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## Business Interest and Engagements among Professionals amidst Pandemic

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### Abstract

**Aim:** Professionals are engaged and are somewhat laying interest in micro businesses. They are actually moved by their ability to engage in their work realm as well as on their ability to expound their interest on such things. With this, it is now a trend and a usual pattern that if a person has a certain job, then it is possible that he/she also explores the definite side of entrepreneur.

**Methodology:** In this study, the researcher used the qualitative- phenomenology. The researcher identified the status of the professionals on their business interest and engagements amidst pandemic and the reasons why they are dwelling aside from full time to part time micro businesses. The respondents chosen were aged 30 to 45 years old, active in their business for about two to three years, identified by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) or has business permit, and were willing to be involved in the study. These respondents' prospects are working as professionals, have finished any 4 to 5 years degree and had been in a private organization, while having their micro businesses aside from their current job.

**Results:** The study developed the identified work-life-professional framework for the benefit of all micro entrepreneur as well as other professionals with the same lineage of interest and engagements.

**Conclusion:** Developing the identified work-life-professional framework for the benefit of all micro entrepreneur as well as other professionals with the same lineage of interest and engagements is very important and useful for the respondents. It allows them to have an overview of their business interest and engagements amidst the pandemic.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneur, Business Interests and Engagements, Micro Business, Pandemic

### INTRODUCTION

Bartik et. al (2020) highlighted that in addition to its impact on public health, COVID-19 has caused a major economic shock. The study wrote that the pandemic had already caused massive dislocation among small businesses just several weeks after its onset and prior to the availability of government aid. Impacts of the COVID-19 also varied across industries, with retail, arts and entertainment, personal services, food services, and hospitality businesses all reporting employment declines exceeding 50 percent; in contrast, finance, professional services, and real estate related businesses experienced less disruption, as these industries were better able to move to remote production.

On the other hand, Werr (2015) stated that entrepreneurship as an institution is founded on ideals such as cultural individualism and change. Cultural individualism encourages individuals who are considered as autonomous and uncontrolled to engage in creative and innovative activities. This autonomy of the free-willed entrepreneur reflected in cultural individualism is regarded as a necessary social condition for entrepreneurship to emerge. Change is then seen as the consequence of opportunity seeking entrepreneurs. Through processes of creative destruction entrepreneurs engage in rule-breaking behavior, and demonstrate their capacity to control the external world. The entrepreneurial organization or society is one in which change becomes the norm and stability the exception. Professionalism, on the other hand, is something quite different. This emphasizes that a key distinguishing feature of professional work lies in its reliance on academic knowledge that formalizes and standardizes the skills on which professional work proceeds. Professionalization can be conceived as a process of cognitive standardization. This permits a measure of uniformity and homogeneity in the "production of producers". Professionalism therefore is a method of how exclusive knowledge is controlled by the professional occupation through mechanisms of recruitment,

460



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training, socialization, and peer monitoring. While professional work involves fresh judgment and discretion, it is not typically a rule-breaking entrepreneurial practice.”

Professionals are engaged and are somewhat laying interest in micro businesses. They are actually moved by their ability to engage in their work realm as well as on their ability to expound their interest on such things. With this, it is now a trend and a usual pattern that if one has a certain job, then it is possible that he/she also explores the definite side of entrepreneur. With this, the researcher would like to identify the status of the professionals on their business interest and engagements amidst pandemic and the reasons why they are dwelling aside from full time to part time micro businesses and in the end develop the identified work-life-professional framework for the benefit of all micro entrepreneur as well as other professionals with the same lineage of interest and engagements.

### Objectives

This study aimed to identify the business interest among professionals amidst pandemic. Thereby, the research objectives are as follows:

1. Determine the business engagements among professional workers amidst pandemic.
2. Determine the motivating factors on dwelling on other businesses amidst pandemic.
3. Propose a business motivation framework amidst pandemic pertaining to work-life professional balance

### Expected Output

The output of the study is the development of the work-life balance professional framework as to assist professional workers amidst pandemic.

### Methodology

#### Research Design

In this study, the researcher used the qualitative- phenomenology. Phenomenology is concerned with the study of human perception of events or phenomena from the actual happenings in the real world. It is reliving the experiences of the participants involved in the study and going deeper into their thoughts, identifying the essence of the experience as described by the participants through lengthy discussions (Campbell, 2011; Creswell, 2007).

The purpose of the Interpretative Phenomenological Deductive Approach is to capture the essence of an experience through the lens of those living it and present it from the more specific to a more general approach where the lens of the activities or phenomenon is highlighted (Creswell, 2012; van Manen, 2014). Phenomenological research attempts to describe meaning of an experience pre reflectively rather than through forming generalizations (Salendab & Akmad, 2023; Sanchez, et al., 2022). Furthermore, phenomenological research offers insight into why people do what they do through the study of the life-world (Muñoz & Sanchez, 2023).

#### Instrument

The study made use of the small group discussions (SGD) interview tool valiated by experts in the field.

#### Participants

The data gathered came from the small group discussions (SGD), where each set was composed of the individuals in a section to minimize the shyness among the participants using online tools. The respondents chosen as those aged 30 to 45 years old, active in their business for about two to three years and are identified by the DTI or has business permit and were willing to be involved in the study. These respondents' prospects are working as professionals, have finished any 4 to 5 years degree and had been in a private organization, while having their micro businesses aside from their current job. These respondents were involved in the study and they were asked on the motivating factors that they actually dwell themselves amidst pandemic on micro businesses aside from their current full time job. They must be doing their businesses outside their working hours and weekends where they cannot actually interfere with their current full-time jobs.

#### Data Analysis

The data gathered were interpreted using themes using the Creswell's 7 steps of identifying the responses or might be done to validate the answers through the NVIVO and they would be given back to the respondents to see if the interpreted data are the same with the data being identified by the respondents. From the themes of the data the table or the matrix would be highlighted. The data were saturated and highlighted. If the questions were



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not sufficient, the researcher might add questions and ask the respondents to answer the question based on their free will. The main output of this study is the business motivation framework pertaining to work-life professional balance framework amidst pandemic and use this to assist the varieties of professionals in private organizations where they actually have more than one job and these are the small or micro businesses. These 10 respondents were chosen via the purposive sampling design of the study and the set requirements given.

### Ethical Considerations

Prior to the data gathering, they were asked to become part of the study through an ethical consent form, to protect the rights of the respondents and the researcher. They were asked to be honest with their answers. The SGD was done in a familiar place such as a Google, messenger, Zoom to minimize fear and other negative tensions which might arise.

### Findings and Discussion

#### Pandemic increases business opportunities.

From the study it was quite rewarding to see that most of the participants are very much positive with what they have as a professional and as a business minded individual. They thank everyone who had given this idea. They agree that the more businesses one has, the more tiring they are at the end of the day, but they felt more fulfilled and satisfied since they are waiting for the right moment to provide foods and basic needs for their family members. In a nutshell, they are happy with what they are currently engaged in and they love the income they are receiving. They are multi taskers and loved the idea of rapid development. The PWC (2021) explained this that "Millennials tend to be uncomfortable with rigid corporate structures and turned off by information silos. They expect rapid progression, a varied and interesting career and constant feedback. In other words, millennials want a management style and corporate culture that is markedly different from anything that has gone before – one that meets their needs." This is so true with these participants since they love what they are doing because they get the most out of it and they get their desired results. Additionally, "It's clear that millennials will be a powerful generation of workers and that those with the right skills will be in high demand. They may be able to command not only creative reward packages by today's standards, but also influence the way they work and where and how they operate in the workplace. They may also represent one of the biggest challenges that many organizations will face." Since it is pandemic the participants had seen this as an opportunity and they started loving the idea of their work, since they are multi taskers.

Some of the responses of the participants are as follows:

*"I worked as a full time as a professional worker and I am happy with my current status but then I have to commit with a few business so I can add more income to my family."*

*"I also work as a full time professional in the municipal but I have extra time for my microbusiness, I do buy and sell to add more income too."*

*"I know as a professional that my time is limited but I am working 8 to 5 and the rest hours are spent on online businesses like selling clothes."*

*The responses surely gave meaning to the happiness they are experiencing as with the business ventures they have as well as their professional entanglement.*

*"I am happy as a professional but sometimes I do enjoy working part time as a business woman."*

*"I am happy with my profession but most of the times I want to add more income to our family so we can buy some extra things."*

*"Yes also, I am happy and contented but I like to be more active on my income generation."*

*"Most specifically, I am happy, practicality wise, I need to have more than just one job."*

*"I know that I am happy with being a professional but because it is pandemic so I need to add more income to us so we can survive, I have many salary loans."*

*"I know you can relate that one major job is not enough now adays so I will be more happy if I have extra income coming from other jobs"*

*"Yes, I am happy with what I have right now, but because of the pandemic, we need to add more businesses so we can survive."*





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Generally they engaged themselves with the current business they have since they would like to support more of their families basic needs and since they are happy with what they are earning from the businesses. They are also exploring most of the online businesses and essential needs since it is pandemic.

### Essential Products are in-demand

Most of the businesses that the current participants engaged in are in essentials like clothing, foods and bags, some engaged in accessories and some are still on buy and sell, like kitchenware and the likes. Most of the times they are thinking to add more micro businesses with their current status like adding more water station refillers and the likes. Since it is pandemic essential products are in demand and are bought. They utilized online platforms so they can meet more users, consumers and clients. They are using this as to engage in more business ideas and to add more specific time and customers which may not meddle with their current status as professionals. Parson and Vansic (2020) highlighted that "A global crisis struck the world in the shape of the COVID-19 pandemic at the beginning of 2020. As a result, supermarkets have experienced panic buying behaviors, empty store shelves, out of stocks, and a large increase in online sales. Supermarkets, producers, marketers, and businesses have had to adapt to consumers' changed buying behavior in food consumption. The result suggests that the buying behavior in regard to price sensitivity and perceived quality of meat, fruits, and vegetables has changed during the COVID-19 pandemic." Therefore since there was a changed in this, there is more development and opportunity to this, since the essentials are bought online and might increase more income from their business owners, so they engage and embrace these ideas to earn more. Osborne (2017) stated that "the survival of corporate industries is dependent on maximizing profits from existing capabilities, while recognizing and adjusting to the fact that what may work today may not necessarily work in the future (Kortmann, Gelhard, Zimmermann, & Piller, 2014). To make or maintain their companies' profitability, leaders of companies must work hard to engage employees (Kortmann et al., 2014). However, leaders may sometimes struggle to adapt their organization in response to change if they limit their focus to existing products and processes (Hill & Birkinshaw, 2012). Understanding how to manage the balance between employee relations, adopting innovation, and maximizing short-term profits is critical to business leaders ensuring a viable future for their corporations (Hill & Birkinshaw, 2012). The use of advanced technologies, skilled labor, best practices, and education has helped to increase the efficiencies in many major organizations and firms. However, disengaged employees who have lowered productivity since the 2008 financial meltdown have affected the financial performances of many U.S. organizations (Purcell, 2014). The longevity of an organization is affected by employee engagement, which is a factor on the financial performance of the organization (Bersin, 2014). In contrast, improved employee productivity had a positive effect on organizational financial performance. Organizational productivity is determined by employees' efforts and engagement (Musgrove, Ellinger, & Ellinger, 2014).

The following statements are the responses of the participants regarding the essential businesses they engaged in.

*"I do have my restaurant though I am a professional individual but I have to make this, aside from this is my hobby, cooking."*

*"Most of my extra time are used for selling things online."*

*"I have my ukay ukay online."*

*"I cook most of my free time and sell the idea and the viand to my kumares and kumpares."*

*"I do online shows and live selling of jewelries and some accessories."*

*"My online business is quite good, the surpluses of the kitchen wares from other countries."*

*"I enjoy doing my buy and sell and sell it online, mostly bags and accessories."*

*"I have my own business online and have my water station even though I am a full time employee."*

*"I really do enjoy the online selling and cooking of foods and I sell them."*

*"I do online dealings with the online clothes and dresses which I sell."*

Technically, most of them are into foods and clothing, some engaged in other essentials like water refilling and accessories which are surprisingly in demand during pandemic. They agreed that these are all part of not letting depression comes in, as people buy more, they tend to be entertained more, they added. The consumer behavior is also changing, since it is pandemic and this was seen on the drastic change from face to face to engaging in online markets.



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### Pandemic Innovates Professional Perspectives

The pandemic had given these participants more reasons to live, more reasons to be motivated. Surely they love what they are doing, like what they need to do as a professional employed individual in their own organization but most of the times, they love their earnings and income from these businesses. Since the pandemic offered varieties of businesses opportunities so they had grabbed the idea, and since this idea is more on the essential needs of the people, they are trending. Additionally they engaged themselves in the online platform which is the real demand on the consumer behavior trends. Professionals strive for challenging assignments providing opportunities to learn. Challenging tasks are generally presented as more important for motivation and retention of personnel than financial and other kinds of rewards. This provides a fertile ground for continuous learning and innovation and individual entrepreneurial initiatives. The organizational and commercial exploitation of these opportunities generated by individual and local experiments is, however, challenged by several countervailing forces. One of these is professionals' preference for autonomy. Directing and coordinating professionals during entrepreneurial ventures is considered a special challenge and has been described as the 'herding cats' (e.g., Løwendahl 2005) or 'aligning stars' (Lorsch & Tierney 2002) problem. Professionals cherish their autonomy dearly and resist efforts to curtail it through managerial interventions telling them, for example, what services to deliver and in what way. Such a focus on the sovereignty of the individual expert and thus the exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities. In individualistic expert cultures, sharing as well as seeking knowledge outside of one's professional domain may easily be perceived as an illegitimate invasion of other experts' domains or the admittance of professional weakness. Finally, the often claimed primary loyalty of professionals to a profession or knowledge domain rather than a specific employing organization (Løwendahl, 2005) creates challenges in relation to retention, since professional's are highly mobile, and the firm's commercial orientation. Professionals need to be given challenging work to maintain their motivation, but this work generally has to be balanced with less stimulating (but economically more rewarding) work which exploits existing competencies.

These are the concrete samples of the answers of the participants and they agreed that pandemic even though it is quite depressing, but it has offered avenues of business learning and opportunities which gladly they engaged for themselves. They are also happy with what they receive, what they have and are willing to maintain these businesses as with their professionalism, even though they are employed, they will be suing their spare time to do all these, and they are motivated because of their families.

*"Yes, the pandemic has offered lots of financial strains to professional individuals like us. I do not like to talk about my day job, and how I need to go through salary loans to help my family achieve their daily needs, but nevertheless, since you ask, I know that this pandemic gives us more opportunities to spread our knowledge on business online selling and other micro businesses, so technically, the pandemic had given my family opportunity to become equipped with the business skills and embrace new idea on what to sell with the current pandemic status."*

*"It is quite hard to accept at first that I need to go and find businesses to support my family, since my day job has been quite not good, since I do have salary loans and since my spouse has been terminated from the work, so I need to fix the financial strains of the pandemic through another businesses, online, mostly."*

*"I know that this pandemic had given us more problems in terms of the financial status, so I need to go through with another businesses since I cannot do it all alone and since you know the status of my children, they need financial assistance for the medical conditions which they have."*

*"Thinking of the pandemic made me chills most of the times, it gives me creep since the pandemic has laid off so many people in terms of their day job, I for example, even though I finished my degree but most of my life I had been searching for the right job for me, and I think this business made me really color my passion. I love my business and hope it can sustain more our financial needs, even it is quite difficult since it is pandemic, but we are surviving."*

*"(sighing) this pandemic brought us more financial pain in the ass, really (laughing) and having more businesses makes it more worthwhile. I cant thank enough my friend for having this idea and im loving the income as much as financial struggle is concern."*

*"I do not know what I will not do, if I am not here with my profession and my business, they are really working hand in hand."*

*"Sometime, when we need a helping hand, it is our hand that we need to lend, see what I mean? We need to focus more on what we can do more and what we can offer, extend more assistance to yourself and explore all your capabilities. I love having this multitasking since I am earning more, however at the end of the day it is quite tiring but when I see my children and they eat three times a day or so having merienda, I thank God for the whole tiring day."*



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*"I cant thank enough my parents for giving us this idea on the businesses, they gave the idea and we just made it thru online! It is successful!"*

*"I love our businesses, it is so encouraging, more satisfying and more fulfilling as a parent. I had given more to my children than I just work as a professional."*

*"No words can truly express my gratitude for who ever had discovered online selling."*

Based on the discussions above the participants revealed a particular phenomenon which may interest all professionals. Based on the results they are happy to venture both in their professional and business ventures which offer most of their physical and basic needs as much as their family' needs as well as their professional inclinations. This output which is known as work-life balance framework engages everyone to continue with their ventures and become essential in their own chosen field. As Ulla et. al (2020) indicated that Keeping the workforce happy is a major issue faced by today's employers. The big challenge is to find what job-related factors can lead to happiness; the bigger challenge is to identify the sources that lead to happiness. Based on the research of (Joshnloo & Jarden, 2016) which studied hedonism as a major cause of happiness when moderated by individualism. Hence, theorized that, work life balance, career development, which subsequently effects happiness. Moreover, individualistic societies are proven to be more hedonistic (tend to value pleasure) and are more closely linked with happiness as compared to collectivist societies. Results indicate that Individualism plays a significant positive role on happiness, as well as in directly.

Likewise, Mathew (2021) revealed that Work-life balance has always been concerned with those interested in the quality of working life and its relation to broader quality of life. The Teachers Service Commission should formulate statutory policies that promote teachers' work life balance. Besides the various types of leave that teacher are entitled to, the TSC should consider providing guidelines on how the already overworked teacher can find time to live his or her personal life better. Professionals need to make deliberate effort to sensitize teachers to live their personal life well. They should abandon the attitude that teachers are free to choose how to live their personal life. This could involve, occasionally, having sessions where professionals in matters work life balance talk to teachers.

Another important element for an employee's well-being is work life balance. Lately, the discourse on work-life balance has established the need for improvement in the working conditions. In answer to these debates, research has been conducted which explains the creation and evaluation of a succinct measure of work-life balance based on people's observable behaviors. In addition, the correlation between work-life balance and retention habits is greater than the connection between job satisfaction and harmony (Brough et al., 2014).

Along with these elements, learning is also a key player of an employee's well-being and is important for progressing one's career forward. Although the above-mentioned elements of happiness, career development, work life balance and learning have been identified as essentials in a work place; there is yet to be research that brings them together on the same platform to be studied relatively in the context of one another.

## Conclusion

To sum it up, the phenomenon which exist with these kinds of participants in this study are as follows:

1. People will be motivated amidst pandemic because of their loved ones
2. People will engage with different tasks because of their generation and their nature
3. People will adapt and be adept with what they have and will multitasks because of the survival needs

## Recommendations

In the light of the study the following are recommended:

1. Invite more respondents to make the study more diverse.
2. Aside from the phenomenology, trying other research design might be beneficial to the study
3. Development of other output might be done by collecting additional variables in the same line of study.





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# BUSINESS MOTIVATED FRAMEWORK

for business minded persons

## BRING IT ON!

Starting a business requires sacrifices so be motivated and find your own strength, be it your family, your income or any other motivation and interest which may give you spark and propel you to do it!



## ESSENTIAL FIRST

try to study the needs of the consumers and be the best buyer and seller which you can be. Try to be minimalizt and practical also to find the consumers needs and go engage!

## LOVE PEOPLE LOVE YOUR WORK

loving people meaning looking at what they can find amidst pandemic, loving your work means you need to have passion for the business as well as looking for what the people really wants, mostly it is ONLINE nowadays!



## BE INTERESTED ALWAYS AND ENGAGE NEW TRENDS

engaging in new trends may give you more skills and edge over other as you can acheive more customers with great avenues!

BE MOTIVATED BE INSPIRED!  
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