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Research Article

Entrepreneurial Marketing Practices of Small & Medium Enterprises (SMEs) In Northern Zambales, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the entrepreneurial marketing practices of small and medium enterprises in Masinloc, Candelaria, and Sta. Cruz, Zambales as basis for a Proactive Entrepreneurial Marketing Practices Enhancement Program (PEMP). A descriptive-correlational research design was employed with 107 SME owners and managers as respondents. A validated researcher-made questionnaire was used to measure seven dimensions: proactiveness, opportunity-driven behavior, risk management, innovativeness, customer satisfaction, resource leveraging, and value creation. Data were analyzed Frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and one-way ANOVA. Results revealed that SMEs exhibited strong entrepreneurial marketing practices in all dimensions. Proactiveness obtained the highest mean, while innovativeness obtained the lowest mean, although still within the Strongly Agree range. Significant differences were observed when respondents were grouped according to location, indicating that the local business environment influences entrepreneurial marketing practices. No significant differences were found in most dimensions when grouped according to other profile variables. The study concludes that SMEs in Northern Zambales are proactive and customer-oriented but need further strengthening in innovativeness. The proposed PEMP provides targeted interventions through the support of DTI, LGUs, and PRMSU to enhance proactive practices that are responsive to the specific conditions of each municipality.

Keywords: *Innovativeness, Opportunity-driven behavior, Proactiveness, Resource leveraging, Risk management, Value creation*

Introduction

Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) play an important role in the economic development of the Philippines. In recent years, Entrepreneurial Marketing has emerged in the planning strategies of SMEs to make them more competitive and responsive to market demands. According to Mascariñas and Campos (2023), SMEs in Davao City practice Entrepre-

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neurial Marketing that focuses on proactiveness, innovativeness, and customer value creation, enabling them to differentiate their products, attract and retain customers, and sustain growth. Iqbal et al. (2021) found that entrepreneurial orientation has a positive impact on innovation performance, highlighting the importance of proactiveness, innovativeness, and risk management. However, SMEs often face difficulties in ensuring competitiveness due to limited resources and changing market conditions. Rubio-Andrés, Linuesa-Langreo, Gutiérrez-Broncano, and Sastre-Castillo (2024) noted that appropriate strategies can enhance attractiveness, consumer preference, and marketability, but external challenges make it difficult for enterprises to sustain these gains. Despite numerous studies on entrepreneurial marketing, few have examined its seven dimensions proactiveness, opportunity-driven behavior, innovativeness, risk management, resource leveraging, customer satisfaction, and value creation among SMEs in geographically isolated municipalities such as Northern Zambales. SMEs in Masinloc, Candelaria, and Sta. Cruz face lack of financial resources and expertise, secluded location, and smaller consumer base, causing customers to travel to other municipalities for better products and services. This study assessed the entrepreneurial marketing practices of SMEs in Masinloc, Candelaria, and Sta. Cruz, Zambales. It determined the profile of SMEs, the level of their practices across the seven dimensions, and the significant differences when grouped according to profile. The findings served as basis for the Proactive Entrepreneurial Marketing Practices Enhancement Program (PEMP) to strengthen SMEs with the support of DTI, LGUs, and PRMSU.

Materials and Methods

This section presents the methods and procedures used in this study. It discus the designed used in this study, the sample population and the statistical tools to identify the difference and the mean rating of the response to the SMEs. The data gathering procedures. And how the data were treated. The methods were chosen to make sure that the data gathered were valid and reliable. This is to assess the entrepreneurial marketing practices of SMEs in Northern Zambales. The study was done step by step. From finding the respondents, to gathering the data, to analyzing it. This is to make sure that the results answered the objectives of the study.

Study Design

This study used a quantitative descriptive research design. The quantitative approach was used because numerical data were collected through a survey questionnaire to measure the extent of entrepreneurial marketing practices of SMEs. The descriptive design was used because the study aimed to describe the profile of SMEs and the extent of their practices in terms of proactiveness, opportunity-driven behavior, innovativeness, risk management, resource leveraging, customer satisfaction, and value creation, without manipulating any variables. The design also allowed the researchers to determine the significant difference in entrepreneurial marketing practices when the respondents were grouped according to their profile.

Sample/Population of the Study

The target population of this study were the SME owners, managers, or authorized representatives. They are the ones who are involved in marketing decision-making. They are the ones who decide what to sell, how much to sell it, and how to promote it.

This study was conducted in the northern municipalities of Zambales. Specifically in Masinloc, Candelaria, and Sta. Cruz. The following inclusion criteria were used in selecting the respondents: (1) the respondent must be an owner, manager, or authorized representative of an SME; (2) the SME must be duly operating with a business permit in Masinloc, Candelaria, or Sta. Cruz; (3) the SME must have been operating for at least one year; and (4) the respondent must be involved in marketing functions and serve local customers.

Respondents were excluded if they were not involved in marketing decision-making. They were also excluded if their business was no longer operating at the time of data gathering. The study utilized a purposive sampling to identify the potential respondents following the criteria that it must be an owner, manager, or employees who have idea or part of the

marketing. A total of 107 respondents were selected. They were chosen based on the criteria stated above.

These three municipalities were chosen because they have many SMEs. They have SMEs in different sectors. Most of them are in their central business areas. Because of this, they are a good example of a rural area to study entrepreneurial marketing practices.

Data Gathering Tools

The survey questionnaire was the main tool used in this study. It was made by the researchers. It was made to gather information on the entrepreneurial marketing practices in the Northern Municipalities of Zambales. The questionnaire has two parts. It has Likert-scale items, and the statement was used is close ended questions. This is to make sure that the answers are accurate and easy to measure.

The main gathering tool is contained of two parts. The first part covers the demographic profile of the respondents, including type of business, years of operation, capitalization, number of employees, location, and business category. The second part measures entrepreneurial marketing practices dimensions such as proactiveness, opportunity-driven behavior, innovativeness, risk management, resource leveraging, customer satisfaction, and value creation. Each indicator was rated using a 4-point Likert scale to capture the perceptions of the respondents.

To ensure validity and reliability, the questionnaire was checked first. It was validated by three panel members. The panel members gave suggestions and comments. These were considered to improve the questionnaire. It was also tested for reliability through Cronbach's Alpha. Only the items that were found valid and reliable were included in the final questionnaire.

Data Gathering Procedures

The data were gathered step by step. First, the researchers prepared a letter of request. It was addressed to the Municipal Mayors of Masinloc, Candelaria, and Sta. Cruz, Zambales, to seek approval in conducting the study in their respective municipalities. The endorsement of the mayors was crucial to the legitimacy of the research undertaking and to ensure smooth execution involving local small and medium enterprises. Moreover, the researchers presented letters to the Dean of the Graduate School at President Ramon Magsaysay State University seeking permission to allow the researchers to go off-campus for conducting the study.

Upon approval, the questionnaires were personally distributed by the researchers to the selected respondents from duly operating small enterprises with business permits in the three municipalities. The purpose of the study was explained to the respondents, and they were assured that the confidentiality and privacy of all gathered data would be strictly maintained and used solely for the purpose of conducting research. The respondents were given enough time to answer the questionnaire, and the accomplished questionnaires were retrieved on the same day or on an agreed schedule.

Treatment of Data

To answer the objectives of the study, the data gathered were summarized and analyzed using the following statistical treatments:

1. Frequency and Percentage. This was used for the demographic profile of respondents to determine the frequency counts and percentage distribution of profile-related variables.
2. Weighted Mean. This was used to determine the assessment of the respondents with regard to entrepreneurial marketing practices.
3. Likert Scale. The Likert scale is an ordered scale wherein the respondents selected the option that most closely fits their viewpoint. By asking respondents how much they agree or disagree with a given statement, it is frequently used to determine the views of respondents in selecting from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), to Strongly Disagree (SD).
4. ANOVA (Analysis of Variance). This was used to examine the significant difference in entrepreneurial marketing practices when grouped according to the profile of the respondents. It is a statistical test that determines if two or more population means are equal.

Decision Rule 1: If the computed significant value is greater than (>) 0.05 alpha level of significance, accept the null hypothesis and reject the alternative hypothesis. There is no significant difference.

Decision Rule 2: If the computed significant value is less than or equal (≤) to 0.05 alpha level of significance, reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. There is significant difference.

Result and Discussion

The results are presented based on the objectives. First, the profile of the SMEs is described. Next, their assessment of entrepreneurial marketing practices is presented. Last, the differences are shown. This is when they were grouped based on their business profile.

Profile of the Participating SMEs

This study had 107 SMEs. They came from Masinloc, Candelaria, and Sta. Cruz. Food and beverage establishments such as restaurants and bakeries made up the largest group at 30.8%, followed by businesses classified as other at 29.0%, and retail or grocery businesses at 26.2%. When it comes to years of operation, the largest group had already been operating for 10 years or more. That is 23.4%.

Most of them had a capitalization between ₱3,000,000 and ₱15,000,000. That is 76.6%. Most of them were also small in terms of workforce, with only 1 to 10 workers (88.8%). Masinloc accounted for the largest share of respondents at 42.1%, and most of the participating enterprises were classified as small businesses at 77.6%.

Table I. Selected profile characteristics of the participating SMEs

Profile Variable	Largest Group	Frequency	Percentage
Type of Business	Food and Beverage	33	30.8%
Years of Operation	10 years or more	25	23.4%
Capitalization	₱3,000,000 - ₱15,000,000	82	76.6%
Number of Employees	1-10 employees	95	88.8%
Location	Masinloc	45	42.1%
Business Category	Small	83	77.6%

Overall, the profile shows that most participating enterprises were small businesses with few employees, yet many had already been operating for 10 years or more. Despite their limited workforce and resources, these SMEs have managed to stay in operation, which reflects their ability to adapt and remain responsive to customer needs.

Entrepreneurial Marketing Practices

Overall, the respondents strongly agreed that the participating SMEs practiced all seven dimensions of entrepreneurial marketing, with a grand mean of 3.63. Among the dimensions, proactiveness obtained the highest mean of 3.69, followed by opportunity-driven behavior at 3.65 and resource leveraging at 3.64. Customer satisfaction and value creation both recorded 3.63, while risk management got 3.59. Innovativeness, although it had the lowest mean of 3.57, was still interpreted as Strongly Agree, which suggests that even the weakest area was still positively practiced by the SMEs.

Table II. Summary of entrepreneurial marketing practices

Dimension	Weighted mean	Interpretation	Rank
Proactiveness	3.69	Strongly Agree	1
Opportunity-driven behavior	3.65	Strongly Agree	2
Innovativeness	3.57	Strongly Agree	7
Risk management	3.59	Strongly Agree	6
Resource leveraging	3.64	Strongly Agree	3
Customer satisfaction	3.63	Strongly Agree	4.5
Value creation	3.63	Strongly Agree	4.5
Grand mean	3.63	Strongly Agree	

Proactiveness came out as the strongest dimension. This shows that the SMEs generally take initiative. They anticipate what customers need. And they recognize opportunities that can help them stay competitive. The highest-rated indicator under this dimension was investing resources early to target promising opportunities. It got 3.75. This supports what (Tolossa, Singh, & Gautam, 2024) said. That proactive behavior helps firms anticipate what will happen in the market. And it helps them act before the opportunity is gone.

Opportunity-driven Behavior also rank as a second to the highest assessment from the respondents particularly recognized that opportunities drive business success at 3.74. This indicates that business owners value identifying and pursuing opportunities as part of their regular decisions. This supports the discussion of Tabares, Tavera, Barrera, & Escobar-Sierra (2022) on the role of managerial capabilities in supporting opportunity-driven behavior.

Innovativeness got the lowest mean. But the rating still showed that the practice was present among the SMEs. The lower scores for product or service innovation and process innovation show that there is still room for improvement. They need to improve in developing new offerings. They need to improve in developing new offerings. And in their internal operations. This is true for SMEs that have to work with limited resources. This suggests that SMEs still need to strengthen both their new offerings and their internal operations, which is understandable given their limited resources. In line with this, Flaminiano (2024) pointed out that smaller enterprises can still innovate by making better use of the resources they already have. For these SMEs, innovation does not necessarily mean expensive changes, but rather practical and continuous improvements in how they operate.

Resource leveraging, customer satisfaction, and value creation were also positively assessed. In resource leveraging, the use of resource and network management to support business success obtained the highest rating at 3.70. For customer satisfaction, the item on customers seeing their feedback reflected in business decisions recorded 3.73, while continuous improvements that provide greater customer value led value creation at 3.68. Taken together, these results indicate that SMEs value their networks, listen to customer feedback, and keep improving their products and services. This also supports the findings that customer satisfaction and service quality can support customer loyalty (Hang, Trung, Hien, & Hiep, 2024). It also shows that entrepreneurial marketing can help firm performance through customer value and strategic capabilities (Ouragini & Lakhal, 2023).

Differences According to Business Profile

The ANOVA results showed that the differences in entrepreneurial marketing practices were related to some profile variables. They were not related to every characteristic that was examined. Proactiveness differed significantly based on capitalization ($p = 0.046$), location ($p < 0.001$), and business category ($p = 0.032$). Opportunity-driven behavior, innovativeness, and resource leveraging each differed significantly based on location. Their p-values were $p < 0.001$, $p = 0.002$, and $p = 0.007$. Risk management differed according to location ($p = 0.001$) and business category ($p = 0.050$). For customer satisfaction, significant differences were found by years of operation ($p = 0.034$) and location ($p = 0.004$), whereas value creation varied by type of business ($p = 0.014$) and location ($p < 0.001$).

Table III. Summary of statistically significant differences in entrepreneurial marketing practices

Dimension	Profile variables with significant differences	p-value(s)
Proactiveness	Capitalization; Location; Business Category	0.046; < 0.001; 0.032
Opportunity-driven behavior	Location	< 0.001
Innovativeness	Location	0.002
Risk management	Location; Business Category	0.001; 0.050
Resource leveraging	Location	0.007

Dimension	Profile variables with significant differences	p-value(s)
Customer satisfaction	Years of OIperation; Location	0.034; 0.004
Value creation	Type of Business; Location	0.014;<0.001

Among the profile variables, location showed the most consistent link with differences across the entrepreneurial marketing dimensions, which suggests that the local business environment may shape how SMEs identify opportunities, introduce innovations, manage risks, use resources, and satisfy customers to create value. This does not mean that location alone caused these differences, but rather that the assessed practices varied across the municipalities included in the study. Similarly, differences in proactiveness by capitalization and business category may reflect variations in resources and operating conditions, while differences in customer satisfaction by years of operation may indicate that businesses with different operating histories have developed different ways of understanding and responding to customers. Differences in value creation by type of business likewise suggest that the nature of products and services offered may matter in how firms create value. Overall, the results support the need for development initiatives that consider the specific conditions of SMEs.

Proposed Enhancement Direction

Based on the findings, the thesis proposed a Proactive Entrepreneurial Marketing Practices Enhancement Program (PEMP). The program aims to sustain the SMEs' existing strengths. At the same time, it aims to address areas that need further development. Priority activities include capability-building, mentoring, coaching, networking, and collaboration. This will be among SMEs, the DTI, LGUs, and higher education institutions. Particular attention may be given to affordable product, service, and process innovation. Also to practical digital marketing. Also to financial recording and resource management. Also to customer feedback systems. And also to business risk assessment.

Conclusion

The participating SMEs in Masinloc, Candelaria, and Sta. Cruz showed favorable entrepreneurial marketing practices. This was across all seven dimensions assessed in the study. Their overall grand mean was 3.63. This means that respondents strongly agreed that these practices were present in their businesses. Proactiveness emerged as the strongest dimension. This shows that the enterprises generally value taking initiative. And they value responding to market opportunities; Innovativeness got the lowest mean, although its rating still fell within the Strongly Agree range. This means that there is an opportunity to strengthen it. It does not mean that there was no innovative practice. The findings also showed that entrepreneurial marketing practices varied based on selected business profile characteristics. Location was related to differences in several dimensions. Capitalization, business category, years of operation, and type of business were significant for particular dimensions. These results show that the circumstances in which SMEs operate should be considered when planning interventions to strengthen their marketing capabilities. The proposed PEMP gives a practical direction for supporting these enterprises. It will be through coordinated training, mentoring, networking, and institutional collaboration.

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The main findings (novelty) and why they are important and useful:

The study found that SMEs in Masinloc, Candelaria, and Sta. Cruz exhibited strong entrepreneurial marketing practices, with proactiveness obtaining the highest mean and innovativeness obtaining the lowest mean, although still within the Strongly Agree range. Location emerged as the profile variable most consistently related to differences across the entrepreneurial marketing dimensions, which indicates that the local business environment shapes how SMEs operate. Based on these findings, a Proactive Entrepreneurial Marketing Practices Enhancement Program (PEMP) was proposed to strengthen the existing practices of SMEs through the support of the DTI, LGUs, and academic institutions such as PRMSU. This study is novel because it provides localized evidence from Northern Zambales and offers a practical program that is responsive to the specific conditions of each municipality, rather than a uniform program for all SMEs.

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