



GSJ: Volume 14, Issue 5, May 2026, Online: ISSN 2320-9186

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# RISK CONTROL MANAGEMENT PRACTICE OF RESTAURANT INDUSTRY IN LEGAZPI CITY

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## Keywords:

Hazard prevention, Restaurant industry, Risk control management, Risk management practices

## Introduction

The restaurant industry in Legazpi City has demonstrated steady growth, contributing significantly to

local employment generation and tourism development. According to the Department of Tourism, food and

dining experiences are among the primary motivators for travel, positioning restaurants as key drivers of local economic activity. Along Legazpi City Boulevard -particularly within the coastal barangays of Puro and Lamba - the increasing number of food establishments reflects rising consumer demand and tourist arrivals. These areas offer strategic advantages, including proximity to scenic attractions such as the boulevard waterfront and views of Mayon Volcano, accessibility to both local residents and tourists, and a

At the same time, managing a restaurant is not without challenges. Day-to-day operations involve dealing with a range of risks, from food safety concerns and equipment breakdowns to employee-related issues, theft, and compliance with health regulations (Health and Safety Solutions Philippines, 2023). When these risks are not mitigated or

Because of this, paying attention to risk control management has become increasingly important. For restaurant operators, this means being able to recognize potential risks, understand their possible impact, and put in place practical measures to manage them. These may include proper food handling

conducive environment for dining and leisure activities. Such location-based advantages enhance the attractiveness of restaurants and support the promotion of Bicolano cuisine. However, despite this expansion, research shows that small and medium-sized restaurant enterprises remain highly exposed to operational risks - such as food safety issues, equipment failure, workforce challenges, and environmental disruptions - which can result in financial losses and business instability if not effectively managed.

handled properly, they can lead to financial losses, disruptions in service, or a decline in customer trust, and at worst, closure of business. For smaller establishments, especially those operating with limited resources, these risks can have more serious consequences (Lopez & Castillo, 2021).

practices, regular maintenance of equipment, compliance with health standards, and ensuring that staff are trained in safety procedures (Abad & Reyes, 2020). In the case of Legazpi City, these concerns are even more relevant given the area's exposure to typhoons and the changing patterns of tourist arrivals (Martinez, 2021).

There are also existing policies that guide restaurant operations in this regard. The Philippine Food Safety Act of 2013 (Republic Act No. 10611) requires establishments to observe proper sanitation and food handling practices, while Republic Act No. 11058 (Occupational Safety and Health Standards) emphasizes the need to maintain safe working

conditions for employees. Failure to comply with these regulations may result in penalties or suspension of operations (Department of Labor and Employment, 2019). These policies highlight that managing risks is not simply a good practice, but an essential responsibility for business owners.

Despite the essential nature of these policies, most existing studies on risk control management focus heavily on large establishments in highly urbanized centers, leaving a limited focus on micro and small restaurants in local settings. Consequently, there is a lack of research examining how restaurant businesses in smaller cities like Legazpi actually manage operational risks. Compared to larger cities like

Manila or Cebu, local micro and small establishments in Legazpi operate under different conditions and face unique difficulties, including erratic seasonal tourist demand and a high susceptibility to recurring natural hazards. These factors make it important to better understand how local restaurant owners and managers deal with risks in their day-to-day operations.

Effective risk control management also supports sustainable restaurant operations by ensuring food safety, protecting employees and customers, and reducing operational losses. Strengthening these practices helps restaurants maintain business

continuity and contribute to stable local economic development, particularly in risk-prone areas such as Legazpi City, consistent with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals on health, decent work, and responsible production (United Nations, 2015).

In view of these considerations,

this study examines the risk control

management practices of fast-food restaurants along Legazpi Boulevard. It focuses on how these establishments identify, assess, and manage operational risks, as well as the areas where gaps or weaknesses may still exist. By looking into current practices, the study aims to provide practical insights that can

help improve risk management, strengthen food safety measures, and support more reliable day-to-day operations. Ultimately, the findings are expected to contribute to building more resilient restaurant businesses, which may, in turn, support the continued growth of tourism and the local economy of Legazpi City.

## Rationale

The well-known observation by Benjamin Franklin that “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” highlights the value of addressing risks before they develop into more serious problems. This idea is

particularly relevant in the restaurant industry, where daily operations are exposed to a range of risks that may affect safety, service quality, reputation, and overall business performance.

Restaurants also play an important role in the local setting. Food is often a key part of the travel experience, and dining establishments serve as spaces where culture and local identity are expressed. . Food is one of the attractions for people to visit. Visitors rely on local food establishments. In cities like Legazpi, restaurants not only support tourism but also contribute to employment and the local economy. Restaurants are foregrounds for culture, tourism and

a sure source of local economy. Because of this, how these businesses manage operational risks becomes an important concern, not only for owners but also for the broader community. The influence of these environmental constraints is interesting enough for the academic literature to have devoted part of its interest, with few exceptions such as those of Avella and Ottaviano (1990), and Pisu (2004) which will be referred to later.

This gap in the knowledge requires exploration about how locally owned restaurants identify and control risks, what risk reduction

and control strategies are used to mitigate perceived restaurant risks, and whether good practices on risk management align with regulatory

policies. Through this site-specific query, the research aims to generate findings that are of practical and

pertinent use to Legazpi City's restaurant industry.

Despite a generally high awareness of operational hazards among restaurant owners, effective mitigation is severely hindered by limited resources. There is a critical lack of affordable, structured risk management systems designed specifically for micro and small enterprises. Consequently, the impact

of poor risk control directly threatens their business sustainability. When these small businesses cannot afford comprehensive safety frameworks, unmitigated daily risks can easily escalate into severe financial losses, service disruptions, or permanent closures.

In addition, strengthening risk control management practices contributes to the long-term sustainability of restaurant operations. Effective risk management not only minimizes operational disruptions but also promotes food safety, responsible resource utilization, and protection of employees and customers. By enhancing preparedness against operational, financial, and

environmental risks, restaurants can maintain continuity of services, improve customer trust, and support sustainable economic activity in Legazpi City. These efforts are consistent with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) (United Nations, 2015).

The ultimate goal of this study is not only to minimize risks, but also to boost the resilience of SMEs which are a vital part of the local economy. The results of this study are expected to generate evidenced-based recommendations for restaurant operators to sustain their operations,

protect customers and employees, and enhance Legazpi City's reputation as a gastronomic hub. "Thus, the research itself epitomizes Franklin's lasting aphorism, that: "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

## Current State of Research in the Field

Research on risk control management in the Philippine restaurant industry has expanded significantly, reflecting the industry's evolution and addressing the increasing complexity of risks. The

field focuses on operational, financial, and reputational risk mitigation strategies, driven by technological advancements, regulatory changes, and global trends.

## Problem in the Field

Despite advancements in research on Risk Control Management (RCM) in the restaurant industry, several pressing challenges continue to hinder its effective implementation, particularly in smaller urban centers such as Legazpi City. Frameworks like the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) system and the Food Safety Act of 2013 (RA 10611) are designed to ensure food safety and compliance with regulatory

standards. However, for many small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), compliance remains difficult to sustain due to limited financial resources, lack of technical expertise, and the complexity of regulatory requirements. These constraints often result in inconsistent food safety practices, which expose restaurants to the risks of penalties, reputational harm, and even business closure.

Technological innovations -- such as point-of-sale (POS) systems, predictive analytics, and automated inventory management—offer promising solutions to strengthen operational efficiency and minimize risks. These tools enable better tracking of sales, forecasting of demand, and monitoring of inventory, thereby reducing losses and improving overall risk control.

Yet, many smaller establishments in Legazpi City are unable to fully adopt such systems. High implementation costs, inadequate infrastructure, and the need for specialized technical knowledge serve as barriers to technology integration. As a result, these businesses often rely on manual processes, which make them more vulnerable to theft, wastage, and inefficiencies.

Beyond compliance and technology challenges, restaurants in Legazpi City also face unique environmental and economic risks. The city's geographic location makes it highly susceptible to typhoons, flooding, and volcanic activity, which disrupt supply chains, damage infrastructure, and limit customer

access. These environmental factors, combined with fluctuating tourism demand, create uncertainties that further complicate restaurant operations. Small enterprises, in particular, struggle to absorb these shocks due to their limited financial capacity and lack of contingency planning.

The COVID-19 pandemic further underscored these vulnerabilities. While larger establishments were able to adapt through measures such as digital ordering platforms, delivery services, and enhanced hygiene protocols, many smaller restaurants in Legazpi

City lacked the resources to do the same. This uneven adoption of adaptive strategies highlighted the need for more inclusive and context-specific approaches to risk management that consider the realities of micro and small enterprises.

Taken together, these intersecting challenges - regulatory compliance pressures, technological limitations, environmental vulnerabilities, and financial constraints - point to the urgent need for localized, adaptable, and

industry-specific RCM strategies. Addressing these concerns is crucial not only for the survival of individual restaurants but also for sustaining the role of the sector in Legazpi's broader economic and cultural development.

### Research Gap

The review of existing literature shows that food safety and compliance frameworks, technology-driven risk control tools, and enterprise risk management (ERM) systems have been widely studied in the restaurant industry, particularly

in large urban centers and developed economies. These studies highlight important lessons on proactive food safety measures, technological integration, and holistic approaches to operational risk. However, most of these findings are drawn from

contexts where restaurants have stronger infrastructures, steady

markets, and greater access to capital and expertise.

What is missing in the literature are studies that examine how restaurants in smaller cities, where enterprises often face financial limitations, fluctuating customer demand, and vulnerability to natural hazards, apply these risk management practices in real-world conditions. Specifically, in Legazpi City, restaurants along the Boulevard serve as both cultural attractions and

livelihood anchors, yet they operate within a setting shaped by seasonal tourism, resource constraints, and recurring environmental threats such as typhoons and volcanic activity. Despite their importance to local economic growth, there is little empirical evidence on how these establishments identify risks, adopt control mechanisms, and adapt to sudden disruptions.

This gap calls for a context-specific investigation. By focusing on the actual experiences of restaurants along Legazpi City Boulevard, the present study aims to provide localized insights into Risk Control Management (RCM) practices. It seeks to bridge the disconnect between broad, generalized findings and the

day-to-day realities of smaller urban centers. Ultimately, this study intends to generate practical recommendations that can help local restaurant operators build resilience, ensure compliance, and sustain growth amidst the unique economic and environmental conditions of Legazpi City.

## Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to examine and assess the risk control management practices of restaurants in Legazpi City in order

to better understand how operational risks are managed within the local context.

### Specific Objectives.

The following are the specific objectives directed at realizing the primary objective

1. To identify the types of risks commonly encountered by restaurants in Legazpi City.

2. To assess the risk control management practices of restaurants in terms of:

- a. risk identification;
- b. risk assessment;
- c. risk control measures; and
- d. risk evaluation and

monitoring.

3. To determine the challenges and barriers that affect the effective implementation of risk control management practices among restaurants; and

4. To propose strategies to improve risk control management practices among restaurants in Legazpi City.

### Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on three key frameworks -- Enterprise Risk Management (ERM), Contingency Theory, and supported by the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) framework. These

The **Enterprise Risk Management (ERM)** framework offers an integrated approach to identifying, assessing, and mitigating different kinds of risks—financial, operational, regulatory, and reputational. It promotes a proactive and strategic mindset in managing uncertainties that could disrupt business continuity. As discussed by Lam (2003) and Kaplan and Mikes (2012), ERM allows organizations to align risk management efforts with their overall goals, ensuring that

The **Contingency Theory**, on the other hand, underscores that

collectively provide a comprehensive basis for understanding how restaurants in Legazpi City manage risks and sustain their operations under varying conditions.

vulnerabilities are addressed in a systematic way. In the case of restaurants, ERM is crucial in handling issues related to food safety, compliance with sanitation laws, and employee welfare. Applying this framework helps businesses anticipate possible disruptions, sustain customer confidence, and adapt to market fluctuations, especially in a tourism-oriented city like Legazpi where environmental and economic conditions can shift rapidly.

there is no single best way to manage or control risks. Developed by Fred

Fiedler (1967), this theory highlights that effective management depends on the specific context in which an organization operates. For restaurants in Legazpi City, this means that risk control measures must be tailored to their size, resources, and operational realities. Smaller establishments, for instance, may not have the same capacity for

formal systems as larger chains, but they can adapt by developing flexible, experience-based approaches to risk management. The theory emphasizes responsiveness—adapting strategies based on local conditions such as weather disruptions, resource constraints, and seasonal customer flow.

Supporting these theoretical perspectives is the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) framework, which serves as an operational model for managing food safety risks. Unlike ERM and Contingency Theory, HACCP is not a theory but a structured system that focuses on identifying potential hazards in the food preparation process and establishing critical control points to prevent or minimize

these risks. As noted by Mortimore and Wallace (2001), HACCP promotes a preventive approach to food safety management. In restaurant operations, the application of HACCP principles ensures compliance with food safety regulations and enhances consumer protection. This is particularly relevant in maintaining quality standards and sustaining customer confidence.

Taken together, these frameworks provide a strong foundation for the study. Risk Management Theory (through ERM) offers the strategic structure for managing risks, Contingency Theory introduces adaptability to varying operational conditions, and the HACCP framework provides a

practical and preventive approach to food safety management. The integration of these perspectives highlights that effective risk control in restaurant operations requires a combination of structured systems, contextual flexibility, and consistent application of safety measures.

## Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework, as illustrated in Figure 1, presents the cyclical process of Risk Control Management (RCM) in restaurant operations. The flowchart visually demonstrates how each stage of the process (Risk Identification, Risk Assessment, Risk Control, Challenges, Reassessment, and Evaluation) is

The cycle begins with Risk Identification, which involves recognizing the potential threats that may affect restaurant operations. These risks may include food safety hazards, financial instability, operational breakdowns, or regulatory noncompliance. Once

Following assessment, the next stage is Risk Control Practices, where specific measures are implemented to reduce, prevent, or eliminate identified risks. These may include compliance with HACCP standards, preventive equipment maintenance,

However, the framework also acknowledges the presence of challenges and barriers that can affect the smooth implementation of control measures. These challenges include limited financial resources,

interrelated and continuously feeds into one another, forming a loop of constant monitoring and improvement. At the center of this system lies the 5×5 Risk Assessment Matrix, which functions as the key analytical tool for prioritizing risks according to their likelihood and impact.

identified, these risks are subjected to Risk Assessment, to evaluate the probability of occurrence and the severity of consequences. This process allows them to determine which risks are most critical and require immediate action.

staff training on hygiene and safety, and sound financial controls. These measures are intended to safeguard restaurant operations, maintain customer confidence, and ensure adherence to regulations.

high employee turnover, insufficient knowledge, or inadequate technological support. By recognizing these barriers, management can better plan interventions suited to their operational realities.

After the controls are in place, the framework proceeds to the Reassessment stage. This step determines whether the control measures have been effective in

reducing risks to an acceptable level. If some risks remain high or critical, additional or alternative actions must be taken.

The cycle concludes with Evaluation, which measures the overall effectiveness of the RCM process. Evaluation results are based on outcomes such as reduced incidents of contamination, improved

operational stability, financial soundness, and compliance with local and national regulations. The findings from this stage are fed back into Risk Identification, making the process circular and continuous.

Overall, the diagram captures the essence of RCM as a dynamic, evolving, and context-based system. It highlights that risk management in restaurant operations is not merely a procedural requirement but an ongoing process that demands vigilance, adaptability, and sound

managerial judgment. Through this conceptual model, restaurants in Legazpi City can establish a sustainable framework that promotes safety, efficiency, and business resilience in a highly competitive and risk-prone industry.

The theoretical anchor and the conceptual framework serve as the foundation of the study's methodology. It guided the preparation of the research instrument, the formulation of questions, and the data analysis procedures. Each part of the framework—risk identification, assessment, control, challenges,

reassessment, and evaluation - corresponds to the study's specific objectives. By aligning the conceptual framework with the research process, the study ensures that its findings are consistent, relevant, and reflective of the actual risk management practices of restaurants along Legazpi City Boulevard.

## Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study focused on micro and small restaurants in Legazpi City registered with the DTI or SEC, examining how they manage risks in daily operations. Managers are the main respondents, as they oversee operations and implement risk control measures.

Admittedly, only very few restaurants are operated along Legazpi City Boulevard hence the limited number of the respondents. However, it is acknowledged that there are other food establishments in the area that are not formally registered. These were not included in the study due to accessibility

It is also important to note that only a limited number of restaurants operate along the boulevard, resulting in a relatively small sample size. While efforts were made to include all accessible establishments within the defined scope, the number of respondents remained constrained

Given these limitations, the findings of the study should be interpreted within the context of the selected respondents and study area. Nevertheless, the results provide

The study is limited to restaurants along Legazpi City Boulevard and does not include larger establishments or other staff's perspectives. Findings are based on the managers' responses and focus only on current practices and challenges.

limitations, lack of official records, and the difficulty in verifying operational legitimacy. Despite this, the study attempted to capture the general condition of restaurant operations within the area, as the included establishments represent the more structured segment of the industry.

by the actual population of restaurants in the area. Furthermore, some respondents did not fully answer all items in the questionnaire despite follow-up efforts by the researcher, which may have affected the completeness of certain data points.

meaningful insights into the current risk control management practices of small restaurant establishments and may serve as a useful reference for similar settings.

## Research Design

This study made use of a quantitative descriptive research design to obtain a clear and factual understanding of the Risk Control Management (RCM) practices among restaurants along Legazpi City Boulevard. The purpose of this design

is to describe and analyze the existing practices, without manipulating variables, in order to see how restaurant managers or owner-managers identify, assess, and control risks in their operations.

The quantitative approach is appropriate because the study aimed to gather measurable data that can show patterns and trends on how risks are managed in the local restaurant industry. By focusing on what actually happens in practice,

the research sought to provide an accurate picture of how prepared and responsive these establishments have been when dealing with operational challenges. The data were collected mainly through administration of a survey instrument.

## Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study on Risk Control Management (RCM) practices among restaurants in Legazpi City, several key conclusions can be drawn.

The profile of the respondents reveals that most participants were managers of small to medium-sized restaurants, particularly from fast food and casual dining establishments. A significant number of these businesses have been operating for five years or less,

indicating that many are still in the process of developing formal systems for risk management. With relatively small staff sizes and limited resources, these establishments rely on practical and cost-effective approaches to managing risks. This highlights the critical role of management in ensuring the successful implementation of risk control practices, as managers are directly involved in overseeing daily operations and enforcing safety measures.

In terms of the types and frequency of risks encountered, the

results show that food safety risks are minimal, with issues such as expired

ingredients and cross-contamination rarely occurring. Operational risks, including equipment breakdowns, supply chain delays, and poor ventilation, were reported occasionally but remain within manageable levels. Workplace-related risks, such as minor injuries and hygiene concerns, were also

found to be low. These findings suggest that restaurants generally maintain effective basic risk control measures. However, the presence of occasional operational and staffing challenges indicates the need for continuous monitoring and strengthened preventive strategies to sustain safe and efficient operations.

With regard to current Risk Control Management practices, the study found that these are implemented to a high extent across all areas, including risk identification, assessment, control, and monitoring. Preventive measures and compliance with regulatory standards were rated very high, reflecting a strong commitment to maintaining operational safety. Practices such as regular inspections, employee hazard

reporting, and emergency preparedness are actively carried out, although they are not always formalized or standardized. This suggests that while restaurants are aware of risks and take active steps to manage them, there is an opportunity to enhance effectiveness and consistency through the formalization of procedures and the development of structured systems.

The study also identified several challenges in the implementation of RCM practices. Among these, limited financial resources emerged as the most significant constraint, affecting the ability of establishments to invest in safety equipment, training, and maintenance. Other challenges, including operational pressures, staff turnover, and coordination issues, were present but not strongly

experienced. Similarly, barriers such as limited training and awareness of risk management concepts were noted but did not significantly hinder implementation. Overall, these findings indicate that the challenges faced by restaurants are manageable, suggesting that practical and cost-sensitive strategies are more appropriate and effective for these types of establishments.

Finally, in terms of strategies to improve Risk Control Management practices, respondents emphasized the importance of modernization through digital monitoring systems, increased management involvement, and strict adherence to regulatory standards. Additional strategies include regular staff training, active employee participation, improved

coordination, provision of incentives for compliance, and the development of contingency plans. These findings indicate that a comprehensive approach - combining technology, leadership, workforce engagement, and regulatory compliance - offers the most effective and practical means of strengthening risk control management practices in restaurants.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, several recommendations are proposed to enhance Risk Control Management (RCM) practices among restaurants in Legazpi City. Guided by the researcher-proposed strategy matrix,

these recommendations emphasize the complementary roles of internal management actions and external institutional support in achieving effective and sustainable implementation.

Restaurants are encouraged to adopt digital monitoring systems, such as applications, automated checklists, and digital reporting tools, to improve the accuracy and consistency of safety monitoring. Internally, managers and supervisors should oversee the use of these tools in daily operations, while external

technical support may be accessed through agencies such as the Department of Information and Communications Technology. The use of digital systems enables real-time hazard identification, improves documentation, and strengthens operational oversight.

Strengthening management involvement is equally essential. Restaurant owners and managers should take an active role in conducting safety inspections,

leading meetings, and assigning responsibilities to staff. This internal leadership function may be complemented by guidance from the Department of Labor and

Employment, particularly in relation to occupational safety and health standards. Strong leadership ensures

accountability and fosters a culture of safety within the organization.

To maintain operational integrity, restaurants must ensure continuous compliance with regulatory standards. Internally, this includes conducting regular audits, updating policies, and maintaining permits. Externally, coordination with the Department of Trade and

Industry, Department of Labor and Employment, and local government units is necessary to align practices with national and local regulations. Such collaboration helps reduce legal risks, improve workplace conditions, and enhance customer confidence.

In addition, restaurants should invest in training and capacity building to strengthen employee competence in risk management. Management should organize regular training sessions, onboarding programs, and refresher courses, while partnerships with institutions

such as the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority and Department of Labor and Employment can provide technical expertise and standardized training support. These initiatives contribute to a more skilled and proactive workforce.

Promoting employee participation is also vital in reinforcing RCM practices. Internally, restaurants should establish hazard reporting systems, form safety committees, and recognize employee contributions to safety. Externally, programs from the Department of

Labor and Employment can support awareness and implementation of occupational safety initiatives. Encouraging employee involvement enhances accountability and strengthens collective responsibility for workplace safety.

Restaurants should also prioritize the development of contingency and emergency plans.

Management must establish clear procedures, assign roles, and conduct drills, while coordination with

agencies such as the Bureau of Fire Protection and local disaster risk reduction offices ensures compliance with emergency preparedness

Given the financial constraints identified in the study, establishments are advised to strategically allocate internal resources for safety measures, including PPE, safety signage, and equipment maintenance. At the same time, external support should be maximized through programs of the Department of Trade and Industry,

Finally, seeking expert consultation is recommended to further strengthen risk management practices. Internally, restaurant owners should initiate safety audits and implement improvements, while

Overall, restaurants are encouraged to adopt a comprehensive and integrated approach to risk control management that clearly defines internal responsibilities while leveraging external support systems. The researcher-proposed strategy matrix serves as a practical guide to

standards. These measures help minimize disruptions and enable effective responses during unforeseen events.

including Go Negosyo for mentorship, as well as financing options such as the P3 (Pondo sa Pagbabago at Pag-aseño) Program and the RISE UP Loan Program. These initiatives provide accessible funding and support that enable small and medium enterprises to invest in safety improvements and operational upgrades.

externally, support from accredited safety practitioners and the Department of Labor and Employment can provide professional guidance and ensure alignment with best practices.

operationalize these recommendations by outlining specific actions, responsible stakeholders, and expected outcomes. Through this combined effort, restaurants can enhance safety, improve efficiency, and ensure long-term sustainability.

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