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# Sustainable Marketing Strategies for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises Amidst COVID-19 Pandemic

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# SUSTAINABLE MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR MICRO, SMALL, AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES AMIDST COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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## ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the sustainable marketing strategies for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. In this research technique, a quantitative descriptive survey was utilized to examine 363 MSMEs in designated cities and municipalities in Pangasinan, such as Binmaley, Calasiao, Dagupan City, Mangaldan, San Carlos City, Santa Barbara, and Urdaneta City, all registered with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). According to the findings, manufacturing is the primary industry for most respondents; they are sole proprietorships with less than Php3 Million in assets, have 1-9 employees, and have been in operation for less than three years. The sustainable marketing strategies implemented by the MSMEs in terms of product, place, price, promotion, physical evidence, people, and process are considered extremely important. The level of effectiveness in sustaining marketing strategies of MSMEs is considered very effective. The respondents assessed the problems encountered by the MSMEs in sustaining marketing strategies as extremely serious. It can be concluded that the majority of the respondents were in the manufacturing business, a single type of business organization, and, capitalization comprises not more than 3 million. Most of them have a minimal number of employees and operate for a short time. For the sustainable marketing strategies implemented by the MSMEs product, place, price, physical evidence, people and process are extremely important while promotions are very important. The effectiveness of 7ps of marketing is considered very effective. The respondent's problems encountered by the MSMEs in sustaining marketing strategies as extremely serious.

**Keywords:** MSMEs, marketing strategies, sustainability, marketing

## INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the Philippines are defined as any business activity or enterprise engaged in industry, agri-business, and, or services that has: an asset size up to P3,000,000 and an employment size of 1-9 employees for Microenterprise, the asset size of P 3,000,001 - P15,000,000 and 10-99 employees for Small enterprise, and an asset size of P15,000,001 - P100,000,000 and an employment size by 100 - 199 employees for Medium enterprise.

MSMEs can react more quickly to changes in the business environment, giving them an advantage over larger organizations when addressing sustainability issues. Because of this COVID-19 pandemic, consumers are looking for quality and affordable products and services.

Sustainable marketing refers to the type of marketing that involves using products and services that are respectful of the environment and social aspects. Its objective is to improve the quality of life by promoting products, services, and ideas that are eco-friendly. With the rise in environmental issues, the society has become more aware of these problems. Businesses that actively participate in such initiatives can inspire their users to take action and make a positive impact. By setting an example, these companies have the power to motivate their customers to join the cause, creating a ripple effect of



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positive change. As a result, companies can enjoy better brand visibility and attract more customers who support the message.

"Furthermore, despite playing a vital role in economic growth, MSMEs are facing significant challenges due to a lack of support from relevant government departments, banks, financial institutions, and corporations. This lack of support is proving to be a major obstacle in the growth path of MSMEs." Nowadays, MSMEs face challenges such as reduced revenue, cash flow shortage, decreased demand for orders, labor force impact, business continuity disruption, supply chain disruption, transportation unavailability, and reduced production levels. Despite the importance of the list of the problems that are faced by existing/new companies in the MSMEs sector is the absence of adequate and timely banking finance, limited capital and knowledge, non-availability of suitable technology, low production capacity, ineffective marketing strategy, constraints on modernization and expansions, non-availability of skilled labor at affordable cost, and follow up with various government agencies to resolve problems due to lack of workforce and knowledge.

With the preceding observation and claims, the researcher is eager to venture into the Sustainable Marketing Strategies for MSMEs amidst the COVID-19 pandemic to know if their strategies are sufficient to sustain their business. MSMEs play a crucial role in the development of the Philippine economy. They contribute to poverty reduction by generating employment opportunities for the growing labor force and by providing public goods and services. Moreover, they stimulate economic growth in remote and rural areas. MSMEs also act as essential partners for large enterprises by supplying goods and support services. They serve as a breeding ground for new entrepreneurs and large corporations. A flourishing MSME sector is a sign of a thriving and growing economy, and it is widely recognized for the significant contributions it makes to sustainable development. The growth of MSMEs is a potential economic booster that deserves serious attention.

### Research Questions

1. What is the Profile of the MSMEs in terms of:
  - 1.1. Nature of Business;
  - 1.2. Types of Business Organization;
  - 1.3. Capitalization;
  - 1.4. Number of Employees; and
  - 1.5. Years in business operation?
2. What are the sustainable marketing strategies implemented by the MSMEs in terms of:
  - 2.1. Product;
  - 2.2. Place;
  - 2.3. Price;
  - 2.4. Promotion;
  - 2.5. Physical evidence:
  - 2.6. People; and
  - 2.7. Process?
3. What is the level of effectiveness in sustaining marketing strategies for MSMEs during the COVID-19 pandemic?
4. What are the problems encountered by the MSMEs in sustaining marketing strategies amidst the COVID-19 pandemic?
5. What intervention can be proposed to sustain marketing strategies for MSMEs amidst the COVID-19 pandemic?



## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

To gather the necessary data for this study, the researcher utilized the descriptive analysis method of research using a survey questionnaire. It is widely accepted, Descriptive analysis uses the quantitative method, according to the book of Daniel J. Boudah (2015). The technique used in the study is a data-gathering instrument and a predefined series of questions used to collect information from the respondents (Research Connections, 2016). It was designed with statements and a Likert scale for the respondents to rate the statements indicated in the questionnaire. The survey questionnaire respondents provided ample time to sustain marketing strategies for MSMEs amidst the COVID-19 pandemic in Pangasinan.

### Research Respondents

The quantitative descriptive survey method of research focused on 363 MSMEs in selected cities and municipalities in Pangasinan, including Binmaley, Calasiao, Dagupan City, Mangaldan, San Carlos City, Santa Barbara, and Urdaneta City, which are registered MSMEs in the province with the DTI. The researcher chose the list of respondents using cluster sampling based on the establishment in Pangasinan, which is included in the questionnaire.

### Research Instrument

Initially, a self-administered survey questionnaire was designed. The questionnaire was constructed to enable the respondents to answer the questions as accurately as possible. The survey questionnaire is divided into five functional parts. The initial section emphasized the company profile of MSMEs, encompassing the nature of the business, business organization type, capitalization, number of employees, and years in operation. The second part dealt with sustainable marketing strategies implemented by the MSMEs in terms of product, price, place, people, promotion, physical, and process. The third part dealt with the effectiveness of the marketing strategies under the new normal by MSMEs. The fourth part dealt with the problems encountered by the MSMEs' marketing strategies during the pandemic. The last portion of the instrument elicits the interventions that can be proposed to sustain marketing strategies for MSMEs amidst COVID-19.

### Data Analysis

To answer problems stated in research questions on sustainable marketing strategies implemented by MSMEs in terms of 7ps, problem number three, on the effectiveness of the marketing strategies under the new normal by MSMEs, and on the problems encountered by the MSME's marketing strategies during this time of the pandemic, the average weighted mean was used. The weighted mean is an average that gives more weight to certain data points.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Profile of the MSMEs

Table 1 shows the characteristics of the MSMEs. The table reveals that most of the respondents are engaged in manufacturing business, which constitutes 169 of those surveyed or 46.6% of the total. On the other hand, the number of those involved in service business is the lowest, with only 79 respondents or 21.8% of the total. This can be attributed to the abundance of natural resources in Pangasinan and the government's support for entrepreneurship.

Among the surveyed responses, single proprietorship was the most common type of business organization, accounting for 72.7% (264) of the responses, while the least common were cooperatives, which accounted for only 7.2% (26). The most possible reason most respondents chose single proprietorship as a business organization is the ease of establishing a business using this structure.



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The majority of respondents' capitalization is below PhP3 million (242 or 66.7%), while the minority have capital of 15 million to 100 million (48 or 13.2%). A micro-enterprise is a small business that typically operates with minimal investment and is often not registered.

As to the number of employees, the majority of the MSMEs have 1-9 employees 284 (78.2%) while more than 200 employees are considered the least of the surveyed responses making up 9 (2.5%). Based on the survey, it is unsurprising to note that a micro-enterprise is defined as a business with five or fewer workers.

**Table 1.** Profile of the MSMEs

(N=363)

		Frequency	%
<b>Nature of Business</b>	Manufacturing Business	169	46.6
	Trading/Merchandising Business	115	31.7
	Service Business	79	21.8
<b>Type of Business Organization</b>	Single	264	72.7
	Partnership	54	14.9
	Corporation	19	5.2
	Cooperative	26	7.2
<b>Capitalization</b>	Not more than 3 million	242	66.7
	3M-15M	73	20.1
	15M-100M	48	13.2
<b>Number of Employees</b>	1-9	284	78.2
	10-99	54	14.9
	100-199	16	4.4
	more 200	9	2.5
<b>Number of years in Business Operation</b>	3 years below	135	37.2
	4-6	53	14.6
	7-9	71	19.6
	More than 12	104	28.7

As to the duration of business operations, the majority of the respondents responded with three years, with a frequency of 135 (37.2%). The least frequent response was 4 to 6 years with a frequency of 53 (14.6%). This may have also resulted from the strengthening and full implementation of the Go Negosyo Act, R.A. 10644, which seeks to promote "ease in doing business and facilitate access to services for MSMEs within its jurisdiction."

### Sustainable Marketing Strategies Implemented by the MSMEs

Table 2 illustrates the sustainable marketing strategies implemented by MSMEs for their products. Respondents replied extremely important in all the sustainable marketing strategies implemented by the MSMEs indicators such as a high-quality product offered by the enterprises in the market, consistent product design improvement to attract more customers and, consumers, consistency of products' physical attributes to its price value during the COVID-19 pandemic, uniqueness of its brand, logo and product among the competitors, products meet consumer needs and satisfaction, availability of the



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products in the market during COVID-19 pandemic, food and drug administration certification, satisfaction guarantees, and other safety certification and seals to the products offered, Physical stores now have secure and sanitized areas to ensure the safety of customers and consumers. and well-packed products to preserve the freshness of its food products, product innovation to provide the consumers and, or customers to product variations for more options and to compete with other leading competitors and creating a product/s essential to the current situation of COVID-19 that can add to the healthy lifestyle of customers and, or consumers.

**Table 2.** Sustainable Marketing Strategies implemented by the MSMEs for Product

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>DE</b>
<b>1. A high-quality product offered by the enterprises in the market.</b>	4.42	EI
<b>2. Consistent improvement of product design to attract more customers and, or consumers.</b>	4.31	EI
<b>3. Consistency of products' physical attributes to their price value during the COVID-19 pandemic.</b>	4.38	EI
<b>4. The brand, logo, and product should have unique characteristics that distinguish them from the competitors.</b>	4.40	EI
<b>5. Products meet consumer needs and satisfaction.</b>	4.36	EI
<b>6. Availability of the products in the market situation during the COVID-19 pandemic.</b>	4.44	EI
<b>7. Food and Drug Administration Certification, Satisfaction guarantees, and other safety certifications and seals to the product certificate</b>	4.39	EI
<b>8. Physical stores now have secure and sanitized areas to ensure the safety of customers and consumers. and well-packed products to preserve the freshness of its food products.</b>	4.45	EI
<b>9. Product innovation to provide the consumers and, or customers with product variations for more options and to compete with other leading competitors.</b>	4.44	EI
<b>10. Creating a product/s essential to the current situation of COVID-19 that can add to the healthy lifestyle of customers and, or consumers.</b>	4.62	EI
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.42</b>	<b>EI</b>

*Legend: Extremely Important (EI) 5-4.21, Very Important (VI) 4.20-3.41, Moderately Important (MI) 3-40-2.61, Slightly Important (SI) 2-60-1.81, (Not Important at all (NI) 1-1.80*

On all indicators, respondents rated importance extremely high with an average weighted mean of 4.42. The result is a good indicator in business industries in that the respondents know and practice the importance of their product's quality for their customers' satisfaction. Marketing activities revolve around the product; without a good product, market success is unlikely.

As indicated in the study of Syapsan (2019), marketing mix strategy is the mediator between service quality, innovation towards competitive advantages, and sustainable economic growth. Results indicated that the quality of services, as reflected in the products offered, has a significant impact on marketing mix strategies. This implies that tailoring service quality to meet customer requirements results in increased satisfaction. Essentially, heightened service quality correlates with greater customer satisfaction. Additionally, the level of service quality plays a direct role in fostering a resilient local economy. Enhancing service quality by understanding customer needs can contribute to sustainable economic growth and a competitive advantage achieved through effective marketing mix strategies. In essence, improving service quality to align with customer preferences can lead to a well-crafted marketing mix strategy and the sustainability of the local economy. Furthermore, a positive



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relationship exists between marketing mix strategies and a sustainable local economy. This indicates that an elevated marketing mix strategy corresponds to an enhanced approach for achieving sustainable economic growth and competitive advantage.

### Sustainable Marketing Strategies Implemented by the MSMEs to Place

Table 3 presents the sustainable marketing strategies implemented by the MSMEs as to place. As can be gleaned from the table above, the respondents claimed extremely important the indicators of accessibility of the enterprise to the customers, retail goods and services are open to the customers, delivery or drop-off services nearest to the customers' area, availability of online stores, websites, retail stores to reach out more customers and, or consumers, Physical stores now have secure and sanitized areas to ensure the safety of customers and consumers. and sanitized area of the physical stores for the safety of customers and, or consumers and The location of the enterprise makes consumers feel secure, easy and open access of physical stores or online stores to customers and, or consumers in contrast the indicators engagement with customers through websites, retail stores, mail order catalogs and other is considered very important.

Holistically, the respondents surveyed were extremely important in indicator of sustainable marketing strategies implemented by the MSMEs as to place with an average weighted mean of 4.35, results showed a good indicator that the accessibility of the venue of business enterprises was considered for easy access of the customers. This indicates that the element of "place" in the marketing mix holds considerable importance in managing the distribution and movement of goods, ensuring that the product is available at the appropriate location and time. In the absence of effective product placement, customers are more likely to seek alternatives for their needs or desires.

**Table 3.** Sustainable Marketing Strategies Implemented by the MSMEs to Place

Indicators	Mean	DE
1. Accessibility of the enterprise to the customers.	4.42	EI
2. Retail goods and services are open to customers.	4.39	EI
3. Provide delivery or drop-off services nearest to the customers' area.	4.32	EI
4. Availability of online stores, websites, and retail stores to reach more customers and, or consumers.	4.26	EI
5. Physical stores now have secure and sanitized areas to ensure the safety of customers and consumers. and sanitized areas of the physical stores for the safety of customers and, or consumers.	4.46	EI
6. Engagement with customers through websites, retail stores, mail-order catalogs, etc..	4.12	VI
7. Easy and open access to physical stores or online stores to customers and, or consumers.	4.37	EI
8. The location of the enterprise makes consumers feel secure.	4.52	EI
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.35</b>	<b>EI</b>

Legend: Extremely Important (EI) 5-4.21, Very Important (VI) 4.20-3.41, Moderately Important (MI) 3-40-2.61, Slightly Important (SI) 2-60-1.81, (Not Important at all (NI) 1-1.80

### Sustainable Marketing Strategies Implemented by the MSMEs as to Price

Table 4 showed that indicators on price could be marketing strategies for the sustainability of their business where respondents claimed that is extremely important in all indicators such as offering special promos and discounts to customers and, or consumers, providing competitive and affordable prices to the wholesalers and retailers, uses a different mode of payment for your customers and, or consumers, provide competitive pricelist for those customers who are interested in avail distributorship and resellers program if they plan to resell your products, a Businesses often specify their preferred



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payment terms for goods and services. as to when it should be paid for goods and services, lower prices of customers compared to other MSMEs, availability of consignment to be offered to the credible and valued customers and Adoption of commodities' prices to members' expectations.

Overall, price indicators are considered extremely important in sustainable marketing strategies, with an average weighted mean of 4.34. Business establishments use diverse strategies, particularly in the pricing of their products, to attract customers. As mentioned in the literature, the price of a product or service is always evolving. As a result, it is essential for the pricing to be flexible, adjusting to changes that occur over time. The pricing component in the marketing mix model is determined by what is charged for the performance of a service or the purchase of a product. The pricing strategy chosen by a company not only impacts its revenue but also has repercussions on various facets of the business. Furthermore, it shapes the perceptions of buyers concerning the quality of the product or service. Hence, pricing plays a crucial role in the day-to-day operational activities of the organization.

**Table 4.** Sustainable Marketing Strategies Implemented by the MSMEs as to Price

Indicators	Mean	DE
<b>1. Offers special promos and discounts to customers and, or consumers.</b>	4.39	EI
<b>2. Provide competitive and affordable prices to wholesalers and retailers.</b>	4.48	EI
<b>3. Uses different modes of payment for your customers and, or consumers.</b>	4.26	EI
<b>4. Provide a competitive pricelist for those customers whore is interested in availing of the distributorship and resellers program if they plan to resell your products.</b>	4.40	EI
<b>5. Businesses often specify their preferred payment terms for goods and services. as to when they should be paid for goods and services.</b>	4.29	EI
<b>6. Cheaper prices of customers compared to other MSMEs.</b>	4.23	EI
<b>7. Availability of consignment to be offered to credible and valued customers.</b>	4.35	EI
<b>8. Adjusting commodity prices to meet the expectations of members.</b>	4.32	EI
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.34</b>	<b>EI</b>

Legend: Extremely Important (EI) 5-4.21, Very Important (VI) 4.20-3.41, Moderately Important (MI) 3-40-2.61, Slightly Important (SI) 2-60-1.81, (Not Important at all (NI) 1-1.80

### Sustainable Marketing Strategies Implemented by the MSMEs for Products

As shown in Table 5, respondents claimed it extremely important for the indicator to offer products through personal selling or face-to-face selling following the health and safety protocol. This implies that the business established contemplate the safety not only of their customers but their employees as well while some claimed as very important on the indicators Provide brochures and leaflets to offer consumers and customers access to products.terials for consumers and, or customers like brochures and leaflets to give them access to the products, creating a digital posters and brochures about the business and its products to attract customers and, or consumers to let them engage in industry and its products offered, Penetrating social media platforms and E-commerce companies like Shopee, Lazada, etc., by the MSMEs, sending advertisements like electronic catalogues, posters, brochures, and leaflets through direct mails to customers/consumers' email, collaboration and partnership with famous personalities and influencers to make a review about the food products, special promos, discounts and freebies offered to the customers and, or consumers and posting feedbacks of customers and/ or consumers about the products on the social media platforms.



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**Table 5.** Sustainable Marketing Strategies Implemented by the MSMEs as to Promotions

Indicators	MEAN	DE
1. Offers products through personal selling or face-to-face selling following the health and safety protocol.	4.32	EI
2. Provide brochures and leaflets to offer consumers and customers access to products.	4.00	VI
3. Creating digital posters and brochures about the business and its products to attract customers and, or consumers to engage them in the industry and its products offered.	4.08	VI
4. Penetrating social media platforms and E-Commerce companies like Shopee, Lazada, etc., by the MSMEs.	4.04	VI
5. Sending advertisements like electronic catalogs, posters, brochures, and leaflets through direct mail to customers/consumers' emails.	3.99	VI
6. Collaboration and partnership with famous personalities and influencers to make a review about the food products.	3.96	VI
7. Special promos, discounts, and freebies are offered to the customers and/ or consumers.	4.16	VI
8. Posting feedback from customers and/ or consumers about the products on social media platforms.	4.08	VI
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.07</b>	<b>VI</b>

Legend: Extremely Important (EI) 5-4.21, Very Important (VI) 4.20-3.41, Moderately Important (MI) 3-40-2.61, Slightly Important (SI) 2-60-1.81, (Not Important at all (NI) 1-1.80

Overall, the sustainable marketing strategies implemented by the MSMEs for promotions are considered to be very important, with an average weighted mean of 4.07. The literature indicates that the promotional strategies employed by an organization during a crisis are crucial. Maintaining or elevating the level of advertising can lead to increased sales, market share, and revenue both during and after an economic downturn. Additionally, customers tend to make more rational purchasing decisions when faced with reduced spending power during a crisis. Therefore, advertising efforts should emphasize the significance of safety, durability, and reliability, focusing on these aspects rather than presenting a glamorous image of the brand (<https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1439188>).

### Sustainable Marketing Strategies Implemented by the MSMEs as to Physical Evidence

As shown in Table 6, respondents claimed that physical evidence is extremely important in the indicators physical facilities of the enterprises are visually appealing, clean, and in good repair, observing the general standard of code on sanitation, observation of IATF health protocols (physical distancing), ask the customers to have customer's feedbacks about the products, Equipment for COVID-19 pandemic are provided by the enterprise, simple and functional physical layout of the enterprise make the operations more convenient to the employees/workers/ and customers/consumers and calm and enjoyable ambiance for customers, while some claimed as very important on the indicator handling queries and customer feedback through the use of technology; this implies that not all employees are still into uses of technology in customers or maybe some of the business enterprises use a paper record in customers feedback for ease of answering.



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**Table 6.** Sustainable Marketing Strategies Implemented by the MSMEs as to Physical Evidence

INDICATORS	MEAN	DE
1. The physical facilities of the enterprises are visually appealing, clean, and in good repair.	4.36	EI
2. Handling queries and customer feedback through the use of technology.	4.11	VI
3. Observing the general standard of the Code of Sanitation.	4.36	EI
4. Observation of IATF health protocols (physical distancing)	4.66	EI
5. Ask the customers to have customer's feedback about the products.	4.30	EI
6. The enterprise is providing equipment for the COVID-19 pandemic.	4.50	EI
7. Having a simple and functional physical layout in the enterprise makes it more convenient for employees, workers, and customers.	4.42	EI
8. Calm and enjoyable ambiance for customers.	4.38	EI
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.38</b>	<b>EI</b>

Legend: Extremely Important (EI) 5-4.21, Very Important (VI) 4.20-3.41, Moderately Important (MI) 3-40-2.61, Slightly Important (SI) 2-60-1.81, (Not Important at all (NI) 1-1.80

Holistically, the sustainable marketing strategies implemented by the MSMEs as to physical evidence are considered extremely important, with an average weighted mean of 4.38. As aligned with literature on physical evidence and customer patronage, when individuals or customers experience physical discomfort due to ambient temperature, their emotional response to strangers tends to be less positive compared to when they are physically at ease. Furthermore, it is argued that ambiance holds greater significance in service-oriented environments since both customers and employees frequently interact with the company's facilities. The atmosphere within a bank, for instance, can either support or impede the achievement of internal organizational objectives and external marketing goals (Kenneth Adiele 2015). Physical evidence provides tangible cues of a company's quality of experience. It can prove advantageous in situations where a customer is making their first purchase from the organization and requires reassurance, or when payment for a service is expected upfront before its delivery.

### **Sustainable Marketing Strategies Implemented by the MSMEs as to People**

As can be gleaned in the table above, the responses are extremely important in indicators such as skills and competence of the employees in managing the business, skilled workers in producing quality products of MSMEs, technical support from the management like workshops, virtual training, and webinars, provide incentives, rewards, and reinforcements from the management to increase the motivational level of the workers and employees to produce quality products, effective and proper customer service of the employees and workers, good public relationship with the suppliers, consumers and/ or customers to build a good rapport with them and provide complete personal protection equipment for all employees, especially under operations like mask, gloves, thermometers, alcohol, anti-bacterial soap, etc while respondents consider very important on the indicator collaboration through virtual meeting with the management and employees for updates about the business operations and continuity plan. This implies that collaboration or partnership is relevant to knowing the new trends and updates to be applied in their business.



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**Table 7.** Sustainable Marketing Strategies Implemented by the MSMEs as to People

INDICATORS	MEAN	DE
1. Skills and competence of the employees in managing the business.	4.34	EI
2. Skilled workers in producing quality products for MSMEs.	4.40	EI
3. The management provides technical support in the form of workshops, virtual training, and webinars.	4.23	EI
4. Provide incentives, rewards, and reinforcements from the management to increase the motivational level of the workers and employees to produce a quality product.	4.37	EI
5. Effective and proper customer service of the employees and workers.	4.48	EI
6. Collaboration through virtual meetings with the management and employees for updates about the business operations and continuity plan.	4.14	VI
7. Good public relationship with the suppliers, consumers, and, or customers to build a good rapport with them.	4.40	EI
8. Provide complete personal protective equipment for all employees, especially under operations like masks, gloves, thermometers, alcohol, anti-bacterial soap, etc.	4.62	EI
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.37</b>	<b>EI</b>

Legend: Extremely Important (EI) 5-4.21, Very Important (VI) 4.20-3.41, Moderately Important (MI) 3-40-2.61, Slightly Important (SI) 2-60-1.81, (Not Important at all (NI) 1-1.80

The sustainable marketing strategies implemented by MSMEs towards people are highly valued, with an average weighted mean of 4.47. This means that workers, partners, and customers are considered integral parts of business enterprises, and their contribution is highly recognized. Personal marketing serves as a tactic to fortify the image and standing of a professional in the employment sphere. When executed with precision, it fosters a sense of authority, elevating these individuals to become recognized authorities in their respective fields.

### **Sustainable Marketing Strategies Implemented by the MSMEs as to Process**

As shown in Table 8, respondents claimed that all indicators are considered extremely important, such as identification of product/service attributes that influence consumer's purchasing decision, offering service delivery during the crisis, offering advance orders and ready-to-pick-up process, response time for inquiries, and processing of products, proper sanitation (health protocol by IATF, timely production, and operations of the enterprise to avoid delays in delivering products to consumers and customers, operating time must be flexible during lockdowns to both employees/ workers and consumers/customers, utilize alternatives to preserve foods to the extent the shelf life of products such as frozen foods. Holistically, the sustainable marketing strategies implemented by the MSMEs as to the process are considered extremely important, with an average weighted mean of 4.47. Find the best and most efficient way to promote your product and company to your targeted audience and prospective customers. Once you get people talking about your product, an experience, an issue, or a brand, you can make a tangible impact.



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**Table 8.** Sustainable Marketing Strategies Implemented by the MSMEs as to Process

INDICATORS	MEAN	DE
<b>1. Identifying the product/service attributes that have an impact on consumers' buying decisions.</b>	4.47	EI
<b>2. Offers service delivery during the crisis.</b>	4.28	EI
<b>3. Offers advance orders and ready-to-pick-up process.</b>	4.28	EI
<b>4. Response time for inquiries and processing of products.</b>	4.54	EI
<b>5. Proper sanitation (Health Protocol by IATF).</b>	4.61	EI
<b>6. Just-in-time production and operations of the enterprise to avoid delays of deliveries to the consumers and, or customers.</b>	4.49	EI
<b>7. Operating time must be flexible during lockdowns for employees/ workers and consumers/customers.</b>	4.60	EI
<b>8. Utilize alternatives to preserve foods to extend the shelf life of products such as frozen foods.</b>	4.52	EI
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.47</b>	<b>EI</b>

Legend: Extremely Important (EI) 5-4.21, Very Important (VI) 4.20-3.41, Moderately Important (MI) 3-40-2.61, Slightly Important (SI) 2-60-1.81, (Not Important at all (NI) 1-1.80

The marketing mix indicators that resulted in extremely important are the following: Product (AVM= 4.42); Place (AWM= 4.35); Price (AWM= 4.34); Physical Evidence (AWM= 4.38); People (AWM= 4.37); and Process (AWM= 4.34). The marketing mix under promotion resulted in Very important (AWM= 4.07). It is advisable to take into account the comprehensive 7Ps of the marketing mix when assessing competitive strategies. This approach aids MSMEs in examining and defining critical factors that impact the marketing of their products.

#### Level of Effectiveness in Sustaining Marketing Strategies of MSMEs as to Product

Table 9 presents the effectiveness in sustaining MSMEs' marketing strategies as to product. As shown in the table, responses are considered very effective in all product indicators such as a high-quality product offered by the enterprises in the market, consistent improvement of product design to attract more customers and, or consumers, consistency of products' physical attributes to its price value during COVID-19 pandemic, uniqueness of its brand, logo, and product among the competitors, products meet consumer needs and satisfaction, availability of the products in the market during COVID-19 pandemic, food and drug administration certification, satisfaction guarantees, and other safety certification and seals to the products offered, Physical stores now have secure and sanitized areas to ensure the safety of customers and consumers. and well-packed products to preserve the freshness of its food products, product innovation to provide the customers and, or consumers with product variations for more options and to compete with other leading competitors, creating a product/s essential to the current situation of COVID-19 that can add to the healthy lifestyle of customers and, or consumers.

**Table 9.** Shows the level of effectiveness of MSMEs in sustaining their marketing strategies for their products.

INDICATOR	MEAN	DE
<b>1. A high-quality product offered by the enterprises in the market.</b>	4.55	VE
<b>2. Consistent product design improvement to attract more customers and, or consumers.</b>	4.53	VE
<b>3. Consistency of products' physical attributes to their price value during the COVID-19 pandemic.</b>	4.64	VE



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<b>4. The brand, logo, and product should have unique characteristics that distinguish them from the competitors.</b>	4.49	VE
<b>5. Products meet consumer needs and satisfaction.</b>	4.58	VE
<b>6. Product availability during the COVID-19 pandemic.</b>	4.53	VE
<b>7. Food and Drug Administration Certification, Satisfaction guarantees, and other safety certifications and seals to the products offered.</b>	4.60	VE
<b>8. Physical stores now have secure and sanitized areas to ensure the safety of customers and consumers. and well-packed products to preserve the freshness of its food products.</b>	4.54	VE
<b>9. Product innovation to provide the customers and, or consumers with product variations for more options and to compete with other leading competitors.</b>	4.53	VE
<b>10. Creating a product/s essential to the current situation of COVID-19 that can add to the healthy lifestyle of customers and, or consumers.</b>	4.61	VE
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.56</b>	<b>VE</b>

Legend: Very Effective (VE) 5-4.21, Strongly Effective (SE) 4.20-3.41, Moderately Effective (ME) 3-40-2.61, Slightly Effective (SE) 2-60-1.81, (Not Effective at all (NE) 1-1.80

Overall, the level of effectiveness in sustaining marketing strategies of MSMEs as to product is considered very effective with an average weighted mean of 4.56. Again, the results of this research along this aspect favor the public as these indicate that the product of the business enterprises may benefit the business owners as well as the customer's satisfaction. Conforming to Almase V's (2017) research on the business strategies of micro-manufacturing enterprises in Quezon Province, the study found no significant effects on the implementation of strategies in production, marketing, human resource management, financial operations, and research and development. This lack of impact was observed even when respondents were sorted based on age, gender, marital status, and participation in training sessions.

#### **Level of Effectiveness in Sustaining Marketing Strategies of MSMEs as to Place**

As shown in Table 10, respondents responded very effectively in all indicators, having an average weighted mean of 4.38, which indicates that the result may show a good indicator that the customers may have easy access to some business establishments, and this also implies that those with own business made a strategic plan in terms of The location.

**Table 10.** Level of Effectiveness in Sustaining Marketing Strategies of MSMEs as Place

INDICATOR	MEAN	DE
<b>1. Accessibility of the enterprise to the customers.</b>	4.46	VE
<b>2. Retail goods and services are open to customers and, or consumers.</b>	4.42	VE
<b>3. Availability of delivery of goods and services to customers and, or consumers.</b>	4.33	VE
<b>4. Availability of online stores, websites, and retail stores to reach more customers and, or consumers.</b>	4.29	VE
<b>5. Physical stores now have secure and sanitized areas to ensure the safety of customers and consumers. and sanitized areas of the physical stores for the safety of customers and, or consumers.</b>	4.46	VE
<b>6. Engagement of customers through websites, retail stores, mail-order catalogs, etc.</b>	4.29	VE
<b>7. Customers can now easily access products through physical or online stores.</b>	4.31	VE



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<b>8. The location of the enterprise makes consumers feel secure.</b>	4.53	VE
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.38</b>	<b>VE</b>

Legend: Very Effective (VE) 5-4.21, Strongly Effective (SE) 4.20-3.41, Moderately Effective (ME) 3-40-2.61, Slightly Effective (SE) 2-60-1.81, (Not Effective at all (NE) 1-1.80

### Level of Effectiveness in Sustaining Marketing Strategies of MSMEs as to Price

According to the findings in Table 11, the responses indicate that all indicators are highly effective, with an average weighted mean of 4.38. This means that price is a significant factor in a sustainable marketing strategy, as most customers are attracted to lower prices without compromising the quality of the products.

**Table 11.** Level of Effectiveness in Sustaining Marketing Strategies of MSMEs as to Price

INDICATORS	MEAN	DE
<b>1. Offers special promos and discounts to customers and, or consumers.</b>	4.40	VE
<b>2. Provide competitive and affordable prices to wholesalers and retailers.</b>	4.45	VE
<b>3. Uses different modes of payment for your customers and, or consumers</b>	4.21	VE
<b>4. Provide a competitive pricelist for those customers whore is interested in availing of the distributorship and resellers program if they plan to resell your products.</b>	4.41	VE
<b>5. Businesses often specify their preferred payment terms for goods and services.</b>	4.47	VE
<b>6. Cheaper prices of customers compared to other MSMEs.</b>	4.43	VE
<b>7. Availability of consignment to be offered to credible and valued customers.</b>	4.38	VE
<b>8. The adjustment of commodity prices to meet the expectations of members</b>	4.35	VE
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.38</b>	<b>VE</b>

Legend: Very Effective (VE) 5-4.21, Strongly Effective (SE) 4.20-3.41, Moderately Effective (ME) 3-40-2.61, Slightly Effective (SE) 2-60-1.81, (Not Effective at all (NE) 1-1.

### Level of Effectiveness in Sustaining Marketing Strategies of MSMEs as to Promotions

Table 12 shows how effective MSMEs are in sustaining marketing strategies for promotions. The table showed very effectiveness on the indicators offering products through personal selling or face-to-face selling following the health and safety protocol, creating digital posters and brochures about the business and its products to attract customers and, or consumers to let them engage in the industry and its products offered, penetrating social media platforms and e-commerce companies like Shopee, Lazada, etc. by the MSMEs, sending advertisements like electronic catalogs, posters, brochures, and leaflets through direct mails to customers/consumers' email, collaboration and partnership with famous personalities and influencers to makes a review about the food products, offered special offers, gifts, and discounts for customers, and posting feedback from customers and, or consumers about the products on social media platforms, this suggests that social media is increasingly becoming a crucial element of digital marketing, offering remarkable advantages by reaching a vast audience worldwide. Social media platforms facilitate connecting with customers, enhancing brand awareness, and driving leads and sales while strongly effective on the indicator provide brochures and leaflets to offer consumers and customers access to products to give them access to the products can also be of help in promoting their products that will eventually develop a good establishment.



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**Table 12.** Level of Effectiveness in Sustaining Marketing Strategies of MSMEs as to Promotions

INDICATORS	MEAN	DE
1. Offers products through personal selling or face-to-face selling following the health and safety protocols	4.36	VE
2. Provide brochures and leaflets that can be used to offer consumers and customers easy access to your products.	4.11	SE
3. Creating digital posters and brochures about the industry and its products to attract customers and, or consumers to engage them in the industry and its products offered.	4.36	VE
4. Penetrating social media platforms and E-Commerce companies like Shopee, Lazada, etc., by the MSMEs.	4.66	VE
5. Sending advertisements like electronic catalogs, posters, brochures, and leaflets through direct mail to customers/consumers' emails.	4.30	VE
6. Collaboration and partnership with famous personalities and influencers to make a review about the food products.	4.50	VE
7. Offered special offers, gifts, and discounts for customers.	4.42	VE
8. Posting feedback from customers and/ or consumers about the products on social media platforms.	4.38	VE
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.30</b>	<b>VE</b>

Legend: Very Effective (VE) 5-4.21, Strongly Effective (SE) 4.20-3.41, Moderately Effective (ME) 3-40-2.61, Slightly Effective (SE) 2-60-1.81, (Not Effective at all (NE) 1-1.80

According to a study, promoting the marketing strategies of MSMEs is highly effective, with a weighted mean score of 4.30. This suggests that promotional tactics can be beneficial for business enterprises in achieving their objectives and increasing their customer base. This finding is supported by literature on the subject. As cited in the literature, the promotional component plays a pivotal role in effectively presenting the organization's products or services to customers, encouraging them to make purchases, as noted by Salman et al (2017).

#### Level of Effectiveness in Sustaining Marketing Strategies of MSMEs as Physical Evidence

Table 13 presents the level of effectiveness in sustaining the marketing strategies of MSMEs as physical evidence. According to the results, the responses were found to be highly effective in all indicators, indicating that physical evidence is very effective in sustaining marketing strategies for MSMEs. The average weighted mean of 4.54 suggests that physical evidence is compelling in sustaining the marketing strategy as all the requirements are being met by the business enterprises.

**Table 13.** Level of Effectiveness in Sustaining Marketing Strategies of MSMEs to Physical Evidence

INDICATORS	MEAN	DE
1. The physical facilities of the enterprises are visually appealing, clean, and in good repair.	4.51	VE
2. Handling queries and customer feedback through the use of technology.	4.48	VE
3. Observing the general standard of the Code of Sanitation.	4.55	VE
4. Observation of IATF health protocols (physical distancing).	4.63	VE
5. Ask the customers to have customer's feedback about the products.	4.59	VE
6. The enterprise provides equipment for a COVID-19 pandemic.	4.64	VE
7. Having a simple and functional physical layout in the enterprise makes it more convenient for employees, workers, and customers.	4.45	VE



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<b>8. Calm and enjoyable ambiance for customers.</b>	4.54	VE
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.54</b>	<b>VE</b>

Legend: Very Effective (VE) 5-4.21, Strongly Effective (SE) 4.20-3.41, Moderately Effective (ME) 3-40-2.61, Slightly Effective (SE) 2-60-1.81, (Not Effective at all (NE) 1-1.80

### Level of Effectiveness in Sustaining Marketing Strategies of MSMEs as to People

As shown in Table 14, all of the indicators are considered very effective with an average weighted mean of 4.40, which implies that the relevance of people such as employees, customers, and all stakeholders are considered a big part of the effectiveness of sustaining marketing strategy since they can be an agent to market the product of a business establishment.

**Table 14.** Level of Effectiveness in Sustaining Marketing Strategies of MSMEs to People

INDICATORS	MEAN	DE
<b>1. Skills and competence of the employees in managing the business.</b>	4.38	VE
<b>2. Skilled workers in producing quality products for MSMEs.</b>	4.44	VE
<b>3. The management provides technical support in the form of workshops, virtual training, and webinars.</b>	4.28	VE
<b>4. Provide incentives, rewards, and reinforcements from the management to increase the motivational level of the workers and employees to produce a quality product.</b>	4.40	VE
<b>5. Effective and proper customer service of the employees and workers.</b>	4.42	VE
<b>6. Collaboration through virtual meetings with the management and employees for updates about the business operations and continuity plan.</b>	4.31	VE
<b>7. Good public relationship with the suppliers, consumers, and, or customers to build a good rapport with them.</b>	4.45	VE
<b>8. Provide complete personal protective equipment for all employees, especially under operations like masks, gloves, thermometers, alcohol, anti-bacterial soap, etc..</b>	4.55	VE
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.40</b>	<b>VE</b>

Legend: Very Effective (VE) 5-4.21, Strongly Effective (SE) 4.20-3.41, Moderately Effective (ME) 3-40-2.61, Slightly Effective (SE) 2-60-1.81, (Not Effective at all (NE) 1-1.80

### Level of Effectiveness in Sustaining Marketing Strategies of MSMEs as to Process

Table 15 presents the effectiveness of sustaining MSMEs' marketing strategies as to process. The result showed that all indicators in sustaining the marketing strategy as to process are very effective, with an average weighted mean of 4.46. This highlights that within a business, the process serves as a vital foundation, enabling the smooth coordination of individual activities and ensuring that resources are utilized to their maximum potential. Aligned with Alzoubi's (2015) research on the influence of Business Process Management (BPM) on business performance superiority, the findings indicated that achieving consistent excellence demands financial and moral support from organizational managers for business process orientation. This support is particularly crucial within the context of business entrepreneurship, where an uncertain environment marked by risk and changeability shapes the future outlook of the organization's business performance superiority.



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**Table 15.** Level of effectiveness in sustaining marketing strategies of MSMEs as to Process

INDICATORS	MEAN	DE
1. Determining the features of a product or service that have an impact on the decision-making process of consumers when making a purchase.	4.44	VE
2. Offers service delivery during the crisis.	4.31	VE
3. Offers advance orders and ready-to-pick-up process.	4.38	VE
4. Response time for inquiries and processing of products.	4.46	VE
5. Proper sanitation (Health Protocol by IATF).	4.66	VE
6. Just-in-time production and operations of the enterprise to avoid delays of deliveries to the consumers and, or customers.	4.40	VE
7. Operating time must be flexible during lockdowns for employees/ workers and consumers/customers.	4.57	VE
8. Utilize alternatives to preserve foods to the extent of the shelf life of products such as frozen foods.	4.52	VE
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.46</b>	<b>VE</b>

Legend: Very Effective (VE) 5-4.21, Strongly Effective (SE) 4.20-3.41, Moderately Effective (ME) 3-40-2.61, Slightly Effective (SE) 2-60-1.81, (Not Effective at all (NE) 1-1.80.

The results indicate that the effectiveness level of MSMEs for the seven Ps of marketing has been very high, with an overall average weighted mean score of 4.41. This implies that the participants have acquired essential knowledge, skills, and foundational competencies understandings and can transfer these through authentic performance tasks with minimal guidance.

#### Problems Encountered by the MSMEs in Sustaining Marketing Strategies

Table 16 illustrates the problems encountered by the MSMEs in sustaining marketing strategies. As can be gleaned in Table 19, respondents assess as extremely serious the difficulties encountered by the MSMEs in sustaining marketing strategies on the indicators of lower revenue due to lack of demand for orders, challenges such as inadequate cash flow to sustain staffing and operations, disruptions in the supply chain, and difficulties in accessing raw materials, reduced production capacity due to a fewer of temporary workers, some businesses have responded to the situation by implementing reduced working hours or having employees take paid leave. Others have temporarily closed based on direct instructions from authorities. In contrast, some businesses have temporarily shut down due to decreased orders, instances of staff COVID-19 infections, and, more regrettably, some have permanently closed, supply chain disruption due to social distancing requirements, stores closing, shipping delays, unavailable transportation between suppliers, production facilities, and customers and prioritization between the essential and non-essential products during enhanced community quarantine.

**Table 16.** Problems Encountered by the MSMEs in Sustaining Marketing Strategies

INDICATORS	MEAN	DE
A. Lower revenue due to lack of demand for orders.	4.37	ES
B. Insufficient cash flow has caused staffing and operational difficulties, as well as disruptions in supplier relationships and access to raw materials.	4.41	ES
C. Due to fewer temporary workers, reduced working hours, or employees taking paid leave, the production capacity has been reduced.	4.36	ES
D. Some businesses closed as per authorities' instructions, while others closed due to staff COVID-19 infections, reduced orders, or permanent closure.	4.36	ES



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<b>E. Supply chain disruption due to social distancing requirements, stores closing, and shipping delays.</b>	4.32	ES
<b>F. There is unavailable transportation between suppliers, production facilities, and customers.</b>	4.22	ES
<b>G. Prioritization between the essential and non-essential products during enhanced community quarantine.</b>	4.35	ES
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.34</b>	<b>ES</b>

*Legend: Extremely Serious (ES) 5-4.21, Very Serious (VS) 4.20-3.41, Moderately Serious (MS) 3-40-2.61, Slightly Serious (SS) 2-60-1.81, (Not Serious (NS) 1-1.80*

Overall, the problems encountered are considered extremely serious, with an average weighted mean of 4.34. The results serve as a basis for coming up with strategies on how to resolve such problems in business so as not to compromise the quality of service provided to the customers as aligned with the literature on In the study on issues and challenges faced by SMEs, conducted by Bhoganadam, S. et al. (2017), it is highlighted that small and medium enterprises encounter numerous challenges stemming from both internal and external factors, significantly affecting their performance. External challenges involve factors like changes in legal systems, market conditions estimation, and environmental influences such as political, legal, social, economic, and socio-cultural ecological aspects that contribute to an entrepreneur's journey into entrepreneurship. External challenges for MSMEs encompass socio-cultural factors like education, caste, religion, family background, and networks, all of which exert influence on individuals. On the other hand, internal challenges pertain to various management-related factors, including production, marketing, human resource development, financial aspects, and infrastructure. While SMEs have control over internal factors in managing their businesses, government intervention through specific schemes and programs for different sectors can help mitigate the impact of external factors. Internal challenges encompass production hurdles such as power shortages, resource limitations, scarcity of materials, high costs of raw materials, poor raw material quality, and a lack of machinery. Marketing challenges may arise from insufficient promotional strategies, limited market channels, networking opportunities, disorganized distribution channels, and delays in delivery. Financial challenges include issues like limited credit from banks, inadequate awareness of available schemes and services, prolonged processes in banks, and a shortage of working capital.

## CONCLUSION

The majority of the respondents' nature of business is manufacturing business. Concerning the nature of business organizations, the survey findings reveal that the predominant responses correspond to a single type of business organization. The majority of the respondents' capitalization comprises not more than 3 million. Regarding the number of employees, most of the MSMEs have 1-9 employees and responded three years or below regarding the number of years in business operation. For MSMEs, implementing sustainable marketing strategies requires careful consideration of the 6 P's: product, place, price, physical evidence, people, and process. Promotions also play a crucial role. The 7 Ps of marketing are highly effective, but MSMEs struggle to sustain their marketing strategies.



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