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Marketing Strategy Transformation of Micro-Small and Medium Enterprises in Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao: A Convergent Design

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ABSTRACT

The study focused in strategies and ideas that can be applied to tackle sustainability-related problems. Micro-Small and medium enterprise provides both economic growth and environmental conservation if the appropriate plans and approaches are taken. Additionally, this study aims to give a thorough list of various drivers that the researcher identifies by applying the convergent approach research technique. By offering thorough, up-to-date perspectives and findings on sustainable activities and their causes, notably in the context of MSMEs, it aimed to contribute to the level of information. The study employed a convergent design of mixed methods research (MMR) with 400 respondents and 17 participants in the quantitative strand and qualitative strand, respectively. The study was conducted in micro-small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, Philippines.

The findings revealed the high level on the status of marketing strategy transformation. Meanwhile, sustainability revealed the high-level result. The lived experiences of the employees of micro-small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) on sustainability as influenced by their experiences in marketing strategy transformation, have positive ideas. The participants convey the significance of exogenous variable to the endogenous variable.

Conclusions have been drawn from both quantitative and qualitative findings. In the quantitative results, all the exogenous variables obtained high rating indicating that the variables are oftentimes manifested. The exogenous variable which is sustainability obtained very high-level rating meaning it is always manifested in micro-small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the BARMM region.

Keyword: Sustainability; Small-Medium Enterprises; Convergent Design

INTRODUCTION

The sustainability of small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) has been challenging (Bakos, et al., 2020). Numerous factors, including poor financial management, small and medium enterprises -specific educational opportunities, a lack of technological support, social issues, restrictive legal frameworks, inadequate financial assistance programs, and problematic ethical considerations, have an adverse impact on the growth of small and medium enterprises (Haresankar, et al., 2018). Today's businesses must continuously improve with environmentally sustainable practices, and more and more environmental sustainability is expected of them every day, according to Bakos, Siu, Orengo and Kasiri (2020). Additionally, there have been instances of social and environmental inequities caused by structural pressures, and manipulated access to healthy settings, health services, and natural resources (Leposa, 2020).

The survey results of Dao-Luna et al.'s (2018) study in the Philippines show that while a hostile business environment like fierce competition, corruption, poor infrastructure, and low product quality are the top barriers to small and medium enterprises' competitiveness, skills and high product quality are the top barriers of small and medium enterprises success. Additionally, Ballesteros and Domingo (2015) claim that calamities are

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detrimental to business, especially for small and medium enterprises They noted in their study that catastrophic events might jeopardize capital, logistics, the product market, and labor, which jeopardizing business recovery and continuity.

Due to its strategic role in creating new jobs and businesses and significant contribution to the encouragement of the growth of gross domestic products, the Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) sector has become a significant factor in the development of the national economies around the world (Sarwono, 2015). However, Small and Medium enterprises 'resilience and sustainability, however, are constantly at risk (Kot, 2018; Hanggraeni, et al., 2019). Due to the importance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in terms of economic growth, innovation, and employment (Manzaneque-Lizano, et al., 2019), the impact of crises on the long-term viability of SMEs has been receiving increased attention in the literature and from governments.

Sustainable small and medium enterprises is mostly driven by marketing strategy transformation. According to Gil-Gomeza, Guerola-Navarroa, Oltra-Badnesa, and Lozano-Quilis (2020), the transformation of marketing strategy has a major impact on sustainability. The advantages of customer relationship management may boost the beneficial impact of its components on each sustainability dimension.

Micro-Small and medium-sized businesses (MSMEs) in the Philippines have suffered significant losses. The Philippine economy has reached the recovery stage six months after the shutdown in March 2020, but small and medium enterprises are still battling a sharp fall in demand and earnings (Shinozaki & Rao, 2021). This research aims to fill the void around what should occur and what really does for micro-small and medium enterprises in the Philippines' BARMM Region. Marketing strategy transformation will highlight the survival that affects the sustainability of small and medium enterprises. This study employed a convergent design of mixed methods research (MMR) to investigate and understand whether marketing strategy transformation could determine the sustainability of micro-small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, Philippines. Specifically, this study aimed to:

- 1. Know the status of marketing strategy transformation and sustainability of the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, Philippines.
- 2. The lived experiences of the employees of micro-small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) on sustainability as influenced by their experiences in marketing strategy transformation.
- 3. How do quantitative and qualitative results corroborate with each other.

METHODS

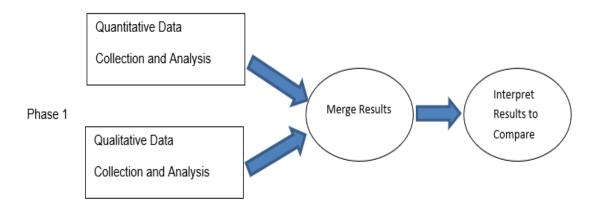
Research Design

The research was conducted using the mixed methods convergent design. With the mixed methods, the researcher could integrate elements of qualitative and quantitative approaches to study for specific and profound understanding and corroboration purposes (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). In most cases, a convergent design was employed, in which the researcher carried out both the quantitative and qualitative aspects in the same phase of the research process, measured the approaches equally, analyzed the two components independently, and interpreted the results together (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). Data was analyzed and compare results to see if the findings corroborate with each other.

The researcher confirmed and validated the findings relating to the same phenomenon using several methodologies according to the convergent design (Figure 1), which also increased internal and external validity. To be within the scope of this research, the researcher was utilized quantitative and qualitative methods to study the perceptions of employees' sustainability of the small and medium enterprises in a convergent manner.

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Figure 1. Convergent Design



Source: Creswell and Creswell (2018)

The researcher considered the joint correlational research and survey design for the quantitative strand because it was used to analyze the relationship between marketing strategy transformation and sustainability. It was applied to measure accurately (Cooper & Schindler, 2014) or meant to quantify variables from the target participants (such as size, magnitude, duration, or amount) using numerical values (Gravetter & Forzano, 2012). It was also used to demonstrate how different variables relate to one another (Saunders, et al., 2010) through statistical analysis or to anticipate and manage phenomena (Bueno, 2016). This adheres to a positivist principle and employs the language of variables and hypotheses (Neuman, 2014), and it is generalizable (Bueno, 2016).

Moreover, the survey method was used in data collection, as this approach allows large quantities of data to be collected is not expensive is effective, and allows larger sample sizes to be collected (Burns and Bush, 2004). In the survey, a formal questionnaire was prepared and distributed to the participants.

In the qualitative strand, the researcher used a phenomenological approach the to study the first-person perspectives on the foundations of awareness (Neubauer, et al., 2019). The essential component of an experience is its intentionality; it is focused on something, and its connection to sustainability will depend on how marketing strategy transformation. The explanation for this method was for the researcher to recognize and analyze the employee's experiences in small and medium enterprises in the BARMM region, Philippines. Using a phenomenological approach, the researcher explained the common meaning of a phenomenon that many individuals experienced (Creswell, 2013).

Phenomenological principles state that scientific research is accurate when the information gained comes from a rich explanation that allows the essence of experience to be understood (Moustakas, 1994). The researcher outlined simple, systematic phenomenological analytical methods (Moustakas, 1994; Creswell, 2017). Phenomenological approach was carried out with the use of focus group discussion (FGD) and in-depth interviews (IDI) with small groups of participants. Through observing the participant's experiences, the researcher was able to generalize what it is like to experience a particular event from the viewpoint of those who lived the experience.

Research Respondents/Participants

In selecting the small and medium enterprises (SMEs), simple random sampling method was used. The Philippines Statistics Agency (PSA) classifies small if it has 10-99 employees and medium with 100-199 employees. On the other hand, the Philippines Commission on Women cited that according to the Magna Carta for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) classifies an enterprise as small if it has Php 3,000,001–15,000,000 asset size and medium if it has Php 15,000,0001–100,000,000 asset size. This serves as the criteria for selecting the small and medium enterprises to participate in this study. The researcher obtained records from the

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Department of Trade and Industry and Business Permits and Licensing Office of the four provinces and one city

Most of the research participants of the study are female, in the 26-35 age bracket in College in rank and file position, and have five years of service.

Quantitative Strand

of the BARMM Region.

In the quantitative strand of the study, a simple random sampling technique was employed to select the respondents from the micro-small and medium enterprises that were duly allowed to operate in the region. Responses to the survey were collected from a minimum of 400 respondents.

The collection of information from the total population provides deeper insights into the target population and a more detailed outcome (Brannan et al., 2022). The respondents were invited to rate the survey questionnaire on their knowledge on marketing strategy transformation, digital transformation, risk management, and sustainability. The following criteria was considered to achieve homogeneity: must be a Filipino resident, continuous and not less than five years of employment as an employee, male and female, such employees come from various municipalities in the region. The respondents were composed of the employees of small and medium enterprises with a status of managerial positions and rank and file positions because they are more knowledgeable on the status and operations of the small and medium enterprises.

Qualitative Strand

In the qualitative strand of this study, there were 17 key informants. They were also chosen using the purposive sampling technique. A purposeful sample is a form of nonprobability test, also known as a judgmental or expert sample, according to Lavrakas (2008). This sampling technique is designed because participants know their company. There were seven employees as informants for the focus group discussion (FGD). Ten informants are required for an in-depth interview (IDI), which consists of three supervisors, two middle managers, and five employees. The qualitative strand's criteria for employees are the same as the quantitative strand.

Locale of Study

The research was carried out in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, Philippines due to principal economic activity.

Research Instruments

The researcher provides two different instruments for both the quantitative and qualitative phases. There are many different ways to collect data in a mixed methods study. These include interviews, observations, and both closed-ended and open-ended questionnaires. These support one another and improve the data's reliability and validity.

Quantitative Strand

In the quantitative strand, in collecting the data to determine the correlation between marketing strategy transformation and sustainability, the study was administering a questionnaire which the researcher personally distributed. The questionnaires were adapted from various studies. The questionnaire for marketing strategy transformation was adapted from Hien & Nhu's (2022) research and Khan & Quaddus (2015) research on sustainability.

The instrument underwent pilot testing with at least 20 people to test/ensure the clarity and relevance of the question, leading to more accurate data collection. The questionnaire was administered to SMEs employees. Information about the demographic profile of the participants was also asked. The profile of the participants includes the name of the MSMEs they are connected with, sex, age, nationality, educational level, occupational status and length of service in the company.

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Part I dwelled on the status of marketing strategy transformation which was measured by search engine

Part I dwelled on the status of marketing strategy transformation which was measured by search engine advertising, content marketing, social media, email marketing, and attitude toward digital marketing. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the questionnaire modified from Hien & Nhu's (2022) study was in the (0.7–0.8) range, indicating that the scales have achieved reliability.

Part II on sustainability was measured by economic sustainability, social sustainability, environmental sustainability, attitudes towards sustainability, and sustainable business practice. Khan & Quaddus (2015) conducted an exploratory factor analysis on the instrument used in their research, with a Cronbach's alpha 0.9 in each indicator.

Participants indicated their responses on a five-point Likert-type scale with anchors (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree for marketing strategy transformation and sustainability. The tools underwent the content validity of three experts. The 5-point Likert scale was used to describe the marketing strategy transformation and sustainability.

Marketing Strategy Transformation. In the interpretation of data, the respondent's perception of marketing strategy transformation was measured on the level at which dimensions were experienced, learned, and manifested by the employees. It has five indicators, namely, search engine advertising, content marketing, social media, email marketing, and attitude toward digital marketing. Research was performed using the description and interpretation matrix as follows:

Range of Means	Description	Interpretation
4.20 – 5.00	Very High	Marketing strategy transformation is always manifested.
3.40 – 4.19	High	Marketing strategy transformation is often times manifested.
2.60 – 3.39	Moderate	Marketing strategy transformation is fairly manifested.
1.80 – 2.59	Low	Marketing strategy transformation is rarely manifested.
1.00 – 1.79	Very low	Marketing strategy transformation is not manifested at all.

Sustainability. The sustainability adapted from Khan & Quaddus's (2015) study measured economic sustainability, social sustainability, environmental sustainability, attitudes towards sustainability, and sustainable business practice. The ratings will be analyzed using the interpretation matrix as follows:

Range of Means	Description	Interpretation
4.20 – 5.00	Very High	Sustainability is always manifested.
3.40 – 4.19	High	Sustainability is oftentimes manifested.
2.60 – 3.39	Moderate	Sustainability is fairly manifested.
1.80 – 2.59	Low	Sustainability is rarely manifested.
1.00 – 1.79	Very low	Sustainability is not manifested at all.

Qualitative Strand

In the qualitative strand, the researcher used interview guide questions for focus group discussion and in-depth interviews. In order to make sure the interview guide questions were appropriate for the studys' location, the interview questionnaire was also tested on three participants. The instrument focused on the participants' subjective responses and experiences about their lived experiences employees of small and medium enterprises.

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It provides information about individual's ideas and feelings about a particular issue. In addition, the participants' different perceptions of a particular subject matter were illuminated. This was obtained using guide questions and probing questions. The interview guide was also undergone content validity by three experts to obtain reliability.

Issues on the Validity of Instruments

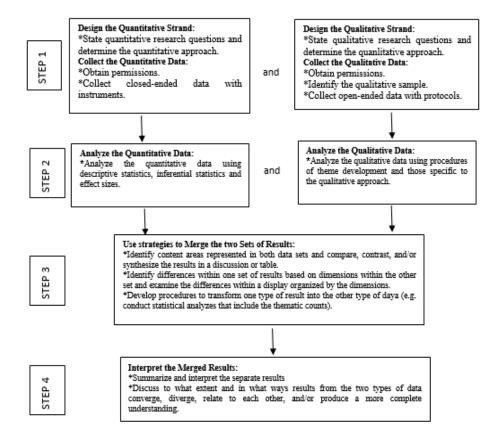
The modified survey questionnaire and interview guide questions was evaluated by three experts at each step of the study. It was evaluated by content validity and provided a setting to enhance the questions. Additionally, the audio materials were used in the focus group discussion and In-Depth Interview to identify any omissions in the transcription.

Data Analysis Procedure

Figure 2 depicts the process of a mixed-design method where quantitative and qualitative data are confirmed to provide knowledge of the links between marketing strategy transformation and sustainability. In the quantitative phase, the researcher used a survey questionnaire to understand the employees' perception of sustainability through marketing strategy transformation, the findings were analyzed using statistical methods, in numeric details. In the qualitative strand, the researcher used focus group discussion (FGD) and in-depth interviews (IDI) in order to understand the employee's perceptions of corporate identity. Thematic analysis was used to transcribe, evaluate, and code the data. In a convergent design, the outcomes of quantitative data and qualitative data are combined. Quantitative and qualitative data findings were given when the data were cross tabulated and compared. Additionally, if important topics are grouped, quantitative and qualitative data comparisons were conducted.

The focus group discussion (FGD) and in-depth interview (IDI) approach was used to substantiate the outcomes and allow the participants to narratively. The protocol for the FGD and IDI was well prepared for the smooth flow of information processing.

Figure 2. Flow of Procedure







Ethical Considerations

The convergent design was consistent with the ethical standards and recommendations of the 1979 Belmont Report study. The 10 pillars of research ethics—social value, informed consent, vulnerability concerns, risk-benefit analysis, information privacy and confidentiality, justice, transparency, researcher qualifications, adequate facilities, and community involvement adhered to in this study.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to determine the status and lived experiences of employees on marketing strategy transformation and sustainability of the micro-small & medium enterprises. Furthermore, the respondents of the study were limited to the key municipalities in the BARMM Region.

RESULTS

This section dealt with the results of the quantitative data gathered through the survey questionnaire.

The status of marketing strategy transformation and sustainability of the micro-small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in BARMM Region, Philippines

Presented in Table 1 is the status of marketing strategy transformation and sustainability among micro-small and medium enterprises in BARMM Region. The table shows the overall mean of marketing strategy transformation and sustainability are 4.39 and 4.50, respectively. Marketing strategy transformation and sustainability had a *very high* description level. In addition, all had a standard deviation ranging from 0.38 to 0.40, which is less than 1, the typical standard deviation for the Likert scale, and denotes consistency of responses among the respondents.

The result suggests that marketing transformation and sustainability are always manifested. This also means that MSMEs always consider search engine advertising content marketing, social media and attitude toward digital marketing. Similarly, small and medium enterprises are sustainable in terms of economic, social and environmental. Likewise, small and medium enterprises have positive attitude toward sustainability.

Table 1 Status of Marketing Transformation and Sustainability

Latent Variables / Observed Variables	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Descriptive Level
Marketing Transformation	4.39	0.40	Very High
Search Engine Advertising	4.58	0.50	Very High
Content Marketing	4.55	0.49	Very High
Social Media	4.50	0.48	Very High
Email Marketing	3.93	1.20	High
Attitude toward Digital Marketing	4.41	0.57	Very High
Sustainability	4.50	0.39	Very High
Economic Sustainability	4.51	0.49	Very High
Social Sustainability	4.57	0.50	Very High
Environmental Sustainability	4.54	0.49	Very High
Attitude toward Sustainability	4.47	0.44	Very High
Sustainable Business Practice	4.41	0.49	Very High





Qualitative Result

This succeeding section presents the participants in the in-depth interview (IDI) and focus group discussion (FGD), of which there are ten and seven participants in the in-depth interview and focus group discussion, respectively. The participants are from small and medium enterprises (SMEs), particularly from the BARMM region. The ideas expressed by the participants/informants were used to corroborate the issues that surfaced in the quantitative and qualitative results. The participants/informants are presented using pseudonym (Table 2) for ethical consideration to uphold confidentiality and to protect their personal identity.

Table 2 Profile of the Participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Years in Service	Position	Study Group	Place
Joevel/P01	M	8	Manager	IDI	Cotabato City
Sarah Jane/P02	F	10	Rank and File	IDI	Datu Odin Sinsuat
Rodel/P03	M	7	Manager	IDI	Parang
Divas/P04	F	8	Rank and File	IDI	Lamitan City
Baberlyn/P05	F	8	Rank and File	IDI	Marawi City
Joel/P06	M	6	Manager	IDI	Upi
Rjay/P07	M	6	Manager	IDI	Sultan Kudarat
Jovan/P08	M	7	Manager	IDI	Datu Abdullah Sangki
Genelyn/P09	F	6	Rank and File	IDI	Shariff Aguak
Vilma/P10	F	7	Manager	IDI	Datu Odin Sinsuat
Henry/FGD01	M	10	Manager	FGD	Datu Odin Sinsuat
Albert/FGD02	M	8	Manager	FGD	Datu Odin Sinsuat
Rico/FGD03	M	8	Rank and File	FGD	Cotabato City
Elmer/FGD04	M	7	Rank and File	FGD	Cotabato City
Rodel/FGD05	M	6	Rank and File	FGD	Parang
Lealyn/FGD06	F	6	Rank and File	FGD	Upi
Grace/FGD07	F	8	Rank and File	FGD	Nuro Upi

Lived Experiences of the Participants on the Status of the Exogenous and Endogenous Variables

The ideas that transpired from the participants during the in-depth interview and focus group discussion provide a clear understanding of how the variables are understood based on the personal insights and experiences of the respective micro-small and medium enterprises. It served to corroborate the result of the quantitative study. The transcribed responses of the participants are presented in Table 3 wherein common ideas were previously identified and categorized.

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Table 3 Lived Experiences of the Participants on the Quantitative Results Regarding the Status of the Exogenous and Endogenous Variables

Status	Essential Theme (A Priori)	Core Ideas
Sustainability (STY)	Economic Sustainability	Increase in employees as the business progresses.
(Endogenous Variable)		The business offers job to the community.
		The business achieves its sales and profit goals.
		Maintain good business performance.
		Customers are being offered an increasing quantity of products.
		Acquire new machineries and equipment.
	Social Sustainability	The business ensures that its employees can support their families' basic needs.
		The compensation they received the delighted the employees.
		The business participates in philanthropic activities, such as providing aid to those in need within the community in which it operates.
		The management avoids meddling in its employees' personal lives.
		The management's concerns about the applicant's with minor age.
	Environment Sustainability	The business equips employees with ecologically friendly practices.
		An employee has been designated by the business to handle waste management.
		Waste management techniques are very beneficial to businesses.
		The business practices good hygiene, especially for front-line employees.
	Attitudes towards Sustainability	The sustainability of the business is influenced by business viability.
		Local government unit maintains peace and order in the community the businesses operate.
		Addressing customer needs is the company's top priority.
		Managing resources to meet client needs will have an impact on the success of the company.
		SMEs have a beneficial social influence and economic benefits to the community.



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	Sustainable Business Practice	The business provides instruction to its staff on how to properly utilize electricity and other machinery and equipment.
		Energy conservation is always reminded to employees.
		The business practice material recycling.
		Consider use of green products.
		The business is offering local goods priority.
		The management promotes community-serving civic organizations.
Marketing Strategy Transformation (MST)	Search Engine Advertising	Posting advertisements on the internet to increase customers.
(Exogeneous Variable)		Internet advertisement is a tool for product awareness.
		Utilization of Facebook page and other social media platform in advertising the product and store.
		Internet is fastest way to promote the product and other opportunities the customers may avail.
	Content Marketing	Since consumers often rely on what they read on social media, advertising content helps educate them about the product.
		Business owners use Facebook pages / account since this is free and widely used by the customers.
		Facebook page/account is the fastest way to inform customers about the product.
		Customers can learn more about a product's features and business by browsing operations advertising content.
	Social Media	Gives useful information to customers.
		All information about the product provided in the social media.
	Email Marketing	Email was used to communicate with suppliers.
	Attitude toward Digital Marketing	Positive result from the products advertised online with digital marketing.
		Social media promotion could help the business reach its target sales.
		The sharing of trustworthy content makes digital advertising beneficial for the company.

Qualitative data showed that the informants mentioned marketing strategy transformation, and sustainability directly and indirectly by the informants. This means that the MSMEs observed the variables that served as the predicate of their sustainability and staying in the industry. The themes that surfaced during the interviews and discussions are presented in Table 2.





Data Integration of Salient Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Table 4 displays the integration of both quantitative and qualitative findings of the study on sustainability and marketing strategy transformation of micro-small and medium enterprises in the BARMM region. Generally, this presents the status of sustainability and marketing strategy transformation.

Regarding the status of all variables, the participants in the in-depth interview and focus group discussion confirmed very high-level ratings.

Table 4 Joint Display of Quantitative and Qualitative Results

Research Area	Quantitative Phase	Qualitative Phase	Nature of Integration
Status of Marketing Transformation, and Sustainability	MST and STY is	Informants/Participants confirmed the very high and high overall level of Marketing Strategy Transformation and Sustainability as gathered from the lived experiences on the presence of these variables in the operation of MSMEs in BARMM Region.(Refer to Table 3)	Connecting, Merging (Confirmation)

DISCUSSION

Status of Marketing Strategy Transformation and Sustainability of Micro-Small and Medium Enterprises in BARMM Region

The quantitative strand respondents gave very high ratings for the following variables: sustainability and marketing strategy transformation. The sustainability of micro-small and medium-sized businesses (MSMEs) in the BARMM Region is aided by the extremely high degree of marketing strategy transformation, particularly about the indicators, search engine advertising, content marketing, social media, and attitude toward digital marketing. According to Borland and Lindgreen (2013), a company's marketing strategy is crucial to its long-term viability. Micro-Small and medium enterprises regularly use social media and the internet to market and promote their businesses and goods. Hien & Nhu (2022) is a fantastic resource for a wealth of pertinent information.

Observance on the economic sustainability, social sustainability, environmental sustainability, attitudes towards sustainability and sustainable business practice of micro-small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in their sustainability supports the very high-level rating obtained. According to Das, Rangarajan, and Dutta (2020), Corporate Sustainability is an effective issue in large firms. However, firms must recognize their ethical and environmental obligations, particularly in these developing markets. Further research has shown that collaborative working practices, government policy and facilitation, and supportive organizational cultures can all benefit MSME sustainability performance and, as a result, enhance performance.

The study by Yusoff et al. (2018) emphasizes the importance of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) contributes to the nation's economy worldwide, which is an undeniable truth, it also emphasizes the very high degree of sustainability. As a result of increased awareness of the significance of sustainable growth for SMEs, several interpretation and conceptions of sustainable growth have emerged.

Lived Experiences of the Participants on the Status of the Exogenous and Endogenous Variables

This section explores the participants' actual experiences with the key exogenous and endogenous variables that were discussed in the in-depth interview and focus group discussions.

Sustainability. The participants confirmed the very high rating for sustainability in the qualitative results. The four essential themes (*a priori*) are all positive. This suggests that because they are economically viable, micro-

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small and medium enterprises support the local economy by creating jobs, maintaining a profit, and being able to buy equipment for their operations. Additionally, social sustainability refers to the company's commitment to meeting the fundamental needs of its employees' families, charity programs, and pay that enables them to send their siblings or children to school. This relates to a study by Boar, Ramon, and Frederic (2020) that found that

most standards use economic and social factors to address sustainability-related challenges.

On the attitude towards sustainability, the business believed that the environment impacts their success, satisfaction of their customers, and the use resources. They also believed that their must be used wisely and contribute to the community's welfare. This was supported by the study of Zhang, Zhang, and Zhou (2021) which discussed a significant study on the cognition-based sustainability attitude that supports the consumer theory of economics.

On sustainable business practices, the employees are always reminded of the proper use of energy and recycled materials, promoting eco-friendly operation and behavior, patronizing local suppliers, using green products, and involvement with the community. According to the study cited by Caldera, Desha, and Dawes (2017), the move toward sustainable products has encouraged commercial organizations to enhance their environmental performance and efficiency. This includes "Lean thinking," which has evolved into "Lean and Green Thinking" as a targeted intervention for firms to implement sustainable business models that minimize costs by reducing waste and improving material efficiency.

Marketing Strategy Transformation. The respondents confirm the very high rating of this variable. The essential themes (*a priori*) are all positive. This means that micro-small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) have used search engine to advertise their business and products, social media as a platform for the customers to be updated, and have a positive attitudes toward digital marketing. However, content marketing and email marketing were not used, Rather, they used another platform like Facebook page. This is so because the network economy has developed due to the interactive update to the Internet and mobile communications, and marketing has entered a new era as a result (Chen, 2019).

Data Integration of the Quantitative and Qualitative Results

In this study, convergent approach was used wherein quantitative and qualitative data collected during the same data collection period were examined and then integrated (Creswell, 2014). The status of marketing strategy transformation and sustainability are confirmed by the participants from both in-depth-interview and focus group discussions, hence *connecting-merging-confirmation*. All the indicators of the variables are high which contributes to the sustainability of MSMEs (Hien & Nhu, 2022; Freise & Seuring, 2015; and Khan & Quaddus, 2015).

On the context of marketing strategy transformation as predictor of sustainability, it is likewise confirmed by the participants to the latter, hence the nature of data integration is *connecting-merging-confirmation*. This follows the study of Bolton (2021) and Hac et al (2021) showing the influence to sustainability.

In overall, based on the results in quantitative survey and qualitative results, the overall mean for sustainability (4.50) and marketing strategy transformation (4.39), which evaluated as "Very High," indicating that MSMEs in BARMM are successfully implementing marketing strategies, including digital marketing, in spite of limitations. This was supported by the qualitative results, which showed that participants emphasized the important part that social media platforms play in advancing marketing initiatives. Additionally, respondents stated that a key component of their digital marketing strategies was Facebook content marketing along with search engine advertising.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The study employed a convergent mixed method research (MMR) design with 400 respondents and 17 participants in the quantitative and qualitative strand, respectively. The study was conducted in small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in BARMM Region, Philippines.

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The findings revealed a very high level of the status of marketing strategy transformation. This is supported by

The findings revealed a very high level of the status of marketing strategy transformation. This is supported by various researchers (Borland & Lindgreen, 2013; Hien & Nhu, 2022) that it may contribute to the sustainability of the small and medium enterprises in the BARMM Region. Meanwhile, sustainability revealed very high-level result. This is also supported by the study of Das, Rangarajan, and Dutta (2020) wherein being sustainable means effectiveness on the business performance, thus, contributes to the markets.

The lived experiences of micro-small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) employees on sustainability as influenced by their experiences in marketing strategy transformation have positive ideas. The participants convey the significance of exogenous variable to the endogenous variable. In addition, they revealed that marketing strategy transformation has its influence to sustainability and has influence in the quantitative strand.

Data integration is applied to corroborate qualitative and quantitative data, revealing connecting-merging confirmation of variables' status. Connecting-merging confirmation appeared in the best influence of the endogenous variable since results from the quantitative and qualitative strands agree.

CONCLUSION

Conclusions have been drawn from both quantitative and qualitative findings. In the quantitative results, all the exogenous variables such as Marketing Transformation obtained very high ratings indicating that the variables are always practiced and manifested. The exogenous variable which is sustainability obtained very high-level rating meaning it is always manifested in micro-small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the BARMM region.

The qualitative findings provide the participants' lived experiences on the status of the exogenous and endogenous variables. They identified essential themes (*a priori*) for all variables which are mostly positive. This means that small and medium enterprises in the BARMM region are already practicing these indicators.

The corroboration of the quantitative findings by the qualitative results during the integration of results provided concrete evidence of the essential themes that emerged in both phases. This also provided an in-depth understanding on the sustainability with the essential themes (*a priori*) that emerged.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the results of the study following are recommended:

The very high level on marketing strategy and digital transformation among the MSMEs suggests that maintaining the marketing strategies particularly on the search engine advertising, social media and attitude toward digital marketing. This will give more ideas to the customers about the business and their products. for these will help influence the sustainability of the businesses. On the very high level of sustainability, it is also recommended to maintain what the business is practicing.

It is recommended that further future research integrate a more detailed framework and model that visually illustrates the process of marketing strategy transformation. This framework or model should include key stages such as the initial challenges faced by MSMEs, the adaptations they make in response to these challenges, and the eventual implementation of a new, more effective marketing strategies.

Lastly, future studies should explore how MSMEs in BARMM are adopting digital tools such as social media, e-commerce platforms, and online advertising. A focus on the adoption rates, challenges faced, and strategies used by MSMEs to integrate these tools into their marketing plans would provide valuable insights. Given that the study has already shown a high usage of platforms like Facebook, it would be beneficial to investigate further the barriers and opportunities related to digital marketing, especially in terms of scalability, resource limitations, and technological literacy.

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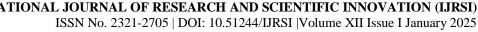


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