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DISSEMINATION AND MARKETING OF ARTISANAL PRODUCTS FROM INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND COMMUNITIES ON DIGITAL PLATFORMS: REVIEW OF STRATEGIES AND CHALLENGES

**DIFUSIÓN Y COMERCIALIZACIÓN DE PRODUCTOS ARTESANALES
DE PUEBLOS Y COMUNIDADES INDÍGENAS EN PLATAFORMAS
DIGITALES: REVISIÓN DE ESTRATEGIAS Y RETOS**

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Dissemination and marketing of artisanal products from indigenous peoples and communities on digital platforms: review of strategies and challenges

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ABSTRACT

Crafts represent the history and evolution of civilizations over time. Their preservation and dissemination are vitally important so that regions do not lose their cultural identity. The aim of this article is to highlight research that has focused on the importance of training artisans in digital marketing strategies for using existing platforms to market their craft products. It is noteworthy that they have mainly opted to use social networks such as Facebook and Instagram for this purpose. In conclusion, it is emphasized that these training support strategies for artisans are of utmost importance in reducing the technological gap in this sector of the community and improving their quality of life. It is recommended that these strategies be strengthened and that new digital channels be leveraged to increase training and support for artisans.

Palabras clave: handcrafted products, digital platforms, digital marketing, artisans

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Difusión y comercialización de productos artesanales de pueblos y comunidades indígenas en plataformas digitales: revisión de estrategias y retos

RESUMEN

Las artesanías representan la historia y evolución de las civilizaciones a lo largo del tiempo. Su preservación y difusión es de vital importancia para que las regiones no pierdan su identidad cultural. El objetivo de este artículo es destacar aquellas investigaciones que se han enfocado en la importancia de capacitar a los artesanos en estrategias de marketing digital para el uso de plataformas existentes para la comercialización de sus productos artesanales. Se destaca que principalmente han optado por el uso de redes sociales como facebook e Instagram para dicho objetivo. Como conclusión, se destaca que estas estrategias de apoyo formativo a los artesanos, es de suma importancia para disminuir la brecha tecnológica en este sector de la comunidad y elevar su calidad de vida. Se recomienda fortalecer estas estrategias y aprovechar los nuevos canales digitales para incrementar las capacitaciones y apoyos a los artesanos.

Keywords: productos artesanales, plataformas digitales, marketing digital, artesanos

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INTRODUCTION

In Mexico, as in other Latin American countries, the word “craftsmanship” is closely related to indigenous communities and their rural life. Through them, we can see their different cultural expressions, inherited from generations past. Their production processes are manual, supported by traditionally basic tools, their raw materials come from the region where they live, and they are organized into family or community workshops. (de la Cruz Ramos, 2022).

A handicraft is an object of cultural identity, made by hand using raw materials from the region where the artisan lives. (FONART, 2014).

In terms of raw materials, Mexico's inventory of plant and animal species used in traditional crafts, available from CONABIO (National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity) has information on 666 species, of which 536 are vascular plants, 3 are fungi, 2 are algae, and 125 are animals (marine invertebrates, marine vertebrates, insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals) (CONABIO, 2022).

There are numerous expressions of traditional craftsmanship: tools; clothing and jewelry; costumes and accessories for festivals and performing arts; storage containers, objects used for storage, transportation, and shelter; decorative and ritual art objects; musical instruments and household utensils; and toys, both for entertainment and education (UNESCO, 2025).

Currently, handicrafts are still a source of employment for many families from diverse cultures, although sometimes with very low pay. This is due to various factors, forcing existing artisans to migrate to other locations to sell their products at low prices in order to earn an income (Villanueva Guzmán et al., 2024).

In 2021, handicraft production generated 479,655 paid jobs, representing 37.7% of the jobs in the culture sector as a whole. The two areas with the most paid jobs were: plant fibers and textiles, with 111,771 jobs, and traditional foods and sweets, with 92,150 jobs (INEGI, 2023).

Despite the historical value and uniqueness of handicrafts, they often do not achieve the visibility they deserve in broader markets, thus limiting economic opportunities for those who produce them. Within the handicraft sector, the adoption of technological tools marks a new path to follow and a challenge to face in the face of the unequal economic, social, and political reality experienced by artisans (Araque Geney, 2021). These technological tools not only facilitate direct connections between artisans and

potential consumers in different parts of the world, but could also act as a bridge for the preservation and promotion of cultural riches.

Technology plays a central role in the economy, and the use of digital platforms can significantly transform the way artisanal products are perceived and purchased. This research analyzes various initiatives that have emerged to promote greater recognition and appreciation of cultural wealth. By highlighting the authenticity of these communities, it contributes to the enhancement and preservation of their cultural heritage, generating a positive impact both economically and socially, seeking to create equality, within the framework of the social and solidarity economy, for all artisans who are left behind due to a lack of exposure.

Some research focuses on the social and solidarity economy, which, according to (INAES, 2021) refers to a set of socioeconomic and cultural initiatives based on a paradigm shift toward collaborative work and collective ownership of assets. The SSE seeks to generate relationships of solidarity and trust, community spirit, and participation in society, strengthening processes of productive integration, consumption, distribution, savings, and lending to meet the needs of its members and the communities where they operate.

METHODOLOGY

The type of research carried out is documentary or bibliographic review (Esteban Nieto, 2018), which consists of a review of the literature, seeking to identify and analyze various contributions to the dissemination of artisanal products using digital platforms.

The documentary research method is mainly used in qualitative studies. It involves an indirect approach to reality, based on secondary sources. Therefore, data available in written or visual sources that have been generated by individuals, researchers, or institutions for various purposes is accessed (Díaz & Sime, 2009).

In this research, various articles related to the dissemination of artisanal products through the use of technological platforms were consulted. These studies show that global digital transformation has led to the emergence of technological platforms—social networks, marketplaces, specialized websites, and mobile applications—that offer unprecedented opportunities for indigenous artisans to overcome traditional marketing limitations (Sánchez Gándara, 2025).



The vast majority of studies found use digital marketing through social media, while others make use of e-commerce technologies. All agree on the importance of promoting artisanal products online to increase visibility and boost sales, as well as contributing to the preservation of culture.

In the article entitled Technological tools for communicating the emotions generated by indigenous crafts (Allende-Hernández et al., 2023), the authors focused their research on analyzing the context and production systems of indigenous craftswomen to identify the emotions, sensations, and symbolic elements that are present in the design and creation of their crafts. The research focused on the Central Coast Region of Oaxaca. They propose strategies that allow indigenous artisans to venture into e-commerce, contributing to their empowerment in decision-making for the commercialization of their crafts. One of the contributions of the research is the development of a software tool called Sidisart, which integrates a database with a domain of images and key attributes that identify the emotions, sensations, and symbolic elements of the crafts (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Technological tool for the semantic differential of handicrafts (SIDISART) (Allende-Hernández et al., 2023)

The screenshot shows the 'Diferencial Semántico de las Artesanías' (SIDISART) software interface. It includes a file explorer on the left to select images, a central image display area showing a colorful rabbit-shaped craft, and a right panel for selecting semantic differential options. The left panel also contains a personal data section with fields for age, marital status, gender, and residence, as well as experience with handicrafts. The right panel features seven semantic differential scales, each with a 7-point scale and a selected option.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Aburrimiento						Admiración
Nostalgia						Regocijo
Distracción						Interés
Rechazo						Inspiración
Moderación						Orgullo
Tristeza						Alegría

Buttons: Limpiar, Registrar

In the thesis entitled “Marketing Strategies for Handicraft Workshops in the Indigenous Communities of Nacajuca, Tabasco” (de la Cruz Ramos, 2022), the author conducts an in-depth study of craft workshops in the municipality of Nacajuca, Tabasco, Mexico, and the research offers an analysis of the environment, focusing on sociocultural, political, legal, economic, environmental, and customer factors.

The main objective of the research was to develop a marketing strategy proposal to strengthen sales and increase the income of artisans in the indigenous communities of Nacajuca. Although the author's research does not focus directly on the use of technology, its importance for this analysis lies in the generation of various marketing strategies, including digital strategies, where the author mentions the relevance of social networks such as WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

Another review is titled Social media strategies for promoting handmade macanas from the province of Azuay (Romo-Jaramillo et al., 2020); in this study, the authors conducted research with the aim of designing a social media strategy model for the commercial promotion of handmade macanas that enhances the positioning and image of the canton of Gualaceo, province of Azuay, in the Republic of Ecuador. The authors highlight that there is weak commercialization of macanas due to a lack of commercial awareness and cultural representation of these handmade garments, and they considered it essential to apply the social media strategy model as a marketing strategy to position and improve the image of the product offered.

Figure 2. Social media strategy proposed by the author. (Romo-Jaramillo et al., 2020)



The social media strategy proposed in Figure 2 is developed in five phases:

- Phase 1. Promote the product being offered.
- Phase 2. Attract users and brand followers.

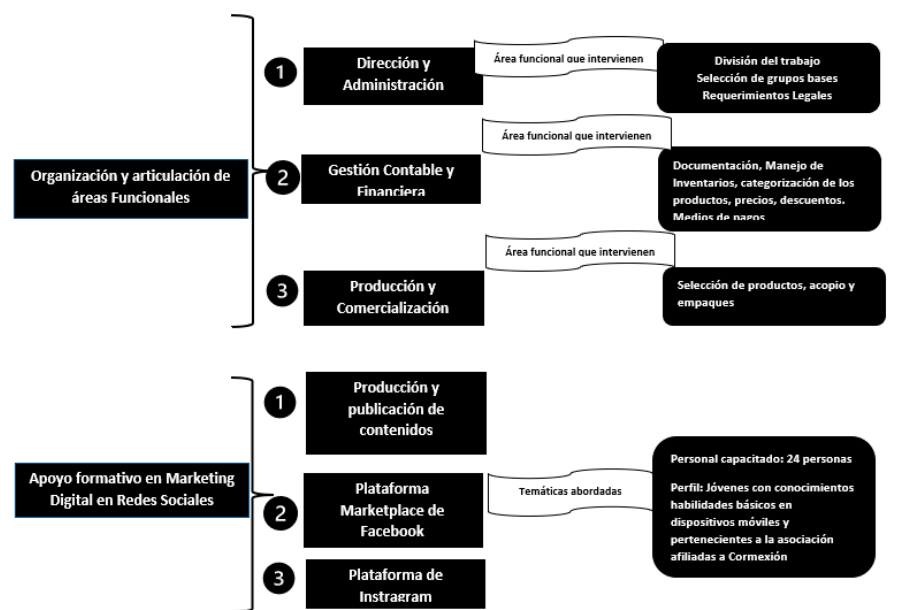
- Phase 3. Share experiences about the use of the product and its quality.
- Phase 4. Build loyalty through offers and promotions
- Phase 5. Monitor the behavior of users and followers on social media to determine the level of promotional feasibility and sales.

The strategies outlined by the author are directly related to digital marketing, which encompasses a wide range of techniques and strategies used to promote products or services online, including social media, email, PPC, and SEO. (Taherdoost, 2023).

In the research entitled Digital marketing on social networks as a promotional mechanism for artisanal products (Vasquez Lopez et al., 2024), the authors conducted surveys of artisan leaders from Corpomexión (Corporación Artesanal y Cultura Mexión OVOP Tuchín) in Colombia, with the aim of identifying the current conditions for marketing artisan products, highlighting mainly demographic aspects, knowledge and use of social media, and the marketing methods they used prior to the research. After that, the authors focused on providing training support in digital marketing on social media, with an emphasis on Facebook and Instagram, aimed at an initial group of 10 people with basic knowledge and skills in mobile devices and belonging to the association under study, mainly young people.

The research resulted in the implementation of various marketing techniques, the creation of Facebook and Instagram pages, and the monitoring of the behavior of both pages to determine the interactions and users reached during a three-month period in 2022. The results are favorable for artisans, increasing the visibility of their products on these platforms.

Figure 3. Organization, coordination, and training support proposed by the authors. (Vasquez Lopez et al., 2024)



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Since the 2019 pandemic, consumers have become increasingly comfortable shopping online, thanks to greater transaction security and the ease of comparing prices and products. (Rapôso & Andrade Júnior, 2020).

This paradigm shift in the distribution and marketing of different products triggered the growth of online shopping, and in this sense, the distribution and sale of handicrafts must adopt these new marketing channels.

As a result of the above, it is important to have a digital marketing plan, which is currently of utmost importance for entrepreneurs and companies to develop successfully in today's markets (Curiel Jiménez et al., 2022).

In the studies analyzed, the authors highlight the importance of digital marketing through social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, due to the number of users that both platforms currently have. Although it should be noted that TikTok and other video platforms are currently gaining relevance for the dissemination and marketing of services and products, at the time of writing this article, no studies focused on these platforms were found.

Therefore, the result of this research is to highlight that digital platforms are an excellent ally for increasing the visibility of artisanal products created by artisans from communities in various regions. It should be noted that historically, artisans are mainly found in communities far from cities, so access to technology is limited.

CONCLUSIONS

Social media platforms have evolved as new uses for them have emerged. They initially arose as tools for sharing feelings, emotions, and news of various kinds, and as a means of interacting with people located in different geographical areas.

Today, these platforms have become tools for entrepreneurs and large companies to offer various physical and digital services and products. This evolution eliminates the barrier of having to invest large sums of money in the development of e-commerce platforms, since with basic knowledge, anyone can use them and benefit from their reach.

In this regard, it is important that artisans from different regions of Mexico and Latin America have this basic knowledge, which in turn allows them to reach more people at the local, national, and international levels, leading to increased promotion of each region's crafts, promoting the preservation of their ancestral riches, and thereby increasing sales of their products.

This increase in sales translates directly into the self-sufficiency of artisans, raising their quality of life and also increasing the interest of artisans' children in continuing these legacies that have been passed down from generation to generation, as well as attracting the interest of others who do not have an artisan heritage.

Fortunately, more and more artisans are willing to train themselves and adopt all the strategies and learn new tools that help them increase their sales, since this not only improves their quality of life, but also allows them to acquire equipment and tools that help them streamline their time in the production of their artisan products.

There is still much work to be done in terms of digitizing artisanal products, but it should be noted that government institutions at different levels (local, state, and federal) are supporting artisan communities in bridging the technological gap through training, financial support, and promotion on official platforms.



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