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## Empowering local brands: The role of government and marketing in driving growth

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### Abstract:

Branding creates a unique identity that resonates with consumers' emotions and values, enabling small businesses to thrive globally, with initiatives like One Town One Product (OTOP) balancing local authenticity and international appeal. Local brands act as cultural ambassadors, enhancing national identity and driving economic growth, while consumer ethnocentrism fosters loyalty to local products. Government support plays a key role in fostering innovation and expanding market opportunities for MSMEs. This study explores the impact of marketing strategies and government support on local businesses and community development, using a descriptive-correlational design with data from 50 MSME owners or managers in Camarines Sur. The findings led to the development of the APPA Model, "Assessing Products and Profit Advancement," which provides two integrable marketing strategies for MSMEs and governments, emphasizing sustainability, flexibility, and modern principles. The model's spiral-shaped design highlights priorities, balancing cost-efficient strategies with actionable forecasted data for businesses and focusing on subsidization, regulation, and infrastructure for governments. It encourages adaptation, ethical practices, and competitive advantages for sustainable growth. Local governments support MSMEs by addressing financial disparities through accessible financing options like microloans, grants, and subsidies, enabling businesses to invest in marketing, infrastructure, and operations. Tailored support, such as mentorship and networking, helps newer businesses establish a market presence. Strategic policies, streamlined processes, and infrastructure investment boost MSME competitiveness, promoting long-term economic growth. The APPA Model fosters a collaborative ecosystem for sustainable local enterprise development by aligning resources with business needs.

### Keywords:

Marketing, Local Brands, Local MSMEs, Impact of Local Government.

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## INTRODUCTION

Branding is the art of creating a unique and authentic identity that connects deeply with people's emotions, values, and aspirations, allowing even small initiatives to grow into global standards. The One Town One Product (OTOP) initiative embodies this by promoting locally produced goods to foster regional development and cultural preservation. It balances global reach with local authenticity, as highlighted by Reshetnikova et al. (2022) and Mandler et al. (2021), by adapting strategies that retain cultural significance while appealing to international markets. Products build trust through authenticity, aligning with trends such as sustainability and ethical consumerism. Key strategies include storytelling, certifications, high-quality standards, partnerships with distributors, and digital marketing to enhance credibility and scalability. This holistic approach not only preserves cultural heritage but also supports local economies, positioning it as a model for impactful globalization.

Nation branding had become a crucial tool in the globalized world, where countries, much like corporations, had to build and promote distinct identities to compete on the international stage. Alhassan (2024) discussed how local brands served as cultural ambassadors, showcasing national values and uniqueness while driving economic growth and fostering a sense of pride within the population. Zelenskaya & Elkanova (2020) added that local brands could significantly contribute to a nation's brand architecture by acting as sub-brands that reflected regional diversity and cultural heritage. A well-coordinated sub-brand strategy allowed nations to promote local uniqueness while uniting them under a coherent national brand narrative, enhancing both domestic pride and global competitiveness. By strategically aligning local and national branding efforts, countries could better navigate the complexities of a globalized marketplace.

Consumer ethnocentrism played a crucial role in shaping perceptions of local brands. According to Mutia (2021), local consumers often prioritized purchasing from local brands, not only for economic reasons but also due to a sense of loyalty and identity tied to supporting products that reflected their culture and community values. Adobas et al. (2024) added that government interventions were essential for the development of local brands, particularly MSMEs, as they provided the necessary support and infrastructure to compete in both local and regional markets. Policies that promoted innovation, access to financing, and market exposure enabled local brands to thrive. This fostered community development and economic resilience.

Local businesses will do more than just contribute to the economy—they will build stronger communities. The relationships among small businesses will create a cohesive, welcoming community identity where mutual support is prevalent. Additionally, local businesses will be significant job creators and will tend to hire residents rather than commuters. The money spent at local businesses will circulate within the community, further enhancing economic growth. Therefore, this research will explore the limitations and effectiveness of social media marketing and local government support, examining consumer attitudes toward these factors and how demographic profiles influence responses.

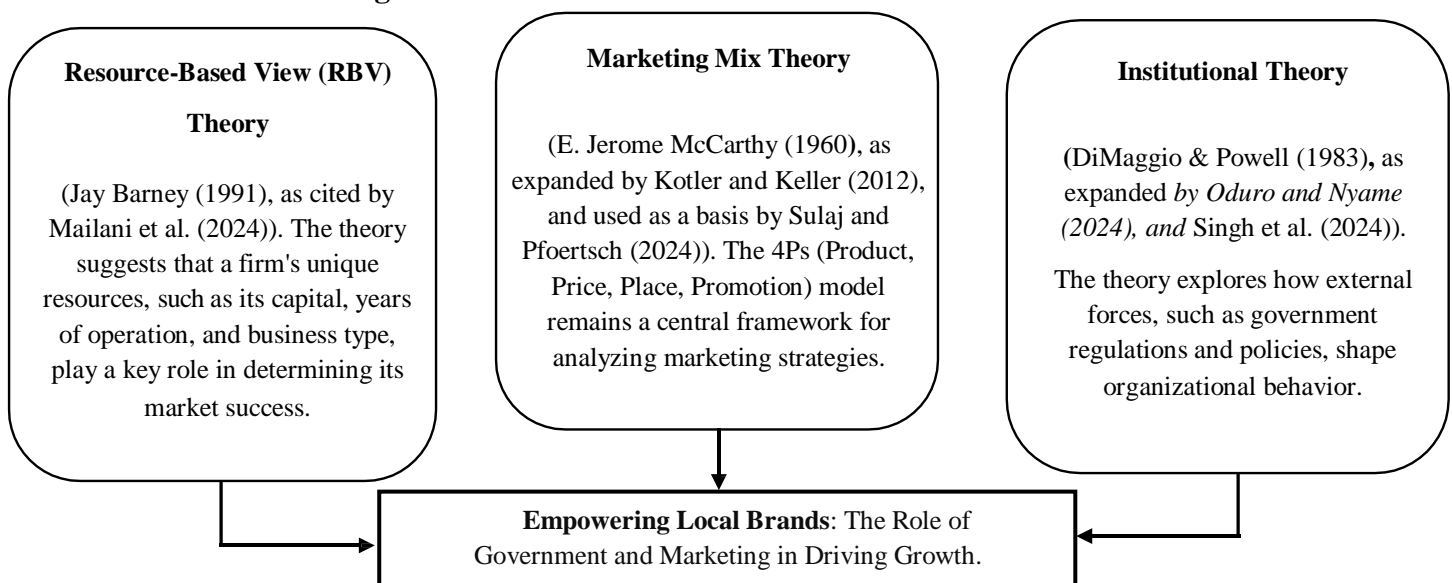
Small businesses played a crucial role in strengthening the economy by fostering job creation and community cohesion. Despite their importance, these businesses often faced challenges such as financial constraints, marketing difficulties, and limited government support. This study aimed to uncover what drove the success of local businesses, particularly focusing on how government assistance and effective marketing strategies could contribute to their growth and sustainability. By examining the current support systems and challenges, the research sought to develop a plan to enhance local business marketing efforts. The findings would provide valuable insights for policymakers, support organizations, and the MSMEs themselves to collaboratively strengthen the local economy.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Generally, this study aims to explore various aspects of local MSMEs and the challenges they face concerning government support and the implications of sub-branding. Specifically, it will address the following objectives:

1. What are the business profiles of local MSMEs in terms of capitalization, years of operation, nature of business, and monthly sales?
2. What are the challenges affecting local MSMEs' marketing in terms of product positioning, branding, place, price, promotion, and people?
3. What is the impact of local government on local MSMEs in terms of policy support, financial incentives, and infrastructure development?
4. Is there an association between business profiles and the challenges faced by local MSMEs?
5. Is there a relationship between the challenges faced by local MSMEs and the impact of local government?
6. To develop a sustainable marketing framework for local brands.

**Figure 1**  
**Theoretical Paradigm**

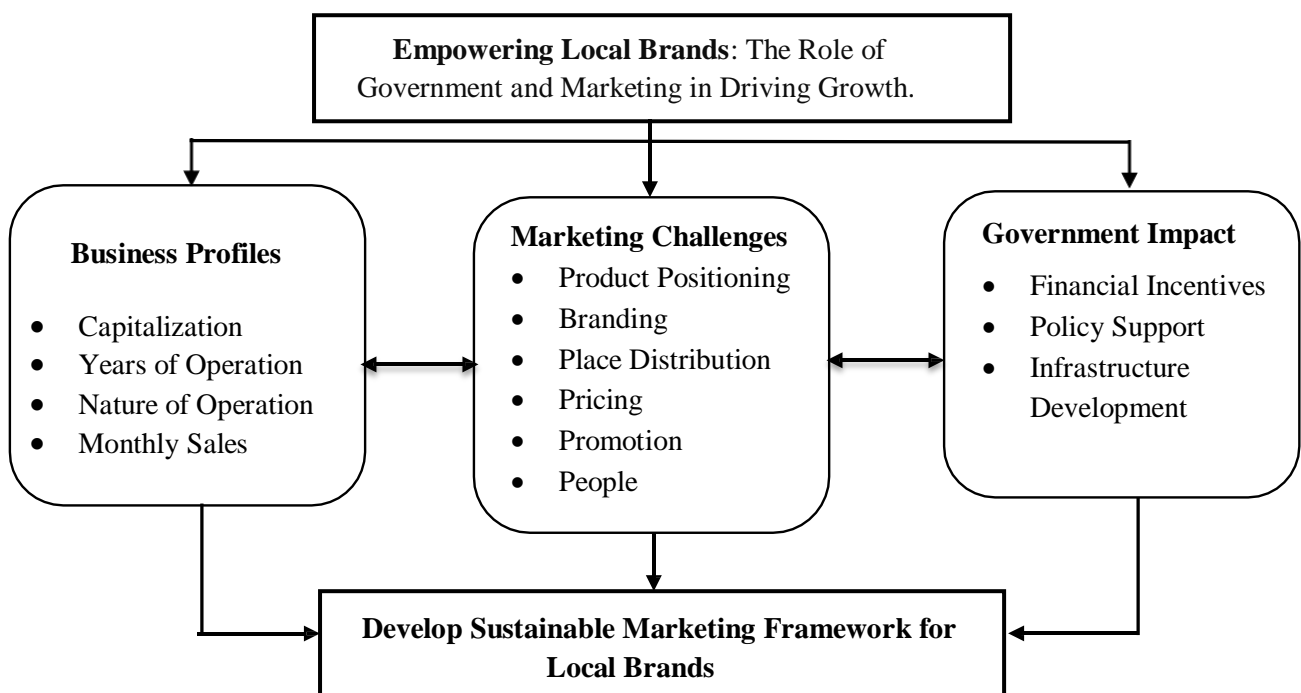


The figure above shows the vital theories that served as a guide in conducting the study. The Resource- Based View Theory, emphasized that firms with strong internal resources are more likely to achieve a competitive advantage. Recent research confirms RBV's relevance, particularly for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Studies on MSME growth in developing economies highlight that access to financial resources and human capital remains crucial for their performance. However, Mailani et al. (2024) argues that while RBV benefits established firms, it may be less effective for startups, which must instead focus on managing limited resources creatively.

The Marketing Mix Theory discusses MSMEs, in particular, struggling with effectively managing these variables due to limited resources, which impacts their ability to compete. Kotler and Keller (2012) further expanded this model in their book *Marketing Management*, emphasizing the strategic importance of branding and positioning in creating market differentiation. Sulaj and Pfoertsch (2024) built on this approach by emphasizing customer-centric strategies that adapt to evolving technologies and market landscapes. Given the instability of trends and the increasing complexity of the marketing landscape due to the latest technologies, the model is a crucial aspect of effective marketing management.

The institutional theory discusses government interventions, including tax incentives and regulatory policies, which can either support or hinder MSME growth. Oduro and Nyame (2024) found that local governments actively engaging with MSMEs through mentorship programs and networking opportunities significantly reduce barriers to market entry and promote sustainable growth. Singh et al. (2024) further discovered that transparent regulatory frameworks and consistent government engagement provide MSMEs with the stability they need to overcome market challenges. This highlights the critical role of government involvement in fostering MSME success.

**Figure 2**  
**Conceptual Paradigm**



The research explored the relationship between these variables to assess whether these factors had any significant correlation that could have affected each other. Business profiles were the independent variable, as they might have influenced outcomes. Government policies were the dependent variable, as they may have varied based on the business profiles. Marketing challenges served as the intervening variable that could have either amplified or reduced those effects.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Built a strong business profile for micro small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) required addressing both opportunities and challenges in today's rapidly evolving world. Özsomer et al. (2024) highlighted how digital disruptions, climate crises, and trade tensions reshaped international marketing dynamics, while Alkatheeri et al. (2023) pointed out that MSMEs faced limitations in long-term planning and resource allocation compared to large multinationals. Despite these constraints, Akutansi (2023) suggested that MSMEs could unlock growth by preparing robust financial reports to attract investors and secure expert guidance. Flaminiano (2024) emphasized that entrepreneurial bricolage—creatively leveraging existing resources—could foster innovation in products, processes, and marketing strategies. Furthermore, Sanama & Manigo (2024) argued that integrating Total Quality Management (TQM) and entrepreneurial orientation played a critical role in improving business performance by driving continuous improvement. However, all the authors agreed that gaps in governmental support, particularly in access to financing and infrastructure, remained significant barriers to sustainable growth for MSMEs in emerging markets.

Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) often relied on cost-effective marketing strategies like social media, word-of-mouth, and local partnerships to boost sales. Although digital tools expanded their reach, MSMEs still faced challenges in converting these efforts into significant revenue, as suggested by Honigsberg et al. (2024). Local brands, as noted by De Vries & Fennis (2020), sparked impulsive buying by emphasizing their local appeal, though price sensitivity and quality expectations remained critical, as cited by Cabaguing et al. (2023). Obuyes et al. (2024) underscored the importance of balancing the economics of branding and marketing activities for MSMEs to maximize returns. As consumers increasingly valued authenticity, provenance, and sustainability, Bouchouar & Souaf (2024) highlighted the need for MSMEs to blend traditional and digital approaches to build trust and maintain strong customer relationships. Ultimately, their competitiveness hinged on how quickly they could adapt to evolving consumer preferences and market conditions.

Local government played a pivotal role in shaping the business ecosystem, particularly for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), often regarded as the lifeblood of the economy. Recognizing the significance of MSMEs, governments understood that effective policies were essential for fostering growth and innovation. For instance, Tecson & Garcia-Vigonte (2022) highlighted that following the COVID-19

pandemic, the Philippine government implemented strategies to support MSMEs, acknowledging their critical role in economic recovery. Additionally, government decentralization was proposed to enhance public service delivery and address local inequalities, as noted by Dick-Sago (2020). However, while decentralization could improve access to services, challenges such as low funding, lack of accountability, and poor governance often hindered the quality-of-service delivery. Lim (2022) emphasized the need to foster innovation among MSMEs, advocating for local governments to create an environment conducive to innovation through simplified regulatory processes, access to financial assistance, and investments in infrastructure improvements, especially digital access, alongside enhancing market promotion efforts and offering training and development programs to bolster the growth and competitiveness of local MSMEs, ultimately fostering vibrant communities (Zhou et al., 2023; Kartani et al., 2024).

The business profile of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) was often marked by their reliance on local markets and informal networks, which limited their competitiveness in a globalized economy. According to Farida & Setiawan (2022), effective marketing strategies were crucial for MSMEs to establish a competitive advantage, yet many struggled to implement these due to various challenges. Abdul-Azeez et al. (2024) highlighted that while MSMEs were vital catalysts for economic development, they frequently faced significant hurdles, including limited access to financing, which was essential for growth and innovation. Gamundoy et al. (2020) noted that these financial constraints, compounded by high-interest rates and strict collateral requirements, exacerbated the difficulties MSMEs encountered in adapting their marketing strategies. Sevillo & Martir (2024) emphasized that there was an urgent need for support mechanisms that addressed these challenges, enabling MSMEs to effectively leverage their marketing efforts. Therefore, overcoming these obstacles was essential for MSMEs to enhance their market presence and drive profitability, ultimately contributing to broader economic development (Sy, 2024).

The relationship between marketing challenges and local government support was crucial for the success of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). According to Prasannath et al. (2024), government policies, particularly financial assistance and support programs, significantly influenced the entrepreneurial orientation and performance of MSMEs by providing essential resources to overcome barriers in their marketing strategies. However, Crawford et al. (2024) stated that many MSMEs struggled to access these support mechanisms due to bureaucratic complexities, which hindered their ability to implement effective marketing plans. Anabe-Aducon (2019) highlighted that local government financial management played a pivotal role in determining how effectively MSMEs could leverage these supports, as improved financial management at the local level facilitated better access to marketing and innovation resources. Additionally, Reyes-Garcia et al. (2024) added that financial inclusion initiatives, especially in underserved areas, empowered MSMEs by enhancing their access to the financial resources necessary for expanding their market reach. Ultimately, the interplay between government support and market development was critical for fostering income growth among rural MSMEs,

directly correlating with their marketing and overall growth potential (Duan & Zheng, 2024).

Created a sustainable framework for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) was essential for their long-term growth and adaptability in an ever-changing economic landscape. According to Nimfa et al. (2021), various theories supported the sustainable growth of MSMEs, emphasizing the integration of environmental, social, and economic considerations into their operations. Rao et al. (2023) proposed a conceptual framework that helped MSMEs identify sustainable business practices tailored to their unique challenges. Additionally, Gennari (2023) discussed the transition toward a circular economy, presenting a framework designed to enhance sustainability while promoting resource efficiency among MSMEs. In the Philippines, government interventions played a crucial role in supporting micro, small, and medium enterprises, as highlighted by Adobas et al. (2024), who analyzed the impact of various policies on MSME development. Finally, Adviento et al. (2022) emphasized the significant contribution of Philippine MSMEs to sustainable economic development, showing how an effective framework could tackle issues like employment generation, income inequality, and poverty alleviation.

A noticeable gap in the research formulation process was the lack of efficiency and the failure to fully leverage results to create innovative, sustainable models. Researchers tended to focus on broader concepts rather than addressing immediate, tangible issues, which contributed to the lack of empirical validity in key areas concerning MSMEs. For example, studies on digitalization emphasized improved MSME performance but often lacked sufficient data linking these improvements to business profiles, such as capitalization, years of operation, or monthly sales. Similarly, discussions on ESG adaptation and financial reporting for local brands failed to provide measurable outcomes, especially when addressing marketing challenges like product positioning, branding, and pricing. The framework to be developed would focus on maximizing data use, with prevention and forecasting at its core, ensuring that the data collected was meaningfully applied. By incorporating these strategies, policies could be updated to create more sustainable, proactive models that drove long-term MSME success.

## **METHODS**

### **Research Methods**

The researchers employed a descriptive-correlational research design method for comparative data analysis of key variables. The variables that were measured and evaluated included the business profiles of local MSMEs, as well as the associations between these business profiles and marketing challenges, and between marketing challenges and government impact. This framework facilitated a comprehensive comparative analysis across different business profiles, allowing for an assessment of each marketing challenge and the effects of government impact within these categories.

The data collected were compiled and analyzed using various techniques, including frequency and percentage analysis, weighted means and ranks, chi-square tests, the

Pearson correlation formula, and thematic analysis to further examine patterns, trends, and potential relationships between the variables.

## Sampling Procedure

To gather data, the researchers conducted a self-constructed survey involving fifty (50) participants from local MSMEs with product brands that were either newly established or had been in operation for at least five (5) years within the province of Camarines Sur. The study utilized purposive convenience sampling and employed a questionnaire for owners or business managers with at least two (2) years of experience, containing Likert-scale questions with brief descriptions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Profile of Local MSME's

*Table 1.1 Local MSME's Profile*

Profile	F	%	Rank
<b>Years of Operation</b>			
Less than 1 year	8	16%	4
1 – 3 years	10	20%	2.5
4 – 5 years	10	20%	2.5
More than 5 years	22	44%	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>	
<b>Capitalization</b>			
Below ₱10,000	17	34%	1
₱10,000 – ₱50,000	16	32%	2
₱50,001 – ₱100,000	6	12%	4
Above ₱100,000	11	22%	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>	
<b>Monthly Sales</b>			
Below ₱5,000	14	28%	1
₱5,001 – ₱20,000	12	24%	3
₱20,001 – ₱50,000	11	22%	4
Above ₱50,000	13	26%	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Table 1 shows significant diversity in years of operation, capitalization, and monthly sales among the surveyed businesses. The majority (44%) have been operating for more than five years, while 16% are newly launched enterprises, reflecting a mix of experience levels. In terms of capitalization, most businesses operate with modest funding, with 34% having below ₱10,000 and only 22% having capital above ₱100,000, indicating limited financial resources for growth. Monthly sales also vary, with 28% generating below ₱5,000 and 26% achieving over ₱50,000, illustrating a wide range of financial performance levels.



The prevalence of long-standing businesses suggests a degree of resilience and market presence, while the significant portion of newer businesses reflects ongoing entrepreneurial activity and market entry. The fact that nearly half of the businesses have been in operation for over five years indicates a foundation of stability and potential expertise in their respective industries. However, the presence of 16% newly launched enterprises signifies a continuous influx of innovation and new market entrants. Despite this, the overall modest capitalization, with 34% of businesses operating with less than ₱10,000, points to a systemic challenge in accessing sufficient financial resources to fuel growth and expansion. The variation in monthly sales further underscores the disparity in business success, with some companies struggling to generate even ₱5,000, while others achieve substantial sales of over ₱50,000. This suggests that business performance may be influenced by factors such as industry, market positioning, and resource management, and highlights the need for targeted support mechanisms for smaller or newer businesses to bridge these gaps.

The prevalence of long-standing businesses indicates resilience and market presence, aligning with findings from Alkatheeri et al. (2023) on the operational maturity of SMEs in emerging markets. The significant portion of newer businesses reflects ongoing entrepreneurial activity, consistent with Flaminiano (2024), who emphasized entrepreneurial bricolage as a driver for innovation in developing economies. Capitalization trends reveal that most businesses operate with limited financial resources, a challenge highlighted by Rahmani (2023), who advocated for better financial reporting to aid local MSMEs in resource allocation. Additionally, the income disparities in monthly sales figures, which affect the adoption of tailored strategies, echo Özsomer et al. (2024) on the necessity of differentiated branding approaches to improve performance. These findings underscore the importance of targeted policy interventions, such as those suggested by Sanama and Manigo (2024), who identified total quality management and entrepreneurial orientation as predictors of SME success, particularly for enhancing market positioning and financial growth.

### **Challenges Affecting Local MSMEs' Marketing.**

This section will discuss the challenges affecting local MSMEs' marketing in relation to product positioning, branding, place distribution, price, promotion, and people.

### **Product Positioning**

*Table 2.1 Challenges affecting local MSMEs' marketing in relation to product positioning*

Parameters	Mean	Rank	Interpretation
Challenges in differentiating your product from competitors.	3.24	1	MC
Defining and target your ideal customer for this product.	3.14	2	MC
Communicating the value of your product to customers.	2.96	4.5	MC
Aligning your product with the desired brand image.	2.96	4.5	MC
Establish and maintain a competitive advantage for your product.	3.12	3	MC
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.08</b>		<b>MC</b>

*Notes:* 5.00 - 4.50 – Extremely Challenging (EC); 4.49 - 3.50 – Very Challenging (VC); 3.49 - 2.50 – Moderately Challenging (MC); 2.49 - 1.51 – Slightly Challenging (SC); 1.50 - 1.00 – Not Challenging at all (NC).

Table 2.1 shows that local businesses are challenged in differentiating their products from competitors, with the highest mean score of 3.24, ranking first among the parameters. Although all parameters are categorized as “Moderately Challenging,” this indicates that creating unique selling points remains a critical hurdle. Communicating the product's value to customers and aligning it with the desired brand image are tied as the lowest-ranked parameters, both with a mean of 2.96, suggesting that these are relatively less challenging but still moderately so.

A critical emphasis on product differentiation as the primary challenge for businesses highlights the importance of innovative strategies to distinguish offerings in competitive and evolving markets. This challenge is compounded by the difficulties businesses face in defining and targeting their ideal customer base, underscoring the necessity of a deep understanding of market dynamics, consumer preferences, and behavioral trends. A profound grasp of market conditions includes not only recognizing the immediate competitive landscape but also anticipating shifts in consumer expectations, technological advancements, economic fluctuations, and regulatory changes. In today's rapidly changing environment, understanding how cultural, social, and technological forces shape consumer behavior is essential for businesses to stay relevant. Establishing a competitive advantage requires not only initial differentiation but also ongoing innovation and adaptability to shifting market forces, including the rise of new competitors and evolving consumer needs. These findings suggest that businesses must invest in comprehensive market research that goes beyond surface-level trends, using data analytics and behavioral insights to comprehend the evolving needs of their customers. Moreover, businesses should foster a proactive, innovation-driven culture that empowers teams to respond quickly to market shifts and identify new opportunities. Effective branding and communication strategies will also be crucial in shaping and sustaining a differentiated product positioning framework that resonates with diverse target customers. By focusing on these key areas, businesses can build stronger and more resilient competitive advantages, ensuring they remain agile and responsive in today's dynamic marketplaces.

A critical emphasis on product differentiation as the primary challenge for businesses highlights the need for innovative strategies to stand out in competitive markets. This aligns with Zhao et al. (2024), who emphasize how digitalization can enhance SME performance by enabling targeted innovation and improved market responsiveness. The challenges of defining and targeting ideal customers, as well as sustaining competitive advantage, underscore the importance of understanding consumer behavior and leveraging branding strategies. De Vries and Fennis (2020) also mention the effectiveness of aligning branding with local market preferences to foster consumer connection and impulsivity, showcasing how localized branding can complement broader digital strategies. These insights underscore the need for businesses to integrate market research, innovation, and

adaptable branding to construct a competitive product positioning framework in both local and global contexts.

## Branding

*Table 2.2 Challenges affecting local MSMEs' marketing in relation to branding*

Parameters	Mean	Rank	Interpretation
Increase awareness of your brand among your target audience.	3.32	1.5	MC
Maintaining consistency in your branding across various marketing channels.	3.08	4	MC
Building an emotional connection with your target customers through your brand.	2.98	5	MC
Managing and protecting your brand's reputation, especially in times of crisis.	3.30	3	MC
Building and sustain the long-term value of your brand in the marketplace.	3.32	1.5	MC
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.20</b>		<b>MC</b>

*Notes:* 5.00 - 4.50 – Extremely Challenging (EC); 4.49 - 3.50 – Very Challenging (VC); 3.49 - 2.50 – Moderately Challenging (MC); 2.49 - 1.51 – Slightly Challenging (SC); 1.50 - 1.00 – Not Challenging at all (NC).

Table 2.2 shows that the results for all parameters are "Moderately Challenging" for local businesses. Managing and protecting a brand's reputation during crises ranks first, with a mean of 3.3. This underscores the importance of resilience and crisis management strategies in maintaining consumer trust. Building an emotional connection with target customers emerges as the least challenging aspect, with a mean of 2.98, suggesting that while emotional branding is essential, businesses may already have systems in place to address this effectively.

The multifaceted nature of branding challenges underscores the need for businesses to prioritize crisis management and proactive reputation-building measures to protect consumer trust and preserve brand equity. Safeguarding a brand's reputation requires a strategic focus on responsiveness and transparency, particularly during crises. Increasing brand awareness and sustaining long-term brand value necessitate continuous investment in innovative marketing strategies and creative initiatives. As consumer preferences rapidly evolve, businesses must remain agile, employing dynamic and forward-thinking approaches to ensure their brand stays relevant and appealing. This involves leveraging emerging technologies, digital platforms, and new communication methods to reach diverse audiences in personalized, interactive, and meaningful ways. Building an emotional connection with customers allows businesses to utilize effective storytelling, personalized experiences, and customer engagement tactics to strengthen this bond. However, maintaining consistency across various marketing channels highlights the complexity of managing messaging across a fragmented digital ecosystem. Businesses must develop a unified brand voice and integrate technology to ensure a seamless and cohesive customer experience across platforms, ensuring that their brand's message remains clear and

consistent. Ultimately, these efforts will reinforce their brand's presence, foster loyalty, and contribute to its long-term viability in an increasingly competitive market.

The challenge of increasing brand awareness and sustaining long-term value underscores the importance of continuous marketing innovations, resonating with Zhao et al.'s (2024) findings on the transformative role of digitalization in enhancing MSME performance. This is demonstrated by Cabaguig et al. (2023), who propose psychographic frameworks to enhance consumer intention and purchasing behavior. Additionally, the complexity of maintaining branding consistency across channels echoes the insights of Obuyes et al. (2024), who emphasize the interplay of advertising and product appeal in consumer engagement. Together, these findings point to an integrated branding approach that balances innovation, consistency, and customer-centric strategies.

## Place Distribution

*Table 2.3 Challenges affecting local MSMEs' marketing in relation to place distribution*

Parameters	Mean	Rank	Interpretation
Choosing the right distribution channels for your product.	3.28	4	MC
Expanding your product's availability to new geographical markets or regions.	3.62	1	VC
Maintaining an efficient supply chain and ensure products reach customers on time.	3.34	2.5	MC
Maintaining optimal inventory levels across different distribution points.	3.34	2.5	MC
Building and maintaining good relationships with retailers or other distribution partners.	2.98	5	MC
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.31</b>		<b>MC</b>

*Notes:* 5.00 - 4.50 – Extremely Challenging (EC); 4.49 - 3.50 – Very Challenging (VC); 3.49 - 2.50 – Moderately Challenging (MC); 2.49 - 1.51 – Slightly Challenging (SC); 1.50 - 1.00 – Not Challenging at all (NC).

Table 2.3 shows that expanding product availability to new geographical markets is the most significant challenge for businesses, with a mean score of 3.62, categorized as 'Very Challenging.' This highlights the complexities of scaling operations and navigating regional market dynamics, such as understanding local consumer preferences, adapting marketing strategies, and managing logistics across diverse cultural, economic, and regulatory environments. These challenges require businesses to adapt their operational structures and develop agile strategies tailored to different regional contexts. In contrast, building and maintaining relationships with distribution partners ranked lowest, with a mean of 2.98, suggesting that businesses find this aspect of distribution relatively less difficult, potentially due to existing frameworks or established networks. However, this does not eliminate the need for continuous collaboration and adaptation as the business expands into new and potentially unfamiliar markets.

The role of distribution management in achieving business success highlights various opportunities and challenges that businesses must navigate strategically. Expanding product availability to new geographical markets is essential for growth but

introduces logistical, regulatory, and market-entry barriers that require in- depth analysis and tailored strategies. Businesses must invest in infrastructure and adapt to local regulations to penetrate new markets effectively. Maintaining an efficient supply chain and optimal inventory levels is crucial for ensuring product availability while minimizing costs, making it essential to implement robust operational systems and integrate advanced technology. This approach helps streamline processes, reduce inefficiencies, and enhance responsiveness to market fluctuations. The interconnectedness of distribution and operational efficiency emphasizes the need for businesses to prioritize geographic expansion strategies that align with supply chain optimization. Leveraging existing partner relationships—whether with distributors, suppliers, or logistics providers—can significantly reduce risks, improve reliability, and enable businesses to maintain competitiveness across diverse markets, driving sustained growth.

Bouchouar and Souaf (2024) emphasize that strategic marketing coordination can address challenges for local products requiring targeted approaches. The shared challenges of supply chain efficiency and inventory management resonate with Cabaguing et al. (2023), who stress the role of understanding consumer behavior in optimizing operational processes for local tourism products. Additionally, De Vries and Fennis (2020) underscore the importance of tailoring distribution strategies to local or global markets, emphasizing the value of leveraging existing strengths to sustain competitiveness.

## Pricing

*Table 2.4 Challenges affecting local MSMEs' marketing in relation to pricing*

Parameters	Mean	Rank	Interpretation
Challenge in defining an effective pricing strategy for your product.	3.00	4	MC
Determining how price-sensitive your target customers are.	3.14	2	MC
Maintaining profitable margins while staying competitive in pricing.	3.30	1	MC
Implementing discount strategies or promotions without undermining the product's value.	3.10	3	MC
Aligning your pricing with the perceived value and positioning of your brand.	2.98	5	MC
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.10</b>		<b>MC</b>

*Notes:* 5.00 - 4.50 – Extremely Challenging (EC); 4.49 - 3.50 – Very Challenging (VC); 3.49 - 2.50 – Moderately Challenging (MC); 2.49 - 1.51 – Slightly Challenging (SC); 1.50 - 1.00 – Not Challenging at all (NC).

Table 2.4 shows that maintaining profitable margins while staying competitive in pricing is the most challenging aspect for businesses, with a mean of 3.3. Although all parameters are "Moderately Challenging" for all local MSMEs, this emphasizes the need for strategies that balance profitability and market competitiveness. Aligning pricing with

perceived value and brand positioning ranks last, with a mean of 2.98, suggesting that businesses have a relatively clear understanding of their brand's market perception.

The difficulty in gauging customer price sensitivity reveals a gap in understanding consumer behavior, which can hinder a business's ability to optimize pricing strategies. This gap can be bridged by investing in advanced analytics, such as predictive modeling and customer segmentation, alongside robust feedback mechanisms to capture real-time data on customer perceptions and purchasing patterns. Implementing promotions without devaluing the product highlights the balance businesses must strike between driving short-term sales and preserving long-term brand equity. Promotional strategies must boost immediate sales while maintaining the perceived value of the product, ensuring that price reductions do not signal lower quality or erode customer trust. Conversely, the challenge of aligning pricing with perceived value suggests that businesses are relatively successful in positioning their products to match customer expectations. However, continuous monitoring and adjustments may be necessary as market conditions and consumer perceptions evolve. Ultimately, harmonizing pricing with both customer expectations and brand value requires a nuanced approach that combines consumer insights, market trends, and long-term brand management.

Obuyes et al. (2024) highlight the delicate balance in promotional strategies, particularly in terms of impulsive buying behaviors, where short-term sales incentives must not undermine long-term brand perception. In the context of local tourism products, Cabaguing et al. (2023) point to the significance of psychographic factors in shaping consumer purchasing decisions, underscoring the need for businesses to integrate consumer insights into their pricing and promotional strategies. De Vries and Fennis (2020) further emphasize how local brands can drive consumer impulsivity, suggesting that understanding customer perceptions can help maintain brand value even with promotional activities.

## Promotion

*Table 2.5 Challenges affecting local MSMEs' marketing in relation to product promotion*

Parameters	Mean	Rank	Interpretation
Finding the most effective advertising platforms for your target audience.	3.02	5	MC
Engaging your target customers through promotional activities.	3.10	3.5	MC
Allocating a limited marketing budget effectively across different promotional activities.	3.14	2	MC
Measuring the effectiveness of your promotional campaigns and return on investment (ROI).	3.16	1	MC
Difficulty in determining the best times to launch promotions for your product.	3.10	3.5	MC
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.10</b>		<b>MC</b>

*Notes:* 5.00 - 4.50 – Extremely Challenging (EC); 4.49 - 3.50 – Very Challenging (VC); 3.49 - 2.50 – Moderately Challenging (MC); 2.49 - 1.51 – Slightly Challenging (SC); 1.50 - 1.00 – Not Challenging at all (NC).

Table 2.5 shows that measuring the effectiveness of promotional campaigns and their return on investment (ROI) poses the greatest challenge, ranking first with a mean of 3.16. This underscores the need for businesses to adopt robust metrics and analytics tools to evaluate marketing outcomes accurately. Finding the most effective advertising platforms presents the least challenge, with a mean of 3.02, suggesting that businesses have a reasonable grasp of where to reach their target audiences.

The effectiveness of promotional campaigns and determining return on investment (ROI) is the most significant challenge faced by local businesses. This suggests that while businesses may invest considerable effort in executing marketing strategies, they struggle to quantify their success and accurately assess the impact of their promotional activities. In today's data-driven environment, businesses must prioritize the adoption of advanced analytics, particularly through the utilization of freely accessible open-source AI tools, such as Google and various tracking tools, to derive meaningful insights from their campaigns, allowing for better-informed decision-making. On the other hand, the relatively lower challenge of identifying the most effective advertising platforms indicates that businesses are more confident in reaching their target audience through various channels. This may be due to the wide availability of advertising platforms and the increased focus on digital marketing, which has made audience targeting more accessible and straightforward. Nevertheless, the discrepancy between these two aspects highlights a broader issue—while businesses may be effective at executing campaigns, they often lack the tools to evaluate their success, indicating a need for a more comprehensive approach to marketing measurement and performance tracking.

As highlighted by Zhao et al. (2024), businesses often invest significant resources into marketing strategies but struggle to quantify their success, reflecting a broader issue in marketing analytics and performance measurement. This difficulty underscores the necessity of adopting advanced analytics tools, as emphasized by Bouchouar and Souaf (2024), who argue that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) must leverage digital technologies to remain competitive. Meanwhile, the relatively lower challenge of selecting effective advertising platforms reflects the increasing availability of digital marketing tools, aligning with the findings of De Vries and Fennis (2020), who note that the rise of digital channels has made it easier for businesses to target audiences, whether locally or globally. However, as Baidya et al. (2017) and Cabaguing et al. (2023) suggest, while businesses may excel in execution, they often lack the necessary tools or strategies to assess their campaigns' impact accurately, highlighting the importance of a balanced approach that integrates both execution and performance tracking.

## People

*Table 2.6 Challenges affecting local MSMEs' marketing in relation to people*

Parameters	Mean	Rank	Interpretation
Ensuring your staff has the necessary skills and knowledge to represent your brand effectively.	3.18	2.5	MC
Providing consistent and high-quality customer service.	2.98	5	MC

Keeping your staff motivated and aligned with your marketing goals.	3.06	4	MC
Difficulty in recruiting and retain skilled employees in a competitive labor market.	3.50	1	VC
Building a long-term relationship with your customers through positive staff interactions.	3.18	2.5	MC
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.18</b>		<b>MC</b>

*Notes:* 5.00 - 4.50 – Extremely Challenging (EC); 4.49 - 3.50 – Very Challenging (VC); 3.49 - 2.50 – Moderately Challenging (MC); 2.49 - 1.51 – Slightly Challenging (SC); 1.50 - 1.00 – Not Challenging at all (NC).

Table 2.6 shows that recruiting and retaining skilled employees in a competitive labor market poses the greatest challenge, with a mean score of 3.5, indicating the need for robust talent acquisition and retention strategies. Providing consistent, high-quality customer service is the least challenging, with a mean score of 2.98, suggesting that businesses are relatively proficient in maintaining service standards. It may also imply that businesses require less attention compared to other operational challenges.

Recruiting and retaining skilled employees underscores the intense competition in the labor market, where businesses are struggling to attract and keep top talent amidst rising demand for skilled workers. To address this, companies need to develop robust talent acquisition and retention strategies, focusing on competitive compensation packages, career development opportunities, and fostering a supportive workplace culture. Conversely, providing consistent, high-quality customer service suggests that businesses are generally proficient in maintaining service standards. However, this proficiency should not be taken for granted; businesses must continue to evolve their customer service practices, ensuring that service quality not only meets expectations but also exceeds them to drive brand loyalty. The contrast between these two areas indicates that while businesses may have established effective customer service practices, they need to invest more strategically in their workforce to ensure long-term growth and success.

Equipping staff with the skills necessary to foster customer relationships aligns with Cabaguig et al.'s (2023) findings on psychographics and purchasing behavior, where positive customer interactions are critical. Moreover, Obuyes et al. (2024) demonstrate how customer engagement strategies, influenced by employee competency, can impact buying behavior. Lastly, De Vries and Fennis (2020) note the importance of local branding efforts, reinforcing how motivated and skilled employees serve as a bridge between strong employer practices and exceptional customer experiences.

### Summary of Challenges Affecting Local MSMEs' Marketing

*Table 2.7 Summary table of challenges affecting local MSMEs marketing*

Parameters	Mean	Rank	Interpretation
Product Positioning	3.08	6	MC
Branding	3.20	2	MC
Place Distribution	3.31	1	MC
Pricing	3.10	4.5	MC
Promotion	3.10	4.5	MC



People	3.18	3	MC
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.16</b>		<b>MC</b>

*Notes:* 5.00 - 4.50 – Extremely Challenging (EC); 4.49 - 3.50 – Very Challenging (VC); 3.49 - 2.50 – Moderately Challenging (MC); 2.49 - 1.51 – Slightly Challenging (SC); 1.50 - 1.00 – Not Challenging at all (NC).

Table 2.7 shows the varying levels of challenges businesses face in the different areas of their marketing strategy. The highest-ranked parameter, Place Distribution, has the highest rank with a mean of 3.31, suggesting that businesses are relatively confident in their ability to distribute products effectively. On the other hand, Product Positioning ranked last with a mean of 3.08, suggesting that businesses find it more difficult to position their products effectively in the market.

Businesses face a moderate level of challenge across most marketing parameters, with Place Distribution being the least challenging aspect. This suggests that businesses may have established efficient distribution networks, enabling them to reach customers more easily. Conversely, Product Positioning emerges as the most challenging factor, indicating that companies struggle with effectively communicating their products' unique value propositions to target audiences. This challenge may stem from increasing competition and rapidly changing market dynamics, making differentiation harder. The ongoing need for strategic alignment and resource management across these areas' points to the necessity for businesses to refine their positioning strategies, strengthens brand identities, and enhance internal capabilities to ensure long-term success in a competitive market. Product positioning is a challenging factor, reflecting the complexities of differentiating offerings in a crowded market. This aligns with the findings of De Vries and Fennis (2020), who explore how local brands struggle to carve out unique positions against larger global competitors. Additionally, the rise of digitalization, as discussed by Zhao et al. (2024), underscores the need for businesses to leverage technology to enhance marketing performance and adapt to new consumer behaviors in a competitive market. Businesses must continually innovate and optimize their approaches to customer engagement and resource allocation, as emphasized by Obuyes et al. (2024) and Cabaguig et al. (2023).

### **Impact of Local Government to MSMEs.**

This section will discuss the impact of local government on local MSMEs concerning financial incentives, policy support and infrastructure development.

### **Financial Incentives**

*Table 3.1 Impact of Local Government in terms of financial Incentives*

Parameters	Mean	Rank	Interpretation
Accessibility of government grants and subsidies to MSMEs.	2.90	5	MI
Effectiveness of government-backed loans or low-interest credit options for MSMEs.	3.10	1	MI

Impact of government programs that educate MSMEs about financial management and funding opportunities.	3.08	2	MI
Timeliness of disbursement of financial aid or loans to MSMEs.	2.98	4	MI
Helpfulness of the government in connecting MSMEs with external funding sources (e.g., investors, venture capital).	3.04	3	MI
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.02</b>		<b>MI</b>

*Notes:* 5.00 - 4.50 – Extremely Impactful (EI); 4.49 - 3.50 – Very Impactful (VI); 3.49 - 2.50 – Moderately Impactful (MI); 2.49 - 1.51 – Slightly Impactful (SI); 1.50 - 1.00 – No Impact at all (NI).

Table 3.1 shows that the impact of local government in terms of financial support has a "Moderate Impact" on local MSMEs, with an overall mean score of 3.02. Among the parameters, the effectiveness of government-backed loans or low-interest credit options ranks first with a mean of 3.1, while the accessibility of government grants and subsidies holds the lowest rank with a mean of 2.9. The results indicate that while government initiatives provide moderate support, opportunities for improvement remain.

Government-backed loans or low-interest credit options have the highest-ranked factor; this indicates a critical need for accessible financing as a priority for MSME growth. However, the relatively close mean scores for all parameters suggest no standout area of excellence, emphasizing the need for comprehensive improvements. The lower ranking of grant accessibility and the timeliness of financial aid disbursement points to possible bureaucratic inefficiencies or communication gaps, which can hinder MSMEs from leveraging these resources effectively. In addition, while educational programs and external funding connections are moderately impactful, their effectiveness could be amplified through tailored, proactive engagement with MSMEs. Overall, the findings underline the necessity for more streamlined, targeted, and responsive government interventions to better support MSMEs' financial sustainability and growth.

Dick-Sage (2020) underscores that decentralization can improve public service delivery, suggesting that localized approaches may better address issues like delayed financial aid disbursement and limited grant accessibility. Kartani and Hayat (2024) discuss how policy-driven empowerment strategies are essential for MSME growth, emphasizing the need for improved access to credit and investor connections. Lim (2022) highlights the role of innovation, suggesting that streamlined policies can catalyze entrepreneurial behavior, further emphasizing the need for enhancements in government initiatives to maximize MSME potential. These perspectives highlight the importance of optimizing government policies to enhance the sustainability and competitiveness of MSMEs.

## Policy Support

*Table 3.2 Impact of Local Government in terms of policy support*

Parameters	Mean	Rank	Interpretation
Ease of registering or licensing a business with local authorities.	3.48	1	MI
Impact of local government tax policies and incentives for MSMEs.	3.22	2	MI

Challenges of complying with local regulations and bureaucratic hurdles for MSMEs.	3.18	3	MI
Impact of local labor and employment policies on MSMEs, particularly in hiring and managing employees.	2.94	4.5	MI
Effectiveness of local government advocacy for MSMEs in policy-making and legislative decisions.	2.94	4.5	MI
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.15</b>		<b>MI</b>

*Notes:* 5.00 - 4.50 – Extremely Impactful (EI); 4.49 - 3.50 – Very Impactful (VI); 3.49 - 2.50 – Moderately Impactful (MI); 2.49 - 1.51 – Slightly Impactful (SI); 1.50 - 1.00 – No Impact at all (NI).

Table 3.2 evaluates local government policies affecting MSMEs, with all parameters interpreted as "Moderately Impactful." The highest-ranked factor is the ease of registering or licensing a business with local authorities, with a mean of 3.48. The lowest-ranked parameters are the impact of local labor and employment policies and the effectiveness of local government advocacy for MSMEs in policy-making, both sharing a mean of 2.94 and ranked fourth.

The evaluation of local government policies affecting MSMEs shows both progress and areas for improvement. Streamlined business registration processes, which rank highly, highlight a strength in reducing bureaucratic obstacles, facilitating new business formation, and fostering an entrepreneurial ecosystem. By simplifying administrative procedures, local governments help MSMEs overcome barriers to entry, contributing to their growth. However, lower scores on labor and employment policies and the effectiveness of local government advocacy indicate that these areas remain underdeveloped in direct support for businesses. MSMEs feel that labor policies do not adequately address operational challenges, such as staffing flexibility and labor costs, hindering their competitiveness. Additionally, the perception that local governments are not sufficiently engaged in advocating for MSMEs reveals a gap in aligning policies with small businesses' needs. This disparity suggests an opportunity for local governments to strengthen their role by revisiting these policies, engaging more actively with MSMEs, and tailoring labor regulations and advocacy efforts to better support the sector's growth and sustainability.

The mixed performance in local government policies affecting MSMEs reflects the study by Kartani and Hayat (2024), which emphasizes the importance of coordinated government policies for MSME empowerment. Their findings indicate that procedural improvements, such as the ease of business registration, have shown moderately positive results. However, lower performance in areas like labor policies and advocacy highlights the need for targeted reforms to address specific challenges faced by MSMEs. Lim's (2022) study also shows the critical role of innovation in MSME growth, suggesting that overcoming hurdles in labor and legislative advocacy could create a more supportive environment for entrepreneurship. Together, these perspectives underscore the necessity for a balanced approach that enhances operational efficiencies while fostering innovation and stronger representation for MSMEs in policymaking processes.

## Infrastructure Development

Table 3.3 Impact of Local Government in terms of infrastructure development

Parameters	Mean	Rank	Interpretation
Adequacy and accessibility of transportation and road networks for MSMEs.	3.08	2	MI
Reliability of local government-provided utilities for MSMEs.	3.00	4	MI
Government support for digital connectivity for MSMEs.	2.88	5	MI
Accessibility of government-supported business parks and commercial real estate options for MSMEs.	3.02	3	MI
Impact of local government support for MSMEs in accessing technology, innovation hubs, or incubators.	3.10	1	MI
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.01</b>		<b>MI</b>

Notes: 5.00 - 4.50 – Extremely Impactful (EI); 4.49 - 3.50 – Very Impactful (VI); 3.49 - 2.50 – Moderately Impactful (MI); 2.49 - 1.51 – Slightly Impactful (SI); 1.50 - 1.00 – No Impact at all (NI).

Table 3.3 evaluates local government infrastructure and technological support for MSMEs, with all parameters rated as "Moderately Impactful." Local government support for accessing technology, innovation hubs, or incubators ranked first with a mean of 3.10, while the lowest-ranked parameter is government support for digital connectivity with a mean of 2.88.

While innovation hubs are supported, the foundational digital infrastructure needed to connect MSMEs to the global market remains underdeveloped. Many MSMEs, especially in emerging markets, face significant barriers in accessing international trade opportunities due to insufficient digital infrastructure. Limited broadband access, inadequate e-commerce platforms, and a lack of integration with global supply chains hinder their ability to reach global consumers and suppliers. This underdevelopment restricts their potential for scaling operations beyond local or regional markets, making it difficult for MSMEs to compete globally. This imbalance suggests that local governments must prioritize improving digital connectivity by investing in high-speed internet access, creating digital trade platforms, and fostering technological innovation that enables MSMEs to engage with global markets. Furthermore, while transportation networks and business park accessibility show moderate support, the reliability of utilities appears to be a persistent challenge, indicating that more attention is needed to stabilize and enhance essential services. To maximize MSME growth and their ability to tap into the global market, a more integrated approach that strengthens both physical and digital infrastructure while addressing utility reliability could help create a more robust environment for MSMEs to thrive and expand internationally.

Government policies for MSME development must be comprehensive, advocating for integrated strategies that address technological advancement and basic infrastructure needs, as emphasized by Kartani and Hayat (2024). Lim (2022) highlighted the critical role of digital infrastructure in driving MSME innovation and the necessity of bridging digital gaps for global competitiveness. Similarly, Tecson and Garcia-Vigonte (2022) point out the importance of robust infrastructure in post-pandemic recovery, emphasizing that both

physical and digital connectivity are essential for creating a resilient MSME ecosystem. Together, these studies affirm the need for local governments to adopt an integrated approach, strengthening both digital and physical infrastructure while ensuring reliable utilities to enhance MSME growth and sustainability.

### **Summary of Impact of Local Government to MSMEs**

*Table 3.4 Summary table of impact of local government to MSMEs*

Parameters	Mean	Rank	Interpretation
Financial Support	3.02	2	MI
Policies	3.15	1	MI
Infrastructure Support	3.01	3	MI
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.06</b>		<b>MI</b>

*Notes:* 5.00 - 4.50 – Extremely Impactful (EI); 4.49 - 3.50 – Very Impactful (VI); 3.49 - 2.50 – Moderately Impactful (MI); 2.49 - 1.51 – Slightly Impactful (SI); 1.50 - 1.00 – No Impact at all (NI).

Table 3.4 summarizes the challenges faced by local MSMEs and the varying degrees of support that influence the success of marketing efforts. Policies received the highest rank with a mean of 3.15, indicating that they are perceived as the most crucial in driving marketing initiatives due to their role in shaping the business environment and regulations. Financial support follows closely with a mean of 3.02, highlighting its significant role in enabling businesses to fund their marketing strategies. Infrastructure support, with a mean of 3.01, ranks slightly lower, suggesting that while important, it may not be as immediately impactful as policies and financial backing. The overall mean of 3.06 reflects a moderately important level of support needed for effective marketing strategies.

The summary suggests that, while all three forms of support are important, policies are perceived as the most influential in driving marketing success. This may reflect the critical role those favorable policies and regulations play in creating a conducive environment for businesses. Financial support, while still important, underscores the necessity of adequate funding to implement and sustain marketing efforts. The slightly lower ranking of infrastructure support suggests that, while it is foundational, its impact may be less immediate compared to the more strategic contributions of policies and financial resources. These findings indicate that businesses rely on a balance of these supports to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of their marketing initiatives.

The critical role of government policies in shaping the success of marketing strategies is significant. Policies reflect the substantial impact of a supportive regulatory environment, as emphasized by Zhou et al. (2023), who discuss the positive effects of government policies on place branding performance. This aligns with Kartani et al. (2024), who argue that government policies contribute to the development and empowerment of MSMEs. Dick-Sagoe (2020) suggests that decentralization and effective policies are key to improving public service delivery, which supports business growth.

## The Association Between Business Profiles and the Challenges Faced by Local MSMEs.

*Table 4 Significant association between business profiles and the challenges faced by local MSMEs*

	Product Positioning	Branding	Place (Distribution)	Pricing	Promotion	People
Capitalization	$X^2 (12, N = 50) = 13.3555, p = 0.3437$	$X^2 (9, N = 50) = 21.4404, p = 0.01083^{***}$	$X^2 (9, N = 50) = 12.773, p = 0.1732$	$X^2 (9, N = 50) = 4.6684, p = 0.1733$	$X^2 (12, N = 50) = 11.6612, p = 0.4733$	$X^2 (12, N = 50) = 12.2325, p = 0.4272$
Years of Operation	$X^2 (12, N = 50) = 11.5625, p = 0.4814$	$X^2 (9, N = 50) = 9.5231, p = 0.3905$	$X^2 (9, N = 50) = 10.5174, p = 0.3102$	$X^2 (9, N = 50) = 8.5784, p = 0.4771$	$X^2 (12, N = 50) = 21.1944, p = 0.0476^{***}$	$X^2 (12, N = 50) = 14.0713, p = 0.2962$
Monthly Sales	$X^2 (12, N = 50) = 14.6739, p = 0.2598$	$X^2 (9, N = 50) = 21.2303, p = 0.01167^{***}$	$X^2 (9, N = 50) = 18.2440, p = 0.03245^{***}$	$X^2 (9, N = 50) = 18.1875, p = 0.03306^{***}$	$X^2 (12, N = 50) = 15.3481, p = 0.223$	$X^2 (12, N = 50) = 12.6173, p = 0.3975$

Notes: \*\*\* p is significant ( $p < 0.05$ ); Interpretation Guide:  $p\text{-value} \geq 0.05$   $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ .

Table 4 shows significant relationships identified in branding with capitalization, indicating that branding strategies are influenced by a business's capitalization. Additionally, monthly sales are significantly associated with branding, suggesting that these marketing elements are key drivers of sales performance. Years of operation are significantly linked to promotion, reflecting the evolving promotional strategies of businesses over time.

The results reveal relationships between business characteristics and marketing strategies, emphasizing the strategic importance of aligning marketing efforts with a business's operational and financial context. The strong association between branding and capitalization highlights the role of financial resources in establishing and sustaining effective branding initiatives, as businesses with higher capitalization can invest more in brand development. The significant links between monthly sales and branding, placement, and pricing suggest that these marketing elements are key for driving revenue, underscoring the need for businesses to optimize distribution channels and pricing strategies while maintaining a strong brand identity. Furthermore, the connection between years of operation and promotion reflects how businesses refine and adapt their promotional efforts over time, leveraging market knowledge to enhance engagement. Collectively, these findings highlight the need for a dynamic and context-sensitive approach to marketing, where businesses assess and adapt their strategies based on financial capacity, sales performance, and operational maturity to maximize market impact.

Business characteristics and marketing strategies emphasize the importance of aligning marketing efforts with a business's financial and operational realities. Farida and Setiawan (2022) highlight that innovation and strategic alignment are key drivers of competitive advantage, underscoring the significance of branding and capitalization in establishing a strong market presence. Additionally, Sy's (2024) exploration of marketing strategies connects years of operation with refined promotional efforts, reflecting the need for businesses to adapt over time for sustained engagement. Gamundoy et al. (2020) and

Sevillo and Martir (2024) emphasize the challenges of financing and resource limitations, further highlighting the role of financial capacity in shaping effective marketing initiatives. These findings underscore the necessity of a dynamic, context-sensitive marketing approach to enhance SME performance and competitiveness.

### **The Relationship Between the Challenges Faced of Local MSMEs and the Impact of Local Government.**

*Table 5. Relationships between the challenges faced by local MSMEs and the impact of local government*

	Financial Support	Policies	Infrastructure Support
Product Positioning	$r(48) = .106, p = .465$	$r(48) = .166, p = .249$	$r(48) = .0676, p = .641$
	very weak	very weak	very weak
Branding	$r(48) = .149, p = .303$	$r(48) = .201, p = .162$	$r(48) = .134, p = .355$
	very weak	weak	very weak
Place (Distribution)	$r(48) = .00751, p = .959$	$r(48) = .0616, p = .671$	$r(48) = -.0547, p = .706$
	very weak	very weak	very weak
Pricing	$r(48) = .112, p = .441$	$r(48) = .148, p = .303$	$r(48) = .0553, p = .703$
	very weak	very weak	very weak
Promotion	$r(48) = .0205, p = .888$	$r(48) = .059, p = .684$	$r(48) = .00841, p = .954$
	very weak	very weak	very weak
People	$r(48) = -.0143, p = .323$	$r(48) = -.0697, p = .631$	$r(48) = -.0254, p = .075$
	very weak	very weak	weak

*Notes:* 1.0 – Perfect Relationship; 0.99-0.80 – Very Strong Relationship; 0.79-0.60 – Strong Relationship; 0.59-0.40 Moderate Relationship; 0.39-0.20 – Weak Relationship; 0.19-0.01 – Very Weak Relationship; 0 – No Relationship

Table 5 shows that there is generally a weak relationship between marketing strategies and local government support mechanisms. Branding appears to have the strongest link with policies, indicating that policy frameworks have a greater impact on branding efforts compared to other strategies. Conversely, most other areas exhibit weak relationships, with some even showing near-zero or negative correlations, particularly in distribution and promotion. Infrastructure support has the least impact overall, with no significant connection across all marketing dimensions. In particular, the "people" aspect shows a weak negative correlation with infrastructure support, suggesting that issues with infrastructure may adversely affect the human resource side of marketing.

The results reveal a notable gap, indicating that financial support, policies, and infrastructure may not be functioning effectively together. The weak links observed across various areas suggest that businesses are either underutilizing available support to enhance their marketing or that the support provided is not adequately tailored to their specific marketing needs. There is a slightly stronger, yet still weak, connection between policies and branding, suggesting that policy frameworks may play a significant role in shaping brand development, potentially through regulatory guidance or incentives. Conversely, the negative correlation between infrastructure support and the people aspect implies that infrastructure issues may be hindering marketing efforts that rely on human resources. This

calls for a more focused approach, encouraging local governments to rethink and enhance their strategies to provide more targeted and effective support in these areas.

Critical misalignment in implementation arises because these mechanisms do not sufficiently integrate with businesses' marketing strategies. Weak correlations indicate that businesses may not be fully leveraging these supports, or that the supports are inadequately designed to address specific marketing needs. A slightly stronger association between policies and branding suggests that regulatory guidance and incentives could potentially influence brand development. However, the negative relationship between infrastructure support and human- resource-focused marketing implies that deficiencies in infrastructure may hinder effective marketing efforts. These findings align with existing studies, such as Prasannath et al. (2024), which underscore the importance of coherent government policies in enhancing SME performance, and Crawford et al. (2024), which highlight the need for tailored financial mechanisms. Additionally, Anabe-Aducon (2019) advocates for improved local government strategies to address disparities and promote inclusive growth. Together, these insights emphasize the necessity of integrated and context-sensitive interventions to better support businesses.

### **Develop Sustainable Marketing Framework for Local Brands**

This section presents the marketing framework developed by the researchers based on the questionnaire survey results. The framework highlights MSMEs' approaches to brand promotion, positioning, and distribution, as well as how the local government can adapt to and support businesses in the current landscape.

#### **Inputs**

1. **Primary Resources** - The researchers developed the marketing framework using survey data from fifty (50) participants representing owners or business managers of local MSMEs with product brands that have been in operation for at least two (2) years and are either newly established or have been in operation for at least five (5) years within the province of Camarines Sur.
2. **Secondary Resources** - The researchers utilized various relevant literature that is at least five (5) years old, as well as strategic business practices, marketing frameworks, and information on current government services, as references to create survey questionnaires and gather data to formulate the marketing framework. The related literature was sourced from sites such as ResearchGate.com, scholar.google.com, and ejournals.ph, all of which are peer-reviewed.



### **Process:**

- Step 1: Performed a documentary analysis of the marketing framework as well as government policies to identify parameters for utilizing survey questionnaires.
- Step 2: Conducted a survey of each respondent using a structured questionnaire that contained a Likert scale to measure the degree of their opinions on the given parameters.
- Step 3: The responses from the survey were gathered.
- Step 4: Consolidated and summarized the responses from both the survey and interviews to present, analyze, and infer the collected data easily.
- Step 5: The developmental plan was created using the results acquired from the survey and interviews. It was designed using Adobe Photoshop to present the desired output.

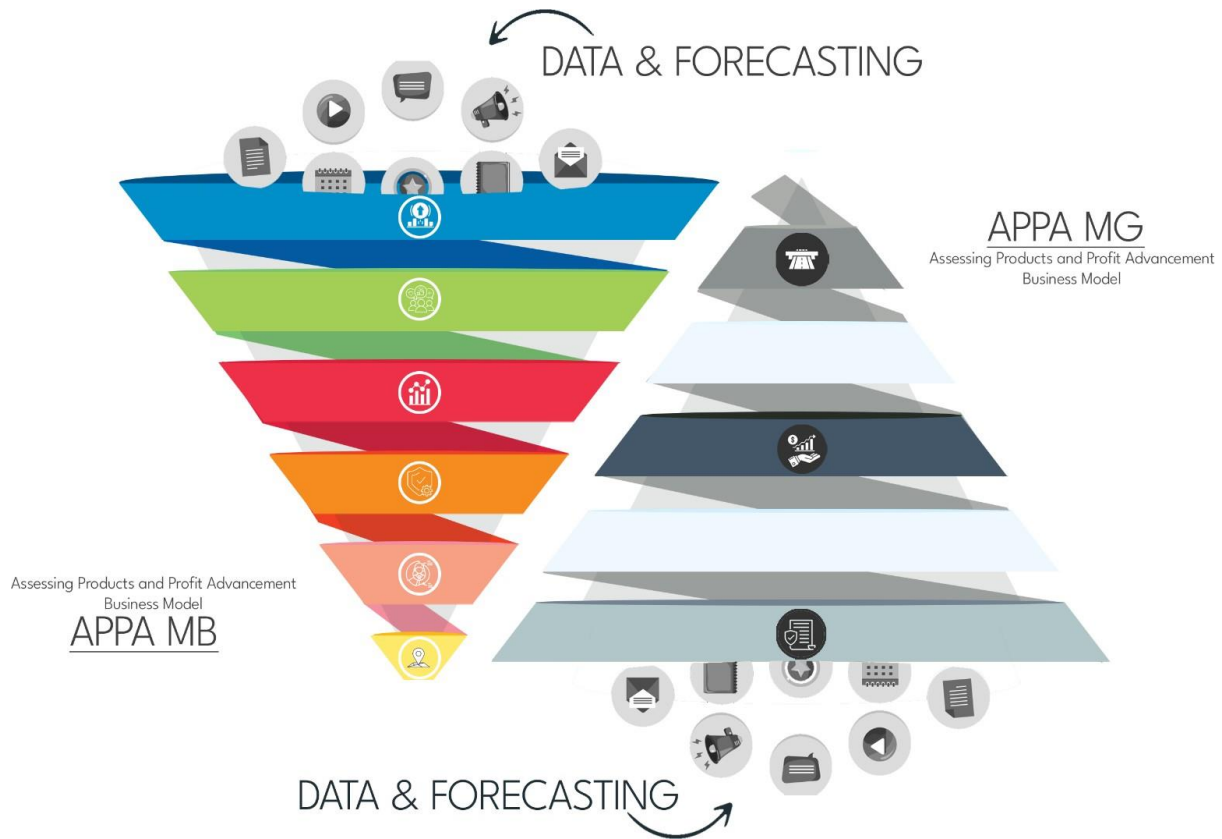
### **Output**

This section presents the marketing framework developed by the researchers based on the questionnaire survey results. The framework highlights MSMEs' approaches to brand promotion, positioning, and distribution, as well as how the local government can adapt to and support businesses in the current landscape.

## **MARKETING FRAMEWORK: APPA MODEL**

**Figure 3.1**

Marketing Framework APPA Model



The APPA Model presents two marketing frameworks that are integrable and interlocking, assisting local MSMEs in navigating priorities in marketing. The acronym stands for "Assessing Products and Profit Advancement." It employs the fundamental concepts of modern marketing to address the target priorities of local businesses.

Figure 3 highlights the shape of the pappus cone spiral, consisting of two components of basic marketing frameworks that can be utilized by anyone for easy usage. One framework is designed for businesses, while the other is tailored for local governments. The components of these frameworks can be interchangeable based on the highest priority objective, facilitating identification and alignment with the current business landscape and local business needs. The components are paired based on their current frequency of use. For example, policies can aid ethical and sustainable practices, while financial support can contribute to better engagement and provide leverage for improved pricing. The model is based entirely on the results and is a probable measure to obstruct further misalignment of implementation, affirming sustainability and flexibility through forecasting and data usage.

**Figure 3.2**  
APPA Model for Business

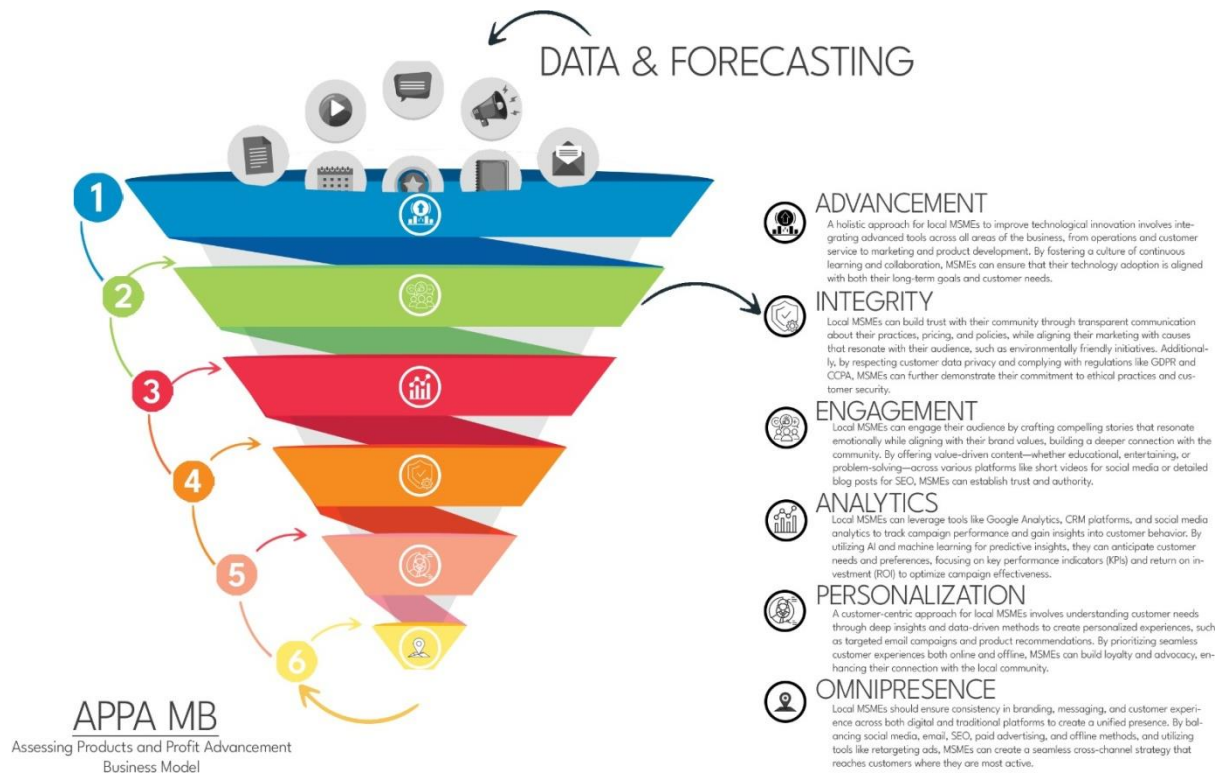


Figure 3.2 shows the first half of the framework, which is the APPA model for business. The framework utilizes a marketing strategy tailored for a modern marketing approach. The balanced aspects and standalone components provide local MSMEs with an independent edge, regardless of their knowledge of the current landscape. The model identifies the fundamental core and aspects of modern marketing that are cost-efficient and achievable. The largest section represents the prioritized objective, which is vital or in need of more focused attention, while the bottom level signifies the least priority. Placement can be an interchangeable decision that can be aligned based on current forecasted data and ongoing government activities.

**Figure 3.3**

### APPA Model for Government

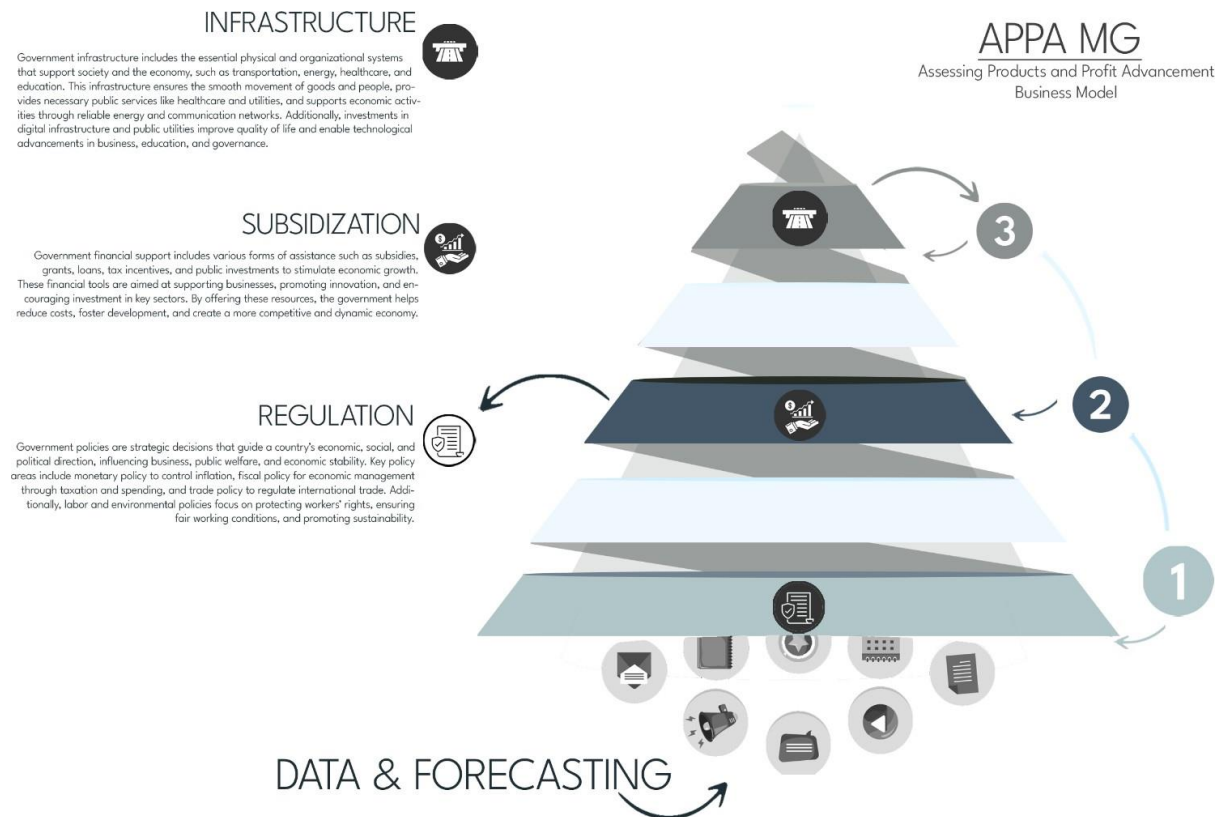


Figure 3.3 shows the framework model on the side of the local government. It provides the essential aspects of governmental activities in terms of subsidization, regulation, and infrastructure support. The frequency of data gathering, government updates, and monitoring is underlined as the core structure of the model. This acquisition of information is vital and of great importance and should be utilized for maximum efficiency, which would greatly benefit local MSMEs. Additionally, the model will reduce misalignment of government activity and the multi-distribution of information on a large scale. This practice can be a fundamental core in government to ensure a higher rate of completion for local MSMEs' marketing targets, thus equipping local businesses with a more competitive advantage.

**Figure 3.4**

Sustainability View

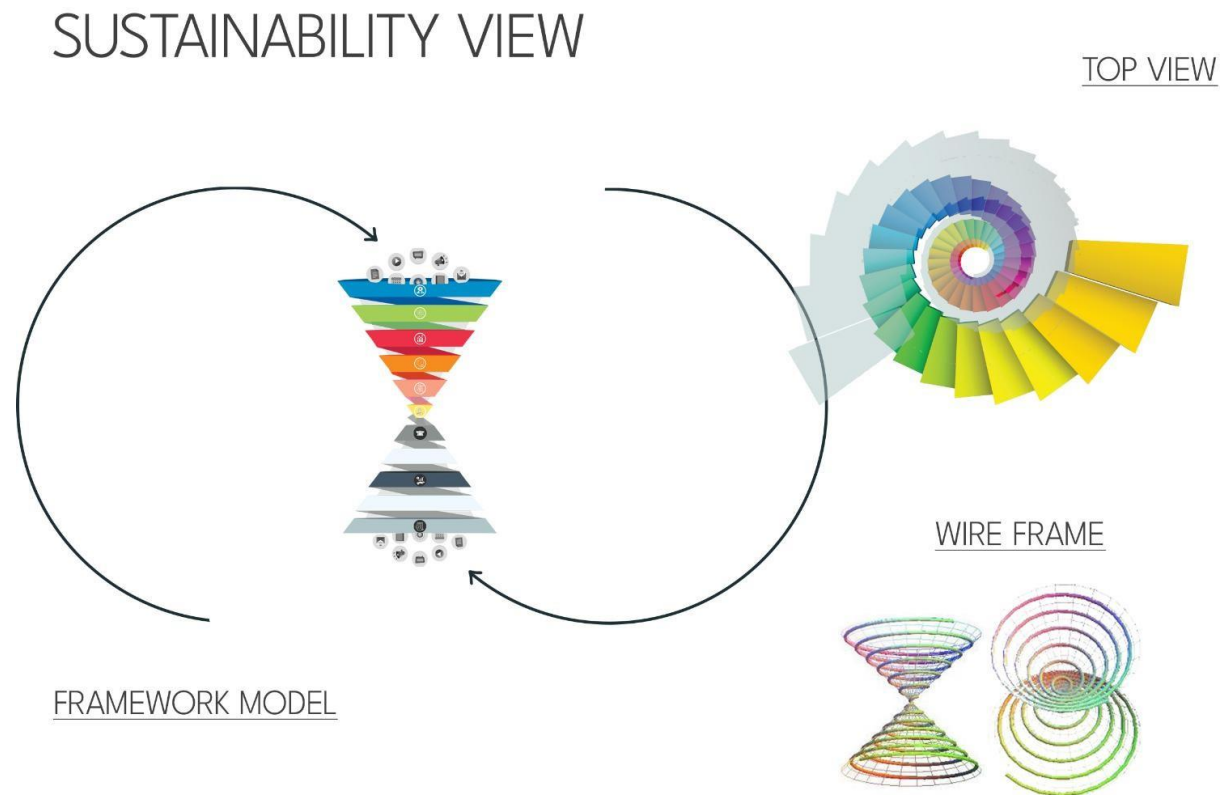


Figure 3.4 shows the framework for sustainability functions, highlighting the models' different perspectives. The shape adapted has a looping and expanding characteristic, encompassing an environment for self-sustainability and adaptation. This shape will trigger a different viewpoint on each cycle or target accomplished and will be reinforced by an environment of current landscape data. The model has no overlaps and can be a great prevention for intervention misalignment.

## CONCLUSIONS

This section presents the findings derived after the data analysis and the conclusions made for the problems being solved

### Business Profiles of Local MSMEs

Local governments have a critical role in fostering an inclusive and dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem, particularly by addressing the financial disparities among MSMEs. Providing affordable financing options, such as microloans and grants, is essential for businesses with limited capital, enabling them to invest in growth- oriented activities like marketing campaigns and infrastructure development. This support would

help level the playing field for smaller businesses that often struggle to access traditional funding avenues. Additionally, offering tailored support to newer businesses through mentorship, market guidance, and networking opportunities could significantly strengthen their market presence and help them navigate early-stage challenges. The varying monthly sales among businesses further underscore the need for differentiated policies that cater to enterprises at different financial stages. Businesses with lower sales can benefit from interventions focused on improving operational efficiency, accessing new markets, and developing robust marketing strategies to boost their growth. Meanwhile, businesses with higher sales should be encouraged through scaling opportunities and incentives for innovation, allowing them to expand and remain competitive. By targeting these needs with strategic policies local governments can foster a more resilient and diversified business environment, drive sustainable growth, and contribute to broader economic development.

### **Challenges affecting Local MSMEs' marketing in terms of product positioning, branding, place, price, promotion, and people.**

To thrive in today's competitive market, local MSMEs must adopt a multifaceted approach that includes product differentiation, crisis management, reputation building, geographic expansion, distribution optimization, strategic pricing, and effective talent acquisition and retention. Product differentiation allows businesses to stand out in a crowded marketplace, catering to unique customer needs and creating a distinct brand identity. Crisis management is crucial for navigating unforeseen challenges and maintaining resilience in volatile market conditions, ensuring businesses can adapt and recover swiftly. Additionally, reputation building, through consistent quality and positive customer interactions, establishes trust and fosters long-term customer loyalty. Geographic expansion and efficient distribution management enable MSMEs to reach new markets, increasing their customer base and driving growth. Implementing strategic pricing allows businesses to remain competitive while maximizing profitability, and measuring marketing effectiveness ensures that resources are allocated efficiently. A focus on talent acquisition and retention helps businesses secure skilled employees who are integral to innovation and operational success. By concentrating on these areas, local MSMEs can enhance their competitiveness and build a strong foundation for sustained growth, contributing to the broader economic development of their communities.

### **Impact of Local Government on Local MSMEs in terms of policy support, financial incentives, and infrastructure development.**

To better support MSMEs, local governments must prioritize the accessibility, speed, and efficiency of financial support mechanisms such as government-backed loans, low-interest credit options, grants, and subsidies. Streamlining application processes, eliminating bureaucratic delays, and enhancing communication between government agencies and businesses are critical to ensuring that these resources are accessible when needed. Additionally, simplifying registration and licensing procedures for businesses,

alongside reforming labor policies for more flexible and supportive employment conditions, would reduce entry barriers and address operational challenges. Advocating for MSME representation in policy-making processes is vital to ensure that the unique needs of these businesses are considered in the creation of laws and regulations.

Moreover, local governments must invest in both physical and digital infrastructure to support MSME success. Strengthening digital connectivity, providing access to technology, and fostering innovation hubs and incubators will help businesses tap into new markets and enhance productivity. Improving the reliability and stability of essential utilities and transportation networks is also crucial for businesses to function efficiently. By implementing these measures, local governments can create a more supportive ecosystem that drives MSME growth, bolsters financial sustainability, improves operational efficiency, and increases competitiveness, ultimately contributing to the broader economic development of local communities.

### **Association between business profiles and the challenges faced by local MSMEs.**

Local MSMEs must tailor their marketing strategies to align with their financial capacity and sales objectives to ensure sustainable growth. Businesses with more capital can invest in comprehensive brand development, leveraging advanced marketing techniques such as targeted advertising, influencer partnerships, and large-scale campaigns to build brand awareness and drive customer loyalty. In contrast, businesses with limited resources should adopt cost-effective approaches, focusing on digital marketing strategies, word-of-mouth referrals, and localized campaigns that require minimal financial investment but can yield significant returns. Optimizing pricing and placement strategies by analyzing sales performance and market trends allows businesses to enhance their market positioning and maximize revenue potential while remaining competitive within their financial means.

As MSMEs gain experience, they refine their promotional tactics and adapt to evolving market dynamics. A marketing strategy should evolve in response to operational maturity, available resources, and shifting market conditions. For instance, as businesses grow and become more familiar with their target audience, they can fine-tune their promotional activities to better engage customers and align with their preferences. By adopting a flexible, dynamic approach, businesses can respond quickly to market shifts and adjust their marketing efforts accordingly, ensuring they stay relevant and competitive. This ongoing adaptation helps businesses maximize the return on their marketing investments, allowing them to maintain a strong market presence even amid changing financial circumstances or competitive pressures, ultimately leading to greater marketing effectiveness and long-term success.



### **-Relationship between the challenges faced by local MSMEs and the impact of local government.**

Local governments need a more integrated approach to support local MSMEs, particularly in brand development. Policymakers should create specific regulatory guidance and incentives to empower businesses in strengthening their brand identity. This could involve programs providing resources for branding initiatives, such as workshops, funding for marketing campaigns, and access to branding experts. By offering these resources, local governments can enhance the market presence of local businesses, helping them stand out in competitive industries.

Additionally, local governments should reassess their support mechanisms to ensure financial assistance meets the specific marketing needs of MSMEs. Programs could offer targeted financial support that addresses the challenges MSMEs face in distribution and promotional strategies, enabling them to optimize their marketing tactics and improve their effectiveness in the market. By aligning financial resources with the needs of MSMEs, local governments can make their support more accessible and impactful.

Local governments must also prioritize investments in reliable infrastructure, such as transportation and communication networks, which are essential for marketing operations. These infrastructures facilitate efficient distribution, enhance communication with customers, and support digital marketing efforts. Moreover, fostering a collaborative relationship between local governments and MSMEs is vital to identifying gaps in existing support systems and ensuring that policies align with the actual needs of businesses. By integrating strengthened policy frameworks, tailored financial support, improved infrastructure, and closer collaboration with MSMEs, local governments can create a conducive environment for business growth. This holistic approach will enhance marketing strategies and contribute to broader economic development, ensuring that MSMEs have the resources and opportunities they need to succeed.

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