

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION STRATEGIES IN RURAL ASSOCIATIONS: CASE STUDY OF TOTA-BOYACA ASSOCIATIONS

¹DORA ESTHER FONSECA PINTO, ²CARLOS ARTURO FONSECA PINTO, ³SANDRA MILENA MESA
CARVAJAL

¹Candidata a doctorado en Administración Gerencial. Docente Investigadora de la Escuela de Administración de Empresas Agropecuarias de la Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia. E-mail: dora.fonseca@uptc.edu.co. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8361-2648>

²Doctorando en Administración Gerencial. Docente Investigadora de la Escuela de Administración Turística y Hotelera de la Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia, Colombia. E-mail: Carlos.fonseca@uptc.edu.co. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9658-8616>

³Administradora de Empresas Agropecuarias. Investigadora Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia. E-mail: dora.fonseca@uptc.edu.co

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Summary

This research focused on the strategic analysis of the associations that are located in the municipality of Tota-Boyacá-Colombia, integrating a PESTEL evaluation and the study of internal and external factors through SWOT techniques, with the aim of identifying the opportunities and threats that influence these organizations, for which strategies were formulated that seek to optimize their growth and sustainability. A methodological orientation was used that focuses on the collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data, considering political, economic, social, technological, ecological and legal aspects, as well as internal strengths and weaknesses. The main results suggest that partnerships could benefit significantly from programmes to support agriculture and digitalisation. Despite this, they face challenges such as lack of economic resources and deficiencies in connectivity. To consolidate these entities, it is imperative to implement advanced promotion tactics, take advantage of Tota's tourist location and collaborate with government initiatives. Among the limitations of the study are the constant evolution of the environment and relevant literature, which indicates that future research should analyze the impact of these changes on organizational strategies and consider new emerging factors.

Keywords: Digital Innovation, Digital Transformation, Partnerships, Marketing Strategies, Community Resilience.

INTRODUCTION

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have shown great importance in economic and social development worldwide. They have established themselves as fundamental tools in the processes of production, marketing, communication and integration, and as facilitators of daily activities. This has made it possible to generate greater productivity and added value for people and companies, resulting in benefits for economies and favoring economic and social development (Franco & Rincón Engativá, 2016).

Digital marketing consists of all the marketing strategies of an organization developed through cyberspace to meet the needs of the consumer and, at the same time, achieve a position in the market. This type of marketing goes beyond traditional forms of sales and marketing, as it integrates strategies and techniques designed for the digital world. It has become the new commercial method for conducting negotiations at a global level, thanks to the wide range of tools offered by the Internet and the multiple platforms available, which facilitate buying and selling opportunities (Selman, 2017; Cardona, 2014; Moreno, 2019).

In Colombia, digital marketing contributes to associations to generate greater competitiveness and achieve more efficient organizational growth. It allows us to be an engine of innovation by generating management alternatives that respond to new technological trends. This indispensable tool

facilitates access to new markets through the provision of communication channels with customers, satisfying their demanding needs in an assertive manner (Pitre Redondo et al., 2020).

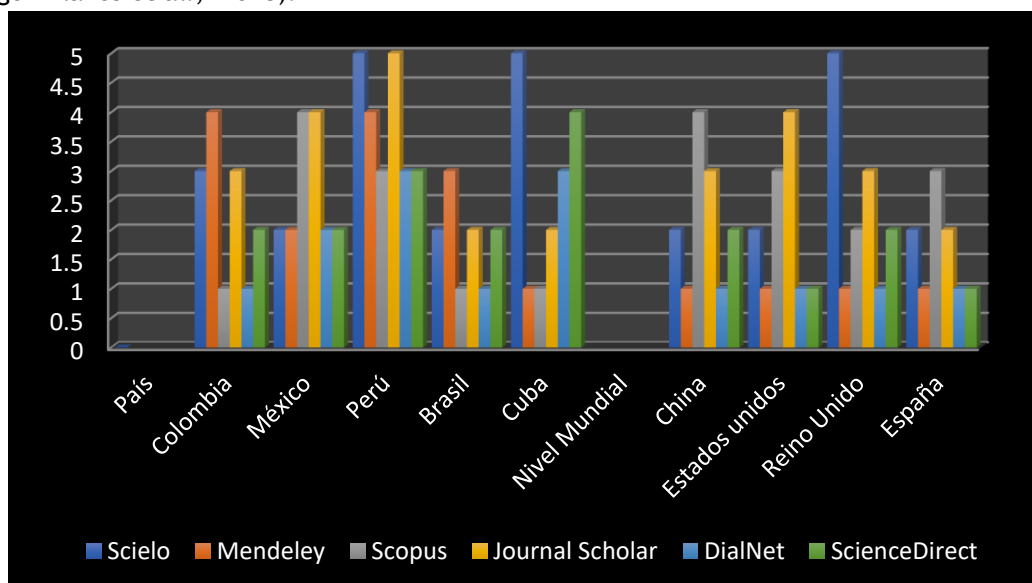
Associations and farmers face problems related to the marketing of their products, where intermediaries and changing prices play an important role in limiting members' incomes. This intermediation becomes an inconvenience when marketing is subjected to a long chain of intermediaries, harming both the producer and the final consumer (Cruz C.L., 2021).

However, this crisis has accelerated the growth of e-commerce, which is taken advantage of by ventures that have made the Internet a strategic ally to locate themselves and create a good reputation in the digital market. Digital marketing has become an effective tool for partnerships, in order to achieve growth in a globalized market. In Colombia and in the world, the way of making purchases has changed, following the digital era, and companies recognize mobile devices as a means of creating links with potential customers (Hoyos-Estrada & Sastoque-Gómez, 2020).

Based on the above, this study aims to analyze digital marketing as a social entrepreneurship strategy to answer the research question: What strategies can be used to develop digital marketing in associations?

Theoretical Basis

An exhaustive documentary review was carried out to address the research topic, developing a bibliographic matrix that included academic and official documents and relevant articles. The study was carried out at a descriptive level, using specialized search engines such as Google Scholar, Mendeley, Scopus, Scielo and Dialnet, where the keywords used in the search included "digital marketing", "social entrepreneurship", "information and communication technologies (ICT)" and "e-commerce". This search yielded documents in English and Spanish, prioritizing those with a high citation rate and relevance. The review focused on the importance of digital marketing and ICT in social entrepreneurship, especially in the context of associations, addressing the discussion from the relevance of digital marketing in the dissemination and advertising of products and services, as well as the critical role of ICT in e-commerce and its impact on the economic stability of social enterprises (Perdigón Llanes et al., 2018).



Source: Author (2022)

In the creation of the word cloud, absolute frequencies greater than 1 in the reference documents were considered. This methodology allows us to identify the most repeated words, which, according to the theory of word clouds, highlight the most relevant and frequent terms within the corpus analyzed. By visualizing these words, one can discern recurring patterns and themes that underlie the text and that, on a deeper level, reveal a contextual orientation similar to the research in question. This technique facilitates the identification of key concepts and dominant themes that influence the development of the research.

Digital Marketing-E-Commerce

Marketing has evolved to meet the demands of society; If before goods were obtained through production and exchange, today the reality is different, since service is more diverse, more global, influencing the need to segment customers, due to the increase in demand, competition and new technologies. Just as marketing evolves, companies also do so so that they can better plan their strategies in the face of the challenge of meeting various increasingly particular demands through the use of digital tools, moving from the traditional to the digital, from the common to the different and from the disruptive, all this within the conception of marketing 4.0 or digital marketing (Kuazaqui & Lisbon, 2019). In this sense, it is necessary for companies to be up to date, that is, to know these techniques in order to use the one that is most adapted to their market segment or customer and that yields them the most benefits (Viteri et al., 2018). Digital marketing does not require a significant allocation of financial resources and therefore represents an indispensable component of entrepreneurs' market orientation (Njegomir, 2020). In this sense, the organizational team should seek specialized advice in the area to develop the digital marketing plan that adapts to their products and needs and guarantees their success (Viteri et al., 2018). Digital marketing is all those activities aimed at the promotion, communication and marketing of goods and/or services through the use of the internet, applications and social networks. According to Acosta and Martínez (2018), there are two characteristics of digital marketing that make it an outstanding tool for companies and/or associations: it is personalized and massive.

The growth of the internet has brought about significant changes in the global business sector, making e-commerce an increasingly popular and beneficial business model. This model has generated great interest in various studies that examine key factors for success in e-commerce, such as interaction with customers, analysis of their behavior, positioning in web search engines, and security in financial transactions (Perdigón Llanes et al., 2018). Electronic business or e-business, defined as the process of exchanging or buying and selling products and services through computer networks that include the Internet, use electronic commerce to automate marketing through computer applications, which allows organizations to achieve cost savings, increase revenue, make faster deliveries, reduce administration costs and improve customer service (Perdigón Llanes et al., 2018).



Source: Author (2022)

Figure No. 1 e-commerce

Social Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship has been an area of growing interest in business schools since the eighties, this field addresses aspects such as financing, characteristics of the entrepreneur and market opportunities (García-Uceda et al., 2020). Social entrepreneurship is distinguished by its objective of

generating positive and sustainable social changes, in contrast to conventional entrepreneurship that focuses mainly on economic return (Mair & Martí, 2006; Austin et al., 2006, cited by García-Uceda et al., 2020).

Unlike traditional entrepreneurship, which is mainly measured by financial indicators, social entrepreneurship assesses success through a combination of economic and social outcomes (Boschec, 2008, cited by García-Uceda et al., 2020). To this end, it can be said that social entrepreneurship seeks to generate tangible social benefits through its business activities, framed within a corporate social responsibility approach (Moreira, 2011).



Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

ICTs have transformed public administration and commercial, economic and social development at a global level. Since the 2000s, governments have implemented policies to integrate ICTs into the public sector, seeking to improve effectiveness, efficiency, and transparency (Cárdenas, 2014). The advancement of ICTs has made the Internet an essential resource for business growth and job creation, especially in emerging economies, where the integration of ICTs in MSMEs and associations has proven to be crucial for economic recovery and technological progress (CESTUR, 2006, cited by Luis et al., n.d.).

In Colombia, the development of ICTs has been a priority, with significant efforts to promote their use in various areas. However, disparities persist in connectivity and the use of ICTs, particularly in rural areas, which poses challenges for the effectiveness of these programs in promoting rural development (Information and Communication Technologies for Rural Development in Colombia, 2010).



Associativity

Associativity has become a key strategy for the development of small businesses in a globalized environment. This concept refers to cooperation between companies to achieve common objectives, while maintaining legal and managerial independence. The most prominent forms of associativity include production chains, networks, and clusters (Bada Carbajal et al., 2017). For SMEs and associations, associativity offers benefits such as economies of scale, process optimization, and access to resources that would otherwise be inaccessible (Gómez & Gómez, 2018).

The study of associativity has shown that, despite its advantages, associations face challenges in the management and participation of their members, which can affect their sustainability (Vélez & Rodríguez, 2019). However, associativity is presented as an effective alternative to strengthen the capacities of companies and associations, improving their competitiveness and efficiency in a globalized environment.



The theoretical review confirms the importance of digital marketing and ICT in the context of social entrepreneurship and associativity. These elements are fundamental for the growth and sustainability of associations and MSMEs, offering key tools and strategies to improve their competitiveness and adapt to the demands of today's market. The integration of these technologies and approaches is crucial to meet the challenges of the globalized environment and promote sustainable economic and social development.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Type of Research: The research adopted a mixed approach, integrating qualitative and quantitative methodologies to provide a complete view of the study problem. This methodological combination facilitated the validation and expansion of the results obtained. The study was descriptive-exploratory with a documentary approach to delimit and describe the relevant facts, using Participatory Action Research (PAR) in the qualitative approach, involving the population in the understanding and analysis of their reality, thus enriching the knowledge about the problems raised (Colmenares, 2012). In the quantitative approach, it focused on the collection and analysis of numerical data through surveys, in order to generate accurate statistics and perform objective analysis (Gibson, 2017).

Population and Sample: The population under study is made up of the 8 associations of the agricultural sector located in the municipality of Tota, covering a total of 28 associates distributed in various villages. The sample was universal, including all associations to ensure full representation of the agricultural sector in the research.

Data Collection Techniques and Instruments: Surveys and literature review were used as the main data collection instruments, which were input for the construction of the PESTEL matrix (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Ecological and Legal Factors), to obtain information for the SWOT matrix (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats), interviews were carried out with 100%

of the members of the associations. allowed for a deeper understanding of common problems and perceptions of opportunities and challenges (Méndez, 2011).

Data Processing and Analysis Techniques: Data collected through surveys were organized in Microsoft Excel and analyzed using SPSS version 25 software. To characterize the associates, a descriptive analysis was carried out and, in turn, a binary logistic regression analysis was carried out with the aim of identifying the variables that influence the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) (Aguayo Canela, 2012). The questionnaire is structured with 37 questions which were directly aligned with the objectives of the research, the instrument addressed quantitative, qualitative, nominal, ordinal, binary variables and an open question; which allowed to have a more complete and detailed vision of the object of study. To quantify the linear relationship between variables, the MATLAB tool was used (Hernández Lalinde et al., 2018).

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

In the context of the evaluation of the environment in the municipality of Tota, an integrated matrix was developed that combines the PESTEL analysis where opportunities and threats were evaluated, allowing a more accurate view of the external factors that influence the development and operations of the associations, allowing the formulation of adaptive and proactive strategies that optimize the use of opportunities and minimize the associated risks. The matrix serves as a key tool for informed decision-making and the development of strategies that strengthen the resilience and growth of partnerships in the municipality.

Table 1. PESTEL Matrix

Criterion	Description	Impact (1 Low, 2 Medium, 3 High)	Duration (Short, Medium, Long)	Total	Opportunity	Threat	Recommended Strategy
Politician	Political instability and corruption in Colombia.	3	Stocking	9	Creating alliances with local actors to strengthen social cohesion	Legal uncertainty and abrupt changes in policies.	Establish mechanisms for anticipation and adaptability to political changes.
Economic	Impact of the pandemic on high unemployment rates.	3	Stocking	9	Encourage local entrepreneurship and the use of digital platforms to identify new opportunities.	Economic difficulties that limit the ability to invest.	Promote economic resilience through income diversification.
Social	Change in consumption habits, greater use of digital platforms.	2	Long	6	Increase digital presence and use digital marketing to attract new customers.	Digital divide and inequality in access to technology.	Train the population in the use of digital tools.

Technological	Progress in connectivity and digital tools in the municipality.	2	Stocking	6	Leverage network expansion to improve the digital presence of associations.	Need for constant updating in technologies.	Invest in continuous technological training.
Ecological	Environmental awareness and sustainable practices in the region.	2	Long	6	Integrate eco-friendly practices into the associations' processes to improve the image.	Risk of non-compliance with environmental regulations.	Develop and comply with rigorous environmental standards.
Legal	Regulation and compliance with local and national regulations.	2	Stocking	6	Ensure compliance with regulations to avoid penalties and promote good practices.	Possible changes in regulation that affect operations.	Monitor legislative changes and adapt operations in compliance with regulations.

Source: Author (2022)

The **Internal Factors Matrix** allows a detailed analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the associations, identifying the internal resources and capacities of the organizations, facilitating the evaluation of the aspects that directly affect their operation and performance. The strengths that were identified circumscribe the presence of well-defined value propositions in their products, experienced workforce, great interest in implementing technologies in order to enhance the development of their activities. However, significant weaknesses are also highlighted, such as the low advertising of its products and the lack of a defined target market, in addition to the lack of knowledge about the use of virtual applications, all these elements identified allowed an evaluation to be made on the priority of formulating strategies that maximize strengths and effectively address internal weaknesses.

TABLE 2. MATRIX OF INTERNAL FACTORS

Criterion	Description	Impact Assessment (1: Low, 2: Medium, 3: High)	Duration (Short, Medium, Long)	Total (Impact x Duration)	Priority (High, Medium, Low)
STRENGTHS					
F1	The associations have defined their value proposition, with a clear differentiation in the market.	3	Long	9	Loud
F2	It has a workforce trained in key areas (e.g., production, administration).	3	Stocking	6	Loud

F3	Knowledge and experience in the activities offered, which provides a competitive advantage.	3	Long	9	Loud
F4	Basic knowledge of social media management (WhatsApp), facilitating direct communication with customers.	2	Stocking	4	Stocking
F5	Implementation of technologies in the productive activity, improving efficiency and quality.	3	Long	9	Loud
F6	Interest in expanding the commercialization of products through the use of ICTs, looking for new market opportunities.	2	Stocking	4	Stocking
F7	Location in a tourist municipality, which can attract visitors and potential additional customers.	3	Long	9	Loud
F8	Awareness of the need for digital marketing, with ongoing efforts for its integration.	2	Stocking	4	Stocking
F9	Diversification of productive activities, providing flexibility and adaptability.	2	Stocking	4	Stocking
F10	Capacity and commitment of rural women to create productive networks, promoting local initiatives.	2	Stocking	4	Stocking
F11	Commitment of the young population to digital marketing, facilitating adaptation to new technologies.	2	Stocking	4	Stocking
WEAKNESSES					
D1	Orders placed with each association are low in volume, limiting economies of scale.	3	Stocking	6	Loud
D2	Difficult access to the web address due to technical issues and lack of training.	2	Short	2	Stocking
D3	Low advertising of products, with limitations in the use of digital and traditional media to increase visibility.	3	Stocking	6	Loud
D4	Lack of a defined target market, making it difficult to segment and focus on specific marketing strategies.	3	Long	9	Loud
D5	Associates don't use social media for marketing, missing out on online sales opportunities.	3	Stocking	6	Loud
D6	Public relations limited to municipal farmers' markets, reducing visibility at the regional or national level.	2	Stocking	4	Stocking

D7	Lack of efficient order delivery logistics, which can affect customer satisfaction and competitiveness.	3	Long	9	Loud
D8	Low profitability in productive activities, limiting the capacity for reinvestment and expansion.	3	Long	9	Loud
D9	Absence or low interest of producers in associating, affecting collaboration and expansion of the network of associations.	2	Stocking	4	Stocking

Source: Author (2022)

The External Factors Matrix examines the opportunities and threats affecting Tota Township associations from an external perspective. This analysis considers the environment in which organizations operate, including political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal aspects that can influence their development. Identified opportunities, such as programmes to support gender equality and strengthening agriculture, offer potential benefits for partnerships, while threats, such as limited economic resources and the digital transformation gap, represent challenges that could hinder their progress. Like the internal factors matrix, this tool prioritizes factors according to their impact and urgency, allowing strategic planning that takes advantage of opportunities and mitigates threats from the external environment.

Table 3. Matrix of external factors.

Criterion	Description	Impact Evaluation (1: Low, 2: Medium, 3: High)	Duration (Short, Medium, Long)	Total (Impact x Duration)	Priority (High, Medium, Low)
OPPORTUNITIES					
O1	Programs for the equity and equality of Boyacá women.	2	Stocking	4	Stocking
O2	Programs and projects that promote the strengthening of agriculture and rural development.	3	Long	9	Loud
O3	Programs that promote innovation and technological development processes applied to industry and agriculture.	3	Stocking	6	Loud
O4	Strengthening of the municipality's entrepreneurship unit to guide and accompany the formulation of plans and business models for business initiatives.	2	Stocking	4	Stocking
O5	Pact for the digital transformation of Colombia: generate a sustainable model for connectivity in rural areas.	3	Long	9	Loud

O6	Pact for the digital transformation of Colombia: Government, companies and households connected to the knowledge era on the way to a digital society and industry 4.0.	3	Stocking	6	Loud
O7	Promote labor insertion to achieve socioeconomic stabilization through teleworking.	2	Stocking	4	Stocking
O8	Investment in the improvement of spaces recognized as an asset of cultural interest.	2	Stocking	4	Stocking
O9	Use of applications for the commercialization of agricultural products.	3	Stocking	6	Loud
O10	Promote access to and use of ICTs for citizens with disabilities.	2	Stocking	4	Stocking
O11	Investment in public spaces for the use of ICTs.	2	Stocking	4	Stocking
O12	Internet connectivity in the public library and Vive Digital.	3	Stocking	6	Loud
O13	Privileged location of the municipality where Lake Tota stands out as a strategic area of environmental importance for the province, also a site of tourist and gastronomic importance.	3	Long	9	Loud
O14	Digital marketing campaigns and promotion of the Tourist Information System in Boyacá.	2	Stocking	4	Stocking
O15	Promotion of environmental care through local and digital campaigns.	2	Stocking	4	Stocking
O16	Pact for sustainability: harmonize agricultural production with the conservation and efficient use of natural resources.	3	Long	9	Loud
O17	Boyacá Advances for the Safeguarding and Recovery of Lake Tota.	2	Stocking	4	Stocking
THREATS					
A1	Limited economic resources.	3	Long	9	Loud
A2	Slow progress in the digital transformation of public administration.	2	Stocking	4	Stocking
A3	Differences in capacity for digital transformation between economic sectors and between government entities.	2	Stocking	4	Stocking
A4	Lack of knowledge of digital tools.	3	Stocking	6	Loud
A5	Misuse of social networks.	2	Stocking	4	Stocking
A6	Territorial gap in digital transformation.	3	Stocking	6	Loud
A7	Limited internet access.	3	Long	9	Loud
A8	Geographical and social gaps.	2	Stocking	4	Stocking
A9	Low quality of internet service compared to international standards.	3	Stocking	6	Loud

A10	Low ICT development index at the national level.	3	Long	9	Loud
A11	Low human capital for digital transformation.	2	Stocking	4	Stocking
A12	Regulation of misleading advertising and unfair competition.	2	Stocking	4	Stocking

Source: Author (2022)

The Strategic Matrix

This strategic plan is formulated with the aim of developing and optimizing the capacities of the associations of the municipality of Tota in the field of digital marketing, based on an exhaustive analysis of internal and external factors. This analysis has been carried out using SWOT matrices, which have made it possible to identify and evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that influence the environment and functioning of the associations. Through the integration of these factors, specific strategies have been designed that seek to take advantage of the opportunities of the environment, mitigate threats, enhance strengths and overcome weaknesses. The strategic plan not only focuses on improving the visibility and competitiveness of partnerships through the effective use of digital technologies, but also proposes concrete actions to strengthen internal management and adapt operations to market needs and demands. This comprehensive approach ensures proper alignment with local development goals and the sustainability of business initiatives in the municipality of Tota

TABLE 4. STRATEGIC MATRIX

1. FO Strategies (Strengths-Weaknesses)		
Strengths (F)	Opportunities (O)	FO Strategies
F1: Defined value proposition	O2: Programs that promote the strengthening of agriculture and rural development.	Develop products and services that highlight the unique value proposition for accessing agricultural and rural support programs.
F5: Implementation of technologies in productive activity	O5: Pact for the digital transformation of Colombia: generate a sustainable model for connectivity in rural areas.	Integrate new technologies into production to align with digital transformation initiatives and improve rural connectivity.
F7: Location in a tourist municipality	O13: Privileged location of the municipality and Lake Tota as a strategic area.	Use the tourist location to promote products and attract visitors, generating new market opportunities.
F10: Rural women's commitment to building productive networks	O4: Strengthening of the municipality's entrepreneurship unit.	Promote the participation of rural women in productive networks and take advantage of institutional support for the development of business networks.
2. DA Strategies (Weaknesses-Threats)		
Weaknesses (D)	Threats (A)	DA Strategies

D1: Low Volume Orders	A1: Limited economic resources.	Look for ways to pool orders and collaborate with other associations to increase order volume and make better use of limited financial resources.
D2: Difficult to access the web	A4: Lack of knowledge of digital tools.	Implement training and technical support to improve access to the web and the use of digital tools among associates.
D5: Associates do not use social media for marketing	A6: Territorial gap in digital transformation.	Develop training and support programs for partners in the use of social networks and close the digital divide.
D8: Low profitability in productive activities	A10: Low ICT development index at the national level.	Optimize production activities and seek support in the development of ICTs to improve profitability and adapt to digital trends.
3. FA Strategies (Strengths-Threats)		
Strengths (F)	Threats (A)	FA Strategies
F3: Knowledge and experience in the activities offered	A3: Differences in capacity for digital transformation between economic sectors.	Use knowledge and experience to lead knowledge transfer initiatives that can serve as a model for other sectors.
F6: Interest in expanding the commercialization of products through ICTs	A7: Limited internet access.	Develop alternative or mobile technology solutions to overcome internet access limitations and expand commercialization.
F9: Diversification of productive activities	A8: Geographical and social gaps.	Take advantage of diversification to adapt to geographical and social gaps, offering products that can be distributed in different regions.
4. DO Strategies (Weaknesses-Opportunities)		
Weaknesses (D)	Opportunities (O)	DO Strategies
D3: Low advertising of products	O14: Digital marketing campaigns and promotion of the Tourist Information System in Boyacá.	Leverage digital marketing and promotion campaigns to improve product visibility and increase advertising.
D6: Public relations limited to municipal farmers' markets	O8: Investment in the improvement of spaces recognised as an asset of cultural interest.	Use investment in cultural spaces to improve public relations and expand the network of contacts outside the local level.

D7: Lack of efficient delivery logistics	O9: Use of applications for the marketing of agricultural products.	Implement technological applications to improve delivery logistics and adapt to new marketing methods.
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Source: Author (2022)

The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) matrix is a fundamental tool in the evaluation and analysis of data in research, as it provides an understandable and quantifiable view of performance and the key factors that influence the object of study. In the context of the research, the KPI matrix was designed to reflect the demographic, educational, and socioeconomic characteristics of the population under analysis. This matrix includes indicators such as age distribution, average educational level, work experience, and household size, as well as variations in the adoption and use of technologies. The relevance of these indicators lies in their ability to provide a detailed understanding of the profile of the population and its conditions, which in turn makes it possible to identify patterns, needs, critical areas and opportunities that facilitate the implementation of strategies that contribute to strengthening decision-making in a coherent and informed manner.

Table 6. KPI matrix

Category	Indicator	Definition	Result
Use of ICTs by Rural Women	Formal ICT Training	Percentage of women with formal ICT training	4.6%
	Main Barriers to ICT Use	Percentage of women who face different barriers	Lack of skills: 41.7%
			Lack of access: 23.1%
			Lack of technical support: 16.7%
			Lack of financial resources: 18.5%
	Cultural and Social Perception of ICT	Percentage who believe cultural perception affects use	62.0%
	Government ICT Policies	Percentage of women who are aware of support policies	16.7%
E-Commerce Adoption	Conducting Internet Sales	Percentage of women who make sales on the internet	18.5%
	Internet Sales Costs	Percentage that considers the costs of selling on the internet	Cheap: 75.9%
			Expensive: 24.1%
	Increase for Selling on the Internet	Percentage that has noticed an increase in online sales	100.0%
	Time Savings by Selling on the Internet	Percentage that saves time selling online	98.2%

	Convenience of Selling on the Internet	Percentage that finds it convenient to sell on the internet	100.0%
	Expanding Marketing	Percentage that has been able to expand its commercialization	98.2%
	Obstacles to Selling Online	Percentage of women who face specific obstacles	72.2%
Characterization of rural women	Average Age	Weighted average of age groups	39.7 years
	Average Educational Level	Weighted average education level	69%
	Average Experience	Weighted average years of experience	10.8 years
	Average Number of Household Members	Average number of members in the household	4.6 Members

Source: Author (2022)

DISCUSSION

The results of the PESTEL analysis indicate that partnerships at Tota have the potential to take advantage of significant opportunities, such as access to agricultural strengthening programs and digital transformation. This finding agrees with Smith et al. (2020), who highlight that the adoption of technologies contributes to improving competitiveness in rural environments. However, the threats of limited economic resources and digital divides coincide with González et al. (2019) and Lee & Kim (2017), who suggest that lack of investment in technology and financial constraints are critical barriers to the development of partnerships.

Regarding internal factors, the strengths identified are a value proposition, the interest in the adoption of technology, these statements are supported by Martínez and Rodríguez (2021), who emphasize the importance of a differentiated proposal and the use of technologies to improve efficiency. On the other hand, weaknesses such as low publicity and logistical deficiencies, found in the study, are aligned with Hernández et al. (2022) and Patel (2018), who highlight that a low digital presence and logistical problems negatively affect the ability to compete and grow.

The integration of strengths and opportunities, and the formulation of FO strategies such as the development of a digital tourism promotion, are supported by the literature that supports the use of digital platforms to increase competitiveness (O'Brien, 2020). In addition, collaboration with government programs for the implementation of technologies, as suggested by Adams & Clark (2019), is pertinent to improve organizational growth. In contrast, the DA and WT strategies, which address weaknesses and threats, are in line with White and Peters (2019) on the need for digital training and Smith (2021) on the importance of efficient logistics.

The recommendations derived from the analysis, such as strengthening the digital presence and optimizing logistics processes, are aligned with Wilson & Lee (2022) and Evans (2018), who suggest that these areas are key to improving competitiveness. However, it is important to mention that the constant evolution of the literature and the dynamics of the environment could introduce new variables that have not been captured in this study. (Brown & Taylor, 2021). This limitation suggests the need for further research to analyze, validate, and adjust strategies according to emerging changes in the context.

CONCLUSIONS:

This study reveals that partnerships at Tota present significant opportunities through the adoption of technologies and access to partnership strengthening programs, which can enhance their competitiveness in the marketplace. Strengths such as a clear value proposition and technological adoption contrast positively with internal weaknesses, while external threats, such as lack of economic resources and digital divides, underscore the need for a robust strategy to meet these challenges. Implementing digital advocacy and collaborating with government programs are key recommendations to improve organizational growth. However, the study faces limitations related to the constant evolution of the environment and literature, suggesting that future research should explore how emerging changes affect partnership strategies and evaluate new variables and contexts for a more comprehensive understanding.

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