to flourish, he ought to do some self-evaluation.
Applying defense mechanisms positively or devastatingly in the workplace provokes a wise decision. Being aware of unconscious responses to adverse and painful situations and emotional states will provide a necessary boost to your emotional intelligence may cause one to become a much better person, an employee, and a leader.

Question 4. What were the competencies you apply to survive during the pandemic times?

D. Entrepreneurial Competencies

Defense mechanisms aren’t treacherous. Applying them is exceptionally healthy. Entrepreneurial competencies (Mitchelmore, S. and Rowley, J., 2010)29 are vital to business evolution and accomplishment. They are the fundamental characteristics like precise information, purposes, behaviors, self-regard, societal roles, and competencies.

The idea of entrepreneurial competencies is employed widely by government agencies in their financial development and corporate victory initiative. The central concept of entrepreneurial competencies, extent, and affiliation to entrepreneurial performance and business success is the need for rigorous investigation and development inaccurate preparation. But problems happen after not using them successfully. Abuse and misapplication will cause several issues in life and the profession. If one wishes his career to flourish, he ought to do some self-evaluation.

Applying defense mechanisms positively or devastatingly in the workplace provokes a wise decision. Being aware of unconscious responses to adverse and painful situations and emotional states will provide a necessary boost to your emotional intelligence may cause one to become a much better person, an employee, and a leader.

As some of the informants narrated:

P7 “I used competencies like perseverance/patience; commitment; systematic planning and monitoring; independence and self-confidence; and persuasion and networking.”

P8 “I used the competency of goal setting; opportunity-seeking and initiative; demand for efficiency and quality; information seeking; and taking calculated risks.”

According to Sanjana, Saini (2017)30, these are the ten (10) Entrepreneurial Competencies:

Opportunity-seeking and initiative. Entrepreneurs obtain chances and take the creativity to remodel them into occupational conditions.

Persistence. Pertains to entrepreneur's sustained constructive maintenance of drive and continuously transformed a dynamic engagement in a new business undertaking despite counterforces or tempting replacements.
Commitment. It involves pledging resources to a business initiative in hopes of safeguarding profits on the endeavor.

Demand for efficiency and quality. Entrepreneurs attempt to ensure one thing is improved, quicker, or low-priced.

Taking calculated risks. The capability to deal with imperfect information and act on a dangerous decision requires skill to realize thought-provoking but realistic goals.

Goal setting. Establishing short- or long-term purposes, usually integrating timetables and measurable measures.

Information seeking. This is where entrepreneurs gather info concerning their purchasers, dealers, sellers, technical know-how, and possibilities.

Systematic planning and monitoring. It means "in an arranged, logical way." Planning is determining what to do. Monitoring is checking to make sure that something is achievable before experimenting with it.

Persuasion and networking. An influential entrepreneur can convince customers to buy goods and generate a solid network of connections to grow.

Independence and self-confidence. Entrepreneurs who work for themselves are better off due to the autonomy that managing one's business offers.

Self-confidence is concerned with how a person believes and trusts in his ability.

4.1 CREATIVITY

It is the ability to make original designs done. Creative thinking (Landry, Lauren, 2017) is the flexibility to appreciate the world in new ways and seek hidden patterns, the network between apparently discrete phenomena, and get results.

Creativity is crucial in business because it’s a differentiator. Organizations these days operate in very highly competitive, world surroundings, making creative thinking essential. Creative ability is what fuels enormous concepts, way of discerning, and opens new chances. Creativity may be a critical start that has given importance.

Creativity was stratified because the best issue is business success in management, integrity, and even vision.

One reason for that is: creative leaders are more comfortable with vagueness. And as industries still evolve, business purposes and creativity are required.

As one of the informants narrated:

“I experimented on the numerous entrepreneurial competencies I’ve learned theoretically and in practice. I used these competencies as my defenses over bankruptcy. I have to experiment the fastest
and be sensitive about the immediate impact of the competency I used. I have to be vigilant on these competencies experimenting as to which among these competencies work during the new normal.”

Creativity permits one (Roe, Betsy, 2012) to see and explain issues with novelty. Being creative unlocks awareness. A society that has vanished touch with its artistic facet is an unfree community, is not readily understood. It opens our minds to reality and overcomes biases. Creative thinking is living a life that accepts inventiveness and makes distinguishing connections between seemingly dissimilar insights. Creative thinking is about making life a journey into seeing and acting in the spare familiarity of the finest.

4.2 BUSINESS PRACTICES

Whether operating in the Philippines or abroad, here are Filipino values that every employee considers: 1) extremely Educated 2) Cordial Reception & Generosity 3) Family Values 4) “Hiya” and “Mahiyain” 5) the Value of Diligence. Editorial Team (2019).

As one of the informants narrated:

“I have to apply business practices acceptable to the customers. I have to deal with them with the highest standard of professionalism. I have to be hospitable and generous to them.

Highest courtesy and family-oriented bearings are the values I have to show every customer.”

Accepting communally accountable guidelines goes a lengthy process towards enticing and holding clienteles, which is crucial to a business's temporary success.

Further, several people (Murphy, Chris B., 2019) can quickly pay the quality of the product, aware that a portion of the returns is directed towards social reasons close to and beneficial to them. Being a communally accountable business will boost the business's image and shape its complete image. Societal accountability authorizes workforces to the stand that business incomes are at their disposal to do philosophical works. Recognized business social accountability programs will enhance the worker's morale and result in greater productivity in the workforce.

**Question 5. How did these pandemic experiences transform your life?**

When asked about their experiences that transform their lives, they gave the following responses:

P9 (Economic Impact). “I experienced extreme hardships in life like loss of jobs, cannot buy rice, coffee, sugar; cannot pay water, electric and telephone bills resulting to inadequate sustenance of family needs.”

(Social Impact). “I saw people maintaining social distances, wearing face masks and shields, regular washing of hands. I saw people observing health protocols, awareness, and sanitary practices because of the fear of the CORONA-virus...”
pandemic. There was an evident discipline in buying. Because of peoples’ obedience to stay home, their income was lowered because they were afraid to go out and have their meals outside”.

(Religious Impact). “I turned religious and prayerful – regularly attending to radio masses and praying the rosary. I was awakened on the presence of God leading me to reflect on my sins and do acts of love. I feel no one to go concerning rescue except “God” the Almighty. I felt the presence and importance of my immediate family members resulting to closer family ties”.

P10 (Economic Impact) “I witnessed that goods and commodities were scarce because of limited supply and resources causing high demands and resulting to imbalance economic activity. There were increased on prices reaching up to 50%. There was evident scarcity of agricultural and manufactured goods. There was panic buying. I became a garden advocate utilizing vacant lots for planting vegetables and ornamental plants for sale. I did backyard gardening a lot”.

(Health Impact). “I used alcohol most often. I drank lemon and ate vitamin C-rich foods. I used to expose myself to the heat of the sun probably 20 minutes from sunrise up to 10 o’clock in the morning. I followed the IATF health protocols. I noticed our sales on alcohol, vitamin C-rich foods and vegetables were high”.

(Political Impact). “I observed politicians became generous extending help through their AYUDA and in giving longer periods of payment through the Bayanihan Act 1 & 2. I noticed politicians became real workers reaching out people in their homes under their jurisdictions”.

Entrepreneurs (Kritikos, Alexander S. 2014)\textsuperscript{35} enhance remunerative development by presenting innovative technologies, products, and services. Rivalry is improved after businesspersons challenge current businesses to become more competitive. They create new work openings for the community. Business movement increases the creation of industries and economies.

E. Back to the basics

The COVID-19 pandemic (Lee, Marie, 2020)\textsuperscript{36} redirected activities that people need to accomplish. This can be a time of persistence for several productions and clienteles. Fears and worries are everyday urgencies like paying on foods and uttered reluctance to usual mood of living. To balance this, alternative ways to buy and handle business are discovered: procurements created done on-line searching and distributions, payments via on-line transactions.

As one of the informants narrated:
"I have to survive. If it drives me to get rid of the luxuries and the activities I used to do, I have to do it! In business, when people go back to the basic things to survive, I have to offer goods and services on the basic needs of man. I have to be sensitive to the basic needs of customers for them to survive, too."

If the uncertainty of the coronavirus pandemic (Johnson, Cathy, 2020) leads everybody feeling incapacitated, perhaps a reminder that lifestyle can profoundly shape one's health is simply the remedy demanded by everyone.

From food and drink, one takes, one decides how active life tends to be; one will be able to scrape back some control by going back to healthy basics. Individuals must watch out for their physical and intellectual state at the moment. Many things one does to take care of connection and routine have gone out the window.

A healthy diet, regular exercise, not smoking, limiting liquor intake, and obtaining healthy sleep are verified cornerstones of a healthy lifestyle.

It's true that to stop infection with coronavirus, hand washing and social distancing are the most excellent defenses till an immunizing agent arrives.

But it pays to bear in mind that the fundamental pillars of excellent health facilitate deflection and spread of chronic diseases equally as unwelcome as COVID-19. Focusing on a healthy lifestyle may leave one in better shape to face the COVID-19 crisis in the shorter term by boosting the body's immunity and supporting a sensible mental state.

5 FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings revealed that the entrepreneurs’ pandemic experiences included bankruptcy, experimentation on new business ventures, the discovery of new modes of selling products, running out of products to sell, a sudden increase in prices, increased expenditures, reserved funds were spent, re-loans, no customers, and hoarding, among other things. Entrepreneurs were terrified of pandemic issues; business sustainability was called into question and put defense mechanisms to the test. Goal setting, systematic planning, and monitoring, independence and self-confidence, opportunity seeking and initiative, risk-taking, information seeking, demand for efficiency and quality, commitment to work contract, persuasion and networking, and persistence were reaffirmed and applied. Obeying health protocols, frequently washing hands, wearing a face mask/shield, and social distancing was all part of the transformation for the new normal. The simplicity of living occurred. Everyone went back to basics, and their faith in the Almighty grew.

Finally, the CORONA-Virus pandemic had a significant impact on entrepreneurship. Business Sustainability, Defense Mechanisms, Entrepreneurial Competencies, Creativity Back to the Basics, Business Practices had been so evident in the lived experiences gathered from entrepreneurs in the
Philippines' province of Abra. The lived experiences inevitably resulted in the discharge of competencies deemed necessary weapons to survive the pandemic times. During the new normal, entrepreneurs with varying situations and expertise used the same competencies at times.

The researchers humbly make the following suggestions: 1) Business sustainability, defense mechanisms, entrepreneurial competencies, creativity, and innovation, Back to the Basics, and Business Practices may be included as topics in Technology and Livelihood Education, Entrepreneurial, Technopreneurship, Agripreneurship classes, and the service industry be researched to ensure the broader dissemination of entrepreneurial knowledge and application. 2) Other researchers may study entrepreneurial ventures further to elucidate entrepreneurs' practices and lived experiences in the Philippines' province of Abra. 3) Comparative studies of the lived experiences of the manufacturing, service, and retailing sectors may be highlighted and used as valuable sources of data on entrepreneurial ventures.
REFERENCES


