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## Research Article

### Opportunities and Challenges of Selected One Town One Product Enterprises in Selected Towns of Cavite Amidst Pandemic

Jerico B. Tadeo \*, Danica S. Muralla

Department of Management Studies, Cavite State University – CCAT Campus, Philippines

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#### \*Corresponding author:

E-mail:

[jerico.tadeo@cvsu.edu.ph](mailto:jerico.tadeo@cvsu.edu.ph)

#### ABSTRACT

The One Town One Product (OTOP) is a program of the Philippines wherein enterprises sell their products that are available within their localities. This study aimed in determination of challenges and opportunities experienced by these enterprises in Cavite. The researchers used descriptive-correlational design, purposive sampling and flexible data survey approaches through questionnaires. The proponents found that most of the OTOP enterprises were operating young, their initial capital is Php 300,000.00 below and most of the enterprises have one to nine employees. The participants of the study experienced challenges in production, reduction on manpower, establishing funds for employee-support, managing their flow of funds, attracting new customers, ensuring the health and well-being of the people. Moreover, the correlation results were insignificant. Thus, all null hypotheses are accepted. The outcome of this research study serves as a baseline for policy intervention and strategic implementation for rebound strategies among the pandemic hit enterprises.

**Keywords:** *Cavite, Enterprises, MSMEs, One product, One town, Pandemic*

#### Introduction

The One Town One Product - Philippines's idea was inspired by Governor Hiramatsu of Oita Prefecture's popular One Village, One Product (OVOP) project, which began in 1979. This is a way for citizens to get involved in the country's regional growth. As a result of its popularity, other countries have adopted the concept as an effective and efficient tool for poverty reduction in their own areas, especially in rural parts of the country. Thailand,

Bangladesh, Cambodia, Pakistan, India, Vietnam, and Indonesia are among the countries where OTOP has developed itself. In the Philippines, former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo made OTOP – Philippines a main priority program to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship and job creation. Every city and municipality's chairperson take the lead in discovering, creating, and supporting a competitively advantageous product or service through OTOP (Tabisola, 2019). Since Philippines is

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one of the countries that has been seriously affected by COVID-19, causing the Philippine government to create a new set of policy intervention (Alarca, et.al, 2022). The entire island of Luzon has been locked down, affecting million of its citizens. People are not allowed to leave their homes except to get essential necessities during the lockdown. Curfews and travel bans were enforced, causing schools and colleges as well as enterprises to temporarily suspend operations, creating not only threats and challenges but also opportunities (Du, et.al., 2020).

The researchers aimed to determine the challenges that the selected One Town One Product (OTOP) enterprises in Cavite encountered, as well as the opportunities that have opened up as a result of the pandemic which can provide a springboard for policy-based researches and intervention for a pandemic-sensitive responses towards these enterprises.

### Objectives of the Study

Generally, the study aimed to determine the opportunities and challenges of selected One Town One Product (OTOP) Enterprises in Cavite Province amidst pandemic.

Specifically, the researchers aimed to:

1. determine the business profile of One Town One Product Enterprises in terms of:
  - a. length of operations;
  - b. range of initial capitalization; and
  - c. number of staff;
2. determine the challenges that OTOP enterprises faced in terms of:
  - a. operation;
  - b. staffing;
  - c. capitalization;
  - d. strategy implementation; and
  - e. sustainability;
3. identify the degree of extensiveness of challenges among the participants in terms of:
  - a. operation;
  - b. staffing;
  - c. capitalization;
  - d. strategy implementation; and
  - e. sustainability;
4. determine the opportunities that arises for OTOP Enterprises in terms of:
  - a. product innovation;
  - b. business expansion;
  - c. market penetration and coverage; and

- d. government support;
5. determine the significant relationship of the degree of extensiveness and the profile of the participants; and
6. propose strategies to address the challenges faced by the selected OTOP enterprises in selected towns of Cavite Province.

### Materials and Methods

The proponents of the study used descriptive-correlational research design. The descriptive study was used to determine the challenges and opportunities of One Town One Product enterprises. Moreover, the correlational study used to determine the significant relationship between the degree of extensiveness in terms of challenges and the business profile of the respondents. The proponents used the purposive sampling technique and utilized 20 participants from the 60 registered and operational OTOP enterprises in Cavite as provided by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). The study used both the primary and secondary data sources in collecting the data. The primary data were from the participants and also the results from the survey questionnaires. The secondary source of data was from the internet such as research studies, journals, e-books, and any related sources that supported the study.

### Research Instrument

This study used a researcher-made questionnaire which was divided into two parts. The first part contained the business profile of the selected One Town One Product (OTOP) Enterprises in selected towns of Cavite. While on the second part contained the questions related to objectives of the study. This was subjected to validity and reliability test. The Cronbach alpha was used to test the scale of reliability of the pilot testing, which was computed at 0.87.

### Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers conducted a flexible data gathering, phone-guided response survey, wherein the researcher had a conversation over the phone. Also, the researcher reached the respondents through email together with the attached online questionnaire and Google Forms. The proponents have used frequency

and percentage tables, mean analysis, spearman rho as statistical approaches for data analysis. Finally, the respondents' confidentiality and privacy were maintained in related to the data gathered as the researchers secured an informed consent before conducting the survey.

In addition to that, the confidentiality was maintained where the researchers ensured that no physical, emotional, or social harm affected the respondents.

## Results and Discussion

### Demographics of the participants

Table 1. Length of operation

Category	Frequency	Percentage
0 to 5 years	7	35.00
6 to 10 years	5	25.00
11 to 20 years	6	30.00
21 years and above	2	10.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The results revealed that 35% of the respondents' business lengths of operations were zero to five years and 10% were 21 years in

operation and above. The respondents were dominated by 0 to 5 years in business operations.

Table 2. Range of initial capitalization

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Below Php 3,000,000	15	75.00
Php 3,000,000 to Php 15,000,000	3	15.00
Php 15,000,000 to Php 100,000,000	2	10.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The findings also depict that in terms of range of initial capitalization, 75% were below Php 3,000,000 and 10% were Php 15,000,000 to 100,000,000. The table revealed that

majorities of the respondents were below Php 3,000,000 pesos of initial capitalization.

Lastly, for the number of staffs, this study revealed that 85% were 1 to 9 employees and five percent were 50 to 249 employees.

Table 3. Number of staff

Category	Frequency	Percentage
1 to 9 employees	17	85.00
10 to 49 employees	2	10.00
50 to 249 employees	1	5.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.00</b>

### Challenges of OTOP enterprises

Table 4. One Town One Product enterprises' challenges in terms of operation

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Establishing a work from home method	6	9.50
Staying in control of the governments' recommendations, guidelines and regulations.	9	14.30
Performing a business impact evaluation	5	7.90

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Procurement of goods and raw materials	9	14.30
Low production capacity	14	22.20
Ensuring the viability of the manufacturing ecosystem	2	3.20
The prices of the materials used are expensive or costly	13	20.60
Lack of equipment and facilities	5	7.90
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The results revealed that in terms of operation 22.20% says that low production capacity is a big challenge and 3.20% says that ensuring the viability of the manufacturing ecosystem is a less challenge. The table revealed that majority of the respondents faced low production capacity. Same case is experience in other countries, according to (Abu-Mater and Afifa, 2021), COVID-19 had a tremendous impact on Jordanian SMEs; they were forced to close their enterprises or minimize their working hours and workforces due to state restrictions, curfews, and the need to cut costs. Coronavirus is causing new tensions within and between communities concerning social distancing and purchasing behaviors, with cases of commuters and urban visitors to the countryside being 'othered' due to fears of disease spread and scarcity of goods. Coronavirus, on the other hand, poses significant challenges the same case for SMEs in Nigeria, as it results in low

productivity, restricted access to financial services, and a minor position in global value chains, according to the report (Abu-Mater and Afifa, 2021). The presence of the *Badan Usaha Milik Daerah* (BUMD) (Regionally-owned enterprises) programs could increase household productivity and income; however, it has not been able to provide benefits in improving community welfare because of insufficient human resources and unsustainable governance. Lastly, this study also deduced that the establishment of BUMD could certainly catalyze the absorption of the local workforce, especially the younger generation. Hence, the authors derived that the pattern of community empowerment through BUMD programs in improving the welfare of rural communities around the gold mining areas in the West Sumbawa Regency is ongoing but yet to be maximized in implementation (Ibrahim, et.al., 2020).

Table 5. One Town One Product enterprises' challenges in terms of staffing

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Reduction on manpower	9	19.60
Keeping them inspired and motivated	8	17.40
In providing transparency to produce trust and honesty	2	4.30
Maintaining all-out communication to the employees	2	4.30
Provide the utmost safety of the employees in all aspect	7	15.20
Reduction of employees' wage	3	6.50
Ensures that there is no gap when some employees are incompetent	5	10.90
Establishing funds to support the employees	9	19.60
Others	1	2.20
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 5 shows the challenges in terms of staffing, 19.60% says that reduction on manpower and establishing funds to support the employees is a big challenge and 2.20% says that checkpoints are affecting those staff who are far away from home is less challenge for

them. The rigorous lockdown in the national capital region and high-risk provinces lasted from mid-March until the end of May 2020, resulting in massive economic damage and limited manpower. The Philippine economy is yet

to recover after the March lockdown and MSMEs continue to face a severe decline in demand and earnings performed from the end of March to mid-April 2020 (Rao, 2021).

Table 6. One Town One Product enterprises' challenges in terms of capitalization

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Managing and maintaining the flow of funds	15	27.30
Having an access to management resources	2	3.60
Assessing government support	6	10.90
Workers' salaries	4	7.30
Having a limited capital to survive the pandemic	11	20
Paying for assets such as equipment for production and vehicles for transportation	6	10.90
Paying for assets such as equipment for production and vehicles for transportation	2	3.60
Unforeseen expenses due to sudden changes such as utility bill	9	16.40
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The Philippine economy has recovered six months after the March lockdown, however micro, small, and medium-sized businesses continue to face a severe decline in demand and earnings performed from the end of March to mid-April 2020, this article evaluates the early impact of the ECQ and lockout measures on MSMEs and draws policy implications. The analysis of the study also revealed that the lockdown measures have different effects on MSMEs depending on their location, sector, and firm size. MSMEs in the NCR were more likely than those in the provinces to have no sales.

Outside the NCR, however, MSMEs with declining income were more visible, and provincial MSMEs seem to be more prone to lay off workers than those in the NCR. Wage payments and financial conditions of MSMEs vary by area as well (Rao, 2021). Furthermore, table 6 also reveals that 27.30% says that they faced hard times in managing and maintaining the flow of funds and 3.60% says that having an access to management resources and paying for assets such as equipment for production and vehicles for transportation is less challenge for them in terms of capitalization.

Table 7. OTOP enterprises' challenges in terms of strategy implementation

Category	Frequency	Percentage
In handling marketing strategies to attract existing and potential customers	12	16.20
Providing a new way to survive in the new normal	13	17.60
Going businesses digitalized	12	16.20
Reopening business' establishments at a 50% maximum capacity	6	8.10
As a response to the new trend, the company's image is being changed and new services are being offered	4	5.40
Attracting new customers	14	18.90
Developing a new strategy to generate enough revenue to recoup what the company spends on media or advertising	9	12.20
Too many strategic initiatives run concurrently leading to strategic fatigue	4	5.40
<b>Total</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>100.00</b>

As stated by Sattayathamrongthian and Vanpetch (2019), the lack of experience and proper financial management are the internal factors that usually influence the success of the implementation of such programs. Additionally, working at home is becoming increasingly important in the business world, especially in the event of a pandemic. If a company's director is impacted by a pandemic, it will lose its effective boardroom practice. If important employees are affected, the company's day-to-day operations will be disrupted. To mitigate this risk, many industrial sectors have implemented work-from-home policies. However, the efficiency of company operations, the revenue of the firm, and the performance of the enterprise are all questioned if the employee's or functions' performance is harmed as a result of the work-from-home culture circumstance and in the midst of some of the most difficult times that businesses throughout the world are fac-

ing (Ismail, 2021). Also, businesses with scattered leadership, a flexible staff, and an adaptive culture can keep running during a pandemic. Additionally, resilient businesses enable more informed and decentralized decision-making. In order to establish trust and build ties with employees, stakeholders, and customers during and after a crisis, successful firms used Internet and Communication Technology (ICT) and integrate Intranet, social media, and online communication platforms into their everyday business routines. Considerably, table 7 shows the strategy implementation challenges of the participants, it reveals that 18.90% says that it was hard to attract new customers in this time of pandemic and 5.40% says that there are too many strategic initiatives run concurrently that leads to strategic fatigue and as a response to the new trend, the company's image is being changed and new services are being offered.

Table 8. OTOP enterprises' challenges in terms of sustainability

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Ensuring that personnel who have been laid off or furloughed do not become disoriented	3	4.30
Adapting of new technologies to support the business	10	14.50
Ensuring the health and well-being of the people related to the business	12	17.40
Managing Supply Chain Management efficiently	10	14.50
Asking employees to learn new skills to support changes to the business models.	7	10.10
Inability to compete against larger firms in terms of Research & Development expenditure and innovation	10	14.50
Lack of entrepreneurial zeal, capacity, and know-how	5	7.20
Maintaining the target profit even the materials became costly	12	17.40
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100.00</b>

According to Tabisola (2019), enhancing Rural Entrepreneurship is one of the most important ways to enhance economic development and thus economic well-being in rural communities where it is the formation of a new company in a rural setting that provides a new product, services or creates a new market, or employs new technology. As a result, modifications must be implemented to ensure that the program actually unleashes and harnesses the entrepreneurship that the Philippines require to go forward and be competitive in placing its

niche for global market penetration. As stated by Chattinnawat et. al. (2019) to acquire valuable information and guidelines for the implementation and product development of the One Tambon One Product (OTOP) program in Thailand, the researchers conducted the study to assess the perceived quality or attitude of the consumers, specifically the elderly, on the OTOP product. Lastly, in terms of sustainability, it showed that 17.40% says that ensuring the health and well-being of the people related to the business and maintaining the target profit

even the materials became costly is a big challenge for them and 4.30% says that ensuring that personnel who have been laid off or

furloughed do not become disoriented is less challenge for them.

Table 9. OTOP enterprises' opportunities in terms of product innovation

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Adopting new technologies related to production	7	9.10
Using new and affordable materials	10	13
Creating new products related to the situation and customer's needs	10	13
Maintaining Research & Design and not cutting it for the innovations	10	13
Improving the packaging of the product	13	16.90
Work on additional features to make the product more significant during these pandemic times.	9	11.70
Cashless transaction to provide convenience to the consumers	13	16.90
Design offers that can be delivered to any country or industry	5	6.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>100.00</b>

A study found out that doing business during the COVID-19 pandemic is very challenging and has a dangerous impact on small businesses, workers' life as well as the country's economy. Many firms' activities have been restricted or significantly changed as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, and supply networks have been affected. The continued financial impact of the crisis on businesses is enormous (Engidaw, 2020). The advantage of being better prepared for future crises, as well as the complexity of aspects and their interactions in the degrees of readiness among organizations was investigated. It also emphasizes financial and business management procedures that will help firms to efficiently adapt to unforeseen interruptions during a large pandemic. The au-

thors welcome further clarification or elaboration. The COVID-19 problem is anticipated to have a significant impact on our companies and society. On a global basis, people are living in unprecedented time. Enterprises, in particular, are dealing with several issues, including a drop in sales, supply chain interruptions, cancellation of export orders, raw material shortages, and transportation disruptions, to name a few (Alao, 2020). Furthermore, the OTOP's opportunities in terms of product innovation respondents considered that improving the packaging of the product and cashless transaction to provide convenience to the consumers which gathered 16.90% while 6.50% showed that design offers that can be delivered to any country or industry as presented in table 9.

Table 10. One Town One Product enterprises' opportunities in terms of business expansion

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Use of social media sites and e-commerce platforms	16	25.80
Setting up a delivery-based method	9	14.50
Supplying items to another company that wants to sell them	7	11.30
Having distributors and resellers	14	22.60
Collaboration in other businesses with related products	7	11.30
Build deep and meaningful relationship with potential clients	9	14.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 10 reveals that 25.80% says that used of social media sites and e-commerce platforms is great opportunity in this time of pandemic and 11.30% says that supplying items to another company that wants to sell them and collaboration in other businesses with related products are less opportunity for them.

Jaiborisudhi and Kitipadung (2021) revealed that the results emphasized that the respondents must create uniqueness and start

developing their products to differentiate from other entrepreneurs through raw material, recipe, or different application in usage. Also, utilizing the traditional manufacturing process, which is complex and requires a hand-made process, can also be considered as an advantage since it cannot be easily copied by others. Further, the authors also conveyed how important it is for the entrepreneurs to focus on matching the trend of consumers.

Table 11. OTOP enterprises' opportunities in terms of market penetration and coverage

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Creating new partnerships amidst the pandemic	7	10.00
Ensuring transparent communication not just to employees but also to the customer	12	17.10
Setting up virtual and/ or online stores to reach existing and potential customers	12	17.10
Creating a new market and/ or business model	5	7.10
Adapting the shift in meeting the customer's needs	10	14.30
Joining local programs that supports MSMEs such as Go Lokal, Trade Fairs, and Bazaar	11	15.70
Identify alternative or additional revenue streams that can be potential sources of future growth	7	10
Selling products in different areas or villages	6	8.60
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Also, for the market penetration and coverage, it shows that 17.10% were ensuring transparent communication not just to employees but also to the customer and also 17.10% of

setting up virtual and/ or online stores to reach existing and potential customers, and the lowest result is 7.10% were creating a new market and/ or business model

Table 12. OTOP enterprises' opportunities in terms of government support

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Allocating and ensuring funds for the business	5	11.60
Allocating technologies related to the business	8	18.60
Ensuring transparency in all transactions, plans, regulations, and guideline	4	9.30
Mitigating the business' losses due to the pandemic	2	4.70
OTOP enterprises received some financial support	3	7.00
Covered institutions implement a 30-day grace period to the lenders for loans due to the quarantine period.	2	4.70
Attending seminars/webinars provided by LGUs or government that can help the business	16	37.20
Invest in workforce training programs aimed toward future economic	3	7.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100.00</b>



Electronic commerce has grown at a remarkable pace over the last five years, and this trend is expected to continue, if not accelerate. Because of the widespread use of the internet and smart electronic gadgets, India's e-commerce industry is booming. However, India's current e-commerce growth rate is significantly behind that of other industrialized countries (Sitabur and Deebhijan, 2017). Moreover, it is common knowledge that during the start-up phase, entrepreneurs must establish the business's limits and identify the product or service to be offered. This is a difficult undertaking, especially for new technology-based businesses, which typically demand substantial

investments and a short time frame to turn an idea into a full-time business (to avoid product obsolescence). Despite the fact that business model design is a relatively new issue in the entrepreneurship sector, it is garnering increasing attention in the literature. The utility and predictability of business models are anticipated to aid entrepreneurs in making better decisions, boosting their chances of success (Soriano, 2017). In terms of government support, showed that 37.20% were attending seminars/webinars provided by LGUs or government that can help the business and 4.70% were mitigating the business' losses due to the pandemic.

Table 13. Degree of extensiveness in terms of challenges

Category	Mean	Interpretation
Operation	3.00	Extensive
Staffing	2.50	Extensive
Capitalization	2.85	Extensive
Strategy Implementation	3.05	Extensive
Sustainability	2.95	Extensive
<b>Grand mean</b>	<b>2.87</b>	<b>Extensive</b>

For the degree of extensiveness in terms of challenges faced by the OTOP enterprises, this study revealed that respondents were extensive in terms of operation with a mean of 3.00; staffing with a mean of 2.50; capitalization with

a mean of 2.85; strategy implementation with a mean of 3.05; sustainability with a mean of 2.95. Overall, the study has a grand mean of 2.87 and interpreted as extensive.

Table 14. Summary of correlation of demographic profile and extensiveness of challenges

Categories	Challenge in Staffing	Challenge in Capitalization	Challenge in Strategy Implementation	Challenge in Sustainability
<b>Length of Operations</b>	Insignificant	Insignificant	Insignificant	Insignificant
<b>Range of Initial Capitalization</b>	Insignificant	Insignificant	Insignificant	Insignificant
<b>Number of Staff</b>	Insignificant	Insignificant	Insignificant	Insignificant

Significance at 0.05%

Moreover, in the correlation of degree of extensiveness in terms of operation, staffing, capitalization, strategy implementation, and sustainability to demographic profile of the respondents, it revealed that all of the computed rho value are ranging from 0.00 to .30 which

can be interpreted as a negligible correlation and p-value are all higher than 0.05 which can be interpreted as insignificant. Thus, all null hypotheses are accepted and no significant relationship among and within the variables were inferred.

## Conclusion and Recommendation

The results from the analysis of data from the respondents lead to the conclusion and revealed that the respondents were dominated by 0 to 5 years in business operations, with an initial capitalization of Php 3,000,000 below having a 1 to 9 employees.

Furthermore, the researchers concluded that most of the respondents' business known as OTOP enterprises face challenges towards the pandemic in terms of low production capacity, reduction on manpower and establishing funds to support the employees, managing and maintaining the flow of funds, attracting new customers, and ensuring the health and well-being of the people related to the business and maintaining the target profit even the materials became costly. Moreover, most of the respondents also granted opportunities in terms of improving the packaging of the product and cashless transaction to provide convenience to the consumers, using of social media sites and e-commerce platforms, ensuring transparent communication not just to employees but also to the customer and also setting up virtual and/or online stores to reach existing and potential customers, and lastly, attending seminars/webinars provided by LGUs or government that can help the business. The findings revealed for the degree of extensiveness in terms of challenges the OTOP Enterprises faced was severe in terms its operations, staffing, capitalization, strategy implementation, and sustainability. Additionally, in the correlation of degree of extensiveness in terms of operations, capitalization, strategy implementation, and sustainability to demographic profile of the respondents, it depicts that all of the computed rho-value and p-value as interpreted as a negligible correlation and insignificant

After the presentation of data, analysis, interpretation and conclusion. The authors recommend some strategies to the One Town One Product enterprises that may help them to overcome the challenges they're currently facing. Specifically, the authors focused on recommending the 20/80 rule since maintaining and managing the flow of funds had a highest percentage in terms of capitalization, review the existing workflow given that low production capacity got a highest frequency on operations,

engage with e-commerce were also recommended since attracting new customers was also a challenge in terms of strategy implementation. Furthermore, the authors recommended to the Local Government Unit to provide outlets to help them grow their sales and promote their products as well as help them minimize their cost. Lastly, the researcher recommended to the future researcher to propose new study for the future researchers to conduct a study where OTOP enterprises adapt the strategies recommended by the proponents.

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