

Franchising: A Response to Employment Issues in Santa Cruz, Laguna

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Abstract- The study aimed to determine if franchising business can alleviate the employment issues in Santa Cruz, Laguna. It was descriptive-correlational in design and involved the food and beverages franchising business in Santa Cruz, Laguna. Specifically, the researchers sought to answer the following objectives: (1) To determine the business profile of the franchise in terms of number of years in operation, firm size in terms of number of employees, and annual income, (2) To measure the extent of the following franchising benefits namely employment opportunities, programs and training, and traditional benefits in addressing employment issues namely unemployment, underemployment, and contractualization, (3) To determine if there is a significant relationship between the franchises' business profile and employment issues in Santa Cruz, Laguna. The respondents were divided into two (2) groups: (1) food and beverages franchisees and (2) employees therein, where separate questionnaires were given. Corresponding to a total of 17 franchisees and 66 employees in Santa Cruz, Laguna. For franchisees, the total population sampling was utilized given that the population size was relatively small. Meanwhile, simple random sampling was used for employees of franchise businesses. The data collection was done by distributing modified and adapted questionnaires to the respondents. Frequency, percentage, weighted mean, standard deviation and chi-squared test were used to statistically treat the data. Majority of the franchises operate between 1 to 3 years, with 1 to 9 total number of employees, and an annual income of less than P250,000. Franchising benefits such as employment opportunities, programs and training, and traditional benefits has a large extent in

addressing unemployment, underemployment, and contractualization issues in Santa Cruz, Laguna. Lastly, the statistical results revealed the significant correlation between franchising and employment issues considering the presence of franchising benefits leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

Indexed Terms- Franchising, Employment Issues, Number of Years in Operation, Firm size in terms of number of employees, Annual income, Employment Opportunities Programs and Training, Traditional Benefits, Unemployment, Underemployment, Contractualization

I. INTRODUCTION

Entering the corporate world and managing a company can be challenging especially if an individual has no prior experience and knowledge about it, leaving them with numerous options, for instance investing in a franchise. Franchising allows larger businesses to expand at the same time allowing entrepreneurs and small business owners to run their own operations with the assistance and support of a larger organization.

Internationally, franchised enterprises have become an integral component of the business landscape. It has benefited the national and local economy. In the Philippines, the franchising business remains an important variable in the country's growing economy. According to the Department of Trade and Industry (2022), in terms of economic dynamism, Santa Cruz, Laguna placed 36th. Economic dynamism is one of the criteria to rank which place in the Philippines grew exponentially in the last decade. One of its indicators

was employment generation wherein, it was one of the lowest percentages in all of the indicators in economic dynamism.

The increasing number of franchise businesses in the country suggests a direct effect on the employment rate yet, statistics with regards to employment issues show contradictory to the latter. Although the government had made it a priority, the remedies and solutions provided were insufficient to address the entire employment situation. Nevertheless, the job situation in Santa Cruz, Laguna, the province's capital, cannot be disputed. Hence, a study entitled Franchising: A Response to Employment Issues in Santa Cruz, Laguna, is conducted. This will reveal the significant relationship between the franchising and employment issues in Santa Cruz, Laguna. This research study is a way of contributing to the existing knowledge about franchising benefits and gaining deeper insight on its relevance to employment issues.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The structural models utilized in this study are the Keynesian Theory of Employment by John Maynard Keynes and the Classical Theory of Unemployment. Keynesian Theory of Employment suggests that as new franchise businesses open to operate, labor demand and output increases resulting in a contagious effect of job creation, increase of people's spending capacity and finally improving the aggregate demand of an economy through households, businesses, and government spending. Government intervention through public policies and regulation set forth to ensure the employees' safety, and confidence especially in wage related concerns also positively affects the employment growth. This highlights the role of the government in being the frontline in improving the economic performance of the economy. On the other hand, the Classical Theory of Unemployment where inflexible wage structure causes unemployment suggests that despite the rising number of franchised businesses and their demand for employees, unemployment remains unsolved. This may be due to the presence of voluntary unemployment where workers prefer to be unemployed rather than to settle in the unsatisfying wage rate provided by these businesses.

III. RESEARCH QUESTION OR RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS OR PROBLEM STATEMENT

It specifically tackled to determine the profile of the franchising business with regards to number of years in operation, firm size in terms of number of employees, and annual income. Moreso, it measured the extent of franchising benefits such as employment opportunities, programs and training, and traditional benefits in addressing employment opportunities namely unemployment, underemployment, and contractualization. In addition, it determined if there is a significant relationship between franchises' business profile and employment issues.

IV. DATA AND METHODS

Descriptive-correlational research design was utilized in this study to determine the extent of franchising benefits in addressing employment issues in Santa Cruz, Laguna. The data is gathered in numerical format, and analyzed in a quantitative way using statistical tools. A total of 83 respondents: 17 franchisees and 66 employees of food and beverages franchise businesses were chosen randomly to accomplish the questionnaires.

V. RESULTS

Table 1 shows the summary meal results on the extent of franchising benefits in addressing employment issues.

Table 1. Summary of the Mean Results

Unemployment	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Employment Opportunities	3.72	Large Extent
Programs and Training	3.78	Large Extent
Traditional Benefits	3.58	Large Extent

Legend: 4.20-5.00: Very Large Extent
 3.40-4.19: Large Extent
 2.60-3.39: Neutral
 1.80-2.59: Little Extent

1.00-1.799: Very Little Extent

The extent of employment opportunities in addressing unemployment issues yielded an overall mean of 3.72 and a standard deviation of 1.06 which was verbally interpreted as High. Respondents claimed to a Large Extent that they are having job security as they are employed in the franchise business. This is evidenced by a mean of 3.60 and a standard deviation of 1.12. Furthermore, they claimed to a Large Extent that their employment in the franchise business kept them away from emotional and mental stress of not having a job as evidenced by a mean of 3.67 and a standard deviation of 1.03. Lastly, they expressed that they are able to meet their basic needs through their employment in a franchise business, as evidenced by a mean of 3.90 and a standard deviation of 1.01.

These results were supported by the study of Wilson and Finch (2021) where they asserted that the relationship between mental health and unemployment is bi-directional. It means that good mental health is a key influence on employability, finding a job and remaining in that job. Unemployment causes stress, which ultimately has long-term physiological health effects and can have negative consequences for people's mental health, including depression, anxiety and lower self-esteem. Furthermore, unemployment has its effect and is linked to other external factors including poverty. Which was said to be multidimensional. This means that because human needs vary, poverty also has many aspects in different forms.

The extent of programs and training in addressing unemployment issues yielded an overall mean of 3.78 and a standard deviation of 1.02 which was verbally interpreted as High. Respondents claimed to a Large Extent that franchise businesses have a human development training program for entry-level employees to obtain the success of the business. This is evidenced by a mean of 4.00 and a standard deviation of 0.83. Moreso, respondents claimed that franchise businesses are implementing programs and training that makes them competent enough to secure their current job which was evidenced by a 3.58 mean and 1.21 standard deviation. At last, respondents expressed that the type and nature of training programs they are experiencing is clear to them and it secures

their job, with a mean of 3.76 and a standard deviation of 0.96.

The results show that programs and training which are provided by the franchise businesses are helpful in addressing unemployment issues. This is justified by the study of Shitemba et al. (2022) where the majority of the participants in their study believes that franchises have a human development training programme for entry-level. Since businessmen do not invest in a matter or project where they will not expect a return, it could be translated that the programs and training they provide to their employees can help them realize their full potential for franchise management and building brand reputation. Consequently, Subong-Espinosa et al. (2022) stated that the franchising businesses also make sure they are complying with the legal and business requirements imposed by the Philippine government – both the national and local entities. They must also comply with the regulations imposed by the franchisors such as programs and training of the employees to better perform their respective duties. To supplement the aforementioned claim, the article entitled Unregulated Franchising Environment by Nicolas and De Vega Law Offices discussed the need for disclosure of information from the franchisor regarding the training provided, number of persons, duration and training materials. Franchise businesses implement programs and training to make the employees competent enough and to eventually secure their current job. This, however, may also indicate that the employees may experience a lack of confidence in their current jobs for the reason that they are aware of the other employees in the competitive market that have a greater edge in terms of excellent educational background, higher social status, and powerful connections to name a few. Furthermore, due to the fact that some of the franchise businesses cannot provide up-to-date programs and training about latest developments and technologies in their respective field, some of the employees felt that the skills and knowledge they obtained in programs and training will be insufficient. The programs and training provided to employees will be a key factor in cultivating their full potential to be a labor participant. In a longer run, it is not only their competence and job security that will be addressed, but also the unemployment issues in the country in general.

The extent of traditional benefits in addressing unemployment issues yielded an overall mean of 3.58, a standard deviation of 1.20, and was verbally interpreted as High. Respondents claimed that the health insurance benefits that franchise businesses are offering are better than the other organization and will help them meet the needs in the future. This was evidenced by a mean of 3.62 and a standard deviation of 0.95. Additionally, respondents expressed that franchise businesses offer retirement savings programs like loan options wherein they can withdraw it when needed, as evidenced by a mean of 3.56 and a standard deviation of 1.18. Finally, respondents affirm that franchise businesses offer paid time off that covers the cost of holiday, sick days, and vacation periods that can earn loyalty and long-term employment from employees. This was evidenced by a mean of 3.56 and a standard deviation of 1.20.

These data is supported by Hisenrath and Cambon (2021) where it was discussed that other policies might be playing a role in driving labor market mismatch, most notably, federal jobless benefit programs in a group of franchises who was pushing bonuses and insurance benefits to employees who will be hired in their franchising business. It can therefore be concluded that insurance benefit is the most prevalent benefit that franchise businesses offer in relation to addressing unemployment. This is backed by the statement made by Augustinian Student Alliance (N.D.) which emphasized that the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) has already ordered some fast-food chains classified as franchise, namely, Jollibee and Burger King, to regulate full benefits of regular employment (e.g. 13th month pay, sick leave) to their prospective workers to allow the companies to utilize their skills and talents in the workforce and to address also the unemployment in the country. Ultimately, the franchise model was seen as a key avenue for stimulating economic growth and viable job creation strategy through providing different advantages like providing established brand recognition, lower failure rate, lower business risks, ongoing business support and training, easier access to funding, higher profits and most especially they offer benefits to the workers and make concessions to the local population.

Table 2. Summary of the Mean Results

Underemployment	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Employment Opportunities	3.79	Large Extent
Programs and Training	3.62	Large Extent
Traditional Benefits	3.57	Large Extent

Legend: 4.20-5.00: Very Large Extent
 3.40-4.19: Large Extent
 2.60-3.39: Neutral
 1.80-2.59: Little Extent
 1.00-1.799 : Very Little Extent

The extent of employment opportunities in addressing underemployment issues yielded an overall mean of 3.79, a standard deviation of 1.10, and is verbally interpreted as High. Respondents claimed that the employment they receive from a franchise business became an opportunity to utilize their skills, as evidenced by a mean of 3.97 and a standard deviation of 0.86. Additionally, respondents expressed that being an employee in the franchising industry provides them an opportunity that satisfies all the knowledge and experience that they have. This is evidenced by a 3.70 mean and 1.22 standard deviation. Lastly, respondents claimed that their employment has given them the opportunity to use the appropriate education they have finished, as supported by the results of 3.72 mean and 1.18 standard deviation.

The previously presented statistical result could be simply interpreted that franchise businesses have employment opportunities that could widely help address the problem regarding underemployment. This is supported by the study of Ghani et al. (2023), regarding the growth factor of Franchising and its related parties, which emphasized that previous literature has acknowledged franchising as a great way for businesses to expand into new areas and opportunities. The statement with the highest weighted mean about the utilization of skills among employees of franchise businesses could mean that despite the underemployment that has been happening, employees from franchising businesses can still utilize their skill set on their jobs. The presence of diversity in employees is inevitable. Rowe (2019) mentioned that overqualified employees can be overqualified by

virtue of being appropriately educated but can be over-skilled for their current job. On the other hand, the statements that rank second and last are about the usage of appropriate education and satisfaction of all knowledge and experiences, respectively. Although marked to a large extent, it can be interpreted that despite the employment opportunities being given to the employees from franchising businesses, underemployment will still be there as it is deemed a crisis for now. One literature by multi-unit franchisee (2019) entitled "Underemployment Here To Stay" supports this idea as they said that underemployment is more than a trend as it continues to affect how franchisees recruit. They specifically stated that underemployment is not just a trend but a crisis. It also observed that the education in the country still relies on old curriculum and they just started updating the curriculum this past few years.

The extent of programs and training in addressing underemployment issues yielded an overall mean of 3.62 and a standard deviation of 1.12 which was verbally interpreted as High. Respondents claimed that their employment in a franchise business gave them additional programs and training aligned to their skills, which was evidenced by a mean of 3.77 and a standard deviation of 1.05. Also, respondents affirm that their employment in a franchise business offers them the minimum level of income they deserve based on the training they have undergone, as evidenced by a mean of 3.70 and a standard deviation of 1.18. Finally, with a mean of 3.41 and a standard deviation of 1.12, respondents claimed that being employed in a franchise business offers programs to be competent enough and be qualified for their current position.

The preceding statistical result could be simply interpreted that having programs and training in place for employees of franchising businesses could widely help in addressing underemployment. According to Lutsili (2023), since underemployment is characterized as a condition where employees are working for lesser hours or their skills and education are not fully in use, having proper programs and training for employees could extend not only in the immediate result such as employees competence but also in their future endeavors that could totally alleviate underemployment. These could greatly assist each employee in enhancing their employability

thereby making them sufficiently qualified for the position they are assuming which allow them to be compensated fairly and benefit not just the job seekers themselves, but also the businesses such as franchise businesses and society as a whole (Lutsili, 2023).

The extent of traditional benefits in addressing underemployment issues yielded an overall mean of 3.57 and a standard deviation of 1.11 that was verbally interpreted as High. Respondents affirm that they might be given a chance to be promoted in a position that best suits their skills, which was evidenced by a mean of 3.73 and a standard deviation of 1.03. In addition, respondents claimed that they are receiving minimum/above minimum wage and a remuneration for overtime. This was evidenced by a 3.57 mean and a standard deviation of 1.11. Moreso, with a mean of 3.42 and a standard deviation of 1.18, respondents expressed that franchise business offers them a job that is related to their education and past work experience/s.

This indicates that franchise businesses, considering the traditional benefits they provide, are valuable in reducing the underemployment issues. Employers ensure that their employees will have career advancement by offering them job promotions that are consistent with their capabilities. This is probably because they are aware of the worsening underemployment issues such as skill mismatch that may affect not just the employees but their business as well. Moreover, most of the franchisees are hiring regular employees who are entitled to legal employment benefits which do not make them underemployed. However, it can be seen as contradictory to what Malgas et al. (2020) stated in their study as they concluded that employees being hired by retail chains, mostly franchise businesses, might enter in an employment contract that will make them classified as underemployed such as casual employees who are not guaranteed benefits such as a legal minimum wage, job security, allowances or terminal benefits. Lastly, most franchisees do not settle in employing workers whose educational background or past work experiences are not related to their current job. This is probably due to the growing job mismatch which could negatively affect the work performance, job satisfaction and the overall productivity of the franchise business.

Table 3. Summary of the Mean Results

Contractualization	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Employment Opportunities	3.61	Large Extent
Programs and Training	3.62	Large Extent
Traditional Benefits	3.66	Large Extent

Legend: 4.20-5.00: Very Large Extent
 3.40-4.19: Large Extent
 2.60-3.39: Neutral
 1.80-2.59: Little Extent
 1.00-1.799 : Very Little Extent

The extent of employment opportunities in addressing contractualization yielded an overall mean of 3.61 with a standard deviation of 1.12 which was verbally interpreted as High. Respondents claimed that franchise businesses take initiatives to provide employment opportunities, like converting contractual employees into regular employees. It was evidenced by a mean of 3.63 and a standard deviation of 1.02. Moreso, with a mean of 3.62 and a standard deviation of 1.18, respondents claimed that franchise business provides them an opportunity to diversify their skills. Lastly, respondents affirm that franchise business considers modifying or stipulating contract terms, as evidenced by a mean of 3.58 and a standard deviation of 1.16.

This indicates that franchise businesses offer extensive employment opportunities, particularly in addressing contractualization. This interpretation is further supported by Hizam-Hanafiah et al.'s (2023) emphasis on the franchise sector's role in creating employment opportunities. There is also a correspondence between the findings in the study of Loreto et al. (2020) implying that working in the franchise sector goes beyond just providing a job; it allows employees to expand their skill set. The positive perception expressed by the respondents indicating that franchise businesses provide significant employment opportunities which opens opportunities to diversify skills, is aligned with the researchers' broader conclusions. It was suggested that despite the challenges faced by contractual workers, they demonstrate adaptability and maintain a hopeful

outlook on their future prospects. Therefore, it is plausible to infer that these positive perceptions of employment opportunities within franchise businesses play a role in fostering the adaptability and optimism exhibited by the contractual workers as perceived in the study of Loreto et al. (2020).

The extent of programs and training in addressing contractualization yielded an overall mean of 3.62, standard deviation of 1.08, and was verbally interpreted as High. Respondents claimed that they are able to use what they learn in programs and training in their job in franchise business which earned the highest weighted mean of 3.73 and a standard deviation of 0.93. Moreso, they claimed that they are still employed in franchise business with the same employer that they worked with while on the programs and training, with a mean of 3.60 and a standard deviation of 1.26. Finally, the respondents claimed that the programs and training they have received while working in franchise business helped them advance in their career, which was evidenced by a mean score 3.52 and a standard deviation of 1.03.

Rashid et al. (2020) mentioned that training conducted by organizations for individual staff development helps increase the skills of a person for future responsibility. Being able to use the knowledge and skills learned from programs and training while performing the job represents that there is a positive return on investment in employee development. Moreso, this adds up to the level of motivation they have since the employees feel that they are well-equipped with skills and knowledge. To support this, Ozkeser (2019) states that training is an activity that not only invests in the qualifications of employees but also adds value to their motivation, benefits both for the business, the individual, as well as the intergroup and group relations. Wherein, the concepts of quality, efficiency and commitment must be adopted. Additionally, Clarity Voice (2023) believes that investment in training signifies employees that their growth and development matter to the business. Therefore, regular training prepares employees for their current roles and opens avenues for advancement. By developing their capabilities, they are better positioned for future promotions and leadership roles. Hence, knowledge and skills demonstrated from programs and training develops

certain opportunities which add up to their value that could potentially lead to contract renewals or extensions, and other career opportunities.

The extent of traditional benefits in addressing contractualization yielded an overall mean of 3.66 and a standard deviation of 1.07 which was verbally interpreted as High. Respondents claimed that being employed in a franchise business allows them to have flexible work arrangements and have another job. Also they added that the recognition they receive in a franchising business for their work accomplishment makes them more motivated at work. Both claims were evidenced by a mean of 0.85 and a standard deviation of 1.20. Respondents also claimed that the employment in a franchise business is renewable with a mean score of 3.50, and standard deviation of 1.11.

This is supported by Maids (2023) who mentioned that employees appreciate working for a company that gives them the freedom to choose their own schedule. This may be interpreted that employees who have other jobs, or those that are currently studying prefer the flexible work arrangement, offered by the non-regular employment. This is prevalent since having a single source of income may not be enough to cater their basic needs. Also, Filipinos, particularly the youth are now more oriented with their financial capacity and are determined to be self-sufficient. Bandwagon may also play a role, being able to juggle two responsibilities at once is both a trend, and necessity. Additionally, as perceived by the respondents, the recognition they receive at work adds value to the motivation they feel. Since naturally, humans are driven by emotion, their performances, benefits they are receiving, and motivation at work are directly related with each other. Noticeably, the statement regarding contract renewal in a franchising business as perceived by the respondents is marked to a large extent as to addressing contractualization. This could be interpreted that the term addressing does not translate to definitely getting rid of the arrangement of contractualization, removing its negative attribute, but rather accepting its idea by making its attribute better and acceptable for all parties, employees, government, and the businessmen alike.

Table 4. Test on the significant relationship between the business profile and the employment issues

IV	DV	DF	X ² VALUE	P VAL UE	REMARKS
Number of Years in Operation	Unemployment	9	22.79	0.025	Significant
	Underemployment	12	45.88	0.000	Significant
	Contractualization	9	28.53	0.003	Significant
Firm Size in terms of Number of Employees	Unemployment	3	9.56	0.032	Significant
	Underemployment	4	20.99	0.001	Significant
	Contractualization	3	6.43	0.129	Not Significant
Annual Income	Unemployment	9	13.58	0.203	Not Significant
	Underemployment	12	45.16	0.000	Significant
	Contractualization	9	28.93	0.002	Significant

Alpha Value = 0.05

Table 2 demonstrates the significant relationship between the franchises’ business profile and the employment issues as perceived by the businesses.

To begin with, the Number of Years in Operation was observed to have a significant relationship with the responses in Unemployment, Underemployment, and Contractualization as observed from the computed p-values of 0.025, 0.000, and 0.003 respectively, which were all lower than the significance alpha of 0.05.

The previously presented statistical result emphasized that the number of the years in operation has a significant relationship with all of the three employment issues. This confirms that SMEs employment contribution to employment creation is evident. Whereas, new and young businesses create opportunity rapidly particularly, among recent labor market entrants was highlighted, as confirmed by the

studies of Rotar et al. (2019), and of Hyatt (n.d.). This underscores that younger businesses are dynamic that older ones which may be because the former is more receptive to experiment than the latter who have an established way of management and operation.

Consequently, the Firm Size of the Business in terms of Number of Employees was also observed to have a significant relationship with Unemployment and Underemployment as evidenced by the p-values of 0.032 and 0.001 respectively. On the other hand, it was not observed to have a significant relationship with Contractualization as it has incurred a p-value of 0.129, greater than the 0.05 level of significance.

It can be therefore inferred that the firm size in terms of number of employees has a significant relationship with the Unemployment and Underemployment but not with Contractualization. During the surge of the pandemic where securing a job was harder, the connection between firm size and employment security was examined by the study of Lin et al. (2021). Whereas smaller firms had a surge of unemployment than large enterprises. The reason for the firm size advantage was greatly seen in terms of resources, where the impact will be minimized and they retained their workers at slightly higher rates.

To reiterate, firm size in terms of number of employees was not significantly related in Contractualization. Such result may be simply interpreted that the firm's workforce, associated with their capability to support expenses on them, will not suffice as the main driving force for the existence of Contractualization. It may seem that smaller firms often practice this hiring arrangement when in fact it is prevalent that even large companies practice them. This could be attributed to the gradual betterment of the workplace where inclusivity and opportunity is accessible for the greater aspiring labor participants including students among others. Also, it is noticed that contractual workers are often adaptable. They seamlessly integrate into organizations, leveraging their abilities and expertise to achieve successful results, whether it is a short-term project or a long-term commitment. In summary, these characteristics make job order/contractual employees invaluable assets to employers, fostering a productive and adaptable workforce, in line with the article on Labor Law PH (2022).

Lastly, the Annual Income of the franchising businesses were also observed to have a significant relationship with the Underemployment and Contractualization as suggested by the computed p-values of 0.000 and 0.002 respectively for the test of significance. Yet, the test on its relationship with Unemployment yielded a p-value of 0.203 which was greater than the significance alpha 0.05 was not observed to be significantly related. It can be interpreted that despite the increase in business' income, the unemployment was not observed to be significantly affected. Which may be because businesses tend to increase salaries of their current employees or promote them. By doing so, the number of employed individuals were not positively affected.

From the findings above, it can be concluded that at 0.05 significance level, the business profile of the respondents has a significant relationship with the responses on the employment issues. Thus, the null hypothesis "There is no significant relationship between the business profile and employment issues" is therefore rejected. This suggests that the alternative is to be accepted which furthermore implies the existence of a relationship.

CONCLUSION

In the light of the findings of this study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Majority of the businesses operate between 1 to 3 years, with 1 to 9 total number of employees, and an annual income of less than P250,000.
2. Employment opportunities, programs and training, and traditional benefits were attained to a large extent through franchising.
3. Null Hypothesis is rejected, hence there is a significant relationship between the franchises' business profile and employment issues in Santa Cruz, Laguna.

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