

ORIGINAL

Impact of creating an online store to market organic products

Impacto de la creación de una tienda online, para comercializar productos orgánicos

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: to define digital marketing as an adaptive and technological process through which companies create, communicate, deliver, and maintain value with their customers.

Objective: to determine the impact of creating an online store to market organic products.

Method: an observational, descriptive, and cross-sectional study was conducted. The population consisted of environmentally conscious individuals interested in improving their health and that of the planet through their purchasing decisions. A simple random sampling method was used with 115 people who were sent a questionnaire to determine how frequently they consume organic foods.

Results: 83 % of respondents frequently consume nuts, 98 % are motivated by the quality and benefits of consuming nuts, 42 % of respondents set aside \$10 monthly, educational videos are preferred by 59 %, 40 % prefer to buy by the pound, and 75 % of respondents agree to receive promotions and offers via WhatsApp.

Conclusions: the creation of an online store for the sale of organic products in Ecuador is part of a context of market expansion and alignment with global trends in healthy and sustainable consumption.

Keywords: E-Commerce; Organic Products; Digital Marketing; Sustainability; Consumer Behavior.

RESUMEN

Introducción: definir el marketing digital como un proceso adaptativo y tecnológico mediante el cual las empresas crean, comunican, entregan y mantienen el valor con sus clientes.

Objetivo: determinar el impacto de la creación de una tienda online para comercializar productos orgánicos.

Método: se realizó un estudio observacional, descriptivo y transversal. La población estuvo constituida por individuos con una conciencia ambiental y un interés en mejorar su salud y la del planeta a través de sus decisiones de compra. Se empleó el método de muestreo aleatorio simple con un número de 115 personas las que se les envió un cuestionario de preguntas para saber con qué frecuencia consumen alimentos orgánicos.

Resultados: el 83 % de los encuestados si consumen con frecuencia frutos secos, el 98 % están animados por la calidad y beneficios de consumir frutos secos, el 42 % de las personas encuestadas separan \$10 mensuales, los videos educativos son de preferencia para el público encuestado con 59 %, el 40 % de las personas prefieren comprar por libras, un 75 % de los encuestados están de acuerdo en recibir promociones y ofertas vía WhatsApp.

Conclusiones: la creación de una tienda online para la comercialización de productos orgánicos en Ecuador se inscribe en un contexto de expansión de mercado y alineación con tendencias globales de consumo saludable y sostenible.

Palabras clave: Comercio Electrónico; Productos Orgánicos; Marketing Digital; Sostenibilidad; Comportamiento del Consumidor.

INTRODUCTION

New technologies are present in countless possible areas, permeating every aspect of daily life, such as communication between friends or family, to cite just one example. One of the key factors in making this possible has been the emergence of the Internet, which, since its origins in 1969, has transformed, crossing the boundaries of the computer to reach other electronic devices, to make people's lives easier.⁽¹⁾

Digital transformation, understood from a business perspective, aims to integrate new technologies across as many sectors of the company as possible to change the way it operates, optimizing processes and improving its competitiveness to deliver value to all target audiences.⁽¹⁾

Organic foods are considered healthy because they are produced or manufactured according to a set of standardized methods and techniques known as "organic," meaning they do not use chemical substances or synthetic components. Their consumption is associated with the idea of protecting health. In the online world, digital marketing positively influences consumers' purchasing decisions by improving recognition of customer needs, assisting in product and service information searches, enhancing the evaluation of alternatives, and improving the purchasing and post-purchase experiences.⁽²⁾

The concept of digital marketing has grown in popularity. Digital marketing is an adaptive, technology-driven process through which companies create, communicate, deliver, and maintain value with their customers. Large companies improve their communication strategies through cybermedia, primarily through digital marketing and technological innovations such as big data and machine learning. Digital marketing is broad and uses digital techniques such as network technologies, multimedia, interactivity, especially social media, mobile marketing, analytics, e-commerce, and customer data mining. The large amount of data allows companies to develop the market by predicting customer response. In addition, data collected in digital environments can help track a company's performance.⁽³⁾

E-commerce encompasses all commercial transactions carried out through telecommunications networks using electronic means. Thus, e-commerce includes not only the electronic purchase and sale of goods, information, or services, but also the use of the Internet for pre- and post-sale activities. The digital economy has become one of the main drivers of global growth. While many countries are in recession, the e-commerce sector is growing. Growth is particularly significant in start-ups that have launched a website, and social media is an ally in facilitating buying and selling.⁽⁴⁾

Digital marketing represents a new frontier in business competitiveness, shaping commerce as a key driver of many technological advances. E-commerce, with its dynamic, fast-growing, and highly competitive characteristics, promises new avenues for wealth creation. E-commerce is a new business model that is emerging to transform business processes. Thus, Internet marketing is an integral part of marketing strategy; commercial agents must understand how consumers use the Internet to make decisions, choose brands, and negotiate.⁽³⁾ Therefore, stimulating credibility and online trust is essential to foster this type of relationship.

The consumption of organic food is on the rise in many countries, such as Switzerland and Denmark, and the general public must be aware of the health and sustainability benefits these products offer.⁽⁵⁾

Consumer behavior in this regard involves people seeking, purchasing, using, evaluating, and discarding products and services to meet their needs. It is a dynamic process that involves decisions that affect how they spend their available resources. Internal and external factors, such as social class, peer pressure, and other social aspects, influence this behavior. Although it has traditionally been seen as a process of buying and selling, it is also considered a process of exchange between the consumer and the company.

Based on the above, the objective of this article is to determine the impact of creating an online store to market organic products.

METHOD

An observational, descriptive, cross-sectional study was conducted to determine the impact of creating an online store for marketing organic products.

The population consisted of individuals with environmental awareness and an interest in improving their health and the planet's through their purchasing decisions. Selecting this sample enabled us to obtain relevant results on preferences, purchasing behavior, and willingness to buy organic products via an online platform. The sample was taken from only one sector in northern Quito: La Luz. A simple random sampling method was used, with a sample of 115 people who were sent a questionnaire to determine how often they consume organic foods.

The data processing and analysis plan for the study on creating an online store for organic products involves collecting data via Google Forms, exporting it to Excel for cleaning, and numerically coding responses on a Likert scale. Descriptive analyses will be performed to summarize the data's characteristics, including measures of central tendency and dispersion, and graphs will be used to visualize the distributions.

Ethical considerations focus on ensuring the anonymity and confidentiality of participant data. It is ensured that all information collected will be used exclusively for academic and research purposes, without revealing personal identities or compromising sensitive data.

RESULTS

Figure 1 shows that 83 % of respondents frequently consume nuts.



Figure 1. Distribution according to frequency of nut consumption

Figure 2 shows that 98 % are motivated by the quality and health benefits of consuming nuts.

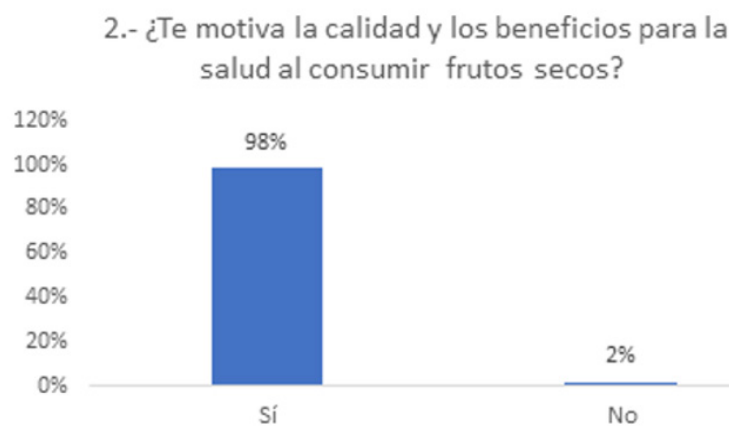


Figure 2. Distribution according to quality and health benefits

Figure 3 shows that 53 % consume nuts, with most respondents consuming nuts for personal reasons.



Figure 3. Distribution according to nut consumption

Figure 4 shows that 42 % of respondents set aside \$10 per month.



Figure 4. Distribution according to budget

Figure 5 shows that educational videos are preferred by the surveyed public, with 59 % of responses in first place.



Figure 5. Distribution according to promotion of healthy consumption habits

Figure 6 shows that consumer preferences for natural nuts received a majority of 83 % of responses.

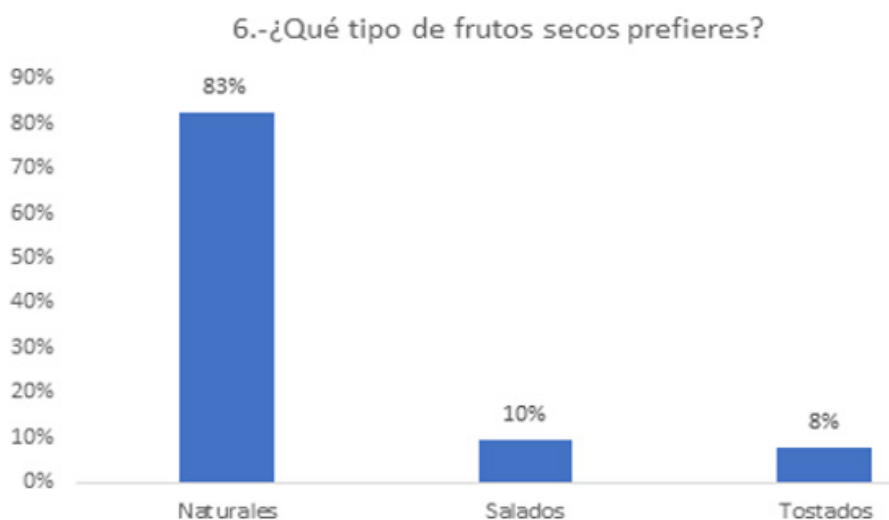


Figure 6. Distribution according to preferred nuts

Figure 7 shows that 40 % of people prefer to buy by the pound.



Figure 7. Distribution according to the quantity of nuts purchased

Figure 8 shows that 64 % of people prefer to pay by bank transfer.

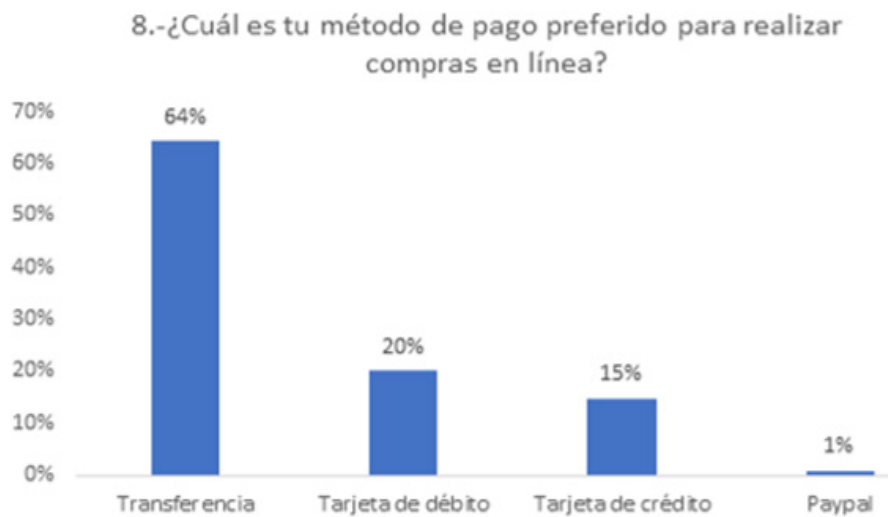


Figure 8. Distribution according to payment method

Figure 9 shows that 75 % of respondents agree to receive promotions and offers via WhatsApp.

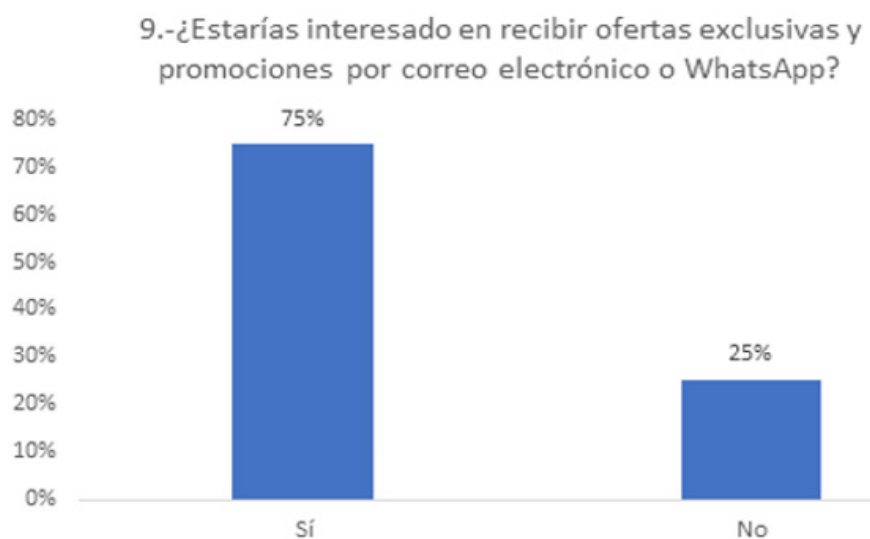


Figure 9. Distribution according to interest in receiving promotions and offers via WhatsApp

DISCUSSION

Public health and environmental sustainability have become central pillars of the global agenda, profoundly transforming the consumption habits of modern society. In this context, demand for organic products has grown steadily worldwide, driven by awareness of the harmful effects of pesticides and synthetic chemicals in food. Organic foods are produced responsibly, contributing to protecting the environment and preserving natural resources.⁽⁶⁾

E-commerce has experienced significant growth in recent years, driven by an increase in consumers who prefer shopping online. In Ecuador, around 40 % of the population makes purchases online. In terms of payment methods, credit cards are the most widely used, accounting for 61 % of transactions, followed by debit cards and cash payments.

The current commercial landscape in Latin America, particularly in Ecuador, is being redefined by e-commerce, which has emerged as a key strategic factor. Active internet use globally reaches 62,5 % of the population, rising to 75 % in the Latin American region. In Ecuador, sales through digital platforms have grown exponentially, reaching \$5 billion in 2023, a 25 % increase over the previous year. This reality underscores the potential of e-commerce as a powerful tool for promoting and marketing organic products.⁽⁷⁾

Only a minority consume nuts on medical advice, which confirms the idea that nuts are valued mainly for their general health benefits and personal preferences. These data show that the online nut store has been successful in capturing consumers' attention and preferences.

Customer preferences are reflected in this, as most are aware of the nutritional value of organic products (nuts). The online store can play an important role in improving customer service by providing essential and accurate information to support the population's diet and lifestyle.

Despite recognition of their intrinsic benefits, the penetration of organic products in many countries, including Ecuador, remains limited. The main challenge lies in low consumption, a phenomenon that can be explained by the lack of information about the real nutritional value of these foods and by the mistaken or real perception of a higher cost compared to conventional products. To reverse this situation, it is essential not only to educate the population about the specific health and well-being benefits, but also to improve availability and access through efficient sales channels.⁽⁸⁾

The creation of an online store dedicated to organic products addresses the pressing need to expand access to a broader audience, overcoming the geographical and time constraints inherent to traditional channels.

⁽⁷⁾ The Ecuadorian digital ecosystem has shown remarkable robustness in recent years, with 82,3 % of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) using the internet. This digital penetration, coupled with the rise of e-commerce, makes investing in online platforms a strategic decision with significant profitability potential. E-commerce facilitates buying and selling, as well as using the internet for pre- and post-sale activities such as customer service and supply chain management.⁽⁹⁾

The creation of an online store for the marketing of organic products is part of a context in which the organic food market is expanding, driven by a growing interest in personal health, environmental sustainability, and responsible consumption. This phenomenon is reflected not only in the increase in demand for organic products but also in the evolution of consumer preferences, with consumers increasingly valuing transparency in the supply chain, product quality, and the social and environmental impact of their purchases.

Likewise, e-commerce offers a key opportunity to promote and market these foods in both Colombia and Ecuador. It is necessary to continue strengthening this trend and promoting the supply of organic foods through new sales channels, such as virtual stores. E-commerce has implemented state-of-the-art digital innovations, which have increased its use on mobile devices, enabling online purchases and boosting e-commerce.⁽⁵⁾

It is important to note that individuals make rational decisions based on maximizing their personal interests. In the context of the proposal, this theory can be applied to understand consumers' purchasing decisions, how they are influenced by the perceived benefits of organic products, and how internal and external factors shape their choices. In the context of the proposal, this theory can be used to analyze the factors that motivate consumers to buy organic products and how the online store can influence their purchasing behavior.⁽¹⁰⁾

The design of an online store specializing in organic products responds to several key market trends: the digitization of commerce has transformed how consumers access products, and online channels have become an essential tool for reaching a broader, more diverse market. Within this, e-commerce platforms overcome geographical and temporal barriers, making it easier for consumers to purchase organic products that might otherwise not be available in their local markets. The online store not only serves as a sales channel but also as an educational space that informs consumers about the benefits of organic products, sustainability practices, and certifications that guarantee product authenticity. This reinforces consumer confidence and differentiates the store in a market that, although growing, faces the threat of new competitors seeking to capitalize on the trend toward organic products.

The most significant barrier to mass consumption is price, which limits purchases to segments of the population with greater purchasing power or awareness of value. In addition, availability and access are

problems, as organic products are not always available in all supermarkets or traditional markets. In the case of nuts (walnuts, almonds, pistachios), consumer preference is directly linked to the search for healthier snacks with high nutritional value, in which consumers weigh the monetary cost against the perceived long-term health benefits.⁽¹¹⁾

There are also significant challenges to consider, including the fact that competition in the organic market is constantly growing, requiring clear and sustained differentiation. This can be overcome by focusing on product quality, customer service, and building strong relationships with suppliers who ensure product freshness and authenticity. Therefore, the online store must adapt to consumers' changing expectations, who increasingly value personalization and convenience in their shopping experiences.

Competition in the organic market is constantly growing, requiring clear and sustained differentiation. The branding strategy must go beyond a social media presence and position the brand holistically. Product characteristics that customers value include reliability, durability, and, above all, the company's reputation and ingredient quality. In the digital environment, this translates into creating a website with a clear, attractive design and continuous, segmented social media communication. The original thesis proposes an approach focused on customer service and the provision of essential, accurate information, which is vital to the food segment.⁽¹⁰⁾

The advantages of virtual businesses include global market expansion and the speed at which business is conducted. The use of new technologies and innovation has improved communication between customers and the company. When establishing a digital marketing project in a company, it is advisable to consider the following phases: strategic marketing, marketing mix, marketing plan, and control phase. Among the benefits of e-commerce are getting to know the consumer better, distinguishing our brand from the competition, identifying opportunities, and quickly detecting opportunities that allow us to grow and reach new markets, among others.⁽¹²⁾

E-commerce is the most powerful tool for overcoming traditional barriers to high prices and low availability, facilitating access to a broader, more informed audience. The success of an e-commerce initiative in this sector depends on rigorous analysis of consumer behavior.⁽⁷⁾ The creation of an online store dedicated to organic products responds to the need to facilitate access to these products for a wider audience, overcoming the geographical and time constraints of traditional sales. Furthermore, digitizing the purchasing process not only expands the potential market but also enables consumers to make informed decisions by providing detailed product descriptions, certifications of origin, and information on sustainable practices.

Analysis and synthesis of scientific evidence confirm the existence of a dynamic niche market for organic products, whose expansion is intrinsically linked to the adoption of e-commerce platforms and ethical, sustainability-focused digital marketing strategies.⁽¹³⁾ The study of organic food consumers is crucial to the creation of any successful digital sales platform. The purchasing decision in this segment is not purely economic, but is deeply influenced by psychological and social factors.⁽¹⁴⁾

Sustainability and social responsibility should not just be marketing messages; they should be integrated into all business operations. This includes practices such as eco-friendly packaging, waste reduction, and carbon footprint offsetting, which not only strengthen the store's value proposition but also have a positive impact on the environment.

CONCLUSIONS

The enormous potential of online stores selling organic products in a growing market is revealed. As consumers become increasingly aware of the benefits of a healthy and sustainable diet, the creation of an online store for the sale of organic products in Ecuador is part of a context of market expansion and alignment with global trends in healthy and sustainable consumption.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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