

APPLICATION OF MARKETING AS AN OPPORTUNITY IN MICROENTERPRISE CONSULTING IN EMILIANO ZAPATA, TABASCO, MEXICO.

APPLICATION OF MARKETING AS AN OPPORTUNITY IN MICROENTERPRIS ES CONSULTANCY IN EMILIANO ZAPATA, TABASCO, MEXICO.

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<https://doi.org/10.61117/ipsumtec.v8i1.364>

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Abstract -- Business development implies promoting customer service strategies that allow establishing efficient market segments, covering existing needs, offering quality products and above all generating value so that customers obtain a benefit from the products. Marketing is a set of principles that allow meeting the demand in the markets and this should build prosperous businesses. In microenterprises this process, in most of the occasions is inconsistent due to several internal and external factors that lead businesses to their disappearance, the present research allows determining the importance of marketing consultancies for small and medium enterprises that contribute to market positioning and competitiveness in Emiliano Zapata, Tabasco Mexico, 308 enterprises were determined in which a survey was applied with 21 items with a qualitative and quantitative analysis that allow setting aspects that contribute to promote strategies for the development of marketing consultancy attention processes. The results indicate that the lack of financial resources, training, motivation, government support, business profiles, sales plans, clear objectives, goals, marketing professionals, incidence of unfounded points of view, are the elements that detonate informal businesses without present and future, which emanate labor instability with volatile economies. It is concluded that it is necessary to establish a priority attention program for the region that involves marketing professionals, government and businessmen, universities, to develop integral attention schemes for micro and small businesses that allow their survival and there is a project with a theoretical and practical basis to generate viable, profitable, consistent businesses that contribute to the economic and social development of the region.

Key words: Strategies. marketing, microenterprises, business.

Abstract -- Business development involves promoting customer service strategies that allow establishing efficient market segments, covering existing needs,

offering quality products and, above all, generating value so that customers obtain a benefit from the products, marketing is a set of principles that allow meeting demand in the markets, and this must build prosperous businesses. In micro-enterprises, this process is often inconsistent due to various internal and external factors that lead businesses to their disappearance. This research allows us to determine the importance of marketing consultancies for small and medium-sized companies that contribute to market positioning and competitiveness in Emiliano Zapata, Tabasco, Mexico. 308 companies were determined in which a survey with 21 items was applied with a qualitative and quantitative analysis that allows to establish aspects that contribute to promoting development strategies for marketing consulting processes. The results indicate that the lack of financial resources, training, motivation, government support, business profiles, sales plans, clear objectives, goals, marketing professionals, and the incidence of unfounded points of view are the elements that trigger informal businesses without a present or future, which emanate labor instability with volatile economies. It is concluded that it is necessary to establish a priority attention program for the region that involves marketing professionals, government and businessmen, universities, to develop comprehensive attention schemes for micro and small businesses that allow their survival and that there is a project with a theoretical and practical foundation to generate viable, profitable, consistent companies that contribute to the economic and social development of the region.

Key words: Business. marketing, microenterprises, strategies.

INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a crucial role in the economic development of the regions, as they are an important source of employment and dynamism in many localities. In Emiliano Zapata, Tabasco, microenterprises face a series of challenges,

including the lack of access to specialized marketing advice. Marketing is a fundamental tool for business management, as it allows companies to identify and satisfy consumer needs, differentiate themselves from the competition and ultimately increase sales and profitability.

The research also considers the design of strategies and programs that effectively respond to specific needs in terms of marketing consultancy. In this way, it will contribute to increasing the competitiveness of local companies, strengthen their capacity to face market challenges and, consequently, improve their sustainability and growth. This allows to identify the needs with respect to marketing consultancy, design plans, programs and projects that are effectively addressed, this referred that in Mexico the entrepreneurial death at national level corresponds to 32.6% of new companies are lost in an average of 27 months, in Tabasco is considered that lost is 38.9% to be high in the country, below Quintana Roo, Colima, Nuevo Leon and Aguascalientes [1].

By evidencing the importance of counseling and its effects, it is estimated to consider informed decisions that will contribute to raise awareness about the availability of trained marketing professionals in the locality, to encourage companies to collaborate with these talents, generate employment opportunities and professional and economic development in the region. Finally, the research contributes to increasing local competitiveness, which will benefit not only businesses, but also the economy and quality of life management. Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises are fundamental to the economy of Emiliano Zapata, Tabasco, as they generate employment and contribute to economic development. However, throughout their growth process, many of these enterprises lack advisory services, which could limit their potential. This situation raises the need to investigate the reasons behind this omission, whether due to economic issues, lack of information, disinterest, competencies, business opportunity or formal entrepreneurship projects [2].

It is noteworthy that the town is home to the Universidad Tecnológica del Usumacinta (UTU), which offers a degree in marketing, indicating the presence of trained professionals in the region. However, many of these graduates are forced to migrate to find employment opportunities due to the lack of options. This situation influences the need to raise awareness with entrepreneurs about the availability of specialized talent in their environment and to foster collaboration among the different actors. There are no advertising or marketing agencies in the locality that offer consulting services, which still limits the opportunities to access these tools.

It is crucial to take advantage of this advantage and provide advice to enhance their growth and competitiveness, by doing so, not only improves their performance, but also contributes to increase the local

economy and create a favorable environment for the development of employees and the community in general. The presence of the Universidad Tecnológica del Usumacinta is a resource that offers training in marketing, is to raise awareness of the importance of promoting capacity building, which triggers collaboration between companies and professionals, by defining specific work plans and programs in order to generate formality in business.

Many of the MSMEs are led by people who with great effort have managed to create a company and with it generate some jobs, and from the beginning they have done well, which leads some of these entrepreneurs to think that changes or the implementation of strategies from the commercial aspect are not necessary, because as many of them say, "why more, if we are fine", "why make unnecessary expenses", "they already know us, it is not necessary to incur more expenses", among other arguments that sometimes justify the low investment in marketing [3].

Due to lack of information, there is the belief that marketing is associated only with sales, ignoring recommendations and study that actually encompasses, which is why small entrepreneurs, when generating profits or consider themselves profitable and fall into complacency not to invest in consulting. According to [4] presents a simple five-step model of the marketing process: understanding the market, customer needs and wants (market research), designing a customer-oriented marketing strategy (target market), creating an integrated marketing program that delivers superior value (setting the strategy), building profitable relationships and creating customer delight (marketing mix management), and capturing customer value, utility and equity (control). Marketing aims to find the ideal customer and build customer loyalty, accurately communicate the image of the organization, and achieve the expected success. Today, with globalization, it is easy for consumers to access services and products, which has led to a constant increase in competition and options in the market. Even if products or services are innovative, it is likely that, shortly after their launch, direct or indirect competition will emerge. For this reason, you must keep up to date, innovate and dimension outlets that allow you to capture the attention of your customers.

In terms of competition, marketing allows entrepreneurs to know the strengths and weaknesses of their competitors and provide a competitive advantage. According to [5], in the case of Mexico, their distribution throughout the territory is diverse; five entities occupy 40% of the total number of MSMEs, concentrated in the southern region, mainly dedicated to commerce, and in the north, although the number is smaller, they carry out industrial activities: State of Mexico 13.01%, Mexico City 8.92%, Jalisco 6.98%, Puebla 6.21%, and Veracruz 5.80%.

The significant sectors of economic activity in which Mexican MSMEs develop are retail trade, service, and manufacturing. Thus, being an important engine for the country, small and medium-sized companies cover different sectors and needs for the population, being relevant those of the commerce, industry and services sector. The [5] presents a total of 128,327 establishments with 595,282 people employed in them. 43.0% of the establishments correspond to the Commerce sector, 41.7% to Services, 9.5% to Manufacturing and 5.8% to the Rest of economic activities. Of the total number of establishments, 95.3% are Micro size (0 to 10 employed persons); 4.6% are SMEs (11 to 250 persons) and 0.1% are Large (more than 251 persons). The number of establishments and the number of occupied persons continues to increase in recent years; from 2013 to 2018, establishments grew an average annual rate of 5.6 percent.

Considering the points of view of the entrepreneurs allows us to demonstrate whether marketing consultancies have an impact on performance, thus facilitating informed decision making to enhance their development and create awareness of the availability of trained marketing professionals in the region. It is expected to leverage talent, and generate not only employment opportunities, but also professional and economic development in the locality. What is relevant to marketing is the management of profitable relationships with customers, its dual goal is to attract new customers through the promise of superior value and to retain current ones by delivering satisfaction [4].

On the other hand, to understand how the companies are presented, their definition indicates that they are those that have a total workforce of no more than 250 workers, a moderate turnover and less access to resources or tools compared to large companies or franchises [6]. Microenterprises are those with up to 10 employees. It is important to say that, according to the Ministry of Economy (Table 1), the two important criteria for classifying companies in Mexico are the number of employees and the level of annual sales in pesos [7].

This study not only contributes to the understanding of the current situation of the companies, but will also provide practical recommendations to foster collaboration between companies and professionals in the sector. By facilitating achievement and improvement of their performance, which, in turn, will benefit the local economy and the development of the community as a whole.

Table 1. Criteria for the classification of companies in Mexico.

Size	Sector	Number of employees	Annual sales amount (million pesos)	Combined maximum ceiling*.
Micro	All	Up to 10	Up to \$4	4.60
Small	Trade	From 11 to 30	From \$4.01 to \$100	93.00
	Industry and services	From 11 to 50	From \$4.01 to \$100	95.00
Median	Trade	From 31 to 100	From \$100.01 to \$250	235.00
	Services	From 31 to 100		
	Industry	From 51 to 250		250.00

Source: Secretaría de Gobernación, (2009).

* Combined Ceiling = (Employees) X 10% + (Annual Sales) X 90%.

For which, in Emiliano Zapata Tabasco 831 economic units of the commerce sector are considered, 81 wholesale with 651 people involved and 750 retail units with 1 913 employed people, making a total of 2 564 which is the population of interest, that, at the industrial level, there are 302 economic units with 885 employees and in the service sector 725 economic units with 2 151 people [5]. Knowing the economic units and employed personnel allows to dimension the business volume of the municipality to generate attention in its different economic segments.

The objective of this research is to demonstrate the importance of marketing consultancy for companies in Emiliano Zapata. Through this research, it is intended to demonstrate how having professionals trained in this area positively affects business decision making, improving the visibility and positioning of local companies in the market. It also seeks to raise awareness about the availability of marketing experts in the locality, promote collaboration which would generate new employment opportunities and professional development in the region. The objective of the research is to determine the importance of marketing consultancy for small and medium enterprises that contributes to market positioning and competitiveness in Emiliano Zapata, Tabasco, to identify the possible causes for which entrepreneurs omit marketing consultancy, as well as to evaluate the perception of entrepreneurs with an impact analysis, a proposal that focuses on a particular and relevant approach to play a crucial role in the economy, both locally and regionally.

DEVELOPMENT

Methodology

The activity was developed in the town of Emiliano Zapata, Tabasco, Mexico, at 17°41'00"N and 91°41'00"W comprising 14 ejidos, 11 rancherías, 2

villages, 27 farms and one village, with a population of 32 181 inhabitants with 52 % women and 48 % men. The municipality has 1,858 economic units, according to the economic study of [5]. An instrument was developed based on the Marketing Survey for Entrepreneurs Managers of Spanish MSMEs [8], taking into account some questions from the article Marketing Strategies for Participating in the University Consulting Program in the Region of Los Valles, Jalisco, published in the XVIII International Congress of Accounting, Administration and Informatics [9]. A total of 308 economic units were estimated for the results to be representative with a margin of error of 5% and a confidence level of 95% according to the application of a finite sample size formula [10]. The research technique used for this study is qualitative and quantitative, the results are expressed and tabulated numerically. In order to carry out the study, easily accessible technological tools are used for data collection, the qualitative and quantitative methodologies will guarantee the validity of the results obtained. The survey was applied by means of Google forms, in which, 21 questions were considered which are 7 dichotomous and 14 multiple choice, according to the following items.

1. Select the sector of your company or business: a) Manufacturing, b) Industry, c) Services.
2. How many people does your company/business employ?, a) 1 to 4 employees, b) 5 to 10 employees, c) 11 to 50 employees, d) more than 101 employees
3. What is the life span of your company/business? 1 to 3 years, 4 to 6 years, more than 6 years
4. The services/products you sell are mainly directed to: a) Consumers, b) Other companies.
5. Select the geographic zone of your company/business: a) Rural, b) Urban
6. How important do you consider advertising consultancy for your business? a) Very little, b) Little, c) Neutral, d) Important
7. How often do you use advertising and sales consulting services? a) Never, b) Yearly, c) Quarterly, d) Occasionally, e) Monthly.
8. How often do you participate in advertising and sales training, a) Never, b) Yearly, c) Occasionally, d) Quarterly, e) Monthly.
9. Does your company/business receive support from the government for sales or advertising consultancies, a) Yes, b) No.
10. Does your company/business have a budget earmarked for advertising or sales consulting (other than government)? a) Yes b) No
11. If your answer is no, what are the main obstacles you face when hiring sales and advertising consultants? a) Costs, b) Lack of time, c) Lack of confidence in the results, d) Lack of information.
12. What is your main objective in advertising? a) To increase sales, b) Brand image and visibility, c) Launch a new product/service.

13. What advertising channels does your company/business currently use, a) Digital (social networks and website), b) Traditional (radio, press and printed material).
14. What is your level of knowledge about current trends in advertising? a) Very bad, b) Bad, c) Fair, d) Good, e) Very good.
15. Which of these promotional/sales strategies does your company/business focus on, a) Discounts to help recall unsold merchandise, b) Discounts to get quick cash, c) Putting out the same promotions as competitors, d) Promotional only when it is a new product or service, e) I don't do any strategy.
16. What is your perception of the effectiveness of your advertising and sales strategies without outside advice? a) Very bad, b) Bad, c) Fair, d) Good, e) Very good.
17. Does your company/business have a brand identity (logo, corporate colors), a) yes, b) no.
18. Does your company have a mission, vision and values? a) Yes, b) No
19. Are you clear about the strengths and weaknesses of your company/business, a) Yes, b) No.
20. How often do you analyze your prices, your competition and your ideal customer? a) Never, b) Annually, c) Occasionally, d) Quarterly, e) Monthly
21. The prices of your product or service are based on: a) The profits that will be made, b) An estimated cost based on the competition.

Ethical aspects

For the present study, the General Law for the Protection of Personal Data in Possession of Obligated Subjects is applied, referring to the first title of general provisions, chapter I "Of the object of the law", article two in all its sections [11]. On the other hand, being a qualitative research, it is considered the collection of data that becomes a unit of analysis and interpretation according to established objectives and hypotheses [12]. This makes it possible to avoid naming the interviewees and preserve their identity.

Results

The results of the survey show that 84.6% belong to the service sector which are clothing, footwear, miscellaneous items, food sales, 15.4% of manufacturing such as bakery, tortilla shops, repair shops, which in this case the particularity of the population, being close to the international highway and being a population that is a passage to other municipalities of Balancán and Tenosique Tabasco, becomes a community of commerce. In this case, 61.65% of the employees correspond to companies with between 1 and 4 employees, which classifies them as microenterprises according to the definition of MSMEs. Secondly, 30.8% of the companies

surveyed have between 5 and 10 employees, and finally, 7.7% have between 11 and 50 employees. This profile reflects the reality of MSMEs in Emiliano Zapata, Tabasco, where microenterprises predominate, composed mainly of small businesses with few employees, highlighting the need to orient support and development processes towards smaller companies, which represent the region's entrepreneurial core.

In terms of time of creation, 62.5% are estimated to be older than 6 years, 23.1% from 4 to 6 years and 15.4% from 1 to 3 years in the initial stage, which implies that most of the businesses are already established and have a growing economic and dynamic experience in the market, while a smaller proportion are in the early stages of their development. 84.6% of the companies offer their services or products primarily to consumers, indicating that the businesses are focused on the end market and on satisfying individual customer needs. Only 15.4% of respondents direct their products or services to other businesses, suggesting that a minority specialize in the B2B (Business to Business) market while a smaller proportion focus on business to business relationships, with specific dimensions, as 86.4% of microenterprises are located in urban areas and 13.6% in rural areas.

For this, 100% of those surveyed do not receive government support for sales or advertising consultancies, which impacts the development of the business through practical learning that is reinforced over time by generating experience in the type of business developed and the treatment of customers, without methodological processes that enhance the experiences lived. This indicates that, according to the sample, none of the surveyed businesses benefit from government programs aimed at commercial or marketing, the lack of government support in this area highlights an opportunity for improvement, since many companies could benefit from consulting or resources to strengthen their sales and visibility in the market [13].

This makes for a complex problem, since 61.5% of the participants do not have a budget allocated for advertising or sales consulting, implying that businesses do not invest in this type of external support to improve their commercial strategy, which could limit their growth. On the other hand, 38.5% do have a budget allocated for consultancy in this area, which reflects that a smaller proportion of companies recognize the importance of investing in improving their sales and visibility.

In the case of having a business budget allocated to advertising consultancy, the main obstacles faced by businesses in hiring sales and advertising consultancy services are, in the first place, with 50%, the lack of information, which indicates that many entrepreneurs are unaware of the options available or how they could benefit from these consultancies. This obstacle is amplified by the absence of a marketing agency in the locality, which generates greater distrust in the results of such consultancies. Distrust in the results with 30% is the

second obstacle, reflecting a concern about the effectiveness of the consultancies in generating a tangible return on investment. This problem is also related to the expectation of short-term results, which in reality usually generate evident impacts in the medium and long term. Finally, cost at 20% is another limiting factor, as some companies consider consultancies to be too expensive. However, many of these companies rely on their traditional "voice-to-voice" management and believe that they do not need external advice.

However, it is important to emphasize that marketing methods are fundamental for the growth of companies in the market. Failure to invest in this leads to slow development and, in some cases, to stagnation of companies, as conformism and lack of adaptation slows down progress. Lack of information, mistrust of results and perceived costs are the main obstacles companies face when hiring sales and advertising consultants. However, increased education about the benefits could help overcome these barriers and encourage business growth.

The utility of advertising, according to 53.8% of the participants, is to improve the image and visibility of the brand, which indicates that the companies focus on creating a positive and strong perception of their brand in the public. On the other hand, 46.2% have as their main objective to increase sales, which suggests that, in this case, advertising is oriented to boost sales, without prioritizing so much the construction of a brand image.

Although most businesses seek to strengthen their image and visibility, a significant proportion of companies also focus directly on increasing their sales through advertising, reflecting two different but complementary approaches within advertising actions. This is reflected from the results shows that 100% of the participants use digital channels for their advertising, specifically social networks and website, which is the clear preference for online platforms to reach their target audience, which is consistent with current trends in digital marketing, low costs, speed of information, adjustment to the type of global learning, where these tools allow greater interaction, segmentation and reach at relatively low costs, reflecting the growing importance of online platforms to connect with consumers and promote products or services in a digitized environment.

Part of the respondents consider it important to review key aspects of their business with a moderate frequency, which could reflect a strategic and conscious approach towards adapting and adjusting their offerings according to changes in the market, competition and the needs of their ideal customer. The fact that the frequency is not monthly could suggest that, although the analysis is recurring, it is not performed as consistently, possibly due to workload or the priority given against other operational tasks (Table 2).

Table 2. Likert scale average responses

Item	Mean ± standard error	Standard deviation	Median	Fashion
6	3.4615 ± 0.4021	1.450022104	4	5
7	1.8461 ± 0.1538	0.554700196	2	2
8	2.0769 ± 0.2106	0.759554525	2	2
14	3.3846 ± 0.1804	0.650443636	3	3
16	3.4615 ± 0.2432	0.877058019	3	3
20	3.4615 ± 0.2432	0.877058019	3	3

Source: Own elaboration.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Marketing is a method that involves using different approaches, so by type of trade and product, 30.8% of the participants use promotions only when launching a new product or service, suggesting that they focus on generating interest and attracting customers at key moments. 23.1% choose to offer discounts to help clear out unsold merchandise, indicating that they are looking to liquidate products with low turnover. 15.4% use discounts to raise quick cash, reflecting a need to generate immediate income. Some 7.65% decide to run the same promotions as the competition, which represents a reactive strategy, and finally, 23.05% do not implement any promotional strategy at all.

Although a significant portion of companies use promotions at specific times such as product launches or to move stagnant inventories, there is also a considerable percentage that do not employ any promotional strategy, which limits their growth and competitiveness. Companies that choose to copy competitors' promotions or resort to quick discounts when looking for short-term solutions instead of building strategies [14].

Using identity and branding is vital in companies. 78.6% have a brand identity, including key elements such as logo and corporate colors, although it is not registered, but only as a business identifier, which provides positive results, indicating that these companies are concerned about establishing a coherent and professional image in the market. This reflects the importance of creating a visual identity that allows customers to recognize and differentiate the brand. On the other hand, 21.4% of respondents do not have a defined brand identity, which points to an opportunity for improvement in building a solid and memorable presence in the market, to create a consistent image and attract their target audience.

This also has an impact on the fact that 61.5% of the participants have a defined mission, vision and values, which indicates that these companies are clear about their long-term objectives, their purpose and the principles that guide their actions, considering their corporate identity.

This is fundamental for building a solid organizational culture and establishing a clear direction. On the other hand, 38.5% of respondents do not have these elements defined, reflecting a lack of structure or strategic direction, which could hinder alignment and decision making within the company. This could limit its ability to project itself into the future in a coherent and aligned manner in the medium and long term.

Knowing the strengths and weaknesses of the business is important for business innovations and planning for the future. 84.6% of the participants have clarity about the strengths and weaknesses of their business, indicating a good level of self-knowledge and strategic preparedness. On the other hand, the remaining 15.4% do not have such clarity, which could limit their ability to make informed decisions and adapt to market changes. These results highlight the need to strengthen self-knowledge in companies that still lack clarity about their internal situation. Marketing consultancies could be key to help these MSMEs identify their areas of opportunity, improve their positioning and optimize their resources, which contributes to the development and sustainability of the business.

As a result, 53.8% of respondents in sales units set the prices of their products or services based on estimated costs and competition, while 46.2% base their prices on expected profits. This picture reflects two distinct approaches to pricing: one oriented towards competitiveness and market alignment (reference to competition) and the other focused on internal profitability (expected profits). The fact that half of the respondents use the competition as a benchmark indicates a common strategy to position themselves within a competitive market. However, basing prices solely on internal costs or profits could limit flexibility in the face of changing market conditions or consumer expectations. These aspects suggest that many of the MSMEs in Emiliano Zapata, Tabasco, prioritize competitiveness in pricing, but it could be beneficial to incorporate a comprehensive strategy that also considers factors such as profitability and customer perceived value. Marketing consultancies play a crucial role in helping companies develop a balanced pricing strategy that not only aligns with the competition, but also maximizes profit margins and improves market positioning.

With reference to the questions developed on a Likert scale (Table 2), it is shown that the averages of the responses are between 1.84 and 3.46, which makes it possible to establish that there is an ambiguous opinion about marketing consultancies in the MSMEs of Emiliano Zapata. The following is an analysis of the results of each item. Item 6 of the survey, which asks about the importance of advertising consultancy for the business, obtained an average of 3.46, which is close to the "Important" option. This suggests that, in general, respondents consider advertising advice to be of moderate to significant importance to their businesses.

In this case, participants tend to value advertising advice, although without considering it as an essential or top-priority factor. The average suggests a somewhat favorable opinion, but not an absolute consensus on its relevance. This level of importance could reflect that, although respondents recognize the benefits of advertising for their businesses, not all perceive the need for specialized advice or do not consider it an immediate priority.

For some items, such as item seven on the frequency with which respondents use advertising and sales counseling, it obtained an average of 1.84 on the Likert scale. This value is close to the "Never" option, indicating that most of the participants do not regularly use advertising and sales consultancies. The low average suggests that consultancies in these areas are not a common practice for most of the businesses surveyed, which could reflect a lack of dependence on these services or a perception that they are not needed on a frequent basis, indicating that the entrepreneurs or managers of the businesses surveyed tend to develop these areas on their own or to resort to other less specialized resources.

As for item eight, which asks about the frequency of participation in advertising and sales training, it obtained an average of 2.07 on the Likert scale, which is close to the "Annual" option. This result suggests that most respondents participate in training on an occasional or annual basis, but not on a regular or frequent basis. The low average indicates that, although some respondents recognize the importance of training, it is not a constant practice within their businesses. This could reflect a low priority for ongoing advertising and sales training, possibly due to time constraints, financial resources, or a perception that training is not frequently needed.

Item 14, which evaluates the level of knowledge about current trends in advertising, obtained an average of 3.38 on the Likert scale, which is close to the "Fair" option. This result suggests that respondents have moderate knowledge about current trends in advertising, i.e., they do not perceive themselves as experts, but neither do they completely lack information on the subject.

The average generally suggests that participants consider themselves somewhat informed, but probably do not have a deep or up-to-date knowledge of the latest trends and changes in advertising. This could reflect that, although they recognize the importance of being aware of new developments in advertising, the level of familiarity with these trends is not necessarily high. Item 16, which evaluates the perception of the effectiveness of advertising and sales strategies without external advice, obtained an average of 3.46 on the Likert scale, which is close to the "Good" option. This result suggests that, in general, respondents perceive their advertising and sales mechanisms to be relatively effective even without external advice.

Therefore, there is a moderately positive assessment of the effectiveness of internal aspects, which reflects that

entrepreneurs feel confident in their ability to manage these aspects independently. However, the fact that the average is not high (close to "very good") could suggest that, although the publicity actions work reasonably well, the respondents recognize that they could still improve with external support or advice. Item 20, which inquires about the frequency with which respondents analyze their prices, competition and ideal customer, obtained an average of 3.46 on the Likert scale, which is close to the option "Quarterly". This result suggests that, in general, participants perform this analysis on a regular basis.

Regarding the definition of correlation of the Likert scale questions of data collected (Figure 1), it reflects a positive correlation between the items evaluated and the averages obtained, which allows identifying that, in the commercial activities of Emiliano Zapata, Tabasco, they perceive and apply various aspects related to marketing. The low average in item 7 stands out, which evidences a clear area of opportunity that could reflect lack of knowledge or specific difficulties in its implementation. On the other hand, several items such as 6, 15, 16 and 20 show similar and consistent averages, suggesting that certain aspects of marketing are managed or understood. The moderate relationship between the variables suggests that, although there is a positive trend, there are areas for significant improvement with proper counseling, especially exploring the nature of the business, the purposes, identification of motivation and models to be implemented for formal social inclusion and assistance that favors the maintenance of the businesses [15]. This reinforces the importance of intervening in the identified weak points, such as the one represented by item 7, to strengthen their competitiveness and their ability to adapt to market demands. Therefore, the graph evidences the need to implement customized actions, such as workshops, consultancies or educational materials, that allow efficiency in the region's businesses, optimize marketing management and, consequently, enhance their business success in a competitive environment.

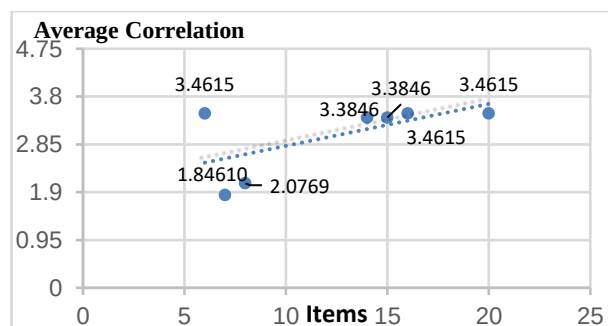


Figure 1. Correlation of items

Source: Own elaboration.

For the calculated Chi-square value $\chi^2 \approx 3.8355$, is less than the critical value of 9.488 at 0.05 % and gl, of 4. Therefore, the null hypothesis of

independence between services and production is rejected, indicating that there is a significant relationship between the two variables in the context of the data presented. This result suggests that the distribution of services is not independent of output, which could indicate a correlation between how service levels are distributed as a function of output. This could reflect, for example, that certain levels of production are associated with higher or lower demands for services in the categories studied that affect the informality expressed in the subsistence of microenterprises, especially due to the inertia of investments, procedures, existing benefits, business opportunities and training [16].

The research conducted has identified a significant relationship between marketing consultancy and the performance of activities in Emiliano Zapata, Tabasco, which requires improvement, especially because most of them are in the service sector. Although many of these companies have adopted basic marketing practices, the results also reflect important areas for improvement in their strategic management, consider personnel management, technological adjustments, and structural adjustments to be competitive with customers and suppliers [17].

The correlation coefficient obtained showed a moderate relationship, suggesting that although there is a positive trend in marketing decisions, significant weaknesses still persist. These weaknesses are mainly in key areas such as strategic planning, market segmentation and digital marketing execution. These findings reinforce the need for further intervention in these aspects, especially service microenterprises that are of the informal type and there is the possibility of significant improvements in their competitiveness with proper counseling [18].

Additionally, the Chi-square test analysis revealed a significant relationship between services and production, highlighting the importance of integrating marketing consulting within a broad business development strategy. This relationship suggests that marketing decisions are linked to production and thus to the ability of firms to adapt to market demands. A relevant factor identified during the research is that many of the companies have chosen to omit marketing consultancy due to lack of information and distrust in the results of these services. This phenomenon reflects a major barrier to the development of MSMEs in the region, since misinformation or lack of confidence in the effectiveness of the counseling leads to underutilization of the tools and plans to boost their productivity and competitiveness.

CONCLUSIONS

The research underscores the urgent need to implement customized marketing consulting programs for MSMEs in Emiliano Zapata. Such programs should focus not only on strengthening the areas identified as weak, but also on providing strategic tools that allow enterprises to improve their market positioning and increase their

competitiveness. The creation of a local marketing consulting agency would be a key step in this process, as it would provide the necessary support to overcome current barriers and take advantage of the potential offered by marketing as a tool for growth.

The implementation of these activities will contribute not only to the success, but also to the economic growth and sustainable development of the region, with specialized consulting, it is essential that MSMEs in Emiliano Zapata have access to marketing consulting programs tailored to their specific needs. These programs could include workshops, customized consultancies and educational materials that address areas such as market segmentation, branding, digital communication and social media management, this intervention, will improve informed decision making and enhance local competitiveness.

Aspects such as the promotion of marketing professionals is important to create awareness about the availability of trained marketing professionals in the region, as well as to encourage MSMEs to collaborate with these experts, which will not only contribute to the growth of the companies, but will also generate new employment opportunities and professional development in the locality. They should be aware that hiring marketing consultants is a key investment for their sustainability and expansion.

It is to promote continuing education to ensure effective implementation with marketing aspects, so it is recommended to establish ongoing training programs for local entrepreneurs with programs that include training in areas such as the use of digital tools, market data analysis and the development of marketing plans that are aligned with administrative trends and develop the financial, human and service aspects that allow structuring a viable, profitable and long-lasting microenterprise.

Developing customized strategies can be tailored to your size, industry and financial capacity to maximize the impact of consulting and implement recommendations effectively.

In this sense, the creation of a marketing consultancy agency in the area, which provides specialized, transparent and accessible services, and which is capable of generating confidence in local entrepreneurs about the positive aspect of an adequate marketing strategy, stands out as an area for improvement.

In order to develop future research, the study of the impact of globalization on business development processes at the local and regional levels is considered, in order to visualize the feasible environments for business generation.

On the other hand, it is necessary to carry out joint research with local universities in order to develop quality human resources and build the capacity of local entrepreneurs to face globalized trade.

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