



SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT

Master's Programme in Entrepreneurship and Innovation
ENTN19 Degree Project - New Venture Creation
30 May 2024

Resilience on the Menu: How MSME restaurants overcome adversity and crisis

Co-authors:
Molly Eklund
Stina Svensson

Supervisor: Marie Löwegren

Abstract

The restaurant industry, known for its volatile and risky nature, faces unique challenges in maintaining resilience. This study explores how micro and small to medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in the Swedish restaurant industry manage to survive during periods of crisis and adversity. By investigating the concepts of crisis management and business resilience in relation to MSMEs, this study provides valuable insights into the actions and methods taken by restaurant owners, founders, and managers. This thesis uses a qualitative approach, and the collection of data is made through semi-structured interviews with 11 participants within the area of food trucks, lunch restaurants, Cafés, bars, and restaurants. The collected data is analyzed with thematic analysis resulting in six aggregated dimensions that contribute to increased business resilience: Bootstrapping, Business development, Increase price margin, Relationship retainment, Adaptive resilience prerequisites, and Proactive measures. This research emphasizes the importance of financial resilience, customer loyalty, and a proactive mindset in overcoming external challenges and adversity. Two conceptual frameworks are developed showcasing the active adversity management strategies utilized by MSME restaurants and the importance of possessing adaptable prerequisites and proactive measures when met with adversity.

Keywords: Crisis Management; Resilience; Adversity; Crisis; Restaurant Industry; MSME

Acknowledgement

The authors of this thesis want to express their gratitude for the support and help from the supervisor Marie Löwegren throughout the writing of this thesis. The authors would also like to thank all the eleven participating restaurants that wanted to share their experiences and encounters with adversity and crises which generated valuable insights and contributions to the thesis.

Table of content

Abstract	1
Acknowledgement	2
Table of content	3
1. Introduction	5
1.1 Surviving Crises	5
1.2 The restaurant industry during crises	6
1.3 Research Purpose	7
1.3.1 Practical Implications and Academic Contributions	7
2. Empirical Context	8
2.1 Restaurant Industry	8
3. Literature Review	9
3.1 Crisis Management and Business Resilience	9
3.1.1 Dynamic Capabilities	9
3.2 Crisis Management and Business Resilience in MSMEs	10
3.2.1 Innovativeness and Proactiveness	11
3.2.2 Bootstrapping	11
3.2.3 Social capital	13
3.2.4 Digital Transformation	13
3.3 Summary	13
4. Methodology	15
4.1 Epistemology and Ontology	15
4.2 Research Design	16
4.3 Sampling Strategy	16
4.4 Data Collection	20
4.5 Quality Assessment	20
4.6 Data Analysis	22
4.7 Limitations	23
4.7.1 Research design	23
4.7.2 Sampling Strategy	23
4.7.3 Data collection	24
4.8 Ethical Considerations	24
5. Findings	25
5.1 Overview	25
5.2 Bootstrapping	28
5.3 Business Development	30

5.4 Increase Price Margin	31
5.5 Relationship Retainment	33
5.6 Adaptive Resilience Prerequisites	34
5.7 Proactive Measures	37
6. Analysis	38
6.1 Profit increase and customer value	38
6.2 Relationship Retainment	39
6.3 Proactive measures	39
6.4 Adaptable Resilience prerequisites	40
6.5 Conceptual Framework of Adversity Management	43
6.6 Conceptual Framework of Prerequisites	44
7. Discussion	45
8. Conclusion & implications	49
8.1 Conclusion	49
8.2 Limitations	51
8.3 Theoretical contribution	51
8.4 Practical implications	53
8.5 Recommendations for future research	53
Reference list	55
Appendix A	61
Appendix B	62

1. Introduction

This chapter introduces the societal and academic context of crises and adversity. Emphasis is put on the effects crises may have on businesses as well as how they manage to build resistance towards negative external events. The restaurant industry during crises is argued as a relevant context to investigate because of its volatile nature. The aim of the study is presented as contributing to the existing literature on crisis management and business resilience by introducing a new interesting industry context and providing a practically implacable framework for restaurants to cope with disruptions.

1.1 Surviving Crises

In recent years, warfare, pandemics, natural catastrophes, and precipitous stock market downturns are just a few of the crises that have profoundly impacted our societal landscape with devastating ramifications. A crisis can be defined as “a condition of instability or danger, as in social, economic, political, or international affairs, leading to a decisive change” (Dictionary, 2024). Through the times, businesses have struggled to survive in the challenging situations generated by societal crises which can be seen in today's economic situation and the lingering ramifications of the global COVID-19 pandemic (Donthu, & Gustafsson, 2020). However, there have always been businesses that managed to stay strong, cope with challenging circumstances, and develop resilience towards crises (Aldianto et al. 2021). To learn how to survive and how to adapt to crises as a business, researchers have explored the concept of crisis management and business resilience by utilizing businesses that have been resilient to a crisis as study objects (Bachtiar et al. 2023; Hong et al. 2012; Aldianto et al. 2021).

One finding that many studies had in common for effective crisis management and resilience, was the innovative ability to be agile and adaptable to change in the changing environment (Chesbrough, 2020; Donthu & Gustafsson, 2020; Wang et al. 2020; Wenzel et al. 2020). When individuals are faced with adversity, they start developing entrepreneurial intentions and take entrepreneurial actions (Bullough et al. 2014). Thinking creatively and entrepreneurially helps navigate difficult situations and crises (Bullough et al. 2014), which can be showcased in a

higher ability to decrease the effects of crises amongst startups with innovative mindsets (Markovic et al. 2021).

Micro and small to medium-sized enterprises, from now called MSME, constitute a crucial segment of the global economy, contributing significantly to employment generation, innovation, and economic growth (Herbane, 2010); Guo et al. 2020; Eggers, 2020). However, MSME's constrained resources and weak market holds make them much more vulnerable to external events, unlike larger more stable firms, but have still shown to be effective in responding to and surviving crises (Hong et al. 2012; Markovic et al. 2021; Eggers, 2020). MSMEs' smaller size, less than 250 employees (McAdam & Reid, 2001; Bhamra et al. 2011), allows them to be more flexible when externalities occur (Eggers, 2020). Despite MSMEs' proof of resilience and adaptability to crisis, mainly larger companies have been investigated as praxis for successful performance during crises in literature (Hong et al. 2012).

After the worldwide pandemic and its iterations had a grim hold on our world and many businesses faced crippling consequences or even failed (Donthu & Gustafsson, 2020), there has been a larger supply of crisis management studies set in a more recent environment (Bartik et al. 2020; Remko, 2020; Yeh, 2021). However, there is one industry that was more affected by the worldwide crisis than the others (Gössling et al. 2020; SCB, 2021), that has not been featured in remotely as many studies.

1.2 The restaurant industry during crises

The restaurant industry was majorly hit by the crippling consequences of the pandemic (Dube et al. 2020). Even in Sweden, where the pandemic regulations were not nearly as strict for the restaurant industry as abroad, over 50,000 employees in the industry were let go in 2020 (Martinsson, 2021), and the sales of bars, entertainment restaurants, and pubs were reduced by more than 35 % (SCB, 2021). The Swedish restaurant industry's situation during the pandemic is unique compared to other countries where businesses were completely shut down, whereas the Swedish industry could be continued to a larger extent but adapted to the regulations (Ludvigsson, 2020). This generated an environment for restaurants with the possibility to adapt, change, and innovate to survive rather than being completely shut down, which makes the

Swedish context of great theoretical interest for researching methods of business survival through crisis and/or adversity. Furthermore, the Swedish restaurant industry is currently suffering through an economic crisis (Creditsafe, 2024). A record high number of restaurants going bankrupt was achieved in January 2024 whereas the number had increased by more than 100 percent compared to January 2023 (Creditsafe, 2024).

The restaurant industry is, however, not solely vulnerable and sensitive to critical crises, but also to adversity such as minor economic fluctuations and downturns (Dube et al. 2020; Kim et al. 2020). The restaurant industry is known for its volatile and risky nature (Park et al. 2023), and is dominated by privately owned SMEs (Lee & Hallak, 2018). Therefore, further research into how the restaurant industry has managed crises and adversity can generate insights to be applied in an extensive number of challenging situations for the industry, not solely related to major crises such as the pandemic.

1.3 Research Purpose

This study aims to investigate and generate a deep understanding of how MSME restaurants in Sweden have and can manage and survive crises and adversity. The concepts of resilience and crisis management are explored within the restaurant industry context with a focus of understanding owners' and founders' actions and experiences of surviving crises and adversity.

Therefore, this thesis aims to answer the following research question:

How do MSME restaurants in Sweden overcome crises and adversity?

1.3.1 Practical Implications and Academic Contributions

This thesis will provide practical implications for struggling restaurants during the current crisis and future adversities by researching effective crisis management strategies, thereby contributing to the existing literature with a unique and relevant industry context. However, the restaurant industry is not the only industry with a volatile nature. Other service industries such as retail, tourism and hospitality, also showcase a risky nature with a fast changing environment (Ren et

al. 2017; Dube et al. 2020). Therefore, this research may also contribute with practical implications for these industries.

2. Empirical Context

2.1 Restaurant Industry

With millions of individuals employed worldwide and 14,4 million people only in the US, the restaurant industry contributes to the global economy substantially by generating hundreds of billions of dollars in revenue (Dube et al. 2020; Lee & Hallak, 2018). A significant part of this economic income comes from the revenue of dining establishments, ranging from fine dining offerings to fast food chains (Dube et al. 2020). The majority of the restaurants within the industry are small to medium-sized enterprises and privately owned (Lee & Hallak, 2018). Owners of MSME restaurants who believe in their ability to carry out entrepreneurial activities are more likely to be innovative and find opportunities that affect the restaurants' performance positively (Lee & Hallak, 2018; Lee et al. 2016). This willingness and entrepreneurial drive are crucial for restaurants in a fast-changing world.

However, despite its economic contribution and importance, the restaurant industry, MSME restaurants, face a lot of challenges. One notable aspect, as mentioned, is the sector's vulnerability to external factors, including natural disasters, pandemics, and economic downturns (Dube et al. 2020; Kim et al. 2020; Park et al. 2023). These events can have a profound impact on restaurant businesses, leading to financial losses, and long-term damage to the industry as a whole (Dube et al. 2020). During the Covid-19 pandemic many restaurants all over the world had to shut down (Gössling et al. 2020). With the drastic restrictions that governments all over the world had to implement, such as social distancing and lockdowns, the restaurant industry experienced a major loss of their sit-in guests, leading to a big decrease in employment and revenue (Dube et al. 2020).

3. Literature Review

In this chapter, a comprehensive literature review of existing research on crisis management and resilience is presented. Major concepts to be discussed include Dynamic Capabilities, Innovativeness and Proactiveness, Bootstrapping, Social Capital and Digital Transformation. The chapter ends with a summary and an explanation of the existing gap in the literature.

3.1 Crisis Management and Business Resilience

Within the literature scope on how businesses and organizations survive crises and adversity, there are two major emerging concepts, Crisis management and Business resilience. Crisis management is defined as the ability to take well-timed and effective measures to cope with disruptions to survive and grow (Pearson & Clair, 1998). Business resilience, however, encompasses the general concept of the ability to return to equilibrium following a disturbance (Bhamra et al. 2011) and the capacity to absorb impact and recover from it (Linnenluecke & Griffiths, 2010). Resilience is a diversely defined concept within the business research scope but generally entails an ability or capability to persevere through adversity and crisis successfully (Aldianto et al. 2021). Since crisis management entails the ability to respond effectively to crisis and actions taken to persevere, it is closely intertwined with resilience, the ability to persevere through adversity and crisis. The ability to manage crises effectively increases the chances of survival and growth (Pearson & Clair, 1998), i.e., increases resilience. The majority of the studies on crisis management and business resilience are conducted in the context of large companies and not as much in an SME context (Herbane, 2010).

3.1.1 Dynamic Capabilities

A central concept of business resilience raised in a number of studies within business resilience are Dynamic capabilities (Aldinatio et al. 2021; Teece et al. 1997; Martinelli et al. 2018). Dynamic capabilities (DC) can be explained as a unique form of capability that integrates and adapts resources to effectively respond to rapidly changing environments (Teece et al. 1997), and is stressed as an important driver of resilience (Martinelli et al. 2018; Aldinatio et al. 2021). The DC is built upon three capacities; sensing, seizing, and transforming, whereas sensing refers to identifying and assessing opportunities, and seizing refers to resource mobilization to capture the

value of opportunities (Teece, 2007). The transformation capacity refers to the capacity to change by adjusting and reconfiguring resources and the capability to improve them in the business's daily operations (Teece, 2007). However, little research has been done on how SMEs should develop and exploit DC during crises (Guo et al. 2020).

A form of DC is agile leadership and is an identified ability that is a central driver for resilience (Aldianto et al. 2021). Agile leadership is defined as being rapidly adaptable and flexible to external circumstances and surprising events (Attar & Abdul-Kareem, 2020). Agile leaders can apply creative thinking to adapt businesses to external circumstances and environments (Attar & Abdul-Kareem, 2020). Coleman (2017) stresses how consistency and agility are essential competencies to balance for leaders to adapt to market changes and to institute the core values of their business.

3.2 Crisis Management and Business Resilience in MSMEs

Although crisis management and SMEs strategy are two generally researched fields, little research has been done on how they function together (Herbane, 2010; Sullivan-Taylor & Branicki, 2011). Herbane (2010) expresses the absence of research made on crisis management in relation to small businesses, and questions why there is a lack of explorations made on how small firms cope with crisis. The absence of an understanding on how SMEs handle crisis management planning and strategic planning from a resilience perspective is underlined as a gap in the current literature (Herbane, 2019).

However, there has been some research conducted on SMEs' crisis management process as well as how they approach adversity (Herbane, 2010; Hong et al. 2012; Markovic et al. 2021). Furthermore, various factors have been explored that help SMEs handle crises and gain resilience, such as innovativeness and proactiveness, bootstrapping, social capital and digital transformation (Winborg & Landström, 2001; Teece, 2007; Hong et al. 2012; Martinelli et al. 2018; Guo et al. 2020).

3.2.1 Innovativeness and Proactiveness

Innovation, one dimension of entrepreneurial orientations (Eggers, 2020), is an effective strategic response to a crisis due to the opportunity to implement renewal within your business to adapt to changing circumstances (Wenzel et al. 2020). Innovation as a strategy can also include changing the business strategy, changing the structure of the organization or operations, transforming and adjusting the business model or even switching to a new target market (Covin & Kuratko, 2010). The ability to innovate can seem difficult during a crisis since the situation often requires quick decision-making while suffering resource constraints (Wenzel et al. 2020; Markovic et al. 2021; Chesbrough, 2020). However, SMEs with innovativeness tend to learn how to improve their venture for future events and disruptions as well as how they can run the business in a more effective way from experience with crisis (Saunders et al. 2014).

Along with innovativeness, proactiveness is also an important dimension of entrepreneurial orientations that has a positive effect on SMEs' performance and survival during and after negative external events, such as crises or adversity (Eggers, 2020; Soininen et al. 2012). This dimension is described as an initiative to look for changes in the external environment to prepare for future events (Soininen et al. 2012). The higher the innovativeness and proactiveness SMEs have, the better their chances are to succeed in a crisis (Eggers, 2020).

In a study made on several SMEs' actions and behavior during crises, the firms that succeeded and survived had similar innovative and proactive approaches (Hong et al. 2012). A common factor in their proactive approach was that before the crisis, they observed the environment to notice any possible future adversities and disruptions to prepare their business (Hong et al. 2012). This shows the businesses' proactiveness in how they actively worked to meet the future adversity. When met with a disaster, the firms implemented a recovery plan to rebuild the business and at the end of the crisis, new strategies and implementations could be developed leading to innovative business plans (Hong et al. 2012).

3.2.2 Bootstrapping

Financial bootstrapping is a strategy used by small businesses that face a lack of capital and financial constraints (Winborg & Landström, 2001), and can be utilized to survive in times of

crisis and adversity (Fadil & St-Pierre, 2021). Businesses of smaller size frequently encounter difficulties with receiving financial support (Winborg & Landström, 2001). These challenges often reduce the business's ability to grow and develop. To confront this adversity, they turn to alternative methods to meet their resource needs (Winborg & Landström, 2001). Within financial bootstrapping, several different “clusters” of bootstrappers exist (Winborg & Landström, 2001). Winborg and Landström (2001) name these: the delaying bootstrappers; the relationship-oriented bootstrappers; the subsidy-oriented bootstrappers; the minimizing bootstrappers; the private owner-financed bootstrappers; and the non-bootstrappers.

The first type of bootstrapper is the Delaying bootstrapper. This type of cluster employs methods that postpone the payments in order to handle their financial situation (Winborg & Landström, 2001). Their characteristics include having difficulties in securing future financing from traditional banking sources and are in need for additional finance (Winborg & Landström, 2001). The second bootstrapper, the Relationship-oriented bootstrapper, focuses on strategies that are socially oriented to gather resources (Winborg & Landström, 2001). They rely on their personal relationships and networks to share or borrow resources, including sharing equipment and facilities within their network (Winborg & Landström, 2001).

The third cluster is the Subsidy-oriented bootstrapper. This bootstrapper utilizes methods of receiving subsidies from the governmental institutions in order to meet their capital needs (Winborg, Landström, 2001). Minimizing bootstrapper is the fourth cluster and focuses on strategies internally to acquisitioning their resources by reducing the capital tied to their operations (Winborg & Landström, 2001). These methods allow businesses to remain stable and manage their resource needs effectively (Winborg & Landström, 2001).

The next cluster is the Private owner-financed bootstrapper. They depend strongly on the owner, or their relatives, ability to provide resources to the business (Winborg & Landström, 2001). The internally oriented methods of acquiring resources are focused on the owners' capacity to contribute with financial resources (Winborg & Landström, 2001).

The authors also briefly mention a group defined as the Non-boostrappers that have little interest in securing more finance and do not utilize any methods linked to Bootstrapping (Winborg & Landström, 2001).

3.2.3 Social capital

Another factor that was expressed as important for survival amongst SMEs was relationship and network strength (Hong et al. 2012). Having open communication with customers and stakeholders was presented as a facilitator of managing crises. This is also supported by Martinelli et al. (2018) who state the importance of having social capital to gain resilience. When met with a crisis, the businesses with an already strong social capital are able to rely on its network instantly and in that way develop resilience in difficult situations (Martinelli et al. 2018). The need to maintain relationships and social capital found in the SME context of crisis management is coherent with studies set in the restaurant industry during the COVID-19 pandemic. Messabia et al. (2022) studied Canadian restaurants' crisis management strategies during the COVID-19 crisis, where one of the major findings was that strategic human resource management and retainment of human capital were important to survive successfully.

3.2.4 Digital Transformation

Digital transformation is defined as the strategic utilization of information, computing, communication, and connectivity technologies to implement significant enhancements in an entity's capabilities and operation (Vial, 2019). Guo et al. (2020) explain how digitalization can help firms foster competitive advantage and enhance SME resilience. By activating their dynamic capabilities, digitalization enables SMEs to respond to crises in a dynamic way (Guo et al. 2020).

3.3 Summary

As mentioned above, the majority of the studies on crisis management and business resilience mostly focused on larger companies (Herbane, 2010). However, after the recent global crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic, the literature on SME in relation to crisis management and resilience has expanded (Scopus, 2024). The majority of the studies conducted within the SME context

after the pandemic are however mainly set in the specific context of the COVID-19 crisis (Claus et al. 2022; Caballero-Morales, 2021; Klyver & Nielsen, 2021). Thus, there is still a research gap of how SMEs manage and survive diverse adversity and crises.

Furthermore, the articles focusing upon SMEs have mainly included a diverse sample collection of SMEs in industries such as medtech, engineering, finance, manufacturing and more (Hong et al. 2012; Eggers, 2020). It appears that the majority of the studies conducted within the SME context are in more stable industries or market contexts, whilst the more volatile industries that may benefit the most from the practical implications and have the most experience with adversity are overlooked.

4. Methodology

This chapter introduces the methodology of the thesis. The chapter starts with an epistemology and ontology perspective. The research design is then explained followed by the sampling strategy where the criteria for the cases are stated. Furthermore, this chapter describes how the data was collected and which approach was used. A quality assessment is presented followed by the approach of the data analysis. The chapter ends with an explanation of the thesis's limitations and ethical considerations.

4.1 Epistemology and Ontology

This research adopts a constructionist approach of ontology, based upon the assumption that the reality of how restaurants manage to survive crisis and adversity is socially constructed through interactions and individual perceptions rather than objective. Aligning with Bell, Bryman and Harleys' (2022) definition of the constructionist position of ontology as continuously produced and reproduced, this research focused on how restaurant owners face and respond to crises and adversity and their own perception of crises. This viewpoint suggests that their perceptions and strategic actions are actively and continuously formed throughout their interaction and experience with crises and adversity.

Aligning with the constructionist position of ontology, this research adopts an interpretivist position of epistemology where we assume that knowledge of how restaurants survive adversity and crises is gained by understanding subjective meanings that are attached to experiences by social actors (Bell et al. 2022).

To conclude, this study was based upon the ontological assumption that realities of crisis and adversity management are socially constructed and the epistemological assumption that it can be understood through interpretive qualitative methods (Bell et al. 2022). These assumptions guide the research methodology and design in order with the aim to provide a contextual and rich understanding of how MSME restaurants in Sweden overcome and survive crisis and adversity.

4.2 Research Design

This study aimed to investigate how Swedish MSME restaurants overcome and survive crises and generate general theories and insights into business resilience within the restaurant industry. Since the aim of the study is to address an existing gap in existing research by generating theory on how restaurants survive and manage crises and adversity, an inductive research approach was taken (Bell et al. 2022). Since this study aims to investigate how restaurants overcome crises and adversity, it demanded a thorough understanding of the context, subjective interpretations of restaurant owners, and a focus on individual strategies, which therefore motivated the use of a qualitative research method (Bell et al. 2022).

The study was mainly conducted with a grounded theory method whereas open interviews were held to allow for theory to emerge from the collected data rather than imposing preconceived hypotheses or notions upon the findings (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). However, a literature review was conducted to provide context and enable a discussion and interpretation of the findings in relation to their coherence and divergence from existing research.

To allow for deep analysis and an in-depth understanding of real-life events (Bell et al. 2022), a case study approach was chosen. Since multiple case studies usually provide a stronger ground for theory-building research than single case studies (Yin, 1994), a multiple case study was conducted where different restaurants could be examined and similarities and differences could be identified, providing a deeper knowledge of the researched topic (Bell et al. 2022). The multiple-case method was also applied to generate a stronger theory grounded in various empirical cases along with a greater theoretical expansion and broader investigation of the research question (Eisenhart & Graebner, 2007).

4.3 Sampling Strategy

Elaborating on the method of selecting the specific cases for the multiple case study, a purposive sampling approach was applied where the selection directly adhered to answering the research question (Bell et al. 2022). Furthermore, the sequential approach of purposive sampling was applied where more cases were added to the selection over time until theoretical saturation was

met (Bell et al. 2022). To ensure a structured method, however, the approach of priori purposive sampling was applied whereas the criteria were clearly defined and set from the start of the study. In order to set these criteria, a pilot interview was conducted where an evaluation of the appropriateness of the chosen participant could be executed. After interviewing a restaurant manager that had only worked a few months at the restaurant in question for the pilot interview, it became apparent that both the quality and quantity of data insights was limited. The majority of the data collected was shared as a secondary source of what happened in the restaurant before the participant was employed and the knowledge of previous coping strategies was limited. As part of the first pilot case, an interview with a second participant working at the restaurant was conducted in order to see if it generated differentiating data and/or perceptions. However, no new relevant data was collected from the second interview and no larger difference of the data was detected. Therefore, only one participant was interviewed in the cases of the study.

Within grounded theory-building research, the choice of multiple cases should be motivated by its contribution to the theory being built (Eisenhart & Graebner, 2007). Therefore, a theoretical sampling approach, a form of purposive sampling, was applied where the cases were chosen out of theoretical reason (Bell et al. 2022). Cases were chosen from a theory expansion reasoning, whereas diverse samples that could provide new theoretical insights were chosen (Yin, 1994). Securing coverage of possible different insights through variation in samples is of great importance (Alvesson & Ashcraft, 2012). Therefore, motivated by the possibility of generating more diverse insights and experiences, a variety of restaurant types such as traditional restaurants, Food trucks, Lunch restaurants, Cafés and bars were sampled.

Criteria of the cases to answer the question: <i>How do MSME restaurants in Sweden overcome crises and adversity?</i>
Micro or SME restaurants (>250)
The restaurants must be located within a big city in Sweden (top 3 biggest)
Restaurants must have overcome crises and/or adversity successfully
Participants must have an experience with, and a good memory of crises/adversity and how they acted - therefore they must have successfully coped with crises/adversity within the past 5 years
The restaurants have to be autonomous

Table 1. Case criteria

Several criteria were set to ensure that the participants selected were of theoretical interest (see table 1). The first criterion established is that the restaurants have less than 250 employees, to be within the realms of the MSME definition. This was set in order to study cases relevant to the targeted research gap. Furthermore, the criteria for the restaurants to be located within the top three biggest cities in Sweden; Malmö, Gothenburg, or Stockholm, was set to ensure a level of similarity of urban context. The choice of cases in larger cities was made since smaller cities may have more prominent situational factors, resulting in less applicable and generalizable findings. For participants to contribute to the study and generate valuable insights of how they survived and managed adversity and/or crisis, the criteria that the restaurants must have survived crises and/or adversity successfully, and that the participants worked there at the time was set. Furthermore, the need for them to hold a good memory of the coped crisis/adversity was crucial in order for the study to collect correct and extensive data. Therefore, the criterion that the crisis and/or adversity was experienced within the past five years was set. Lastly, the criterion that the restaurants were autonomous i.e., privately owned was set to collect data from cases with the freedom to implement strategies and make changes rapidly and extensively during crisis and/or adversity.

Case number	Location	Business Type	Role	Founding year	Number of employees	Worked here for:
Pilot	Malmö	Restaurant	Manager	2019	9	4 months
1	Malmö	Bar/restaurant	Founder/Manager	2023	6-7	From start
2	Göteborg	Foodtruck	Co-founder	2014	8-20	From start
3	Göteborg	Foodtruck	Co-founder	2018	4-12	From start
4	Malmö	Restaurant	Manager	2014	15	9 years
5	Malmö	Café	Owner	2020	8-12	From start
6	Malmö	Restaurant	Co-founder	2022	13	From start
7	Stockholm	Lunch Restaurant	Owner & Founder	2011	11-12	From start
8	Malmö	Restaurant	Manager	2021	20-25	2 years
9	Stockholm	Lunch restaurant	Founder	2016	10	From start
10	Malmö	Café/bar	Owner	2017	9	From start
11	Malmö	Bar/restaurant	Co-founder	2023	7	Fram start

Table 2. Case overview

Furthermore, the number of cases selected was based on Saunders and Townsends' (2016) statement of collecting sufficient data that shows transparency, and depth, and can be used to answer the research question. The authors state that the norm of the number of cases for qualitative research is between 15 to 60, however, the research purpose and the saliency of data should be kept in mind. Since this study involved cases with participants who could provide rich and diverse data, a smaller number of participants was enough to reach theoretical saturation where no new insight could be drawn from the data (Bell et al. 2022). After conducting 8 interviews, the research started to receive homogenous data, hence approach saturation. However, the data collection continued until saturation was met and confirmed in several interviews and across all categories of restaurant categories. Therefore, the number of cases researched in this study was 11.

4.4 Data Collection

After prospecting restaurants through googling, researching and scouting different restaurants in person that matched the criteria presented earlier, the interviewees were contacted. The contact was primarily made through E-mail and LinkedIn as well as in person with a brief explanation of what the study was about. After confirming that the criteria were met, the interviews were conducted in person, via phone call or via video conference.

This study was conducted with semi-structured interviews to collect empirical data of both real-time and retrospective perspectives from founders/owners/managers who have experienced crises and/or adversity (Gioia et al. 2013). The interviews were structured to follow an interview guide, see appendix A, focused on the research topic of crisis and adversity in their business, but was used very flexibly and did not limit the interviewees' responses (Bell et al. 2022). Open questions were asked to gain a better understanding and learn more about their experiences related to crisis and adversity in the restaurant industry, followed by follow-up questions if additional information needed to be received or an answer displayed an area of interest that motivated more questions. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed directly after the interview. The interviews were roughly 30 - 45 minutes long and held over the period of three weeks with both the authors present.

4.5 Quality Assessment

In order for this study to have a high level of trustworthiness, four criteria were considered when conducting the qualitative research; Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, and Confirmability (Bell et al. 2022). The first criterion, refers to the credibility of the research findings and how believable they are (Bell et al. 2022). To establish credibility, both of the authors were present during the case interviews to ensure the accuracy of the collected data by providing more than one interpretation. Furthermore, credibility was enforced by including direct quotes to exemplify the findings further and provide an evidential foundation for the analysis of findings. The quotes that were translated from Swedish to English were also listed in their original language in appendix B to ensure transparent usage of quotes.

The second criterion of transferability encloses to what extent the findings of this thesis can be applied to other contexts (Bell et al. 2022). A thorough and detailed description of the research methodology and the cases characteristics and demographics was provided to facilitate the transferability. Limitations of the research and methods applied are added in order to showcase for whom this study is applicable to, and what is limiting the transferability. By offering transparency of this study's process, the reader receives a better understanding of whether the information can be used in another context or not.

To ensure dependability, which is the third criterion and relates to the consistency and reliability of the research findings (Bell et al. 2022), the whole process of this study was carefully documented. A detailed explanation of the sampling strategy is showcased, followed by the research's criteria of the cases. Furthermore, the process of collecting the data is described with an explanation of how the authors proceeded to prospect and reach out to the participants and how the interviews were conducted. Both the authors then ensured that the choice of method and approach was valid and correctly documented.

The last criterion is confirmability and aims to verify that the researchers' opinion is not apparent in the thesis' outcome and that the authors stay honest (Bell et al. 2022). To minimize the potential biases in the findings, the researchers continuously reflected on the stated assumptions throughout the research process and kept the documentation transparent. With consideration of these four criteria, the study retains the reliability and validity of the research findings and therefore contributes with knowledge within the studied field.

Additionally, to avoid bias and interpretation of complex concepts such as adversity and crises, casual language was used whereas words such as “setbacks”, “tough times” and “difficulties” were employed. This was done for the interviewees to provide information about the experiences rather than their perception of what the concepts entail as experiences and instead isolate that to the researcher's analysis process.

4.6 Data Analysis

To interpret and analyze the data collected, an analysis was conducted with a thematic approach, using 1st and 2nd order categorization of the data (Gioia et al. 2013). In the 1st order analysis, which is meant to adhere closely to the informants' terms (Gioia et al. 2013), the collected data was categorized freely to stay truthful and close to the terms, which culminated in a large number of concepts. After defining the different concepts, the analysis continued with identifying similarities and differences between the concepts and after identifying common factors, distilling the categories into a smaller, more manageable number. After labeling the concepts with terms closely related to terms from the participants, the authors navigated the display of categories by analyzing the smaller codes with a more abstract perspective, guided by the Gioia et al. (2013) as looking at the question “what's really going on here?”, culminating in 2nd order themes. With the emergence of 2nd order themes, a relation to several bootstrapping methods presented in 3.2.2 could be identified among some of the themes.

Moreover, a process of analyzing differences and similarities between the different themes was conducted and themes were organized into aggregated dimensions. For one of the emerging aggregated dimensions, the theoretical concept of Bootstrapping was directly applied. After this analysis process, a data structure displaying the concepts, themes and dimensions was made to offer an overview of the findings from a broader and more theoretical perspective. The process of analysis was presented with an explanation of how the concepts were organized into themes and aggregated dimensions.

In order to conduct a deeper analysis and move from the data structure that is described as more of a static overview by Gioia et al. (2013) to a grounded theory model of a dynamic and complex phenomenon, the analysis was continued with a focus on how the different emerging concepts relate to and interact with each other. Through this analysis process, a perception of the dynamic interrelationship between themes and dimension and how they affect each other as well as what they result in was built and displayed in two different conceptual frameworks. Lastly, the analysis was finalized by putting the grounded theory model and findings in the context of existing literature, guided by the literature review, to analyze the findings' coherence and divergence from existing research.

4.7 Limitations

4.7.1 Research design

In conducting this study, several limitations have been identified that may have an effect on the transparency and generalizability of the findings (Bell et al. 2022). The thesis' reliance on open interviews, may have resulted in biases, lack of transparency, and reliance on the participants' own thoughts which could have influenced the outcome. Furthermore, despite the efforts of allowing theories to emerge from the data collection, the development of the grounded theory models could have unintentionally been influenced by preconceived beliefs from the authors during the analysis. This may have influenced the interpretation of the findings. Lastly, with the chosen approach of a case study to enhance the depth of the analysis, there is a possibility that some nuances and variations among different restaurants may not have been fully captured since the scope of the case study is limited. A wider exploration of more restaurants within every category could therefore have been more favorable.

4.1.2 Sampling Strategy

A possible limitation is that the criteria set on the different restaurants were not sufficiently strict to ensure the same level of success in surviving and handling crises and adversity, which could have affected the outcome of this thesis. Furthermore, one limitation of the sampling strategy may be that the pilot interview was conducted with a restaurant manager that had only been employed for a few months, which showed to result in insufficient quality of the data. Although it generated insights in how to adapt the criteria, the quality of the open questions could not fully be tested due to the limited knowledge of the participant. Lastly, the perception of met saturation might have been affected by the authors ability to identify new codes and their own interpretations of saturation (Bell et al. 2022). Determining premature saturation may have limited the explorations of unique perspectives that could have emerged by conducting additional interviews.

Another limitation discovered was the choice to include cases located in different cities. Although they were all located in a larger city area and the variation may have provided the study with a broader scope, the choice to include samples from different cities also introduced

variability to cultural and contextual factors as well as economical conditions that may affect the different strategies employed.

4.7.3 Data collection

The data collection method encompasses several limitations. The duration of the interviews, 30-45 minutes, could have restricted the depth of the cases' experiences due to the short time frame. However, the interview ended when there appeared to be no more relevant information to extract. An additional limitation for the collected data was having different types of modes for interviews. Phone calls, video meetings and face-to-face interviews can differ in the depth and quality of the participants' responses. Online interviews, such as phone calls and video meetings, limit the level of personal connection that would have been received with only face-to-face interviews (Bell et al. 2022). The different interviews could therefore vary in quality from each other and findings could have been skewed.

4.8 Ethical Considerations

Several actions to ensure integrity within the study were taken in line with Bell, Bryman and Harley's (2020) suggested considerations. To ensure that the participants were comfortable sharing their experiences and integrity, the participants were informed that the data would be handled anonymously in regards to displaying names and personal information. They were also verbally informed before agreeing to participate, as well as at the start of the interviews, that the interviews would be recorded in order for the authors to transcribe and analyze the data correctly.

5. Findings

This chapter presents the empirical findings of the data collected from the semistructured interviews, see interview guide in Appendix A, with the restaurant owners/founders/managers, 1-11 (Table 2). The findings are identified with a thematic approach and presented as six aggregated dimensions using 1st and 2nd order analysis (Gioia et al. 2013). The experienced external crises and adversity among the cases were all experienced within five years and included; the global COVID-19 pandemic; Restaurant industry staff shortage; War/inflation/interest rate crisis; and Disruptive construction. Some internal crises and adversity such as fires and employee fights, were also mentioned but will however, not be further explored out of lack of theoretical interest.

5.1 Overview

1st order concepts	2nd order themes	Aggregate dimensions
Minimized food waste by making use of every ingredient and making dishes with food that is left	Minimizing bootstrapper	Bootstrapping
Fired external marketing - marketed by themselves instead		
Support from family and friends as personnel	Relationship-oriented bootstrapper	
Rent kitchen space from earlier work contacts for cheap, outside of their opening hours		
Postpone rent payments	Delaying bootstrapper	
Borrow capital from landlord for renovation		
Contract with a brewery		
Invested money generated from other businesses	Private owner-financer bootstrapper	
Apply for governmental grants	Subsidy-oriented bootstrapper	
Apply for governmental loans		

Different new activities/concepts: After work, abba events etc.	Customer Experience Enhancement	Business Development	
Different new activities/concepts: Karaoke, quiz night etc.			
Discount on takeaway			
Sitting-down party			
Collaboration with food delivery service company	Operational Augmentation		
Started a new concept called "weekend bag" to adapt to the pandemic			
Renovation	Facility Enhancement		
Purchased a pizza oven			
Improved outdoor seating with glass			
Heighten product prices	Increase revenue per unit		Increase Price Margin
Gradually work up the prices			
Make portions smaller	Reduce product cost		
Switch out to cheaper ingredients			
Limit opening hours. Fewer hours to reduce personnel costs	Reduce operational cost		
Analyze and cancel less profitable operations			
Temporary layoff for personnel			
Maintain fast service	Retain relationships with customers	Relationship Retainment	
Not compromise on service quality			
Not heighten prices			
Not compromise on the quality/quantity of the raw materials			
Did not lay off the staff	Retain relationship with personnel		
Co-owners reduced time and prioritized staff hours so they were able to avoid layoffs			

Open communication with personnel			
Low operational costs	Financial resilience	Adaptive Resilience Prerequisites	
Saved money for low-season business			
Emergency buffer			
Good customer relationship	Customer loyalty		
Satisfied customer			
Good relationship with personnel	Personnel loyalty		
Fight or flight- choose fight	Mindset		
Sit back and be cool under pressured times			
Keep evolving to keep up			
Full speed ahead and not pulling the brakes			
Anticipating the next wave of adversity	Anticipatory Awareness		
Plan for the unplannable			
Learned to anticipate the next crisis			
Increasing emergency buffer	Proactive financial planning		Proactive Measures
Cautious about spending money			
Holding on tightly to our money for the next crisis since we can't know what will happen			
Now conduct frequent competitive analysis and analyzes customer habits at other businesses to keep up to date	Proactive analysis		
Frequent environmental analysis to be prepared for what is happening in the world			

Table 3. Overview Aggregated Dimensions

5.2 Bootstrapping

1st order concepts	2nd order themes	Aggregate dimension
Minimized food waste by making use of every ingredient and making dishes with food that is left	Minimizing bootstrapper	Bootstrapping
Fired external marketing - marketed by themselves instead		
Support from family and friends as personnel	Relationship-oriented bootstrapper	
Rent kitchen space from earlier work contacts for cheap, outside of their opening hours		
Postpone rent payments	Delaying bootstrapper	
Borrow capital from landlord for renovation		
Contract with a brewery		
Invested money generated from other businesses	Private owner-financer bootstrapper	
Apply for governmental grants	Subsidy-oriented bootstrapper	
Apply for governmental loans		

Table 4. Bootstrapping

In seven of the cases; 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, and 9, methods to reduce costs by changing the business operations were discovered. Minimizing food waste was mentioned in both cases 3 and 8. Case 3 stated: *“We had a lot more food waste before. (...). We learned a lot about managing groceries and how to make use of them.”*. By making use of the leftover ingredients and coming up with new dishes indicated that improving resource efficiency and optimizing the use of resources was a strategy applied to reduce costs of food waste. Furthermore, case 1 mentioned that by firing external marketers and conducting the marketing in-house instead was a strategy to save money. These two actions can be distilled to the theme **Minimizing bootstrapper**.

An additional concept was identified in case 3 that stated that they took help from friends and family to support as personnel: *“Support from family and close friends who helped with*

servicing.”. Furthermore, renting cheap kitchen space from contacts that were not utilized at the hours needed was mentioned by case 2: “*We got to prep in the kitchen where we worked at because it was only open in the evenings.*”. The two concepts can be categorized into the theme **relationship-oriented bootstrapper**. They can reduce cost by leveraging existing relationships and contacts to help business operations.

Another type of bootstrapper was discovered as a second-order theme, the **Delaying bootstrapper**. This theme includes three first-order concepts, all identified in case 7. The first concept is about the ability to postpone the rent which the restaurant did during a crisis to save money. Furthermore, the concept of borrowing capital from the landlord to renovate is mentioned where they received capital to renovate the courtyard: “*The landlord agreed to it, and we got a tenant improvement.*”. The last concept for this theme was presented by case 7 which includes the contact with a brewery where the restaurant got an advanced discount on the delivery: “*We renegotiated our contracts with the beverage supplier. That way, we got a lot of money.*”.

A third bootstrapper theme recognized in case 5 where it is stated that the owner “*have invested quite a bit of money from other business ventures*” to be able to survive the adversity. This was assorted into the theme of **Private owner-financer bootstrapper**. The last concepts identified that can be related to a cluster is the actions of applying for government grants and loans. Case 7 mentioned that: “*We applied for all available grants, and we received all of them*”. Furthermore stated case 9 that they also utilized the possibility to receive financial support during the crisis, in form of loans. These concepts are recognized as the **Subsidy-oriented bootstrapper**. All the second-order themes presented relate to the larger aggregated dimension of *Bootstrapping*.

5.3 Business Development

1st order concepts	2nd order themes	Aggregate dimension
Different new activities/concepts: After work, abba events etc.	Customer Experience Enhancement	Business Development
Different new activities/concepts: Karaoke, quiz night etc.		
Discount on takeaway		
Sitting-down party		
Collaboration with food delivery service company	Operational Augmentation	
Started a new concept called "weekend bag" to adapt to the pandemic		
Renovation	Facility Enhancement	
Purchased a pizza oven		
Improved outdoor seating with glass		

Table 5. Business Development

In order to attract more customers and reach a broader customer segment during crises and adversity, several measures were conducted and showcased in seven of the interviewed cases; 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8 and 9. The first of the three second-order themes discovered is **Customer Experience Enhancement**. This theme involves the concept of starting new activities for the customers which is explained in case 1: *“Now we do have some different activities like quiz night and karaoke. (...). I didn't plan on those at the beginning. (...). But I was like, oh, no one is coming around.”*. Case 8 also mentioned how they started to implement activities and events to attract more customers. Discount on takeaway was an additional concept discovered in case 9: *“We had a lot of discounts all the time (...) to really bring in the people.”*. Lastly, a concept found in case 9 that enhances customer experience is creating a sitting-down party for the guests, *“Then we had a sitting club and seated dance”*

Collaboration with a food delivery service company and expanding the operation to meet the customers’ needs forms the next second-order theme **Operational Augmentation**. Case 2 mentions that involving a third party to handle the home delivery facilitated their ability to run

their restaurant more broadly. When hit with adversity, case 3 needed to rethink its business to be able to reach its customers and attract new ones: *“Then we understood that we had to rethink. (...) people were eating at home. (...). We had a weekend bag that both individuals and companies could book including three courses.”*

The last second-order theme is **Facility Enhancement** which includes concepts that focus on developing the business to gain customer satisfaction and are found in two cases, 4 and 7. Three first-order concepts are discovered in case 4 as renovation, purchasing a pizza oven, and improvement on the outdoor seating. Case 4 states: *“What we actually did then was to take the opportunity to do some renovation. We expanded and installed a pizza oven that we didn't have before. (...) We also took the opportunity to expand the outdoor seating area, which we invested a lot in. (...). It has made a significant difference in attracting people.”*. Case 7 also describes the opportunity to renovate when a crisis has occurred: *“Then we made an investment and started a big construction project. I built a pergola in the courtyard.”*. These three themes can be transformed into the aggregated dimension *Business development*.

5.4 Increase Price Margin

1st order concepts	2nd order themes	Aggregate dimension
Heighten product prices	Increase revenue per unit	Increase Price Margin
Gradually work up the prices		
Make portions smaller	Reduce product cost	
Switch out to cheaper ingredients		
Limit opening hours. Fewer hours to reduce personnel costs	Reduce operational cost	
Analyze and cancel less profitable operations		
Temporary layoff for personnel		

Table 6. Increase Price Margin

Several methods of increasing the price margin are shown in six cases; 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, and 10. The discovered second-order theme **Increasing Revenue per unit** is focusing on heightening the

product prices and gradually increasing the prices. This action was shown in cases 3 and 8. An additional second-order theme focuses on **Reducing product costs** by making the portions of the food smaller and switching out the expensive ingredients to cheaper ones. In case 3 it was stated that: *“We needed to consider the size of the portions and start using cheaper carbohydrates.”*. The ability to change to cheaper ingredients is also explained in case 6: *“We decided to endure lower margins and economize on other things, such as finding cheaper ingredients.”*.

Another identified theme is **Reduce operational cost**. A concept related to this theme was discovered in cases 2 and 4, involving limiting the opening hours to reduce personnel expenses. In order to save capital case 2 said: *“(…) we talked to those who worked with us and said that none of us have any idea how this is going to go. We hope that you're okay with reducing your hours a bit because we had to cut down on the opening hours.”*. The second concept found was the action of analyzing and canceling less profitable operations. This was utilized by case 2 and 6, where case 6 describes their realization of closing down the wine bar and only focusing on the restaurant's dining room, which resulted in more profit. A last concept identified to reduce the operational costs was to lay off employees temporarily, which was mentioned by case 3. Another case that also took the action to take away working hours for the personnel was case 10, *“The staff were asked to stay at home, and I stepped in and worked to save the company.”*. These three second-order themes created the aggregated dimension Increase Price Margin.

5.5 Relationship Retainmentment

1st order concepts	2nd order themes	Aggregate dimension
Maintain fast service	Retain relationships with customers	Relationship Retainmentment
Not compromise on service quality		
Not heighten prices		
Not compromise on the quality/quantity of the raw materials		
Did not lay off the staff	Retain relationship with personnel	
Co-owners reduced time and prioritized staff hours so they were able to avoid layoffs		
Open communication with personnel		

Table 7. Relationship Retainmentment

One important factor when restaurants are experiencing adversity emphasized by the participants, was to preserve relationships. This was present in six of the cases, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9 and 10. Customers are a big part of a restaurant's operation, and by having good relationships with them, the businesses can survive adversity and hard times. How to **Retain relationships with customers** is discovered in case 4 where the importance of maintaining good service quality to preserve happy customers is stated: “(...) *we're extremely fast at everything. (...) We have extremely satisfied customers.*”. Case 4 also emphasized the importance of not compromising on factors affecting the customers negatively; “(...) *you can never change the quality of the product. That's when you lose guests.*”. Case 6, 7 and 10 indicated that in order to retain the relationship with the customers you should not raise the prices. Case 6 stated: “*There were many who raised their prices. (...) I think that made a lot of customers scared. (.). So instead, we decided that we just have to endure having lower margins.*”. Case 10 had the same opinion and explained: “*Some increase the prices of their products, those companies (...) lose turnover. (...) people don't have enough money, sometimes you have to take a loss to avoid losing customers.*”.

One other important factor for the restaurants' operations is the personnel. In cases 2, 4, 7 and 9 it becomes clear that they focused on the theme **Retain relationship with personnel** when met

with adversity. In the interview with case 2, the importance of keeping their personnel at every cost was showcased, “(...) *we don't want to do this, we don't want to lay off. (...). Everyone stays on board and we reduce hours. (...). We [the founders] stepped out of operation.*”. Furthermore, case 2 continued to explain how important it was to retain personnel after the crisis, when the industry “*had a major shortage of staff*” and they “*couldn't hire staff so we didn't open the restaurant in the evenings until June.*”. Lastly within this theme is the concept identified in case 4, that describes that their open communication among the personnel maintain the good relationship between all the employees. These two second-order themes culminate in the aggregated dimension *Relationship Retainment*.

5.6 Adaptive Resilience Prerequisites

1st order concepts	2nd order themes	Aggregate dimension
Low operational costs	Financial resilience	Adaptive Resilience Prerequisites
Saved money for low-season business		
Emergency buffer		
Good customer relationship	Customer loyalty	
Satisfied customer		
Good relationship with personnel	Personnel loyalty	
Fight or flight- choose fight	Mindset	
Sit back and be cool under pressured times		
Keep evolving to keep up		
Full speed ahead and not pulling the brakes		
Anticipating the next wave of adversity	Anticipatory Awareness	
Plan for the unplannable		
Learned to anticipate the next crisis		

Table 8. Adaptive Resilience Prerequisites

Throughout the case interviews, different prerequisites that helped the establishments survive adversity and crises were found in seven cases; 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10 and 11. Both in cases 2 and 3, the founders of the food trucks stressed the importance of maintaining low costs. Case 2 stated that *“We could have afforded to just shut down and sit and pay rent. Because we had such low operational costs.”*. Case 5 mentioned the low rent made it possible for them to survive their crises: *“It was a low rent, compared to other places. That was a crucial reason why we didn't go bankrupt.”*. Furthermore, as stated in case 4, *“We had an emergency budget at that time”*, which allowed them to cope with the difficult time. An emergency buffer is also mentioned by case 11 that is saved for future adversity. Case 2 stated how their usual cycle of saving up after summer seasons to have money to last throughout the less busy winter season helped them survive the pandemic as well as the current economic downturn. These different concepts can be grouped as **financial resilience** factors.

Furthermore, the importance of having satisfied customers and a good relationship with their customers was stressed in three cases whereas in case 3, the importance of having satisfied customers was emphasized since *“(…) our customers kept buying from us. (…) It's nice when people keep reaching out to us.”*. In case 4 it was mentioned that *“We have extremely satisfied customers.”*, which was an effect from their good and fast service and the quality of the food. Case 9 also shows the characteristics of having a good relationship with their customers. It is stated that they show high customer value by giving the guests a lot for their money, which is well appreciated. These concepts of high customer satisfaction and good customer relationships culminate in **Customer loyalty** where the customers stay throughout difficult times.

Another important factor expressed by case 4 was that the restaurant had a great relationship with their personnel from before: *“Many people feel that this is my family here. You have heard it a thousand times before but that is really how it is here. And it is a lot because of our owner”*. Having a good relationship with personnel resulted in **Personnel loyalty** in crisis that allowed the businesses to maintain their service value throughout adversity. For case 10, it was stated that the very good relationship with the personnel allowed for them to take away the staff working

hours during the crisis and still be able to rehire them later: *“They understood that for the company to survive, I needed to make a change, which everyone agreed to.”*

Furthermore, the concepts that explained how the restaurants approached or perceived the situation were apparent. Case 9 expressed how they *“chose to accelerate instead of stopping.”* whilst case 2 explain how they *“Instead of hitting the panic button, kept our cool”*. Case 4 mentioned how they tried to move forward instead of standing still: *“If you stand still in an industry like this, you will eventually lose your edge. So it's important to constantly be innovative and evolve.”*. Lastly, case 1 expressed their determination to fight when met with a crisis or adversity. These concepts form the theme **Mindset**.

The last identified theme is **Anticipatory Awareness** and consists of three concepts. The first concept is about expecting future adversity is visible in both case 2 and 3. Case 3 stated: *“Just because you might feel that things are calm now and that there won't be much happening, you can always think that soon there will be a new pandemic, or soon a wave of something else will come.”*. The second recognized concept was plan for the unplannable which is mentioned by case 4: *“But there is always something happening that you cannot plan for. So it's more about just plan for the unplannable.”*. The last concept is identified in case 6 who showcased that earlier experience of adversity resulted in expecting more future adversity.

All of these concepts and themes refer to something the restaurants already had built up before they met the recent adversity and may therefore not be perceived as answering the question of “how” restaurants tackle adversity directly. However, they are all examples of factors that can be proactively increased or adjusted to some extent. Therefore, they can be distilled into the aggregated dimensions of *adjustable resilience prerequisites*.

5.7 Proactive Measures

1st order concepts	2nd order themes	Aggregate dimension
Increasing emergency buffer	Proactive financial planning	Proactive measures
Cautious about spending money		
Holding on tightly to our money for the next crisis since we can't know what will happen		
Now conduct frequent competitive analysis and analyzes customer habits at other businesses to keep up to date	Proactive analysis	
Frequent environmental analysis to be prepared for what is happening in the world		

Table 9. Proactive measures

In five of the cases, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 11, there were some actions and precautions that they now take in order to prepare for coming unforeseen events and externalities. Actions taken after meeting and overcoming adversity and or crisis. In case 4, the owner already had an existing emergency budget after many years of experience in the shaky restaurant industry that helped them through the crises and adversity they met. However, after the pandemic crisis, they stated: *"nothing on the radar that something like that could happen"*, they expanded their emergency budget: *"It's larger now in case something similar happens again so that we can hold out even longer."* Expanding the emergency buffer is also mentioned by case 11 as a proactive measure taken in anticipation for future adversity. In case 2, 3 and 4, it was found that they have become more cautious with their money and hold on more tightly to their finances after the pandemic in case there is going to be more adversity. As stated by the founder in case 3: *"Soon a wave of something else will come. You have to be frugal now"*. These concepts of retaining money in case of future adversity are distilled into the theme of **Proactive financial planning**.

In case 6, it was stated that the founder of the restaurant who had previous experience with running businesses during crisis and adversity now *"try to check, like, the external environment and competitive analysis quite thoroughly"* to stay aware of the current and upcoming situation.

This method can be analyzed as conducting **Proactive analysis**. These themes can be linked with the description of proactiveness that drives resilience for MSMEs as previously presented in the literature and be distilled into the aggregated dimension of *proactive measures*.

6. Analysis

In this chapter, the analysis of the findings is continued with a focus of discovering and understanding the dynamic interactions, differences and similarities of the different concepts, themes and aggregated dimensions. The analysis culminates in two explanatory grounded theory frameworks.

6.1 Profit increase and customer value

The three different dimensions; *Increase price margin*, *Business development* and *Bootstrapping* were all built upon second-order concepts that included actions taken to cut costs, generate more revenue per customer or attract more customers. What connects them is that they are all methods to cram down costs or increase revenue in some way. What can be analyzed as the biggest differentiator of the three dimensions is how they affect customer value. Since the different bootstrapping mechanisms primarily affect the business's internal operations, it has no direct effects upon the offered or perceived customer value. Yet still, it reduces costs within the operation, resulting in an increased profit directly.

The dimension of *Increase price margin* that encompasses mechanisms such as heightening prices, shrinking portions and limiting opening hours, does however, directly reduce the value offered to or perceived by customers. It mainly changes the business *externally* since the operations mostly remain unchanged. This results in more profit per purchase since prices go up and product costs are reduced. The dimension also includes laying off staff, which can be argued to not be as directly tied to price margin increase. However, mainly on-call employees were laid off, whose work is directly related to the services and food provided which can also be seen as a cost of goods sold, i.e., product cost.

The dimension of *Business development*, which encompasses themes such as renovation, new concepts and increased convenience however changes both the value offered *externally* and the business *internally*. The *Business development* dimension directly extends or increases the perceived or offered customer value since it develops operations and offers more things than the original value offers. These extensions make the value offer more attractive and attract new customers. One of the themes within the *Business development* dimension is however different from the others. The *Facility Enhancement* theme mainly increases the profit value long-term since it requires large investments, whilst the other themes affect it immediately after implementation. The renovation can however, still result in immediate increase of the customer value.

6.2 Relationship Retainment

The dimension of *Relationship Retainment*, encompassing various choices such as not compromising on customer value and not firing staff even though it would benefit the financials at the time, was discovered as a common strategy among the cases to retain loyalty among their customers and their staff. Although emphasized as very important by many cases, other employed methods directly contradicted it. The dimension of *Increase price margin* compromises customer value by increasing prices quickly, making portions smaller and limiting opening hours, which directly contradicts the concepts of not compromising on customer value and product/service quality within the theme of *Retain customer relationships*. Similarly, the concept of cutting costs by laying off staff and personnel, as part of the *Increase price margin* dimension, contradicts the theme of *Retain personnel relations* since it may harm or terminate the relationship with personnel. Founders in some cases chose to cut back on their own hours in order to keep staff on the payroll as part of the *Retain personnel relations* theme whilst some did the complete opposite and chose to terminate staff and work more themselves as part of the *Increase price margin* dimension.

6.3 Proactive measures

The dimension *Proactive measures* encompasses concepts that cases have implemented after a crisis to prepare for future similar situations. The theme of *Financial planning* that includes concepts such as increasing emergency buffer or holding on tightly to money feeds into the

adaptable prerequisite theme of having *financial resilience*. Conducting proactive financial planning provides better financial prerequisites for surviving crisis and adversity.

The other theme of *proactive analysis* encompasses analytical strategies taken to proactively prepare for a crisis. Conducting analyzes of the current industry environment, consumer habits and competition, can keep the restaurants prepared for what possible trends, threats and externalities are coming. This measure develops into a new adaptable prerequisite of *pre-awareness*.

6.4 Adaptable Resilience prerequisites

The dimension of *adaptable resilience prerequisites* outlines different prerequisites that the participants viewed as helpful in their success that can be changed.

Firstly, the *financially resilient* theme that encompassed having an emergency buffer as well as having low operational costs, resulted in an ability to persevere through challenging times without major loss. By having low operational costs, some cases could employ the strategy of *Retaining personnel relationships* and not laying off staff without losing a large amount of capital. Similarly, cases with an emergency buffer could also avoid laying off staff, ie. *retaining personnel relationships*. The cases with a buffer could also employ the strategy of *retaining customer relationships*, by not compromising on the quality of food or service during economically challenging times as well as pursuing *Facility Enhancement* as part of the *business development* dimension and making use of less profitable periods by renovating and extending the customer value rather than diminishing it.

Having low operational costs can be questioned as an *adaptable resilience prerequisite* since a large factor is the venue's rent that can often not be altered in hindsight, leaving foodtruckers and smaller restaurants at an advantage. However, the dimension of *Bootstrapping* entails strategies that lower operational costs such as *relationship-oriented bootstrappers* whereas leveraging relationships and networks can lower rent and other costs. This way, *Bootstrapping* can also be employed as a *proactive measure* to drive *financial resilience*. Although lowering operational costs can be difficult in the midst of a crisis, it is a prerequisite that can be adapted beforehand.

Although primarily coded as a prerequisite, it also appeared as a strategic choice whereas one case turned down offers or opportunities of expansion in order to keep their costs low. This strategy also relates to the dimension of *Proactive measures*, that entails the concept of *holding on tightly to money* for future adversity.

Secondly, the theme of *customer loyalty*, which was discovered as an important driver of resilience through adversity, was a prerequisite that allowed for businesses to still have customers choosing their establishment through adversity and helped them retain more revenue. The *retain customers* theme closely adheres to the prerequisite since it focuses on maintaining the *customer relationships* throughout the adversity by not reducing customer value. Retaining good customer relationships and not compromising on customer value maintains the *customer loyalty* since having an unchanged customer value through crisis does not affect the concepts of *customer satisfaction* or *good customer relationship* negatively. Measures that increase customer value however, may increase *customer satisfaction* or *good customer relationship*, resulting in an increased customer loyalty rather than just maintained.

The *Increase revenue per unit* theme resulting in a diminished customer value that contradicts the *customer retention* efforts, may however be assumed to reduce *customer satisfaction* and have the opposite effect upon the *customer loyalty* in a long term context. However, no empirical findings in this study enforce or prove this.

Thirdly, the theme of *personnel loyalty* was raised as a prerequisite for managing the crisis effectively. It was stressed that having a good relationship with personnel i.e., having loyal personnel was imperative to retain service talent throughout challenging times. Although many cases tried to *retain personnel relationships* through strategies like only reducing the hours and not laying off employees and cutting back on the owners hours instead, the crisis and/or adversity still negatively affected the personnel to some extent. Having loyal personnel was important to prevent them from quitting. By prioritizing staff and minimizing lost working hours, the *retainment of personnel relationships* avoided damage done to the relationship, therefore feeding into the maintenance of the prerequisite *personnel loyalty*. However, some cases laid off their staff as part of the *increase profit* dimension to cut costs and still managed to rehire their

personnel. They did however emphasize that they had a very established and good personnel relationship before that. Whilst *personnel loyalty* as a prerequisite may be kept by strategies of *retaining personnel relationships*, a high personnel loyalty can also allow for keeping or rehiring staff even after straining the relationship by laying off or firing them.

Moreover, *Mindset* was a theme of prerequisites that emerged throughout many of the cases. Having the instincts of fighting instead of giving up and focusing on moving forward instead of backwards were all part of a prerequisite for actively trying to manage adversity and/or crises. The mindset of trying to tackle the crises rather than admitting defeat allowed for them to look for and find solutions rather than being afraid. The cases with a courageous mindset all chose to not compromise on the customer value by focusing on *Business development* and *bootstrapping*, rather than getting scared and implementing actions of *increasing price margin* that affected the customers negatively, such as heightening prices and minimizing the portion size.

Lastly, a less tangible prerequisite theme that emerged was *anticipatory awareness*. This theme appeared in cases with previous experience from crisis or adversity, and as a trait adopted in hindsight of recent crisis or adversity experience. The *anticipatory awareness* can be analyzed as a prerequisite for taking proactive measures. For example, *holding on tightly to money* and *expanding emergency the buffer* as *proactive financial planning* was made with future crises or adversity in mind. Moreover, *conducting market analyzes* was made after experiencing a crisis before, with an *anticipatory awareness* of potential future adversity and crisis in mind. Additionally, prerequisites such as having *financial resilience* where restaurants already had an emergency buffer had also done this as a *proactive measure* after many years in a volatile industry with an anticipation of future adversity, ie. *anticipatory awareness*.

6.5 Conceptual Framework of Adversity Management

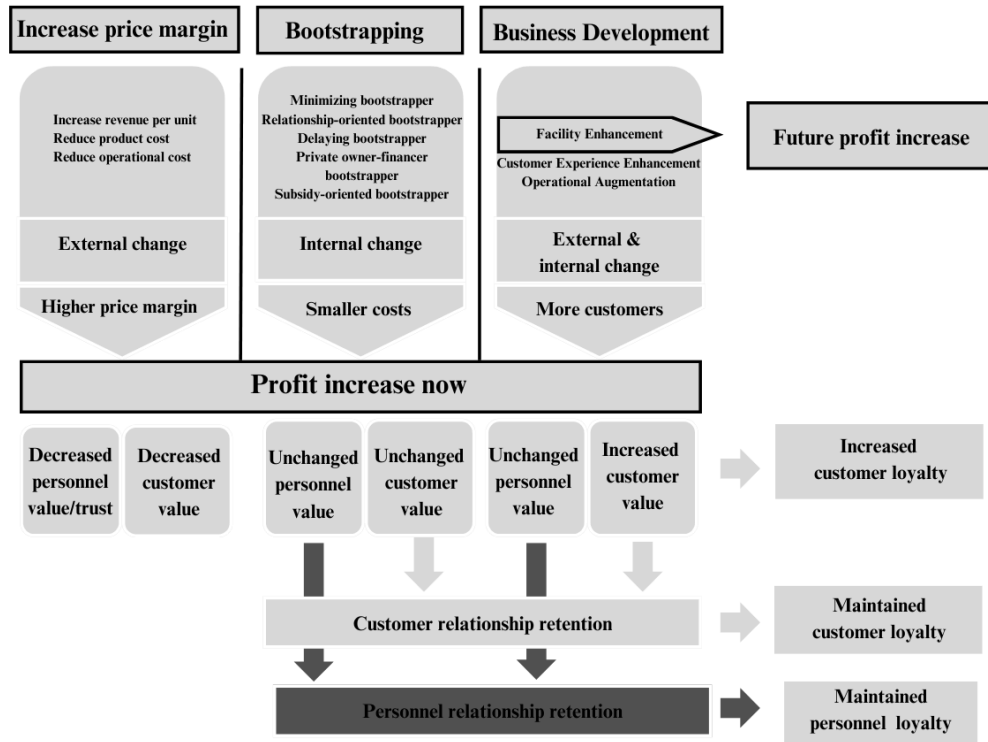


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of active adversity management strategies and impact on value

As presented in the framework above, the three dimensions of *Increase price margin*, *Bootstrapping* and *Business development* all create a profit increase by raising the price margin, reducing costs and attracting more customers. However, the profit increase of *Facility Enhancement* is shown to be future while the other themes of *Business development* and the other dimensions result in profit increase directly. The dimension of *Increase price margin* encompasses external changes that lead to a decreased customer value while the *Bootstrapping* dimension solely encompasses internal changes that do not change the customer value. The dimension of *Business development* encompasses both external and internal changes and leads to an increased customer value. The unchanged and increased customer value from *Bootstrapping* and *Business development* does not inflict any strain on the customer relationship and therefore leads to customer relationship retention. Customer relationship retention maintains customer loyalty. *Business development* that results in an extended or increased customer value leads to an increase in customer loyalty.

Unlike the *Increase price margin* dimension that includes laying off personnel and reducing hours that leads to a decreased personnel value, *Business development* and *Bootstrapping* can be implemented without decreasing the personnel value and straining the relationship, hence retaining relationships with personnel and therefore maintaining personnel loyalty. However, since there is no positive impact on the value for personnel rather than unchanged, it does not increase personnel loyalty.

6.6 Conceptual Framework of Prerequisites

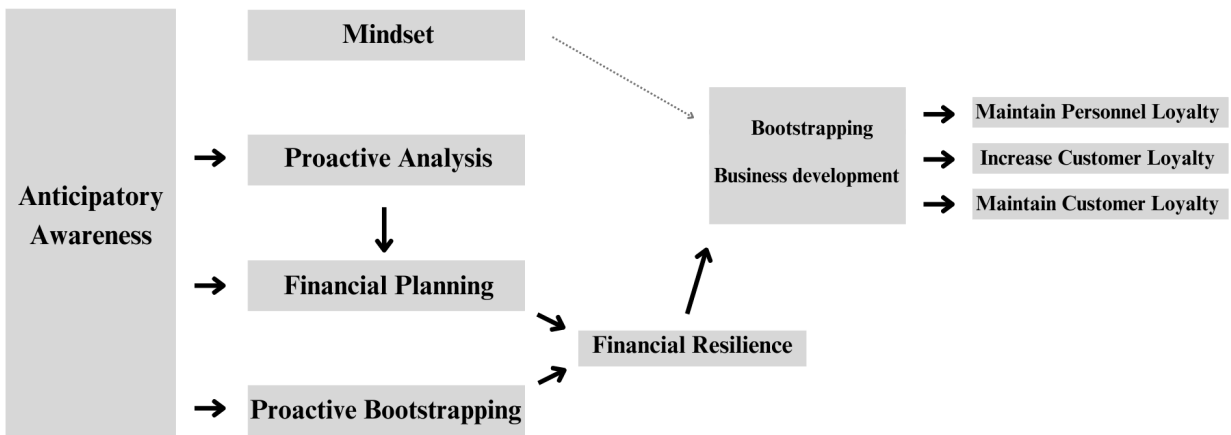


Figure 2. Conceptual framework of prerequisites and proactive strategies

Presented in the model above, are the interactions of *Adaptable resilience prerequisites* and *Proactive measures* and how they affect the choice of the active management strategies. Firstly, *Anticipatory awareness* is placed as a prerequisite driving the proactive measures of *analysis*, *financial planning* and *bootstrapping*. Since *Proactive analysis* results in awareness of the upcoming situation and allows for preparation and planning, it is outlined as contributing to *financial planning*. Moreover, *bootstrapping*, which was previously analyzed solely as an active management strategy, is here presented as *proactive bootstrapping* that entails proactively lowering operational costs. It is presented as a proactive measure that along with *financial planning*, contributes to the prerequisite *financial resilience*. Since *financial resilience* allows for choosing active strategies such as *Bootstrapping* or *Business development* that leaves the personnel value unchanged and customer value unchanged or increased, it is shown that financial

resilience drives an increase or maintenance of customer loyalty as well as maintenance of personnel loyalty. Lastly, *Mindset* is presented as a potential driver of increase or maintenance of customer loyalty as well as maintenance of personnel loyalty since it is linked to pursuing the active strategies *Bootstrapping* and *Business development* over value decreasing strategies within the *Increase price margin* dimension.

7. Discussion

The findings of this thesis can be divided into three major categories; *Active adversity management strategies*, *Proactive measures for adversity management* and *Adaptable prerequisites for resilience*.

Some of the findings of Active adversity management strategies, Proactive measures and Adaptable prerequisites can be related to dynamic capabilities, presented by Teece et al. (1997), as the capability to sense, seize and transform to respond to rapidly changing environments. Sensing, i.e., seeing and evaluating opportunities, was prevalent in the findings whereas proactive measures such as competitive and environmental analyses and scans were made. These proactive measures display dynamic capabilities of sensing and evaluating opportunities. The adaptable prerequisite of Mindset may also be a finding that can be analyzed as part of a sensing capability. Since having a courageous and solution-oriented mindset was analyzed as a driver of choosing the more innovative and opportunity-oriented Business development and Bootstrapping strategies over the Increase price margin strategies, it can be a factor in the capability to sense opportunities.

Seizing, that refers to capturing the value of opportunities by mobilizing resources (Teece, 2007), is also a capability displayed in findings where restaurants adapted their business models and operations to changing circumstance such as adapting to the shift in consumer behaviour during the pandemic by providing new takeaway concepts or sit-down parties. The swift decision making and planning required displays the dynamic capability of seizing opportunities. Another example of capacity to seize opportunities were the restaurants who utilized the less profitable

times during the pandemic or other crises to renovate and conduct facility enhancement with minimal loss of profit.

Transformation, that refers to the capacity of adjusting, reconfiguring and improving resources in operations to align with challenges and opportunities better (Teece, 2007), was displayed in findings. The Facility enhancement strategies of renovating and expanding outdoor seating as well as installing a new pizza oven can be analyzed as a display of transformation capacity whereas the restaurant transformed to comply with customer needs. Bootstrapping strategies such as optimizing use of ingredients and reducing food waste, also displays transformation capacity and reconfiguring resources.

An additional form of dynamic capabilities is agile leadership which can be recognized in the findings. The attributes of agile leadership is the rapid and flexible adoption to external events, and its ability to integrate creative thinking within their business to meet the external circumstances (Attar & Abdul-Kareem, 2020). This can be linked with the dimension of Business development where the restaurants had to be creative in order to change their business operation to match their customers' needs and desires. Furthermore, it can be discussed that the adaptable prerequisites and the anticipatory awareness increases the restaurants' ability to be flexible and the possibility of rapidly responding to crises and adversity.

The literature suggests that digital transformation can aid SME resilience (Guo et al. 2020). This aspect was, however, less prominent in the findings. Although some restaurants implemented digital food delivery services which is a type of digitalization as part of a Business development strategy, the emphasis was put on it being an operational augmentation, and emphasized other strategies, possibly due to the more analogue nature of restaurant operations unlike SMEs in other industries.

The existing literature highlights the importance of innovativeness and proactiveness as key drivers of resilience for MSMEs (Eggers, 2020; Soinen et al. 2012). The findings support the importance of these factors. Firstly, the Active adversity management strategy discovered and presented in figure 1 as Business development deeply resonates with innovation as a crisis

management strategy, that is described as changing business strategy, changing organizational structure, adjusting business models or targeting a new market by Covin & Kuratko (2010). The themes of operational augmentation and customer experience enhancement can be likened with adjusting business models and targeting new markets. The findings support the importance of these factors since they have led to successful management of crisis and/or adversity. Proactiveness has been a crucial concept in this thesis. Soininen et al. (2012) described this dimension as the action of actively looking for changes in the external environment in order to be prepared for future challenges. This proactive stance can clearly be related to the identified aggregated dimension Proactive measures which includes environmental and competitive analysis as well as financial planning.

This study has recognized and identified five types of bootstrappers, which aligns with the original definition by Winborg and Landström (2001), that used certain methods to meet their financial need. The findings show how MSME restaurants utilize different bootstrapping mechanisms in order to maintain their operations during crisis and adversity, such as minimizing the costs, leveraging social relationships and networks, and delaying costs. These were used when the restaurants faced critical financial situations or needed to think creatively in order to save financial capital, which aligns with Winborg and Landström (2001) explanation of a typical bootstrapping situation.

The important role of Social capital, as underlined by Martinelli et al. (2018) and Hong et al. (2012) also became evident in the findings. The importance of relationship and network strength during crisis expressed by Hong et al. (2012), adheres to many themes and dimensions of findings. The majority of cases prioritized retaining customer relationships and personnel relationships immensely and avoided decreasing value offered to both personnel and customers which helped them survive crisis successfully without losing valuable staff and customers which enforces the importance of strategic human resource management in a Canadian restaurant context during the pandemic (Messabia et al. 2022). Hong et al. (2012) emphasized open communication with stakeholders as a facilitator of crisis management which is directly supported by the concept of open communication with personnel present in the Personnel relationship retention theme. The importance of social capital is also supported as an important

facilitator for the relationship-oriented bootstrapper strategy where having a strong network to utilize and leverage is needed.

The research highlighted and identified several Adaptive resilience prerequisites, including having an emergency buffer, possessing customer and personnel loyalty, and anticipatory awareness. The prerequisites of resilience, which the restaurants have gained from earlier experiences, helps them to increase and adjust easier to crises and adversity, and increases the chances of surviving difficult situations. These prerequisites can be closely aligned with the definition of business resilience which current literature describes as the capability to persevere through crisis successfully (Linnenluecke & Griffiths, 2010).

8. Conclusion & implications

8.1 Conclusion

This study's aim was to explore and investigate how MSME restaurants survive and manage crises and adversity. The research question: *How do MSME restaurants in Sweden overcome crises and adversity?*, was answered by developing two different comprehensive frameworks of active adversity management strategies, adaptable prerequisites and proactive measures grounded in the findings of this study, to effectively manage crisis and adversity in the restaurant industry. One of which encompasses four categories of discovered *Active adversity management strategies* and how they affect perceived customer value and personnel value and one that encompasses discovered *adaptable prerequisites for resilience* and their interaction with discovered *proactive measures for adversity management*.

Our main findings can be concluded as follows;

As presented in the first framework (Figure 1), there are four main groups of active adversity management strategies for MSME restaurants to implement during adversity or crisis. A strategy of increasing price margin can be implemented by increasing revenue per product, lowering product costs or lowering direct personnel costs, resulting in *external* changes. A strategy of bootstrapping can be implemented by different methods of cost reduction and finance acquisition solely by changing operations *internally*. A strategy of business development can be implemented by different methods of expanding, enhancing or augmenting operations, customer experience and facilities by making both *internal* and *external* changes. While implementing strategies of increasing price margin directly reduces the value offered to customers and in some cases the value offered to personnel, Bootstrapping strategies leaves them unchanged and business development strategies increases the value offered to customers. The last active adversity management strategies to be implemented are the preserve relationships strategies that encompass strategies of retaining customer and personnel relationships by not compromising on their value. Therefore, Business development and Bootstrapping strategies are coherent with relationship retainment strategies whilst increase price margin strategies are not. Lastly, increasing the customer value by implementing business development strategies, improves the

customer loyalty which is defined as an imperative prerequisite for resilience whilst bootstrapping solely maintains it.

There are five main adaptable prerequisites that enable and support restaurants' ability to be resilient; Financial resilience, Customer loyalty, Personnel loyalty, Mindset and Anticipatory awareness. Simultaneously, there are three main proactive measures taken by restaurants in order to prepare for upcoming adversity; Proactive financial planning, Proactive analysis and Proactive bootstrapping. As presented in the second framework (Figure 2), they interact with each other. Anticipatory awareness serves as a prerequisite for the proactive measures of financial planning, analysis and bootstrapping. The proactive analysis also enables Financial planning whereas it results in preparedness for what adversity and/or crises will come. Proactive financial planning and Proactive bootstrapping results in financial resilience, which allows for choosing customer value enhancing or non-diminishing crisis management strategies of Business development or Bootstrapping during adversity or crisis over Increase price margin strategies and therefore leads to maintained personnel loyalty and maintained or increased customer loyalty. Mindset as a prerequisite is also analyzed as a possible driver of choosing adversity management strategies that do not diminish customer or personnel value.

The conclusion can be drawn that choosing adversity management strategies like Business development and Bootstrapping over Increase price margin strategies, are a better and more sustainable choice of adversity management since they do not affect personnel or customer loyalty negatively and Business development even increases customer loyalty which is an important prerequisite for resilience. However, no conclusion on whether strategies of Increasing price margin affects customer loyalty negatively can be drawn. The assumption that a decreased customer value and sometimes decreased personnel value result in a decreased customer and/or personnel loyalty is not supported by empirical data in this study since all cases had a successful outcome.

8.2 Limitations

The findings generated very diverse strategies and measures employed by MSME restaurants to handle crises, resulting in two different frameworks. As already discussed in the limitations of the methodology, the success criteria of surviving/handling crises and adversity were not sufficiently stringent to encompass the same level of success amongst the different businesses. This may have affected the conclusion to be more incoherent than it would be with more homogenous samples in aspect to their current economic situation. However, these more diverse insights may encompass different strategies suitable for restaurants with different prerequisites. This way, the suspicion that the less successful businesses could generate less valuable insights may be disregarded since the cases had different prerequisites. Some methods employed are more valuable for cases with more financial resources whilst others may be more relevant for cases with liquidity issues.

Another limitation also mentioned in the methodology chapter is the inclusion of samples from different cities in Sweden. The difference in factors such as local economical situation and cultural contexts are not taken into consideration in the analysis of the findings, which may have provided a somewhat skewed perception of the results. However, since they're all large cities located in Sweden, the context should not impose a large impact on the results.

8.3 Theoretical contribution

This research's findings contribute to a broader and deeper knowledge and understanding about the concepts of crisis management and business resilience in the context of MSME restaurants. The previously highlighted lack of insights into how restaurants and SMEs can effectively manage and survive crises and/or adversity has been contributed to with a variety of found concrete strategies, measures and prerequisites. The contributions of this study to existing research, are multifaceted and build upon the existing body of knowledge on several fronts.

The existing research on dynamic capabilities as drivers of resilience, that lacked concrete insights of strategies applied in SMEs, align with many of the strategies, prerequisites and proactive measures found and presented in the framework. These more concrete strategies

generate insights relating to the dynamic capability literature aimed toward the unexplored context of MSMEs.

Furthermore, this study provides a new perspective of and new insights into how Bootstrapping can be a major strategy of active adversity management as well as a proactive measure to prepare for future adversity. Since Bootstrapping is usually a concept explored in financial scarcity among newly started ventures in the struggling beginning curve of a startup, and not traditionally seen as an proactive strategy for future crises or an active strategy of crisis management in SMEs, these findings may broaden the research context of Bootstrapping and offer new perspectives and angles to be explored.

Additionally, the importance of retaining customer and personnel relationships and loyalty was prominent in the findings of this study, which enforces and builds upon the existing research of social capital's importance in crisis management among SMEs. By defining concrete strategies for retaining the relationships and exploring different crisis management strategies' effects on them and loyalty, this study has contributed to a deeper understanding of how social relationships are affected, valued and mattered in crisis and adversity management among MSME restaurants.

The provided frameworks can be utilized as guidance for future research when the development and exploration of relevant concepts are required. Furthermore, this study can act as support guidance in future research and endeavors, as well as guidance in quantitative studies, when the desire to examine certain related topics occurs. The existing literature made on SMEs can be further evolved and related to the restaurant industry. New insights into how SMEs utilize concepts such as innovativeness, proactiveness, bootstrapping, social capital, data transformation, and dynamic capabilities have been identified and developed.

Several measures and strategies could be linked to innovative context, which contribute to more concrete and relevant MSMEs literature. Furthermore, many of the strategies and proactive measures along with some of the prerequisites, could be analyzed to be coherent with the emphasis put on innovativeness and proactiveness in existing crisis management literature. This study's findings contribute with more concrete and conceptual measures, strategies and

prerequisites within the subject of innovativeness and proactiveness set in a MSME restaurant context.

Furthermore, since this study does not focus solely on crisis but also encompasses experience and management of general adversity, the management strategies to survive crisis and adversity effectively, are therefore labeled as *adversity management* instead of the more established term of *crisis management*. This underlines the theoretical contribution of more general and applicable research to be applied across a multitude of difficult situations rather than being restrained to the specific crisis context.

8.4 Practical implications

The two different frameworks highlight many different strategies, actions, and measures to be taken during adversity or crisis along with beneficial prerequisites that are interchangeable as well as proactive measures that can be taken before in advance of future adversity. These frameworks may help guide not only MSME restaurant establishments but also MSMEs in a more general context, particularly in industries with the same risky and volatile nature, in how to approach, manage and prepare for adversity and crises. The conceptualization and organizing of the codes provide a more general strategy approach that can be applied to a larger number of businesses than solely restaurants.

To summarize, the developed frameworks of this study offer insight into how MSMEs, particularly in the restaurant or service industry can implement strategies to manage adversity and crisis. By utilizing these frameworks, businesses can improve their prerequisites for resilience, take effective proactive measures, and ultimately manage adversity more efficiently and deliberately.

8.5 Recommendations for future research

Since this study researched how restaurants have survived crises and adversity but mainly focused on recent experiences, the conclusion does not fully encompass how the different strategies, actions, and measures taken affect the businesses in a long-term manner. Many

participants suggested that not compromising on customer value and personnel relations was of great importance for success whilst others presented it as their main coping mechanism in crisis. It would be of great interest to conduct longitudinal studies to research how these different approaches affect businesses long-term. The disparity in choice of management strategy where increasing price margin, directly contradicted the strategy of preserving relationships, would be of great interest to research in a longitudinal setting to see how the difference in choice of strategies would unfold.

For future research, it could also be of interest to research opposite samples that have not managed crises or adversity successfully to discover which methods applied were unsuccessful. By incorporating the opposite cases, more rigor and validation of the findings could be established and a more in-depth analysis of the prerequisites as causative factors could be made. Furthermore, as stated in the limitations, the criteria for successfully surviving a crisis could be sharper and of higher standards to research the best methods employed to thrive in a crisis rather than methods employed to survive. Therefore, future research could study the *most* successful cases and have more strict criteria.

A broader exploration of the different prerequisites and mindsets can also be recommended for future research. Insights of how the soft prerequisites affect the restaurant's survival and a deeper discussion of what Mindset entails and if there are more dimensions of it, would be of great interest. This research could also contribute more to existing research on dynamic capabilities with an emphasis on agile leadership.

Lastly, this inductive study has generated a new grounded theory framework with many new insights into *how* MSME restaurants manage and survive crises. This new theory allows for deductive research to be conducted in the aim of testing the findings. Therefore, it is recommended that deductive research with a quantitative approach is conducted in future research to test the conclusions of this study (Bell et al. 2022).

Reference list

- Aldianto, L., Mirzanti, I.R., Anggadwita, G., Permatasari, A., & Williamson, I.O. (2021). Toward a business resilience framework for startups, *Sustainability*, 13(6), p. 3132. Available online: doi:10.3390/su13063132. [Accessed 20 February 2024].
- Alvesson, M., & Ashcraft, K. (2012). Interviews. In *Qualitative Organizational Research: Core Methods and Current Challenges*. pp. 239-257. doi: <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526435620>. [Accessed 19 March 2024].
- Attar, M., & Abdul-Kareem, A. (2020). The Role of Agile Leadership in Organisational Agility. *Agile Business Leadership Methods for Industry 4.0*, Emerald Publishing Limited: Bingley, UK, pp. 171–191. Available online: doi:10.1108/978-1-80043-380-920201011. [Accessed 20 February 2024].
- Bachtiar, N.K., Setiawan, A., Prastyana, G.A., & Kijkasiwat, P. (2023). Business resilience and growth strategy transformation post crisis, *Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, 12(1). Available online: doi:10.1186/s13731-023-00345-5. [Accessed 19 February 2024].
- Bartik, A.W., Bertrand, M., Cullen, Z., Glaeser, E.L., Luca, M., & Stanton, C. (2020). The impact of covid-19 on small business outcomes and expectations, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 117(30), pp. 17656–17666. Available online: doi:10.1073/pnas.2006991117. [Accessed 19 February 2024].
- Bell, E., Bryman, A. & Harley, B. (2022). *Business research methods*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.
- Bhamra, R., Dani, S., & Burnard, K. (2011). Resilience: the concept, a literature review and future directions, *International Journal of Production Research*, 49(18), pp.5375-5393. doi: <https://doi-org.ludwig.lub.lu.se/10.1080/00207543.2011.563826> [Accessed 13 May 2024].
- Bullough, A., Renko, M., & Myatt, T. (2014). Danger zone entrepreneurs: The importance of resilience and self-efficacy for entrepreneurial intentions, *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 38(3), 473-499. doi:10.1111/etap.12006 [Accessed 15 February 2024].
- Caballero-Morales, S.-O. (2021). Innovation as recovery strategy for SMEs in emerging economies during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Research in International Business and Finance*, 27. doi: 10.1016/j.ribaf.2021.101396. [Accessed 17 May 2024].

Chesbrough, H. (2020). To recover faster from Covid-19, open up: managerial implications from an open innovation perspective, *Industrial Marketing Management*, 88, pp. 410-413, doi:10.1016/j.indmarman.2020.04.010. [Accessed 19 February 2024].

Clauss, T., Breier, M., Kraus, S., Durst, S., & Mahto, R. (2022). Temporary business model innovation – SMEs' innovation response to the Covid-19 crisis. *R and D Management*, 52(2), pp. 294 - 312. doi: 10.1111/radm.12498. [Accessed 17 May 2024].

Coleman, J. (2017). The best strategic leaders balance agility and consistency. *Harvard Business Review digital articles*, pp. 2-5. Available online; <https://eds.p.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=5&sid=d82cc9f5-fe98-4d3a-9482-fd1a520f673c%40redis>. [Accessed 19 February 2024].

Covin, J. G., & Kuratko, D. F. (2010). The Concept of Corporate Entrepreneurship, *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Technology and Innovation Management*, pp.207–213. [Accessed 21 February 2024].

Creditsafe. (2024). Nytt stort konkursrekord - 1047 konkurser under januari. Available online: <https://www.creditsafe.com/se/sv/blog/konkurser/konkursstatistik.html> [Accessed 15 February 2024].

Dictionary. (2024). Crisis. Available online: <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/crisis> [Accessed 9 May 2024].

Donthu, N., & Gustafsson, A. (2020). Effects of COVID-19 on business and research, *Journal of Business Research*, 117, pp. 284-289. doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.06.008. [Accessed 19 February 2024].

Dube, K., Nhamo, G. & Chikodzi, D. (2020). Covid-19 Cripples Global Restaurant and hospitality industry, *Current Issues in Tourism*, 24 (11), pp. 1487–1490. doi:10.1080/13683500.2020.1773416. [Accessed 15 February 2024].

Eggers, F. (2020). Masters of disasters? Challenges and opportunities for SMEs in times of crisis, *Journal of Business Research*, 116, pp.199-208. doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.05.025. [Accessed 22 February 2024].

Eisenhardt, K. M., & Graebner, M. E. (2007). Theory Building from Cases: Opportunities and Challenges. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50. pp. 25-32. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2007.24160888>. [Accessed 20 March 2024].

- Fadil, N., & St-Pierre, J. (2021). Growing SMEs and internal financing: the role of business practices. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 28(7), pp. 973-994. doi: 10.1108/JSBED-11-2019-0375. [Accessed 20 May 2024].
- Gioia, D. A., Corley, K. G., & Hamilton, A. L. (2013). Seeking Qualitative Rigor in Inductive Research Notes on the Gioia Methodology. *Organizational Research Methods*, 16(1), pp. 15-31. doi: 10.1177/1094428112452151 [Accessed 19 March 2024].
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine Publishing Company.
- Guo, H., Yang, Z., Huang, R., & Guo, A. (2020). The digitalization and public crisis responses of small and medium enterprises: Implications from a COVID-19 survey. *Frontiers of Business Research in China*, 14(1), doi: 10.1186/s11782-020-00087-1. [Accessed 15 May 2024].
- Gössling, S., Scott, D., & Hall, C. (2020). Pandemics, tourism and global change: A rapid assessment of COVID-19. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*.
<https://doi-org.ludwig.lub.lu.se/10.1080/09669582.2020.1758708> [Accessed 15 February 2024].
- Herbane, B. (2010). Small business research: Time for a crisis-based view. *International Small Business Journal*, 28(1), pp. 43–64. doi: 10.1177/0266242609350804. [Accessed 15 May 2024].
- Herbane, B. (2019). Rethinking organizational resilience and strategic renewal in SMEs. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 31(5-6), pp. 476-495, doi: 10.1080/08985626.2018.1541594 [Accessed 15 May 2024].
- Hong, P., Huang, C. and Li, B. (2012). Crisis management for smes: Insights from a multiple-case study, *International Journal of Business Excellence*, 5(5), p. 535. doi:10.1504/ijbex.2012.048802. [Accessed 15 February 2024].
- Kim, J. K., Lee, S. K., & Tang, L. R. (2020). Effects of epidemic disease outbreaks on financial performance of restaurants: Event study method approach. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 43, 32–41. <https://doi-org.ludwig.lub.lu.se/10.1016/j.jhtm.2020.01.015> [Accessed 15 February 2024].
- Klyver, K., & Nielsen, S. L. (2021). Which crisis strategies are (expectedly) effective among SMEs during COVID-19?. *Journal of Business Venturing Insights*, 16. doi: 10.1016/j.jbvi.2021.e00273. [Accessed 17 May 2024].
- Lee, C., & Hallak, R. (2018). Investigating the moderating role of education on a structural model of restaurant performance using multi-group PLS-SEM analysis. *Journal of Business*

Research, 88, pp. 298-305. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2017.12.004> [Accessed 17 April 2024].

Lee, C., Hallak, R., & Sardeshmukh, S. R. (2016). Innovation, entrepreneurship, and restaurant performance: A higher-order structural model. *Tourism Management*, 53, pp. 215-228. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2015.09.017> [Accessed 17 April 2024].

Linnenluecke, M.K. & Griffiths, A. (2010). Corporate sustainability and organizational culture. *Journal of World Business*, 45, pp.357-366. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2009.08.006> [Accessed 15 May 2024].

Ludvigsson, J. (2020). The first eight months of Sweden's COVID-19 strategy and the key actions and actors that were involved. *Acta Paediatrica, International Journal of Paediatrics*, 109(12), pp. 2459 - 2471. doi: 10.1111/apa.15582. [Accessed 21 May 2024].

Markovic, S., Koporcic, N., Arslanagic-Kalajdzic, M., Kadic-Maglajlic, S., Bagherzadeh, M. & Islam, N. (2021). Business-to-business open innovation: COVID-19 lessons for small and medium-sized enterprises from emerging markets. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 170, doi:10.1016/j.techfore.2021.120883. [Accessed 19 February 2024].

Martinelli, E., Tagliazucchi, G., & Marchi, G. (2018). The resilient retail entrepreneur: Dynamic capabilities for facing natural disasters. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour & Research*, 24(7), pp. 1222-1243. doi: 10.1108/IJEER-11-2016-0386. [Accessed 15 May 2024].

Martinsson, K. (2021). Tusentals lämnade restaurangbranschen under pandemin: ”Högre lönekrav nu”, Arbetet. Available online: <https://arbetet.se/2021/12/03/tusentals-lamnade-restaurangbranschen-under-pandemin-hogre-lonekrav-nu/> [Accessed 15 February 2024].

McAdam, R., & Reid, R. (2001). SME and large organisation perceptions of knowledge management: comparisons and contrasts, *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 5(3), pp. 231-241. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1108/13673270110400870> [Accessed 17 April 2024].

Messabia, N., Fomi, P. R., & Kooli, C. (2022). Managing restaurants during the COVID-19 crisis: Innovating to survive and prosper. *Journal of Innovation & Knowledge*, 7(100234). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jik.2022.100234> [Accessed 15 May 2024].

Park, S., Lee, S. & Song, S. (2023). Does being different from others increase extremeness and volatility in restaurant firm performance?, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 114, p. 103568. Available online: doi:10.1016/j.ijhm.2023.103568. [Accessed 19 February 2024].

Pearson, C.M. & Clair, J.A., (1998). Reframing crisis management. *Academy of Management Review*, 23(1), pp.59-76. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMR.1998.192960> [Accessed 15 May 2024]

Ren, S., Chan, H.-L., & Ram, P. (2017). A Comparative Study on Fashion Demand Forecasting Models with Multiple Sources of Uncertainty. *Annals of Operations Research*, 257(1-2), pp. 335–355. doi: 10.1007/s10479-016-2204-6. [Accessed 21 May 2024].

Remko, V. H. (2020). Research opportunities for a more resilient post-COVID-19 supply chain – closing the gap between research findings and industry practice. *International Journal of Operations and Production Management*, 40(4), pp. 341-355. doi:10.1108/IJOPM-03-2020-0165 [Accessed 19 February 2024].

Saunders, M. N. K., Gray, D. E. & Goregaokar, H. (2014). SME innovation and learning: The role of networks and crisis events. *European Journal of Training and Development*, 38(1-2), pp. 136-149. doi:10.1108/EJTD-07-2013-0073. [Accessed 21 February 2024].

Saunders, M.N.K., & Townsend, K. (2016). Reporting and justifying the number of interview participants in organization and workplace research. *British Journal of Management*, 27, pp. 836-858. doi: 10.1111/1467-8551.12182 [Accessed 19 March 2024].

SCB. (2021). Stora skillnader inom branschen när restaurangernas försäljning föll. Available online: <https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/redaktionellt/stora-skillnader-inom-branschen-nar-restaurangernas-forsaljning-foll/> [Accessed 15 February 2024].

Scopus. (2024). Results of “SME” and “Crisis Management”. Available online: <https://www.scopus.com/results/results.uri?sort=cp-f&src=s&sid=2731c895d25bf4f3fa2be111e93f2a0d&sot=a&sdt=a&sl=44&s=TITLE-ABS-KEY%28%22SME%22+AND+%22Crisis+Management%22%29&origin=searchadvanced&editSaveSearch=&txGid=a0cb76ae8b9f88912805503549e90216&sessionSearchId=2731c895d25bf4f3fa2be111e93f2a0d&limit=10> [Accessed 23 May 2024].

Soininen, J., Puumalainen, K., Sjögrén, H., & Syrjä, P. (2012). The impact of global economic crisis on SMEs: Does entrepreneurial orientation matter? *Management Research Review*, 35(10). pp. 927-944. doi:10.1108/01409171211272660 [Accessed 21 February 2024].

Sullivan-Taylor, B., & Branicki, L. (2011). Creating resilient SMEs: why one size might not fit all, *International Journal of Production Research*, 49(18), pp. 5565-5579, doi: 10.1080/00207543.2011.563837 [Accessed 16 May 2024].

Teece, D.J. (2007). Explicating dynamic capabilities: The nature and microfoundations of (sustainable) enterprise performance. *Strategic management journal*, 28, pp. 1319–1350, doi: 10.1002/smj.640 [Accessed 21 February 2024].

Teece, D. J., Pisano, G., & Shuen, A. (1997). Dynamic capabilities and strategic management. *Strategic Management Journal*, 18(7), pp. 509 - 533. doi: 10.1002/(SICI)1097-0266(199708)18:7<509::AID-SMJ882>3.0.CO;2-Z [Accessed 15 May 2024].

Vial, G. (2019). Understanding digital transformation: A review and a research agenda. *Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, 28(2), pp. 118 - 144. doi: 10.1016/j.jsis.2019.01.003 [Accessed 16 May 2024].

Wang, Y., Aoran, H., Xia, L. & Jia, G. (2020). Marketing innovations during a global crisis: a study of China firms' response to COVID-19. *Journal of Business Research*, 116, pp. 214-220. doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.05.029. [Accessed 19 February 2024].

Wenzel, M., Stanske, s., & Lieberman, M.B. (2020). Strategic responses to crisis. *Strategic Management Journal*, 42(2), pp. 231-488. doi:10.1002/smj.3161. [Accessed 21 February 2024].

Winborg, J., Landström, H. (2001). Financial bootstrapping in small businesses: Examining small business managers' resource acquisition behaviors. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 16(3), pp. 235–254 doi: 10.1016/S0883-9026(99)00055-5. [Accessed 6 May 2024].

Yeh, S. (2021). Tourism recovery strategy against COVID-19 pandemic. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 46(2), pp. 188-194. doi:10.1080/02508281.2020.1805933 [Accessed 19 February 2024].

Yin, R.K. (1994). Discovering the Future of the Case Study. Method in Evaluation Research. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 15(3). doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1098214094015003> [Accessed 16 April 2024].

Appendix A

Interview Guide Questions

(Will serve as a loose guide of what to include in the interviews)

Background:

1. Tell me about your business.

Information to check within this:

- Number of employees
 - Founding year
 - General business operations etc
 - How is it going (is the restaurant thriving, getting by, or barely hanging on?)
2. Tell me about your role in the business.

Information to check within this:

- How long have you worked with/at this business?
- What are your main responsibilities?
- Do you report to anyone?

How does your decision-making process within the business management look?

3. The interviewees' background

Cises & Adversity:

4. Has this restaurant faced any challenging or difficult situations?
5. Tell me about your experience with that/those situations.

Information to check within this:

- When did this/those situations occur, and for how long did it last (approximately)?
- How was the restaurant affected by the difficult time/s?

6. How did you handle/cope with that situation?

Information to check within this:

- Any actions taken to adapt to/survive the situation

7. Did you learn anything from this situation?

8. How do you think the next experience will be when faced with a difficult period?

9. Why do you believe that the restaurant survived the setback successfully?

10. Do you take any more precautions for similar future situations?

If so, What are they?

11. Do you think you will handle a future problem/situation differently

Previous experience- entrepreneurial learning:

12. Do you have any previous experience of facing difficult situations in a business (as a manager, founder etc)?

If so- repeat questions: 4-10.

Appendix B

Quotes in the original language

<p>“Vi bestämde oss för att stå ut med lägre marginaler och snåla in på annat istället till exempel att hitta billigare råvaror.”</p>	<p>“We decided to endure lower margins and economize on other things, such as finding cheaper ingredients.”</p>	<p>Interview 6</p>
<p>“Vi behövde tänka på storleken på portionerna och börja använda oss av billigare kolhydrater”</p>	<p>“We needed to consider the size of the portions and start using cheaper carbohydrates.”</p>	<p>Interview 3</p>
<p>“Då förstod vi att vi fick tänka om. (...) Då åt man hemma. (...). Vi hade en helkasse som både privatpersoner och företag kunde boka tre rätter.”</p>	<p>“Then we understood that we had to rethink. (...). People were eating at home. (...). We had a weekend bag that both individuals and companies could book including three courses.”</p>	<p>Interview 3</p>
<p>“Det vi passade på att göra då faktiskt va att renovera lite. Vi utökade och fixade en pizzaugn som vi inte hade innan. (...). Vi passade även på att utöka uteserveringen vilket vi satsade enormt mycket på. (...). Det har blivit en markant skillnad i att locka till sig folk.”</p>	<p>“What we actually did then was to take the opportunity to do some renovation. We expanded and installed a pizza oven that we didn't have before. (...) We also took the opportunity to expand the outdoor seating area, which we invested a lot in. (...). It has made a significant difference in attracting people.”</p>	<p>Interview 4</p>
<p>“(…) vi pratade med de som jobbade med oss och sa att vi ingen har en aning om hur det här kommer gå. Vi hoppas att ni går med på gå ner lite i tid, för vi var ju tvungna att dra ner öppettiderna.”</p>	<p>“(…) we talked to those who worked with us and said that none of us have any idea how this is going to go. We hope that you're okay with reducing your hours a bit because we had to cut down on the opening hours.”</p>	<p>Interview 2</p>
<p>”Det var ingenting som var på kartan att något sånt där kunde hända.”</p>	<p>“nothing was on the radar that something like that could happen.”</p>	<p>Interview 4</p>

“Den är större nu ifall något liknande kommer hända igen så att man kan hålla ut ännu längre”	“It's larger now in case something similar happens again so that we can hold out even longer.”	Interview 4
“(…) vi är extremt snabba på allt. (…). Vi har extremt nöjda kunder.”	“(…) we're extremely fast at everything. (…). We have extremely satisfied customers.”	Interview 4
“försöker kolla liksom omvärlds och konkurrensanalys ganska noggrant “	"try to check, like, the external environment and competitive analysis quite thoroughly”	Interview 6
“(…) kvaliteten på produkten kan man aldrig ändra på. Det är då man förlorar gäster.”	"(…) you can never change the quality of the product. That's when you lose guests.”	Interview 4
“Det var många som höjde sina priser. (…). Jag tror att det gjorde att många kunder blev rädda. (…). Så vi bestämde oss istället för att då får vi bara stå ut med att ha lägre marginaler.”	“There were many who raised their prices. (...) I think that made a lot of customers scared. (..). So instead, we decided that we just have to endure having lower margins.”	Interview 6
“(…) vi vill inte göra det här, vi vill inte permittera. (…). Alla jobbar kvar och vi går ner i tid. (…). Vi [grundarna] gick ur drift.”	“(…) we don't want to do this, we don't want to lay off. (...). Everyone stays on board and we reduce hours. (...). We [the founders] stepped out of operation.”	Interview 2
“Vissa ökar priset på produkterna, de företagen (….) tappa omsättning. (….) folk har inte tillräckligt med pengar, ibland får man ta en förlust för att inte tappa kunder.”	“Some increase the prices of their products, those companies (...) lose turnover. (...) people don't have enough money, sometimes you have to take a loss to avoid losing customers.”	Interview 10
“De förstod för att företaget ska överleva så behöver jag göra en ändring som alla själva gick med på.”	“They understood that for the company to survive, I needed to make a change, which everyone agreed to.”	Interview 10
“Många tycker så här att man ser det är min familj här. Man har hört den tusen gånger innan men så är det verkligen här. Och det är mycket för vår ägare.”	"Many people feel that this is my family here. You have heard it a thousand times before but that is really how it is here. And it is a lot because of our owner.”	Interview 4

“Personalen fick stanna hemma och jag själv fick hoppa in och jobba för att rädda företaget.”	“The staff were asked to stay at home, and I stepped in and work to save the company.”	Interview 10
“Så vi har ju en jättebrist på personal.”	“We have a major shortage of staff”	Interview 2
“vi fick inte ta personal så att vi öppnade inte kvällar på restaurangen förrän i juni.”	“We couldn't hire staff so we didn't open the restaurant in the evenings until June.”	Interview 2
“Vi hade haft råd att bara kunna stänga ner och bara sitta och betala hyra. För att vi hade så låga omkostnader.”	“We could have afforded to just shut down and sit and pay rent. Because we had such low operational costs.”	Interview 2
“(…) våra kunder fortsatte handla. (…). Det blir ju lite fint där när folk fortsätter liksom kontakta oss.”	“(…) our customers kept buying from us. (…). It's nice when people keep reaching out to us.”.	Interview 3
“Vi hade nödbudget då”	“We had an emergency budget at that time”	Interview 4
“Vi har extremt nöjda kunder.	“We have extremely satisfied customers.”	Interview 4
“Det var en billig hyra, om man jämför med andra ställen. Det var en superviktig anledning för att vi inte gick konkurs.”	“It was a low rent, compared to other places. That was a crucial reason why we didn't go bankrupt.”	Interview 5
“har stoppat in ganska mycket pengar från annan företagsamhet”	“have invested quite a bit of money from other business ventures”	Interview 5
“Vi hade mycket mer svinn förr. (…). Vi lärde oss mycket om särskild mathantering och hur man kan använda det.”	“We had a lot more food waste before. (…). We learned a lot about managing groceries and how to make use of them.”	Interview 3
“Vi hade ju massa rabatter hela tiden (…) för att verkligen få in folket.”	“We had a lot of discounts all the time (…) to really bring in the people.”	Interview 9

“Står du still i en sån här bransch så kommer du till slut tappa stinet. Så det gäller att hela tiden vara innovativ och utvecklas”	"If you stand still in an industry like this, you will eventually lose your edge. So it's important to constantly be innovative and evolve."	Interview 4
“Så istället för att man börjar slå på stora paniktrumman så har vi lite mer is i magen”	“So instead of hitting the panic button, we kept our cool”	Interview 2
“Men vi valde ju att gasa istället för att bromsa”	“But we chose to accelerate instead of stopping.”	Interview 9
“Vi sökte alla bidrag som fanns att få och vi fick alla bidrag”	“We applied for all available grants, and we received all of them”	Interview 7
“Vi omförhandlade i våra avtal med dryckesleverantör. Så då fick vi massa pengar.”	“We renegotiated our contracts with the beverage supplier. That way, we got a lot of money.”	Interview 7
“Sen hade vi sittklubb och sittdans.”	“Then we had a sitting club and seated dance.”	Interview 7
“Då gjorde vi en satsning och satte igång ett stort bygge. Då byggde jag en pergola på innegången.”	“Then we made an investment and started a big construction project. I built a pergola in the courtyard.”	Interview 7
“Snart kommer en våg av någonting annat. Så det gäller att vara sparsam”	“Soon a wave of something else will come. You have to be frugal now”	Interview 3
“Bara för att man kanske känner att nu är det lugnt, nu kommer det inte bli så mycket. Då kan man alltid tänka att snart kommer en ny pandemi, snart kommer en våg av någonting annat.”	“Just because you might feel that things are calm now and that there won't be much happening, you can always think that soon there will be a new pandemic, or soon a wave of something else will come.”	Interview 3
“Men det är alltid någonting som händer som du inte kan planera för. Så det är mer bara plan for the unplannable.”	“But there is always something happening that you cannot plan for. So it's more about just plan for the unplannable.”	Interview 4
“Support från familj och nära vänner som hjälpte till att servera.”	“Support from family and close friends who helped with serving.”	Interview 3

<p>“Vi fick preppa i köket där vi jobbade på eftersom det bara var kvällsverksamhet.”</p>	<p>“We got to prep in the kitchen where we worked because it was only open in the evenings.”</p>	<p>Interview 2</p>
<p>“Hyresvärden gick med på det och vi fick en sån där hyresgästanpassning.”</p>	<p>“The landlord agreed to it, and we got a tenant improvement.”</p>	<p>Interview 7</p>