

Sustainability of a Sole Proprietor MSME Owner through Entrepreneurship and Social Responsibility

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Abstract

Original Research Article

The study intends to determine how micro, small, and medium-sized (MSMEs) implement sustainable marketing strategies and effective decision-making processes as well as understand how these enterprises conduct marketing to maintain competitiveness and growth. By using a quantitative descriptive survey method, 10 DTI-registered MSMEs in Kalumpang, Marikina City were examined. The study comprised of exploring the nature of their operations, organizational structure, and other distinguishing characteristics of enterprises.

The study showed that most enterprises are service-oriented sole proprietorships with having capital below PHP 3 million. The enterprises employ between 1 and 9 individuals and are relatively new ventures as only started operations for less than three years. The study also showed how 7Ps (Product, Place, Price, Promotion, Physical evidence, People, Process) are used in sustainable marketing initiatives among MSMEs. The survey responses also affirm the effectiveness of 7Ps in marketing challenges experienced by enterprises.

However, the study also revealed limitations through time constraints, which hinders enterprises from perceiving long-term impacts of marketing tactics on their business growth and sustainability. In addition, the study also encountered limitations where respondents opted out of the study to keep confidentiality, thereby affecting the research data.

In conclusion, the 7Ps marketing framework remains to be a valuable tool for MSMEs in terms of attaining sustainable business growth in a competitive market. Moreover, the findings of this study also recommend further research which focus on other strategies that can promote sustainability in marketing efforts among MSMEs.

Keywords: MSMEs, Sustainable Marketing, 7Ps Marketing Framework, Decision-Making, Business Growth, Competitiveness, Marketing Strategies.

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INTRODUCTION

Similar to businesses, entrepreneurship also involves initiation, organization, and management of ventures. However, entrepreneurship does not focus on profit generation but rather on implementing practices sustainable for the environment, economy, and society into their daily operations (Munshi, 2023). As enterprises advance their processes, they become increasingly vital in contributing to economic development by promoting innovation. They also foster inclusive growth by generating jobs for their surrounding community which can address social inequality and thereby improve quality of life.

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) act as the cornerstone of the economy in the Philippines. A study by the Senate of the Philippines (2012) defines these enterprises as involved in agribusiness, industry, or services with asset classifications. Microenterprises possess assets with value not exceeding ₱3,000,000 and employ 1–9 individuals. Assets of small enterprises must worth ₱3,000,000 to ₱15,000,000 and have 10–99 employees. Medium enterprises follow with assets not exceeding ₱100,000,000 and have 100–199 employees. Given their smaller scale compared to large corporations, MSMEs can be more responsive to market changes which is advantageous in addressing sustainability.

Despite MSMEs' essential function in the national economy, these enterprises have distinct limitations such as limited access to capital, insufficient support from financial and government institutions, and reliance on larger corporations. These constraints impede enterprises from attaining sustainability and innovation in their ventures. Other challenges include fluctuations in revenue, reduced demand, logistical barriers, restricted production capacities, and interrupted supply chains which can be detrimental in operational efficiency and achieving social responsibility.

In light of these challenges, the researcher emphasizes the incorporation of environmental and social responsibility on offered products and services provided is pivotal to implement sustainable marketing strategies. Sustainable marketing aims to improve societal well-being through the promotion of environmentally conscious values in their products and services. As public awareness of environmental and ethical issues continues to grow, businesses that actively engage in sustainability efforts are better positioned to influence consumer behavior positively. Such efforts not only contribute to global causes but also enhance brand reputation and attract value-aligned customers.

In light of these observations, this study investigates the sustainable marketing strategies employed by MSMEs, particularly to evaluate whether their current approaches are sufficient for maintaining operations amidst a dynamic and challenging business environment. MSMEs are crucial to the Philippine economy—not only in generating employment and reducing poverty—but also in fostering development in rural

and underserved areas. Through the supply of goods and services, MSMEs also function as indispensable partners to larger firms. Their growth and sustainability are therefore key indicators of a robust and resilient economy, and merit focused academic and policy attention.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

According to Gabriel (2015), a **sole proprietorship** is defined as a business operated and owned by one individual. Such business model, often referred to as individual entrepreneurship or proprietorship, is considered the simplest and most cost-effective way to establish a business. For this reason, it is commonly adopted by small business owners, freelancers, and other self-employed individuals. In this context, the researcher aims to explore how individual entrepreneurs manage to sustain their businesses while adapting to social, economic, environmental, and cultural challenges.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and **sustainable entrepreneurship** has been gaining increasing attention in today's fast-paced economy. Not only are companies expected to make profits, but also to have a positive societal and environmental impact. Growing international sensitivity to social disparities, environmental deterioration and economic fluctuations, has been leading to a generation of demand for the effective integration of ethics and sustainability in practice (Schaltegger & Hansen, 2013). Sustainability in entrepreneurship involves prioritization of economic viability, social responsibility, and environmental stewardship in enterprises.

Marketing mix is also one of the concepts relevant to this study; it is a cornerstone model in marketing strategy. It is the sum of tools that businesses utilize to satisfy customers and have them make buying decisions that lead to profit (Koshy, 2024). The traditional **7Ps Framework** (Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Physical Evidence, and Process) is particularly suited for service-oriented enterprises. The 7Ps elements should be tailored in order to meet customer expectations and market demands, which are components of an effective marketing plan. 7Ps, if properly integrated into businesses, can attain customer satisfaction and gain competitive advantage.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized quantitative descriptive survey method in order to obtain the appropriate data. This quantitative technique is implemented in descriptive analysis to provide clear objective summary of data (Boudah, 2015). Structured survey questionnaire was the selected form of data collection which consisted of preset questions formulated to gather relevant data (Research Connections, 2016).

The study intended to focus on 10 MSME sole proprietors currently registered with Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and operating within Kalumpang, Marikina

City. The participants were selected through simple random sampling technique obtained from a local population of 929 MSMEs (Marikina City Business Permit and Licensing Office, 2024). As an overall perspective, there are approximately 19,694 MSMEs registered in the locale. A sample size of 10 was determined using the through the use of RAOSOFT sample size calculator with 0.95 confidence interval and was considered to be suitable because the study was exploratory and small-scaled.

The survey questionnaire was composed of five (5) sections, the first of which outlines the profile data of MSMEs. These include the nature of business, type of organization, amount of capital, number of current employees, and time of operation in years. Subsequent sections examined the sustainable marketing strategies employed by the MSMEs, focusing on the 7Ps of marketing, namely the product, price, place, promotion, physical evidence, people, and process.

Data collected from respondents were analyzed

descriptively, with the average weighted mean employed to measure responses regarding sustainable marketing strategies. The weighted mean approach assigns more significance to specific data points to provide a more accurate reflection of participant perceptions.

While the random sampling method ensured each MSME within Kalumpang had an even and equal chance of selection, the limited sample size and exploratory nature of the current study may affect the generalizability of the results. Nonetheless, the findings offer meaningful insights into the sustainable marketing practices of MSMEs in the area.

Sample Size Determination

As means to measure the appropriate sample size for the current study, the researcher used the RAOSOFT sample size calculator and also verified the result using the following statistical formula:

$$n = \frac{N \times x}{(N-1) \times E^2 + x}$$

- **n** = sample size
- **N** = population size (929 MSMEs in Kalumpang, Marikina City)
- **E** = margin of error (0.31 or 31%)
- **x** = $z^2 \times r \times (1 - r)$
- **z** = critical value at 95% confidence level (1.96)
- **r** = response distribution (0.5)

Substituting the values:

$$x = (1.96)^2 \times 0.5 \times (1 - 0.5)$$

$$x = 3.8416 \times 0.5 \times 0.5$$

$$x = 0.9604$$

Now substitute into the main formula:

$$n = (929 \times 0.9604) / [(929 - 1) \times (0.31)^2 + 0.9604]$$

$$n = 892.474 / [928 \times 0.0961 + 0.9604]$$

$$n = 892.474 / [89.1528 + 0.9604]$$

$$n = 892.474 / 90.1132$$

$$n \approx 9.9 \approx 10$$

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1: Tally of Profile Data of the MSME Respondents (N=10)

Category	Respondent
Nature of the Business	
Manufacturing Business	0
Merchandising Business	2
Service Business	8
Type of Business Organization	
Single Proprietorship	7
Partnership	2
Corporation	1
Cooperative	0
Capitalization	
Not more than 3M	6
3M - 15M	3
15M - 100M	1
Number of Employees	
1 - 9	6
10 - 99	3
100 - 199	1
200 and more	0
Years in Business Operations	
Below 3 years	6
4 - 6 years	1
7 - 9 years	0
More than 12 years	3

The table above (Table 1) summarizes the profile of the surveyed MSMEs. Most respondents are engaged in **Service Business** (8 out of 10), while the least represented are in **Merchandising** (2 out of 10). This distribution may reflect Marikina City's Local Government Unit (LGU) efforts to support entrepreneurship across sectors.

Regarding business organization, **Single Proprietorship** was considered the most common type which was accounted by 7 respondents, followed by partnerships (2) and corporations (1). No cooperatives were reported. The preference for single proprietorship likely reflects the ease of establishing and managing businesses under this structure.

In terms of capitalization, the majority of the

respondents—more than half—reported capital investments of less than Php 3 million, consistent with the classification of micro-enterprises. Additionally, three MSMEs fall under the small enterprise category, with capital ranging between Php 3 million-Php 15 million, while one MSME meets the criteria for a medium enterprise with capitalization of up to Php 100 million. In relation to workforce size, six MSMEs employ between 1 and 9 individuals, further aligning with micro-enterprise classification. Notably, no respondent reported employing more than 200 individuals, which affirms the absence of large-scale enterprises among participants in the current study. In terms of the years in business operations, more than half of the MSMEs operated for **3 years or less**, indicating that they are relatively new in their ventures.

Table 2: Summary of Profiles of MSME Respondents

Sl. No	Business Name	Owner	Nature	Scale	Type of Business	Capitalization	Employees	Years in Operation
1	Drizzled Chicken	Ms. Mainie Fontanilla	Service	Small	Partnership	3M–15M	10–99	≤ 3 years
2	Maico	Mr. Copper Andres	Service	Small	Partnership	3M–15M	10–99	4–6 years
3	Crocsilugan	Mr. Cid Castillo	Service	Micro	Sole Proprietorship	< 3M	1–9	≤ 3 years
4	Hey It's My Coffee	Mr. Elijah Andres	Service	Micro	Sole Proprietorship	< 3M	1–9	≤ 3 years
5	Caffetierra	Ms. Ayessa Young	Service	Micro	Sole Proprietorship	< 3M	1–9	≤ 3 years
6	Reyes Bakery & Sari-sari Store	Mr. Jobert Viesca	Merchandising	Micro	Sole Proprietorship	< 3M	1–9	> 12 years
7	Sagolicious & Sari-sari Store	Ms. Elisa Lao	Merchandising	Micro	Sole Proprietorship	< 3M	1–9	≤ 3 years
8	Nails by Anj	Ms. Angeline Santiago	Service	Micro	Sole Proprietorship	< 3M	1–9	≤ 3 years
9	Megan-D, Ponti Dental Clinic	Dra. Lakambini Ponti	Service	Small	Sole Proprietorship	3M–15M	10–99	> 12 years
10	Café Lidia	Mr. Jun Estanislao	Service	Medium	Corporation	15M–100M	100–199	> 12 years

Table 2 summarizes the profile of the surveyed MSMEs which shows their business nature, organizational type, scale, capitalization, employee size, and operational tenure. These characteristics are necessary to provide a continuum for understanding the entrepreneurial environment and help to shape successful marketing strategies to best fit the specific requirements and capacities of each MSME. The adopted classification system is consistent with national standards, where MSMEs are classified by asset size and workforce. Microenterprises usually start with minimal capital investment and a small number of employees, often

fewer than ten, reflecting their limited but crucial role in local economies. For the small companies who have moderate capital investment and number of employees would be 10 to 99 or so, it stands to reason to keep on growing and getting more complex. Medium-sized enterprises possess relatively higher levels of assets and number of employees which enable them to acquire more resources. By distinguishing these differences, it also enables a more nuanced assessment of how sustainable marketing practices can be meaningfully practiced along the full range of MSME development stages.

Table 3: Implementation of Sustainable Marketing Strategies for Products by MSME Respondents

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent (DE)
Offering of high-quality product/s	4.42	EI
Continuous improvement of the design of product design to widen customer reach	4.31	EI
Physical attributes of products offered match the price value	4.38	EI
Uniqueness displayed in terms of overall logo and product among competitors	4.40	EI
Product meets customer satisfaction	4.36	EI
Products are always available in the market	4.44	EI
Legal certifications from the Food and Drug Administration and relevant regulatory bodies	4.39	EI
Secure and sanitized physical stores	4.45	EI
Varied product innovation in order to widen options in the market	4.44	EI
Average Weighted Mean	4.39	EI

Scale: Extremely Important (EI) = 4.21–5.00, Very Important (VI) = 3.41–4.20, Moderately Important (MI) = 2.61–3.40, Slightly Important (SI) = 1.81–2.60, Not Important at all (NI) = 1.00–1.80

Sustainable marketing strategies for products are highly prioritized by MSMEs which are summarized in Table 3. Respondents emphasized offering high-quality products, improving product design to satisfy customers, ensuring that physical attributes align with price value, and developing a unique brand identity as means to gain competitive edge. Product availability in the market is also prioritized, along with ensuring compliance to regulatory standards such as certifications from the Food and Drug Administration and other regulatory bodies. Additionally, physical retail stores are maintained in secure and hygienic conditions as means to demonstrate commitment to consumer well-being. MSMEs also continuously strive innovation in their products to meet customers' diverse preferences and occupy competitive market niches. Such manifestation of adaptability contributes to widen product offerings that may promote healthier lifestyle options for consumers.

All indicators in the table were deemed “Extremely

Important” which is evident with the measured average weighted mean of 4.39. This implies entrepreneurs are aware of the crucial role of product quality in maintaining customer satisfaction and business success. Since bulk of marketing lies on the actual attributes of the product, its quality speaks for itself in marketing strategies. Otherwise, sustainable success in the market is unattainable when the products offered do not meet quality standards.

This is in support with the findings of Sypsan (2019) regarding marketing mix. Marketing mix acts as the intermediary between service quality, product innovation and competitive advantage. Supporting this, Sypsan (2019) emphasized that the marketing mix serves as an intermediary between. Product quality is the foundation in marketing mix which allow businesses to satisfy consumer needs and improve their overall services.

Table 4: MSME Respondents' Implementation of Sustainable Marketing Strategies in terms of Place

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent (DE)
Enterprise is easily accessible to customers	4.42	EI
Retail services and good are always open to the customers	4.39	EI
Delivery service is offered	4.32	EI
Utilizing online platforms through websites and online retail stores	4.26	EI
Must have secure and sanitized physical store	4.46	EI
Engagements through websites, catalogues, stores	4.12	VI
Convenient access to enterprise's physical and online stores	4.37	EI
Location must make customers feel at ease and secure to visit	4.52	EI
Average Weighted Mean	4.35	EI

Scale: Extremely Important (EI) = 4.21–5.00, Very Important (VI) = 3.41–4.20, Moderately Important (MI) = 2.61–3.40, Slightly Important (SI) = 1.81–2.60, Not Important at All (NI) = 1.00–1.80

Table 4 outlines the implementation of sustainable marketing strategies by MSMEs in terms of Place which is one of the defined elements in marketing mix. The findings indicate that location-related strategies are perceived as Extremely Important ($M = 4.35$) across the majority of respondents. The highest-rated indicator was “location must make customers feel at ease and secure to visit” ($M = 4.52$), followed closely by “secure and sanitized physical store” ($M = 4.46$) and accessibility of the enterprise to customers ($M = 4.42$). These results emphasize that ensuring customer safety, comfort, and ease of access are critical priorities for the surveyed MSMEs.

In addition, other place-related strategies such as offering delivery services ($M = 4.32$) and maintaining online stores or websites ($M = 4.26$) were also rated as extremely important. While most indicators were evaluated within the top range, “engagements through websites, catalogues, and

physical stores” received a slightly lower rating ($M = 4.12$), placing it in the Very Important category, though still reflective of strong relevance.

These results suggest that MSMEs recognize the importance of both physical and digital accessibility. By ensuring customers can conveniently access their products and services, MSMEs in Kalumpang, Marikina City strengthen their ability to deliver value and enhance customer satisfaction. As emphasized in sustainable marketing literature, “place” not only facilitates the distribution and delivery of goods, but also significantly influences consumer trust and loyalty. Ensuring availability through multiple channels and providing a secure, inviting environment are essential strategies to remain competitive and socially responsible.

Table 5: Pricing-Based Sustainable Marketing Strategies Adopted by MSME Respondents

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent (DE)
Offering of special promotions and discounts	4.39	EI
Provide affordable yet competitive prices to wholesalers	4.48	EI
Uses a wide variety of payment methods to cater to customer convenience	4.26	EI
Provide competitive price list	4.40	EI
Offer bundle pricing or promotional pricing (e.g., buy one get 1 free)	4.29	EI
Average Weighted Mean	4.36	EI

Scale: Extremely Important (EI) = 4.21–5.00, Very Important (VI) = 3.41–4.20, Moderately Important (MI) = 2.61–3.40, Slightly Important (SI) = 1.81–2.60, Not Important at All (NI) = 1.00–1.80

In relation to the pricing element of the marketing mix, MSMEs implement various sustainable marketing strategies that are rated as Extremely Important by respondents, obtaining an overall average weighted mean of 4.36 (Table 5). Notably, providing affordable yet competitive prices to wholesalers got the highest mean score (4.48), highlighting the crucial role wholesale pricing plays in sustaining business operations. Other significant strategies include offering special promotions and discounts ($M = 4.39$), maintaining a competitive price list ($M = 4.40$), providing diverse payment methods to enhance customer convenience ($M = 4.26$), and employing bundle or promotional pricing schemes, such as “buy one, get one free” offers ($M = 4.29$).

These results suggest that MSMEs strategically leverage pricing as a vital tool to attract and retain customers, increase sales volume, and maintain competitiveness. Pricing is inherently dynamic, requiring continuous adjustment to market demands, customer preferences, and competitive pressures to ensure long-term business viability. The elasticity of pricing enables MSMEs to respond effectively to external fluctuations, optimizing revenue without compromising customer loyalty. Therefore, sustainable pricing strategies not only drive profitability but also foster positive relationships with wholesalers, retailers, and end consumers. This aligns with marketing theory, which emphasizes that pricing decisions impact multiple aspects of business performance, making it a critical component of the overall marketing mix.

Table 6: Promotion-Based Sustainable Marketing Strategies Adopted by MSME Respondents

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent (DE)
Products are presented personally	4.32	EI
Provide brochures containing list of products offered	4.08	VI
Creating digital posters, brochures, as well as short videos about the products to attract customers	4.04	VI
Penetrate social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and TikTok	4.16	VI
Collaborations and Partnerships with famous personalities or influencers	3.96	VI
Provide one-time discounts and freebies and special promotions (e.g., valentine's, women's month)	4.08	VI
Average Weighted Mean	4.11	VI

Scale: Extremely Important (EI) = 4.21–5.00, Very Important (VI) = 3.41–4.20, Moderately Important (MI) = 2.61–3.40, Slightly Important (SI) = 1.81–2.60, Not Important at All (NI) = 1.00–1.80

Promotion, as a vital element of the marketing mix, is given considerable attention by MSMEs, as shown in Table 6. The data indicates that while most promotional strategies are rated as Very Important (mean range: 3.96–4.16), “offering products through personal selling or face-to-face interactions” stands out as Extremely Important ($M = 4.32$). This highlights the how direct customer engagement functions in the promotional efforts of these enterprises.

Other notable strategies include distributing brochures and leaflets ($M = 4.08$), creating digital promotional materials such as posters and short videos ($M = 4.04$), penetrating social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok ($M = 4.16$), collaborating with popular personalities or influencers ($M = 3.96$), and providing one-time discounts, freebies, and special promotions tied to

occasions ($M = 4.08$). These strategies underscore a balanced mix of traditional and digital promotional tools aimed at maximizing customer reach and engagement.

The overall mean weighted mean of 4.11 indicates that the MSMEs highly value promotional activities in their marketing activities. There is evidence from the literature of the need for long-term and focused promotion campaigns in order to achieve sales, market share and revenue especially in tough economic situations. In times of diminished buying power, people become more purposive and pragmatic when purchasing. Hence, MSMEs are encouraged to focus their promotional messaging on product safety, durability, and reliability rather than relying solely on flashy branding. Such an approach aligns with sustainable marketing principles, emphasizing transparency and building long-term trust with customers.

Table 7: MSME Respondents' Implementation of Sustainable Marketing Strategies in Terms of Physical Evidence

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent (DE)
Physical facilities and amenities of the enterprise are visually appealing, aesthetic, clean and of good repair	4.36	EI
Prompt handling of feedback and inquiries through online platforms	4.11	VI
Standard Code of Sanitation are vigilantly observed in daily operations	4.66	EI
Physical facilities provide enjoyable and calm ambience for customers	4.38	EI
Simple and functional physical layout	4.42	EI
Average Weighted Mean	4.39	EI

Scale: Extremely Important (EI) = 4.21–5.00, Very Important (VI) = 3.41–4.20, Moderately Important (MI) = 2.61–3.40, Slightly Important (SI) = 1.81–2.60, Not Important at All (NI) = 1.00–1.80

Table 7 summarizes the sustainable marketing strategies in terms of physical evidence as implemented by MSMEs. Physical evidence was found to shape customer perceptions in terms of reinforcing business credibility. Among the indicators, observing the standard Code of Sanitation received the highest mean score ($M = 4.66$), emphasizing the critical importance of health and hygiene standards. This was followed by “Simple and functional physical layout ($M = 4.42$)”, “Calm and enjoyable ambience for customers” ($M = 4.38$), and “Visually appealing, clean, and well-maintained physical facilities” ($M = 4.36$), all of which fall within the “Extremely Important” range.

In contrast, handling customer queries and feedback through technology received a slightly lower mean score ($M = 4.11$), placing it in the Very Important category. This may suggest that some MSMEs still rely on manual systems or face

challenges in fully adopting digital tools for customer engagement. Nonetheless, the overall average weighted mean (4.39) confirms physical evidence is perceived as “Extremely Important”, highlighting its role in enhancing the overall customer experience and reinforcing brand trust.

This finding aligns with prior findings of Adiele (2015) which also demonstrated that physical surroundings such as cleanliness, layout, and ambience can significantly affect employee performance and customer satisfaction. In service-oriented environments, physical evidence serves as a visual and experiential assurance of a business's reliability and quality. For first-time customers or in transactions where services are paid in advance, these physical cues are particularly vital in boosting confidence and perceived value.

Table 8: People-Oriented Sustainable Marketing Strategies Adopted by MSME Respondents

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent (DE)
Employees are highly skilled and competent	4.34	EI
Workers are skilled in producing high-quality products	4.40	EI
Technical support through virtual trainings and workshops is provided by the management	4.23	EI
Provide incentives and motivations for the employees (e.g. work promotion)	4.37	EI
Employees provide effective and proper customer service	4.48	EI
Good rapport and public relationship with customers and even suppliers	4.40	EI

Complete personal protection equipment (PPE) provided for the employees	4.62	EI
Constant communication/collaboration among management and employees through meetings face- to-face or virtually regarding updates in business operations	4.14	VI
Average Weighted Mean	4.37	EI

Scale: Extremely Important (EI) = 4.21–5.00, Very Important (VI) = 3.41–4.20, Moderately Important (MI) = 2.61–3.40, Slightly Important (SI) = 1.81–2.60, Not Important at All (NI) = 1.00–1.80

Based on the data, MSMEs' implementation of sustainable marketing strategies regarding the "People" component of the marketing mix (Table 8) show that respondents view most indicators as Extremely Important. This underscores the significant role that human capital plays in maintaining business sustainability. Key areas of focus include the skills and competence of employees (M = 4.34), the availability of skilled workers for quality product production (M = 4.40), and management's provision of technical support through workshops, virtual trainings, and webinars (M = 4.23).

Additionally, respondents rated incentives, rewards, and motivational efforts by management to enhance employee performance highly (M = 4.37), along with effective and proper customer service (M = 4.48) and "Good public relations with suppliers and customers to build strong rapport" (M = 4.40). Importantly, "Provision of complete personal protective equipment (PPE) for all employees"—such as masks, gloves, thermometers, alcohol, and antibacterial soap—received the highest mean score (M = 4.62), reflecting the emphasis on workplace safety and health.

Meanwhile, constant communication and

collaboration between management and employees via meetings, whether face-to-face or virtual, regarding business updates and continuity plans was rated as Very Important (M = 4.14). This suggests that while ongoing communication is valued, there may be variability in how consistently it is practiced across enterprises.

Overall, the average weighted mean of 4.37 confirms that sustainable marketing practices related to "People" are regarded as extremely important by MSMEs. This underscores the understanding that employees, partners, and customers are essential assets to business success. Furthermore, it highlights how personal marketing strategies that cultivate professional reputation and authority can reinforce organizational image and credibility in the marketplace.

These findings align with literature emphasizing the pivotal role of human capital in business sustainability, where skilled, motivated, and well-supported employees directly contribute to product quality, customer satisfaction, and operational resilience.

Table 9: Sustainable Marketing Strategies Related to Process as Practiced by MSMEs

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent (DE)
Identifying product attributes that hold impact on customer's purchasing decisions	4.47	EI
Offers delivery services especially in times of crises	4.28	EI
Offers advance and bulk orders as well as ready-to-pick up services	4.28	EI
Prompt response toward customer inquiries as well as in preparing products	4.54	EI
Proper sanitation by upholding health protocol defined by IATF	4.61	EI
Production and operation of the enterprise are done on time to minimizes delivery delays	4.49	EI
Flexible operating time for employees and customers (e.g. especially with student customers and employees)	4.60	EI

Utilization of alternatives such as frozen foods/ingredients with extended shelf life	4.52	EI
Average Weighted Mean	4.47	EI

Scale: Extremely Important (EI) = 4.21–5.00, Very Important (VI) = 3.41–4.20, Moderately Important (MI) = 2.61–3.40, Slightly Important (SI) = 1.81–2.60, Not Important at All (NI) = 1.00–1.80

According to Table 9, MSMEs' implementation of sustainable marketing strategies concerning the "Process" component of the marketing mix are shown to be highly prioritized. The results reveal that all indicators are interpreted as "Extremely Important" as evidenced by the calculated average weighted mean of 4.47. This underscores the importance of efficient, reliable, and adaptable business processes in ensuring customer satisfaction and operational success.

Respondents identified several process-related strategies as highly significant. These include identifying product or service attributes that influence consumer buying decisions ($M = 4.47$), offering service delivery especially during times of crisis ($M = 4.28$), and "Offers advance orders and a ready-to-pick-up system" ($M = 4.28$). The "Response time for customer inquiries and product processing" ($M = 4.54$) also emerged as a key focus area, reflecting the importance of prompt service in building trust and customer loyalty.

Moreover, proper sanitation practices—such as adherence to IATF-mandated health protocols—were rated highly ($M = 4.61$), suggesting that MSMEs are committed to maintaining public health standards, particularly in the post-pandemic business landscape. Timely production and operations to prevent delivery delays ($M = 4.49$), flexible operating hours tailored to both employees and customers ($M = 4.60$), and the use of preservation alternatives like freezing to extend product shelf life ($M = 4.52$) were likewise recognized as vital components of the process.

These findings affirm that MSMEs are strategically optimizing their operational procedures to ensure continuity, adaptability, and customer satisfaction. MSMEs can strengthen sustainability in their operations by aligning their processes with market needs and health standards.

CONCLUSION

The study shows majority of respondents have service-oriented businesses, and most of them are capitalized at not more than three million pesos and have one to nine workers. These companies are relatively new with having operations less than 3 years of experience in the market. Despite being small and young in age, these MSMEs have shown a high level of awareness and interest in sustainable marketing practices in using the 7Ps framework—Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical Evidence.

The findings of the current research revealed all elements of the marketing mix were ranked *Very Important* or *Extremely Important* by the respondents especially product quality, fair and competitive pricing, hygienic and pleasant business environment and investment in people (through training and incentives). These findings emphasize the necessity for MSMEs to balance internal operational capabilities with external customer expectations in order to remain sustainable and competitive.

Table analyses show that MSMEs in the area are particularly attuned to customer-facing elements such as People, Physical Evidence, and Process, where customer satisfaction, proper sanitation, flexible service options, and skilled employees are central to their business strategies. These practices align with existing literature that stresses the pivotal role of human capital, innovation, and adaptability in achieving sustainable growth. The word "literature" here refers to existing academic and empirical studies that examine the relationship between business strategies and sustainability outcomes.

Moreover, this study contributes to both academic literature and local business practice by offering empirical insights into how small businesses in a Philippine urban context understand and implement sustainable marketing. It also serves as a diagnostic tool for MSME owners, providing a basis for reevaluating and improving their current practices.

However, the research was constrained by limited time and scope. A more comprehensive analysis of operations practices, financial results, and customer preferences may bring richer insights. Hence, future studies are encouraged to investigate longitudinal effects of these measures and to examine the effects of technological adoption, environmental sustainability practices and government support systems on long-term MSME performance.

On the ground level, MSMEs are encouraged in adopting the 7Ps as a flexible and inclusive framework for sustainability. Policymakers and the providers of support service can adopt this model to develop the tailored interventions and/or the particular technical support, capital, or sustainable marketing and operating training programs. Furthermore, social responsibility as part of marketing strategy does not only create a brand with a better reputation, but also helps to attract and keep customers and good employees.

Using ethical decision-making, innovation, and enhanced processes in the MSMEs operations, these can become more resistant to market fluctuations and to environmental uncertainties. In the end, these measures are part of larger aims of economic development, stewardship of the environment, and overall social well-being. With MSMEs being the lifeblood of local economies, the need to ensure their sustained support is necessary not only for their survival, but the livelihood of the populations they serve imminent.

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