

## Business growth strategies for positioning: a microenterprise case study in Ecuador

Estratégias de crescimento empresarial para posicionamento: um estudo de caso de microempresa no Equador

Estrategias de crecimiento empresarial para el posicionamiento: estudio de un caso de microempresa en Ecuador

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### ABSTRACT

This article analyzed the business growth strategies for the positioning of a small company located in the parish of Calderón, Ecuador, where the main problem is the abundant competition and economic concentration since there is a large number of businesses engaged in the same economic activity. Due to the limited implementation of business growth strategies, which are implemented empirically and without sufficient preparation by the firms, this article aims to understand how business growth strategies affect the positioning of the selected firm, i.e. the Comercial la "J", located in the Ecuadorian parish of Calderon. For this purpose, it was considered to use the types of field research, bibliographic and descriptive, with a mixed approach; applying research methods: inductive, deductive, analytical and statistical; and data collection techniques through interviews and surveys. With the development of the fieldwork where it was possible to identify the business growth strategies used by the small firm and using the corresponding research techniques, it is recommended to compare the strategies with those adopted by direct competitors and similar businesses, in order to identify good practices and opportunities for improvement. Regarding the results, it could be noted that the small firm analyzed is the second best-positioned store in the market, while it has a 53% probability of recommendation by its customers, which can help it to be a leader in the market.

**Keywords:** Strategies, positioning, customers, competition, business growth, small business.

### RESUMO

Este artigo analisou estratégias de crescimento empresarial para o posicionamento de uma pequena empresa localizada na paróquia de Calderón, Equador, onde o principal problema é a concorrência abundante e a concentração econômica, pois há um grande número de empresas envolvidas na mesma atividade econômica. Devido à implementação limitada de estratégias de crescimento empresarial, que são implementadas empiricamente e sem preparação suficiente por parte das empresas, este artigo tem como objetivo entender como as estratégias de crescimento empresarial afetam o posicionamento da empresa selecionada, ou seja, a Comercial la "J", localizada na paróquia de Calderón. Para tanto, considerou-se utilizar os tipos de pesquisa de campo, bibliográfica e descritiva, com abordagem mista; aplicando métodos de pesquisa: indutivo, dedutivo, analítico e estatístico; e técnicas de coleta de dados por meio de entrevista e pesquisa. Com o desenvolvimento do trabalho de campo, em que foi possível identificar as estratégias de crescimento do negócio usadas pela pequena empresa e usando as técnicas de pesquisa correspondentes, recomenda-se comparar as estratégias com as adotadas por concorrentes diretos e empresas semelhantes, a fim de identificar boas práticas e oportunidades de melhoria. Com relação aos resultados, constatou-se que a pequena empresa analisada é a segunda melhor posicionada no mercado e, ao mesmo tempo, tem uma probabilidade de 53% de recomendação por parte de seus clientes, o que poderia ajudá-la a se tornar líder de mercado.

**Palavras-chave:** Estratégias, posicionamento, clientes, concorrência, crescimento dos negócios, pequenas empresas.

### RESUMEN

Este artículo analizó las estrategias de crecimiento empresarial para el posicionamiento de una pequeña empresa localizada en la parroquia Calderón, Ecuador, donde el principal problema es la abundante competencia y concentración económica, ya que existe una gran cantidad de negocios que se dedican a la misma actividad económica. Debido a la limitada implementación de estrategias de crecimiento empresarial, que se de forma empírica y sin la suficiente preparación por la firmas, en este artículo se objetiva comprender de qué manera las estrategias de crecimiento empresarial inciden en el posicionamiento de la firma seleccionada, es decir del Comercial la "J", localizada en la parroquia Calderón. Para este propósito, se consideró utilizar los tipos de investigación de campo, bibliográfica y descriptiva, con un enfoque mixto; aplicando métodos de investigación: inductivo, deductivo, analítico y estadístico; y técnicas de recolección de datos mediante entrevista y encuesta. Con el desarrollo del trabajo de campo en donde se logró en primera instancia identificar las estrategias de crecimiento empresarial que utiliza la pequeña firma y empleando las técnicas investigativas correspondientes, por lo que se recomienda comparar las estrategias con las adoptadas por competidores directos y negocios similares, con el fin de identificar buenas prácticas y oportunidades de mejora. Con respecto a los resultados, se pudo identificar que la pequeña firma analizada es el segundo local mejor posicionado en el mercado, a la vez que tiene un 53% de probabilidad de recomendación por parte de sus clientes, lo que lo puede ayudar a ser líder en el mercado.

**Palabras clave:** Estrategias, posicionamiento, clientes, competencia, crecimiento empresarial, pequeños negocios.

### ARTICLE HISTORY

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### ARTICLE INFORMATIONS

#### Science-Metrix Classification (Domain):

Economic & Social Sciences

#### Main topic:

Business growth strategies

#### Main practical implications:

This research advises small businesses to enhance market positioning through effective growth strategies. Benchmarking against competitors and leveraging existing strengths can strengthen their market leadership. The empirical evidence presented can be used by researchers, small firm management and entrepreneurship policy analysts.

#### Originality/value:

The article has relevance and originality in the sense that it addresses a specific reality of small businesses in locations in Ecuador. Normally, mainstream literature tends to forget this type of peripheral economic realities and the insights presented here contribute to this relative lack of studies.

## INTRODUCTION

Business growth strategies help to boost the development and expansion of companies, these strategies allow businesses to achieve greater market reach, which is related to the perception that customers have about them, that is, business growth strategies must be aligned with positioning, since an appropriate strategy allows companies to stand out in a saturated market and generate customer loyalty. In Latin America, the empirical evidence demonstrate that improving competitiveness, considering internationalization strategies, and recognizing communication are key components for small business success (Felzensztein et al., 2022). In the other hand, the economic impact of government regulations its not totally clear in the performance and growth of Ecuadorian small firms (Cedeño-Cedeño & Velásquez-Gutiérrez, 2023).

Currently, micro, small and medium enterprises have different types of programs and financing support from institutions, however, the lack of control by these entities, the lack of innovation, poor management (projection) by their managers and the economic policies and regulations established in the country generate that these companies end up in economic decline and their permanence in the market. (Bravo, 2020, p. 572). The absence of quality mechanisms can also be an obstacle for this type of firms (Reyna-Tenorio; Ulloa-de Souza; & Chere-Quiñónez, 2022).

This negative situation is also observed in the parish of Calderón, Ecuador, which is a relatively small sector where competition is extremely high; there are a large number of businesses engaged in the same economic activity, commerce, although they offer different items.

In addition, they apply few growth strategies, in an empirical way, without structured knowledge for its proper functioning, such as diversified growth strategies. In such a way, the selection of products in the Commercial, is managed by variety in its product portfolio, but without the necessary knowledge for its development, although they try to highlight the variety of its products, they are not supplied enough, in products of constant consumption of the clients.

For this reason, some consumers opt to purchase products from other nearby stores with greater agility and better service, which leads to a loss of customers.

The general objective on which this research is based is to establish the incidence of business growth strategies in the positioning of Comercial la "J", a small business located in the Calderón parish, Ecuador. Within the same context, the specific objectives are: to identify the business growth strategies used by this company, to determine the positioning through its level of competitiveness and finally, to analyze the relationship between business growth and positioning of the firm.

This study is justified by the different forms of growth and business development according to its direction of growth. These were taken as a guide to support the influence of growth strategies in the positioning of "Comercial la J", also this research is a reference or source for future research on related topics.

In relation to the antecedents that are related to the subject, we have the authors Yoza, Villafuerte and Parrales (2021) in their research entitled "Business growth: market development strategy in the MSME sector". In which a descriptive methodology was used, under a qualitative, non-experimental approach, the market development strategies presented by MSMEs in Ecuador were critically characterized. The results showed that creativity and innovation and the resilience with which the businesses operate have been key to remain in the market.

Of equal importance is Seminario Unzueta et al. (2020) in their research entitled "Positioning Strategies in times of COVID - 19 of the company D. FRUTITOS E.I.R.L - San Juan de Lurigancho, 2020", which had as general objective to determine the positioning strategies in times of COVID-19 of the company D. Frutitos E.I.R.L - San Juan de Lurigancho, 2020. In which the methodology used in the research study was descriptive of quantitative approach, with non-experimental design, according to the data collected, an applied type research was designed, obtaining as results, that the positioning strategies are being given positively at a high level with 65,0% with respect to consumer management, it was determined that it is being applied correctly with a high level of 68.8% with respect to Marketing and a high level valuation was reached with 70%, regarding brand management a high level of 68.8% is applied and with respect to competition it was observed that a low level of 42.5% does not identify competitors.

Moreover, Dután & Ormaza (2022) in their section entitled "Business growth strategies for the company Roads Networks in the city of Cuenca", whose general objective is to propose the creation of business strategies for the company Roads Networks with a focus on improving competitiveness and exponential growth in the market. The methodology used focused on the mixed type representation where qualitative instruments were used to elaborate the theoretical foundation and quantitative instruments were used to estimate and structure the data. Meanwhile, the methods implemented in the inquiry were the historical-logical that allowed examining the variables of study under a chronological precept and a logical succession, at the same time the deductive-inductive method was used, which made possible the characterization of methods and actions in the business organization under study.

As a result of the surveys conducted with Roads Networks' personnel, it was found that in order to be adequately competitive, the company must necessarily implement growth strategies that allow it to be competitive.

Therefore, business growth strategies are based on the search for greater opportunities of power in the operating market, thus preventing access to new competition, all this, through the strength in negotiating with suppliers and improving the position with current and potential customers (Blázquez Santana et al., 2006). (Blázquez Santana et al., 2006).

In this sense, Coca Milton (2007) states that positioning refers both to the place that a product or brand occupies in the minds of customers, relative to their needs and to competing products or brands, and to the marketer's decisions and intention to create such position. (p. 109).

Valencia Iván (2006) indicates that the creation of a company in Ecuador is guaranteed by the highest legal level represented by the Constitution. It is necessary to emphasize that the company must produce with quality, and its employees and operations must be subject to the provisions of the law in order for this guarantee to be valid. (pages 8 - 9).

According to the Organic Code of Production, Commerce and Investments (2010) (2010) According to the regulations in force, the Sectoral Council of Production will coordinate the policies for the promotion and development of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises with the sectoral ministries within the scope of their competencies. (pp. 27-28).

Naranjo & Subía (2020) note that the Organic Law on Tax Simplification and Progressivity, in force since December 31, 2019, added a title called 'Tax Regime for Micro-enterprises', to which taxpayers considered as micro-enterprises according to the provisions of the Organic Code of Production, Commerce and Investments will be subject, after article 97.15 of the Internal Tax Regime Law. Through Resolution No. NAC-DGERCGC20-0000011, the Internal Revenue Service (SRI) issued the rules for the application of the referred tax regime.

In addition, in the Municipal Government of Portoviejo, there are two municipal ordinances to regulate the activity of businesses, the ordinance that regulates the fees for services provided by the Portoviejo Fire Department "Coronel José Antonio María García Pinoargote" and the ordinance that regulates the Environmental Development in the Canton of Portoviejo, Ecuador.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In this research work called Business growth strategies for positioning. Commercial case the "J" of Calderon Parish, Ecuador the types of field and bibliographic research were applied, with a mixed approach; applying the research methods: analytical, descriptive, statistical; and data collection techniques: interview and survey.

According to the author Arteaga (2022) indicates that:

"Field research aims to understand, analyze, and qualitatively interact with individuals in their native environments and collect data. By being in the "field," social scientists often refer to the real world where the activities and events of people's daily lives are studied. Some researchers also call this method of data collection participant observation or ethnography. Anthropology often uses the term ethnography, and sociology, participant observation, to refer to the method of data collection." (p. 2).

This type of research was used to get to know the problem closely and thus obtain knowledge according to the reality of the variables under study.

Bibliographic research is a process by which concepts are compiled in order to obtain systematized knowledge. (Salas, 2019). This type of research was based on the extensive search for information related to the variables and the object of study, through the knowledge, information and criteria provided by research conducted by various authors previously, it was possible to annex relevant information for the research topic conducted.

In addition, this research is considered to be descriptive, because "it is in charge of punctuating the characteristics of the population under study. Scientific research is a record, analysis and interpretation of the actual nature and composition or processes of the phenomena." (Guevara et al., 2020, p. 166). This type of research was used with the purpose of establishing a detailed and accurate representation of the observed situation.

The approach used is the mixed approach which is the systematic integration of quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study in order to obtain a more complete "picture" of the phenomenon (Guelmes & Nieto, 2015). The present research work has a qualitative-quantitative approach, which helped to collect information on the study problem through the use of the techniques proposed.

Among the methods applied in this study, the following methods were considered and are described below:

The inductive method is an approach used in scientific research and reasoning, which seeks to infer general conclusions from specific observations. This method starts from concrete and particular facts to reach a general conclusion.

(Suarez, 2023). In this sense, this method was used because diverse information on a specific problem was collected from a series of data, which were subsequently analyzed.

"Deductive reasoning is very useful for research. Deduction makes it possible to establish a link between theory and observation and to deduce from the theory the phenomena that are the object of observation." (Dávila Newman, 2006, p. 181). This method was used to demonstrate, understand and explain aspects of the variables of the research project.

The analytical method is a way to reach a result by decomposing a phenomenon into its constituent elements. (Lopera Echavarría et al., 2010). In this sense, this method was used to analyze the existing situation of the object of study, deliberating whether there is a certain connection between the variables of the research, to then synthesize and interpret the data and results of the survey to the customers of Comercial la "J", to determine the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

The statistical method was used to analyze, interpret and project the results obtained from the surveys conducted with customers of Comercial la "J", which is very useful to clarify doubts about the object of study, in a concrete way, through accurate data. Techniques play a significant role in an investigation since they are used to obtain explicit results, among which the following were applied:

The interview is based on the **exchange of ideas or opinions through a conversation** between two or more people. (Editorial, 2020). Through the dialogue between the interviewee, Mrs. Lisbeth Garcia, owner of Comercial la "J", the workers and the interviewer, it was possible to gather relevant information on the topic under investigation, in order to obtain valuable results.

A survey is a research method that collects information, data and feedback through a series of specific questions. Most surveys are conducted with the intention of making assumptions about a population, reference group, or representative sample (Gomez, 2023). It was applied in person to the clients of Comercial la "J", by means of questionnaires, with a series of closed questions.

The population considered in this research project was the owner of Comercial la "J", Mrs. Lisbeth Garcia, the employees and also the customers who make their purchases in this store, based on its annual customer record, which includes the figure of 282 customers, which was provided by the owner. The number of the population under study is accessible and for this reason it was considered in its entirety for the present study

**Table 1.** Details of the study population

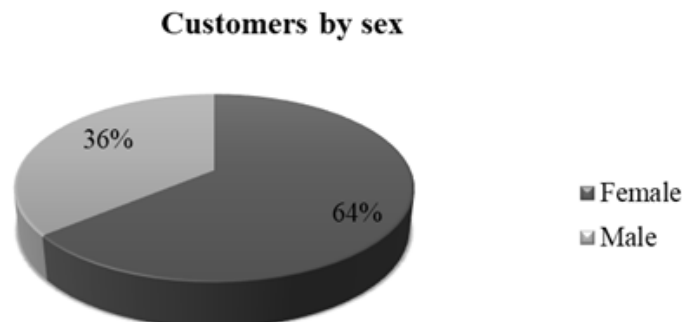
<b>Owner</b>	1
<b>Employees</b>	7
<b>Customers</b>	282
<b>TOTAL</b>	290

Source: own elaboration with the research data (2024)

## RESULTS

Results were obtained to understand how business growth strategies affect the positioning of the analyzed company. Through the collection of information in the field work with the use of the techniques: interview, which was conducted with the owner of the Commercial, Mrs. Lisbeth Garcia and employees; and survey, conducted to the population of 282 people, which appear in the record of annual customers of the Commercial the "J", it was found that 64% are female and 36% are male, i.e. there is a majority of women who predominate as customers of the Commercial.

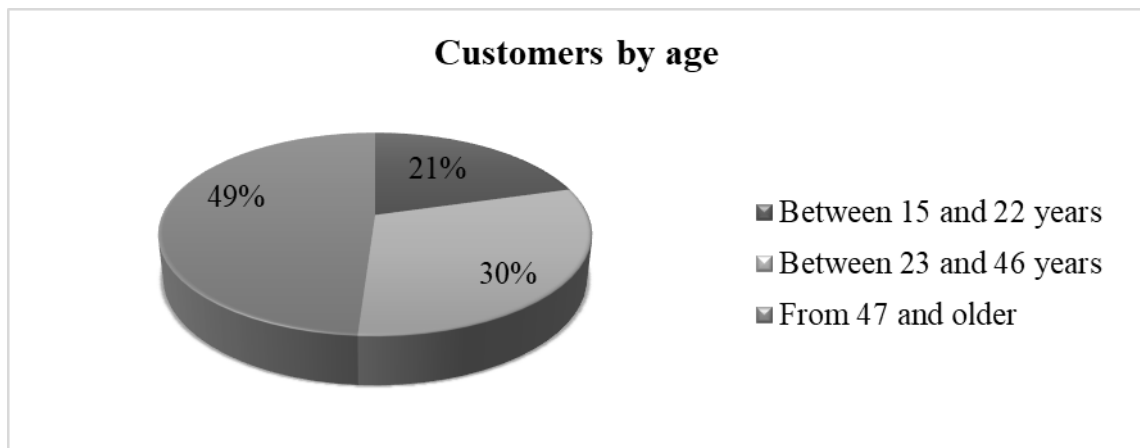
**Figure 1.** Percentages of customers by sex



Source: own elaboration with the research data (2024)

Forty-nine percent of customers are aged 47 and older, while 30% are between 23 and 46 years old, and 21% are between 15 and 22 years old.

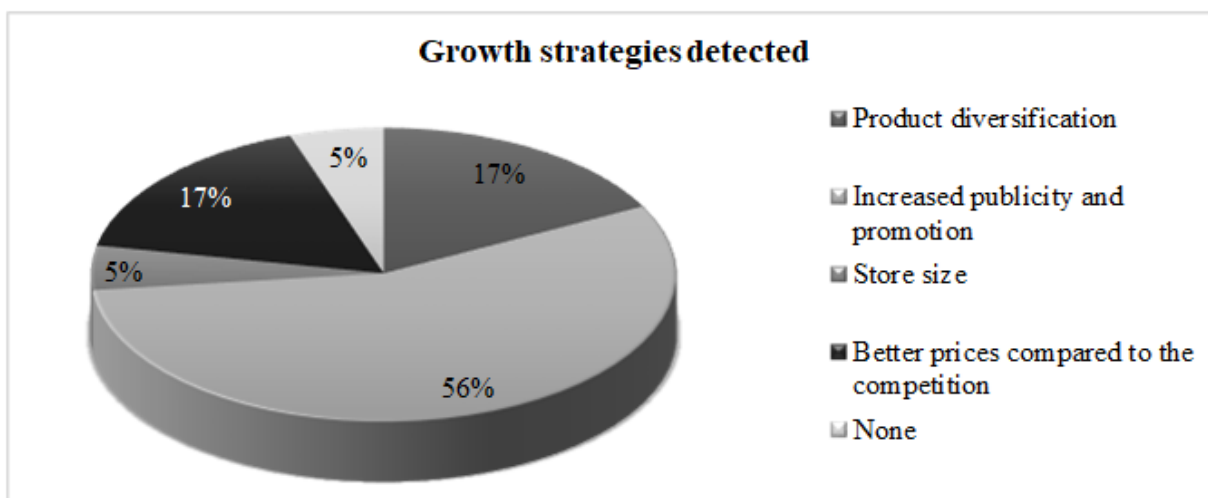
Figure 2. Percentages of customers by age



Source: own elaboration with the research data (2024)

In identifying the business growth strategies used by Comercial la "J" in the Calderón parish, when asked about the growth strategies that customers have noticed in the last two years, it is shown that 56% of customers indicate that the growth strategy they have noticed in the last two years is increased advertising and promotion, 17% consider that they have diversification of products, while another 17% indicate that they have better prices compared to the competition, 5% consider that it is the size of the store, and finally, another 5% indicate that they have not noticed any growth strategy.

Figure 3. Detected strategies



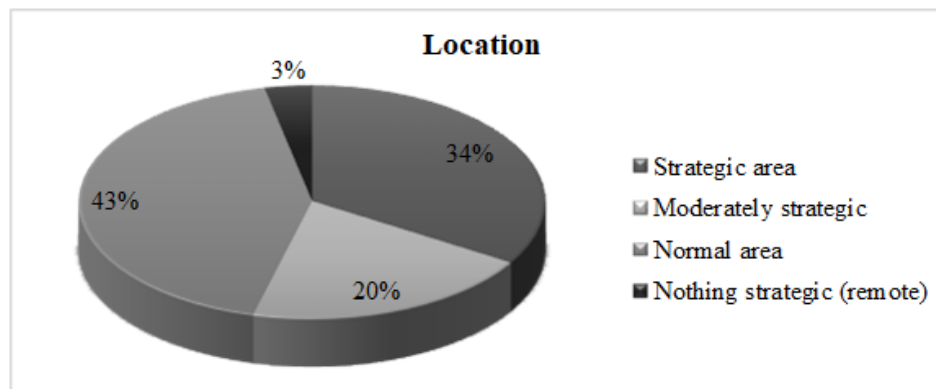
Source: own elaboration with the research data (2024)

In an interview with the owner of Comercial la "J", Mrs. Lisbeth García, she indicated that the actions taken to capture the attention of the store's customers and other public, is to carry out promotions and offers, with economic prices.

On the other hand, in the interview conducted with the employees of the Commercial Department, they indicate that they make product stands, in order to catch the customer's attention, in addition to trying to take advantage of the best promotions of the suppliers, in order to sell the products to the customers at an economical price.

In order to determine the positioning of the "J" store in the parish of Calderón through its level of competitiveness, when customers were asked their opinion on the location of the store, 43% of the customers surveyed considered it to be located in a normal area, 34% said that they considered it to be a strategic area, while 20% considered it to be a moderately strategic area, and finally 3% said that they did not consider it to be strategic at all, and therefore considered it to be a neighboring area.

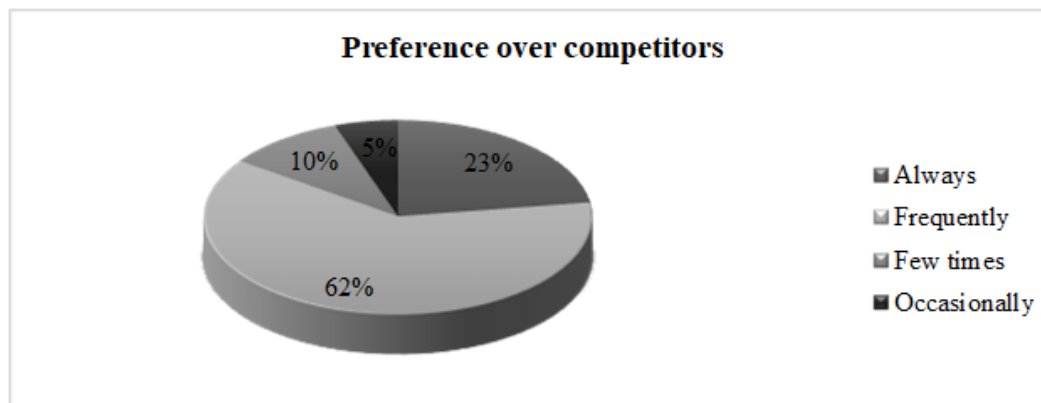
**Figure 4.** Perception about the location of the store



**Source:** own elaboration with the research data (2024)

With respect to the choice of customers of Comercial la "J" over other options available in the parish of Calderón, it was identified that 62% of the customers frequently choose Comercial la "J" over other options available in the parish of Calderón, 23% always choose it, while 10% choose it rarely, and finally 5% choose it occasionally over other available options.

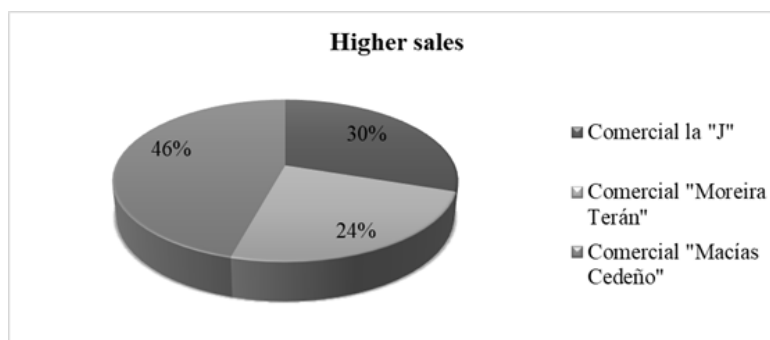
**Figure 5.** Percentage of customers who prefer it over the competitor



**Source:** own elaboration with the research data (2024)

Likewise, when asked about the positioning of the Commercial, through its level of competitiveness, it is evident that when the clients surveyed were asked about which of the commercials they consider to have the highest sales in the market of the parish of Calderón, 46% indicated that the Commercial "Macías Cedeño" has the highest sales in the market, while 30% mentioned that the Commercial "La "J" has the highest sales in the market, 46% indicated that the "Macías Cedeño" store is the one with the highest sales in the market, while 30% mentioned that the "J" store has the highest sales in the market, and finally 24% considered that the "Moreira Terán" store has the highest sales in the Calderón parish market. Therefore, it is evident that the "Macías Cedeño" store predominates in the level of sales in the Calderón parish market.

**Figure 6.** Level of sales by store

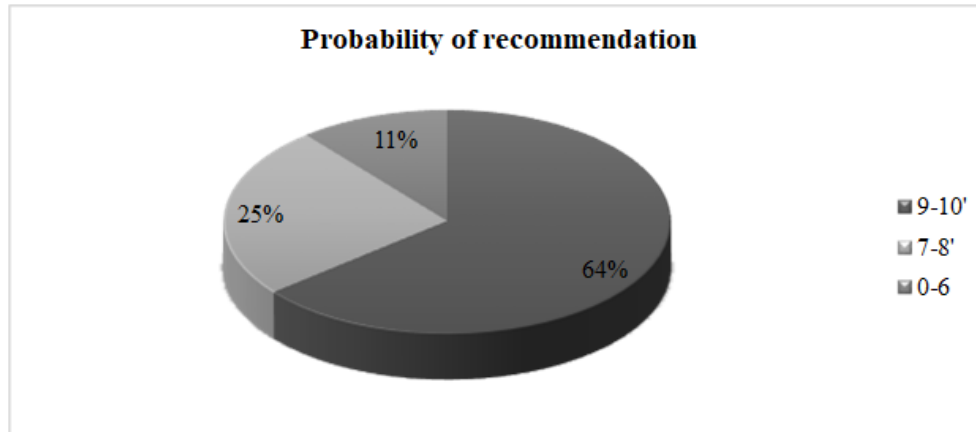


**Source:** own elaboration with the research data (2024)

At this point, with respect to the interview with the owner of the store, Mrs. Lisbeth García, as well as the interview with the store's employees, they indicated that the biggest competition they have are the stores "Moreira Terán" and "Macías Cedeño". Macías Cedeño" is the best positioned leader in the market, followed by Comercial la "J".

When analyzing the relationship between business growth and positioning of Comercial la "J" in the parish of Calderón, when asked how likely it was that they would recommend Comercial la "J" to a friend or relative, 64% indicated that they would recommend it in a range of 9-10, while 25% mentioned that they would recommend it in a range of 7-8, and 11% indicated that they would recommend it in a range of 0-6.

Figure 7. Propension to recommend the store

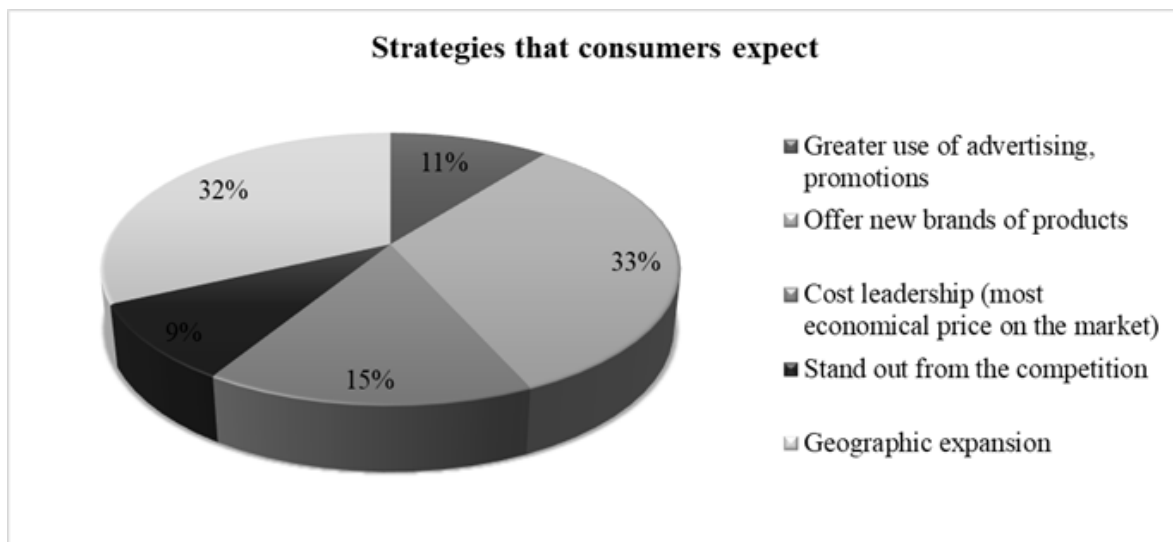


Source: own elaboration with the research data (2024)

With the above results, according to the way of evaluating business positioning, by means of Net Promote Score (NPS), which indicates that the ranks are classified as follows: promoters, in a range of 9-10; passives, in a range of 7-8; and detractors, in a range of 0-6, to calculate it, the percentage of detractors must be subtracted from the percentage of promoters. So, to the 64% of customers who would recommend the Comercial in a range of 9-10, subtract the 11% who would recommend it from 0-6. According to this form of evaluation, it is evident that the NPS of Comercial la "J" is 53%. This means that Comercial la "J" has a high probability of being recommended by its customers, which may influence the positioning of the Comercial as a market leader in the parish.

Next, when examining the growth strategies that the customers would like to see implemented in the commercial area, 33% of the customers stated that they would like to see implemented in the commercial area the strategy of growth by offering new brands of products, 32% indicated that the strategy of growth by geographic expansion, while 15% by cost leadership, 11% indicated that they would like the strategy of growth by greater use of advertising, promotions and 9% indicated that by differentiating themselves from the competition. Therefore, in the results obtained from the 282 clients surveyed, it is evident that clients would like to see the growth strategy implemented by offering new product brands, which can generate a positive benefit with respect to the competition.

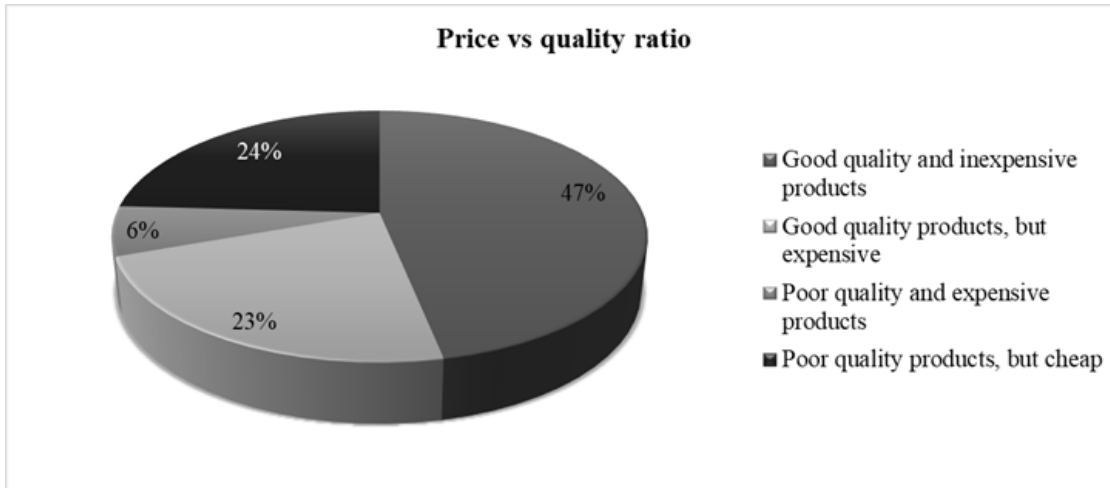
Figure 8. Strategies expected by consumers



Source: own elaboration with the research data (2024)

Regarding the quality-price ratio of the products offered, in comparison with other establishments, 47% of the customers consider that the existing ratio is that the products are of good quality and economical, 23% consider that the products are of good quality but expensive, while 24% indicate that the products are of poor quality but inexpensive, and finally 6% consider that the products are of poor quality and expensive. Therefore, it is evident that most of the Comercial's customers consider that they offer good quality and economic products, compared to the competition.

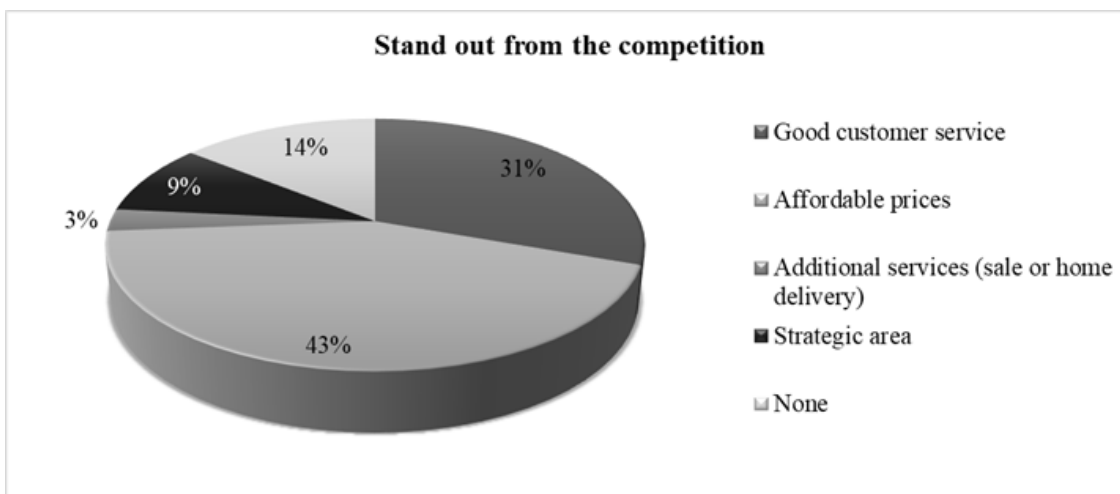
Figure 9. Preferences about price and quality



Source: own elaboration with the research data (2024)

Likewise, when examining whether Comercial la "J" stands out for any specific characteristic in comparison with its direct competitors, 43% of the clients surveyed stated that it stands out for its good service, which is a bit unpleasant in other establishments, 31% indicated that it offers accessible prices, while 14% mentioned that they do not consider that there is any characteristic that makes it stand out, 9% indicated that it is because of its strategic location, and finally, 3% mentioned that it stands out because it offers additional services.

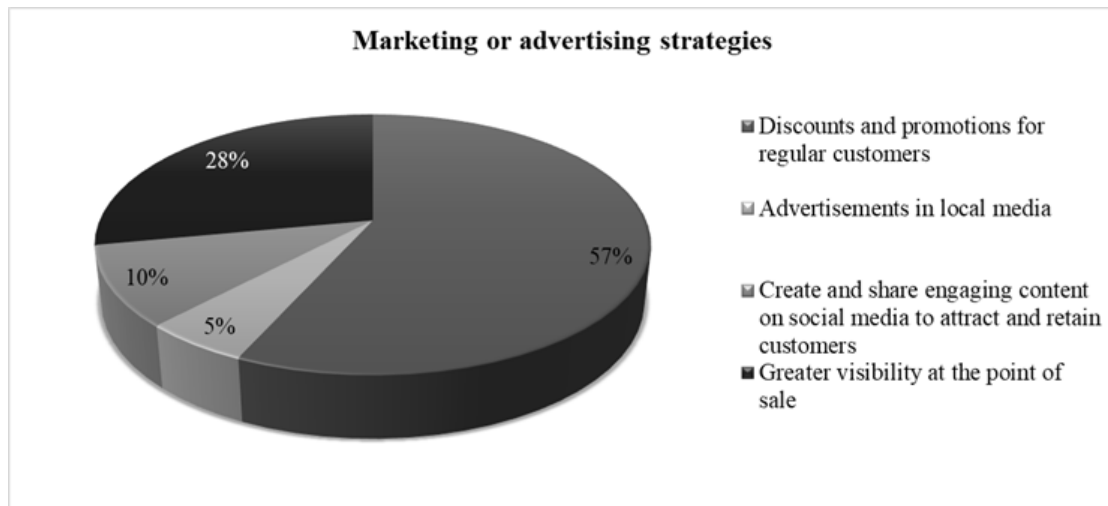
Figure 10. Comparison with its competitors



Source: own elaboration with the research data (2024)

Finally, when investigating the marketing or advertising strategies that customers considered could benefit increased visibility and attraction of more customers, 57% indicated that a marketing or advertising strategy that could benefit them are discounts and promotions to regular customers, 28% indicated increased visibility at the point of sale, 10% mentioned creating and sharing attractive content on social networks to attract and retain customers, finally, 5% considered that through advertisements in magazines, newspapers and local radio stations.



**Figure 11.** Perception of expected marketing or advertising strategies

Source: own elaboration with the research data (2024)

According to the interview conducted with the owner and employees of Comercial la "J", it was evident that their goals are to increase sales and attract new customers through low prices, offers, discounts, and very good service in order to expand in the market, which reflects the close relationship between the strategies they consider implementing in order to be able to position themselves in the market. Business growth strategies provide organizations with a clear and planned approach to expand and strengthen their market position.

- With the results obtained in identifying the business growth strategies used by Comercial la "J" in the parish of Calderón, 56% of them are advertising and promotion of products.

According to the authors Yoza, Villafuerte and Parrales (2021) who conducted the research entitled "Business growth: market development strategy in the MSME sector", where the study focuses on analyzing the market development strategies that have allowed many Ecuadorian MSMEs to achieve business growth and especially sustainability in the market, in which a descriptive methodology was used, with a qualitative, non-experimental approach. The results obtained showed that creativity and innovation and the resilience with which the businesses operate have been key to remain in the market.

This result differs from the results obtained in the present research, since despite the similarity of identifying business growth strategies as fundamental for corporate development, they indicate that innovation is a relevant factor in market positioning, therefore, a properly formulated strategy will help the growth of the organization. On the other hand, the present research identifies that business growth strategies for the strengthening of the Commercial the "J" is the increased advertising and promotion of products.

- Subsequently, with the second specific objective to determine the positioning of the Commercial "La J" in the parish of Calderón through its level of competitiveness, with a percentage of 30%, the result is that it is the second Commercial positioned in the parish of Calderón, being surpassed by the Commercial "Macías Cedeño" with a percentage of 46%. And as for the characteristic that makes it stand out from the competition, it includes a percentage of 43% to the good service provided by employees, the lowest being the additional services, such as sales or home delivery with 3%.

In turn, the authors Seminario Unzueta et al. (2020) in their research entitled: "Positioning Strategies in times of COVID - 19 of the company D. FRUTITOS E.I.R.L - San Juan de Lurigancho, 2020", which aimed to determine the positioning strategies in times of COVID-19 of the company D. Frutitos E.I.R.L - San Juan de Lurigancho, 2020. In the results it was determined that the positioning strategies are being given positively at a high level with 65.0% with respect to consumer management, it was determined that it is being applied correctly with a high level of 68.8% with respect to Marketing and a high level valuation was reached with 70%, referring to brand management a high level of 68.8% is applied and with respect to competition it was observed that a low level of 42.5% does not identify competitors.

These results differ from the results obtained in the present investigation where it can be observed that, in terms of competitiveness in sales, Comercial la "J" is second in the market of the Calderón parish, so it is evident that the competition surrounding the establishment surpasses it in sales.

On the other hand, in the research carried out by Eyzaguirre (2019) entitled: "Business growth strategies for the positioning of OSO FOOD TRUCK in the city of Chiclayo - 2018", which aims to develop business growth strategies to improve the positioning of OSO FOOD TRUCK in the city of Chiclayo, in order to know what the consumer is looking for thus

generating a recruitment strategy and positioning. As a result it was found that the key source for this research would be marketing through social networks as it is a key source to enter and address consumers in a more direct way, thus reaching new consumers and achieving their recruitment, in addition, another strategy will be the delivery service that will allow to serve even the most distant consumers.

- Therefore, when analyzing the relationship between business growth and positioning of Comercial la "J" in the parish of Calderón, the results obtained in this research differ from the previous paragraph.

This research shows that 57% of customers believe that marketing and advertising strategies such as discounts and promotions for regular customers could benefit Comercial la "J", increasing its visibility and attracting more customers; unlike the previous approach, where it is evident that the key strategy is marketing on social networks, only 10% of the Comercial's customers believe that advertising through the creation and sharing of attractive content on social networks can attract and retain customers.

## CONCLUSIONS

With the present investigation it was found that the strategy of business growth most used in the Comercial la "J" during the last two years is the increased advertising and promotion, this type of strategy has allowed the Commercial to be noticed in the market of the parish Calderon, since the local customers are attracted by the promotions of the establishment.

Based on the results obtained through the survey of the customers of Comercial la "J" in the parish of Calderón, it was determined that the current situation of the establishment is moderately good, since Comercial "Macías Cedeño" is the market leader in the sector. On the other hand, through the Net Promote Score positioning evaluation form, it indicated that its NPS is 53%, which indicates that it has a high probability of being recommended by customers and thus extend its positioning and become a leader in the market. The position of Comercial la "J" in the market demonstrates its capacity to satisfy the needs of consumers, as well as its ability to adapt, and also demonstrates a level of competitiveness that allows it to constantly challenge the market leader and remain a relevant option for consumers.

The business growth of Comercial la "J" in Calderón parish is directly related to its positioning in the local market, indicating that the company's success is linked to its visibility and reputation within the community, demonstrating that customer perception and preference can have a significant impact on business success.

### Main limitations of the study and future research

The study identified some limitations and possibilities for future research. First, while the research provided insights into business growth strategies and their impact on the positioning of Comercial la "J" in Calderón parish, it focused primarily on empirical observation without exploring into theoretical frameworks that could enrich the analysis. Future studies could benefit from a more complete theoretical basis to contextualize the findings within the existing literature on business growth strategies and market positioning. In addition, the research relied primarily on interviews and surveys for data collection, which may have limited the depth of understanding. Incorporating methods such as observational studies or case analysis could provide richer insights into the dynamics of business growth and positioning in Calderon Parish. Furthermore, the study emphasized comparison with direct competitors, but did not explore broader industry trends or external factors shaping market dynamics. Future research could investigate the influence of macroeconomic conditions, regulatory environments and technological advances on the effectiveness of business growth strategies in the local market. Overall, while the study provides valuable information, additional research could address these limitations to provide a more deeply understanding of business growth and positioning strategies in Ecuadorian competitive regional markets such as Calderon Parish.

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**Contribution of each author to the manuscript:**

Task	% of contribution of each author	
	A1	A2
A. theoretical and conceptual foundations and problematization:	50%	50%
B. data research and statistical analysis:	50%	50%
C. elaboration of figures and tables:	50%	50%
D. drafting, reviewing and writing of the text:	50%	50%
E. selection of bibliographical references	50%	50%
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