Entrepreneurial perspective on the use of IT as a challenge in rural territory: Magical Town Izamal, Yucatan

Perspectiva empresarial en el uso de las TI como retos en territorio rural: Pueblo Mágico Izamal, Yucatán

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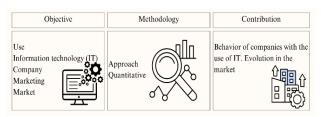
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Abstract

Companies in tourist territories, especially in the Magical Towns of Mexico, faced challenges during the pandemic and postpandemic, however, their association with information technologies played a strategic role. The objective of this work was to analyze the results generated using information technologies [IT] for the marketing of their products as a challenge for their permanence in the market. The methodology has a quantitative approach, with a 92% confidence sample of the questionnaires applied, which were applied in the municipality of Izamal Yucatán. The results indicated that entrepreneurs adapted to market conditions to communicate, move and market products initially in and with locals [residents] and then with occasional tourists who traveled in the municipality of Izamal Yucatán. The above affected its permanence and continuity in the market, but the challenge was to have prior financial solvency that would allow this IT integration.



 $Business man, Companies, Tourist\ territories, Magical\ Town.$

Resumen

Las empresas en territorios turísticos, especialmente en los Pueblos Mágicos de México, enfrentaron desafíos durante la pandemia y post pandemia, sin embargo, su asociación con las tecnologías de la información jugó un papel estratégico. El objetivo de este trabajo fue analizar los resultados que genera el uso de las tecnologías de la información [TI] para la comercialización de sus productos como un desafío para su permanencia en el mercado. La metodología tiene un enfoque cuantitativo, con una muestra de 92% de confianza de los cuestionarios aplicados, los cuales fueron aplicados en el municipio de Izamal Yucatán. Los resultados indicaron que los empresarios se adaptaron a las condiciones del mercado para comunicar, trasladar y comercializar los productos inicialmente en y con los locales [residentes] y luego con los turistas ocasionales que se desplazaban en el municipio de Izamal Yucatán. Lo anterior afectaba su permanencia y continuidad en el mercado, pero el desafío era contar con una solvencia financiera previa que permitiera esta integración de TI.



Empresario, Empresa, Territorios turísticos, Pueblo Mágico

Area: Promotion of frontier research and basic science in all fields of knowledge

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Introduction

Tourism enterprises refer to the group of services and/or products that are part of the tourism value chain, whose business can be profitable or not [United Nations [UN], 2008].

They are an entity that provides a service in a territory classified as having a high tourist attraction, where tourist attractions are found.

Economic initiatives linked to tourism incorporation and of Information Technology [IT] were driven to new markets, successfully selling products and services available in rural and urban areas [World Tourism Organization World Organization [UNWTO], 2017; Ukpabi and Karjaluoto, 2017; Cruz, et al, 2019], a situation that accelerated in the post-pandemic scenario. Tourism activities are conceived as the set of actions implemented by companies for tourism and recreation purposes aimed at visitors Secretaría de Turismo [SECTUR, 2008].

In such a way that, the tourist territory is part of and configures the tourist practice and whose changes are generated by it [Bertoncello, 2002], where tourist spaces are classified according to their attractions such as: beaches, seas, archaeology, history, culture, religion through their churches and others [Boullon, 2006], These spaces also have a low population density [Rubio, 2025], but in its growth it does not in all cases establish ethical procedures [Rogel and Esquivel, 2025]. Starting from the absence of spaces to enter the workforce, considering the size of the territory and the economic units [Fernández-Costales, 2024] and that among the main needs detected in the companies are economic resources, which have an impact on the aesthetic improvement of the spaces destined to exalt the image of the tourist sites, and investment in IT is an essential part of the position of tourist companies in local, national and international markets, as well as the constant updating of their image [Sancho, n/d; González, et al, 2021]. Associated with this is tourism advertising and the presence of the tourist site in the desires of tourists to visit it, on which the permanence of companies in tourist areas depends.

The company is considered to be the engine of the economy in the tourist territories and in the localities of the regions [Juajibioy and Aguiño, 2025].

ISSN: 2007-3682 RENIECYT: 1702902 ECORFAN® All rights reserved. The tourist territories suffer from the lack of interest of the authorities for their validity, since they are a reference in the participation in state, national and international events, positioning the image of these spaces, being an important form of tourist attraction for the rural and urban localities, which converge in the demand of products and services being a direct benefit for the companies.

Other factors that influence the influx of tourists to the territories are: access and/or available roads. lack of awareness, and training of companies empowerment providing or generating tourism services, security, weather conditions, as well as the use of IT, which limits the positioning and demand by tourists [Ayala, 2024]. Information is fundamental for the development of economic activities and society as a whole, driven by the use of IT with the dissemination of products and services for a virtual position in new markets to current and potential buyers [Weber and Zink, 2014; Rodríguez, 2018].

Especially in Izamal, businesses faced challenges such as the closure of tourism activities, which accelerated the creation of business initiatives, these being informal during the pandemic, which influenced the choice of IT as tools for the dissemination of products and services, to places that differed from the usual territory, this being a new form of business, which improved the initial conditions of the villagers.

The aim of this paper is to examine the effects of the implementation of information technologies [IT] on the sale of their products, considering it as a challenge for their consolidation in the market.

Literature review

The companies in terms of their emergence in the market represented an option to reduce transaction costs, they also contribute to the incorporation of labour, strengthening local economies in the territories.

Knowledge, as an essential element for any organization, supports decision-making and its proper management can make the difference between success or failure. In this sense, for any company, information management is essential to reach competitive levels in the market and acquire a greater capacity for development.

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This determines the future of the organization, thus consolidating its position as a successful company in the marketplace and providing a greater opportunity for expansion and growth [Pacheco y Rodríguez, 2020].

Likewise, information management makes it possible to recognize the organization's areas of opportunity, in order to plan in advance, the strategies aimed at the market, considering the means to direct it, the channels and the use of IT for this purpose, in order to achieve visualization and demand.

Technological progress has left an important mark on organizations, offering new possibilities and, simultaneously, proposing essential challenges to maintain their competitiveness in an ever-changing global environment [Olarte, et al, 2023].

Information technologies become an essential resource in organizations, as they stimulate the improvement of the organization's performance by raising the degrees of productivity and efficiency in operations [Sánchez and De la Garza, 2018].

While technology is boosting competitiveness, there is still a lack of technology use among SMEs [UNESCO, 2023]. With respect to business initiatives and the intentions behind their emergence, they are related to economic needs, followed by family and social environment and socioeconomic status, three of the most representative factors as a result of a study conducted (Martínez, et, al, 2021). Some authors state that business initiatives arise from desire, relating the economic part to this, but for (Urbano and Álvarez, 2014; García-Macias, et al, 2018) the latter specify that in Mexico conditions such as skills, motivation, environmental conditions and characteristics of the territory are required.

Regarding entrepreneurship in Mexico, a decrease of 0.6 % was detected with respect to the year 2019 and 2020 on the item 'ease of entry: market burdens and regulations' occupying the 33rd place in the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor [GEM], this means that entrepreneurs presented a greater number of limitations and barriers to circulate their products and services to the market [Hill, et al, 2021].

ISSN: 2007-3682 RENIECYT: 1702902 ECORFAN® All rights reserved. It is noteworthy that in Chile, the reduction of the actions of single women and heads of household is emphasised [Rodríguez-Garcés and Muñoz-Soto, 2017].

Being that entrepreneurship during the pandemic was a key driver for people who became unemployed, went through a reduction in income and thus was required by the socioeconomic situation faced.

Paz-Calderón and Espinosa-Espíndola [2019] argue that entrepreneurial initiatives are driven by exogenous elements that influence it, whose gender approach especially promotes the classification as follows:

- 1. Environment in which it is carried out, in addition to the external nature and its impact, are:
- a. Macroeconomic
- b. Social
- c. Technological
- 2. Access to sources of financing; in this situation, the financing is economic through credit institutions and other public and private bodies.
- 3. Government support policies; entrepreneurial initiatives are boosted when public policies emerge that encourage them in the countries. However, not everything is based on the establishment of policies; the processes intrinsic to this are also considered.

Among the qualities of personality in entrepreneurship that stand out are 'responsibility and discipline', which are more strongly emphasised in the women researched, according to Fuentes-García and Sánchez-Cañizares [2010].

On the other hand, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD, 2016] indicates that there is still a gender gap in relation to factors for entrepreneurship, but once entrepreneurship has started, women respond with confidence and security equivalent to that of men in relation to their businesses.

It is noteworthy that the Pueblos Mágicos, or Magic Towns, denote heritage, wealth and culture, characteristics that distinguish them from other municipalities in Mexico [SECTUR 2016].

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The programme was created in 2001 and its purpose is to promote local tourism, preserve traditions and create employment Secretaria de Turismo, [SECTUR, 2014]. Currently Yucatan there are a total of 7 Magical Towns [Espita, Izamal, Maní, Motul, Sisal belonging to the municipality of Hunucmá, Tekax and Valladolid] and integrating the neighbourhoods of Mérida named Ermita, San Sebastián, Xcalachén as Magical Neighbourhoods], being Izamal a distinctive municipality considering the Franciscan Convent, which attracts Catholics and people of other religions, taking up the history and architecture of the place. At the same time, the territory possesses archaeology, highlighting the Kinich Kakmó pyramid, which allows one to climb to the top and glimpse the entire city Secretaría de Turismo [SECTUR, 2019].

In turn, 16,895 economic units [UE] are established in the Magical Towns of Yucatan, equivalent to 12% of the total number of UE of the Yucatan entity, in Izamal there are a total of 2734 UE National Institute of Statistics and Geography [INEGI 2024], table 1 and table 2.

Box 1
Table 1

Territorial context

Territorial context						
Territory	Number of	Territorial				
	companies	extension				
Mexico	5,862,752	1,964,375 km ²				
Yucatan	140,421	38,402 km ²				
Magic Towns	16,895	6416.94 km ²				
of Yucatan						
Izamal	2,734	275.92 km ²				

Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía [INEGI], [2024; Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores [SRE], n.d.; Gobierno del Estado de Yucatán [Government of the State of Yucatán], [2024; Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores [SRE], n.d.]

Box 2

Table 2

Magical Towns of Yucatán

Magic Town	Number of companies	Territory
Espita	1415	496.91
Izamal	2734	275.92
Peanuts	805	85.59
Motul	2056	297.63
Sisal	186	496.05
Tekax	3289	3819.61
Valladolid	6593	945.22
Total	17078	6416.93

Source: Government of the State of Yucatan, [2024]

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Methodology

The research approach used is quantitative, based on the information collected, the variables were related for interpretation [Bernal, 2010], and the data are presented statistically and as a percentage [Hernández, et al., 2014; Hernández-Sampieri and Mendoza, 2018]. A sample of 92 % confidence, p and q [0.5 respectively], considering a margin of error of $e^2 = [0.08]^2$ and a population of N = 2,734 companies in Izamal, Yucatán are established:

$$n = \frac{\sigma^2 NP[1-q]}{e^{2(N-1)} + \sigma^2 P[1-q]} = 150$$
 [1]

The present study analysed the 150 data collected through the research instrument used, a questionnaire with 55 items, addressed to business owners and/or representatives in Izamal, Yucatán. The period of application of the instrument was from January to October 2023. Cronbach's alpha was determined to validate the content of the data collected, with a high internal reliability of 0.93.

$$\alpha = \frac{k}{k-1} \left[1 - \frac{\sum Vi}{Vt} \right] = \frac{40}{40-1} \left[1 - \frac{\sum 35.8}{378.2} \right] = 1.026 \left[1 - 0.095 \right] = 1.026 \left[0.905 \right] = 0.93$$
 [2]

 $\alpha = Cronbach's alpha$

k = Number of items = 40

 $Vi = Variance \ of \ each \ item = 35.8$

Vt = Variance of the total = 378.2

Results

The findings reflected that 61% of the sample was female and the remaining 39% male. Similarly, it was determined that the profile of the subjects studied has a preponderant academic background of high school, followed by secondary school and bachelor's degree with the same proportion [figure 1].

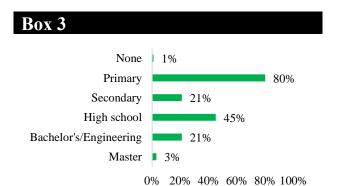


Figure 1

Educational background of interviewees

Source: Own elaboration

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Among the main activities carried out, we find commerce with 63%, services represent 29% of the cases, mainly focused on tourism, 2 companies with industrial activities were detected, among other economic activities [figure 2].



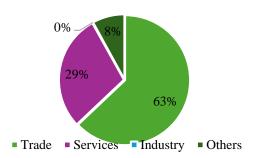


Figure 2 Economic activities

Source: Own elaboration

Based on the size of the company and the income obtained, it was observed that 77.3% are micro, 10.6% nano and 10% small companies, with an approximate income of between \$5000 to \$10,000 pesos with 26.7% per month [table 3]. These data provided that 56% of these economic actions are complementary and 44% indicated that it is a main activity. It was also found that 38% carry out their activities under informal labour mode, i.e. without registering their economic activities with the Ministry of Tax Administration, and 62% carry out these activities under the legal regulations of Mexico.

Box 5 Table 3

Firm size and average monthly revenues

I min size and average monthly revenues						
Size /	\$1 -	\$ 5,001	\$10,001	\$15,001	Over	Total
Income	\$5,000	-	-	-	\$20,000	
		\$10,000	\$15,000	\$20,000		
Nano	3	9			4	16
Micro	34	30	21	13	18	116
Small	2	1	2	4	6	15
Medium					3	3
Total	39	40	23	17	31	150

Source: own elaboration

Based on the perception of the interviewed entrepreneurs, it was found that the marketing strategies used paid off in 90% of the cases with a perspective of agreement and total agreement. Also in the dimension Distribution channels and digital media 93% of the respondents were of the opinion that the effectiveness on the business and the dynamic flow of this space had an impact on the better image of the business.

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Regarding IT and promotional strategies, 84% of the respondents reported that they carried out targeted actions, however, there is still a segment of the population that is unaware of their use and resists this.

Box 6

Table 4

IT and its effectiveness as perceived by the employer 1

Scale	MKT strategies and assertiveness Quantity %		Distribution channels and digital media Quantity %		TI y Promotion strategies Quantity %	
Strongly disagree	4	3%	0	0%	4	3%
Disagree	3	2%	3	2%	12	8%
Indifferent	7	5%	7	5%	9	6%
Agree	98	65%	89	59%	82	55%
Strongly agree	38	25%	51	34%	43	29%
Total	150	100%	150	100%	150	100%

Source: own elaboration

With regard to IT and advertising and the impact on income improvement, 80% perceive this as favourable, but there is a greater number of entrepreneurs who did not focus on their segment of the population to disseminate the products and services offered, which resulted in lower income, also despite the fact that mobility and displacement were encouraged postpandemic, the population still faced the fear of contagion and economic activation was gradual, i.e. it did not affect income immediately after the lifting of the mobility restriction. With regard to the growth in sales, through social networks, this reflects 76%, a palpable result in the transition between the pandemic and post-pandemic periods [Table 5].

Box 7

Table 5

IT and its effectiveness from an employer's

perspective 2	IT and adv = +Income	ertising	Growth Sales [social networks]		
	Quantity	%	Quantity	%	
Strongly disagree	2	1%	1	1%	
Disagree	16	11%	21	14%	
Indifferent	13	9%	13	9%	
Agree	77	51%	62	41%	
Strongly agree	42	28%	53	35%	
Total	150	100%	150	100%	

Source: own elaboration

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Conclusions

By way of conclusions, we can highlight that the human element associated with business activities, which were reactivated during the pandemic, did not always manage to continue, much associated with the social security benefits that a business in the form of a nano or micro enterprise can offer the entrepreneur. It is worth highlighting the present and pre-pandemic situations, which give us a reference of the current dynamics and their evolution.

- Before the pandemic, 2 out of 10 businesses had social networks [2019].
- Post-pandemic 6 out of 10 businesses already had social networks [2022]
- Today [2024] 8 out of 10 businesses have social networks and online sales
- IT readiness and the burgeoning need to increase sales and take advantage of the digital marketplace is what has motivated today's businesses.
- New positions for social media managers are available, however, they have to comply with administrative and operational actions, which reduces media monitoring.
- In the municipality of Izamal, women are the ones who make the most use of online sales for the trade of products and foodstuffs.

It should be noted that the current financial risks are detrimental to the evolution of businesses in rural areas. At the same time, the flow of tourism in the Magical Town of Izamal is fluctuating positively, but it is even more important to offer regional products and traditional services that revive the culture, in the face of the growing demand for imports. Another challenge for company employees is the income [wages], since, according to the income of our country, the minimum wage in force in 2023 and 2024, is the first offer for their hiring.

Declarations

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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Authors' contribution

González-Herrera, Karina Concepción: Contributed to the project idea, research method, information analysis and technique.

Olivares-Contreras, Rodrigo Alejandro: Contributed to research methods, information analysis, technique and conclusions.

Rodríguez-Valencia, Nery Elena: Contributed to the research method, information analysis, technique and conclusions.

Availability of data and materials

Data are available on request.

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