

New Entrants in the Pandemic Era: An Empirical Study on Factors Affecting Start-Up Businesses in The Cities of the Philippines

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Abstract

The study aimed to assess the factors influencing the establishment of startup businesses in Philippine Cities during the pandemic. A quantitative method employing a causal explanatory research design was utilized to achieve this. The study relied on data from the cities and municipalities competitive index (CMCI), which were then analyzed using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient and Multiple linear regression. The study's findings revealed a positive and significant relationship between newly approved businesses and four variables: the number of banks, the presence of a business-one-stop-shop (boss) operating throughout the year, the availability of broadband services, and transportation options. These factors were shown to impact the establishment of startup businesses in Philippine cities significantly. Regression analysis identified local inflation rate, number of banks, and transportation options as significant predictors of startup businesses in Philippine cities. A 1% increase in the inflation rate resulted in a 69.286 decrease in startups. Based on these factors, the study concluded that launching a business during the pandemic was exceedingly challenging, with existing startups facing greater vulnerability to COVID-19 shocks than established businesses. This study highlighted the challenges faced by startups during the pandemic and emphasized the importance of factors like financial access, streamlined registration processes, reliable internet, transportation infrastructure, and inflation rates. Understanding these factors is vital for policymakers and entrepreneurs striving to foster startup establishment and growth in Philippine cities during challenging times.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The global health crisis caused by the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic began in China in December 2019 (Akpan, Ezeume, Udomboso, Ezeume, & Akpan, 2020; CDC, 2020; Huang et al., 2020; Ting, Carin, Dzau, & Wong, 2020), catching the world off guard and unprepared and wreaking havoc on business activities, with serious consequences for small businesses (Akpan, Soopramanien, & Kwak, 2021; Humphries, Neilson, & Ulyseas, 2020). Startups are a driving force in both local and global economic development. Start-ups grow because they gather expertise that generates innovative ideas or new approaches to working business processes that are more difficult for larger corporations to adopt. Besides the humanitarian tragedy of the COVID-19

pandemic, the virus also increasingly influences local and worldwide businesses. The Philippines controlled the pandemic, including increasing community quarantine (ECQ). The strict lockdown in the national capital region and high-risk provinces lasted from mid-March to the end of May 2020, resulting in massive start-up losses (Shinozaki, 2021).

The major challenges for micro, small, and medium-sized start-up businesses are financial and human resource-related. The HR issue is the second challenge start-ups must contend with (Mukherjee, 2018; Hongdiyanto, Lie, F.C.W Sutrisno, & Dewanti, 2020). Recent months have seen a sharp decline in business registrations, and the absence of a new generation of businesses has important ramifications for economic outcomes, particularly employment. These risks can be lessened by helping both new businesses and businesses that are just getting started. In addition to boosting short-term liquidity and financial availability, policymakers should promote the capacity of start-ups to seize new business possibilities (Calvino, Macke, Kato, & Rowan, 2020). In developing companies, these considerations may include elements like local inflation, broadband networks, the availability of banks, transportation, etc. The Philippines' inflation surged more swiftly than expected in June due to the end of one of the longest coronavirus lockdowns in the world, driving up the cost of food, fuel, and transport index (Morales & Cruz, 2020). Community banks provided significant assistance to small businesses during the first six months of the outbreak. Community banks played a crucial role in processing and originating the loans. Due to severe lockdown measures designed to slow the spread of COVID-19 in the Philippines in March 2020, transportation and economic activity stopped. Halfling the occupancy of already overcrowded public transportation systems was one of the safety measures implemented as the economy gradually recovered. As a result, commuters and necessary employees started looking for other ways of transportation, particularly bicycles. Pop-up bike lanes were put in place by national and local governments at the same time to meet the growing demand (Garcia-Beltran et al., 2021). To maintain their sense of normalcy in the face of pandemic restrictions, people increasingly use social media and hold virtual gatherings locally and internationally. Due to pandemic constraints, people increasingly turn to online shopping, and business owners have welcomed this digital trend even more. With the help of technology, online business transactions have already been transformed into an endless marketplace where doing business has become more accessible and effective for both sellers and vendors. This market is necessary because of the COVID-19 epidemic (Arreola, 2020).

Since it is difficult to predict the factors that may impact start-ups, this study is helpful, particularly regarding local government policy. The researchers are aware that most businesses in the Philippines fall into the SME category, making it the main source of income for local governments, which has a big impact. It will be feasible to help new businesses remain operational and profitable even during a pandemic by creating regulations for businesses, ultimately increasing local government revenue. Also, this could lead to an empirically backed recommendation for business owners just starting their business amid the pandemic.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Method

The study used the quantitative research method following a descriptive correlational method. Descriptive research aims to thoroughly and accurately describe a population, situation, or event (McCombes, 2019). It mainly focused on describing and determining the relationship between variables and factors affecting start-ups in the cities of the Philippines during the pandemic era.

2.2 Data Source

The researchers utilized secondary data from the Cities and Municipalities Competitive Index (CMCI) provided by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Competitiveness Bureau. The data set chosen by the researchers for this study included 146 component-class municipalities in the Philippines. The researchers considered the advantage of using a data set to gather the needed data for the study. The information includes the overall competitiveness index and the individual

scores for each of the three main competitiveness pillars: economic dynamism, government effectiveness, and infrastructure (Cambel & Albacea, 2021).

2.3 Sampling Techniques

The researchers employed the stratified sampling strategy to generate 308 sample sizes from the population. The margin of error used in the study was 0.05. The researchers concentrated solely on the schools mentioned since, according to the data supplied, they now have the biggest number of students in the Municipality of Prieto Diaz.

2.4 Data Analysis

The data for this study was organized and classified based on the research design and the provided data set by the CMCI. Ultimately, the data are tallied and tabulated for the presentation. The researchers used the following statistical tools to interpret the data: descriptive statistics to identify the factors affecting the start-ups during the pandemic era, diagnostic analysis to determine the start-up's environment in the cities of the Philippines, the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was used to examine the relationship between the number of newly approved businesses and the factors affecting start-ups, and the multiple linear regression was used to analyze the factors that affect start-ups in the cities of the Philippines. The only value that matters in the interpretation is Sig. value. The value should be lower than the study's acceptable significance level or below 0.05. Generally speaking, it is useless to understand the regression constant. Despite this, adding the constant is typically a smart idea. The capacity to comprehend how the response variable varies when the values of the predictor variables are changed is ultimately the true benefit of a regression model.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The 146 cities in the Philippines included in the CMCI data were examined to determine the factors that affect new businesses. The chart showing the map of the Philippines displays the results. The number of startups in the Philippines during the pandemic era is also covered in this section.

3.1 Number of new approved businesses during the pandemic era

Figure 1 shows the number of recently opened businesses in the cities of the Philippines, which correlate to the three (3) shades of red, yellow, and green. The figure demonstrates that most new businesses are red, which is the color associated with lower-value categories. As expected, most of the newly established firms were located in the National Capital Region (NCR), which has a value of 38,448 startups and falls into the highest category, represented by green. Yellow represents the median worth of a new start-up business, which is 19,224.

Most of the Philippines' startup businesses are located in the NCR region, which contains 16 cities, and they are highlighted in green. This might be brought on by the recent rise of businesses operating to cope with the epidemic. The coronavirus epidemic has increased the number of startups despite an unstable economy and market. More companies have been founded than ever before in the hopes of making enough money to escape the pandemic. The ability of the millennial generation to create opportunities for themselves, as well as the government's recognition of the future role of entrepreneurship and start-ups in the economy, are driving an increase in the number of Filipinos starting businesses (Aguilar, 2018). Furthermore, the number of new businesses is increasing due to the pandemic. However, as more new entrants enter the market, their ability to stand out, be recognized, and remain competitive may be jeopardized.

Table 1 shows the number of start-ups in Philippine cities (by region). With 38,448 new businesses, the National Capital Region (NCR) has the most number. NCR has the highest number of start-ups because it is one of the biggest cities in the world. Meanwhile, the Bangsamoro Autonomous

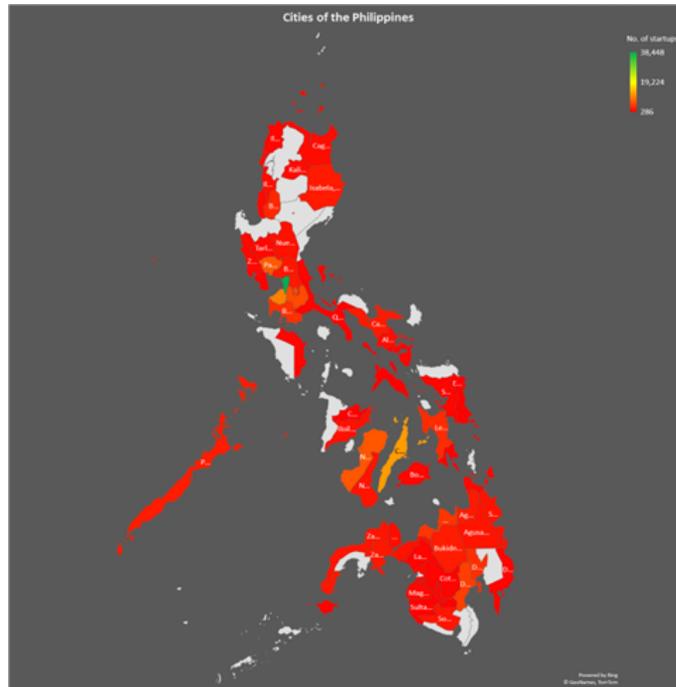


Figure 1. Number of startups in the cities of the Philippines

Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) has the fewest start-ups, with only 822. It is one of the few BARMM cities and regions with only two cities. The region of Central Visayas (Region VII) has the fewest minimum number of start-ups per city, with only 63. The city with the lowest minimum is Carcar, located in the province of Cebu. The National Capital Region (NCR) has the highest maximum number of start-ups, with 8,065 in Quezon City and Metro Manila.

Table 1. Number of startups in the cities of the Philippines (By Region)

Region	No. of cities	Number of startups			
		Total	Average	Min	Max
1. BARMM - Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao	2	822	411	210	612
2. CAR - Cordillera Administrative Region	2	4357	2179	1067	3290
3. REGION IV-B (MIMAROPA)	2	3055	1528	706	2349
4. REGION II (Cagayan Valley)	4	3413	853	647	1188
5. REGION IX (Zamboanga Peninsula)	5	4169	834	304	1377
6. REGION XII (Soccsksargen)	5	3818	764	468	1285
7. REGION XI (Davao Region)	6	9201	1534	550	4284
8. REGION XIII (Caraga)	6	6655	1109	226	1908
9. REGION V (Bicol Region)	7	4541	649	88	1419
10. REGION VIII (Eastern Visayas)	7	5001	714	214	2333
11. REGION I (Ilocos Region)	9	5768	641	339	1400
12. REGION X (Northern Mindanao)	9	9523	1058	163	3586
13. REGION III (Central Luzon)	14	10131	724	115	2024
14. NCR - National Capital Region	16	38448	2403	658	8065
15. REGION VI (Western Visayas)	16	8505	532	109	2865
16. REGION VII (Central Visayas)	16	14377	899	63	4865
17. REGION IV-A (CALABARZON)	20	22104	1105	70	3729

According to the findings, the National Capital Region almost got the total, average, and maximum of startups per city. This is because they are one of the regions with the most cities in the Philippines. Major cities make it much easier to start a business because they naturally attract the most ambitious people. Founders, press contacts, investors, and partners may meet in major cities, fundamentally altering the trajectory of start-up businesses. Because of their higher population density, major cities may have an advantage in access to talent for new businesses. However, just because a major city has a larger population does not always imply that the type of talent required by startups is readily available. Start-up businesses frequently require specialized and geographically dispersed talent. The results support the research by [Le Trinh \(2019\)](#), which found that the startup ecosystem idea is frequently employed in the context of business and innovation. Although “startup ecosystem” is used in various contexts and has no official definition, it often designates a particular geographic location with a high concentration of entrepreneurs and startup businesses.

3.2 Factors affecting start-up businesses in the cities of the Philippines

Table 2 displays the region, the number of cities, selected indicators, and an average value for each. Region II, which has four cities, had the highest average local inflation rate of 7.35, while Region IX, which has five cities, had the lowest average figure of only 0.56. Reduced government spending, a downturn in the stock market, consumer desire to save more money, and tighter monetary policy are possible causes of the low inflation rate. It is also clear that the region BARMM, which contains only two cities, had the highest average cost of rent, at 5,300. This implies that obtaining affordable rent in the area is challenging, particularly in Marawi City, where a conflict had previously occurred. The NCR region, which has 16 cities, had the highest average number of banks per city, with a value of 268. Many new businesses are linked to banks, perhaps because it is challenging for small and startup businesses to survive independently during the epidemic. Although the BARMM region’s average bank score was the lowest, at 1.50, this is due to the unpredictability of security and tranquility in the area.

Table 2. Average of dependent variables that affect startups in the cities of the Philippines

Region	No. of cities	Average				
		Local Inflation Rate	Cost of Rent	Number of banks	(BOSS) Presence of BOSS	(BOSS) All year round
BARMM	2	2.35	5300.00	2	100.00%	50.00%
CAR	2	3.45	588.21	52	100.00%	50.00%
REGION IV-B	2	3.85	375.00	49	100.00%	100.00%
REGION II	4	7.35	910.93	36	100.00%	100.00%
REGION IX	5	0.56	489.40	31	100.00%	20.00%
REGION XII	5	3.40	513.73	36	100.00%	40.00%
REGION XI	6	1.88	593.75	70	100.00%	50.00%
REGION XIII	6	2.07	595.00	21	100.00%	0.00%
REGION V	7	6.50	518.29	34	100.00%	71.43%
REGION VIII	7	3.06	500.00	25	100.00%	100.00%
REGION I	9	3.69	484.52	33	100.00%	100.00%
REGION X	9	3.04	552.89	33	100.00%	33.33%
REGION III	14	4.89	1601.98	43	100.00%	78.57%
NCR	16	3.20	627.45	268	93.75%	93.75%
REGION VI	16	4.37	611.30	26	100.00%	62.50%

REGION VII	16	1.00	1762.04	36	93.75%	56.25%
REGION IV-A	20	4.23	1467.46	55	100.00%	75.00%

The area, number of cities, and the last four variables needed to identify the factors influencing startup businesses in Philippine cities are displayed in Table 3. Getting Mayor's Permit-Minutes in Region VIII had an average of 519.57 per city. While Getting Mayor's Permit-Steps in all regions had a mode of 3 per city. Additionally, the region NCR has the most transportation sources, with an average of 29,533 per city, and has the highest broadband networks, with 47 per city. The expansion of startup businesses is considered a random occurrence that cannot be anticipated with a given set of circumstances. On the other hand, deterministic models developed over time with a focus on discovering a set of internal and external variables that can explain the growth of small firms by identifying certain traits, strategies, and practices connected to growth. Due to their ability to finance loans, banks have been identified as a key element in the success of most startups. According to Farouk and Saleh (2011) and McMahon (1998), stochastic models assume that too many factors affect growth and that no specific factors with dominant effects explain the realization of growth. Due to the pandemic in 2020, it has been challenging for start-ups to secure financing. This difficulty has been coupled with a spike in local inflation rates and a lockdown throughout the entire country of the Philippines, both impacting new businesses.

Table 3. Average of dependent variables that affect startups in the cities of the Philippines

Region	No. of cities	Getting Mayor's Permit Steps (Mode)	Average		
			Getting Mayor's Permit-Minutes	Transportation	Broadband Networks
BARMM	2	3.00	100.00	1878	5
CAR	2	3.00	107.50	5207	12
REGION IV-B	2	3.00	12.50	26274	9
REGION II	4	3.00	258.25	7405	10
REGION IX	5	3.00	308.20	5062	7
REGION XII	5	3.00	48.00	7754	14
REGION XI	6	3.00	515.83	10305	11
REGION XIII	6	3.00	499.33	3500	11
REGION V	7	3.00	298.14	13061	14
REGION VIII	7	3.00	519.57	3306	8
REGION I	9	3.00	27.11	5996	12
REGION X	9	3.00	213.33	17562	11
REGION III	14	3.00	410.86	12409	10
NCR	16	3.00	319.88	29533	47
REGION VI	16	3.00	143.44	11572	15
REGION VII	16	3.00	349.94	6918	11
REGION IV-A	20	3.00	248.65	8465	12

3.3 Relationship between the number of Start-Ups and Selected Competitiveness Indicators

Table 4 shows the calculation of the Pearson Correlation. The findings only supported four of the nine indicators. The study found a strong positive, significant correlation between the

number of startups and the number of banks ($r=0.778$, $p<.000$). The study also found a moderate positive significant correlation between the number of startups and the number of broadbands ($r=0.486$, $p<.000$), and the number of transportation ($r=0.521$, $p<.000$). However, the study found a very weak correlation between the number of startups and the Business-One-Stop-Shop (BOSS) All year round ($r=0.197$, $p<.009$). According to the results, there is a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between the number of banks and the number of newly approved businesses, proving that banks greatly influence supporting startups in the cities of the Philippines. It supports Valdez (2011) findings that smaller enterprises depend on various funding sources, including personal savings, bank loans for small businesses, credit lines, and even money from friends and family. Transport and broadband networks have a moderately positive relationship, and both factors also impact the number of startups. Higher service quality (speed) and more broadband providers vying for customers would likely result in a higher startup rate. It provides substantial evidence supporting the research by Audretsch, Heger, and Veith (2015), who found that while infrastructure is generally positively correlated with startup activity, broadband is more conducive to startup development than roads and railroads. On the other hand, the business-one-stop-shop (BOSS) all year round is also significant but has a weak relationship with the number of startups. This is because the data collection contains information on 146 cities. This indicates that the study has the statistical strength to detect even very small impacts.

Table 4. Test the relationship between the number of newly approved businesses and selected indicators

Variables	r	p
Local Inflation Rate	-.122	.071
Broadband Networks	.486	.000
Transportation	.521	.000
Number of banks	.778	.000
Cost of Rent	-.009	.459
Business One-Stop-Shop (BOSS) Presence of BOSS	.064	.223
Business One-Stop-Shop (BOSS) All Year Round	.197	.009
Getting the Mayor's Permit for new business applications minutes	.103	.107
Getting the Mayor's Permit for new business application steps	-.074	.187

Legend: 0.80 to 1.00 (-0.80 to -1.00) = Very strong positive (negative) correlation,
0.60 to 0.79 (-0.60 to -0.79) = Strong positive (negative) correlation,
0.40 to 0.59 (-0.40 to -0.59) = Moderate positive (negative) correlation,
0.20 to 0.39 (-0.20 to -0.39) = Weak positive (negative) correlation,
0 to 0.19 (0 to -0.19) = Very weak positive (negative) correlation.
Decision Rule: $p < 0.05$, statistically significant. $p > 0.05$, not significant.

3.4 Factors Influencing the Establishment of Startup Businesses in Philippine Cities

The findings only supported three of the nine factors. The analysis reveals that the local inflation rate ($p<0.034$), the number of banks ($p<0.000$), and the number of transportation ($p<0.000$), both of which are less than the acceptable value of 0.05 has a significant relationship with the number of startup businesses in the cities of the Philippines. There is a 69.286 decline in the number of startups for every 1% increase in the local inflation rate. The number of startups rises by 7.102 for everyone, and the number of banks increases. The number of startups increases by .014 for everyone in the number of transportation. As a result, the analysis reveals a considerable positive relationship between the startups and the local inflation rate, the number of banks, and transportation. The findings support Andrews' (1987) research, which claimed that strategic approach and orientation are frequently seen as key growth drivers. In other words, a business must successfully develop a strategic fit between its qualities and the marketplace in which it competes if it hopes to survive and eventually succeed in the long run. This could lead to an

empirically backed recommendation for business owners who are just starting, as their business is progressing from the early stages of growth to more advanced stages, shifting the emphasis from operational and day-to-day activities to tactical and strategic thinking.

Table 5. Findings from multiple regression analysis (Coefficients)

Model	B	SE	95% CI		p
			Lower Limit	Upper Limit	
(Constant)	278.834	521.307	-752.081	1309.750	.594
Local Inflation Rate	-69.286	32.426	-133.411	-5.162	.034
Cost of Rent	.000	.028	-.055	.054	.988
Number of Banks	7.102	.675	5.768	8.437	.000
Business One-Stop-Shop (BOSS)					
Presence of BOSS	591.133	501.130	-399.882	1582.149	.240
Business One-Stop-Shop (BOSS)					
All year round	40.519	133.336	-223.161	304.199	.762
Getting Mayor's Permit for NEW business applications	-.120	.129	-.376	.136	.356
Getting Mayor's Permit for NEW business applications	-38.996	65.073	-167.682	89.691	.550
Transportation	.014	.003	.008	.020	.000
Number of Broadband Networks	-3.179	2.637	-8.393	2.036	.230

Decision Rule: If Sig. is < 0.05, statistically significant. If Sig. is > 0.05, not significant.

4 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper analyzes start-up businesses and the factors affecting them during the pandemic in developing countries, specifically the Philippines. Using different empirical reviews and secondary data analyses, the researchers tried to interpret, analyze, and make reasonable conclusions about start-ups and the factors affecting them in the current crisis. With issues affecting start-ups, worker life, and the nation's overall economy, this study concludes that launching a business during the pandemic is extremely difficult. There are some limitations to this study, such as the use of only secondary data. It would have been preferable to include primary data, whereas gathering empirical or primary evidence directly from businesses during a pandemic is difficult.

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