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EXPLORE SUPPLY CHAIN DYNAMICS AMONG SMALL RETAILERS IN AREA OF KUALA PILAH

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the challenges faced by small-town merchants when competing against larger stores, with a focus on understanding supply chain dynamics and the Triple Bottom Line Concept's implications for corporate success. By investigating issues such as cost, promotion, financing, and technology integration, the study aims to identify strategies to enhance the long-term viability and competitiveness of small merchants. Through qualitative research in Kuala Pilah, it explores the impact of big supermarkets on small retailers and seeks to uncover best practices for maintaining competitiveness. The findings aim to inform policy and support systems that foster the expansion and prosperity of small businesses, ultimately improving the social and economic standing of small town.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The study of the difficulties small-town merchants encounter offers insightful information about the retail industry's dynamics and the tactics small-town retailers use to outbid larger establishments. The goal of the study is to comprehend the challenges that small firms face in order to remain sustainable and grow. These challenges include restricted finance sources, the challenge of finding qualified workers, and the effects of hypermarket expansion in small towns. The study utilizes qualitative research methods, including in-depth interviews, case studies, and thematic analysis, to gather insights from small retailers, stakeholders, and experts. By exploring the experiences, viewpoints, and strategies of small retailers, the research aims to provide actionable recommendations and support mechanisms to help small businesses thrive in small towns.

Overall, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of the challenges, strategies, and future trends shaping the competitiveness and sustainability of small retailers in small towns. By addressing these aspects and aligning the research objectives with contemporary studies, the research has the potential to drive positive change and foster the growth of small businesses, ultimately benefiting the economic and social well-being of small communities. The difficulties small stores in small towns have competing with larger merchants is the issue the study attempts to solve. These difficulties include those related to cost, promotion, financing availability, technology integration, and rivalry with larger retailers. To assist small businesses, succeed in a cutthroat retail environment, targeted solutions and support systems must be developed after taking into account and resolving these challenges. Together, community organizations, legislators, and business stakeholders may put policies into place that are specifically designed to meet the requirements of small merchants, creating an atmosphere that is favorable to their expansion and prosperity. By shedding light on these issues, potential solutions, and emerging trends, the study hopes to strengthen the position of small merchants and improve the social and economic standing of small towns. The concepts and patterns pertaining to the flow of goods and services from the supplier to the customer are the focus of the "Supply Chain Dynamics" themes. These topics are applied to the research to comprehend the effects of operations on local communities and the sustainability of the supply chain. The goal of the study is to determine how companies may use sustainable resources, manage their supply chains ethically, and stop doing things that harm the environment or the communities in which they operate. The study also looks at how supply chain dynamics could affect small merchants' social and economic standing in small communities. The topics are essential for comprehending the structural shifts that have occurred in the retail environments in emerging nations and the adjustments that small retailers need to make in order to deal with these changes. The study also highlights how critical it is to acknowledge how the retail industry is evolving and how crucial it is to comprehend the opportunities, difficulties, and tasks that small merchants must navigate in order to maintain their competitiveness. The objective of the research is to explore the roles in sustaining the business competition with larger retailers in small town. Second is to understand the challenges in sustaining the business competition with larger retailers. Lastly is to investigate future suggestions towards sustaining the small retailer business competition with larger retailers.

Objective of the article is Investigate the challenges faced by small-town merchants in competing with larger stores. Understand how small retailers manage their sourcing, inventory, and supplier relationships to ensure operational efficiency and competitiveness. Shed light on the strategies employed by small retailers to maintain a reliable supply chain and overcome challenges in product sourcing, negotiation, and timely delivery. Explore the importance of building strong relationships with suppliers to secure quality products, favorable pricing, and reliable deliveries. Analyze effective inventory management strategies to avoid stakeouts, minimize carrying costs, and optimize product availability. Assess the impact of supply chain dynamics on the overall operational efficiency of small retailers, including order processing, warehousing, transportation, and logistics management.

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Highlight the adaptability and resilience of small retailers in responding to changes in the supply chain environment and maintaining business continuity. Identify how a well-managed supply chain can provide small retailers with a competitive advantage, enabling them to offer unique products, respond to market trends, and deliver exceptional customer service. Provide insights into how small retailers can optimize their supply chains to thrive in a competitive retail environment and enhance their overall business performance.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Small Retailers in The Small Town

A small retailer is a company that operates on a relatively small scale and sells products or services directly to customers. Small retailers are distinguished from bigger retail chains or companies by their smaller size, lower inventory, and generally focus on a particular niche or local market. Small retailers might be family-run companies, independent merchants, boutiques, or specialized shops, among other business models. Small retailers frequently take a more individualized and neighborhood-focused approach, fostering relationships with their clients and take into account the requirements and tastes of the surrounding area. Small shops can profit from agility, flexibility, and a direct relationship with their client base, but they may also face distinct obstacles than larger competitors, such as restricted resources. Local boutiques, corner stores, and grocery stores in the neighborhood are a few examples of small retailers.

based on a prior paper (Arpita Khare, 2011) that talked about mall purchasing habits in rural Indian towns. This study, which is based on research conducted by our organization, is to investigate the ways in which age and gender influence the attitudes of consumers toward shopping in shopping centers and highlights the importance of taking these aspects into account when planning shopping centers in urban areas. tiny community. The paper also emphasizes the importance of mall characteristics in influencing customer behavior in small town malls, including aesthetics, escape, flow, exploration, role-playing, social aspects, and convenience incentives. Next, The study, which is based on an earlier article by AA Ligthelm (2008), emphasizes how simple access to recently constructed shopping complexes may cause the limited retail market share that now exists to be cannibalized, changing customer purchasing habits as a result of the group's evaluation. The essay proposes investigating different township regions for a fuller knowledge of the socioeconomic dynamics influencing small retailers, and it suggests that additional research be conducted to corroborate the findings.

Small retailers in Kuala Pilah are navigating a market where consumer preferences are shifting towards the affordability and convenience offered by large supermarkets, which could potentially result in a decline in their customer base and profitability, according to research our group conducted in the area. There are chances for resilience and adaptability beyond these obstacles. Small stores in Kuala Pilah can stay competitive in the face of massive supermarket development by employing strategies including emphasizing customer service, providing specialty products, and leveraging technology to expand their online presence and reach. One way that small merchants may set themselves apart is by offering outstanding customer service. This entails individualized communications, help choosing products, and quick resolution of any issues or questions. Developing trusting connections with clients can increase loyalty and differentiate them from more established rivals. By providing specialty items that are hard to find in supermarkets, small businesses can carve themselves a niche market. This could include handcrafted goods, locally produced goods, or distinctive items

made to fit local tastes. Small businesses can attract clients who are looking for specific or premium products by providing a unique variety.

2.2 Theory

The potential of theory to offer a conceptual framework that directs and informs inquiry is what makes it important for research. Theory helps researchers organize and shape their observations by providing a prism through which they can analyze and comprehend phenomena. It provides a path for developing theories, planning experiments, and doing data analysis. Following a theoretical framework guarantees consistency and coherence in the study endeavor when an author is reviewing one of their earlier articles. It advances our understanding of the subject, creates links between other research projects, and aids in the field's overall development. Adhering to the theoretical framework established by the preceding article's author facilitates a more methodical and significant investigation of the research subject, hence enhancing the study's legitimacy and pertinence.

As a result, it comprises just one Triple Bottom Line Concept idea (Elkington, 1994).

2.3 Elkington (1994) Presented The Triple Bottom Line Concept Theory

Elkington (1994) developed the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) idea, a framework for assessing corporate performance that goes beyond the conventional financial bottom line. Elkington contends that companies ought to be held accountable for their effects on society, the environment, and their financial success. This hypothesis aims to investigate the significance of preserving business competitiveness in small towns with larger shops. The essential element of the hypothesis is the economy and profit are related. This is the conventional financial bottom line that evaluates the company's profitability and economic performance in addition to helping the owner maintain the company as a whole. It entails assessing overall economic viability, revenue generation, and financial performance. A company's financial performance determines its success under a capitalist economy. In order to optimize profits while minimizing costs and risk, strategic planning initiatives and significant corporate decisions are usually carefully prepared (Kelsey Miller, 2023) Many corporate goals in the past have been only concerned with growth and economic impacts. Purpose-driven business owners are learning that they may achieve both financial success and social impact through their enterprises.

People make up the second component, which has to do with society. It comprises examining how company operations affect community members, workers, and customers. This aspect places a strong emphasis on community involvement, ethical work practices, and social responsibility. Businesses are adopting sustainability more and more, focusing on creating value for all parties affected by their actions, such as communities, employees, and customers. Businesses that ensure fair hiring practices and encourage workplace volunteerism can positively impact individuals and the next generation. In order to effect change on a bigger scale, entrepreneurs can also turn their gaze outward. Given the wider influence of their actions on society, businesses are under increasing pressure to operate in a socially responsible manner. This covers programs like lessening one's impact on the environment, contributing to philanthropic causes, and encouraging inclusivity and diversity in the workplace. Maintaining equitable treatment of employees is essential for firms to adhere to moral principles. This entails offering opportunity for professional development, safe working conditions, and fair compensation. Businesses may improve employee happiness and loyalty while cultivating a positive work environment by placing a high priority on fair labor practices.

The planet, which is related to the environment, is the last element. The company's impact on the environment is assessed by the environmental bottom line. Environmental goals could include cutting back on pollution, starting recycling and trash collection programs, and supporting sustainable and renewable energy sources. Next, think about doing green actions to lessen your carbon footprint, such as planting new trees or collaborating with environmental non-governmental organizations. In addition, it's critical to sell environmentally friendly items and dispose of harmful waste in a safe manner. The environmental bottom line assesses a company's environmental impact, much like the financial bottom line does. This covers elements including pollution levels, trash production, water use, and carbon emissions. Businesses may track and lessen their ecological footprint by setting environmental goals and targets.

To lessen their influence on the environment, businesses might set environmental targets. This could entail putting policies in place to reduce pollution, starting recycling and waste management initiatives, and switching to renewable and sustainable energy sources. Businesses can monitor their progress and consistently enhance their environmental performance by establishing specific goals. The theory's ability to provide wealth for everybody is one of its advantages. Additionally, the Triple Bottom Line ensures that businesses focus their efforts externally. This means assessing the sustainability of the supply chain and how their activities affect the local communities in which they operate, then making improvements to ensure that everyone wins. This might entail, among other things, making sure supply chains are managed ethically, making use of more sustainable resources, and getting rid of destructive behaviors that affect the environment or nearby populations.

2.4 The Challenges for Small Retailers

As per an essay written by Arpita Khare (2011), Small-town entrepreneurs have unique challenges that may hinder their ability to launch and expand a profitable business. Their restricted access to resources presents challenges. Small towns usually have limited access to capital, infrastructure, and trained labor, which makes it challenging for enterprises to get capital, obtain essential services, and hire qualified personnel. Furthermore, the market's size is constrained. Small towns frequently have fewer clientele than larger cities, which restricts business development opportunities and makes achieving economies of scale challenging. It also lacks the necessary technology infrastructure. Small towns could only have limited access to high-speed internet and other technological infrastructure, which makes it harder for companies to connect with suppliers, customers, and other stakeholders and limits their ability to grow and compete. Then, there aren't many options for education and training. Smalltown company owners may face obstacles when trying to enroll in courses and training that might provide them with the information and abilities needed to be successful in the industry.

Small-town businesses may find it difficult to communicate with suppliers, customers, and other stakeholders if they do not have access to high-speed internet. In the end, slow or unstable internet connections can impair productivity and competitiveness by interfering with communication, delaying transactions, and making it difficult to work with partners. Small-town firms could find it difficult to reach a wider audience online if they don't have reliable internet access. An online presence is essential in the current digital era to expand one's audience and enter new markets. Their capacity to use digital marketing platforms, online sales channels, and e-commerce platforms to draw in clients from far-off places may be hampered by limited internet connectivity. One of the difficulties faced by small shops is their lack of exposure and visibility. Small companies in rural areas may find it challenging to properly advertise and promote their goods and services because of a lack of visibility and foot traffic in addition to restricted opportunities for advertising and promotions. Lastly, there are

issues with regulations and policies. Certain regulatory policies, such as zoning restrictions, limited internet access, and infrastructural constraints, may have an impact on entrepreneurship in small areas. These policies can impede the expansion and success of small businesses. Policymakers and local communities may foster an environment that is more favorable to entrepreneurship and economic growth in small towns by addressing these challenges and putting programs in place to support smalltown entrepreneurs.

Drawing from a work by (AA Ligthelm, 2008), Traditional small companies have several challenges in the evolving retail industry, especially those located in small towns. The rivalry from larger retailers is one of the main worries. Traditional small businesses face a serious threat from the growth of larger retail and shopping complexes in metropolitan regions. It is challenging for small businesses to compete on pricing and variety against these larger rivals since they usually have greater resources, economies of scale, and marketing power. Segmenting the market is the next phase. The current tiny retail market share may be eroded by easy access to recently constructed shopping complexes. Small company sales may be impacted by customers choosing larger retailers that provide a wider range of goods, more affordable prices, and a more comprehensive shopping experience.

There will also be an option for users to modify their settings. As the economy grows and small-town residents become more middle-class, their purchasing habits and lifestyle decisions may change. For small businesses to be relevant and competitive, they must adjust to shifting customer demands and trends. The little money available to small merchants presents another challenge. It can be challenging for small businesses to get funding for expansion, technological advancements, or infrastructure renovations. Their inability to expand and innovate in response to changes in the market may be hampered by their lack of financial resources. Market saturation is another issue that small shops must deal with. When traditional shopping areas outside of the town become too congested, formal firms tend to concentrate on expanding into new markets. Increasing competition might further erode the revenues and market share of small businesses. In the face of shifting market dynamics, traditional small businesses may become more resilient and successful by tackling these challenges via strategic planning, innovation, community involvement, and cooperation.

2.5 Sustaining Small Retailers

The economic life of small towns depends on the viability of its small shops. Small merchants are vital to the community's ability to get necessities and support the general health of the small town economy

(Arpita Khare, 2011). Small businesses need to deal with a variety of challenges in order to survive, including competition from larger retailers, changing consumer preferences, and resource constraints. Small-town merchants can survive by providing help through a support program. This assistance policy has been put into effect by the government. A more conducive environment for small merchants' growth may be created by putting into place laws that assist them, such as those that reduce regulatory burdens, offer training programs, and offer financial incentives. Working with the community is the next stage. Working together, small merchants and neighborhood groups may foster a feeling of community and create opportunities for joint marketing campaigns, resource sharing, and group problem solving.

Also, access to resources Improving access to resources such as financing, business services, and skilled labor can assist small shops in overcoming the obstacles that come with limited resources and infrastructure. In order to continue small retail in a small town, businesses must be innovative and adaptable. Small merchants must

innovate and adapt to shifting market trends and consumer preferences. Policymakers may encourage innovation by investing in research and development and fostering entrepreneurship education. Furthermore, with a marketing strategy in place, implementing unique marketing methods to promote local products and services, attract tourists, and engage new locals can assist small merchants in expanding their client base and increasing awareness. Access to finance is a common challenge for small enterprises, particularly in rural locations where there may be a dearth of traditional banking institutions. Governments can support the provision of low-interest loans, grants, and microloans, among other financing options, that are specifically designed to meet the requirements of small enterprises. Programs for financial literacy and support with company planning can also be of benefit to small business owners in navigating the financing application process.

Giving small businesses access to business support services like accountancy, legal counsel, and marketing support may help them deal with operational difficulties and make wise decisions. Governments, organizations dedicated to company development, and trade associations can provide mentoring opportunities, training courses, and seminars to assist small business owners in developing their management abilities and gaining access to necessary services.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research design is used in this study. Qualitative approaches seek to extensively investigate, comprehend, and analyze social processes in the environment, as indicated by earlier researchers (Bussetto, Wick, and Gumbinger, 2020). You may gather more data and obtain a comprehensive understanding of the topics you choose to study by employing a qualitative research approach (Sim, Saunders, Jackie, and Tom, 2018). The study problem to be researched is "Challenges of small retailers in maintaining business competition with larger retailers in small towns," and semi structured guided interviews are utilized as a data collecting method in order to meet the requirement for knowledge on local retailing strategies. Structured interviews are used in this research. In-depth investigation and comprehension of phenomena are usually the goal of qualitative research designs, which frequently make use of techniques including document analysis, observations, and interviewing. It seeks to convey the subtlety and complexity of social interactions and behaviors. When attempting to get understanding of the experiences, viewpoints, and actions of individuals or groups, qualitative techniques are most helpful. In qualitative research, semi-structured interviews are a popular technique for gathering data. Through predetermined interview questions or themes, they retain a certain degree of structure while allowing both the interviewer and the participant to explore issues in depth. A series of open-ended questions or prompts is usually used in guided interviews in order to get comprehensive, in-depth answers from participants.

3.1 Research Design

The issue of "supply chain dynamics" in a research study on the difficulties small retailers in small towns confront is studying and evaluating the complexities of the supply chain operations that these retailers face. Examining small retailers' sourcing, inventory, distribution, and logistics strategies in order to effectively compete with bigger shops is the focus of this study. Small merchants will be surveyed in an organized manner to obtain information about their supply chain procedures, difficulties, and tactics. This main technique of gathering data will offer personal knowledge of how small merchants manage the dynamics of their supply

chains. To investigate particular supply chain issues and potential solutions, in-depth case studies of certain small merchants will be carried out. These case studies will provide in-depth explanations of the distinctive tactics small merchants use to streamline their supply chain processes. The information gathered from case studies and interviews will be analyzed using qualitative methods like theme analysis. Through this study, small merchants in small towns will be able to uncover common themes, trends, and best practices in supply chain management. The study will also look into how small merchants may benefit from increased supply chain efficiency thanks to technology. This might entail looking into how to improve supply chain operations through the use of online ordering portals, inventory management systems, or other technology. To overcome obstacles and increase the resiliency of their operations, the study will look at how small retailers work with regional producers, suppliers, or other companies in the supply chain. Improving the efficacy of the supply chain requires an understanding of these partnerships' dynamics.

3.2 Sampling of Research

The respondents are Kuala Pilah locals who manage modest retail enterprises in their little community. Due to its connection to the study issue, Difficulties for Small Retailers in Maintaining Large Retailers in Small Towns, this section was selected to be finished. The study's term is appropriate for "small towns," as well as for places that retain their traditional village feel and have not seen fast expansion. This study used a purposive sample technique known as non-probability sampling. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique where a subset of subjects (small merchants) with particular qualities are chosen as study respondents based on data and the particular goal of the researcher's research. This indicates that the researcher did not choose responders from among all other studies in the population. With clear benefits that address the demands of research, purposeful sampling is a desirable research technique. Furthermore, this strategy offers researchers several advantages by using a thoughtful and careful approach to participant selection, which improves the breadth and caliber of studies. Thus, the benefit of employing this approach is that data gathering time is reduced. When conditions change quickly, purposive sampling's flexibility comes in quite handy. Researchers are able to remain focused while accommodating a wide range of needs and interests. This adaptability saves a lot of time and effort during the data gathering stage in addition to guaranteeing a representative outcome. Moreover, there is little room for mistake. Purposive sampling provides a smaller margin of error than random sample techniques, which might introduce bigger margins. Direct data collection from well-chosen respondents who possess distinctive characteristics leads to more accurate and consistent findings, improving the overall precision of the study findings.

3.3 Method of Conducting Qualitative Research

3.3.1 Research Participants

The interview session is the method that researchers utilize to obtain data. One qualitative research strategy for gathering primary data is interviewing. The researcher uses this technique to get input from two entrepreneurs on the subject of the study. Researchers can get comprehensive data with this strategy that might not be available with other research techniques. There is structure to interviews. In a structured interview, two entrepreneurs are asked the same pre-planned questions in the same order by the researcher using a methodical approach to questioning. The researcher acquired distinct information on the problems that each of the two small store owners faced throughout their interview. Kedai Runcit Ambong and ETA MM Enterprise are the

two small merchants that were selected for an interview. The decision is between these two little businesses because the retail space has been around for a while in Kuala Pilah, the infrastructure still appears dated, and no technology is employed—for example, cash payments are the only form of payment accepted. Furthermore, the ETA MM Enterprise was selected because to its positive Google reviews.

3.3.2 Data Analysis Approach

Thematic analysis is a popular qualitative research technique for detecting, interpreting, and reporting patterns (themes) in data. The method involves meticulously coding and categorizing data to identify recurring patterns and underlying meanings. A standard approach to thematic analysis consists of several critical components. First, researchers familiarize themselves with the data by reading and rereading it in order to obtain a better comprehension of the material. They then create initial codes by emphasizing key terms or phrases related to the research objectives. These codes are then sorted into prospective themes, which are groups of connected codes that represent comparable ideas or concepts.

After identifying the initial themes, researchers work to enhance and examine them to make sure they accurately reflect the data. The foundation for analysis and interpretation is then provided by naming and identifying the themes. By using an iterative approach, researchers can address study questions or objectives and identify overarching themes that capture the essence of the data.

Writing up the results is the third stage, where researchers fully explain each topic and include examples or quotes from the data to support their points. Thematic analysis is a valuable tool for delving into intricate phenomena and furnishing detailed and nuanced accounts of participants' experiences, since it offers a versatile and systematic approach to discerning patterns and insights within qualitative data. First, researchers immerse themselves in the data to become acquainted with it. After that, they begin the process of initial coding, which entails finding and labeling data segments that are pertinent to their goals or research questions. First topics come to light throughout this phase.

In order to make sure the first themes appropriately represent the data, researchers work to further improve and analyze them. This might entail classifying related codes together, elaborating on definitions, and ensuring coherence and consistency within and between themes.

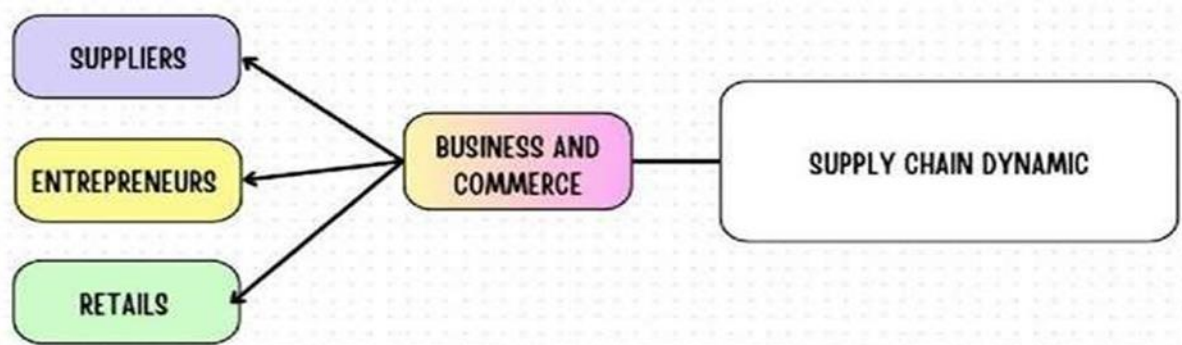
3.3.3 Thematic Analysis Procedures

Start by putting the written data or interview recordings into text format. This means writing down spoken words so they may be analyzed more easily. Read and contrast the raw and transcribed data to become familiar with the data. Make notes, underline important details, and mark the first concepts or trends that the researcher notices. Make the first codes: Finding text passages that are pertinent to the research questions or interesting topics can help you get started coding the data. To categorize these sections, use labels or tags that provide context. Seek out any themes: Take a look at the coded sections and start organizing them into potential themes or patterns. Look for themes, ideas, or topics that keep coming up in the data.

Review and define themes. Using the coded segments, refine and define the study themes, ensuring that each theme captures a unique feature of the data. Ensure that the topics are consistent and significant. Data Interpretation. Analyze the themes to determine how they connect to the research objectives and what insights they offer. Consider the broader significance of each subject within the framework of the research project.

In the context of Supply Chain Dynamics, a word cloud analysis can provide valuable insights into the key terms and concepts related to how small retailers manage their supply chains effectively. Prominent terms. The word cloud may highlight terms such as "suppliers," "inventory," "logistics," "sourcing," "relationships," and "efficiency" in larger fonts, indicating their significance in the discussion of supply chain dynamics. Visual representation. The visual representation of the word cloud can show which terms are most frequently mentioned or emphasized in the context of small retailers' supply chain operations. Themes and concepts. By examining the word cloud, researchers can identify common themes and concepts associated with supply chain dynamics, such as "supplier relationships," "inventory management," "operational efficiency," "adaptability," and "resilience." Insights into challenges and strategies. The word cloud can offer insights into the challenges faced by small retailers in managing their supply chains, as well as the strategies they employ to enhance efficiency, reduce costs, and improve overall performance. Visualization of data. The word cloud serves as a visual summary of the text data related to supply chain dynamics, making it easier for researchers to quickly identify key terms and themes without having to read through the entire text. By analyzing the word cloud for the theme of Supply Chain Dynamics in the context of small retailers in small towns, researchers can gain a better understanding of the critical factors influencing supply chain management practices and the implications for business competitiveness and sustainability 14.

Theme Development



Supply Chain Dynamics theme:

Quotes: I can teach how to find suppliers to get a stock.

Quotes: As an entrepreneur, I need to be smart.

Quotes: Start a retail business because I want more income.

The theme development regarding Supply Chain Dynamics in the research on challenges faced by small retailers in small towns involves a structured approach to understanding and analyzing the complexities of supply chain management within the context of small retail businesses. This theme evolves through various stages of research and analysis, leading to a comprehensive understanding of how supply chain dynamics impact the competitiveness and sustainability of small retailers in small towns. Identification of research gap. The theme development begins with identifying a research gap related to supply chain dynamics in the context of small retailers in small towns. This involves recognizing the lack of in-depth studies or insights into how small retailers manage their supply chains and the challenges they encounter. Literature review. The theme development is supported by an extensive literature review that explores existing knowledge, theories, and best

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practices in supply chain management within the retail sector. This review helps in establishing a theoretical framework and understanding the key concepts and factors influencing supply chain dynamics for small retailers. Research objectives. Clear research objectives are formulated to guide the investigation into supply chain dynamics. These objectives outline the specific aspects of supply chain management that will be explored, such as sourcing strategies, inventory management, logistics, technology adoption, and collaboration within the supply chain. Methodological Approach: The methodology section outlines the research design and data collection methods that will be employed to study supply chain dynamics. This includes conducting interviews, case studies, and thematic analysis to gather insights from small retailers and stakeholders regarding their supply chain practices and challenges. Data analysis. Through data analysis, the research delves into the collected information to identify patterns, trends, and common themes related to supply chain dynamics. This analysis helps in understanding the strategies, best practices, and areas of improvement for small retailers in managing their supply chains effectively. Findings and recommendations. The theme development culminates in the presentation of findings related to supply chain dynamics and the formulation of actionable recommendations. These findings highlight the challenges faced by small retailers, successful strategies employed by them, and areas where improvements can be made to enhance supply chain efficiency and competitiveness. Implications and Future Research: The theme development also considers the implications of the findings on the competitiveness and sustainability of small retailers in small towns. It may suggest avenues for future research to further explore supply chain dynamics or implement interventions to support small retailers in overcoming supply chain challenges.

By systematically developing the theme of Supply Chain Dynamics, the research provides valuable insights into how small retailers in small towns can optimize their supply chains to thrive in a competitive retail environment.

4.1 Discussion

The theme of Supply Chain Dynamics in the context of small retailers operating in small towns is crucial for understanding how these businesses manage their sourcing, inventory, and relationships with suppliers to ensure operational efficiency and competitiveness. Here is a discussion focusing on the theme of supply chain dynamics. Sourcing strategies. Small retailers often face challenges in sourcing products efficiently and cost-effectively. By analyzing how these businesses identify and select suppliers, negotiate terms, and ensure timely delivery of goods, researchers can uncover the strategies employed to maintain a reliable supply chain. Supplier relationships. Building strong relationships with suppliers is essential for small retailers to secure quality products, favorable pricing, and reliable deliveries. Understanding how these businesses communicate with suppliers, address issues, and collaborate can shed light on the importance of supplier partnerships in supply chain management. Inventory management. Effective inventory management is critical for small retailers to avoid stockouts, minimize carrying costs, and optimize product availability. Exploring how these businesses handle inventory levels, demand forecasting, and replenishment strategies can reveal insights into their operational efficiency and customer service capabilities. Operational efficiency. Supply chain dynamics impact the overall operational efficiency of small retailers. By examining processes such as order processing, warehousing, transportation, and logistics management, researchers can assess the effectiveness of these businesses in streamlining operations and reducing costs. Adaptability and resilience. Small retailers must be adaptable and resilient in responding to changes in the supply chain environment, such as disruptions in supply, shifts in consumer demand, or external market factors. Studying how these businesses

navigate challenges and implement contingency plans can highlight their ability to withstand uncertainties and maintain business continuity. Competitive advantage. A well-managed supply chain can provide small retailers with a competitive advantage by enabling them to offer unique products, respond quickly to market trends, and deliver exceptional customer service. Analyzing how supply chain dynamics contribute to their competitive positioning can reveal strategies for differentiation and sustainability. By delving into the theme of Supply Chain Dynamics, researchers can uncover the intricacies of how small retailers in small towns manage their supply chains to overcome challenges, capitalize on opportunities, and enhance their overall business performance 12, 26.

5.0 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the comprehensive study on supply chain dynamics among small retailers in Kuala Pilah offers valuable insights into the challenges, strategies, and future trends shaping the competitiveness and sustainability of small businesses in small towns. By examining the difficulties faced by small-town merchants in competing with larger stores and exploring solutions to enhance their long-term viability and competitiveness, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of the retail industry dynamics. The incorporation of the Triple Bottom Line Concept hypothesis underscores the importance of assessing corporate success beyond financial measures, considering social and environmental implications.

Furthermore, the study emphasizes the significance of effective sourcing strategies, strong supplier relationships, efficient inventory management, operational efficiency, adaptability, and resilience in navigating the complexities of the supply chain environment. By highlighting the role of supply chain dynamics in driving competitive positioning, differentiation, and sustainability for small retailers, the research provides a roadmap for enhancing business performance and customer service in small-town settings. Ultimately, the study aims to foster positive change, support the growth of small businesses, and improve the economic and social well-being of small communities by addressing challenges, promoting innovation, and advocating for tailored support systems. By shedding light on emerging trends, potential solutions, and the importance of sustainable practices, the research seeks to strengthen the position of small merchants and contribute to the overall development of small towns.

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