

Original Article

A Phenomenological Study on the Lived Entrepreneurial Experiences of BSHM Alumni in the Hospitality Industry

Ivan Angeles¹, Kent Voices Sibulan¹, Geraldine Rose Ruiz¹, Jan Auree Bagona¹,
Eric Relon¹, Kim Kenneth Diaz¹, John Eliez Manabat¹, Norwena Razul^{1,*}

Received: 14 May 2026; Revised: 23 June 2026;
Accepted: 25 June 2026; Published: 27 June 2026

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.66074/K3X7N2P8>

Abstract

This study explored the lived entrepreneurial experiences of Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management (BSHM) alumni entrepreneurs in the hospitality industry. Specifically, it examined the lived situations they encountered, the challenges they experienced, the opportunities they utilized, and the responses they developed throughout their entrepreneurial journey. A qualitative research design using a phenomenological approach was employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' personal experiences. The participants were three BSHM alumni from Palawan State University – Brooke's Point Campus who owned and managed hospitality-related businesses. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis framework. The findings revealed that the lived entrepreneurial experiences of BSHM alumni entrepreneurs were reflected in three major themes: navigating business- and market-related difficulties, leveraging opportunities for business growth, and developing personal and strategic coping mechanisms. Participants encountered financial instability, customer-related challenges, and external and operational difficulties. Regarding opportunities utilized, the findings identified utilizing digital marketing and technology, expanding business through strategic decisions, and using customer feedback for business improvement as significant opportunities that supported business growth and sustainability. Furthermore, participants responded to their entrepreneurial situations by maintaining consistency and focus, learning and adapting through experience, and

¹ Palawan State
University – Brooke's
Point Campus,
Brooke's Point,
Palawan, Philippines
* ivanangeles0496
@gmail.com

applying support systems and strategic management practices.

Keywords: business challenges; business opportunities; BSHM alumni; coping strategies; entrepreneurial experiences; hospitality entrepreneurship; lived experiences; phenomenological study

1. Introduction

The hospitality industry is one of the most dynamic and multifaceted sectors globally, playing a crucial role in economic development through services such as accommodation, food and beverage, travel, and tourism. It is highly characterized by customer-centered operations where service quality and customer satisfaction are essential to business success. The industry continues to evolve due to technological innovations, shifting consumer preferences, and economic fluctuations. As such, it requires a highly adaptive workforce with strong competencies in hospitality operations, customer service, and business management.

Graduates of Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management (BSHM) programs are equipped with a diverse set of skills that prepare them for both employment and entrepreneurial pathways within the hospitality sector. These competencies include operational management, service delivery, and customer relations, all essential for navigating industry demands. Many BSHM graduates transition from academic training to entrepreneurship, establishing businesses that reflect their specialization in hospitality services.

Entrepreneurship among hospitality graduates has been increasingly recognized as an extension of hospitality education, as graduates apply their knowledge and skills in real-world business settings. Studies suggest that entrepreneurship education plays a significant role in developing entrepreneurial intentions, knowledge, and competencies necessary for business creation and management (Boldureanu et al., 2020; Nabi et al., 2017). However, there remains a limited understanding of how these competencies are experienced and applied in actual entrepreneurial practice within the hospitality industry.

In particular, the lived entrepreneurial experiences of BSHM alumni remain underexplored. While existing literature highlights the importance of entrepreneurial competencies, limited attention has been given to how hospitality graduates personally experience entrepreneurship within actual business contexts. These experiences often involve managing operational uncertainties, responding to customer expectations, addressing workforce-related concerns, and adapting to external disruptions that affect business continuity. Hospitality enterprises, particularly small businesses, are highly exposed to operational pressures and environmental changes, requiring entrepreneurs to develop adaptive strategies and innovative approaches to sustain their ventures (Baum, 2015; Breier et al., 2021; Nambisan, 2017).

Furthermore, although hospitality education provides foundational knowledge and technical skills, the transition into entrepreneurship exposes graduates to unpredictable and complex business realities. Many BSHM alumni pursue hospitality ventures, including food businesses, personal care services, and tourism-related enterprises. However, how they experience, interpret, and respond to these entrepreneurial situations remains insufficiently documented in the literature.

Additionally, the hospitality industry shapes entrepreneurial behavior through its emphasis on customer experience, service quality, and continuous adaptation to market demands. BSHM alumni entrepreneurs often utilize strategies such as digital marketing, customer feedback integration, and service innovation to remain competitive. Despite this, there is still a gap in understanding how these experiences are lived and meaningfully interpreted by graduates in their entrepreneurial journey.

This study, therefore, explores the lived entrepreneurial experiences of BSHM alumni in the hospitality industry. By focusing on their real-life situations, challenges, opportunities, and responses, the study aims to provide a deeper understanding of how hospitality graduates transition from academic preparation to entrepreneurship. The findings are expected to contribute to improving hospitality education, entrepreneurship training, and support systems for future graduates.

1.1 Research Objectives

This study aims to explore the lived entrepreneurial experiences of BSHM alumni in the hospitality industry.

1. To identify lived situations experienced by BSHM alumni in their entrepreneurial journey.
2. To explore challenges encountered by BSHM alumni entrepreneurs in hospitality businesses.
3. To examine opportunities utilized by BSHM alumni entrepreneurs in their business experiences.
4. To describe responses of BSHM alumni entrepreneurs to entrepreneurial situations

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design using a phenomenological approach to explore the lived entrepreneurial experiences of Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management (BSHM) alumni engaged in hospitality-related businesses. Phenomenology is appropriate for studies that seek to understand and describe how individuals experience and interpret a particular phenomenon from their own perspectives (Moustakas, 1994). Through this approach, the study examined how BSHM alumni experienced entrepreneurship, the challenges they encountered, the

opportunities they utilized, and the ways they responded to entrepreneurial situations within the hospitality industry.

2.2 Participants of the Study

The participants consisted of three (3) BSHM alumni from Palawan State University – Brooke's Point Campus who were actively engaged in hospitality-related entrepreneurial ventures. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on the following criteria: (1) graduates of the BSHM program, (2) owners or operators of hospitality-related businesses, (3) possessing direct entrepreneurial experience within the hospitality industry, and (4) willing to participate in the study. Although the study involved only three participants, this sample size is consistent with phenomenological research, which prioritizes depth of understanding over breadth of representation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The selected participants provided rich, detailed accounts of their entrepreneurial experiences. Data collection continued until sufficient depth of understanding was achieved and no substantially new insights emerged from the participants' narratives.

2.3 Research Locale

The study was conducted among BSHM alumni residing and operating hospitality-related businesses in Brooke's Point, Palawan, Philippines. The locale was selected because it provided access to graduates who had transitioned from hospitality education into entrepreneurial practice within the local hospitality industry.

2.4 Research Instrument

The primary research instrument was a researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide consisting of open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed descriptions of participants' entrepreneurial experiences. The interview questions focused on their entrepreneurial journey, the challenges they encountered, the opportunities they leveraged, their coping mechanisms, and the influence of their hospitality education on business operations. The interview guide was reviewed by research advisers to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study objectives. Follow-up and probing questions were utilized to encourage deeper reflection and richer descriptions of participants' lived experiences. All interviews were conducted with participants' informed consent, audio-recorded, and transcribed verbatim. Field notes were also maintained to document contextual observations and non-verbal cues relevant to data interpretation.

2.5 Sampling Technique

The study employed purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique commonly used in qualitative research. This technique enabled the selection of participants with direct experience of the phenomenon under investigation and the ability to provide meaningful insights into hospitality entrepreneurship.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from all participants. Potential participants were identified through alumni networks and personal referrals. Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted at times and locations convenient to the participants. During the interviews, participants were encouraged to describe their entrepreneurial experiences freely. Follow-up questions were asked to clarify responses and obtain richer descriptions. Each interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes and was audio-recorded with permission. Following data collection, interview recordings were transcribed verbatim. Participants were subsequently allowed to review their transcripts to verify the accuracy of their statements and ensure that their intended meanings were correctly represented.

2.7 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis framework. The first phase involved familiarization with the data through repeated reading of interview transcripts and field notes. During this stage, preliminary observations and reflections were recorded. The second phase involved generating initial codes by systematically identifying meaningful statements, words, and phrases relevant to the participants' entrepreneurial experiences. Codes were assigned to data segments that reflected common ideas, experiences, and perceptions. In the third phase, related codes were grouped into preliminary categories and potential themes. Similar patterns across participant narratives were identified and organized according to the research objectives. The fourth phase involved reviewing and refining themes to ensure consistency and alignment with the participants' accounts. Themes were repeatedly compared with the original transcripts to ensure they accurately reflected the participants' lived experiences. The fifth phase focused on defining and naming themes by identifying their core meanings and relationships to the phenomenon under study. Finally, the sixth phase involved producing the report by integrating themes, participant quotations, and relevant literature to provide a comprehensive interpretation of the findings.

2.8 Trustworthiness of the Study

To ensure the rigor and trustworthiness of the findings, the study adhered to the qualitative criteria of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Credibility was established through member checking, verbatim transcription, and prolonged engagement with the data. Participants reviewed their interview transcripts to verify the accuracy of their responses and interpretations. Dependability was enhanced by maintaining a clear record of the research procedures, coding process, and theme development. Confirmability was ensured by grounding interpretations in participants' actual narratives and by documenting analytical decisions throughout the study. Transferability was supported by detailed descriptions of the participants, the research context, and the findings, allowing readers to assess the applicability of the results to similar settings. Researcher reflexivity was practiced throughout the research process. Reflective notes were maintained during data collection and analysis to monitor personal assumptions and minimize potential biases, ensuring that interpretations remained closely aligned with the participants' lived experiences.

2.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were strictly observed throughout the conduct of the study. Participants were informed of the purpose of the research, their voluntary participation, and their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by using pseudonyms in reporting the findings. Audio recordings, transcripts, and research documents were securely stored and accessed only by the researchers. Respect, sensitivity, and professionalism were upheld throughout the research process, particularly when discussing personal and business-related experiences.

3. Results

3.1 Participant Profile

Participant 1 (Ana) is a home baker who established a small-scale baking enterprise. Participant 2 (Liza) operates a food business, while Participant 3 (Mark) manages a salon and barbershop. Their narratives provided insights into the realities of entrepreneurship, including the challenges they faced, the opportunities they seized, and the strategies they developed to sustain their businesses.

3.2 Lived Situations Experienced by BSHM Alumni in their Entrepreneurial Journey

The participants' narratives revealed that their entrepreneurial journeys were characterized by continuous experiences involving business difficulties, opportunity recognition, and adaptive responses. Three themes emerged from their lived experiences: navigating business- and market-related difficulties, leveraging

opportunities for business growth, and developing personal and strategic coping mechanisms.

Theme 1: Navigating Business and Market-Related Difficulties

This theme describes the experiences participants encounter while establishing and managing their hospitality-related enterprises. Participants shared situations involving financial uncertainty, customer concerns, operational limitations, and market competition.

Subtheme 1.1: Experiencing Financial Instability

Financial instability emerged as a significant experience for participants. Participants shared that managing a business involves periods of low income, limited sales, and difficulties maintaining operational expenses.

One participant described experiencing a period when the business had no sales. She explained that although such situations were expected in entrepreneurship, the experience created uncertainty and personal concerns about the business's sustainability.

“For me, I have experienced zero sales. When I reached that point, I already knew that once I put up a business, I would experience that situation. I asked myself, what will happen to my life? Because it is not always like that.” P1 (Ana)

Another participant shared the difficulty of managing business expenses, particularly due to rising ingredient prices. She emphasized the importance of proper budgeting because daily earnings were not always guaranteed.

“When it comes to budgeting, it is really difficult nowadays because ingredients are expensive. You have to budget wisely. You cannot expect to earn a lot every day.” P2 (Liza)

Subtheme 1.2: Customer-Related Challenges

Participants also shared that customer-related concerns became part of their entrepreneurial experiences. These challenges included customer cancellations and changes in customer decisions, which affected business preparation, resources, and expected income.

One participant explained that cancelled orders were among the difficult situations she encountered as a home baker:

“As a home baker, for example, when someone asked me to make a cake and suddenly it was cancelled, that was one of the most challenging experiences I encountered.” P1 (Ana)

Subtheme 1.3: External and Operational Challenges

Participants narrated that external circumstances and operational concerns influenced their ability to sustain their businesses. These experiences included pandemic disruptions, employee-related concerns, and industry competition.

One participant shared how the pandemic affected business operations due to restrictions and the absence of customers:

“During the pandemic, because of the lockdown, everything closed down—there were no customers and no sales. It was really hard. We were fortunate that we survived without getting sick, but it was difficult not earning for months.” P2 (Liza)

Meanwhile, another participant explained the difficulty of managing employees while maintaining service quality and competitiveness in the beauty industry:

“Finding and retaining talented nail technicians, stylists, brow artists, and staff who share my vision for my salon is challenging. The beauty industry here in Brooke’s Point is quite competitive.” P3 (Mark)

Theme 2: Leveraging Opportunities for Business Growth

This theme describes how participants recognized and utilized opportunities to develop and sustain their businesses. Participants shared experiences demonstrating how digital technology, expansion decisions, and customer involvement served as strategies that contributed to business growth.

Subtheme 2.1: Online Marketing and Technology

Participants identified online platforms and technology as important opportunities to increase business visibility and reach customers.

One participant shared that online marketing helped her promote her products and reach more customers:

“As a home baker, what I have seen is through online marketing. Since we are living in a new era, we are always using gadgets.” P1 (Ana)

She further explained that online promotion allowed more people to discover her business:

“It was not only one or two people who saw my business; many more people were able to see it. Posting products online helps attract and inspire customers.” P1 (Ana)

Another participant also emphasized the importance of online selling and technology in maintaining customer reach:

“Definitely online selling. Technology is really important now. Posting products online keeps customers coming.” P2 (Liza)

Theme 2: Leveraging Opportunities for Business Growth

Subtheme 2.2: Business Expansion and Strategic Decisions

Participants shared that business expansion and strategic decision-making became important opportunities that contributed to the development and growth of their enterprises. They explained that making adjustments in their business operations, including expanding services and improving business locations, helped them increase customer reach and strengthen their market presence.

One participant shared that expanding the business by offering additional services became an opportunity for growth:

“We opened a barbershop.” P3 (Mark)

The participant further explained that changing the business location contributed to increased customer recognition and improved business visibility:

“Before, our location was in Tagong Lugar. When we moved to Harap ng Prince, we gained more customers, and our salon became more recognized.” P3 (Mark)

Subtheme 2.3: Customer Feedback as Opportunity

Participants also shared that customer feedback was an important opportunity to improve their products and services. They explained that listening to customer suggestions allowed them to identify areas for improvement and enhance the quality of their offerings.

One participant described how customer feedback helped her improve her products:

“The suggestions and feedback that they gave about the products I created helped me improve them. I applied their feedback and tried to improve the outcome of the product.” P1 (Ana)

Theme 3: Developing Personal and Strategic Coping Mechanisms

This theme describes how participants responded to entrepreneurial situations through perseverance, continuous learning, support systems, and strategic approaches. Participants shared that sustaining a business required consistency, adaptability, and the ability to learn from experiences.

Subtheme 3.1: Consistency and Focus

Participants emphasized that perseverance and maintaining a positive mindset were important in overcoming entrepreneurial challenges. They explained that remaining consistent and focused helped them continue operating their businesses despite difficulties and uncertainties.

One participant shared the importance of consistency in sustaining her entrepreneurial journey:

“Just be consistent. Just be consistent. Stay focused and consistent, and remain positive in everything.” P1 (Ana)

Subtheme 3.2: Learning from Experience

Participants shared that their entrepreneurial knowledge and skills were developed through observation, actual business experiences, and continuous learning. They explained that learning from situations encountered in their businesses helped them adjust and improve their strategies.

One participant explained that she learned by observing others and reflecting on her experiences:

“Yes, from people and also from what I see. Again, I observe and learn from my observations.” P1 (Ana)

Another participant shared how adapting to changing circumstances encouraged her to modify her business approach:

“I shifted to online selling and delivery.” P2 (Liza)

Subtheme 3.3: Support Systems and Motivation

Participants shared that family support and personal aspirations served as important sources of motivation throughout their entrepreneurial journey. They explained that guidance from family members and their goals for business growth encouraged them to continue despite challenges.

One participant shared the importance of family guidance in her entrepreneurial experience:

“Yes, my mother. She helped me get to where I am today. She is also a businesswoman, so she guided me.” P2 (Liza)

Another participant shared her personal goal for business development:

“My dream for my business is to have a physical store.” P1 (Ana)

3.3 Challenges Encountered by BSHM Alumni Entrepreneurs in Hospitality Businesses

The second research objective focused on identifying the challenges experienced by BSHM alumni entrepreneurs while operating their hospitality-related enterprises. The participants' narratives revealed that they encountered difficulties associated with financial management, customer relationships, external disruptions, workforce concerns, and competitive business environments.

Three themes emerged from participants' lived entrepreneurial experiences: financial instability, customer-related challenges, and external and operational difficulties.

Theme 1: Experiencing Financial Instability

Financial instability emerged as one of the most significant challenges participants faced. They shared experiences of inconsistent income, limited sales, and rising operational costs, which affected their ability to maintain business operations.

Subtheme 1.1: Unstable Income and Limited Sales

Participants shared that there were periods when their businesses generated minimal or no income. These experiences created uncertainty and required them to develop strategies to sustain their enterprises.

One participant explained:

“For me, I have experienced zero sales. When I reached that point, I was aware that once I put up a business, I would experience situations like that. It made me question what would happen to my life because business is not always stable.” P1 (Ana)

The participant's experience reflected the uncertainty encountered by small business owners, particularly those whose businesses depend on continuous customer demand.

Subtheme 1.2: Difficulty in Managing Business Expenses

Participants also shared difficulties controlling business expenses due to rising prices for materials and supplies. They explained that careful financial management was necessary to sustain daily operations.

One participant explained:

“When it comes to budgeting, it is really difficult nowadays because ingredients are expensive. You have to budget wisely. You cannot expect to earn a lot every day.” P2 (Liza)

The participant emphasized that proper budgeting and expense management were necessary, even amid fluctuating business income.

Theme 2: Managing Customer-Related Challenges

Participants shared that customer-related concerns significantly influenced their business operations. They explained that managing customer expectations, handling cancellations, and responding to changing customer decisions were among the challenges they encountered while operating their hospitality-related businesses.

Subtheme 2.1: Customer Cancellations and Uncertainty

Participants described customer cancellations as one of the difficult situations they experienced in managing their businesses. They explained that canceled transactions affected their preparation, resource allocation, and expected income.

One participant shared her experience as a home baker:

“As a home baker, when someone asked me to make a cake and suddenly it was canceled, that was one of the most challenging experiences I encountered.” P1 (Ana)

The participant's experience showed that customer decisions directly affected business planning, particularly for enterprises that require preparation of materials and resources before service delivery.

Theme 3: Addressing External and Operational Difficulties

Participants shared that external conditions and internal operational concerns also created challenges in sustaining their businesses. These experiences included disruptions caused by the pandemic, employee management challenges, and competition in the hospitality industry.

Subtheme 3.1: Business Disruptions During the Pandemic

Participants explained that the pandemic created significant difficulties for their businesses due to restrictions on movement, reduced customer activity, and temporary operational disruptions.

One participant shared:

“During the pandemic, because of the lockdown, everything closed down—there were no customers and no sales. It was really hard. We survived without getting sick, but it was difficult not earning for months.” P2 (Liza)

The participant’s experience demonstrated how external disruptions affected business continuity and required entrepreneurs to endure periods of uncertainty.

Subtheme 3.2: Employee Management and Competition

Participants operating service-oriented businesses shared that workforce management and industry competition were among the operational difficulties they encountered. They explained that finding, retaining, and managing employees who shared their business vision was challenging.

One participant explained:

“Finding and retaining talented nail technicians, stylists, brow artists, and staff who share my vision for my salon is challenging. The beauty industry here in Brooke’s Point is quite competitive.” P3 (Mark)

The participant highlighted that maintaining service quality required not only business management skills but also the ability to manage human resources effectively.

3.4 Opportunities Utilized by BSHM Alumni Entrepreneurs in Their Business Experiences

The third research objective examined the opportunities participants recognized and utilized to sustain and develop their businesses. The participants’ narratives revealed that they maximized opportunities through digital technology, business expansion, and customer engagement.

Three themes emerged from the participants’ experiences: utilizing digital marketing and technology, expanding the business through strategic decisions, and using customer feedback to improve the business.

Theme 1: Utilizing Digital Marketing and Technology

Participants shared that digital platforms have become important opportunities to promote their products and services, increase business visibility, and reach a wider customer base. They explained that online platforms enabled them to reach more potential customers.

Subtheme 1.1: Online Promotion and Customer Reach

Participants shared that online marketing helped them promote their products and connect with customers beyond their immediate location.

One participant explained:

“As a home baker, what I have seen is through online marketing. Since we are living in a new era, we are always using gadgets.” P1 (Ana)

The participant further described how digital platforms helped increase awareness of her business:

“It was not only one or two people who saw my business; many more people were able to see it. Posting products online helps attract and inspire customers.” P1 (Ana)

Another participant also emphasized the importance of technology and online selling:

“Definitely online selling. Technology is really important now. Posting products online keeps customers coming.” P2 (Liza)

Theme 2: Expanding Business Through Strategic Decisions

Participants shared that business expansion and strategic decisions improved their operations and increased customer reach. They explained that introducing additional services and selecting suitable business locations helped strengthen their market presence.

Subtheme 2.1: Introducing Additional Services

One participant shared that expanding business operations allowed them to provide additional services to customers:

“We opened a barbershop.” P3 (Mark)

The participant explained that adding another service became part of their strategy for business development and growth.

Subtheme 2.2: Strategic Location Decisions

Participants also shared that choosing an appropriate business location influenced customer accessibility and business recognition.

One participant explained:

*“Before, our location was in Tagong Lugar. When we moved to Harap ng Prince, we gained more customers, and our salon became more recognized.”
P3 (Mark)*

The participant’s experience demonstrated that strategic location decisions increased visibility and attracted more customers.

Theme 3: Using Customer Feedback for Business Improvement

Participants shared that customer feedback was an important opportunity to improve their products and services. They explained that listening to customers helped them identify areas for improvement and make necessary adjustments to enhance the quality of their offerings.

Subtheme 3.1: Applying Customer Suggestions

One participant explained that customer suggestions and feedback contributed to the continuous improvement of her products. She shared that applying customer recommendations helped her enhance the quality and outcome of her creations.

“The suggestions and feedback that they gave about the products I created helped me improve them. I applied their feedback and tried to improve the outcome of the product.” P1 (Ana)

3.5 Responses of BSHM Alumni Entrepreneurs to Entrepreneurial Situations

The fourth research objective examined how participants responded to the different situations, challenges, and experiences encountered throughout their entrepreneurial journey. The participants’ narratives revealed that their responses involved resilience, adaptability, continuous learning, strategic decision-making, and reliance on support systems.

Three themes emerged from the participants’ experiences, namely maintaining consistency and focus, learning and adapting through experience, and applying support systems and strategic management practices.

Theme 1: Maintaining Consistency and Focus

Participants shared that perseverance, commitment, and maintaining a positive mindset were essential in responding to entrepreneurial challenges. They explained

that consistency allowed them to continue managing their businesses despite uncertainties and difficulties.

Subtheme 1.1: Perseverance and Positive Mindset

Participants emphasized that staying focused and maintaining a positive attitude helped them overcome challenges and continue pursuing their entrepreneurial goals.

One participant shared:

“Just be consistent. Just be consistent. Stay focused and consistent, and remain positive in everything.” P1 (Ana)

The participant explained that consistency was necessary to sustain business operations and remain committed despite challenges.

Theme 2: Learning and Adapting Through Experience

Participants shared that their entrepreneurial journey involved continuous learning and adaptation. They explained that observing others, gaining actual business experience, and adjusting strategies helped them respond effectively to changing situations.

Subtheme 2.1: Observation and Continuous Learning

One participant shared that learning from others and observing different situations contributed to her entrepreneurial growth.

“Yes, from people and also from what I see. Again, I observe and learn from my observations.” P1 (Ana)

The participant emphasized that entrepreneurial knowledge was developed not only through formal education but also through actual experiences and continuous observation.

Subtheme 2.2: Adjusting Business Strategies

Participants shared that adapting their business strategies allowed them to respond to changing circumstances and maintain business operations.

One participant explained:

“I shifted to online selling and delivery.” P2 (Liza)

The participant's adjustment demonstrated how entrepreneurs modify their approaches to address challenges and continue serving customers despite changing business conditions.

Theme 3: Applying Support Systems and Strategic Management Practices

Participants shared that support systems, strategic thinking, and proper planning helped them manage entrepreneurial challenges. They explained that guidance from family members, problem-solving approaches, and financial preparation contributed to sustaining their businesses.

Subtheme 3.1: Family Support and Guidance

Participants identified family support as an important source of motivation and guidance throughout their entrepreneurial journey.

One participant shared:

“Yes, my mother. She helped me get to where I am today. She is also a businesswoman, so she guided me.” P2 (Liza)

The participant explained that her mother's guidance and experience contributed to her development as an entrepreneur.

Subtheme 3.2: Strategic Planning and Problem-Solving

Participants shared that approaching challenges through careful assessment and planning helped them develop appropriate solutions.

One participant explained:

“In times of challenges, first of all, do not panic. I try to study the situation, identify the positive solution, and make a plan.” P3 (Mark)

The participant emphasized the importance of analyzing situations and developing strategies before making business decisions.

Subtheme 3.3: Financial Preparation

Participants also shared that financial preparation was important for managing periods of uncertainty in business. They explained that maintaining financial reserves helped them sustain operations during slow business periods.

One participant emphasized the importance of having backup funds:

“You really need to be strong-willed. Maintaining a backup fund helps during slow months.” P2 (Liza)

The findings demonstrated that the entrepreneurial experiences of BSHM alumni involved interconnected challenges, opportunities, and adaptive responses. Participants experienced financial instability, customer-related concerns, and

operational difficulties; however, they sustained their businesses through digital adoption, strategic decisions, customer responsiveness, perseverance, learning, and support systems.

The themes demonstrate that hospitality entrepreneurship requires not only business knowledge but also adaptability, resilience, continuous improvement, and the ability to respond effectively to changing business conditions.

4. Discussion

The discussion section presents the interpretation of the findings in relation to existing literature and previous studies. The findings are discussed according to the four research objectives of the study: (1) lived entrepreneurial experiences of BSHM alumni entrepreneurs, (2) challenges encountered in hospitality businesses, (3) opportunities utilized for business growth, and (4) responses and coping strategies employed in managing entrepreneurial situations.

4.1 Entrepreneurial Experiences of BSHM Alumni Entrepreneurs

The first research objective examined the lived experiences of BSHM alumni entrepreneurs throughout their entrepreneurial journey. The findings revealed that entrepreneurship among hospitality graduates is characterized by continuous adjustment, uncertainty management, opportunity recognition, and experiential learning. Participants' narratives demonstrated that establishing and sustaining a business required more than technical knowledge; it also required decision-making skills, adaptability, resilience, and the ability to respond to changing business conditions.

Participants' experiences indicate that entrepreneurship is a dynamic process in which individuals continuously develop competencies through direct business involvement. Their narratives reflected situations involving managing financial limitations, understanding customers, utilizing available resources, and making strategic decisions to sustain their enterprises.

This finding supports the entrepreneurial perspective of Shane and Venkataraman (2000), who emphasized that entrepreneurship involves identifying and exploiting opportunities through the interaction between individuals and their environments. The participants' experiences demonstrate that entrepreneurial activities do not simply begin with business creation but continue through recognizing opportunities, responding to challenges, and adjusting strategies according to market conditions.

Furthermore, the findings support the concept of entrepreneurial learning, in which individuals develop knowledge and skills through real-world experience. Kolb (1984) explained that experiential learning occurs through a continuous process of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and application. In this study, participants acquired entrepreneurial competencies by directly experiencing business operations, customer interactions, financial concerns, and operational difficulties.

For BSHM graduates, these experiences highlight the importance of integrating entrepreneurship within hospitality education. While hospitality programs primarily develop competencies in service management, customer relations, and operational procedures, entrepreneurship requires additional competencies related to innovation, financial management, strategic planning, and risk management. According to Hisrich et al. (2017), successful entrepreneurs require a combination of knowledge, motivation, opportunity recognition, and managerial capabilities to establish and sustain business ventures.

The findings further suggest that hospitality graduates who pursue entrepreneurship rely on both their academic preparation and practical experiences. Their hospitality background provided them with an understanding of customer service and service quality, while entrepreneurial engagement allowed them to develop business-related competencies through practice.

4.2 Challenges Encountered by BSHM Alumni Entrepreneurs

The second research objective explored the challenges encountered by BSHM alumni entrepreneurs in managing hospitality-related businesses. The findings revealed three major challenges: financial instability, customer-related concerns, and external and operational difficulties.

Financial instability emerged as one of the most significant challenges participants faced. Experiences of zero sales, budgeting difficulties, and rising operational expenses demonstrate the vulnerability of small hospitality enterprises. Small businesses often operate with limited financial resources, making effective financial management essential for survival and sustainability.

This finding is supported by Bianchi et al. (2017), who emphasized that entrepreneurial capabilities and resource management practices contribute significantly to the performance and sustainability of small enterprises. Entrepreneurs with stronger managerial capabilities are better positioned to allocate resources effectively, respond to uncertainties, and make informed business decisions that support long-term business continuity.

Similarly, financial challenges are common among small and medium enterprises because they often face limited capital availability, unpredictable revenue streams, and rising operational expenses. Participants' experiences demonstrate that entrepreneurial success requires not only passion and commitment but also the ability to manage financial resources effectively.

Customer-related challenges were also identified as significant difficulties among participants. The experiences of order cancellations and changing customer expectations illustrate the importance of customer relationship management in hospitality enterprises. Since hospitality businesses are service-oriented, customer decisions directly influence business performance.

This finding is consistent with Kotler and Keller (2016), who emphasized that understanding customer needs, managing customer relationships, and delivering value are essential components of business sustainability. For hospitality entrepreneurs, customer feedback and engagement are particularly important because service experiences influence customer satisfaction, loyalty, and repeat patronage.

The findings also revealed that external disruptions, particularly the COVID-19 pandemic, significantly affected business operations. Participants experienced periods of reduced customer demand and temporary business interruption. These experiences demonstrate the vulnerability of hospitality enterprises to external crises because many hospitality services depend on customer mobility and face-to-face interactions.

Breier et al. (2021) highlighted that hospitality businesses experienced substantial challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic due to travel restrictions, reduced consumer demand, and operational limitations. However, entrepreneurs' ability to adapt their strategies, such as shifting to online sales and adopting alternative service approaches, contributed to business continuity.

Workforce management also emerged as an operational challenge, particularly for service-based businesses. Participant 3 emphasized the difficulty of finding and retaining employees who share the business vision. This reflects the importance of human resource management in hospitality enterprises, where employee performance directly influences service quality.

According to Baum (2015), human resources represent a critical component of hospitality organizations because employees significantly contribute to customer experiences and service delivery. Therefore, managing employees effectively is essential for maintaining competitiveness in hospitality-related businesses.

4.3 Opportunities Utilized by BSHM Alumni Entrepreneurs

The third research objective examined the opportunities participants recognized and utilized in developing their businesses. The findings revealed that participants maximized opportunities through digital marketing, business expansion, strategic decisions, and customer feedback.

Digital marketing emerged as one of the most important opportunities utilized by participants. The use of online platforms enabled entrepreneurs to promote their products, increase business visibility, and reach customers beyond traditional market boundaries.

This finding supports Nambisan (2017), who explained that digital technologies have transformed entrepreneurship by creating new opportunities for business creation, customer engagement, and market expansion. Digital platforms enable entrepreneurs, particularly small business owners, to overcome geographic limitations and reach broader customer bases.

The findings also align with the OECD (2021), which emphasized that digital transformation provides small and medium enterprises with opportunities to improve competitiveness, increase efficiency, and develop innovative business strategies. Participants' experiences demonstrate how technology became a practical resource that supported business promotion and continuity.

Business expansion and strategic decision-making also emerged as important opportunities. Participants demonstrated entrepreneurial initiative by introducing additional services, expanding operations, and making location-related decisions to improve customer accessibility.

These findings support Drucker's (1985) perspective that entrepreneurship involves innovation and the ability to identify opportunities for improvement. Entrepreneurs create value by recognizing opportunities, introducing change, and turning ideas into practical business actions.

Customer feedback was another opportunity identified by participants. The ability to listen to customers and implement their suggestions contributed to product improvements and service enhancements. This reflects the importance of customer-centered approaches in hospitality entrepreneurship.

According to Grönroos (2007), service businesses achieve competitiveness by understanding customer expectations and continuously improving service delivery.

Participants' experiences demonstrate that customer engagement serves not only as a measure of satisfaction but also as a source of innovation and business development.

4.4 Responses and Coping Strategies of BSHM Alumni Entrepreneurs

The fourth research objective examined how BSHM alumni entrepreneurs responded to entrepreneurial situations, particularly when facing business challenges and uncertainties. The findings revealed that participants developed coping mechanisms through consistency and perseverance, experiential learning, support systems, strategic planning, and financial discipline. The participants demonstrated that sustaining a business requires not only the ability to recognize opportunities but also the capacity to manage difficulties through adaptive responses. Their narratives showed that entrepreneurship involves continuous problem-solving, where entrepreneurs must evaluate situations, adjust strategies, and maintain commitment despite challenges.

One of the dominant coping strategies identified among participants was maintaining consistency and focus. Participants emphasized that persistence, positivity, and commitment were essential in continuing their entrepreneurial activities despite periods of uncertainty.

This finding supports the concept of entrepreneurial resilience, which refers to the ability of entrepreneurs to withstand difficulties, recover from setbacks, and continue pursuing business objectives despite challenging circumstances. According to Bullough and Renko (2013), entrepreneurial resilience enables individuals to remain committed to their ventures by developing confidence, persistence, and adaptive capabilities during uncertain conditions.

Similarly, Ayala and Manzano (2014) emphasized that entrepreneurial resilience is characterized by perseverance, self-confidence, and the ability to manage uncertainty. Participants' experiences demonstrate that resilience becomes particularly important for small business owners who frequently face unstable income, market changes, and operational challenges.

For hospitality entrepreneurs, persistence is especially important because customer demand, seasonal changes, and external disruptions highly influence the industry. The participants' emphasis on consistency suggests that psychological readiness and determination are important factors in sustaining entrepreneurial efforts.

The findings revealed that participants relied heavily on experiential learning as a response mechanism. Participants learned by observing customers, analyzing business situations, and modifying their strategies based on previous experiences.

The shift of some participants toward online selling and delivery services demonstrates their ability to adapt to changing market conditions. Rather than maintaining traditional approaches, they adjusted their operations according to customer behavior and environmental changes.

This finding supports Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory, which explains that individuals develop knowledge through a cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. The entrepreneurial experiences of participants illustrate this process, as they continuously learned from real business situations and applied those lessons to improve their operations.

Furthermore, Cope (2005) explained that entrepreneurial learning occurs through critical experiences that challenge entrepreneurs to reflect, acquire new knowledge, and develop improved approaches. The participants' experiences demonstrate that challenges became opportunities for learning and business improvement.

For BSHM alumni entrepreneurs, experiential learning is particularly relevant because hospitality businesses involve direct interaction with customers, employees, suppliers, and market conditions. Through these interactions, entrepreneurs continuously develop practical competencies beyond classroom learning.

The findings also revealed the importance of support systems in helping participants sustain their entrepreneurial journey. Participants identified family members, mentors, and personal goals as important sources of motivation and guidance.

Family support was particularly evident in the experiences of participants who received encouragement and advice from relatives with business backgrounds. This support contributed to their confidence and ability to continue operating their enterprises despite difficulties.

This finding aligns with the concept of social capital proposed by Bourdieu (1986) and Putnam (2000), which emphasizes that relationships and networks provide individuals with valuable resources, including information, emotional support, and assistance. Entrepreneurs often rely on social networks to access knowledge, encouragement, and resources necessary for business survival.

Similarly, Anderson and Jack (2002) highlighted that social relationships contribute to entrepreneurial development by providing opportunities for knowledge exchange and support. Participants' experiences demonstrate that entrepreneurship is

not solely an individual activity but is influenced by relationships and social environments.

In hospitality entrepreneurship, where businesses often involve strong community and customer relationships, social support becomes an important resource for maintaining motivation and overcoming difficulties.

The findings further revealed that participants responded to challenges through strategic planning and financial discipline. Participants emphasized the importance of analyzing problems, developing solutions, and preparing financial resources for uncertain periods.

Participant responses showed that entrepreneurs did not simply react to challenges but attempted to evaluate situations and create appropriate responses. This reflects an intentional approach to decision-making and business management.

This finding is consistent with Hisrich et al. (2017), who emphasized that entrepreneurs require planning skills, decision-making abilities, and resource management competencies to achieve business sustainability. Effective entrepreneurs must assess risks, allocate resources efficiently, and make informed decisions.

Financial discipline was also identified as an important coping mechanism. Maintaining backup funds and practicing careful budgeting allowed participants to manage periods of slow business activity.

According to Scarborough and Cornwall (2019), financial management is a fundamental entrepreneurial competency because poor financial practices may threaten business continuity. Entrepreneurs who understand budgeting, cost management, and financial planning are better able to manage uncertainty.

The findings suggest that hospitality graduates who pursue entrepreneurship should be equipped not only with service-related competencies but also with financial literacy and strategic management skills.

The findings of this study provide important implications for hospitality management education, entrepreneurship development, and future hospitality entrepreneurs.

For hospitality management programs, the results highlight the need to strengthen entrepreneurship education among students. While BSHM programs traditionally emphasize hospitality operations, customer service, and service quality, graduates pursuing entrepreneurship require additional competencies in business planning, financial management, digital marketing, innovation, and resilience.

Integrating entrepreneurship courses with experiential activities, such as business incubation programs, student enterprises, mentoring, and community-based projects, may help students develop practical entrepreneurial skills. Such initiatives may prepare future hospitality graduates to establish and manage sustainable enterprises.

For hospitality entrepreneurs, the findings emphasize the importance of adaptability and continuous improvement. Participants demonstrated that successful entrepreneurship requires recognizing opportunities, responding to challenges, leveraging technology, and maintaining a customer-centered approach.

The findings also highlight the importance of digital capability in contemporary hospitality entrepreneurship. Online platforms provide accessible opportunities for small business owners to promote their products, maintain customer relationships, and expand their market reach.

Furthermore, entrepreneurial success requires both personal and strategic capabilities. Resilience, perseverance, financial discipline, and effective planning were shown to be essential in sustaining business operations.

This study revealed that the entrepreneurial experiences of BSHM alumni entrepreneurs involve a continuous process of managing challenges, recognizing opportunities, and developing adaptive responses. The findings demonstrate that entrepreneurship among hospitality graduates extends beyond business establishment; it requires continuous learning, innovation, resilience, and strategic decision-making.

Participants encountered various challenges, including financial instability, customer-related difficulties, operational concerns, and competitive pressures. However, they were able to sustain their businesses through digital adoption, business expansion, customer responsiveness, experiential learning, social support, and financial preparation.

The study highlights that hospitality education provides valuable foundations for entrepreneurship; however, additional emphasis on entrepreneurial competencies may further enhance graduates' ability to create and sustain hospitality enterprises. Strengthening entrepreneurship education, digital literacy, and practical business exposure may better prepare future hospitality graduates for entrepreneurial careers.

The experiences of BSHM alumni entrepreneurs demonstrate that the interaction of knowledge, experience, resilience, opportunity recognition, and continuous adaptation shapes successful hospitality entrepreneurship.

5. Conclusion

This phenomenological study explored the lived entrepreneurial experiences of BSHM alumni engaged in hospitality-related businesses and revealed that entrepreneurship is a dynamic process of personal and professional transformation. Beyond managing daily business operations, the participants experienced entrepreneurship as a journey characterized by uncertainty, continuous learning, resilience, and adaptation. Their experiences demonstrated that entrepreneurial success is not solely determined by financial performance but also by the ability to navigate challenges, recognize opportunities, and sustain meaningful relationships with customers and stakeholders. The findings showed that financial instability, customer-related concerns, and external disruptions, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, were significant challenges that tested participants' commitment and capabilities as entrepreneurs.

However, these difficulties also became opportunities for growth, learning, and self-development. Rather than viewing setbacks as failures, participants saw them as opportunities to strengthen their perseverance, decision-making skills, and entrepreneurial confidence. A notable finding of the study is the distinctive influence of hospitality education on entrepreneurial practice. The participants consistently applied hospitality competencies, including customer service, communication, relationship management, service quality, and responsiveness to customer needs, in managing their businesses. These competencies enabled them to build customer trust, improve service delivery, and adapt to changing market conditions. The findings suggest that hospitality education serves not only as preparation for industry employment but also as a foundation for entrepreneurial success. The study further revealed that BSHM alumni entrepreneurs developed a service-oriented entrepreneurial identity. Unlike traditional entrepreneurial perspectives that primarily emphasize profit generation, participants placed great importance on customer satisfaction, continuous improvement, and creating positive service experiences. This service-oriented mindset distinguished their entrepreneurial approaches and influenced how they responded to challenges and opportunities within their respective businesses. The essence of the lived entrepreneurial experience among BSHM alumni lies in their ability to transform hospitality knowledge and skills into entrepreneurial resources that support business sustainability, customer-centered innovation, and long-term growth. Through their experiences, they demonstrated that entrepreneurship in the hospitality sector is not merely an economic activity but a continuous process of applying professional competencies, adapting to uncertainty, and creating value through service excellence.

This study contributes to the growing body of hospitality entrepreneurship literature by providing insights into how hospitality graduates experience and interpret entrepreneurship from their own perspectives. The findings highlight the important

role of hospitality education in shaping entrepreneurial behavior and offer practical implications for hospitality management programs seeking to strengthen entrepreneurial competencies among future graduates. Future studies may expand the scope of investigation by involving a larger number of hospitality entrepreneurs from different regions and sectors further to enrich understanding of entrepreneurial experiences in the industry.

6. Recommendations

The following recommendations are proposed. BSHM alumni entrepreneurs are encouraged to strengthen their entrepreneurial competencies, particularly in financial management, strategic planning, digital marketing, and customer engagement, to enhance business sustainability. The BSHM program and higher education institutions may further integrate entrepreneurship education through practical activities, mentoring, business incubation, and alumni engagement initiatives to better prepare students for entrepreneurial careers. Local stakeholders and industry partners may support hospitality entrepreneurs through training, networking opportunities, and collaborative programs. Future researchers may further explore hospitality entrepreneurship by examining larger participant groups, diverse business contexts, and factors such as digital transformation, financial capability, and entrepreneurial sustainability. These initiatives may help develop resilient, sustainable hospitality enterprises among graduates.

Acknowledgment

Sincere gratitude is extended to all individuals who contributed to the completion of this study. Special appreciation is given to the BSHM alumni participants for sharing valuable entrepreneurial experiences and insights. Gratitude is likewise extended to the instructors, classmates, friends, and families for their guidance, encouragement, and support. Palawan State University – Brooke's Point Campus is also acknowledged for the opportunity and academic support provided. Above all, thanks and praise are offered to God Almighty for the wisdom, strength, and guidance that made this study possible.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest associated with this study. The research was conducted independently without any financial, commercial, or personal relationships that could have influenced the findings, interpretation, or presentation of the results.

No external funding sources or sponsoring organizations had any role in the study design, data collection, analysis, or writing of the manuscript. All decisions related to the conduct of the research were made solely by the authors.

The authors further confirm that the participants, institutions, and individuals involved in this study were not subject to any form of influence that could compromise the objectivity or integrity of the research process.

References

- Anderson, A. R., & Jack, S. L. (2002). The articulation of social capital in entrepreneurial networks: A glue or a lubricant? *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 14(3), 193–210.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/08985620110112079>
- Ayala, J. C., & Manzano, G. (2014). The resilience of the entrepreneur: Influence on the success of the business. A longitudinal analysis. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 42, 126–135.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joep.2014.02.004>
- Baum, T. (2015). Human resources in tourism: Still waiting for change? *Tourism Management*, 50, 204–212. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2015.02.001>
- Bianchi, C., Glavas, C., & Mathews, S. (2017). SME international performance in Latin America: The role of entrepreneurial and technological capabilities. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 24(1), 176–195.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/JSBED-09-2016-0142>
- Boldureanu, G., Ionescu, A. M., Bercu, A. M., Bedrule-Grigoruță, M. V., & Boldureanu, D. (2020). Entrepreneurship education through successful entrepreneurial models in higher education institutions. *Sustainability*, 12(3), 1267. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12031267>
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241–258). Greenwood.
<https://www.scirp.org/reference/referencespapers?referenceid=1558112>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Breier, M., Kallmuenzer, A., Clauss, T., Gast, J., Kraus, S., & Tiberius, V. (2021). The role of business model innovation in the hospitality industry during the COVID-19 crisis. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 92, Article 102723.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102723>
- Nabi, G., Liñán, F., Fayolle, A., Krueger, N., & Walmsley, A. (2017). The impact of entrepreneurship education in higher education: A systematic review and research agenda. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 16(2), 277–299.
<https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.2015.0026>
- Bullough, A., & Renko, M. (2013). Entrepreneurial resilience during challenging times. *Business Horizons*, 56(3), 343–350. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2013.01.001>
- Cope, J. (2005). Toward a dynamic learning perspective of entrepreneurship. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 29(4), 373–397. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6520.2005.00090.x>

- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
https://www.academia.edu/download/55010759/creswell_Qualitative_In%20quiry_2nd_edition.pdf
- Drucker, P. F. (1985). *Innovation and entrepreneurship: Practice and principles*. Harper & Row.
<http://117.241.73.61:8001/jspui/bitstream/123456789/8086/1/%5BDrucker%2C%201985%5D%20Innovation%20and%20E...%20%28%20PDFDrive%20%29%20%281%29.pdf>
- Grönroos, C. (2007). *Service management and marketing: Customer management in service competition* (3rd ed.). Wiley. <https://tashfeen.pbworks.com/f/Book%204%20-%20Service%20Management%20and%20Marketing.pdf>
- Hisrich, R. D., Peters, M. P., & Shepherd, D. A. (2017). *Entrepreneurship* (10th ed.). McGraw-Hill Education. <http://117.241.73.61:8001/jspui/handle/123456789/8101>
- Hjalager, A. M. (2010). A review of innovation research in tourism. *Tourism Management*, 31(1), 1–12.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2009.08.012>
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Prentice Hall. http://carleton-wp-production.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/sites/313/2022/12/Experiential_Learning_Experience_As_The_Source_Of_-1.pdf
- Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). *Marketing management* (15th ed.). Pearson Education.
<https://www.scirp.org/reference/referencespapers?referenceid=3155681>
- Mitchelmore, S., & Rowley, J. (2010). Entrepreneurial competencies: A literature review and development agenda. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, 16(2), 92–111. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13552551011026995>
- Morrison, A., Rimmington, M., & Williams, C. (1999). *Entrepreneurship in the hospitality, tourism and leisure industries*. Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Sage Publications.
<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412995658>
- Nambisan, S. (2017). Digital entrepreneurship: Toward a digital technology perspective of entrepreneurship. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 41(6), 1029–1055.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/etap.12254>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2021). *The digital transformation of SMEs*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/bdb9256a-en>
- Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. Simon & Schuster.
https://la.utexas.edu/users/jmciver/Honors/Nonfiction%202011/Putnam_Bowling%20Alone_Chapter%201.docx

Scarborough, N. M., & Cornwall, J. R. (2019). *Essentials of entrepreneurship and small business management* (9th ed.). Pearson. <https://innotech.edu.kz/wp-content/themes/innotech-theme/Books/10%20Global%20Financial%20Analysis%20and%20Managerial%20Decision-Making/9780134741086.pdf>

Shane, S., & Venkataraman, S. (2000). The promise of entrepreneurship as a field of research. *Academy of Management Review*, 25(1), 217–226. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2000.2791611>

Thomas, R., & Augustyn, M. (2007). Entrepreneurship in hospitality and tourism: A review of the literature. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 26(4), 889–894. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2006.05.001>

Author Contributions: Angeles, I.; Supervision of the research process, data validation, critical review of the manuscript, and final draft editing. Sibulan, K.; Conceptualization of the study, research design, methodology development, data analysis, interpretation of findings, and manuscript writing. Ruiz, G.; Data collection assistance, organization of interview materials, transcription support, and manuscript review. Bagona, J.; Data collection participation, thematic coding support, literature assistance, and manuscript proofreading. Relon, E.; Data gathering assistance, interview facilitation, and documentation support. Diaz, K.; Data encoding support, transcription, and formatting of research outputs. Manabat, J.; Data organization assistance, administrative support, and manuscript formatting. Razul, N.; Research logistics support, documentation, and final manuscript preparation. All authors have read and approved the final manuscript and agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work.