

Analysis of the impact of comprehensive management on the development of Guayaquil's "huecas"

Análisis del impacto de la gestión integral en el desarrollo de las "huecas" guayaquileñas

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ABSTRACT

This research project analyzes the impact of integral management on the development of gastronomic establishments known as *huecas* in Guayaquil, based on McGregor's Theories X and Y. A non-experimental approach was adopted, allowing for the management of the fundamentals based on pre-existing theoretical categories, concepts, variables, and proposals. This methodological approach was key to collecting valuable information from the selected sample, thus facilitating the design of an integral process reengineering focused on continuous improvement and organizational transformation for sustainable growth and institutional development. For data collection, techniques such as direct observation and the application of structured surveys were used, directed to the managers and employees of the *huecas* studied. These methods allowed obtaining a detailed view of the current management and operational practices, as well as the perceptions and attitudes of the staff regarding their work and work environment, including motivation, commitment levels, and leadership perceptions. As a result of the research, the creation of a specific process reengineering model for the analyzed holes was achieved. This model includes the implementation of standardized processes that seek to optimize operational efficiency, improve service quality, and increase customer satisfaction, while also fostering innovation and strategic decision-making capacities.

Keywords: Gastronomic establishment, comprehensive management, huecas, reengineering.

RESUMEN

El presente proyecto de investigación tiene como objetivo general analizar el impacto de la gestión integral en el desarrollo de los "huecos" en Guayaquil, basado en las Teorías X y Y de McGregor. La investigación se llevó a cabo utilizando un enfoque no experimental, lo cual permitió gestionar los fundamentos con base en categorías, conceptos, varia-



bles o propuestas preexistentes. Este enfoque metodológico fue clave para recolectar información valiosa de la muestra seleccionada, facilitando así el diseño de una reingeniería de procesos integral enfocada en la mejora continua y la transformación organizacional para el crecimiento sostenible y el desarrollo institucional. Para la recolección de datos, se utilizaron técnicas como la observación directa y la aplicación de encuestas estructuradas, dirigidas a los gerentes y empleados de los "huecos" estudiados. Estos métodos permitieron obtener una visión detallada de las prácticas actuales de gestión y operación, así como de las percepciones y actitudes del personal respecto a su trabajo y entorno laboral, incluyendo los niveles de motivación, compromiso y percepciones sobre el liderazgo. Como resultado de la investigación, se logró la creación de un modelo específico de reingeniería de procesos para los huecos analizados. Este modelo incluye la implementación de procesos estandarizados que buscan optimizar la eficiencia operativa, mejorar la calidad del servicio e incrementar la satisfacción del cliente, fomentando además la innovación y las capacidades de toma de decisiones estratégicas.

Palabras clave: Establecimiento gastronómico, gestión integral, huecas, reingeniería.

INTRODUCTION

The present research proposes an analysis of the impact of comprehensive management on the development of the *huecas* of Guayaquil, gastronomic establishments that represent not only a traditional culinary option but also an important cultural and economic axis for many families in Guayaquil, Ecuador. Despite popularity, these *huecas*, their, face structural challenges and difficulties in adapting to new market trends, which has limited their growth and consolidation as formal businesses (Susana and Brunett, 2021).

The Ecuadorian gastronomic context shows that the culinary richness of the country is not always reflected in a business strengthening of its actors. *Huecas* offer typical dishes, native flavors, and a close experience with the consumer; however, many of them continue to operate with traditional methods and with significant administrative limitations (Castro and Zaldumbide, 2022).

In this sense, a key opportunity can be identified in the implementation of

comprehensive management strategies that allow these ventures to transform, professionalize their operation, and consolidate as references of gastronomic tourism. Comprehensive management contemplates the planning, control, organization, and direction of resources focused on continuous improvement in terms of service, administration, customer service, and culinary offering (González, 2022).

One of the most influential elements in this process is the incorporation of digital marketing. At present, social networks have gone from being an optional tool to becoming a fundamental channel to make ventures visible, generate sales, and build relationships with the target audience. However, inadequate or unplanned use may negatively affect the image of the business (Polo *et al.*, 2019).

According to Duarte-Casar y Rojas Le-Fort (2024), many *huecas* still manage their advertisement in a traditional way, losing opportunities for positioning in an increasingly digitalized market. In addition, they lack content strategies that create

emotional connections with users, which is particularly relevant in a sector where the cultural and sensory component is decisive for customer loyalty.

The challenge lies in breaking the structural barriers that prevent *huecas* from evolving as businesses. These barriers include the lack of management training, the absence of standardized processes, and limited access to technological tools.

Huecas, as spaces that combine gastronomy, history, and tradition, require a comprehensive approach that considers their cultural particularities. Process management, the implementation of best practices, and a focus on service quality are pillars to ensure their sustainability and competitiveness (Buenaño *et al.*, 2019).

To achieve this goal, a multidimensional approach is necessary, considering the efficient management of resources, innovation in product offerings, personalized customer service, and a clear digital communication strategy (Quimí, 2019).

The justification for this research lies in the need to promote the growth of these businesses from an academic and technical perspective, strengthening the local economic fabric and positioning *huecas* as key players in gastronomic tourism in Guayaquil (Mejía *et al.*, 2017).

Digital marketing emerges as a key tool that, if properly used, can significantly enhance the reach and image of these businesses. However, its implementation must be accompanied by proper content management, consumer knowledge, and a constant evaluation of the results (Bravo, 2021).

Consequently, the present study proposes a mixed approach, with quantitative and qualitative methodologies, that

allows for a diagnosis of the current situation of *huecas* and the design of proposals for an applicable improvement. Integral management is not only conceived as a set of administrative techniques but as a model of cultural and organizational transformation.

The objective is clear: to turn *huecas* into sustainable businesses, with their own identity, capable of competing in a dynamic environment without losing their traditional essence. This transformation requires a strategic perspective that integrates knowledge from the gastronomic, digital, and business domains.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research is framed within a mixed methodological approach, non-experimental in nature, with an exploratory and descriptive design. A joint discussion is incorporated to draw inferences based on all the information collected, with the aim of achieving a better understanding of the problem analyzed: the impact of comprehensive management on the development of *huecas* in Guayaquil (Sampieri and Baptista, 2014).

The approach is both quantitative and qualitative. The first was addressed through structured surveys applied to customers of selected *huecas*, with the objective of understanding their level of satisfaction, perception of service quality, loyalty, and other key aspects used to evaluate business performance.

This research is delimited to a practical analysis within the reality of Guayaquil-based enterprises, considering the operational capacities of the *huecas*. The non-experimental design responds to the need to observe phenomena as they occur, without manipulating variables.

The study population corresponds to the entrepreneurs participating in the "Raíces 2024" fair held in the city of Guayaquil. This event brings together *huecas* representative of the local culinary tradition. The sample was intentional, non-probabilistic, and consisted of three enterprises selected based on their track record, level of participation in training processes, and willingness to collaborate in the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the results obtained in this study about the *huecas* reveals significant patterns regarding customer experience, the perception of service quality, and the elements that promote consumer loyalty.

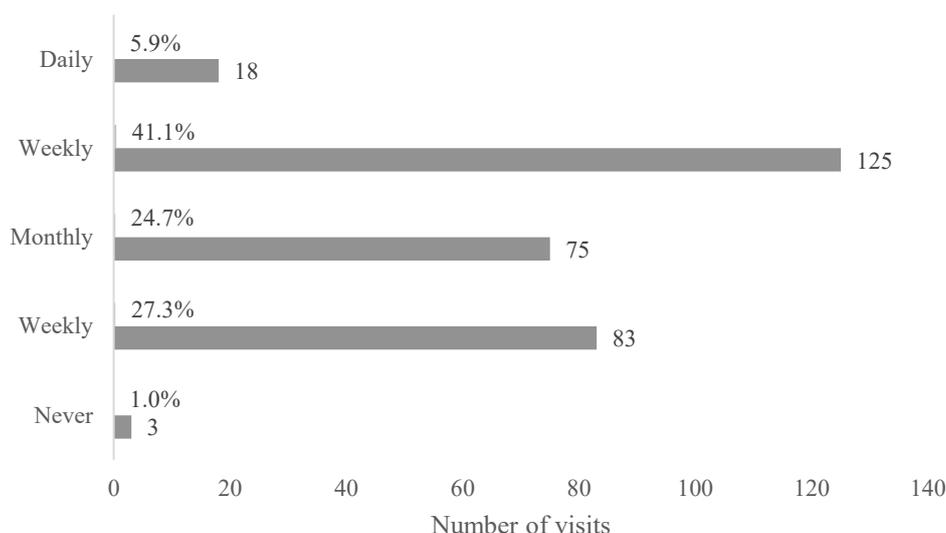


Figure 1. Frequency of visits to the *huecas*

In regards to the frequency of visits, it was observed that 41.1% of respondents visit the *huecas* weekly, highlighting the importance of consistency in the experience offered by these establishments. This figure also reflects the loyalty of an important segment of customers, who value the local culinary offerings and are attracted by affordable prices. The frequency of weekly visits, followed by occasional visits (27.3%) and monthly visits (24.7%), indicate that the *huecas* have a high recurrence rate among their clients, but also point to an opportunity to improve loyalty among

more sporadic consumers by encouraging higher frequency through digital marketing strategies or promotions.

The evaluation of the overall experience of diners about the *huecas* showed a tendency in which the majority of respondents (56.3%) rated their experience as a 3, indicating moderate satisfaction. This finding reflects that, while the *huecas* are meeting their customers' expectations, there is a clear opportunity to improve the overall experience, either through process optimization, continuous improvement of service quality, or innovation in the dishes offered.

Table 1.
How would you rate your overall experience at the huecas?

Items	Quantity	%
1	4	1.3
2	26	8.6
3	171	56.3
4	45	14.8
5	58	19.1
Total	304	100

The classification of the overall experience with a low to medium score, compared to a rating of 4 or 5, highlights that there is room to improve comprehensive management practices, particularly in aspects such as hygiene, staff training, and dish presentation.

On the other hand, when diners were asked about the importance of a "Huaca" implementing comprehensive management practices, the results showed that 50.3% of

respondents consider it very important for *huecas* to implement hygiene, customer service, and food quality practices. This finding emphasizes the relevance of operational and management aspects, which are essential for customer loyalty and the successful positioning of these businesses within the competitive gastronomic sector. However, the lack of standardization in the implementation of these processes could be contributing to many diners not perceiving a consistently satisfactory level of quality.

Table 2.
How important is it for you that a "Hueca" implements comprehensive management practices (hygiene, customer service, food quality)?

Items	Quantity	%
1	2	0.7
2	27	8.9
3	153	50.3
4	32	10.5
5	90	29.6
Total	304	100

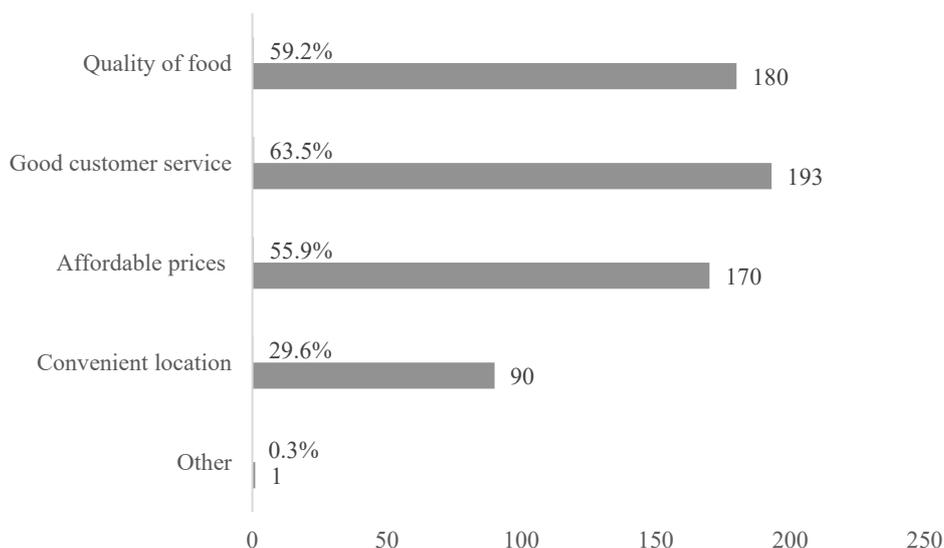


Figure 2. How important is it to you that a “Hueca” implements comprehensive management practices (hygiene, customer service, and food quality)?

In regards to the factors that motivate consumers to return to the *huecas*, the survey results highlight that good customer service (63.5%) is the main driver of loyalty. This finding emphasizes the importance of personalized attention and staff friendliness, key elements in creating a memorable experience for customers. Food quality (59.2%) and affordable prices (55.9%) are also considered determining factors, which

underscores that consumers value both culinary excellence and the quality-price ratio in their decision to return. These results suggest that, although the *huecas* have an attractive offering, it is crucial to continue strengthening service quality and the gastronomic proposition, as well as maintaining affordable prices to ensure that consumers return frequently.

Table 3.

Would you recommend a “Hueca” that implements good comprehensive management practices to your friends or family?

Items	Quantity	%
Definitely yes	166	54.6
Probably yes	132	43.4
Not sure	6	2.0
Probably not	0	0.0
Definitely not	0	0.0
Total	304	100.0

According to the data collected from the survey, diners would definitely recommend one of their favorites *huecas* or one where they had a pleasant experience, with 54.6%, while 43.4% would probably recommend it. One aspect highlighted in the interviews and respondents' comments was dissatisfaction arising from the lack of hygiene, particularly when diners observed that in some *huecas* the same hand was used to handle payments and serve food. These types of practices highlight the urgent need to professionalize the operation of these establishments by implementing better Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP). Staff training in key areas such as food handling, personal hygiene, and customer service should be a priority to guarantee customer safety and satisfaction.

In that sense, Boada's work *et al.* (2023) about the perceptions by consumers and how they impact their shopping preferences and their satisfaction is particularly relevant to understand the factors that influence customer loyalty on *huecas*. According to these authors, perceptions of service quality and product authenticity are factors that directly affect consumer satisfaction and loyalty, a concept that is also reflected in this study. Also, Alcívar *et al.* (2024) provide a useful perspective on how local gastronomy can attract both consumers and tourists, highlighting the importance of the gastronomic experience for customer satisfaction. This is especially applicable to those *huecas* where the autochthonous gastronomic proposal plays a key role in customer's experience.

Lastly, the study by Solano-Solano *et al.* (2023), focused on customer satisfaction in the food and beverage sector in Ecuador, reinforces the importance of service quality and efficient management in

consumer loyalty. These authors emphasize the relevance of service quality as a crucial determinant for consumer loyalty, a finding that is also observed in the results obtained regarding the "Huacas Guauaquileñas".

CONCLUSIONS

The study conducted on *huecas* in Guayaquil highlights the urgent need to establish a comprehensive management model aimed at optimizing their operational and customer service processes. Through this research, fundamental elements were identified, such as the lack of formalization of administrative procedures and the importance of continuous staff training to enhance service quality and ensure customer satisfaction. Survey findings indicate that consumers place a high value on customer service and product quality. This underscores the importance of implementing Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) in the *huecas* as an essential measure to ensure customer loyalty and safety.

The purpose of the process reengineering suggested in the present research is to increase operational efficiency, improve the customer experience, and strengthen the sustainable development of *huecas*. In this way, a solid foundation is established for these enterprises to continue their expansion, thus ensuring their position as benchmarks for local gastronomic tourism.

It is imperative that entrepreneurs maintain a continuous adaptation to the new demands of the market, especially regarding the implementation of digital technologies, which plays a crucial role in the visibility and promotion of businesses. The incorporation of standardized management practices and a perspective of continuous improvement will contribute significantly to their consolidation as formal and

competitive gastronomic establishments. Consequently, the establishment of comprehensive management, complemented by innovation in internal processes and high-quality customer service, is essential to ensure their long-term success and sustainability.

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Author Contribution Statement

- Tatiana Poveda–Anchundia: Project administration, conceptualization, research, supervision.
- Scarlett Sarmiento–Victor: Conceptualization, writing, research.
- Eneyda Alvarez–Caicedo: Methodology, validation, data curation.
- Karen León-Anchundia: Formal analysis, validation.
- Grace Molina–Bravo: Software.