

# Influential Factors on Business Operation Sustainability of Entrepreneurs: A Case Study of the Lower Northeastern Area of Thailand

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of his study is to determine the factors that influence the sustainability of entrepreneurial business operations in the lower northeastern area of Thailand, across various industries. The authors followed the marketing mix (5P) model exploring product perspective, price perspective, distribution channel, promotion perspective, and people perspective and their influence on entrepreneurial business operations sustainability. There was a strong emphasis on the quality and quantity of products provided as well as uniqueness of the products and services developed by the entrepreneurs. Price was less important as long as it was competitive. Location was the most important factor when it came to distribution channel especially for service businesses. Online businesses were slowly developing. Customers preferred brick and mortar family businesses with knowledgeable and friendly entrepreneurs who are service oriented. People make the difference in the sustainability of entrepreneurial operations.

## KEYWORDS

Business Operations, Entrepreneurship, Operations, Sustainability, Thailand

## INFLUENTIAL FACTORS ON BUSINESS OPERATIONS SUSTAINABILITY OF ENTREPRENEURS: A CASE STUDY OF THE LOWER NORTHEASTERN AREA OF THAILAND

Entrepreneurs come in all forms, shapes, and colors. Their businesses vary as much as they do. Our study, therefore, did not look at specific industries but at entrepreneurs from all industries and venues. We wanted to know what makes entrepreneurial operations tick and makes them sustainable. This is an important point for all entrepreneurs as they not only want to start a business but they want to see it grow and sustain over years and generations to come. What are the factors behind that phenomenon that make a successful entrepreneurial venture? As we started to look at the many factors and surveyed the entrepreneurs accordingly. To find out what is most important for them when it comes to their business operations. The lower northeastern part of Thailand which includes the provinces of Buriram, Nakorn Ratchasima, and Surin is a good petri dish for entrepreneurs as they move from agriculture to trade and industry. There has been a broad variety of entrepreneurial activities ranging from starting coffee shops, to home-stay hospitality and tourism to the manufacturing of pottery and innovative agricultural products like banana flowers. The principal investigator (PI) Suvittawat (2020a) looked at hospitality industry economic innovation out of traditional small-medium-size enterprises

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in North-Eastern Thailand. Suvittawat (2020b) also explored the logistics service innovation for business growth: A case study of logistics service entrepreneurs. Suvittawat (2020c) researched the marketing communication and their influence on the perception towards Banana flour purchasing decisions. Banana flour is a new marketed by local entrepreneurs. Suvittawat (2019) looked at the role of entrepreneurs in the Thai pottery industry and the economic innovation created by entrepreneurs. This particular study determines the factors that influence the sustainability of entrepreneurial business operations. We tried to find the relationship and impact of factors that influence entrepreneurial business operations sustainability, especially the influence of the marketing mix (5P) perspective on the entrepreneurial business operations.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature review explored all aspects of entrepreneurship including the work from Caputo and Pellegrini (2020) who looked at entrepreneurial behavior, unveiling the cognitive and emotional aspects of entrepreneurship. Maca-Urbano & Rentería Pérez (2020) conducted an in-depth literature review of entrepreneurship. Interesting is also the cultural proximity of entrepreneurship (Ceci & Masciarelli, 2020). Freeman et al. (2020) focused on ethnicity and entrepreneurship. While Friedman (2020) explored entrepreneurs and the global economy from 1980–to 2020. Fuller-Love (2020a) paid special attention to female entrepreneurship. Fuller-Love (2020b) explored the characteristics and personalities of entrepreneurs. Hubner (2020) researched when entrepreneurs become leaders and how entrepreneurs deal with the management of people. Malizia et al. (2020) provide us with great insights into entrepreneurship theories. Similar to Park (2020) who takes a general look at entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship with a focus on Korea. Guiso et al. (2020) studied how we can learn entrepreneurship from other entrepreneurs. Potter (2020) explored how entrepreneurs combat burnout. This goes along with Walmsley and Nabi (2020) who researched how senior entrepreneurs can be mentored. Wördenweber et al. (2020) explored the role of entrepreneurs in technology and innovation management in operations. Promhitorn (2019) explored customer attitudes and direct sales staffing strategies. Shin (2015) in his research focused on the quality of the user experience and looked even beyond the user experience of smart services in an approach to total quality management and business excellence. While Hemamalini and Kurup (2014) studied the effectiveness of television advertisements on customer purchase intentions. And Kuo and Wu (2014) explored the influence of service quality on customer satisfaction. Marković and Janković (2013) explore the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in the hotel industry. Naturally, we also revised Kotler (1972) the father of marketing, and his generic concept of marketing, as well as his later work Kotler and Keller (2012) on marketing management and its importance for entrepreneurs. Daniel et al. (2012) explored the use of event marketing management strategies. Palazón and Delgado (2009) the moderating role of price consciousness on the effectiveness of price discounts and premium promotions we included all these factors in the research questions for entrepreneurs and their customers. Krizan et al. (2008) looked at business communication. Wu et al. (2007) explored the need for achievement, business goals, and entrepreneurial persistence towards business sustainability. We used the Constantinides (2006) marketing mix model and framed a question around Bolton's (1989) relationship between the market characteristics and the promotional price elasticities. Lechler (2001) looked at social interactions as a determinant of entrepreneurial team venture success potential. As entrepreneurship can also be a team effort and goes beyond the individual entrepreneur as his business grows, this is also an important aspect of the business sustainability over the initial start-up phase. Kitchen (1996) looked at public relations in the promotional mix. Brooksbank (1991) conducted an in-depth literature review on successful marketing practice and created a checklist for marketing practitioners and entrepreneurs alike. Porter's (1980) competitive strategy model was explored in an entrepreneurial context. We based our study on this rich body of literature and validated some while searching for the influential factors on business operations sustainability of entrepreneurs specifically in the Lower Northeastern Area of Thailand.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research is an exploratory method that concentrates on covid-19 virus epidemic influential factors which affect on business operation sustainability of entrepreneurs in the hospitality industry in Thailand. This research also identifies the impact degree of each factor that has on business operation sustainability in the New Normal of covid-19. This research is used a quantitative approach by having respondents complete questionnaires. Before the extensive questionnaires have been constructed, qualitative research methods had been used to identify the unknown factor. Secondary data has been used from many sources which were reviewed by the researcher for research finding confirmation.

The process of this research started from literature reviews and influential factors have been constructed based on the findings in the literature. The draft of influential factors has been consulted with the experts and subject experts reviewed the influential factors as recommended by experts' suggestions. The statistics for survey result analysis are the mean and SD model. The research conclusions were drawn from research findings. The exploratory research focused on 100 entrepreneurs who were operating various types of hotels ranging from homestay, bed, and breakfast, guesthouse to five-star franchised world-class hotel chains Nakhon Ratchasima, Buriram, and Surin provinces, Thailand by using the final developed questionnaires which solely focuses on the research objectives. The observations of entrepreneurs' behaviors were also adopted for research results' confirmation.

The research instrument developed by the primary investigator (PI) is a quantitative measurement. A paper-based survey instrument was developed by the PI and pretested following ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies described by Decrop (2004). The entrepreneurs were interviewed by the researchers and the results were captured with paper-based instruments in the form of a questionnaire.

A conceptual framework of this study has been developed from various literature reviews and several studies according to entrepreneurial studies and sustainable business operations as shown below (Figure 3). The main influential factors have been identified into five main factors such as external environment, internal environment, product perspective, price perspective, promotion perspective, distribution channel perspective, and people perspective respectively as abbreviated service marketing model which forms the basis of the hypotheses.

## ANALYSIS

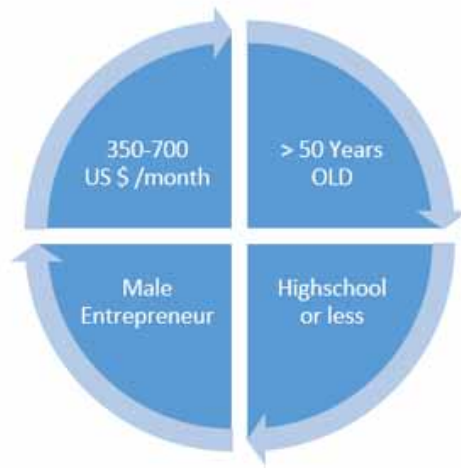
The author used SAS (Statistical Analysis System) by the SAS Institute for the statistical analysis of the data and calculated the mean (m) and standard deviation (SD) as well as the Pearson correlation coefficient. In statistics, the correlation coefficient  $r$  measures the strength and direction of a linear relationship between two variables on a scatterplot. Where the value  $r = 1$  means a perfect positive correlation and the value  $r = -1$  means a perfect negative correlation.

- +0.30. A weak uphill (positive) linear relationship
- +0.50. A moderate uphill (positive) linear relationship
- +0.70. A strong uphill (positive) linear relationship
- + 1.00 A perfect uphill (positive) linear relationship

Requirements for Pearson's correlation coefficient are:

1. Scale of measurement should be interval or ratio.
2. Variables should be approximately normally distributed.
3. The association should be linear.
4. There should be no outliers in the data

Figure 1. Typical Entrepreneur Profile



#### Equation:

$$r = \frac{\sum_i (x_i - \bar{x})(y_i - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{\sum_i (x_i - \bar{x})^2} \sqrt{\sum_i (y_i - \bar{y})^2}} \quad (1)$$

$r$  = correlation coefficient

$x_i$  = values of the  $x$ -variable in a sample

$\bar{x}$  = mean of the values of the  $x$ -variable

$y_i$  = values of the  $y$ -variable in a sample

$\bar{y}$  = mean of the values of the  $y$ -variable

Mean Formula

Mean =

$$\frac{\text{Sum of All Data Points}}{\text{Number of all Data points}}$$

$$\text{Mean} = \text{Assumed mean} + \frac{\text{Sum of all deviations}}{\text{Number of data points}}$$

Source: Johnson & Fred, 1964

We conducted surveys of entrepreneurs in the lower northeastern part of Thailand and received responses from 100 participants, with an almost even distribution of male (45%) and female (55%) respondents who show in Table 1 & 2. We had slightly more female respondents which are representative of the population of entrepreneurs in this area of Thailand. The majority of the respondents were over 51 years old with younger entrepreneurs in the range from twenty to fifty years of age. Most of the younger entrepreneurs started when they reached thirty years of age. But

also people in the midlife crisis were part of the respondents and found a new beginning by starting their own business and being their boss.

**Table 1** *Demographics of the Entrepreneurs Participating in the Study*

Entrepreneur Participants	Count (Respondents)	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	45	45
Female	55	55
TOTAL	100	100%
<b>Age</b>		
20-30 years	11	11
31-40 years	20	20
41-50 years	20	20
>51 years	49	49
TOTAL	100	100
<b>Income (Monthly)</b>		
<350 USD	10	10
350-700 USD	44	44
700-1,500 USD	25	25
>1,500 USD	21	21
TOTAL	100	100
<b>Education Level</b>		
Lower than Bachelor degree	56	56
Bachelor degree	37	37
Master degree	3	3
Other	4	4
TOTAL	100	100

Roughly half of the respondents made under 700 US \$ a month so they are truly small business owners. The other half made over 700 dollars a month. With over one-fifth of the respondents making over 1,500 US dollars which is a lot of money in Thailand and three times the salary of a teacher or government employee. Entrepreneurs with this income would be considered upper middle class especially in the rural areas of Thailand. The majority of the participants had no university education and may only have had a high-school degree or even dropped out of school at an early age. Thirty-seven percent of the respondents earned a bachelor's degree in various majors. And three even earned a master's degree and four a doctorate including Ph. D. and MD.

We not only collected the demographics of the entrepreneurs but also on the business ventures behind them. All of the businesses were located in the lower northeastern part of Thailand including

**Table 2. Demographic of Entrepreneurial Businesses**

Responses	Count (Respondents)	Percentage (%)
<b>Length of Business Operations</b>		
<5 years	12	12
6-10 years	20	20
11-15 years	16	16
16-20 years	19	19
>20 years	33	33
TOTAL	100	100
<b>Type of Business Establishment</b>		
Newly established business	40	40
Family business	51	51
Business brought from someone else	4	4
Commercial rights acquisition business	5	5
TOTAL	100	100
<b>Number of Employees</b>		
< 5	77	77
6-10	17	17
11-15	4	4
16-20	2	2
TOTAL	100	100
<b>Business Type</b>		
Manufacturing Business	6	6
Trade Business	64	64
Service Business	30	30
TOTAL	100	100

the provinces of Buriram, Nakhon Ratchasima, and Surin, which are considered lower economic areas of Thailand and are in co comparison to Bangkok capital and also the business hub.

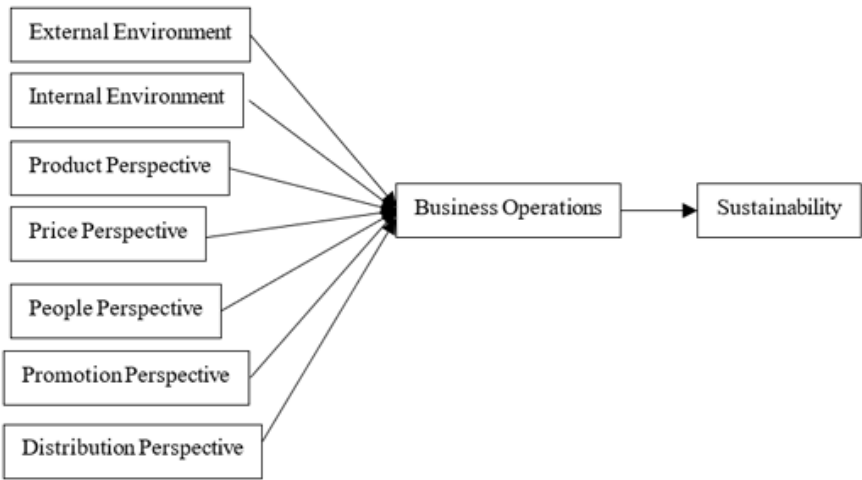
Interesting is that the majority of these businesses already have been in existence for over twenty years and only 12% were new business startups with less than five years in business. One-fifth was between five to ten years in business. And the majority over one third have been in operation ten to twenty years. We also looked at the type of ownership which was with over fifty percent family businesses and a proprietorship from a legal standpoint. However, forty percent of the businesses were newly established startups founded by entrepreneurs. Only five percent were a form of the dealership or franchise. And four percent purchased an existing business from someone else which they continued to operate with some improvements. The majority of businesses (64%) were focused on sales and trade. The minority (6%) were manufacturing businesses including pottery and agricultural

products. Almost one-third (30%) of the participating businesses were service businesses including food services and the hospitality industry. The profiles of the entrepreneurs and their businesses are depicted in graphic formats in Figures 2 and 3.

Figure 2. Typical Entrepreneur Business Profile



Figure 3. Conceptual Framework of this Study



## Findings

The study of the factors influencing the entrepreneurial business operation sustainability can be summarized by the following findings and grouped as followed with a focus on the marketing mix perspective on business operations.

### The Influence of the Marketing Mix (5P) Perspective on Business Operations

- Product Perspective
- Price Perspective
- Distribution Channel
- Promotion Perspective
- People Perspective

### The Effect of the Environment on the Business Operation

- Internal Environment
- External Environment

### The Correlation Coefficient between Marketing Mix (5P) and Business Operation

- Product Perspective
- Price Perspective
- Distribution Channel
- Promotion Perspective
- People Perspective

## The Influence of the Product Perspective on Business Operation

Table 3 shows the influence of the product perspective (PP) on the business operations (BO) was strongly agreed upon (4.29) by the respondents in general. With a special emphasis on the quality of products and services (4.59), consumer preference (4.45), uniqueness of products (4.20) as well as a variety of products offered (4.19) by the entrepreneurs and product updates (4.03) to the latest state of the art. By product, we mean the broad definition of products and also include services.

**Table 3.** *The Influence of the Product Perspective on Business Operation*

Marketing Mix (5Ps)	Mean	S.D	Results
<b>Product Perspective</b>			
1. Quality of products and services	4.59	0.65	Strongly agreed
2. Products are preferred by consumers	4.45	0.79	Strongly agreed
3. Uniqueness of products	4.20	1.00	Strongly agreed
4. Variety of products	4.19	0.98	Strongly agreed
5. Product updates	4.03	0.96	Strongly agreed
<b>Average</b>	<b>4.29</b>	<b>0.87</b>	<b>Strongly agreed</b>

## The Influence of the Price Perspective on Business Operation

Table 4 shows the influence of the price perspective (PP) on the business operations (BO) was agreed upon (3.90) by the respondents in general, but not strongly agreed. The price/quality ratio is reasonable (4.27) and the price/quantity ratio (4.03) is also strongly agreed upon. Whereas a reasonable product price (3.98) is only agreed upon by the respondents and was not seen as very important, price did not



matter when the quality was right. The same as competitive pricing (3.32) compared to direct and indirect competitors in the market was only agreed upon and less important.

**Table 4.** *The Influence of the Price Perspective on Business Operation*

Marketing Mix (5Ps)	Mean	S.D	Results
<b>Price Perspective</b>			
1. Price is reasonable compared with the quality	4.27	0.77	Strongly agreed
2. Price is reasonable compared with the quantity	4.03	0.94	Strongly agreed
3. Product price is reasonable	3.98	0.86	Agreed
4. Competitive pricing	3.32	1.21	Agreed
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.90</b>	<b>0.94</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

### The Influence of the Distribution Channel Perspective on Business Operation

Table 5 shows the influence of the distribution channel perspective (DCP) on the business operations (BO) was agreed (3.56) upon by the respondents in general. Very important is the location of the business (4.65) which is strongly agreed upon following the old saying, location, location, location the most important for some businesses especially service businesses. Almost equally strongly agreed upon was the importance of convenience for customers (4.52). The arrangement of goods and services by product categories was less important (3.29). Also, the variety of distribution channels (3.06) was not critical for respondents. And respondents even disagreed with the importance of the online presence of the entrepreneurial operations (2.31), they preferred brick and mortar stores over online ordering and service points and wanted the traditional way of doing business.

**Table 5.** *The Influence of the Distribution Channel Perspective on Business Operation*

Marketing Mix (5Ps)	Mean	S.D	Results
<b>Distribution Channel Perspective</b>			
1. Location is suitable for business operation	4.65	0.71	Strongly agreed
2. Service convenient to receive	4.52	0.73	Strongly agreed
3. Arrangement of goods by product category	3.29	1.45	Agreed
4. Various distribution channels	3.06	1.43	Agreed
5. Online ordering service	2.31	1.36	Disagreed
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.56</b>	<b>1.13</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

### The Influence of the Promotion Perspective on Business Operation

Table 6 shows the influence of the promotion perspective (PP) on the business operations (BO) was barely agreed (2.59) upon by the respondents in general. Important (3.94) was a coherent promotion strategy followed by sales promotions (2.49). Advertising campaigns through multiple media sources (2.35) were not important for the respondents. Also, after-sales support (2.20) was not important for customers. Customers also did not want to receive cheap give-away items as trinkets (2.00) of

appreciation. This is often the case in Thailand where you will receive a set of coffee mugs when you buy a coffee machine. Or pillowcases when you buy a bedroom suite.

**Table 6.** *The Influence of the Promotion Perspective on Business Operation*

Marketing Mix (5Ps)	Mean	S.D	Results
<b>Promotion Perspective</b>			
1. Coherent promotion strategies	3.94	1.09	Agreed
2. Sales promotion	2.49	1.33	Agreed
3. Advertising through multiple media	2.35	1.23	Disagreed
4. After sales support	2.20	1.43	Disagreed
5. Promotional give-away	2.00	1.14	Disagreed
<b>Average</b>	<b>2.59</b>	<b>1.24</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

### The Influence of the People Perspective on Business Operation

Table 7 shows the influence of the people perspective (PP) on the business operations (BO) was strongly agreed upon (4.48) by the respondents in general. Very important (4.64) was fast service, without much wasted time and delay. Almost equally important were the various problem-solving (4.56) skills of the employees in the business operations. Equally important (4.54) for the customers was to have a good shopping experience. Also very important (4.18) was that the employees had product knowledge of the items and services they were selling for the entrepreneur. Entrepreneur and employee can be almost interchangeable terms in this context. Many entrepreneurial businesses were one man or woman operations such as coffee shops.

**Table 7.** *The Influence of the People Perspective on Business Operation*

Marketing Mix (5Ps)	Mean	S.D	Results
<b>People Perspective</b>			
1. Fast service	4.64	0.57	Strongly agreed
2. Problems solving	4.56	0.72	Strongly agreed
3. Provide a good shopping experience	4.54	0.70	Strongly agreed
4. Product knowledge	4.18	0.97	Strongly agreed
<b>Average</b>	<b>4.48</b>	<b>0.74</b>	<b>Strongly agreed</b>

### The Effects of the External Environment on Business Operation

Table 8 shows the effects of the external environment on business operations (BO) was agreed upon (3.88) by the respondents in general. There was a strong agreement (4.28) on the general changes in customer behavior. Another very strong factor was the changes in the country's economy (4.14). Along with changes in the marketing approaches (4.13) and changes in technology (3.81) that impacted entrepreneurial operations. Changes in Thai government policies (3.04) also had an impact on business operations.

**Table 8. The Effect of the External Environment on the Business Operation**

	Mean	S.D	Result
<b>External environment</b>			
1. Changes in consumer behavior	4.28	0.88	Strongly agreed
2. Changes in economic	4.14	1.09	Strongly agreed
3. Changes in marketing	4.13	0.91	Strongly agreed
4. Changes in technology	3.81	1.07	Agreed
5. Changes in Government policies	3.04	1.39	Agreed
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.88</b>	<b>1.06</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

### The Effects of the Internal Environment on Business Operation

Table 9 shows the effects of the internal environment on the business operations (BO) was not strongly (3.90) agreed upon in general. The external environment was more important for the entrepreneurial operations. Entrepreneurial adaptability (4.48) was most strongly agreed upon. The entrepreneurial abilities (4.32) were a very important factor in terms of operational sustainability. Strategic planning (3.98) was also agreed upon by the entrepreneurs. A little lower ranked were human resource management (3.73) and human resource development issues. The sense of ownership (3.50) ranked low as it was considered a given by the entrepreneurs. Similar factors hold for the organizational culture (3.44) in the entrepreneurial organization.

**Table 9. The Effect of the Internal Environment on the Business Operation**

	Mean	S.D	Result
<b>Internal Environment</b>			
1. Entrepreneurial adaptability	4.48	0.70	Strongly agreed
2. Entrepreneurial abilities	4.32	0.90	Strongly agreed
3. Strategic planning for business operations	3.98	1.05	Agreed
4. Human resource management	3.73	1.11	Agreed
5. Sense of ownership	3.50	1.01	Agreed
6. Organizational culture	3.44	1.05	Agreed
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.90</b>	<b>0.50</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

### The Correlation Coefficient Between Product Perspective and Business Operation

Table 10 shows the correlation coefficient between product perspective and business operations were as follows. The quality of products and services ranked the highest with 0.727 followed by the variety of products 0.722. Also high ranked the products which were preferred by the customers 0.716. Product updates 0.679 were the next and the lowest correlation coefficient was for the uniqueness of product 0.479.

**Table 10.** *The Correlation Coefficient between Product Perspective and Business Operation*

Marketing Mix (5Ps)	Correlation Coefficient
<b>Product Perspective</b>	
1. Quality of products and services	0.727**
2. Products preferred by consumers	0.716**
3. Uniqueness of products	0.479**
4. Variety of products	0.722**
5. Product updates	0.679**

### **The Correlation Coefficient Between Price Perspective and Business Operation**

Table 11 shows the correlation coefficient between price perspective and business operations were as follows. The highest was for the number of products and price 0.741 followed by product price 0.724. Important also was that the price is reasonable 0.685 and competitive 0.677 in comparison with the direct and indirect competition.

**Table 11.** *The Correlation Coefficient between Price Perspective and Business Operation*

Marketing Mix (5Ps)	Correlation Coefficient
<b>Price Perspective</b>	
1. Price is reasonable compared with the quality	0.724**
2. Price is reasonable compared with the quantity	0.741**
3. Product price is reasonable	0.685**
4. Competitive pricing	0.677**

### **The Correlation Coefficient Between Distribution Channel Perspective and Business Operation**

Table 12 shows the correlation coefficient between distribution channel perspective and business operations were as follows. The variety of distribution channels ranked the highest with 0.842 followed by the arrangement of goods by categories 0.756 which makes things easy to find in the store. An online presence ranked quite lower with 0.698 amazing that the correlation for the location of the business is 0.494 is very low. That the service was easy to receive had the lowest correlation with 0.427.

### **The Correlation Coefficient Between Promotion Perspective and Business Operation**

Table 13 shows the correlation coefficient between promotion perspective and business operations were as follows. Sales promotions 0.837 were the highest and promotional give-away 0.815 were the second-highest followed by after-sales support 0.778 and advertisement through various multiple media channels 0.769. A coherent promotional strategy had the lowest correlation coefficient with 0.308.

### **The Correlation Coefficient Between People Perspective and Business Operation**

Table 14 shows the correlation coefficient between people's perspective and business operations were as follows. Product knowledge received the highest correlation coefficient with 0.817 followed by providing a pleasant shopping experience of 0.797 and being able to solve the customers'

**Table 12.** *The Correlation Coefficient between Distribution Channel Perspective and Business Operation*

Marketing Mix (5Ps)	Correlation Coefficient
<b>Distribution Channel Perspective</b>	
1. Location of the business operation	0.494**
2. Service convenient to receive	0.427**
3. Arrangement of goods by categories	0.756**
4. Various distribution channels	0.842**
5. Online ordering service	0.698**

**Table 13.** *The Correlation Coefficient between Promotion Perspective and Business Operation*

Marketing Mix (5Ps)	Correlation Coefficient
<b>Promotion Perspective</b>	
1. Coherent promotion strategies	0.308**
2. Sales promotion	0.837**
3. Advertising through multiple media	0.769**
4. After sales support	0.778**
5. Promotional give-away	0.815**

problems 0.738 fast services had a correlation coefficient of 0.725 and were the lowest. The correlation coefficients provided interesting insights into the entrepreneurial business operations, their sustainability, and perception by the entrepreneurs that reflected the attitude of the customers to a certain degree. One has to be clear that all these were perceptions of the entrepreneurs and it is questionable to what degree they were tainted recent experiences both on a micro and macro level.

**Table 14.** *The Correlation Coefficient between People Perspective and Business Operation*

Marketing Mix (5Ps)	Correlation Coefficient
<b>People Perspective</b>	
1. Fast service	0.725**
2. Problems solving	0.738**
3. Provide a good shopping experience	0.797**
4. Product knowledge	0.817**

## CONCLUSIONS

We studied the factors influencing the business operations sustainability with a focus on the influence of the marketing mix perspective (5P). The influence of the product perspective on the business operations (BO) was strongly agreed upon by the entrepreneurs responding with a special emphasis on the quality of products and services almost equally important were consumer preference and the

uniqueness of products as well as the variety of the products offered and product updates to the latest state of the art. It was interesting to find out that price was not considered that important. The price/quality ratio had to be reasonable and very interesting was also that the price/quantity ratio was also strongly agreed upon. Whereas a reasonable product price was not seen as very important, price did not matter when the quality was right. Competitive pricing compared to direct and indirect competitors in the market was also seen as less important. In terms of distribution channel perspective (DCP) on the business operations (BO) the most important is the location of the business. Especially for service businesses with a lot of customer contact the location is of the highest importance and decides the success of the business. This goes hand in hand with the convenience of the business operations for the customers. The arrangement of goods and services by product categories was less important, and the variety of distribution channels was not critical for the respondents. The online presence of the entrepreneurial operations was not considered critical in the eyes of the entrepreneurs they preferred brick and mortar stores over online businesses and preferred the traditional way of doing business. The influence of the promotion perspective on business operations was the most controversial and was barely agreed upon by the respondents in general. Important however were a coherent promotion strategy followed by sales promotions. Advertising campaigns with multiple media sources were not considered important. Also, support after the sale was not important. It was felt that cheap gismo trinkets such as coffee cups and towels were not effective ways of promoting the business. Promotional items had their place with the large corporation but not with entrepreneurial business ventures. But the influence of the people perspective on the business operations (BO) was strongly agreed upon by the entrepreneurs. Entrepreneur businesses are typically people businesses. People make all the difference in this type of operation. A service mind that provides fast and accurate service that results in a positive shopping experience for the customer. But to provide that the entrepreneur and his staff also need to have product knowledge. In the same accord, the external environment was not seen as critical for entrepreneurs. Yes, there is a change in customer behavior but more importantly, are changes in the country's economy and the world economy. This goes hand in hand with government policies and changes in technology that impacted business operations the most. Also, the effects of the internal business environment on the business operations (BO) was not generally agreed upon by the entrepreneurs. The external environment was more important for the entrepreneurial operations. Entrepreneurial adaptability was seen as the most important factor followed by entrepreneurial abilities and strategic planning. Human resource management and human resource development issues were considered lower. Interestingly enough the sense of ownership ranked low as it was considered a given by the entrepreneurs. Similarly, the organizational culture in the entrepreneurial organization was so intrinsic that it was not considered a factor anymore. The correlation coefficient between the marketing mix and business operations was based on the customers' perception of the entrepreneurial business from the entrepreneur standpoint. The quality of products and services ranked the highest which was followed by the variety of products. Also high ranked were the products which were preferred by the customers. Product updates were found less important than the uniqueness of products. Very important for the customers was the number of products received for the price, over the quality of the products. And no wonder reasonable and competitive prices were important as well. People also wanted a wide variety of distribution channels to choose from, as well as a broad product offering in various product categories. But the preference for online businesses ranked low as they preferred the traditional brick and mortar stores. The correlation coefficient between promotion perspective and business operations was highest for sales promotions including promotional giveaways. Interestingly enough after-sales support ranked low and a coherent promotional strategy had the lowest correlation coefficient. Naturally, the correlation coefficient between people's perspectives and business operations was high for entrepreneurial enterprises. Product knowledge received the highest correlation coefficient followed by employees and entrepreneurs providing a pleasant shopping experience and being able to solve the customers' problems. The correlation coefficients provided interesting insights into the entrepreneurial business operations, their sustainability, and perception by the entrepreneurs that

reflected the attitude of the customers to a certain degree. Entrepreneurs have great insights into their customers' perceptions and often the two mingle. With this, we validated many of the arguments stated in the literature review. Perceptions also depend to a large degree on the external circumstances and currently, the economy is not favorable and covid-19 certainly had a big impact on the business operations. It will be very interesting to see how things change in the New Normal of post corona times. Where will entrepreneurial business operations end up and how will they sustain?

### **Recommendations**

It is highly recommended to replicate this study with a larger sample that can be more industry-specific. Also, other geographic areas of Thailand are of interest as well as international perspectives comparing emerging markets with established countries. As always a study over time can be very valuable for comparison purposes. Especially in the changing time post-covid-19.

### **Declaration of Conflicting Interests**

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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