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ONE TOWN, ONE PRODUCT (OTOP) NEXT GENS MARKET AND PRODUCT STRATEGY IN QUEZON PROVINCE

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Abstract

This research aims to enhance the market and product strategies of the One Town, One Product (OTOP) Next Gen initiative in Quezon Province by evaluating the market viability and product competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Specifically, it will address the following inquiries regarding how the market viability of SMEs participating in the OTOP Next Gen Program will be evaluated in terms of both physical and digital marketplaces; how the product competitiveness of SMEs within this program will be assessed based on design, packaging, brand equity, quality, product line, and product mix; whether there is a significant difference between market viability and product competitiveness; which factors of product competitiveness significantly affect the market viability of SMEs; and what type of business model can be formulated for market and product strategy based on the summary of findings. The research used a descriptive survey method with a quantitative focus, gathering data from 68 willing SME owners and OTOP Hubs across 12 municipalities in Districts 1 and 2, as specified in the Department of Trade and Industry's master list. Moreover, opinions were collected from 198 purposefully chosen and willing OTOP customers from Quezon to evaluate consumer perceptions. The study successfully assessed the market potential and competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) involved in the OTOP Next Gen Program in Quezon Province. Both business owners and consumers regard OTOP products as viable and competitive.

Keywords: market, market viability, OTOP, product competitiveness, product strategy, small and medium-sized enterprises

INTRODUCTION

The world economy is changing. Many people prefer local and specialized products. Nowadays, consumers value authenticity, sustainability, and cultural relevance. As Bhasin (2023) highlights, markets enable the fair exchange of goods. Kumar et al. (2019) also emphasize the need for businesses to adapt to changing market conditions to survive. Small retailers are focused on adjusting their business models to meet these changes. Given this, the One Town, One Product (OTOP) Next Gen initiative is necessary and matches current market trends. It also helps local artists and entrepreneurs participate globally while managing their products.

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OTOP Next Gen initiative in the Philippines drives local economic growth. It helps the creative talent and cultural heritage of different regions. It enhances the skills and abilities of small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) owners for product development, branding, and market access. The OTOP Next Gen objective is to improve the quality and eagerness of local products. It offers support in product development, design, packaging, and branding (Department of Trade and Industry Philippines, 2021). This ingenuity supports the development of authentic and sustainable products, seeking to increase the popularity of Filipino products within the country and abroad, while preserving the country's cultural identity.

The OTOP Next Gen program has substantially supported SMEs in Quezon Province by enhancing their market skills for unique products, both domestically and internationally. It addresses issues with market access, branding, and product development through specific strategies. This approach enables local businesses to succeed and showcase the regional cultural heritage, thereby substantially supporting economic growth. Any assessment of the program's impact on sustainable economic development should consider the rich cultural traditions in the area. Mojica and Tadeo (2022) emphasize the importance of promoting micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to address global challenges, particularly in the ASEAN region.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study aims to improve market and product strategies for the OTOP Next Gen program in Quezon Province.

Specifically, it will answer the following questions:

1. How can the market viability of SMEs under the OTOP Next Gen Program be assessed in terms of specific factors?
    1.1 Physical Market ; and
    1.2 Digital Market
2. How can the product competitiveness of SMEs under the OTOP Next Gen Program be evaluated in terms of specific factors?
    2.1 Design ;
    2.2 Packaging ;
    2.3 Brand Equity ;
    2.4 Quality ;
    2.5 Product lines ; and
    2.6 Product mix
3. Is there a significant difference between market viability and product competitiveness?
4. Which among the product competitiveness factors significantly influences the market viability of SMEs?
5. What type of business model can be developed for market and product strategy based on the summary of findings?

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METHODOLOGY

The study used a descriptive survey method, utilizing a quantitative approach, to assess market and product strategies among small and medium enterprises (SMEs) participating in the OTOP Next Gen program in Quezon Province. Initially, an unstructured questionnaire was developed based on a comprehensive literature review and insights from industry experts. The questionnaire includes various sides of the market and product strategy. Subsequently, a survey was conducted among a representative sample of SME owners in Quezon Province, focusing on Districts 1 and 2 due to logistical considerations. Also, the survey includes selected One Town, One Product (OTOP) customers. The quantitative part of the survey was disseminated in person or online, based on the participants' convenience and preference. The data obtained from the quantitative analysis offers valuable insights into the efficiency of marketing approaches and identifies areas for improvement to sustain the competitiveness of SMEs in Quezon Province within the OTOP framework.

RESULTS

The study includes the data collected from OTOP owners and customers within Quezon Province, following a systematic collection and processing methodology designed to address the identified research problems.

Assessment of the market viability of SMEs under the OTOP Next Gen Program

Table 1
Market Viability

	OWNER		**CUSTOMER**	
	Composite Mean	**DR**	**Composite Mean**	**DR**
Physical Market	3.38	HV	3.34	HV
Digital Market	3.35	HV	3.33	HV
GRAND MEAN	**3.37**	**HV**	**3.34**	**HV**

The data in Table 1 shows that both product owners and customers believe the market potential of OTOP Next Gen products in Quezon Province is highly viable. Owners gave a grand mean of 3.37, with the physical market receiving a composite mean of 3.38 and the digital market composite mean of 3.35. This points to significant market opportunities. Customers rated the overall average score at 3.34, with the physical market scoring 3.34 and the digital market at 3.33. These results suggest that products are well-received on both traditional and online platforms.

Business owners rated physical store accessibility the highest, while distribution channels received the lowest ratings. Customers assess the current demand in local markets as strong,

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although promotional activities received lower scores; however, they still fall within the Viable category. This shows a clear need to improve promotional strategies and distribution systems, despite the positive feedback on accessibility. Overall, the viability of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the OTOP Next Gen Program highlights both challenges and strengths in the local Philippine market. Habito (2021) implied that the success of local businesses depends on meeting market demands, pricing, and accessibility, which the high scores indicate that SMEs in Quezon Province are generally achieving.

Owners rated their digital reach highly, but gave lower ratings to the accessibility of product information. From the customer's point of view, connectivity is essential, while sourcing information on e-commerce sites received the lowest score, although it still falls within a viable range. These findings suggest that OTOP businesses are engaging well in the digital market; however, they face logistical and pricing issues that require strategic improvements. This supports Olazo's (2022) research, which highlights the need for SMEs to utilize technology for effective marketing, despite many struggling due to limited technical skills.

Evaluation of the Product Competitiveness of SMEs under the OTOP Next Gen Program

Table 2
Product Competitiveness

	OWNER		**CUSTOMER**	
	Composite Mean	**DR**	**Composite Mean**	**DR**
Design	3.41	HC	3.37	HC
Packaging	3.48	HC	3.39	HC
Brand Equity	3.49	HC	3.34	HC
Quality	3.41	HC	3.34	HC
Product Line	3.47	HC	3.36	HC
Product Mix	3.36	HC	3.31	HC
GRAND MEAN	**3.44**	**HC**	**3.35**	**HC**

The data presented in Table 2 indicates that both business owners and customers perceive the competitiveness of OTOP Next Gen products in Quezon Province as highly competitive. The grand mean score for owners is 3.44, reflecting high ratings across key areas: design (3.41), packaging (3.48), brand equity (3.49), quality (3.41), product line (3.47), and product mix (3.36). Similarly, customers gave a grand mean of 3.35, with consistently high ratings in design (3.37), packaging (3.39), brand equity (3.34), quality (3.34), product line (3.36), and product mix (3.31).

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These results highlight good alignment between product attributes and consumer expectations, underscoring the competitive nature of OTOP products in the local market.

The findings are supported by the study of Canto, Gil-Saura, and Frasquet-Deltoro (2021), which emphasizes that a strong focus on design can lead to competitive advantages through the integration of marketing and design in product development. As noted by Silayoi and Speece (2007), attractive packaging is indicative of product quality. They also reveal that visual elements have a significant influence on consumer perception and purchasing decisions. The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI, 2022) suggests that, in the context of Philippine MSMEs, OTOP's emphasis should be on enhancing design to boost consumer appeal and market competitiveness.

The appeal of traditional, high-quality workmanship is supported by Estrella and Domingo (2019), who assert that artisanal methods exude authenticity and superior quality. Rutherford and Knowles (2024) further accentuate the importance of encouraging strong brand-consumer connections to sustain brand equity and drive growth.

Additionally, the concept highlighted by Pine and Gilmore (1999) states that the capacity to offer customizable products addresses the growing demand for personalized experiences in the framework of the experience economy. This concept aligns with Estrella and Domingo (2019), who associate product innovation and localization as effective strategies for meeting consumer preferences. In connection with Lamb, Hair, and McDaniel (2020), an organized product mix strategy facilitates trade and enhances the overall perception of customer value.

Significant difference between market viability and product competitiveness

Table 3

Differences in the Market Viability of OTOP Products in Both Physical and Digital Markets as to Owners and Customers

Group Statistics

	Owner_Customer	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Physical Market	Owner	68	3.3758	.40269	.04883
	Customer	198	3.3412	.40760	.02897
Digital Market	Owner	68	3.3485	.51384	.06231
	Customer	198	3.3303	.47835	.03400

Independent Samples Test

	t-test for Equality of Means

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		t	Df	p-value
Physical_Market		.606	264	.545
Digital_Market		.266	264	.790
		.257	109.520	.798

Table 3 shows that in the physical market, owners had a mean score of 3.3758, which is somewhat higher than the customers' mean score of 3.3412. Nonetheless, the difference was not statistically significant, as denoted by a t-value of 0.606 and a p-value of 0.545. Likewise, in the digital market, owners scored an average of 3.3485, while customers had a mean of 3.3303. Moreover, this difference proved to be statistically insignificant, with a t-value of 0.266 and a p-value of 0.790.

The findings suggest that both owners and customers share comparable views on the market viability of OTOP products in both physical and digital channels. The alignment in perception reflects a stable assessment of market conditions and product strategies among key stakeholders.

There is no statistically significant difference in the comparison between owners' and customers' assessments in the market viability of One Town, One Product (OTOP) items across both physical and digital markets. In comparison to customers' ratings (M = 3.3412 and M = 3.3303, respectively), the owners' have slightly higher mean scores in both the physical market (M = 3.3758) and the digital market (M = 3.3485), which were insignificant, supported by p-values of 0.545 and 0.790. These results reveal a shared perception of effectiveness in both markets, indicating that SMEs and consumers correspond in their assessment of OTOP's strategic outreach.

This alignment is consistent with the observations of Molina and Pimentel (2021), who found that stakeholder compromise is a vital component in sustaining competitiveness for local MSMEs in the Philippines, operating in multi-channel environments. When both producers and consumers maintain similar views on market viability, it enhances strategic coherence and reinforces consumer trust.

Table 4
Differences in Product Competitiveness as to Owners and Customers

Group Statistics

	Owner_Customer	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Design	Owner	68	3.4118	.47377	.05745
	Customer	198	3.3698	.44371	.03153

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Packaging	Owner	68	3.4765	.50434	.06116
	Customer	198	3.3854	.44028	.03129
Brand_Equity	Owner	68	3.4926	.44195	.05359
	Customer	198	3.3384	.42978	.03054
Quality	Owner	68	3.4134	.44933	.05449
	Customer	198	3.3356	.44697	.03176
Product_Lines	Owner	68	3.4690	.42876	.05200
	Customer	198	3.3552	.42729	.03037
Product_Mix	Owner	68	3.3632	.47218	.05726
	Customer	198	3.3121	.42073	.02990

Independent Samples Test

	t-test for Equality of Means		
	t	df	p-value
Design	.661	264	.509
Packaging	1.417	264	.158
Brand Equity	2.535	264	.012
Quality	1.237	264	.217
Product Lines	1.892	264	.060
Product Mix	.837	264	.403

The results in Table 4 above show that among all variables, only brand equity yielded a statistically significant difference between the two groups. Specifically, owners reported a higher mean score (M = 3.4926, SD = 0.44195) than customers (M = 3.3384, SD = 0.42978), with a t-value of 2.535 and a p-value of 0.012, indicating that owners have a more favorable view of brand equity than customers.

For the other factors, design (p = 0.509), packaging (p = 0.158), quality (p = 0.217), product lines (p = 0.060), and product mix (p = 0.403), no statistically significant differences were found

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between the two groups. Although slight variations in mean scores are observed, these are not large enough to suggest differing perceptions at a statistically meaningful level.

These findings indicate that both internal (owners) and external (customers) stakeholders generally agree on most factors that impact competitiveness. However, there is a significant difference in how they view brand equity. This gap may necessitate further alignment to ensure that branding efforts are effectively connected with both groups.

The analysis of differences in product competitiveness perceptions between owners and customers revealed that among the six evaluated dimensions—design, packaging, brand equity, quality, product lines, and product mix—only brand equity showed a statistically significant difference ($p = 0.012$). This suggests that owners hold a more favorable view of their brand identity, image, and perceived value ($M = 3.4926$) than customers ($M = 3.3384$). All other factors yielded p-values above 0.05, indicating no significant difference in perception between the two stakeholder groups.

This divergence in brand equity perception is consistent with Aaker's (1996) findings, which emphasize that businesses often overestimate brand equity due to a focus on internal branding strategies and company-centric metrics that may not always align with external consumer perceptions. Similarly, Keller (2003) argued that consumer-based brand equity is determined by customer experiences, recognition, and loyalty, which are influenced by how brands are consistently communicated and delivered in the market.

In the context of local enterprises, Aldaba (2012) highlighted that micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the Philippines often lack sufficient resources for strategic branding, resulting in disparities between how business owners perceive their brand image and how consumers perceive it. This explains the gap observed in the current study between the internal and external evaluations of brand equity among OTOP SMEs.

Product competitiveness factors significantly influence the market viability of SMEs.

Table 5
Influence of Product Competitiveness Factors on Physical Market as to Owners

Dependent Variable: Physical Market

Coefficients (Owner)

Model		Unstandardized	Standard Error	Standardized	t	P
	Design	0.383	0.093	0.451	4.109	< .001
	Packaging	0.391	0.086	0.489	4.552	< .001

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	Brand Equity	0.419	0.1	0.459	4.202	< .001
	Quality	0.471	0.094	0.525	5.015	< .001
	Product Line	0.503	0.098	0.535	5.149	< .001
	Product Mix	0.458	0.089	0.536	5.163	< .001

The results in Table 5 indicate that all six product competitiveness factors—Design, Packaging, Brand Equity, Quality, Product Lines, and Product Mix—positively influence the market viability of OTOP products in physical retail settings ($p < .001$). Notably, Product Mix ($\beta = 0.536$), Product Lines ($\beta = 0.535$), and Quality ($\beta = 0.525$) were the strongest predictors of the outcome. This suggests that well-curated offerings, diverse product lines, and high-quality products are key to success in physical marketplaces. Additionally, Packaging ($\beta = 0.489$), Brand Equity ($\beta = 0.459$), and Design ($\beta = 0.451$) also made significant contributions, emphasizing the importance of customer-facing attributes. High t-values across all models support the reliability of these findings, underscoring the critical role of product competitiveness in market success.

Table 6
Influence of Product Competitiveness Factors on Digital Market as to Owners

Dependent Variable: Digital Market

Coefficients (Owner)

Model		Unstandardized	Standard Error	Standardized	t	P
	Design	0.596	0.111	0.551	5.358	< .001
	Packaging	0.469	0.111	0.461	4.216	< .001
	Brand Equity	0.453	0.132	0.389	3.434	< .001
	Quality	0.506	0.126	0.443	4.019	< .001

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	Product Line	0.539	0.132	0.451	4.101	< .001
	Product Mix	0.477	0.12	0.439	3.966	< .001

The results in Table 6 indicate that all six factors—Design, Packaging, Brand Equity, Quality, Product Lines, and Product Mix—significantly and positively impact digital market viability, with p-values under 0.001. The most influential predictors are Design (β = 0.551), Product Lines (β = 0.451), and Product Mix (β = 0.439), highlighting the importance of creative design and a diverse online catalog. Packaging (β = 0.461) and Quality (β = 0.443) also play key roles, emphasizing the need for appealing packaging and consistent quality in digital sales. Although Brand Equity had the lowest coefficient (β = 0.389), it still significantly contributes to market viability, underscoring the importance of a strong online brand image.

Table 7
Influence of Product Competitiveness Factors on Physical Market as to Customer

Dependent Variable: Physical Market

Coefficients (Customer)

Model		Unstandardized	Standard Error	Standardized	t	P
	Design	0.554	0.052	0.603	10.585	< .001
	Packaging	0.478	0.057	0.516	8.436	< .001
	Brand Equity	0.513	0.057	0.541	9.002	< .001
	Quality	0.479	0.055	0.526	8.653	< .001
	Product Line	0.521	0.057	0.546	9.127	< .001
	Product Mix	0.541	0.057	0.558	9.404	< .001

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The results in Table 7 show that all six factors of product competitiveness significantly influenced physical market viability, with p-values less than .001. Product design had the most substantial effect (β = 0.603), indicating that customers associate well-designed products with greater market presence. Other significant factors included product mix (β = 0.558), product lines (β = 0.546), brand equity (β = 0.541), packaging (β = 0.516), and quality (β = 0.526). These findings suggest that competitive, well-packaged, and creatively designed products enhance visibility and demand in the market, while brand equity and product quality are crucial for building trust and influencing purchasing behavior.

Table 8
Influence of Product Competitiveness Factors on Digital Market as to Customer

Dependent Variable: Digital Market

	Unstandardized	Standard Error	Standardized	T	P
Design	0.682	0.06	0.633	11.458	< .001
Packaging	0.667	0.061	0.614	10.893	< .001
Brand Equity	0.648	0.065	0.582	10.019	< .001
Quality	0.676	0.059	0.632	11.424	< .001
Product Line	0.704	0.062	0.629	11.335	< .001
Product Mix	0.735	0.062	0.646	11.86	< .001

The results in Table 8 show that all six product competitiveness factors significantly and positively influence digital market viability, with p-values under .001. Product design had the strongest effect (β = 0.633), highlighting its role in customer perception on online platforms. It was followed by product mix (β = 0.646), product lines (β = 0.629), quality (β = 0.632), packaging (β = 0.614), and brand equity (β = 0.582).

The findings from Tables 5 to 8 are supported by Tolibova's (2025) study, which highlighted that establishing product competitiveness requires a complex approach. This approach should incorporate research, innovation, quality, pricing, branding, adaptability, and customer care. By combining these strategies, businesses can not only meet current market demands but also anticipate future challenges, thereby achieving a sustained competitive advantage.

Torianyk, Shevchenko, and Tkach (2023) assert that product competitiveness is vital for the success of any business in the marketplace. Additionally, they emphasize that enhancing the

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competitive position of products in sales markets requires an objective and prompt evaluation of competitiveness. Therefore, achieving sustainable competitive advantages depends on securing excellent product quality, enhancing service levels, and executing effective marketing strategies to promote products.

Business Model for Market and Product Strategy

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) perceive that product quality is pivotal for achieving market success. Competitiveness key factors include aesthetics, packaging, brand equity, and overall quality. SMEs can adopt a Product-Driven Business Model to strengthen differentiation and customer relationships, which focuses on innovative, eco-friendly, and customizable products that resonate with local culture.

Customer loyalty can be built by targeting both local and online markets while attracting new clients, supported by a combination of traditional and digital marketing strategies. Strong customer relationships can be shown through the delivery of high-quality products, excellent customer support, and active engagement. Revenue can be diversified through direct sales, subscriptions, and partnerships.

Innovations should be the priority of SMEs. Businesses can gather customer feedback, develop marketing strategies, maintain quality while employing skilled artisans, and ensure a strong quality assurance process. Establishing key partnerships and managing expenses related to manufacturing and marketing is essential.

Furthermore, an approach that provides a tailored product and market strategy that addresses positioning, pricing, promotion, and focuses on customer perceptions of design, quality, and packaging is called a Customer-Centric Value-Driven Business Model. This model is crucial for SMEs in the OTOP Next Gen Program.

At the center of the model is the Value Proposition, shaped by product and market strategies, along with Key Activities that guarantee effective production and logistics. Building trust through quality service and personalized customer interactions strengthens engagement across various channels. The Revenue Stream reflects income generation through sales or subscriptions, aligning all components of the business model to maintain competitiveness by focusing on customer needs.

DISCUSSION

One Town, One Product (OTOP) Next Gen business owners and customers have similar views on the market potential of OTOP products across both the physical and digital market, with no significant evaluative differences. Both groups rated product competitiveness correspondingly in areas like design, packaging, quality, product lines, and product mix, while owners viewed brand equity more positively. This highlights the need to intensify branding efforts to resonate with customers effectively.

All six factors of product competitiveness significantly influence the market viability of OTOP SMEs. The findings underline the importance of enhancing product competitiveness to

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improve visibility and performance in today's retail landscape. Business owners prioritized product mix, product lines, and quality for physical markets, while customers rated design as the most essential factor, highlighting the importance of creativity in digital commerce. Trust and clear branding also emerged as critical for customer engagement.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the study's results, both business owners and customers assessed OTOP products and the market as viable and competitive. Its strengths include the incorporation of cultural design, product quality, and digital connectivity. The study identified challenges related to brand engagement, environmentally friendly packaging, customization, and distribution. The analysis reveals no significant difference in the evaluation of OTOP owners and customers on the market potential of OTOP products across the physical and digital markets. However, owners rated brand equity more positively than customers. Furthermore, all the factors given for product competitiveness significantly affect market viability in both markets, with differing impacts from the viewpoints of owners and customers. Considering all the findings, the study proposed Product-Driven Business Model and Customer-Centric Value-Dirven Business Model to help OTOP Next Gens business align their product offerings and market strategies with customers' expectations. This will enhance business performance and ensure long-term sustainability in an ever-evolving market landscape.

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