

Banquet and Catering Business Operations: Drawing Lessons from Experience

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Abstract – *This research assessed the existing and competing catering business in Batangas province. It provides insights and factual data drawn from the experiences of managers who are into this business operation for a long time. This study presents the Banquet and Catering Business in Batangas Province with respect to their business profile; facilities and amenities; products served and advertising tools. It also identifies the operational problems of the business and significant difference in the problems encountered between managers and employees and propose action plan to solve the problems. The research utilized descriptive method among the managers and employees. The research concluded that most of the banquet and catering business in Batangas, Philippines is operating in either off or on premise operation targeting family occasions. They consist 26 employees and operated for more than 10 years. They can serve more than 300 to 1,000 guests. The business facilities and amenities offered by catering are the basic need in the operation of the business as proper lighting and sound systems. As to products served, all of them prefer a wide variety of palatable dishes. The problems encountered are insufficient parking areas, unexpected loss of electricity and seasonality of the products. The managers and employees show significant differences on the problems related to amenities.*

Keywords – *Banquet & Catering Business Operations: Drawing Lessons from Experience*

INTRODUCTION

The catering industry is the largest sector of the food industry and accounts for approximately 60% of all food businesses. It comprises restaurants, cafes, take-aways, street vendors, hospitals, schools, prisons, residential homes, hotels and other premises where food is produced for immediate consumption. Many of these businesses are small yet commonly operate at par more complex 'production' system, with large numbers of inputs, processes and outputs, than any typical food manufacturers [1], [2].

There are many reasons why clients hold catering; some for the purpose of personal entertainment, some for business; while others for entrepreneurial characteristics they possessed passed from generations of family catering business. Regardless of the reason, the catering does not serve one main purpose which is to invite a large group of people, without doing the planning, buying, cooking and serving of food, nor does the client have to clean up after the party is finished. Having a catering in any occasions allows the client to feel relaxed and just greet and make the guests feel at home rather than act as a service person [3].

Catering as a food industry is complex for the introduction of new products, it is widely regarded as an essential element of competition between catering managers and that the successful management of new product development is a key determinant of their catering business performance [4]. This address why catering businesses always comes up with variations of foods served, marketing strategies, or even a unique venue set-up and keeps the customers interest in their business packages. Product isn't always about food, it's also about the other things that the business could offer, it could be the table clothes and linens, the chairs and the tables' arrangement, utensils, accessories, designs, food and services. Other offers this by creating on-site food preparation, personalized food to modifies a meal to fit their taste and client's final touches of the events [5]. This is what people call the combination of art and service business which made banquet and catering business unique and set them apart from their competitors in the business industry.

Banquet as a large catering activity also served for pre-arranged number of peoples on pre-fixed date and time agreed menu and price. As it caters large occasions, there are formal sit down banquets for an event may be a corporation holding an annual celebration for employees, large family gatherings and the like. Many corporations prefer hosting personalized and creative events that banquet and catering offer. At present, banquet and catering business is one of the

most successful ventures in the food industry. Undeniably, the demand for this service continues to grow bigger and bigger from day to day. The reason behind this condition is the reality that the environment becomes more modern and people become more and more busy.

As a promising business, catering is preparing, presenting and serving great food then graciously but modestly accepting the compliments at the end of the event. The business of food catering gives fulfillment, if the caterer knows what they are doing from the beginning and likes what they are doing in the process, it can be a mixture of fun and pleasure while earning profit [6]. Drawing lessons from successful entrepreneurs in the business of catering and banquet claimed that they venture into this kind of business because they want to enhance, practice, or just fulfil their passion for cooking. As claimed, they also want to create personal recipes and dishes and aesthetically present them to the guests. They also gained fulfilment in doing that simmers down in the realization that catering business is an enjoyable and pleasurable way of earning a living mixed with achievement of one's passion.

In order to be successful in the business, variation of foods and menu served should complement the type of catering that the company wishes to provide in various catering occasions as birthday, wedding and other social events. Likewise, managers who consider successful ventures in the operation of the catering business should specialize in a type of cuisine, such as gourmet, comfort food, ethnic food, etc. for by focusing on a specific concept for the menu, will mean a market itself accordingly and draw attention from diverse customers who prefer type of food and service as their parameters in considering their choice of caterers [7].

With the greater demands in banquet and catering business, it is therefore necessary to evaluate the existing and competing catering business sprouting in Batangas province. This will provide insights and factual data drawn from the experiences of managers who are into this business operation for a long time. As banquet and catering is as significant as other segment of the food industry, the researcher as a caterer herself would like to use the experiences of managers of catering businesses in the province of Batangas whom she considered experienced and successful as they are into their business for more than 10 years. Their sense of maturity in the operation in banquet and catering guarantees implications of the study as lenses for would be entrepreneurs.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study presents the banquet and catering business operations of successful banquet and catering service in the province of Batangas; specifically, it sought to answer the following: present the Banquet and Catering Business in Batangas Province with respect to their business profile; features in terms of facilities and amenities; products served and advertising tools used. It will also identify the operational problems in Banquet and Catering Business, test the significant difference in the problems encountered between the managers and the employees and propose action plan to solve the problems based on the findings of this research.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

The research utilized descriptive method to determine the banquet and catering business operations: drawing lessons from experience. Descriptive Method is an exploration and description of phenomena in a real life situation. It proves accurate account of characteristics of particular, individual, meanings, describes what exist. It is a process of data gathering, analyzing, classifying and tabulating data about prevailing conditions, practices, beliefs, process trends, and cause-effect relationships [8].

Participants of the Research

The participants of the study were the 10 Banquet and Catering Business managers/owners and 20 employees from each of their business representing 210 total populations of all the participating caterers in Batangas province who are into this kind of business for more than 10 years. They were also chosen and since they are willing to participate in the conduct of this research.

Data Gathering Instrument

The instrument used in conducting the study was self - made based from the experiences of the researcher as owner of a banquet and catering business. In order to validate the instrument, the researcher ask assistance from experts and faculty members who are teaching in the hospitality business. The final and revised questionnaire was subjected to CRONBAC alpa test with result of .973, meaning the instrument is reliable. This instrument was divided into two parts. Part I present profile of the catering business, Part II the operational problems encountered in catering business.

Data Collection Procedures

The researchers asked permission from managers of banquet and catering business in Batangas province thru a letter of request. She personally distributed the questionnaire to the respondents and explained to them that confidentiality of the names of catering business will be handled. It was mentioned during the interview with managers that research results will only be used for academic purposes and not for any personal intentions. After the answered questionnaire were retrieved; it was tallied, tabulated and analyzed. There is a 100% retrieval after two months.

Data Analysis

The data gathered were analyzed and interpreted using different statistical tools as frequency distribution, weighted mean and analysis of variance. The given scale was used to interpret the result of the data gathered: 3.50 – 4.00 = Always; 2.50 – 3.49 = Often; 1.50 – 2.49 = Sometimes; 1.00 – 1.49 = Never

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Banquet and Catering Business Profile

Type of Business Operation	f	%	Rank
On-Premise	7	70.0	1
Off-Premise	3	30.0	2
Target Market of the business			
Private Institutions	5	50	4.5
Public Institutions/ Government	6	60	2.5
Families Occasions	10	100	1
Upper Class	6	60	2.5
Middle Class	5	50	4.5
Number of Employees			
16-20 employees	2	20.0	3
21-25 employees	3	30.0	2
26 and above	5	50.0	1
Number of Years in Operation			
10-20 years	8	80.0	1
21 years and above	2	20.0	2
Customers served per occasions			
301 – 600	5	50.0	1
601 – 999	3	30.0	2
1000 and above	2	20.0	3

**Multiple Responses*

The banquet and catering profile revealed that most of their business operates on-premise which consists of 70 percent of the respondents although some are operating off-premise which consists of 30 percent of the respondents. For them, this will help them to

operate easily since they don't need to transfer some catering equipment's in different places. This will lessen the cost of their operation and since they are already well known to their respective places; they are just using word of mouth recommendations and referral from their friends thus they just prefer to place their operation on their own facility. They also claimed in interview the practicality of operating the business like this is occasionally done where your personal touch, competitive service and packages counted a lot.

Truly, banquet and catering is for family occasions which include different social events as their primary target, 100 percent of them; others are for Public schools and upper classes of their respective places. This is very much manifested by the observation and experienced of the researcher that most family occasions at home are done thru catering. Most of the time, families prefer services only while others are on per order basis. In whatever cases, managers still claimed they also gained profit from this kind of package for less manpower and other overhead expenses.

Almost half of the banquet and catering business have 26 and more employees because they can cater up to a thousand of guests when big occasions arises for both social and corporate events. Eighty (80) percent of these banquet and catering businesses are operating for more than ten (10) to twenty (20) years and (20) percent of them are operating for more than twenty-one (21) years. In detail of their successful operation are Angel and Anne's Catering Services which operated for more than 12 years, C. Aquila's Catering Services which operated for 16 years, Josie's Catering Services which operated for 18 years, Aicel's Catering Services which operated for more than 10 years, Via Athena Restaurant and Catering which operate for more than 10 years, Louie and Chit Catering Services which operated for 21 years, Ginazel's Catering Services which operates for 24 years, Cesca Food and Catering Services which operated for 18 years, D3M Foodmates and Refreshments which operates for 19 years and Kubyertoz Catering Services that successfully operates for 11 years.

The managers believe that successful operation of their business for years demand innovative product with minimal pricing, as well as personal relationship with customers as they are the best marketing strategies.

One of the most important considerations a client uses in the decision-making process is a caterer's reputation. It is imperative that the caterer is reliable. It is important for the managers to understand how the

potential customer's decision-making process works. A potential client is looking for a caterer who has the capabilities to do both on premise and off-premise catering. In the many needs of the potential customers; the caterer must understand how it will influence their decision to select the right caterer. Caterers need to get to know their customers. The key to doing these events is to design some kind of checklist to organize and plan all activities and equipment needs before arriving at the event. There is always a need to exceed customer's expectations." Strive to provide better than average food services to guests. Gear strengths to meet and exceed customer satisfaction beyond the food and service.

However, banquet and catering operations is also a demanding work, requiring stamina, ability to work under pressure and excellent interpersonal skills. The success will greatly depend on the reputation and the owner should be willing to work hard and the ability to work under pressure.

Successful catering in today's market is a combination of many important components which affect the outcome of the service [9]. Just to mention poor quality, complaints and dissatisfied customers can destroy the image of caterers and consequently cause losses that can result in closure of the business and worst lawsuits. Regardless of the customers, the caterer is expected to give flawless service irrespective of other numerous technical and aesthetic challenges [10].

Table 2. Banquet and Catering Businesses Facilities and Amenities

Business Facilities	f	%	Rank
1. Internet Access	8	80	5.5
2. Program Host	7	70	7
3. Sound System	10	100	1.5
4. Parking Areas	9	90	3.5
5. Musicians/Band/DJs	5	50	8
6. Event Security	3	30	9.5
7. Swimming Pool	3	30	9.5
8. Function Halls/Events Place	8	80	5.5
9. Audio Visual Rentals and Support	9	90	3.5
10. Lighting/Décor	10	100	1.5

**Multiple Responses*

The features provided by banquet and catering business is 100 percent for sound system and lightning, followed by audio visual rentals, availability of parking areas, function halls and internet access. When managers were asked about this features provided among customers, they disclosed these are basic for

banquet and catering business to be successful in handling various functions. Obviously, there is a need to have your own sound system or if you are renting; and need to make sure that it has quality. They consider the smooth flow of the program in whatever occasion depends on lightning and sounds. There are some clients who are requesting for other facilities as audio visual with an additional minimal fee.

Lighting which includes décor and Sound Systems are some of the basic needs of a catering business, to create an ambiance to the place, especially at night events. The respondents claimed ownership of sound systems because it will definitely help them, and will keep the customers entertained and relaxed. This may include the provision of entertainment like song and dance numbers and games, giveaways or souvenirs for the guest. In catering business, they offer wedding debut, birthday, anniversary baptismal, meetings, blessings, corporate events, elegant rental and many more. Also, lighting is important because it creates a special effect to the place for the guest to really feel what the event is about. If it is a wedding, soft and neutral light effect were used to make a romantic ambiance, for concerts or festivals, bright light colors are used to make the event livelier. Sound systems also play a vital role in the event; it provides relaxation or entertainment with the guests depending on the type of music being played through the sound system, it also helps the lighting to create successfully the ambiance of the event. For weddings, romantic and mellow songs were played, for birthday parties, happy song were usually played. Most of the caterers have their own lighting and sound systems to turn a dull room into something romantic with the help of lighting and sound systems, and also it can generate extra income to the business, or include it in their packages

Lighting can transform a simple event space into a spectacular venue. It adds color to a neutral space and gives clients the option to use one color throughout the event or have the lights, and therefore mood, change as the event progresses. It also allows for centrepieces, head tables, or any important decor to be highlighted during the event for guests to enjoy [10]. The purpose of having a sound reinforcement system is for the program to be heard like in any indoor auditorium with over a few hundred seats and guests [11].

On the other hand, the lowest was event security and swimming pool which ranked as 9.5 with the frequency of 30 or 30 percent followed by musicians and DJs that ranked as 8 with a frequency of 50 or 50 percent.

This is least for security is observed for big events, such as festivals and concerts, has always been a

concern. Perhaps in big events like this, security is extremely important both to prevent breeches of safety and other illegal activity, as well as to make the attendees of such events feel safe and at ease [12]. But since most of the catering events are family oriented, all guests are their family and relatives, so the chances to have a commotion is really small, however security may also happen for some party crashers, that can be taken care of by the host. In some cases, event security is mostly availed by big events with a huge number of guests to keep everything under control. Safety or the hosts feels secured because they know that everything will be under control.

Swimming pools facilities on the other hand are considered as a bonus feature for the caterers that have their own events place. The swimming pool is usually used for pictorials or just to create a sort-of ambiance in the place. Only if the business also has rooms to be rented after the event, then that would be the reason why the swimming pool will be considered by guests.

In a family gathering, they prefer a delightful place to spend time, together with their relatives and friends catered to enjoy the after-party rather than just eating food, like at most events .[13]

Table 3. Banquet and Catering Businesses Products Served

Business Products	f	%	Rank
1. A wide variety of cuisines	10	100	1.5
2. Non-Alcoholic / Alcoholic Beverages	7	70	6.5
3. Creative Floral Designs & Styles	7	70	6.5
4. Variety of Cakes and Desserts	9	90	3.5
5. Specialty Cuisines	8	80	5
6. International cuisine	3	30	8
7. Equipment Rentals and Utensils	10	100	1.5
8. Balloons and Other Party Needs	9	90	3.5

**Multiple Responses*

Table 3 presents the banquet and catering businesses in terms of products served. A wide variety of cuisine, and equipment rentals and utensils as 1.5with the frequency of 100 or 100 percent, followed by variety of cakes and desserts, and balloons and other party needs which ranked 3.5 with the frequency of 90 or 90 percent.

Food is considered the heart of banquet and catering business; it is very important in the business to have its own variety of foods to keep the business going. Banquet and catering businesses served variety of food to choose from. On top of priority to stay at the top of the competition to continuously attract customers.

Aside from food considered, they may also offer extra event equipment and furniture rentals to make the customers' event unique from the others and have its own personality or character.

As to variety of cuisine for a catering business, it should complement with the type of catering that the company wishes to provide. Different menus and types of food should vary based on social events and gatherings, and mobile catering. Likewise, the catering business should have if its specialize type of cuisine, such as gourmet, comfort food, ethnic food, etc. By focusing on a specific concept for the menu, the catering business will be able to market itself accordingly to draw attention from customers looking for that type of food and service.

Also, food choices nowadays are made by people, either as individuals or as a group, which reveal views, passions, background knowledge, assumptions and personalities of customers. There are many factors that can affect the marketing catering business such as food choices, furniture or supply rentals, labor and service charges.

On the other hand, the lowest was international cuisine which ranked at 8 with the frequency of 30 or 30 percent, followed by non-alcoholic wine, beer and liquor beverages, and floral design which ranked as 6.5 with the frequency of 70 or 70 percent.

Few of the catering business offers international cuisine selection to the customers, as they need to have a professional chef who can cook well in different types of cuisine for it to happen. Mostly of the cooks of the caterers are only home cooks that don't have a lot of experience in dealing with such cuisines. As it requires skills to plan the menu, to have it on safe temperature, and on how to prepare it as quick as possible. A professional chef is also of great investment, as it will bring more dish to put up in the menu, and having a wide range of cuisines will attract customers, especially that what is on trend now is a themed celebration, Chinese dinner, etc. which the food will be serve are related to the theme of the celebration.

There are many aspects in which the innovation can be used, as to product itself, courtesy of the servants, nice atmosphere, comfortable place arrangement etc. Having on mind all those aspects the consumer satisfaction will increase [14]. In conditions of high quality products and services competition and improved the consumer's criterions of quality, each company intends to make products and services with better quality.

As managers of catering business whether experienced or inexperienced, it is expected that you

possess the ability to work under pressure and create visually attractive choice of products. Other factors affecting the operation of catering is the selection of equipment to include performance and functionality of design, maintenance, reliability of equipment, availability and cost of replacements, employee skill level to the production needs of the menu, current and future equipment requirements based on customer needs and demands.

Table 4. Banquet and Catering Businesses Advertising Tools

Banquet and Catering Services Advertising Tools	WM	VI	Rank
Billboards	2.40	Sometimes	5
Radio	2.20	Sometimes	6
Television	1.50	Sometimes	9
Newspaper	1.40	Never	10
Flyers	3.00	Often	4
Tarpaulins	3.10	Often	3
Social Media	3.40	Often	2
Yellow Pages	1.60	Sometimes	8
Referrals / Word of Mouth	3.70	Always	1
Calling Cards	2.10	Sometimes	7
Composite Mean	2.44	Sometimes	

For them, referral or favourable word of mouth is the best type of advertising because they believe that every customer served at the event is a possible referral. Guests can be impressed with the good food, services or the caterer's attitude displayed during the function. For this purpose, it is important for the caterer to project a positive attitude regarding the presentation of food and related service. A satisfied client will potentially tell at least three friends, family members or business associates.

This study cited that recruited 601 subjects in three cities who viewed simulated Yellow Pages ads for florists or caterers. Ad information was either generally stated or specific to the product involved. Ads either did or did not contain color. Color was used to attract attention to the ad or else to enhance product appearance. Subjects selected an initial consideration set and a final set of ads to call. Ads with product-specific information were more likely to be considered and called. Findings showed that ads with color were more likely to be considered, but only using product-enhancing color increased chances that an ad would be called. Ads that used enhancing color in a manner that substantiated verbal claims were most likely to be called first [15].

Equally important and effective are techniques that allow for face time—those that remind potential customers of you and make it more likely that they'll think of you the next time they're looking for a caterer. These include events like bridal fairs and tastings and professional and networking society memberships.

Small business owner Sonal Goda points to the importance of face time in boosting business, especially when companies are just starting out. "In the beginning, more of your marketing should actually be what I would call prospecting, which is face-to-face or phone methods—things that require more time than money," she says. "These methods have a much higher rate of return than marketing to people that you don't know. Make a list of the types of people that have been hiring you, then start figuring out how you can connect with that set of people in person."

Bennett reports that Main Event participates not only in bridal fairs, but also in fairs for market segments like attorneys and architects. These segments regularly have conferences and meetings requiring event coordination and planning, and so they invite vendors in to showcase the services they can provide. "We also participate in event venue open houses," Bennett says.

"Most catering companies will do occasional group bridal tastings," Bennett says. "I think one of the things that had helped our business grow is we have taken a similar sort of event and reached out to the corporate community and the venues and we have created a similar type of event just for those people. We're bringing in and wooing the venues that haven't been referring us as many clients as they once did." Bennett recommends this technique to other catering companies. "You might only be having 10 or 20 people at a time, but those are good, really qualified leads." This results affirm catering concept that as a word of mouth is best advertising tools for the service of catering are often sold on a per-person basis.

In any business, it is essential to create a powerful business profile which is an effective way to introduce the business to the potential customers and other stakeholders. A company profile is a professional introduction of the business and aims to inform the audience about its products and services. To create such, one needs to carefully develop an advertising strategy and map out the characteristics to be highlighted and how to assimilate the unique offerings of the business in a concise yet attractive manner.

With the business profile of the Batangas Catering services as respondents of this research, it is still

crucial for any business to create the right marketing mix to reach out to customers and get them interested in your brand. In order to build sales and sustain the success of your various business aspects; a powerful company profile need to present an opportunity for the prospective buyer to know about the company like company address, contact details, management team etc. on sections like the 'about us' page in FB and other technology based advertising tools to be tailor-made for the target audience.

Table 5. Problems Encountered by Banquet and Catering Businesses in Batangas in terms of Facilities

Problems on Facilities	WM	VI	Rank
1. Sound System / A.V. facilities not functioning well	1.80	Sometimes	2
2. Comfort Rooms	1.20	Never	5
3. Insufficient Parking Areas	1.85	Sometimes	1
4. Lightings system that are not functioning well	1.45	Sometimes	4
5. Defective air-conditioning	1.70	Sometimes	3
Composite Mean	1.61	Sometimes	

Table 5 shows the result of the problems usually encountered by the catering businesses in terms of facilities. Result showed the verbal interpretation was sometimes with the composite mean of 1.61

Small/No Parking area ranked first with a weighted mean of 1.85, verbally interpreted as sometimes. Sound system/A.V Facilities no functioning well ranked as two (2) with the weighted mean of 1.80, verbally interpreted as sometimes. And defective air-conditioning ranked as 3 with the weighted mean of 1.70 verbally interpreted as sometimes.

Every event certainly needs a decent parking space for the visitors of the host. So for the caterer that operates residentially, the parking space isn't usually their concern as they usually operate off premise, and the event host usually allocates the space where their guests can park their vehicles. For on- premise caterers or the caterers that has a commercial space, parking space is really a big deal, so they can accommodate all of the guests that will be having the event on the place. It is very important to have an accessible parking space for the guests, the one that isn't too far from function hall. And apparently most of the catering business in District I usually encounter parking space problems as they usually operated off-premise, and mostly of the

space allotted by the hosts for the event set up does not have room for parking space.

The business should have a fairly good idea of how customers would arrive at the event at the proposed location. A great location will ideally have its own parking lot. Depending on the concept, nearby public parking may also be acceptable [16]. Also revealed in the study is the problem in lighting system from which catering service sometimes encounter.

On the other hand, the lowest was the rest room with a weighted mean of 1.20, verbally interpreted as never. This means that never did the catering business encounter problem in rest rooms.

Rest rooms wouldn't be a concern of the business, if operating off-premise, the hosts own rest room is available for the guests, and of course, on premise events, there is always a rest room at the function hall to accommodate the guests 'call of nature'. Fortunately, most of the catering business never had a rest room problem. A clean rest room pleases the customers. It is important to have a clean rest room so the business will never have a bad review from the guests. Sanitation is very important in the food industry, so it is important to keep the cleanliness from the kitchen all throughout the room. Word of mouth is the most powerful marketing tool and when the news is negative, it discourages guests to book events the business.

Consumers are concerned with restroom cleanliness for there is a really a need for a functioning restroom to gain positive influence on customers' perception of the restaurant; and has also been shown to impact the choice of where to eat or whether to return to a restaurant. Customers do not see the inner workings of a service establishment. Yet this unseen area can be a customer's major concern. A clean bathroom can make or break a customer service experience if the company is in the hospitality or service industry. In a restaurant, the impact of a clean restroom on a customer's perception of the company can last through the entire dining experience, and can be a main topic of conversation when the customers tell friends about the establishment [17].

Table 6 shows the result of the problems encountered by Banquet and Catering Business in Batangas in terms of amenities. Result showed that the composite mean is 1.30, verbally interpreted as never. Generally, there is no problem as to amenities as Air conditioner running noisy, internet has extra charge lack of water supply and defective sound system; however, sometimes there is a problem on unexpected loss of electricity (1.55).

Table 6. Problems Encountered by Banquet and Catering Businesses in Batangas in terms of Amenities

Problems on Amenities	WM	VI	Rank
1. Air Conditioned is Malfunctioning	1.41	Never	2
2. No Internet Access	1.38	Never	3
3. Lack of water supply	1.10	Never	4.5
4. Defective Sound System	1.10	Never	4.5
5. Unexpected loss of electricity	1.55	Sometimes	1
Composite Mean	1.30	Never	

The unexpected loss of electricity is something that is inevitable to caterers, for it occurs during rainy season, and very seldom during the sunny days. If operating off premise but the event is in an event place, it is the event place's concern already. But when operating on personal function hall, usually there is a generator to back up the electricity or else it will turn on very dissatisfied customers.

Caterers cannot start their business operations for most of the equipments are run by machines operated by electricity [18]. Water really isn't much of a problem for catering whether on premise and off premise event had dishwashing areas. As for the unpleasant sounds, the caterers stated that they always make sure that their sound systems are always checked by the maintenance worker, and always make sure to fix the damage or problem immediately once it occurs. For the managers such result is a manifestation of their desire to provide better service to their customers as to amenities. For them, the competitiveness of catering business enterprise greatly depends on the service-oriented catering in maintaining a good partnership with customers and their industry partners as well. This was affirmed in the study of [19] which aims to discuss the effect of service quality on customer satisfaction in catering. Truly, determining catering business organization's success depends on customer satisfaction in today's competitive business world. The usual customer satisfaction in catering services increases in different processes such as the improvement of the image and quality of catering services and development of customer perceived value.

Table 7 states the problems encountered by catering business in Batangas in terms of products. Result shows the composite mean of 1.39, verbally interpreted as never.

Seasonality of the product ranked topped with the weighted mean of 1.90 verbally interpreted as

sometimes. Keeping the food hot and cold ranked second with the weighted mean of 1.40, verbally interpreted as sometimes. And shortage of food ranked 3 with the weighted mean of 1.25, verbally interpreted as never.

Table 7. Problems Encountered by Banquet and Catering Businesses in Batangas in terms of Products

Problems on products	WM	VI	Rank
1. Seasonality of the products	1.90	Sometimes	1
2. Shortage of food	1.25	Never	3
3. Food Safety and Security	1.20	Never	4.5
4. Keeping food hot and cold	1.40	Sometimes	2
5. Cross contamination	1.20	Never	4.5
Composite Mean	1.39	Never	

Some products, especially fruits that grow seasonally, are something that is inevitable. Most of the catering business has these problems. Mostly it occurs on dessert dishes but very seldom on the main course or protein. The solution is either replaces the unavailable product that could work also with the dish, or remove the dish from the menu list.

Seasonality maybe best addressed thru determining inventory levels, or just figuring out appropriate hours of operations to plan for a peak season – all while staying profitable. These challenges can most certainly add to increased food costs, waste, safety concerns and even potential loss. All which if not properly controlled or monitored will negatively impact your season ability and your business profitability. [20]

Very notable that catering business in Batangas province never encountered problems on food safety and security, and cross contamination (4.5 and WM of 1.20). Since these are very serious matter in the food industry. It could cause food spoilage and can poison the guests, which results to having bad reviews on the catering business. For the managers it can be avoided in a matter of practicing hygiene, time management and knowing the safe temperature of the products. Also, they ensure that assigned chef is provided with clean working space and foods keep in its safe and required temperature levels. The application of good hygiene practices in food businesses is essential to protect consumers from food borne illness. The Food handlers should have the necessary knowledge and skills to enable them to apply these practices, under the general hygiene regulations. [14] Safely preparing food is of paramount importance

for if food sickens a client, it could lead to costly litigation and cripple your company's reputation.

Table 8. Summary Table of the Problems Encountered by Banquet and Catering Businesses in Batangas

Problems	Composite Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Facilities	1.80	Sometimes	1
2. Amenities	1.24	Never	2
3. Products	1.19	Never	3
Overall Composite Mean	1.41	Never	

Table 8 shows the summary table of the problems encountered by catering businesses in District I. Result got the composite mean of 1.41, verbally interpreted as never.

Facilities ranked 1 with the composite mean of 1.80, verbally interpreted as sometimes. Amenities ranked 2 with the composite mean of 1.24, verbally interpreted as never and products ranked last with the composite mean of 1.19, verbally interpreted as never.

It result is very commendable that catering business in Batangas province never encountered serious problems in the operation of their Banquet and Catering Businesses. This is a strong manifestation that as experienced caterer in the field, they were able to manage very well their business for more than 10 years. For them, this is a long journey to a lot of failures before and a reaping of success after sacrifices. The trip might be so hard and challenging but the fruit is rewarding. For them, this is not a perfect business and sometimes they also encountered problems on facilities because some guests are not satisfied even you feel it is already perfect. Customers always expect the best and the business should meet and exceed that expectation to satisfy them. For managers, every event is an opportunity to learn, to grow and to attract potential customers. This result is very commendable that catering business in Batangas province never encountered serious problems in the operation of their Banquet and Catering Businesses. This is a strong manifestation that as experienced caterer in the field, they were able to manage very well their business for more than 10 years. For them, this is a long journey to a lot of failures before and a reaping of success after sacrifices. The trip might be so hard and challenging but the fruit is rewarding.

Catering is not a perfect business and sometimes they also encountered problems on facilities because some guests are not satisfied even you feel it is already perfect. Customers always expect the best and the business should meet and exceed that expectation to

satisfy them. For managers, every event is an opportunity to learn, to grow and to attract potential customers. As a high contact service and a people oriented business it needs to survive in such a competitive market, it is crucial that both customers and employees are satisfied with the food, the dining environment and the service provided. The success will greatly depend on reputation and in order to build one, the business owner should be willing to work hard and possessed the ability to work under pressure. This kind of entrepreneurial business activity definitely requires a demanding work, requiring stamina, ability to work under pressure, and excellent interpersonal skills .[21]

Table 9. Difference of Responses on the Problems Encountered by Banquet and Catering Businesses in Batangas When Grouped According to Managers and Employees

Profile	Facilities		Amenities		Products	
	F-value	p-value	F-value	p-value	F-value	p-value
Manager Vs Employees	0.843	0.518	9.02*	0.012	0.689	0.591

*Significant at $p\text{-value} < 0.05$

Based from the result of Table 9, only the problems on amenities shows significant difference when grouped according to the managers and employees; The number of employees since the obtained p-value of 0.012 is less than 0.05 alpha level. Thus, the null hypothesis under this variable is rejected. This means that the problems that the catering business encountered as to amenities varies as to the number of employees they have. In support using Scheffe method, catering business with 11 to 15 employees experienced problem compare to others regarding the business amenities. Managers encountered significantly the problems on amenities over employees since they are responsible in the catering business specifically for off premise operations. For them, running a catering business demands a lot from them even if everybody is involved. A bit of patience will be for them that is to look after every little detail by themselves.

Since catering services are gradually earning, the success will greatly depend on building good reputation in the business; the managers if not the employees should be willing to work hard under pressure. In the province of Batangas, the competitiveness of catering business enterprise greatly depends on the service-oriented catering in maintaining a good partnership with customers and their industry partners. Truly, determining catering business organization's success depends on customer satisfaction in today's

competitive business world. Knowing the level of customer satisfaction can help an organization to evaluate the competence of catering activities

To lessen operational problems identified by the business of banquet and catering such as insufficient parking areas I recommend to invest or look for a parking area that would comfortably accommodate customer's vehicles, recommend venue with parking spaces during off premise operations and designate number of vehicles allowed as per discussed with client-customers. In case of unexpected loss of electricity, i suggest to invest for a backup portable power generator and offer to clients especially on the stormy months, coordinate with energy supplier to plan for contingency, provide emergency lights in case of unexpected power interruption for the successful operation.

To draw lesson from experiences of successful banquet and catering operations in case of unavailability of the product. They must have an alternative product and provide a back up menu. They can also suggest to client other equally preferred menu and they can offer customized menu to address the customers need. Understanding the customers lead to customer satisfaction.

Knowing the business of catering and what it requires, is very important in the concept of food industry management. As pointed out, catering business is a different kind of business concern as it has its own peculiarities that do not hold true in other kind of enterprise. This is because caterers do not sell foods but services of the highest order. Patrons of catering business are mostly meticulous and fastidious clients who always want to be treated as most important persons of the event.

Every event will be different story to tell, a different experienced to share.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Most of the banquet and catering business in the province of Batangas is operating in either off or on premise operation targeting family occasions. They have more than 26 employees and in the business for more than 10 years. They can serve more than 300 to 1,000 guests.

The business facilities and amenities offered by catering are the basic need in the operation of the business as proper lighting and sound systems. As to products served, all of them prefer a wide variety of palatable dishes and the presence of equipment and utensils.

The problems encountered in banquet and catering business are insufficient parking areas, unexpected loss of electricity and seasonality of the products.

The managers and employees show significant differences on the problems related to amenities.

An action plan was proposed to solve the problems encountered by the Banquet and Catering Business both by the managers and employees.

It is recommended that the institutions offering hospitality management may help Banquet and Catering managers to do innovation in the operation of their business through linkage with the dean and their association. Managers of Banquet and catering may share resources at lower cost. They may also develop their own talents of hosting and other entertainment activities. Managers may develop staff training on alternative supplier's management or develop their own resources as to planting and livestock business. Banquet and Catering Association in Batangas province may be organized in order to discuss issues in the operation of this kind of promising enterprise. Experiences as lessons learned from this study maybe disseminated as a form of seminar for business students. Respondents maybe invited as guest speakers. Future study may be conducted using other variables to further confirm the result of the study.

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