













Customer satisfaction in their handicraft shopping experience. A study in the Camino Real de Campeche

Satisfacción del cliente en su experiencia de compra de artesanías. Un estudio en el Camino Real de Campeche

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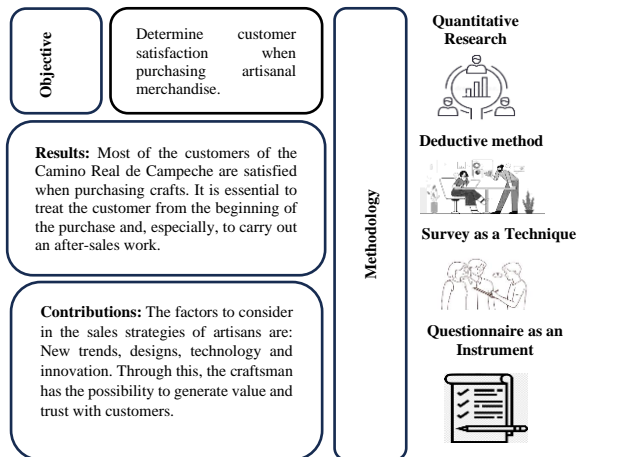


Abstract

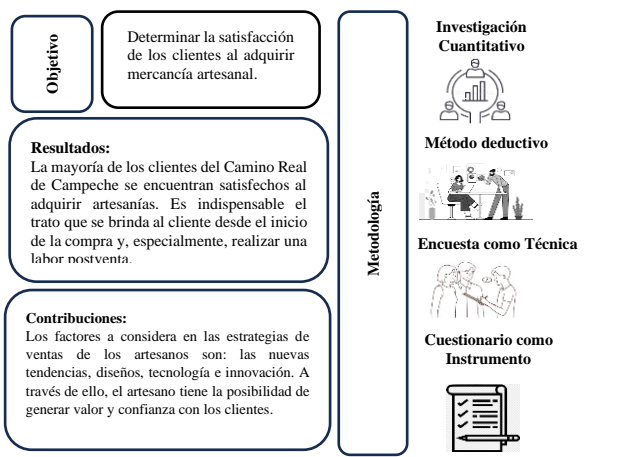
Due to new trends, designs, technology and innovation, the artisan has the possibility of generating value and trust with customers. In addition, it is crucial to detect the needs in the different markets and thereby generate buyer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is very important because it can determine the success or failure of the business. The objective of this study is to determine customer satisfaction when purchasing handcrafted merchandise. The research is descriptive with a quantitative approach and a non-experimental-cross-sectional design. Regarding data collection, field research was carried out. The method is deductive, applying the survey technique and the questionnaire as an instrument. It can be observed that satisfaction does not only come from the physical product, but the treatment provided to the customer from the beginning of the purchase and, especially, carrying out post-sale work is also essential.

Resumen

Debido a las nuevas tendencias, diseños, tecnología e innovación, el artesano tiene la posibilidad de generar valor y confianza con los clientes. Además, es crucial para detectar las necesidades en los distintos mercados y con ello generar la satisfacción del comprador. La satisfacción de cliente es muy importante porque se puede determinar el éxito o fracaso del negocio. El objetivo de este estudio es determinar la satisfacción de los clientes al adquirir mercancía artesanal. La investigación es descriptiva con enfoque cuantitativo y diseño no experimental-transversal. En cuanto a la recopilación de datos, se realizó una investigación de campo. El método es deductivo aplicando la técnica de la encuesta y el cuestionario como instrumento. Se puede observar que la satisfacción no sólo proviene del producto físico, sino que también es indispensable el trato que se brinda al cliente desde el inicio de la compra y, especialmente, realizar una labor postventa.



Handcraft, Camino Real de Campeche, e-commerce, customer satisfaction, digital



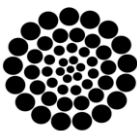
Artesanía, Camino Real de Campeche, e-commerce, satisfacción del cliente, mercadotecnia digital

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## Introduction

### Importance of handicrafts

Customer satisfaction when buying a handmade product can be an extraordinary and profound experience. These products offer a personal and authentic connection with the process of creation, generating originality, quality, support for the local economy and above all culture. This activity is also a source of pride for those who work and demonstrate their creativity, as well as fulfilling their obligations at home, in the countryside and in society.

The state of Campeche conserves a great diversity of handicrafts, an activity that is in decline due to the low remuneration obtained from it. Despite this, the different pieces made are so important and influential for tourism that they have been preserved to this day ([Hernández et al., 2007](#)). The different beliefs and traditions should be treasured so that they continue to leave their legacy and these products continue to prevail.

The production of local items is considered as their identity for artisans, in which they are introduced into market dynamics of buying and selling where manual production and the use of natural raw materials prevail, distinguished by the use of traditional techniques and forms of creation that include cultural, artistic, traditional and significant elements for the artisan producer ([Navarro, 2016](#)).

Under the customer approach, if a business makes its product or service very attractive, its sales opportunities increase significantly. Although good customer service can be offered by any type of business.

A clear example is MSMEs (micro, medium and medium-sized enterprises) which have a unique potential that can often stand out compared to large companies. Among their advantages are flexibility, innovation and a close relationship with customers. MSMEs can serve customers without bureaucratic ties and corporate policies that tend to impede staff initiative ([Martín & Núñez, 2006](#)).

Service quality and its relationship with customer satisfaction and loyalty are very important aspects in the operation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as they occupy a preponderant place in the economy of both emerging and developed countries ([Ferreira-de-Araújo et al., 2019](#)), representing more than half of formal employment worldwide, and contribute on average 50 % and 60 % of gross domestic product (GDP) in the member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development ([OECD, 2018](#)).

### Situation of the craft sector in Mexico

According to research by Saligan et al. (2017), the artisanal sector is not exempt from problems such as discrimination due to their indigenous origin, the poverty in which most artisans live, the scarcity of government support, the low remuneration for their artisanal products and industrialised competition, as well as the precarious recognition of their work. Added to this is the lack of knowledge in digital business techniques and personal finance.

According to Ávila (2022), haggling affects up to 30% of artisans' earnings, which prevents them from covering their costs and recovering their investment. In addition, they feel that their work is not valued and face difficulties in maintaining the viability of their business. And in the face of constant changes in the world, markets are increasingly evolving and globalising ([Benítez, 2009](#)). This positions artisans and craft businesses to face complicated challenges such as producing on the basis of effectiveness, which entails assimilating new technologies and commercial challenges.

For this author, the authenticity of products is a particular issue that requires attention, as it is necessary to offer the customer a shopping experience that goes beyond a simple commercial exchange. It is not just about producing handicrafts for the sake of producing handicrafts, but always identifying the needs, tastes and expectations of the customer.

### Customer satisfaction

As mentioned by Shafi et al. (2021), customer attitude and perception must be known as indispensable elements for increasing handicraft sales.

To achieve full customer satisfaction is a prerequisite to gain a place in the customer's mind and thus in the current target market (Thompson, 2005, as cited in Regalado *et al.*). Therefore, keeping each customer satisfied has become one of the main objectives of all functional areas (production, finance, human resources, etc.) of successful companies. It is important that both marketers and all people working in a company or organisation know the benefits of achieving customer satisfaction. For Armstrong and Kotler (2013), more than any other business function, marketing is about customers as it creates value and satisfaction for them.

In every venture, even in the artisanal one, the behaviour of the consumer must be observed, who issues an opinion according to the environment surrounding the organisation, creating a judgement regarding the product (Irala & Ramos, 2022). If a business wishes to progress, it must strive to satisfy needs and create desires in the consumer (Montesdeoca *et al.*, 2019).

The Royal Spanish Academy [RAE](n.d.) defines a consumer as a person who purchases consumer products or uses certain services. From a marketing perspective, it is the person who uses or acquires a good thinking about satisfying their needs, while consumer purchases are greatly influenced by cultural, social, personal and psychological characteristics (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012).

### Quality, satisfaction and customer loyalty

Service quality is an option for companies to gain a unique advantage over their competitors, regardless of the line of business or services they offer (Shah *et al.*, 2018). Service quality is understood as the gap between customer expectations (what they want) and their perceptions (what they get) after receiving a service (Jain & Aggarwal, 2017).

On the other hand, when a company meets customer expectations, satisfaction is consolidated, but when a customer is in a state of satisfaction and tends to make another purchase again, loyalty is created (Ahrholdt *et al.*, 2017). Similarly, customer satisfaction and loyalty have a strong link to each other.

### Measuring satisfaction

For Wilton & Nicosia (1986), current models consider satisfaction as a dynamic variable because it is conceived as a process of interactions between the organisation and the customer (Alves & Raposo, 2004). Thus, Anderson and Vikas (2000) point out that the customer satisfaction index 'consists of measuring the quality of goods and services at the moment that individuals consume that product or service' (p. 107). For Anderson *et al.* (1994), this overall satisfaction is the perception that customers take with them at the time of purchase and throughout their stay with the company.

### Measuring customer satisfaction in other contexts

The measurement of customer satisfaction is addressed in various fields. Filiolle (1986) studies user satisfaction in non-profit service institutions, such as municipal libraries and museums. Other studies, but in the field of public universities, include the work carried out by Pinard and Savard (1996), in which they applied surveys that allowed them to observe the behaviour of their users.

According to Prados-Peña *et al.* (2022), academic studies on consumer behaviour are scarce and empirical studies are even less common. However, the figure of the consumer is considered significant because all production and marketing efforts should focus on satisfying their needs and expectations.

### Research objectives

The objectives of this research are:

1. To identify customer satisfaction when purchasing handicraft merchandise on the Camino Real in Campeche, an area where handicrafts are a very important activity. This is why this topic is so important, as there is not much information on the subject in this area.

2. Determine the reasons for the acquisition of handicraft products that allow to increase the competitiveness of businesses to offer a quality service and focus on continuous improvement and customer safety, as well as to encourage other artisans to create a competitive advantage to sustain and improve their position in the environment and direct their efforts to achieve the satisfaction of the customer and the artisan himself/herself.
3. Suggest strategies to improve their sales.

### Limitations and delimitations

The present work had the following limitations: (1) the lack of previous studies on the subject in the geographical context studied; (2) difficult access to data from the participants to analyse their information; (3) finally, lack of access to the Internet in some communities.

In terms of delimitations, handicraft clients were studied. In addition, the study was carried out in the months of July-August 2024, in the municipalities of Tenabo, Hecelchakán and Calkiní, in the area known as Camino Real de Campeche.

Finally, we found the relationship between customer satisfaction with previous experiences and quality, the importance of sending updates to maintain contact with the customer, the relevance of technology in boosting artisanal businesses and improving their position in the environment.

### Materials and methods

#### Scope and design

This research is descriptive in scope with a quantitative approach and a non-experimental design, as variables were not deliberately manipulated. Furthermore, it is cross-sectional, due to the fact that it collects data at a single moment and time (Hernández-Sampieri & Mendoza, 2018). In terms of data collection, field research was carried out. The method is deductive applying the survey technique, with the questionnaire as an instrument.

### Population and sample

A population of 500 customers was determined, calculating a sample of 218, with 95% reliability and 5% error to whom a questionnaire was applied by Google Forms in different parts of the area under study, which was shared through social networks, student groups, to buyers in different places where handicrafts are sold and to national and international tourists who purchase these items in different places where they are marketed.

Of the 218 surveys applied by Google Forms, a total of 100 customers responded in person in the study municipalities, with 25 in Tenabo, 32 in Hecelchakán and 43 in Calkiní.

The formula proposed by Spiegel and Stephens (2009) was used and is presented in Figure 1.

#### Box 1

$$n = \frac{NZ^2 pq}{d^2 (N - 1) + Z^2 pq}$$

**Figure 1**

Sample size calculation (Spiegel & Stephens, 2009).

Where:

n = SAMPLE SIZE

N = population size

Z = critical Z value, calculated from tables of the area under the normal curve. Also called confidence level. In the study it is 95%, thus Z=1.96

p = approximate proportion of the study phenomenon in the reference population q = proportion of the reference population without the study phenomenon (1 -p). In the study, p=q=0.5 since pq, which is the binomial variance, is the widest.

d= estimation error (from 5 to 10%). We worked with 5%.

### Characteristic for consumers:

People who have purchased any handicrafts from the region during the study period.

### Instrument and procedure

The questionnaire was elaborated in two sections.



The first included locality, municipality, age, gender and schooling. The second section measured the variables of satisfaction and quality of service, obtaining a total of 15 questions, three of which were Likert scale and 12 of which were multiple choice. The questionnaire was validated by three experts with specialisations in Social Entrepreneurship, Doctorate in Strategic Analysis and Sustainable Development and, finally, Doctorate in Strategic Management and Development Policies.

In order to collect the information, a planning was made according to the sample of consumers to be surveyed and the survey was carried out in the municipalities under study. The questionnaires were administered by the authors of this research. The following activities were carried out:

1. The link was shared via social networks and student groups.
2. The responses obtained via the networks were verified and the dates for the journey, the locality and the work routes were established.
3. With the number of consumers to be surveyed in person, visits were scheduled to Calkiní, Hecelchakán and Tenabo to have direct contact with the customers closest to the artisans.
4. Questionnaires were administered in these towns to obtain the necessary information according to the previously scheduled dates.

### Plan for the analysis of the information

For the analysis of the quantitative information, Excel utilities and the IBM-SPSS statistical programme were used. This was used to analyse the variables of satisfaction and quality of service. For the analysis of the information collected, the following table was used to interpret the weighted averages of the responses:

#### Box 2

Table 1

Weighted averages of Likert-scale responses.

1 a 1.49	Totally Dissatisfied
1.5 a 2.49	Dissatisfied
2.5 a 3.49	More or less satisfied
3.5 a 4.49	Satisfied
4.5 a 5	Fully satisfied

Source: Own elaboration

### Results

The results are shown below:

Figure 2 shows that more than half (57%) of those who buy handicrafts are women.

#### Box 3

■ Women ■ Men ■ I prefer not to answer

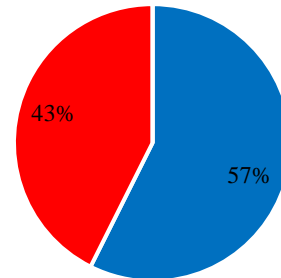


Figure 2

Gender of clients

Source: Own Elaboration

As can be seen in Figure 3, the most purchased types of handicrafts are embroidery (82%), followed by jipi-japa or weaving fibre items (59%), and finally wooden objects (38%).

#### Box 4

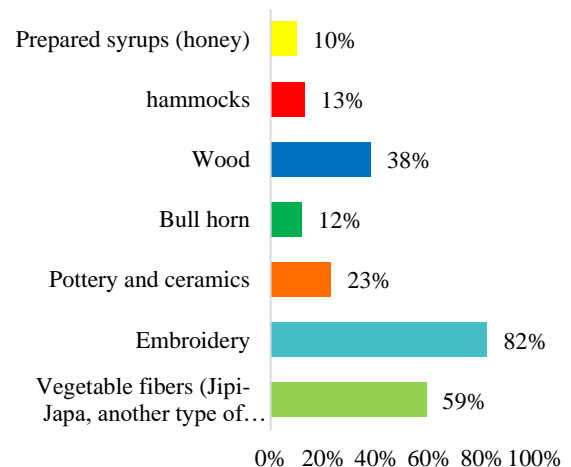


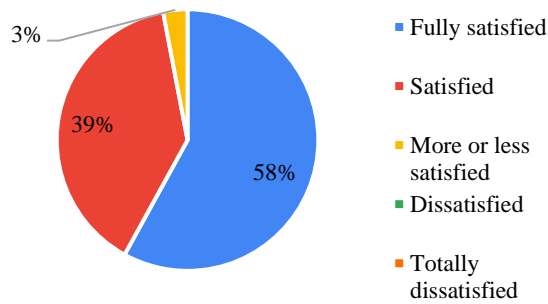
Figure 3

Types of handicrafts purchased by the customer

Source: Own Elaboration.

In Figure 4, the majority are fully satisfied (58%), while 39% are satisfied. However, 3% are more or less satisfied. The weighted average for satisfaction is 4.5, which corresponds to fully satisfied according to Figure 2.

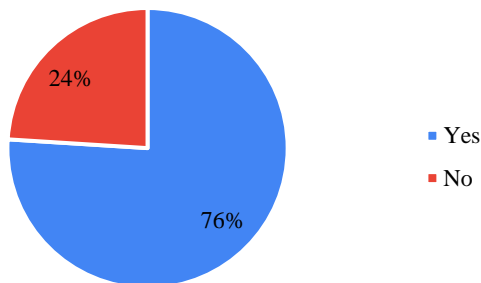
Box 5



**Figure 4**  
Satisfaction when purchasing a handicraft  
*Source: Own Elaboration*

According to Figure 5, it can be seen that the majority of consumers are not frequent customers, with 76% being tourists.

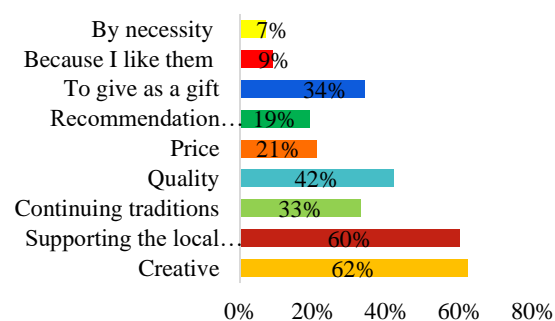
Box 6



**Figure 5**  
Frequent customer  
*Source: Own Elaboration*

As can be seen in Figure 6, the reasons why crafts have been purchased most often are for creativity (62%), followed by support for the local economy (60%) and finally, for the quality of the items offered. (38%).

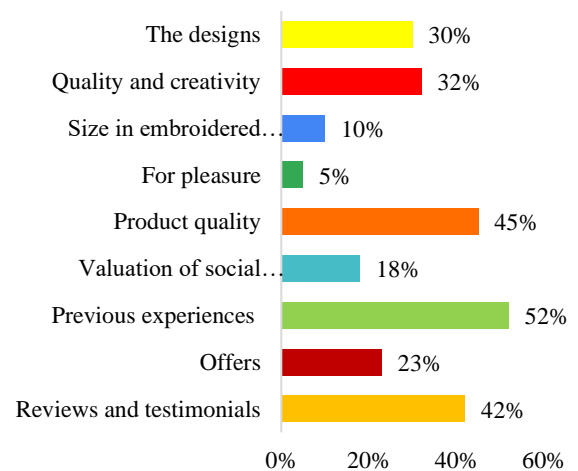
Box 7



**Figure 6**  
Reason for purchasing handicrafts  
*Source: Own Elaboration*

In Figure 7, it can be said that the factors that stand out in influencing the purchase of a handicraft are previous experiences (52%), followed by the quality of the products (45%), then reviews and testimonials (42%). The importance of designs and creativity is also highlighted. This means that factors associated with the quality of the experience (previous experience, quality, as well as reviews and testimonials) are more important than those associated with technical aspects such as design, sizes and offers.

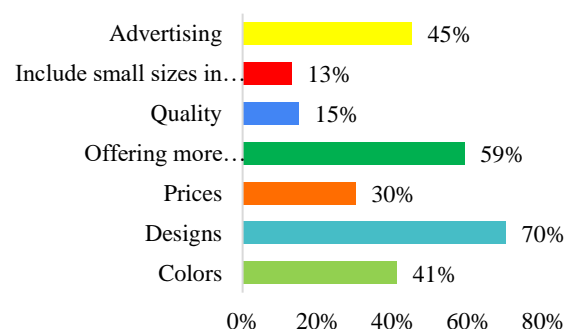
Box 8



**Figure 7**  
Gender Factors influencing the purchase decision  
*Source: Own Elaboration*

According to Figure 8, among the customer's suggestions to the artisan to improve their products are the designs (70%), followed by the option of the specialised (59%), followed by advertising (45%), which they require in order for their products to reach new markets and places.

Box 9



**Figure 8**  
Suggestions from the client to the artisan to improve their products and services  
*Source: Own elaboration*

Figure 9 shows how customers became aware of the artisanal products. Seventy per cent responded that they came across them on their way while visiting the region, followed by recommendations (60%), followed by social networks (59%) in which the artisan participates and which the customers share. Only 8% of the artisans have a website, and 7% make phone calls.

This means that there is a need to invest more in advertising, especially through digital media, so that more customers seek out the businesses rather than finding them on the road.

#### Box 10

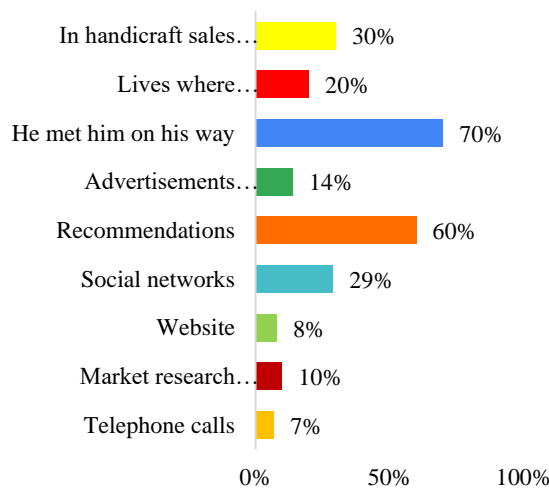


Figure 9

How did you learn about craft products in the region?

Source: Own Elaboration

In Figure 10, 84% have not made any purchases via social media or websites, while the remaining percentage (16%) have purchased at least one item via social media.

#### Box 11

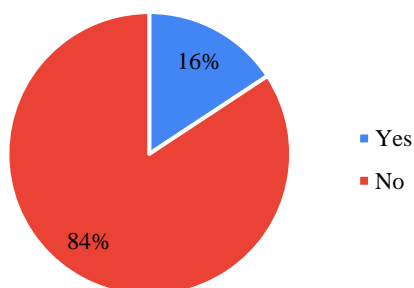


Figure 10

Purchase through a network or website

Source: Own Elaboration

According to Figure 11, the places where most people have made their last purchase of handicrafts are at fairs and exhibitions (45%), followed by the artisan's home (22%), as well as at the tourist parador and handicraft houses (10%). This means that the customer buys because he/she encounters the business, not because he/she knows about it in advance

#### Box 12

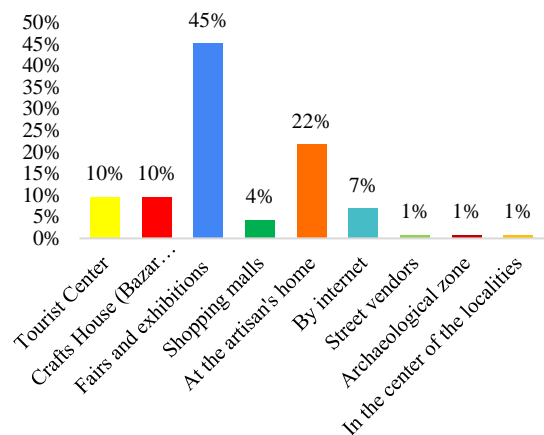


Figure 11

Place where the last purchase of handicrafts was made

Source: Own Elaboration

Figure 12 shows that the majority prefer to receive updates via social media (78%), followed by other means such as text messages and app notifications (7%). However, 4% are not interested in being notified or receiving exclusive offers.

#### Box 13

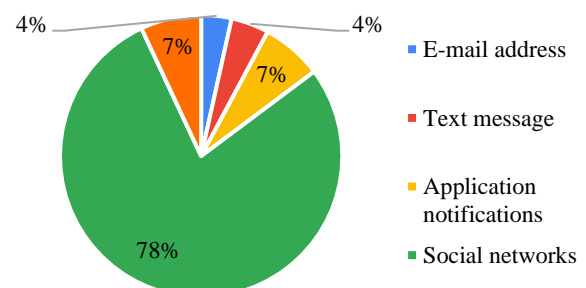


Figure 12

Preferred means of receiving updates and exclusive offers

Source: Own Elaboration

With respect to Figure 13, it can be seen that 99% of buyers have not had any problems or displeasure with the handicraft products.

Box 14

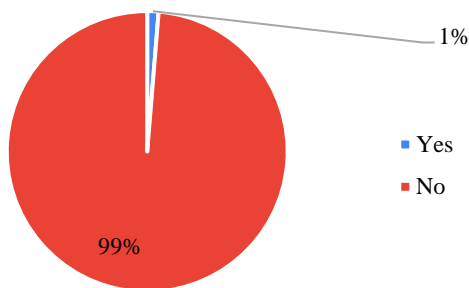


Figure 13

Problems with the artisanal product

Source: Own Elaboration

In Figure 14, 75% suggested creating marketing strategies such as e-commerce, integrating digital technology (60%), creating actions for training programmes and having a marketing plan (45%).

Box 15



Figure 14

Suggested actions for artisans to undertake in their handicraft businesses

Source: Own Elaboration

Discussion

The majority of customers at Camino Real in Campeche are satisfied when purchasing handicrafts (58%), which equals 4.5 in the weighting in Figure 2, compared to micro-businesses in the Mérida commissariat in the state of Yucatán, where there is customer dissatisfaction (at -1.167) when purchasing wooden handicrafts. In addition, unmotivated employees do not strive to make customers feel cared for and satisfied (Guatzozón-Maldonado et al., 2020).

According to the results in Figure 7, it can be observed that quality is among the top three reasons why handicrafts are purchased in Camino Real, so artisans focus a lot on offering exceptional products.

Social media has become a very important marketing channel, especially during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, when it played a key role in the survival and growth of millions of businesses (Heredia et al., 2022). Despite this, only 42% of small and medium-sized enterprises in Mexico found it necessary to sell their products online as a measure to keep their operations active, which represented a significant technological advance for this sector (Guarneros, 2021). However, of the customers in the municipalities of Tenabo, Hecelchakán and Calkiní, 84% have not made any purchase through social networks or websites, i.e. only 16% have obtained an item through these means.

For Ayón et al. (2021), applying digital marketing is a tool that influences customers. Despite its impact, it is not used as an advertising strategy. However, in a study applied in Ecuador (Montesdeoca et al., 2019), it is possible to observe the similarity with the results of low sales made through networks (16%) compared to Camino Real. Likewise, 84% of the businesses have a technological deficit by not implementing digital marketing in the study municipalities, which is compared with the results obtained in the businesses of Cantón Jipi Japa (Ecuador), where 89% are unaware of this tool.

In terms of the factors that most influence the shopping experience, these are experiential rather than technical. Also that the customer ‘meets’ the producers and products instead of looking for them (receptive selling), which suggests an increase in marketing efforts, especially through digital media. For this, it is necessary to create marketing strategies such as e-commerce, the integration of technology and the creation of training programmes, coinciding with the study conducted by Concha et al. (2018) regarding the digital environment as a possible enhancer of the marketing of handicrafts. It would also be relevant to analyse, as a future line, the impact of the factors involved in digital purchasing and their incidence on the purchase decision of handicrafts in Mexico.



To further explore customer satisfaction, there are several directions of future research that could be carried out. One is to analyse customer satisfaction based on quality, although quality is generally recognised. Similarly, in established businesses, one could examine employees and investigate the relationship of job satisfaction and productivity.

## Conclusions

From the results of the study, it can be seen that customers are satisfied with the handicrafts they have purchased. The main reasons for purchase are previous experiences, quality, testimonials from others who have purchased and the designs.

The different strategies to be considered in order to increase sales of the handicraft items and to continue the enterprise are e-commerce through the implementation of technology and digital marketing. In order to do this, marketing policies have to be set: the company's profits, the consumer's wishes and the interests of society.

Although these tools are used by very few artisans, it was found that most of the customers of Camino Real de Campeche are satisfied when purchasing handicrafts, due to previous experiences and the quality of the product offered.

It is necessary to maintain contact with customers, participate in craft and trade fairs as exhibitors so that the artisan is motivated and has a space to sell their products, because creativity is one of the main reasons why tourists buy their works.

Gaining customer loyalty is not easy work, but it is necessary to adapt to the new conditions, for which it is important that artisans are trained.

Consumers' expectations can be observed, which is an opportunity to optimise services through the above mentioned strategies, in order to improve their economic and social situation and to prevail in the market.

## Declarations

### Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest. They have no competing financial interests or personal relationships that could get in the way of the article.

### Authors' contribution

*Sosa-Dzul, Viviana de los Angeles*: project idea, documentary research and fieldwork.

*López Ponce, María Eugenia*: documentary research, discussion, conclusion and general supervision.

*Barroso-Tanoira, Francisco Gerardo*: methodology, data processing, discussion, conclusion and general supervision.

### Availability of data and materials

Data and materials are available through the references provided in the research.

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### Abbreviations

- MSMEs Micro, medium and medium-sized enterprises.
- OECD Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.
- RAE The Royal Spanish Academy.

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