

ANALYSIS OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT OF ENTREPRENEURS IN TEHUACÁN AND PROPOSALS

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Abstract: This study analyzes the organizational management strategies of micro and small retail enterprises (MSEs) in Tehuacán, Puebla, Mexico, focusing on their relationship with financial performance and sales growth. Using a quantitative, descriptive, cross-sectional design, data were collected in March 2025 from 593 entrepreneurs via a 30-item Likert-scale questionnaire, applying the computer-assisted personal interview (CAPI) method. Multinomial logistic regression was used to correlate management, sales, finance, innovation, marketing, and operations practices with four income–expense scenarios, each coupled with increased annual sales. Findings reveal that formal strategic planning consistently correlates with positive sales outcomes, particularly when income and expenses fluctuate. Sales growth is often supported by offering credit, while careful monitoring of earnings and supplier costs underpins financial stability. Innovation strategies are primarily externally sourced, through trade shows or outsourced design improvements, rather than internally developed. Marketing investments, especially in advertising, remain central, and operational strategies vary according to financial conditions, favoring either faster delivery or quality improvements. The study concludes that structured planning, financial discipline, and proactive marketing are key drivers of competitiveness among Tehuacán’s MSEs, though innovation practices remain conservative. Recommendations emphasize strengthening internal innovation capabilities to complement existing strategies for sustained market advantage.

Keywords: entrepreneurs, MSEs, organizational management

JEL Classification: M, M21

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Introduction

This paper aims to describe the organizational management actions of entrepreneurs engaged in retail trade in the city of Tehuacán, Puebla, located 253 km south-east of Mexico City. As such, the city has a variety of productive activities, predominantly the trade of goods and services, as well as a small component of industrial production activities for food and maquila clothing for export. Historically, the site has developed its predominant activity in economic cycles; the most notable was textile production, which declined at the beginning of the new century. This gave way to the predominant commercial activity that exists today.

In recent times, business owners have faced limitations due to their organizational structures lacking financial frameworks that allow them to invest in the use of technology and subsequently in innovations. Furthermore, their owners' intentions are not attentive to creating long-term survival planning strategies. Another scenario is that a significant percentage of their market competitors are informal businesses that have no problem establishing themselves and not paying taxes, while established entrepreneurs are subject to numerous regulations by the authorities. There are also positive results, such as better management of advertising and already observed business conduct that observes ethics in management, hiring workers, compliance with government regulations and customer service.

This paper establishes numerical relationships between perceptions of business operating processes and numerical data related to recent experience, comparing cash flows and annual sales results, and observing the predominant statistical incidences. The main objective of this paper is to observe the organizational aspects of merchants, comparing their methods of money management and how they relate to sales, to understand how merchants implement their organizational architectures and understand their business strategies.

Literature review

The processes part of the systems are the operations of the MSEs and define the decision-making of the entrepreneur. MSEs are present in different economic activities, for example, family businesses that make handicrafts. Sánchez Medina (2018) mentions that creating a methodology to measure the processes in small artisan producers requires considering other factors, for example, the context, the environmental strategy, and so on. Other MSEs use intelligent systems to predict customer preferences (Llanes-Font et al., 2023); this includes small businesses that have already begun their digitalization processes. One of the problems of MSEs is their life span, which, as Vargas and Cárdenas (2019) point out, is almost eight years, despite their significant reach in markets and society. In this case, it is necessary to establish strategies for permanence in the markets, which is achieved with proactive and structured financial management, since it is vital for the survival and success of MSE's.

Baque et al. (2020) argue that there are barriers such as those related to organizational management, technological barriers, and others that impact business decision-making. Other studies focus their attention on motivation. A study conducted in

Ecuador on small businesses highlighted that the heterogeneity of owners presents challenges for training and the practical application of motivational strategies (Martínez & Santamaría, 2024). With the effects of globalization (Vinokurova, 2019), some small and medium-sized companies find themselves in need of organizing themselves to achieve productivity and competitiveness objectives; even so, it is important to manage business processes to monitor and solve business challenges (Gómez et al., 2019). As well as the development of people's skills and abilities through improving organizational development strategies (Noriega Niño De Guzmán & Farfán Pimentel, 2025).

Other studies emphasize the need to apply Kanban quality frameworks to improve the internal processes of small businesses and organize value chains (Fierro & Peñaloza López, 2023; Hann et al., 2025). Additionally, the application of project management methodologies to improve the results of business process management, enhancing managerial skills (Bueno-Pascual, 2023). Another strategy is the Organizational Performance Architecture in a supply chain to achieve maturity in the processes of small businesses dedicated to manufacturing (Carballo-Mendivil et al., 2019). Also, human talent management is important to improve structured processes in personnel management (Solano-Castro et al., 2023). Finally, studies that address the use of artificial intelligence using Enterprise Resource Planning (EPR) could benefit small businesses in meeting their fiscal responsibilities (Bonilla Sánchez & Cabral Martínez, 2025).

Research methodology

The aim of the paper is to present a quantitative, descriptive study with a simple cross-sectional approach. Data were collected through questionnaires using the computer-assisted personal interview (CAPI) methodology.

The instrument used was a 30-question questionnaire with Likert-scale response options, measuring the respondent's perception in five points: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = indifferent; 4 = agree; and 5 = strongly agree. The questionnaires were launched in March 2025, and the information was collected by 60 students in the Business and Marketing program.

It is important to note that the sample reflects the size of the business population with the characteristics of merchants established in the city. According to the National Statistical Directory of Economic Units (DENUE), there are 22,602 micro and small businesses dedicated to commerce in Tehuacán, with between 1 and 10 employees and located both in the city and the surrounding areas. The calculated sample was 396 companies, but this study included 593 entrepreneurs. It is also worth mentioning that this group is one of many that exist in the municipalities surrounding the city.

The model best suited to analyzing the processes of micro and small businesses in terms of management, sales management, finance, innovation, marketing, and operations was multinomial logistic regression, which allowed for the dimensions to be examined in terms of perceptions of income, expenses and annual sales. This was done to avoid redundant optimistic responses about the performance of managers,

who typically do not admit to falling behind in management processes (Figure 1). Microentrepreneurs typically respond to questionnaires about their performance with values of 4, which are associated with “agree”, or with the response option of 5, which means “strongly agree”. Linking responses to outcome scenarios allows us to see beyond the responses alone to understand how SMEs are managed.

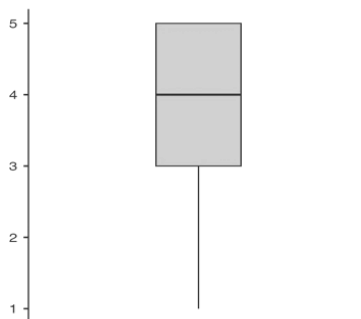


Figure 1. Example of responses regarding business operations, such as actions to achieve sales

Source: Own study based on research

So, the income and expense components, in addition to annual profits, were addressed in four scenarios: 1) increased slightly – increased a lot, with the statement reading: income and expenses increased slightly and the second statement: annual sales increased a lot; 2) Decreased a lot – Increased a lot; 3) Decreased slightly – increased a lot; and 4) Remains the same – increased a lot. Now, these four scenarios were correlated with the dimensions of administrative management to see, with a little more analysis, what the different processes look like. The response values and their correlations with the dimensions were analyzed using statistical software called Jamovi, version 2.6.17. Some results are presented below.

Results

Regarding all data obtained, the reliability analysis, measured in Cronbach's alpha, revealed a level of 0.882, while McDonald's omega was 0.915, which is considered acceptable. The exploratory factor analysis revealed that the Tucker-Lewis index reached a level of 0.901 and the root mean square error reached a level of 0.603, which is acceptable for the proposed model.

For management activities, as an administrative action, the questionnaire included five actions, which in this case is section 12; then, the first question, which is (12a), says: I have a clear mission and vision, I share it with the employed personnel, and we try to carry it out; then (12b) I set specific objectives that we have to achieve in my company; the third question (12c) I set out a business strategy and some actions are carried out by trial and error; the fourth question is (12d), says: I do not usually plan my company's strategy in advance, but rather it arises as I see how to achieve our objectives, and the fifth question, which is (12e), says: My company's

competitive strategy generally results from a formal planning process, that is, the formal plan precedes the action. These questions were related to the perception of income, and expenses increased little, and annual profits increased a lot, using multimodal logistic regression, which yielded a value for each estimator of each of the questions, as well as a constant value. Thus, 12a obtained a value of -0.056 ; 12b of -0.382 ; 12c: -0.643 ; 12d: -0.118 and 12e: 0.150 .

The values obtained from multinomial logistic regression are the correlations between the responses, measured on Likert scales and corresponding to some management action in the administration of small businesses, and the responses regarding income and expenses, as well as annual sales performance. This is also interpreted as the probabilities of occurrence between the variables. For example, Table 1 shows that, of the five administrative actions, the one with a positive correlation to the dimension of income and expenses (increased slightly, but annual sales increased significantly) was action 12e, which has a positive value of 0.150 . The other actions are negatively correlated.

Table 1. Correlation values between management actions, income-expenses and annual sales

Increased slightly of Income and Expenses – Increased a lot of Annual sales				
Predictor	Estimator	SE	Z	p
Constant	5.053	0.81	6.236	<0.001
12a) I have a clear mission and vision; I share it with the employed staff, and we try to achieve it.	-0.056	0.191	-0.294	0.769
12b) I set concrete objectives that we need to achieve in my company.	-0.382	0.223	-1.712	0.087
12c) I propose a commercial strategy, and some actions are carried out through trial and error.	-0.644	0.177	-3.640	<0.001
12d) I don't usually plan my company's strategy in advance, but rather it emerges as I see the best way to achieve our objectives.	-0.119	0.122	-0.971	0.331
12e) My company's competitive strategy generally results from a formal planning process, which means that the formal plan precedes the action.	0.150	0.152	0.989	0.323

Source: Own study based on research

Now, if we take the dimension where income and expenses have decreased a lot, and annual sales have increased a lot (Table 2), it can be seen that the management action with the highest correlation is 12e, which says that my company's competitive strategy generally results from a formal planning process, meaning that the plan precedes the action, with a value of 0.709 , while actions 12a, 12b and 12c have negative correlations. For its part, 12d has a lower correlation of 0.223 .

Table 2. Correlations with the dimension where income and expenses have fallen a lot, and annual sales have grown a lot

Decreased a lot of Income and Expenses – Increased a lot of Annual Sales				
Predictor	Estimator	SE	Z	p
Constant	1.1	1.691	0.651	0.515
12a) I have a clear mission and vision; I share it with the employed staff, and we try to achieve it.	-0.162	0.376	-0.430	0.668
12b) I set concrete objectives that we need to achieve in my company.	-0.517	0.433	-1.196	0.232
12c) I propose a commercial strategy, and some actions are carried out through trial and error.	-0.988	0.320	-3.091	0.002
12d) I don't usually plan my company's strategy in advance, but rather it emerges as I see the best way to achieve our objectives.	0.223	0.319	0.698	0.485
12e) My company's competitive strategy generally results from a formal planning process, which means that the formal plan precedes the action.	0.709	0.379	1.871	0.061

Source: Own study based on research

Thus, taking the correlation values of the other two dimensions, that is: income and expenses fell slightly, and annual sales grew a lot, the strategy that reached the highest correlation value was 12a, which says that the entrepreneur has a clear mission and vision for the business and shares it with his employees, and everyone tries to achieve it (0.179). While for the income and expenses dimension, they remain the same, and annual sales have grown a lot, strategy 12e: my company's competitive strategy generally results from a formal planning process, that is, the formal plan precedes action (0.190), the other strategies had negative correlations.

If we put all the strategies that had positive correlations, in terms of administrative management strategies, and compare them with the perceptions of the results, they would be as follows (Table 3).

Table 3. Correlations with the four dimensions for management

Dimensions for management	Income and Expenses increased slightly – Annual sales increased a lot	Income and Expenses Decreased a lot – Annual sales increased a lot	Income and expenses decreased slightly – Annual sales increased a lot	Income and expenses remained the same – Annual sales increased a lot
Logistic regression	Strategy 12e (0.150)	Strategy 12e (0.709)	Strategy 12a (0.179)	Strategy 12e (0.190)

Source: Own study based on research

For the sales management dimension, which asked five types of questions, income and expenses increased little, and annual sales increased a lot, the statement (13d) “I carry out financing activities (credit) to close some sales” reached the highest value (0.097). For the relationship income and expenses decreased a lot, and annual sales increased a lot, the statement (13d) reached the highest value (0.129). For the relationship income and expenses decreased little, and annual sales increased a lot, the statement 13d reached the highest value with (0.384). The fourth perception that income and expenses remained the same, and annual sales increased a lot, all correlations were negative, the one with the smallest value is the statement (13d) (-0.067).

Regarding the finance dimension, income and expenses increased slightly, but annual sales increased significantly. The strategy with the highest correlation is 14c, which states: “I am very clear about the value of everything I buy or from suppliers each month” (0.038). For the income and expenses dimension, they decreased significantly, but annual sales increased significantly. The strategy that achieved the highest correlation value was 14b: “I am very clear about the value of everything I earn each month” (0.120). For the income and expenses dimension, they decreased slightly, but annual sales increased significantly. The most relevant strategy was 14c (0.346). For the income and expenses dimension, they remained the same, but annual sales increased significantly. All strategies had negative correlations. The one with the lowest value was strategy 14c (-0.032).

Looking at the results of the innovation strategy, we see that in the case of income and expenses, where there was little increase in annual sales, the strategy that achieved the highest correlation value was 15e “I attend trade shows, courses, conferences, or other business-related activities” (0.142); for the dimension of income and expenses, where there was a significant decrease in annual sales, the 15e strategy also achieved a high correlation value (0.436); for the dimension of income and expenses, where there was a significant decrease in annual sales, the most important innovation strategy was 15c “I develop or pay to innovate the way my product or service is sold (design, packaging, promotion, pricing, etc.)” 0.068. This strategy had its highest correlation value with the dimension of income, and expenses remained the same, while annual sales grew significantly (0.277).

In the case of the marketing, the strategy that was repeated in the dimensions of 1) income and expenses increased little and annual sales increased a lot; 2) income and expenses decreased little and annual sales increased a lot and 4) income and expenses remained the same and annual sales increased a lot, was the one that says: “I carry out advertising and promotional activities for my product or service” with values of: 0.032; 0.085 and 0.009. Regarding dimension 3), income and expenses decreased little, and annual sales grew a lot, the strategy “I focus mainly on providing very good service to my customers” reached the highest correlation value with 0.743, while the others had negative correlations.

Two types of actions are observed in terms of the operations strategy (See Table 4), since, on the one hand, the statement “I focus a lot on reducing the time between when the customer requests and receives my product or service” (17b) in the dimension where income and expenses increased little, and annual sales increased a lot had

a weak negative correlation of -0.022 , but in the dimension where income and expenses decreased a lot, and annual sales increased a lot, the correlation has a value of 0.877 . The same type of behavior is observed with strategy (17a) which in the dimension where income and expenses decreased a lot, and annual sales increased a lot, and which is the action of “I focus a lot on the quality of my products or services”, had a correlation of 0.221 . In the dimension where income and expenses remain the same, and annual sales increased a lot, it had a slight negative correlation (-0.004), while the other strategies had negative correlations with higher values.

Table 4. Statements that achieved the greatest value in each dimension of MSE results

Dimension	Income and Expense vs. Annual Profits				
	Increased slightly – Increased a lot	Decreased a lot – Increased a lot	Decreased slightly – Increased a lot	Remains the same – Increased a lot	The most repeated perception
Management	12e	12e	12a	12e	12e
Sales Management	13e	13d	13d	-13d	13d
Finance	14c	14b	14e	14c	14c
Innovation	15e	15e	15c	15c	15e and 15c
Marketing	16d	16d	16a	16d	16d
Operations	-17b	17b	17a	-17a	17a and 17b

Source: Own study based on research

The strategies, once correlated with the business's monetary results, which in this case were called dimensions, are clearly not the same. This shows that each micro and small business owner engaged in commerce in the city defines a series of actions according to the behavior of the relationship between the different results of income and expenses. In the case of annual sales, it was assumed that in all cases they increased significantly between the previous year and the current one.

Discussion

The data analyzed allow us to affirm that this work is in accordance with what was mentioned by (Sanchez, 2018), about the administrative composition of SMEs, that in many cases, their structure is family-based, and that decision-making is centralized. What is clear from this is that merchants have their way of making results according to the type of markets and the type of society, as mentioned by Vargas and Cárdenas (2019). Due to the shape of the markets, it is difficult for small businesses to successfully face the different effects of globalization, and this requires more organization, as mentioned by Gómez et al. (2019), which is not observed in the results of this study. So, what do micro and small entrepreneurs have to do? The answer is hard but firm: entrepreneurs have to look at other strategies to seek quality, as Fierro

and Peñaloza (2023) say, improving project management as Bueno-Pascual (2023) mentions, and making administration mature to improve organizational strategies as Carvallo et al. (2019) mention, and thus have to establish strategies that adapt to changes in the income and expenses of small businesses with the use of tools and technology.

Conclusion

The aim of the paper was to show that, given the four scenarios that are desirable because all of them perceive an increase in annual sales. The values included in the final table have positive correlation values, except for those that state the opposite, but for the administrative management strategies of micro and small commercial companies in the city of Tehuacán, it is interesting to see that entrepreneurs state, in most of the business operation results, that they have a competitive strategy, and that it is the result of a formal planning process that allows them to take action.

Regarding sales management strategies, the results show that sales are imperatively important, given the heightened competition in the SME sector, which leads entrepreneurs to take measures such as using credit to close sales. An interesting finding is the negative correlation between the dominant strategy and the level of unchanged income and expenses. This could suggest that most entrepreneurs experienced changes, rather than a passive relationship between income and expenses.

In line with sales management, for financial strategies, the most common strategy is that micro and small business owners are very clear about the value of all purchases and the settlement of debts with suppliers. Since sales determine expenses and because sales become a defensive act against other competitors, it is evident that they have a clear understanding of income and expenses. This section shows that those business owners who faced a reduction in their income and expenses were very clear about how much they were invoicing in sales, and for the dimension where income and expenses decreased slightly, they paid dedicated attention to the expense components.

Entrepreneurs expressed two innovation strategies for different income and expense dimensions. On the one hand, they purchase what they fail to innovate for its designs, packaging, and so on. The other strategy is attending trade shows, courses, and conferences to improve business. This demonstrates a lack of willingness to create innovations from within the business.

It is important to mention that, in terms of marketing, there is a dominant strategy, which is what drives SMEs to invest in advertising and promotions for the products and services they sell. Perhaps secondarily, for those whose income and expenses have decreased slightly, it is the customer service. That is, marketing actions are essential. Finally, in terms of business operations, it is observed that when income and expenses decrease significantly, they optimize the delivery of sales to customers, and when income and sales decrease slightly, the strategy focuses on product quality, or the quality of the service offered to customers.

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ANALIZA ZARZĄDZANIA ORGANIZACJĄ PRZEDSIĘBIORCÓW W TEHUACÁN I PROPOZYCJE

Streszczenie: W niniejszym badaniu analizuje się strategie zarządzania organizacją mikro- i małych przedsiębiorstw handlu detalicznego (MSE) w Tehuacán, w prowincji Puebla w Meksyku, koncentrując się na ich związku z wynikami finansowymi i wzrostem sprzedaży. W marcu 2025 roku, wykorzystując ilościowy, opisowy i przekrojowy model badania, zebrano dane od 593 przedsiębiorców za pomocą 30-elementowego kwestionariusza skali Likerta, stosując metodę wywiadu osobistego wspomaganego komputerowo (CAPI). Zastosowano wielomianową regresję logistyczną, aby skorelować praktyki zarządzania, sprzedaży, finansów, innowacji, marketingu i operacji z czterema scenariuszami przychodów i wydatków, z których każdy był powiązany ze wzrostem rocznej sprzedaży. Wyniki pokazują, że formalne planowanie strategiczne konsekwentnie koreluje z pozytywnymi wynikami sprzedaży, szczególnie w przypadku wahań przychodów i wydatków. Wzrost sprzedaży jest często wspierany przez oferowanie kredytów, a uważne monitorowanie zysków i kosztów dostawców stanowi podstawę stabilności finansowej. Strategie innowacji są głównie pozyskiwane ze źródeł zewnętrznych, poprzez targi branżowe lub zlecane na zewnątrz usprawnienia projektowe, a nie opracowywane wewnętrznie. Inwestycje marketingowe – zwłaszcza w reklamę – pozostają kluczowe, a strategie operacyjne różnią się w zależności od warunków finansowych, faworyzując szybszą realizację zamówień lub poprawę jakości. Badanie wskazuje, że ustrukturyzowane planowanie, dyscyplina finansowa i proaktywny marketing są kluczowymi czynnikami konkurencyjności wśród małych i średnich przedsiębiorstw Tehuacán, choć praktyki innowacyjne pozostają konserwatywne. Rekomendacje podkreślają potrzebę wzmocnienia wewnętrznych możliwości innowacyjnych w celu uzupełnienia istniejących strategii w celu zapewnienia trwałej przewagi rynkowej.

Słowa kluczowe: przedsiębiorcy, MSP, zarządzanie organizacją

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