

Go-to-Market Strategy for a Student-Led Startup Business

Alexander George M. Geraga¹, Kenn Ivan B. Comez¹, Kyli Cursty Lowi A. Dacanay¹,

Jesus M. Mondala¹, Reine Angelo U. Recto¹, Zyra Ysabel Tapia¹,

Dr. Jhon Ven Saint L. Pasahol, CEMP, LPT, DBA²

¹*Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Marketing Program, Eulogio "Amang" Rodriguez Institute of Science and Technology (EARIST), Manila City, Philippines*

²*Department Head, Bachelor of Science in Entrepreneurship, Eulogio "Amang" Rodriguez Institute of Science and Technology (EARIST), Manila City, Philippines*

Publication history: Received: May 22, 2026; Revised: June 20; Accepted: June 27, 2026

Email of Corresponding Author: geragaagm.cbpa@gmail.com

Abstract

This study assessed the Go-to-Market Strategy of a Student-Led Startup Business as perceived by faculty members and entrepreneur students. It aimed to determine how the respondents evaluated the startup's strategy in terms of market research and customer segmentation, value proposition and product positioning, marketing and promotion strategy, sales and distribution channel, pricing strategy, and customer engagement and retention. The study was anchored on the Input-Process-Output model, where the inputs included related references, respondents, survey results, and problems encountered; the process involved questionnaire formulation, validation, administration, and assessment of GTM components; and the output was a proposed development plan for improving the student-led startup business. The study employed a descriptive survey method using a cross-sectional survey design. Purposive sampling was used to select 100 respondents from Eulogio "Amang" Rodriguez Institute of Science and Technology in Metro Manila, composed of 90 fourth-year entrepreneur students and 10 faculty members. Data were gathered through a validated survey questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale. The data were analyzed using percentage, weighted mean, ranking, and independent samples t-test at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings showed that the Go-to-Market Strategy of the Student-Led Startup Business was generally assessed positively. Market Research and Customer Segmentation obtained a composite mean of 4.228 and was interpreted as Very High Assessment. Value Proposition and Product Positioning obtained 4.129 and was interpreted as High Assessment. Marketing and Promotion Strategy obtained the highest composite mean of 4.240 and was interpreted as Very High Assessment. Sales and Distribution Channel obtained 4.143, Pricing Strategy obtained 4.179, and Customer Engagement and Retention obtained 4.184, all interpreted as High Assessment. The overall grand mean of 4.184 indicated a High Assessment. The independent samples t-test showed that all computed p-values were greater than 0.05, indicating no significant difference between the assessments of faculty members and entrepreneur students. The proposed business plan was developed to improve market research practices, strengthen value proposition, enhance promotional activities, optimize sales and distribution channels, implement competitive pricing strategies, and develop customer engagement programs. The study aligns with SDG 4 on Quality Education by supporting entrepreneurship learning and applied business instruction, SDG 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth by strengthening student entrepreneurship, and SDG 9 on Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure by encouraging innovation-driven and digitally supported startup practices. Its sustainability impact lies in improving educational, institutional, technological, and socio-economic sustainability by helping student entrepreneurs develop more competitive, customer-centered, and sustainable startup businesses.

Keywords: Customer Engagement and Retention, Go-to-Market Strategy, Market Research and Customer Segmentation, Marketing and Promotion Strategy, Pricing Strategy, Sales and Distribution Channel, Student-Led Startup Business, Value Proposition and Product Positioning

1. Introduction

The growth of businesses worldwide has increased the need for new entrepreneurs to develop strategies that allow their ventures not only to earn profit but also to remain competitive. A go-to-market strategy provides a structured guide for introducing products or services to the right customers and building a strong market presence. For student-led startups, GTM planning helps transform creative ideas into viable and sustainable ventures. In the Philippine context, students increasingly use digital platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, and Shopee to promote and sell products. This reflects the creativity and resourcefulness of Filipino student entrepreneurs. However, many student-led startups still experience limited funds, lack of experience, weak marketing strategies, insufficient market research, unclear product positioning, and

difficulty in pricing, distribution, and customer retention. These challenges show the need to assess and improve GTM strategies so that student entrepreneurs can make informed decisions rather than rely on assumptions.

The literature emphasizes that market research and customer understanding are central to an effective GTM strategy. From the reviewed works of Bayatra (2023), Dangare and Pachpande (2023), Kim and Mauborgne (2020), Oliveira et al. (2021), Aduana (2020), and Vistan (2023), startups often struggle when they lack clear target markets and rely on assumptions about customer needs. Dangare and Pachpande (2023) further explain that startups may fail not because of poor product quality but because of weak understanding of customers, competition, and launch timing. Another major theme is the importance of value proposition, segmentation, and positioning. Yoshitsugu (2024), Vitug (2025), and Bayatra (2023) affirm that strong value propositions and proper positioning help align products with customer expectations and market behavior. Kim and Mauborgne (2020) similarly stress value innovation, differentiation, and reduction of buyer uncertainty as important foundations for market entry.

Digital tools and technology integration also shape modern GTM strategies. The works of Oliveira et al. (2021), Wamba et al. (2020), Catacutan et al. (2024), Cueto et al. (2022), Guillen and Lim (2023), Aguda et al. (2021), and Bookshelf PH (2021) collectively highlight the role of digital tools, online marketing, analytics, and technology platforms in expanding market reach and improving customer engagement. Aguda et al. (2021) show that Filipino entrepreneurs use blockchain, fintech, and other digital tools to improve transactions and trust, while The E-Hustle (Bookshelf PH, 2021) documents the use of social media, influencer partnerships, and targeted campaigns among Filipino digital entrepreneurs. Trust-building, customer education, and customer loyalty are also recurring insights. Rezaei and Ortt (2024), Kim and Mauborgne (2020), and Borromeo et al. (2021) underscore the need for clear communication, customer education, and social responsibility in reducing adoption barriers and strengthening customer relationships. Borromeo et al. (2021) further demonstrate that community engagement and alignment with societal goals support long-term sustainability.

Locally, this study is situated at Eulogio “Amang” Rodriguez Institute of Science and Technology (EARIST) in Metro Manila during Academic Year 2025–2026. It involves fourth-year entrepreneur students undertaking business implementation and faculty members with academic and professional knowledge in marketing and entrepreneurship. The study responds to the need for practical GTM guidance within student-led business activities. Nationally, Philippine startup and MSME literature shows that innovation, digitalization, and cultural understanding are important in market development. Akehira et al. (2022) discuss how startup growth affects innovation, competition, and policy considerations in the Philippine economy. Catacutan, K. J., Acob, T. M., Dadap, J. L., Fernandez, A. N., Riza Mea, R. M., Moniño, S. J., & Noriega, J. J. (2024) examine digital marketing strategies and financial performance among startups in Tuguegarao City. Cueto, L. J., Frisnedi, A. F. D., Collera, R. B., Batac, K. I. T., & Agaton, C. B. (2022) highlight the digital innovation challenges of Filipino young entrepreneurs, including lack of digital skills, weak infrastructure, and market-related issues. Guillen, N. B., Jr., & Lim, C. T. (2023) show how Facebook advertising and growth-hacking strategies support MSME customer acquisition, while Vitug, E. G. (2025) emphasizes segmentation, targeting, and positioning in the Philippine market. Globally, GTM literature shows that startups and scaleups must align customer discovery, value communication, pricing, channels, and performance measures. Bayatra (2023) explains that product marketers need cross-functional collaboration and customer-centered communication. Siota, Kowszyk, and Prats (2024) identify market, customer, sales, expansion, and operations as key GTM areas for scaleups. Yoshitsugu (2024) highlights segmentation, value proposition, pricing, distribution, acquisition, and retention in subscription-based consumer technology products. Bhagwat, Parte, Desai, Khakhkhar, and Mehta (2025) emphasize market research, target audience understanding, unique value proposition, pricing, distribution, and performance metrics as key GTM components.

The study is anchored on the Input-Process-Output (IPO) model. The input includes related references, respondents, survey results on GTM strategy, and problems encountered in implementation. The process involves the formulation, validation, and administration of the survey questionnaire and the assessment of GTM components such as target market identification, value proposition, product or service positioning, marketing channels, pricing approach, and customer acquisition tactics. The output is a proposed strategic action plan or business development plan for improving the GTM approach of the student-led startup. The conceptual basis is also supported by GTM-related literature. Kim and Mauborgne (2020) support the need for differentiation, customer pain-point analysis, and value innovation. Oliveira et al. (2021) emphasize market-learning processes, customer interviews, validation cycles, and mentorship systems in university-based entrepreneurship. Wamba et al. (2020) explain that data-driven decision-making strengthens segmentation, pricing, promotion, and market-entry decisions. Tan and Ng (2023) stress regional and cultural adaptation in Southeast Asian startup ecosystems, while Rezaei and Ortt (2024) highlight customer education, transparent communication, and early adopter strategies for improving acceptance of innovative products.

The reviewed literature identifies several concerns that justify the present study. Aduana (2020) notes that Filipino micro- and small-scale enterprises often fail during early stages because of insufficient market understanding, limited budgets, lack of experience, difficulty identifying target markets, and limited access to data-gathering tools. Vistan (2023) adds that

Filipino consumer behavior affects marketing strategy and requires culturally responsive business practices. Existing literature also highlights the need for marketing strategies that consider local cultural contexts and consumer preferences to improve the effectiveness of MSME marketing initiatives. The studies of Dangare and Pachpande (2023), Aduana (2020), and Cueto et al. (2022) also acknowledge persistent startup challenges, especially limited resources, digital skill gaps, and insufficient strategic planning experience. These gaps are relevant to student-led startups because students often have creative ideas but limited exposure to real market testing, positioning, pricing, distribution, and retention strategies. Therefore, this study is necessary to assess the GTM strategy of a student-led startup business from the perspectives of faculty members and entrepreneur students and to use the findings as basis for a proposed business plan.

This study aligns with SDG 4 – Quality Education because it supports entrepreneurship education by helping students understand and apply market research, product positioning, pricing, promotion, distribution, and customer engagement. The findings may help faculty members improve entrepreneurship instruction through learning activities that reflect actual startup challenges. The study also supports SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth because it focuses on strengthening student-led startups, entrepreneurship, market competitiveness, and sustainable business development. By improving GTM strategies, student entrepreneurs may be better prepared to create viable ventures and contribute to economic activity. The study is connected to SDG 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure because it emphasizes innovation, digital tools, market analytics, technology-based promotion, fintech, online platforms, and digital marketing practices. These elements support technological and innovation-driven entrepreneurship. The study also relates to SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals because the literature highlights the importance of university support, mentorship, stakeholder collaboration, government programs, community organizations, and educational partnerships in helping startups gain exposure, legitimacy, and strategic guidance.

The study contributes to educational sustainability by strengthening students' entrepreneurial knowledge, market awareness, and decision-making skills. It helps connect classroom learning with actual business practice, making entrepreneurship education more applied and responsive to real market conditions. It also contributes to socio-economic sustainability by supporting the development of student-led startups that may become competitive, income-generating, and growth-oriented ventures. Improved GTM strategies can help students make better decisions on customer targeting, pricing, promotion, distribution, and retention. The study supports technological and digital sustainability by recognizing the role of online platforms, social media marketing, digital tools, analytics, and technology integration in modern entrepreneurship. These tools are especially important for student-led startups with limited resources. Finally, the study contributes to institutional and community sustainability by providing faculty members, future entrepreneurs, and researchers with a foundation for improving entrepreneurship programs, business planning, and startup support systems. Since the study focuses on culturally responsive marketing, customer trust, community engagement, and local market behavior, it also supports community-based and culturally grounded business development.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study used the descriptive survey method to assess the go-to-market (GTM) strategy of a student-led startup business as perceived by faculty members and entrepreneur students. A cross-sectional survey design was used to collect data at one point in time, allowing the researchers to describe the existing conditions and current practices related to the startup's GTM strategy. The design was appropriate because the study did not manipulate variables or determine cause-and-effect relationships, but instead described and analyzed the respondents' assessments of key GTM components. Descriptive research systematically examines and presents phenomena as they exist in real-world settings. Consistent with this approach, the study documented and compared the assessments of faculty members and entrepreneur students to provide a clear basis for analysis and interpretation.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at Eulogio "Amang" Rodriguez Institute of Science and Technology in Metro Manila during Academic Year 2025–2026. The institution served as the setting because the respondents were fourth-year entrepreneur students and faculty members connected to the entrepreneurship and marketing-related academic context of the study.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents consisted of faculty members and entrepreneur students. A total of 100 respondents participated in the study, composed of 90 fourth-year entrepreneur students and 10 faculty members. The fourth-year students were included because they were taking business implementation subjects, while the faculty members were included to provide academic and professional perspectives in assessing the go-to-market strategy of a student-led startup business.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study used purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique in which respondents are intentionally selected based on characteristics relevant to the research. The combined target population consisted of 261 individuals, composed of 196 fourth-year entrepreneur students and 65 faculty members. From this population, 100 respondents were purposively selected. Purposive sampling involves the deliberate selection of individuals who possess the knowledge, experience, and qualifications necessary to address the objectives of a study. In this study, purposive sampling ensured that respondents with sufficient academic exposure and professional expertise in marketing and entrepreneurship were chosen to strengthen the validity of the assessments and support the formulation of a proposed business plan.

2.5 Research Instrument

The study used a survey questionnaire to gather data addressing the research problems. The instrument focused on the Go-To-Market (GTM) strategy of a student-led startup business and was validated by the adviser, revised based on recommendations, and finalized before administration. The questionnaire measured the respondents' assessment using a five-point Likert scale. It covered market research and customer segmentation, value proposition and product positioning, marketing and promotion strategy, sales and distribution channel, pricing strategy, and customer engagement and retention. The items included concerns such as target market identification, customer needs, demographic and behavioral segmentation, customer feedback, unique value, brand identity, differentiation, social media use, promotional platforms, delivery efficiency, order handling, affordability, competitor-based pricing, complaint handling, repeat purchase, and customer relationship-building. The draft questionnaire was submitted to the adviser, faculty members, and research experts for review and suggestions. It was pilot-tested with three respondents to determine the clarity, accuracy, and suitability of the items. The study adopted content validity to ensure that the questionnaire measured what it was intended to measure. Ambiguous or weak items were revised or removed, while necessary items were added. The questionnaire was examined by Graduate School faculty and the adviser, who were considered experts in research.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers first secured permission to conduct the study before administering the survey to the selected faculty members and entrepreneur students of Eulogio "Amang" Rodriguez Institute of Science and Technology in Metro Manila. The questionnaires were then distributed personally and online to the respondents. After data collection, the survey results were retrieved and tabulated. The final manuscript was then prepared for oral presentation.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The study used percentage, weighted mean, Likert scale interpretation, ranking, and independent samples t-test in analyzing the data. Percentage was used to determine the proportion of respondents belonging to a particular category. Weighted mean was used to determine the overall assessment of respondents on each GTM variable. The five-point Likert scale was used to interpret the level of assessment, ranging from very low assessment to very high assessment. Ranking was used to arrange variables and items from highest to lowest based on weighted mean to determine their relative importance. The independent samples t-test was used to determine whether there was a significant difference between the assessments of entrepreneur students and faculty members regarding the Go-to-Market Strategy of a Student-Led Startup Business, with 0.05 as the level of significance.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Assessment of the Go-to-Market Strategy

3.1.1 Market Research and Customer Segmentation

The assessment of market research and customer segmentation obtained an overall weighted mean of 4.22, interpreted as Very High Assessment. Customer needs were well analyzed, receiving the highest composite weighted mean of 4.34. This was followed by consideration of market trends in planning with a composite mean of 4.29. Identification of the target market and prioritization of customer segments both received 4.17, while competitor analysis before launch received the lowest composite mean of 4.04. Entrepreneur students rated this area 4.19, interpreted as High Assessment, while faculty members rated it 4.26, interpreted as Very High Assessment. The result suggests that the student-led startup demonstrates strong awareness of customer needs and market trends, although competitor analysis remains the weakest part of this area. This agrees with Bayatra (2023), Dangare and Pachpande (2023), Kim and Mauborgne (2020), Oliveira et al. (2021), Aduana (2020), and Vistan (2023), who emphasize that market research and customer understanding are essential foundations of an effective Go-to-Market strategy. The lower rating on competitor analysis also reflects the concern of Aduana (2020) that insufficient market understanding can weaken early business decisions.

3.1.2 Value Proposition and Product Positioning

The assessment of value proposition and product positioning obtained an overall weighted mean of 4.12, interpreted as High Assessment. The highest-rated indicator was the clear communication of the startup's unique selling point, with a composite weighted mean of 4.21. The product's clear value to customers and its positioning against competitors received

composite means of 4.15 and 4.16. Communicating the value proposition in promotions obtained 4.10, while solving a customer problem received the lowest composite mean of 3.82. The findings indicate that the startup is able to communicate its unique selling point but needs to improve how clearly the product addresses customer problems. This supports Yoshitsugu (2024), Vitug (2025), and Bayatra (2023), who affirm that a strong value proposition, segmentation, and positioning help align products with market expectations. The result also connects with Kim and Mauborgne (2020), who emphasize differentiation, customer pain points, and clear value communication as important elements of market entry.

3.1.3 Marketing and Promotion Strategy

The assessment of marketing and promotion strategy obtained the highest overall weighted mean of 4.24, interpreted as Very High Assessment. The most highly rated indicator was the effective use of the marketing budget, with a composite weighted mean of 4.33. Proper use of social media marketing followed with 4.27. Effective promotional tools received 4.18, promotions that increase brand awareness received 3.86, and marketing efforts that attract the intended audience received the lowest composite mean of 4.08. Entrepreneur students rated this area 4.12, while faculty members rated it 4.36. The result shows that marketing and promotion are the strongest areas of the student-led startup, especially in budget use and social media utilization. This is consistent with Oliveira et al. (2021), Wamba et al. (2020), Catacutan et al. (2024), Cueto et al. (2022), Guillen and Lim (2023), Aguda et al. (2021), and Bookshelf PH (2021), who highlight the importance of digital tools, online marketing, and technology integration in improving customer engagement and market reach. However, the lower score on attracting the intended audience suggests that promotional efforts still need stronger targeting and message alignment.

3.1.4 Sales and Distribution Channel

The assessment of sales and distribution channel obtained an overall weighted mean of 4.14, interpreted as High Assessment. Timely delivery of products or services and accessible distribution channels both received the highest composite weighted mean of 4.30. Utilization of partnerships or resellers followed with 4.28, while the organization of the sales process received 4.18. Selecting the appropriate sales channel obtained the lowest composite mean of 3.91. Entrepreneur students rated this area 4.20, while faculty members rated it 4.08. The findings show that the startup performs well in delivery, accessibility, and use of partnerships, but needs improvement in choosing the most appropriate sales channel. This aligns with Yoshitsugu (2024), who identifies distribution channels and customer acquisition tactics as key components of effective GTM strategies. The result also relates to Tan and Ng (2023), who emphasize that startups must adapt communication and channel strategies to match local consumer behavior and trust-building mechanisms.

3.1.5 Pricing Strategy

The assessment of pricing strategy obtained an overall weighted mean of 4.17, interpreted as High Assessment. Offering discounts strategically received the highest composite weighted mean of 4.39. This was followed by price reflecting product value with 4.31 and competitive pricing with 4.24. Customers perceiving pricing as reasonable received 4.16, while pricing based on market research obtained the lowest composite mean of 3.87. The result indicates that the startup demonstrates strength in discount strategies, competitive pricing, and value-based pricing, but still needs to strengthen the use of market research in price-setting. The findings suggest that while the startup applies effective pricing practices, greater reliance on market research could further improve pricing decisions. This is consistent with Wamba et al. (2020), who explain that data-driven decision-making strengthens pricing, segmentation, and promotional decisions.

3.1.6 Customer Engagement and Retention

The assessment of customer engagement and retention obtained an overall weighted mean of 4.18, interpreted as High Assessment. Considering customer feedback received the highest composite weighted mean of 4.29. Strategies implemented to retain customers followed with 4.270, while monitoring customer satisfaction received 4.22. Responding to customer inquiries obtained 4.00, and maintaining good customer relationships received the lowest composite mean of 3.76. The findings show that the startup values feedback, retention strategies, and customer satisfaction monitoring, but still needs to improve relationship-building and inquiry response. This agrees with Rezaei and Ortt (2024), Kim and Mauborgne (2020), and Borromeo et al. (2021), who emphasize trust-building, customer education, clear communication, and loyalty as important factors in reducing adoption barriers and strengthening customer relationships.

3.1.7 Overall Assessment of the Go-to-Market Strategy

The overall assessment of the Go-to-Market Strategy obtained a grand mean of 4.18, interpreted as High Assessment. Marketing and Promotion Strategy received the highest composite mean of 4.24, followed by Market Research and Customer Segmentation with 4.22, Customer Engagement and Retention with 4.18, Pricing Strategy with 4.17, Sales and Distribution Channel with 4.14, and Value Proposition and Product Positioning with 4.12. The findings suggest that the student-led startup has generally strong GTM practices, with marketing and promotion as the strongest area and value proposition and product positioning as the weakest area. This supports Dangare and Pachpande (2023), who emphasize that startups need a clear understanding of target customers, competition, channels, and value communication. Overall, the

results indicate that the startup demonstrates the fundamental elements of an effective go-to-market strategy while still having opportunities to strengthen areas related to value communication and product positioning.

3.2 Difference Between the Assessments of Respondent Groups

The independent samples t-test showed that all computed p-values were greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Market Research and Customer Segmentation obtained a p-value of 0.487, Value Proposition and Product Positioning obtained 0.670, Marketing and Promotion Strategy obtained 0.061, Sales and Distribution Channel obtained 0.323, Pricing Strategy obtained 0.604, and Customer Engagement and Retention obtained 0.200. Since all p-values exceeded 0.05, the null hypothesis was not rejected for all dimensions. This means that there was no significant difference between the assessments of entrepreneur students and faculty members. The result indicates that both groups had comparable perceptions of the student-led startup's GTM strategy. This suggests consistency between the student perspective and the faculty perspective regarding the startup's strengths and areas for improvement. The finding supports the relevance of GTM assessment as a shared evaluative tool, especially since Bayatra (2023), Dangare and Pachpande (2023), and Yoshitsugu (2024) emphasize that GTM planning requires alignment among customer understanding, value communication, pricing, channels, and retention.

3.3 Proposed Business Plan Based on the Findings

Based on the findings, the proposed business plan was developed to enhance the Go-to-Market Strategy of a Student-Led Startup Business. The results showed that Marketing and Promotion Strategy obtained the highest assessment, followed by Market Research and Customer Segmentation. Value Proposition and Product Positioning obtained the lowest assessment, showing the need to improve product differentiation and communication of value to customers. The proposed business plan responds to the identified strengths and weaknesses by focusing on improved market research practices, stronger value proposition, enhanced promotional activities, optimized sales and distribution channels, competitive pricing strategies, and customer engagement programs. These directions are consistent with Tan and Ng (2023), Vistan (2023), and Akehira et al. (2022), who recognize the role of cultural alignment and contextual adaptation in shaping GTM strategies. They also support Dangare and Pachpande (2023), Aduana (2020), and Cueto et al. (2022), who acknowledge the persistent challenges faced by startups and student-led ventures, particularly limited resources, digital skill gaps, and insufficient strategic planning experience.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concludes that the Go-to-Market Strategy of the Student-Led Startup Business was generally assessed positively by both faculty members and entrepreneur students, with the overall grand mean interpreted as High Assessment. Market Research and Customer Segmentation was rated Very High, while Value Proposition and Product Positioning, Sales and Distribution Channel, Pricing Strategy, and Customer Engagement and Retention were rated High. Marketing and Promotion Strategy emerged as the strongest dimension, showing the importance of promotional activities and customer awareness in business success, while Value Proposition and Product Positioning received the lowest assessment, indicating the need to improve the communication of product value and competitive advantage. The findings also showed that faculty members and entrepreneur students had similar assessments of the startup's GTM strategy, and the proposed business plan may guide the improvement of GTM implementation, sustainability, and competitiveness among student-led startup businesses.

Based on the findings and conclusions, student entrepreneurs should continue conducting market research and customer segmentation to better understand customer needs and preferences. Greater emphasis should be placed on strengthening value proposition and product positioning to improve competitive advantage. Marketing and promotion activities should be sustained and improved through effective use of digital platforms and social media marketing. Student-led startups should also enhance their sales and distribution channels, pricing strategies, and customer engagement programs to improve customer satisfaction and business performance. The proposed business plan may be adopted to further improve the Go-to-Market Strategy of student-led startup businesses, while future researchers may conduct similar studies using additional variables and a wider scope of respondents to further validate the findings.

Compliance with ethical standards

The authors declare no conflict of interest. This study complied with recognized ethical standards for human-participant research by ensuring voluntary participation with informed consent, the right to withdraw without penalty, and strict confidentiality through anonymous, secure, and aggregated data handling. Given the focus on psychological well-being, procedures were non-invasive, and safeguards were observed to minimize discomfort, with guidance to appropriate support services when needed, and required institutional permissions were secured for instrument use and access to academic records.

REFERENCES

- Aduana, N. L. (2020). *Entrepreneurship in Philippine setting for senior high school* (Revised ed.). C & E Publishing, Inc.
- Aguda, H. R., Bautista-Casas, C., & Marasigan, N. J. (2021). *Opening the archipelago: The story of blockchain in the Philippines*. Bookshelf PH.
- Akehira, S. P., Alcantara, E., & Laforga, A., Jr. (2022). Competition and innovation: The rise of startups and its effects towards the Philippines economy. *Journal of Economics, Finance and Accounting Studies*, 4(1), 383–411. <https://doi.org/10.32996/jefas.2022.4.1.24>
- Bayatra, I. (2023). *Cracking the product marketing code: Craft winning go-to-market strategies*. Packt Publishing. <https://books.google.com.ph/books?id=BqrdEAAAQBAJ>
- Bookshelf PH. (2021). *The e-hustle: What the country's best digital leaders can teach you about launching and growing your online business*. Bookshelf PH.
- Borromeo, M., Dizon, P., & Padillo, M. (Eds.). (2021). *Planting greatness: Organizations accelerating social impact in the Philippines*. Bookshelf PH.
- Catacutan, K. J., Acob, T. M., Dadap, J. L., Fernandez, A. N., Riza Mea, R. M., Moniño, S. J., & Noriega, J. J. (2024). Digital marketing and financial performance of business start-ups in Tuguegarao City: A basis for service learning program. *Journal of Finance and Business Digital*, 3(3), 185–210. <https://doi.org/10.55927/jfbd.v3i3.11421>
- Cueto, L. J., Frisnedi, A. F. D., Collera, R. B., Batac, K. I. T., & Agaton, C. B. (2022). Digital innovations in MSMEs during economic disruptions: Experiences and challenges of young entrepreneurs. *Administrative Sciences*, 12(1), Article 8. <https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci12010008>
- Dangare, G., & Pachpande, S. (2023). Go-to-market strategy: An important phase for startups. *The Online Journal of Distance Education and e-Learning*, 11(1), Article 34. <https://www.tojned.net/journals/tojdel/articles/v11i01c01/v11i01-34.pdf>
- Guillen, N. B., Jr., & Lim, C. T. (2023). Unlocking growth opportunities for Philippine micro, small, and medium enterprises through Facebook advertising and growth hacking strategies in the post-pandemic era. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary: Applied Business and Education Research*, 4(8), 2884–2893. <https://doi.org/10.11594/ijmaber.04.08.26>
- Kim, W. C., & Mauborgne, R. (2020). *Blue ocean shift: Beyond competing—Proven steps to inspire confidence and seize new growth*. Hachette Books.
- Oliveira, M. F., Cadavez, V., & Teixeira, M. S. (2021). Digital entrepreneurship and innovation in European university incubators: Market-learning processes and venture development. *International Journal of Innovation Science*, 13(4), 567–583.
- Rezaei, J., & Ortt, R. (2024). Overcoming adoption barriers for innovative technologies: Customer education, trust-building, and go-to-market strategy design. *Technovation*, 130, Article 102816.
- Siota, J., Kowszyk, Y., Prats, M. J., & Neckeebrouck, J. (2024, July 15). *European deep-tech scaleups: Go-to-market strategy*. EIC Scaling Club. <https://doi.org/10.15581/018/77865>
- Tan, J. D., & Ng, S. I. (2023). Startup ecosystems in Southeast Asia: Market adaptation, localization strategies, and entrepreneurial performance. *Asia Pacific Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, 17(2), 145–162.
- Vistan, D. N. (2023). *The Filipino entrepreneur: Opportunities and strategies in a growth economy: Text and cases*. Anvil Publishing, Inc.
- Vitug, E. G. (2025). A data-driven analysis of consumer segmentation and market positioning strategy. *Corporate & Business Strategy Review*, 6(3), 182–192. <https://doi.org/10.22495/cbsrv6i3art17>
- Wamba, S. F., Dubey, R., & Gunasekaran, A. (2020). Big data analytics and firm performance: Systematic review and future research agenda. *Annals of Operations Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10479-020-03522-4>
- Yoshitsugu, A. (2024). Go-to-market strategies for consumer technological products with subscription monetization model. *The American Journal of Management and Economics Innovations*, 6(11), 13–22. <https://theamericanjournals.com/index.php/tajmei/article/view/5595/521>