

ANALYSIS OF COFFEE SHOP OPERATIONS USING PORTER'S FIVE COMPETITIVE FORCES MODEL

ABEGAIL C. BACUNGAN

Pangasinan State University – Alaminos City Campus,
Alaminos City, Pangasinan

CRESTINE A. DE CASTRO

Pangasinan State University – Alaminos City Campus,
Alaminos City, Pangasinan

JERA MAY T. TABOR

Pangasinan State University – Alaminos City Campus,
Alaminos City, Pangasinan

GIAN ANDREW G. DOMINGO

Pangasinan State University – Alaminos City Campus,
Alaminos City, Pangasinan

POTENCIANO D. CONTE, JR.

Associate Prof. V, Pangasinan State University – Alaminos City
Campus, Alaminos City, Pangasinan
pconte@psu.edu.ph

ANA ROSE TUGAHAN

Pangasinan State University – Alaminos City Campus,
Alaminos City, Pangasinan

POTENCIANO D. CONTE, JR.

Associate Prof. V, Pangasinan State University – Alaminos City Campus, Alaminos City, Pangasinan
pconte@psu.edu.ph

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the competitive forces affecting the operations and performance of independent coffee shops in Alaminos City and Sual, Pangasinan, using Porter's Five Competitive Forces Model. While prior studies have applied this framework in large urban markets, there remains limited empirical evidence on how these forces influence smaller, provincial-based coffee enterprises. The study addresses this gap by investigating owners' and managers' perceptions of competitive rivalry, threat of substitutes, threat of new entrants, and the bargaining power of suppliers and customers, and determining how these forces relate to business performance.

A descriptive–correlational research design was employed, with data gathered through a validated survey questionnaire administered to 22 purposively selected independent coffee shop respondents in the study area. Spearman's Rho Correlation was used to measure associations between competitive forces and business practices. Ethical standards were observed by securing informed consent, ensuring voluntary participation, and maintaining confidentiality of responses.

Findings revealed strong competitive rivalry driven by the increasing number of cafés and evolving café culture. The bargaining power of customers and threat of substitutes were moderately high, while supplier power exerted a moderate influence on pricing and sourcing. Independent shops employed various strategic responses such as service differentiation, ambiance creation, customer engagement, value-added amenities, and digital marketing. A significant positive correlation was found between competitive forces and business performance, indicating that

strategic awareness and adaptive practices strengthen operational resilience and customer retention. The study recommends enhancing product uniqueness, service quality, supplier diversification, and digital engagement to sustain competitiveness and long-term viability.

Keywords: Porter's Five Forces, independent coffee shops, competitive rivalry, Spearman's Rho, business practices

INTRODUCTION

The coffee shop industry has experienced steady growth in the Philippines, particularly among micro and small enterprises operating in provincial cities and municipalities. In areas such as Alaminos City and Sual, Pangasinan, independently owned coffee shops have emerged as popular social and commercial spaces, contributing to local employment, tourism, and entrepreneurship. Despite this growth, these businesses operate in an increasingly competitive environment characterized by frequent new entrants, substitute products, and changing consumer preferences.

Independent coffee shops often face challenges that differ from those encountered by large franchised chains. Limited capital, dependence on local suppliers, and high customer price sensitivity can significantly influence operational decisions and long-term sustainability. Understanding the competitive forces that shape this environment is therefore essential for business owners and stakeholders seeking to improve strategic planning and operational performance.

Michael E. Porter's Five Competitive Forces Model provides a systematic framework for analyzing industry competition by examining competitive rivalry, threat of new entrants, threat of substitute products, bargaining power of suppliers, and bargaining power of customers. While previous studies have applied this model to large urban markets and franchised businesses, limited research has focused on its application to independent coffee shops in smaller localities such as Alaminos City and Sual.

This study aims to analyze the competitive environment and business practices of independent coffee shops in Alaminos City and Sual using Porter's Five Competitive Forces Model. Specifically, it examines the perceived level of competition, the bargaining power of suppliers and customers, the level of business practices employed by coffee shops, and the relationship between competition and business practices.

METHODS

The study employed a descriptive–correlational research design anchored on Michael E. Porter's Five Competitive Forces Model. This design was used to describe the competitive environment of independent coffee shops and to determine the relationship between perceived competition and business practices. The respondents were owners or managers of independent (non-franchised) coffee shops operating in Alaminos City and Sual, Pangasinan. Purposive sampling was utilized to ensure that respondents were directly involved in business decision-making. A total of 22 coffee shops participated in the study.

Data were collected using a researcher-made questionnaire based on Porter's Five Competitive Forces Model. The questionnaire consisted of the following sections:

- Business profile of coffee shops
 - Perceived level of competition (business rivals, product substitutes, new entrants)
 - Bargaining power of suppliers and customers
 - Level of business practices (pricing scheme, promotions and discounts, quality service)
- Responses were measured using a 7-point Likert scale.

The questionnaire underwent content validation by three experts: a coffee shop manager, a BSBA faculty member, and a campus statistician. The instrument obtained a composite validity rating of 4.57, indicating very high validity and suitability for data collection. Questionnaires were personally distributed to the respondents after securing consent. Respondents were informed of the purpose of the study and assured of confidentiality. Completed questionnaires were retrieved for analysis. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, and mode were used to analyze the profile, perceived competition, bargaining power, and business practices. To determine the relationship between perceived competition and business practices, Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient was employed, with the level of significance set at $p < 0.05$.

RESULTS

This section presents the findings of the study based on the data gathered from 22 independent coffee shops operating in Alaminos City and Sual, Pangasinan. The results are organized according to the research objectives, covering the business profile of coffee shops, the perceived level of competition, the bargaining power of suppliers and customers, the level of business practices, and the relationship between perceived competition and business practices.

Business Profile of Independent Coffee Shops

The results indicate that most independent coffee shops included in the study are relatively young enterprises. A large proportion of the respondents reported operating their businesses for only a few years, reflecting the recent growth of coffee shop establishments in Alaminos City and Sual. The nature of ownership across all respondents was entirely independent or non-franchised, confirming that the study focused solely on locally owned businesses.

In terms of workforce size, the majority of coffee shops employed a small number of workers, consistent with their classification as micro or small enterprises. Most establishments operated with a limited staff complement, typically composed of baristas and service personnel who often performed multiple roles within the shop.

Regarding physical characteristics, the results show that many coffee shops operated within relatively small floor areas and maintained modest seating capacities. Most establishments were designed to accommodate a limited number of customers at a time, reflecting space constraints and the operational scale of independent cafés. Seating arrangements were generally aligned with casual dining and social interaction rather than high-volume customer turnover.

The findings also reveal that the majority of coffee shops possessed essential coffee shop equipment. Commonly reported equipment included espresso machines, blenders, refrigerators,

freezers, coffee grinders, and electric kettles. However, fewer establishments reported the use of water filtration systems and point-of-sale (POS) systems, indicating variations in the adoption of specialized or digital tools.

In terms of financial profile, most coffee shops reported relatively modest initial capital investments. A large proportion of respondents indicated startup capital within the lower capital brackets, while fewer shops reported higher levels of initial investment. Average monthly sales were also generally reported within low to moderate ranges, reflecting the scale and maturity level of many of the businesses.

PERCEIVED LEVEL OF COMPETITION

Competitive Rivalry

The results show that competitive rivalry among independent coffee shops in Alaminos City and Sual is perceived as strong across several indicators. A large number of respondents reported a high presence of nearby competing coffee shops within their immediate area of operation. Many respondents also indicated that customers frequently patronize different coffee shops, reflecting customer mobility within the local market.

Similarity in products and services among coffee shops was also rated at a high level. Respondents reported that menu offerings, pricing structures, and general service formats were largely comparable across competing establishments. The influence of competitors' pricing strategies on their own pricing decisions was likewise reported as strong, indicating sensitivity to price changes within the local market.

The distribution of responses suggests that competition among existing coffee shops is consistently present and actively experienced by business owners and managers.

Threat of Substitute Products

The findings related to substitute products indicate that respondents are aware of alternative beverage options available to customers. These substitutes include milk tea, soft drinks, ready-to-drink beverages, and other non-coffee products.

Results show that many coffee shop owners regularly monitor customer preferences for substitute products. However, the level of adjustment made in response to these substitutes varies among establishments. Some respondents reported frequent consideration of substitutes when planning menus or promotions, while others indicated only occasional adjustments.

The perceived impact of substitute products on sales and customer demand was not uniform across all respondents. The distribution of responses reflects differences in how individual coffee shops experience competition from non-coffee alternatives.

Threat of New Entrants

The results regarding new coffee shop entrants indicate that respondents generally perceive the entry of new cafés into the market as a moderate competitive factor. Many respondents reported that opening a coffee shop in the area is neither extremely easy nor extremely difficult.

Respondents acknowledged that newly opened coffee shops tend to attract customer interest, particularly during their initial months of operation. However, the reported effect of new entrants on the regular customer base of existing coffee shops varied. Some respondents experienced noticeable changes in customer traffic, while others reported minimal impact.

The pressure to improve or innovate due to the presence of new entrants was rated differently across respondents, reflecting varied competitive experiences and market positions among coffee shops.

BARGAINING POWER OF SUPPLIERS AND CUSTOMERS

Bargaining Power of Suppliers

The results indicate that the bargaining power of suppliers is perceived as moderate by most respondents. Many coffee shops rely on a limited number of suppliers for essential raw materials such as coffee beans, dairy products, and other ingredients.

Respondents reported limited ability to negotiate prices with suppliers, particularly when dealing with specialized or branded products. Price increases and supply availability were identified as factors that influence operating costs. However, some respondents indicated the use of alternative suppliers or adjustments in purchasing practices to manage supply conditions. The distribution of responses suggests that suppliers exert noticeable but not overwhelming influence on coffee shop operations.

Bargaining Power of Customers

The findings show that customers exert a moderate to high level of bargaining power over independent coffee shops. Many respondents reported that customers are highly sensitive to price, product quality, service, and ambiance.

The availability of multiple coffee shop options within close proximity was identified as a factor contributing to customer choice. Respondents indicated that customers can easily switch between coffee shops based on preferences and experiences. Online reviews and social media presence were also reported as factors influencing customer decisions. The results demonstrate that customer expectations and preferences play a significant role in shaping business operations across most establishments.

Level of Business Practices

The results indicate that independent coffee shops frequently practice several operational strategies to achieve business goals. In terms of pricing schemes, many respondents reported regularly setting prices that are competitive and aligned with market conditions. Pricing decisions were often adjusted in response to customer demand and competitor pricing. Regarding promotions and discounts, the findings show that coffee shops implement promotional activities selectively. Discounts, bundled offers, and special promotions were commonly used during peak seasons, special events, or periods of low sales.

In terms of quality service, the majority of respondents reported consistently prioritizing customer service. Practices such as staff courtesy, order accuracy, cleanliness, and responsiveness to customer feedback were frequently applied. The overall distribution of responses indicates that most coffee shops actively implement business practices aimed at maintaining competitiveness and customer satisfaction.

Relationship Between Perceived Competition and Business Practices

Spearman's Rho correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between the perceived level of competition and the level of business practices among independent coffee shops.

The results show a significant positive relationship between perceived competition and business practices at the 0.05 level of significance. Higher levels of perceived competition were associated with higher levels of practice in pricing schemes, promotions and discounts, and quality service.

The correlation coefficients indicate a strong and consistent association between competitive pressures and the extent to which coffee shops implement operational strategies.

Implications for Business Practice and Research

The findings of this study have important implications for independent coffee shop owners and managers. Understanding the intensity of competitive forces can assist business owners in developing strategies that are responsive to market conditions. The observed relationship between competition and business practices highlights the importance of adaptability and continuous improvement in sustaining operations.

For policymakers and local business support institutions, the results emphasize the need for programs that support small coffee shop enterprises through training, access to suppliers, and business development initiatives.

In terms of academic research, the study contributes to the limited body of literature applying Porter's Five Forces Model to small-scale, independent businesses in provincial contexts. The findings demonstrate the model's applicability beyond large corporations and franchised enterprises.

Final Summary and Conclusion

In summary, the study demonstrated that independent coffee shops in Alaminos City and Sual operate within a competitive environment shaped by strong rivalry, customer influence, and moderate supplier and entrant pressures. These competitive forces are closely associated with the level of business practices adopted by coffee shop operators. By applying Porter's Five Competitive Forces Model, the study provided a systematic understanding of the challenges and responses of independent coffee shops. The findings highlight the importance of strategic awareness, customer-centered practices, and operational flexibility in maintaining competitiveness within the local coffee shop industry.

DECLARATION ON THE USE OF AI TOOLS

In conducting this research investigation, no artificial intelligence (AI) techniques, technologies, or applications were utilized. Traditional research methods were used to collect, analyze, and interpret all of the data. These approaches included manual data collecting through questionnaires, sensory evaluation by human respondents, and statistical analysis utilizing fundamental techniques including Spearman Rho Correlation and simple percentage.

All of the study's conclusions, findings, and suggestions are based only on the human participants' assessments and answers as well as the researchers' manual interpretation. This statement reaffirms the research process's human-centeredness and honesty.

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