



## HOUSEHOLD AND SOCIETAL ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND STRATEGIC FORMATION AMIDST THE PANDEMIC: A RAILWAY TOWARDS THE “ROADMAP OF CHANGE” IN BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE

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### Abstract

*The household and societal economic recovery and strategic formation amidst the pandemic: a roadmap of change in the business perspective, are among the many considerable factors that obliged businesses to level up due to: 1) **Reduction of patronage** reveal the finding that whether a seller is legitimate or not during this time of “pandemic” where the government cannot suppress their intention for survival, however, considering that the world is a challenge by the test of time, it is suggested that government should look into and review the process while allowing them to do things for survival. Further, the government should balance the equation because, as the pandemic prolonged, the longer the pain, reduces one desire to sustain and eventually increases the gravity of economic casualties; 2) **Operation apathy** since it can be drawn from the sentiments of large business organization, and views that they feel the uncertainties, the government should implement some measures as we faced the new normal by balancing every aspect in a different avenue. It is suggested, however, that the application of a “win-win” solution should be strengthened to bring forth the unity in fighting and combating the pandemic using the non-pharmaceutical approach; 3) **Client Density** finds piercing initiative will soon “reborn” the hope of businesses, making them “grow”, “glow” and “gloom” however, constraints are inevitable, hence government participation plays a major role and initiates some element of change by creating tactical and practical move solving the evident of pandemic spread. It is suggested that to give back sparkling light to businesses, a reduction of implemented control measures will then be imposed. This initiative will somehow pave the way towards reenergizing businesses but not compromising the general welfare of the consuming public; 4) **Government restrictions** reveal that the business sector demand for “reduction” of government restrictions despite the conflicting cases reported. The intention of reducing restrictions would allow people to go back to its usual nature and make the economy perform. Based on the findings made, it is safe to suggest that while it is true that the pandemic is still evident, those areas not severely hit by this pandemic should be given the chance to reopen: thereby, allowing businesses alike, so that the economy functions and government generates revenue while safeguarding the majority of the society; 5) **Regulatory requirements** reveal that government-imposed regulatory requirements hamper the earning desire to large scale businesses, while “online” sellers celebrate the “falling star” of opportunity. Therefore, it is suggested that government should look into the “legitimacy” of most online sellers to ensure that “fairness” and balance are established. Large scale business operators “per se”, are submissive to the government in terms of compliance; having all the business requisites such as business permits and the like, however, for online sellers, complying the same requisites as large scale bears no guarantee; 6) **Cost control measures** reveal that this is the venue where competing businesses represented by that online or digital landscape gains strength as they found that government has tolerated them as it is, due to the abnormality of the economic conditions. While it is true that in the advent of these challenging times, the government is patiently considering some unlawful economic practices made by businesses alike, hence, it is safe to recommend that, for the sake of fairness, cost control measures should be equally and fairly implemented to all. Fairness would mean that even how immeasurable uncertainties the environment embraces, everyone should be equal in the eyes of the law.*

**Short Title: Household and Societal Economic Recovery and Strategic Formation amidst the Pandemic.**

### Background

The household and societal economic recovery and strategic formation amidst the pandemic: a roadmap of change in a business perspective, are among the many considerable factors that obliged businesses to level up due to 1) Reduction of patronage, 2) Operation apathy, 3) Client

density, 4) Government restrictions, 5) Regulatory requirements, and 6) Cost control measures are some of the elements of change in business perspective. For more than a year now, since the pandemic hit and strikes the whole universe, bring tremendous and immeasurable effects to the normal day-to-day passion of the economy as a whole. Financial environment, lifestyle, religion, socials and other major activities usually enjoyed by people were banned and it seems that the world stops evolving to its normal journey. Different business nature drastically changes its usual mechanisms and adjusting far beyond unthinkable environmental proceedings brought by the pandemic. Food chains, theatre, and leisure close their operations; malls limits their capacity of welcoming clients. Service businesses such as (transportation sector) buses, jitney, and taxi cabs had a mandatory control of capacity resulting to drop earnings between them (operators and drivers) that goes beyond their expectations, due to this pandemic. Airline companies are not exempted from this mandate since they are restrained from accommodating flight and are temporarily grounded. Sea transportation (Vessels) also on the “docked” and allows only those carrying essential products. This strong mandate from the Anti-Agency Task Force (AATF) on COVID-19 was disseminated to all levels. The hierarchy of the implementation of this mandate is inherent from the government agencies such as the Department of Health (DOH) and passes through the different government arms for strict compliance. For the national level, National Disaster and Control Commission (NDCC) is the one responsible, while the City Disaster Control Units (CDCU) and the Barangay Health Emergency Response Team (BHERT) for the city-wide and the barangay level respectively. Since then, and until at present, this pandemic has no “*emblem*” of leaving the environment which inhibits the usual human motion. The economy was not able to rebound and find difficulty in turning out to its normal cycle, failing in upholding its usual routine. The continuing threat brought about by this pandemic drags down the household standing up to the point where it cripples the daily sustenance of every resident in the economic arena. Restraining the movement of people, reducing the number of working hours, pressing usual business activities are just some of the measures imposed by the government and are intentionally done to address the increasing number of infections day by day not only in the Philippines but in the whole universe as well. As the pandemic prolonged its presence, government initiatives come to the rescue by providing some sort of (AYUDA) “financial aides” to households who are severely affected by the pandemic. This initiative was praised by many because they can now temporarily acquire a “few” of their fundamental needs to survive however, the sustainability is very limited and the government cannot prolong the provision of the financial aids, as it shallows down the savings intended for social needs. The government even extends far beyond intangible assistance such as declaring all government, private, financial, and lending institutions a “payment holiday”, purposely to free people from economic distress. The control measures of the government nowadays could no longer hold water as a result, people find ways and means to survive. This pandemic crisis (**COVID 19**) for many, yielded a positive view as they embrace the change from old to new normal, spotted a salient opportunity, and capitalizing on bridging the gap of craving for economic recovery while staying at home. As the starting point of change, since a surplus of manpower is evident due to economic anguish, the birth of business interest for many comes into a burning desire. Nowadays, the growing number of small business players seems like a splinter spread all over as an instrument of change. People venture into business even if it is untimely and unplanned since the urgency prevails in which the end justifies the means. The long been used and abused technology (gadgets) has made a dramatic life-changing instrument that aids the conception in diversifying the exploration of new normal activity, the digital business concept. Today, part of the turmoil brought by pandemic, opens the door and windows of opportunity hence, using digital platforms as an instrument, immeasurable small business players spread all over which eventually affects the large-scale business infrastructure, in the long run. As life continues on its journey, online selling, or what we usually call “digital marketing”, dominates the web and carries commodities ranging from consumers essential needs like foods, clothes, household chores, gadgets, and more, are now on digital selling platforms. Now, since all these types of commodities need logistics in terms of their distribution, service delivery bounces as they emulate the connecting link requirements. Panda, Grab, Tok-Tok, Maxim, Lala Move, Mr. Speedy, G&T are among the many logistic counter play that serves as a highway of hope which adds color to the new business trends. These are considered as economic partners for they push the new business practices and provide safety to consumers, for they do not necessarily need to go out acquiring what one’s desires. The control measures imposed by the government in limiting the influx of people outside are aided by this new business arena. However, while it is true that this initiative (online selling) helps the government in controlling the movement of people, another side of the coin gives a negative effect to medium and large enterprise, and at the same time, the government, in terms of its revenue generation since, there is no assurance that all these online players contribute benefit to the government.

Online business so to speak comes in a very simple way, as such, people can easily venture a living using technology. As the situation continues, it leads to the creation of new business mechanisms to sustain and compete those small players “as we call it”; who` contribute major impact to the existing traditional businesses, resulting in a gradual downflow of their long been enjoyed opportunities. Digital business enthusiasts are “peg” with no option since life during this pandemic is consider as the game of winning and surviving. Digital or online businesses are among the few diversionary tactics for households and society for economic sustenance. The impact of the pandemic has far-reaching economic consequences that largely affect the overall industry worldwide. The birth of this online selling initiative comes due to the consistent implementation of strict and mandatory quarantine requirements. As reported, the global recession caused by this pandemic become history with more than a third of the global population at the time “lockdown” policy was deemed ordered. Supply shortages are happening as a result of panic buying, delaying delivery due to disruption of factories and logistics. The global stock market fell on 24 of February due to a significant rising in several COVID-19 cases followed by a single week declines shown in the world major indices. The pandemic has forced to switch the plans not only at the local level but including globally in scope. The presence of this pandemic results to characterize the economic system experiencing significant broad uncertainty. Economic forecasts and consensus among experts show a significant disagreement on the overall extent, long-term effects, and projected recovery as it seems, the economic abnormality is still prevalent in the environment. In the present situation, the kick-off of the vaccines from different sources all over the world has already been rolled out hoping that one day, this pandemic come to an end and become a history to recall however, hard works and sleepless nights extended by Frontliner are not that sufficient. There is still “awesome” evidence of continuing cases in the Philippines and now, begin to establish a new paradigm of the horizon to control such as general community quarantine (GCQ), wherein there is a little considerable and tolerable limit to the economic-related activity. The modified community quarantine (MGCQ) enforces strong control measures that disallow non-essential activity to perform. Curfew hour is then recalled to its implementation thereby, limiting the economic activity of people which triggers them to venture another paradigm to supplement their daily survival requirements.

## Methods

The researcher as a “Frontliner” at the same time, review and collate some documentary evidence, reports, updates, and trends from the occurrence of this pandemic for critical analyses, triangulation of test and validations for twelve (12) months from March of 2020- February 2021 are used. Reinforced records from other sources like the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI); the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA); the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) are recorded. The effect brought about by the pandemic from small to large scale businesses, other business groups, and new players, the “online business enthusiast” were required to answer the questions floated in different modes like emails, Google met, Skype including calls. Some supplementary information drawn from the limited face-to-face interview was carefully recorded and tabulated. The information generated from the study covers selected areas of Mindanao, Philippines. Thus, their executive reports received descriptively were triangulated to the ethnographic notes of the field researcher on the period specified.

Since the study deals on the household and societal economic recovery and strategic formation amidst the pandemic: a roadmap of change in a business perspective, the element of “truth” on the qualitative and quantitative data, exchange of ideas, and other methods of generating prepondering shreds of evidence done within the area of Mindanao, Philippines. This is to counter check and for its confirmatory revalidation on the veracity and credibility on the reported documents from two hundred (200) direct business frontline, draws the following findings:

## Findings and Discussions

The household and societal economic recovery and strategic formation amidst the pandemic: a roadmap of change in a business perspective, are among the many considerable factors that obliged businesses to level up due to 1) Reduction of patronage, 2) Operation apathy, 3) Client density, 4) Government restrictions, 5) Regulatory requirements, and 6) Cost control measures believe to be a factor that affects small and large scale businesses but help in other way recover from economic distress brought by the pandemic. Thus, the findings below are:

### Reduction of Patronage

This is a temporary physical withdrawal of customers in buying commodities brought about by the presence of competitors around. During this pandemic time, the splinter spread of small



players affects the large-scale businesses which reduced their patronage thereby assumes a trajectory effect on sales volume and profit. The patronage reduction does not necessarily mean losing loyal customers but it is a temporary buying detour amidst the pandemic. If this scenario is prolonged, large-scale businesses feel the needle of pain as it reduces its market share and eventually creates a negative option to business continuance. The presence of this pandemic although we cannot set aside embracing the new norms, however, the degree of readiness facing challenges of the unknown is difficult to overcome.

The digital business players, on the contrary, enjoy the present environment where doing business through the use of gadgets comes so easy for them, but affects others. The majority of the business clamors yielded the same sentiments as others regarding the present condition. This creates an additional burden in their day-to-day operation as it denotes climbing to the higher pedestal of change in terms of strategy, tactics, and tracing potential solutions to the perceived coming of the full-blown occurrence of the problem.

Reduction of patronage brought about by the presence of the pandemic is evident that contributes burden to large scale businesses, more so with the small players. Its impact brings a gradual downflow in terms of profit generation since large-scale businesses incur a bigger amount of operating expenditures compared to the digital business players. The layman's understanding of the mathematical aspect of the business nature denotes that, comparatively, digital businesses generate more advantage in terms of profit considering that, they only have used a manageable amount of working capital. "Low to none" when it comes to operating expense requirements, considering that they don't need manpower to aid their business transactions. Unlike the large and medium scale, there is always a percentage allocation of salaries and wages.

The manifestations of claims from medium to large scale business operators when interviewed are all valid and seem they are at the losing end. They pay for all the pertinent government-mandated processes making their business legitimate. On the other hand, online or digital selling among others has not shown proof of their legitimacy thereby creating an advantage to one end and a disadvantage to the other end. Whether a seller is legitimate or not during this time (pandemic), the government cannot suppress their intention for survival however, considering that the world is challenged by the test of time, it is suggested that government should look into and review the process while allowing them to do things for survival. Further, the government should balance the equation because, as the pandemic prolonged, the longer the pain, reduces one's desire to sustain, and eventually increases the gravity of economic casualties.

### **Operation apathy**

The occurrence of the pandemic and the spread of the uncontrollable encroachment of digital business platforms which affect the business environment results in operations delay. Business enthusiast finds its operation meaningless as it faced the challenge and sufferings with no definite spectrum. The impact carried out by operation (production) in general had caused an extreme degree of damage due to some government regulated compliance which makes a delay in distributing basic services. As the situation is prolonged, many of the businesses and production/operation alike tend to make some diversionary initiatives making use of their resources at hand. Common predicaments of the businessmen revealed during the interview that they foresee a higher degree of uncertainty if the situation remains and restrictions continue to their natural being, as they consider this as a major strain in their quest for sustainable and desirable growth.

On the other hand, although the government declares public health emergency under proclamation number 922, authorizing local government units to employ their local disaster risk reduction management fund, the business operation will still be out of their full-blown arena due to the evidence of risk measures and strict enforcement. The battle between the desire to produce goods and the forecasted outcome of the firm is embraced with some hesitations brought about by the overstaying pandemic, which in turn bring some economic changes that will create another form of adjustment on government colossal measures. Since it can be drawn from the sentiments of large business organization, and views that they feel the uncertainty, the government should review some measures as we faced the new normal by balancing every aspect in different avenue such as the government for "revenue" generation, large scale "business sustenance", and the "digital business" players as they have common intention to survive. It is suggested further that, the application of a "win-win" solution should be strengthened to bring forth unity in fighting and combating the pandemic using the non-pharmaceutical approach.

### **Client density**

Lockdowns, isolation, and quarantine are just some of the restrictions imposed by the government amidst the pandemic result in a declining client density in most businesses. The

changing mode of quarantine processes such as total lockdown which restrict travel and transportation imposed strict home quarantine among all households and closing all non-essential establishment are factors that ruin their revenue-generating activity. The rebirth of transmissions shoot up, new government control measures were born such as the implementation of the general community quarantine (GCQ) that allows only a measurable amount of “lay ways” to people going into some business establishment. Worst is, when the *modified general community quarantine* and the *enhanced community quarantine* was imposed as a pilot study for reducing the spread of contamination and infections, bring an unfavorable impact that hit “almost” all businesses where client density drags to ground zero.

Businesses, despite they are heavily affected not by the pandemic (COVID-19), but the essence of having the privilege of earnings, undermined circumstances, and hoping for the best to come. The long-awaited “normal” is far beyond the wildest dream of realization since there is no indicator that led to lessening the transmission of this virus which in turn, prolonged the agony. Their patience was tested by time but they consider the event as unthinkable and beyond human instinct. So to speak that the major contributor to client density downturn is the control measures imposed by the government itself. However, whether the government initiative and business interests suffer from this unexpected occurrence of eventualities, no one can be blamed as it seems that all of us are collateral damage of uncertainties. The roadmap of change in business perspective needs to go far beyond normal by exploring possibilities despite uncertainties. This piercing initiative will soon “reborn” the hope of businesses, making them “grow”, “glow” and “gloom” however, constraints are inevitable, hence government participation plays a major role and initiate some element of change by creating tactical and practical move solving the evident of pandemic spread.

It is further suggested that to give back sparkling light to business, a reduction of implemented control measures will then be imposed. This initiative will somehow pave the way towards reenergizing businesses but not compromising the general welfare of the consuming public.

### **Government restrictions**

Government restrictions define the common clamor of businesses to be reduced, giving time and space to client movement is somewhat controversial in nature. The figure reported by the National Economic Development (NEDA) shows that COVID -19 now possesses a more serious downside risk to the global economy. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the pandemic outbreak and signifies its severity on global coverage, urges countries to include the Philippines to take “urgent and aggressive action”. Historical data accounted for from the time of this pandemic spread all over the world confirms a summative figure reaching as far as 218,823 and 8,810 deaths. In the earlier stage, the Philippines registered a total confirmed 217 cases, 17 death, and 8 recoveries that were the turning point where restrictions are becoming tighter that deprived many to perform their usual human trends. As the pandemic devastated the country, the economic downfall was often noted. Its continuance (Pandemic) little by little, drains out government resources as they extent different modes of extending social supports to severely hit and numerous figures of cases and death.

At present, the pandemic (COVID-19) still evident, however, people have the confidence knowing that vaccines are now available. As reported by the Department of Health (DOH) just this April 2021, nearly a billion vaccine doses have been given worldwide. More to come from different countries all over the world. The Philippines, no less than the President make a pronouncement allowing all local government units to procure vaccines of their choice to be used by their constituents. With these positive views and promising pieces of evidence, a potential and favorable consideration may be granted. They, (Businessmen) believe that the only way to recovery is by making the economy perform as its best as possible, however, the full-blown is still impossible due to the prevalence of the pandemic brought by COVID -19. The business sector demand for “reduction” of government restrictions vis-a-vis the reported cases is somewhat conflicting. The report says that the intention of reducing restrictions and allows people to go back to its usual nature and make the economy perform, suggest that, while it is true that the pandemic is still evident, those areas not severely hit by this pandemic should be given the chance to reopen: thereby allowing businesses alike so that the economy functions and government generates revenue while safeguarding the majority of the society.

### **Regulatory requirements**

Wearing of face mask, face shields, washing hands, physical distancing, staying at home, curfew hour, sleeping habit, and eating vitamins foods are among the regulatory requirement the government imposed during the pandemic. These measures affect large scale businesses as it seems, following the enumerated requirements reduces the buying appetite of consumers however,

on the contrary, give a disadvantageous effect to business as well. Children below 18 and those individuals who are 60 years above are restricted from getting into places where there is a heavy influx of people. Added to the requirements that everyone should possess the mandatory quick response code or known as (QR) code, creates additional burden since the desire of having one, requires ample time since delay in processing most of the time lost one's patience and refrain from getting the mall. These regulatory requirements open the door for online sellers, taking advantage of the constraints faced by large-scale businesses. The overall effect of this requirement creates a notion that indirectly, people are mandated to stay at home. Online sellers' target market is those who have no desire to get inside the mall and wait instead, since goods ordered are delivered at home. They don't need to spend time and efforts and as a result, they save time and money in which big business alike suffers. With this, a lot of large scales business enterprise becomes an arena of a ghost since only a few men and women get in. People as buyers do not spend their usual time roaming and consuming some "fine dining" since having in mind the fear instinct of being infected by the unseen virus. This government regulation creates an atmosphere that cordons people in the four corners, leaving some "non-essential carrying" outlets, making them idol and isolated, resulting in its closure.

The government-imposed regulatory requirements hamper the earning desire of large-scale businesses, while "online" sellers celebrate the "falling star" of opportunity. Therefore, it is suggested that government should look into the "legitimacy" of most online sellers to ensure that "fairness" and balance are established. Large scale business operators per se, are submissive to the government in terms of compliance; having all the business requisites such as business permits and the like, however, for online sellers, complying with the same requisites as large scale bears no guarantee.

### **Cost control measures**

The term defines the "monetary" equivalent of the product sold to buyers in the marketplace. It passes through government regulating bodies in stabilizing the fair price. The price control council is responsible for monitoring the prevailing market price of any commodity, assures market stability. The value-added tax (VAT) is present in the large scale business since they are required to submit sales report quarterly, semi-annual, and annually as mandated by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR).

Meanwhile, as the government is trying to implement the cost control measures during the pandemic, some unprecedented events occur and are contributory to higher inflation rates and declining Gross Domestic Products. As reported in the first quarter of 2020, declining GDP drop by -0.7% affected by some untoward occurrence of unwanted circumstances. The advent of the pandemic shows strong evidence of economic collapse due to varying restrictions. Survey results in April 2020 are summarized and registered a skyrocketed 17.7% unemployment rate which is figuratively equivalent to 7.25 million workers were affected, which this pandemic brings.

The foregoing statements are detrimental to efforts being made by top-level officials in government to employ over and above the rule of law as it is said, "cost control measures should not be under the mercy of the chosen few". This is the venue where competing business represented by that online or digital landscape gains strength as they found that the government has tolerated them as it is, due to the abnormality of the economic conditions. While it is true that due to the advent of these challenging times, the government is patiently considering some unlawful economic practices made by business alike, hence, it is safe to recommend that, for the sake of fairness, cost control measures should be equally and fairly implemented to all. Fairness would mean that despite the storm of the environment embraced by the arena of uncertainties, everyone should be equal in the eyes of law.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The household and societal economic recovery and strategic formation amidst the pandemic: a roadmap of change in a business perspective, are among the many considerable factors that obliged businesses to level up due to 1) **Reduction of patronage** reveal the finding that whether a seller is legitimate or not during this time of "pandemic" where the government cannot suppress their intention for survival, however, considering that the world is a challenge by the test of time, it is suggested that government should look into and review the process while allowing them to do things for survival. Further, the government should balance the equation because, as the pandemic prolonged, the longer the pain, reduces one desire to sustain and eventually increases the gravity of economic casualties; 2) **Operation apathy** since it can be drawn from the sentiments of large business organization, and views that they feel the uncertainty, the government should review some measures as we faced the new normal by balancing every aspect in a different avenue. It is suggested however that the application of a "win-win" solution should be strengthened to bring



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