

Inbound marketing and its influence on customer acquisition with AI in self-service services

Inbound marketing y su influencia en la captación de clientes con IA en autoservicios

Marketing de entrada e sua influência na aquisição de clientes com IA em autoatendimento

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Abstract

Introduction: This article is the product of a master's research project titled *The Impact of Digital Marketing Technologies on the Competitive Strategies of Lodging SMEs in Manta*, highlighting its relevance in an increasingly digitalized business environment. The study was conducted at the Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí in Manta in 2025.

Problem: Despite the growing importance of digital marketing, many lodging SMEs face difficulties in implementing these tools due to a lack of knowledge and resources, which limits their competitiveness.

Objective: The main objective is to determine how digital marketing and technology influence the competitive strategies of lodging SMEs, evaluating their effectiveness in customer loyalty and market differentiation.

Methodology: An exploratory, descriptive, and correlational approach was used, applying surveys with a Likert scale to 70 lodging SMEs. The validity of the instrument was verified using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, yielding a value of 0.960.

Results: The findings indicate that digital marketing and technology show a positive correlation (0.844) with competitive strategies, highlighting the influence of social media and feedback on marketing differentiation and the breadth of products and services.

Conclusion: The research concludes that the effective implementation of digital marketing strategies is crucial for improving the competitiveness of lodging SMEs, enabling stronger customer connections and increased loyalty.

Originality: This study provides a unique perspective on the intersection between digital marketing and competitiveness in the accommodation sector, contributing to existing literature.

Limitations: Limitations include the sample size and the lack of longitudinal analysis, suggesting the need for further research.

Keywords: Inbound marketing, customer acquisition, social media, artificial intelligence.

Resumen

Introducción: El artículo es producto del proyecto de investigación de maestría *El impacto de las tecnologías en marketing digital en las estrategias competitivas de las pymes de alojamiento en Manta*, destacando su relevancia en un entorno empresarial cada vez más digitalizado, realizado en la Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí en 2025.

Problema: A pesar de la creciente importancia del marketing digital, muchas pymes de alojamiento enfrentan dificultades para implementar estas herramientas debido a la falta de conocimiento y recursos, lo que limita su competitividad.

Objetivo: El objetivo principal es determinar cómo el marketing digital y la tecnología influyen en las estrategias competitivas de las pymes de alojamiento, evaluando su efectividad en la fidelización de clientes y la diferenciación en el mercado.

Metodología: Se utilizó un enfoque exploratorio, descriptivo y correlacional, aplicando encuestas con una escala de Likert a 70 pymes de alojamiento. La validez del instrumento se verificó mediante el coeficiente Alfa de Cronbach, obteniendo un valor de 0.960.

Resultados: Los resultados indican que el marketing digital y la tecnología presentan una correlación positiva (0.844) con las estrategias competitivas, destacando la influencia de las redes sociales y el feedback en la diferenciación del marketing y en la amplitud de productos y servicios.

Conclusión: La investigación concluye que la implementación efectiva de estrategias de marketing digital es crucial para mejorar la competitividad de las pymes de alojamiento, permitiendo una mejor conexión con los clientes y un aumento en la fidelización.

Originalidad: Este estudio aporta una perspectiva única sobre la intersección entre marketing digital y competitividad en el sector de alojamiento, contribuyendo a la literatura existente.

Limitaciones: Las limitaciones incluyen el tamaño de la muestra y la falta de análisis longitudinal, lo que sugiere la necesidad de futuras investigaciones más amplias.

Palabras clave: Inbound marketing, captación de clientes, redes sociales, inteligencia artificial.

Resumo

Introdução: Este artigo é produto do projeto de pesquisa de mestrado "O Impacto das Tecnologias de Marketing Digital nas Estratégias Competitivas de Pequenas e Médias Empresas de Hospedagem em Manta, Destacando sua Relevância em um Ambiente de Negócios Cada Vez Mais Digitalizado", realizado na Universidade Eloy Alfaro Lay de Manabí em 2025.

Problema: Apesar da crescente importância do marketing digital, muitas pequenas e médias empresas de hospedagem enfrentam dificuldades na implementação dessas ferramentas devido à falta de conhecimento e recursos, o que limita sua competitividade.

Objetivo: O objetivo principal é determinar como o marketing digital e a tecnologia influenciam as estratégias competitivas de pequenas e médias empresas de hospedagem, avaliando sua eficácia na fidelização de clientes e na diferenciação de mercado.

Metodologia: Foi utilizada uma abordagem exploratória, descritiva e correlacional, aplicando questionários com escala Likert a 70 pequenas e médias empresas de hospedagem. A validade do instrumento foi verificada utilizando o coeficiente alfa de Cronbach, obtendo-se um valor de 0,960.

Resultados: Os resultados indicam que o marketing digital e a tecnologia apresentam uma correlação positiva (0,844) com as estratégias competitivas, destacando a influência das mídias sociais e do feedback na diferenciação de marketing e na amplitude de produtos e serviços.

Conclusão: A pesquisa conclui que a implementação eficaz de estratégias de marketing digital é crucial para melhorar a competitividade das PME de hospedagem, possibilitando um melhor engajamento do cliente e maior fidelização.

Originalidade: Este estudo oferece uma perspectiva única sobre a interseção entre marketing digital e competitividade no setor de hospedagem, contribuindo para a literatura existente.

Limitações: As limitações incluem o tamanho da amostra e a falta de análise longitudinal, sugerindo a necessidade de pesquisas futuras em maior escala.

Palavras-chave: Marketing de entrada, aquisição de clientes, mídias sociais, inteligência artificial.

1. INTRODUCTION

Inbound marketing is a strategy that companies use to reach their audience, capture their attention, and turn them into potential customers through the different platforms and social networks offered by the digital ecosystem. To achieve this, companies

must carefully manage their actions through high-quality, persuasive, and non-intrusive content that entertains and informs the audience, offering the information that users search for on the web. Therefore, companies must focus their objectives on analyzing and understanding the needs and requirements that potential customers seek on social networks and offer products, services, or information that satisfy those needs generated in these digital media [1].

Likewise, as indicated in [2], inbound marketing is a method that focuses on creating valuable content aimed at capturing users' attention through social media with bold, educational, and informative material that entertains audiences through the different formats available on the web, such as videos, reels, infographics, images, among others, covering various scenarios depending on each social network. Consequently, companies currently focus on creating creative, unique, and distinctive content that strengthens their presence on the web, adding value to the brand with efficient communication tools and techniques, offering high-quality products and services that meet user needs, promoting customer service, and generating trust that facilitates customer conversion, increases website traffic, strengthens brand positioning, and builds lasting relationships through customer loyalty in these digital environments [3].

Inbound marketing applied to self-service environments with the support of artificial intelligence allows companies to attract customers more effectively, generating personalized content and digital experiences that strengthen engagement. This strategy is directly linked to data mining, as the collection and analysis of large volumes of information on consumer behavior provide key inputs for designing more accurate campaigns. While inbound marketing attracts in a non-intrusive manner through valuable content, data mining within CRM systems makes it possible to segment customers, identify patterns, and anticipate needs, facilitating faster and more precise business decisions. Both practices enhance commercial efficiency, increase loyalty, and consolidate competitive advantages in highly dynamic markets such as self-services [4].

In accordance with the above, inbound marketing, unlike traditional marketing, is responsible for showing valuable and relevant content that captures the audience's attention in a non-intrusive way, using social media to expand its coverage and reach new markets more quickly and efficiently. In traditional marketing, these objectives tend to require more time and resources to achieve the same business goals: generating income through sales, building customer loyalty, creating an active community, and positioning the brand. Therefore, this research analyzes how inbound marketing influences customer acquisition in Almacenes Tía in the city

of Manta, since the implementation of digital strategies is not usually carried out efficiently, leading to mistakes in commercial management. Likewise, many customers use the traditional channel to learn about promotions or products offered by the brand in physical stores, unaware of the social media platforms where the brand is present, such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and its website. Therefore, it has been considered relevant to study inbound marketing and its influence on customer acquisition through social media by generating valuable content that converts users into customers of Almacenes Tía, addressing the strategies used by the brand and the perception that customers have regarding the management of its content across different communication channels. Since technology continues to evolve, companies must adapt to these changes, optimizing their resources, reducing costs, and developing new market opportunities. Thus, the technological tools used by Almacenes Tía to offer optimal and quality service that fosters loyalty among current and potential customers, contributing to the economic and social development of the sector, will be examined in depth.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Inbound Marketing in Marketing Processes

Inbound marketing arises from the changes generated in marketing and consumption processes in the market, with the purpose of creating a strong, long-lasting connection between the customer and the brand [5]. According to [6], inbound marketing consists of non-intrusive techniques that involve digital marketing strategies to meet the unmet needs of the market. In this regard, [7] states that inbound marketing is generated through the interaction between the brand and the user, through the content displayed on different platforms, accompanying the customer throughout the purchasing process and providing valuable content such as informative, educational, and entertaining material for the user.

Reference [6] also points out that inbound marketing aims to capture users' attention when they browse the web searching for information about products or services that satisfy their needs or desires. This allows companies to understand in detail user behaviors and changes in their interaction within social media in order to interact with them, identify their tastes and preferences, and develop strategies leading to the offer of products or services that meet this demand. Likewise, a link is created between the customer and the brand through active and constant communication, achieving greater reach and visibility in the market.

Inbound marketing is characterized by two-way communication, since there is interaction between the user and the brand. Companies focus on developing content that highlights aspects such as brand value, service quality, and the brand's differentiating factors compared to competitors, evolving in innovation and the creation of products and services that contribute to customer satisfaction. This provides a positive experience with the brand and promotes actions that give the company more visibility on social media, greater reach, and market notoriety, while creating valuable content and automating business processes [7], [8].

Therefore, inbound marketing is a strategy used by companies to accompany users through valuable, innovative, and creative content that characterizes the brand. This type of content guides the user's decision-making and offers added value to the service provided, becoming a differentiating element among brands. It allows users to learn more about the company on these platforms and interact through engaging, educational, informative, and entertaining content for the audience [9].

2.2 Customer and their needs

For Salas [10], the customer is the person who acquires a good, product, or service in exchange for a monetary value; this person may use the good or service for a future commercial activity, while the consumer is the individual who acquires the service or product for personal consumption. The user, in turn, is the person who uses or enjoys a service that may have an economic value or be free of charge. All these individuals, directly or indirectly, are potential customers of companies. Therefore, as stated in [11], the positive interactions generated between the customer and the brand create an active and constant relationship between them, which leads users to become potential customers, since the continuous socialization of the brand through content, information, products, and services offered across communication channels allows greater reach and visibility in the market, enabling users and customers on the web to recognize the brand and engage in two-way communication.

Users or followers on social networks constantly seek information that resolves doubts, needs, or expectations while browsing the web. When entering certain platforms, users can subscribe to publications to receive information on specific topics; this is a direct way for online users to stay informed, learn more about the brand, and understand the benefits and features it offers. Through subscriptions, these users may become customers or consumers of a company's products or services. Therefore, the entire digital marketing process must be aimed at attracting customers, keeping the

audience informed, developing strategies that meet their demands, and socializing meaningful content in the fields of knowledge, entertainment, and education [12], [13].

Similarly, [14] defines that online users interact on different platforms depending on the content, tools, and style each one offers. Thus, companies must analyze and adapt information with specific content for each social network. Here, marketing strategies must be examined in detail so that commercial objectives are met, guiding people in decision-making and creating a unique customer experience and connection.

2.3 Competent decision-making

Decision-making consists of the set of actions that follow a customer's purchase decision. According to [15], it involves analyzing the situation or problem that led the user, customer, or consumer to search for information, diagnosing the characteristics and benefits offered by the product or service, comparing the monetary factor with the satisfaction of the purchase experience, and determining whether the demand in the market is met. Likewise, [16] defines decision-making as the evaluation and analysis of the service to satisfy a need through a good or service offered by the company.

The author in [17] indicates that the response time in decision-making is based on how fast a problem, doubt, or comment generated on digital platforms is addressed; this response should be provided as soon as possible to create a better user experience when comparing the service with that of other brands. This allows the brand to improve its reputation, as stated in [18], who emphasizes that customer value judgments about a brand, product, or service are related to brand image and identity. These perceptions are displayed on social media in various ways, and companies must analyze the importance of developing strategies tailored to each platform to create meaningful content for the audience, generating a perception different from competitors, giving greater visibility to the brand, ensuring user awareness of its presence, and determining whether market demand will be satisfied by the company.

2.4 The quality of valuable content

Valuable content is information shared through various communication channels to deliver a relevant message to the audience and presented in different formats depending on the platform, such as videos, audio, infographics, images, among others. According to [19], valuable content offers a benefit to the user, capturing their attention and encouraging them to become a customer, making it essential that publications be developed through marketing strategies that seek to humanize the brand—that is,

selling without selling directly—engaging the audience through interactions, learning more about their preferences and tastes, and providing companies with important data to create educational, informative, and entertaining content.

Thus, publications shared on the web transmit relevant information to the audience. This aligns with [20], who emphasizes that customers must analyze and evaluate a brand before purchasing a good or service to verify that it meets their requirements and needs. Therefore, creating creative and meaningful content that captures attention and guides the user toward purchase is essential. Likewise, [21] states that the quality of the content, as well as that of the product or service offered, must provide differentiating characteristics compared to other brands, since they influence brand perception, recognition, and awareness. Quality content must offer truthfulness and creativity, reflecting the brand's personality, commitment, and integrity, and strengthening honesty and trust between brand and customer.

2.5. Customer acquisition and its processes

Customer acquisition is a vital process within the commercial management of any business, with the purpose of creating secure and lasting relationships between the customer and the brand, which directly and indirectly influence the development and fulfillment of business objectives [22]. According to [23], customer acquisition occurs when the user or consumer becomes a priority for the company, attracting their attention and guiding them throughout the decision-making process. This first interaction is the most important step for establishing a long-term relationship between the brand and the customer.

For [24], customer acquisition means that users access the virtual store or visit the physical store with a particular interest in content or information that caught their attention in these media. Therefore, companies must meet customers' expectations and needs with the aim of creating an active long-term relationship, providing guiding information throughout the decision-making process. This fosters customer trust and creates an emotional connection based on the positive experience generated during the purchasing process.

2.6. Media and technological tools

Communication is the means by which two or more people interact and relate by exchanging information, opinions, references, messages, expressions, or gestures, either verbally or in writing, through traditional or digital media [25]. There are platforms

that allow individuals to connect locally or globally, interacting and exchanging information that is of vital importance for companies, since this data found on the web enables the development of strategies according to the needs or requirements expressed in these media [26], [27].

Among the communication platforms currently used by people is email, a medium through which messages are sent and information is stored until the user decides to delete or archive it. Another communication channel used by individuals is telephone service, which today is not only for calls and text messages but also serves as a portable tool for work, socialization, and real-time communication. This technological device allows people to download applications and social networks used continuously to optimize the execution of their activities, among them video calls, social network usage, video editing applications, and others [28].

2.6 Merchandising as a strategy

Merchandising refers to the commercial management of various products through marketing strategies that encourage purchases at points of sale, based on the presentation, distribution, and rotation of promotional products strategically placed on shelves so that customers can easily see and access them [29]. In this process, promotion plays an important role, as it stimulates impulse buying by strategically placing products. These actions also influence consumer decision-making by transmitting a message to the target audience, highlighting the characteristics, advantages, and benefits associated with acquiring the product [30].

From a marketing perspective, human beings constantly create new needs, desires, and requirements through various communication channels, leaving valuable information for companies and offering opportunities for the development of new products or services that meet market demand with the quality standards required by users [31]. Many of these processes involve stimulating the senses and generating emotions through the experience acquired when consuming or purchasing a good or service [32].

2.7 Product policy for its development

Companies today incorporate strategic factors for commercial success, as well as for maintaining market presence and visibility in communication channels. These platforms offer companies broad possibilities for implementing marketing tools and techniques for growth and development in the market. However, success does not

depend solely on these tools, as significant actions must be analyzed, compared, planned, executed, and controlled in every process in which the brand or company is involved to be recognized by online users and satisfy general or specific market demand. This involves negotiation between the parties, as without products or services there is no agreement or profit [33].

The purchase decision within commercial management requires a stimulus or motivation for the consumer to buy, which is related to the characteristics and capabilities of the product or service when meeting demand. This action is also influenced by the environment and the stimuli generated by companies through content or publications in digital media. In turn, interactions between users and the brand provide relevant data for developing commercial and marketing strategies that ensure the growth and permanence of the brand in the market [34].

3. METHODOLOGY

According to authors [35], scientific research fulfills two fundamental purposes: a) producing knowledge and theories, and b) solving problems. Therefore, the present research is descriptive in nature because it is a study aimed at identifying who, where, when, how, and why regarding the subject of study; in other words, the information obtained in a descriptive study explains an organization. It is exploratory and non-experimental because it is based on analyzing variables without altering the research objective.

Based on the analysis and reviewed literature, it should be noted that this research is non-experimental and cross-sectional. Analyzing experimental research refers to the term “Ex Post Facto,” which is used after events have taken place. According to [35], these are studies carried out without manipulating variables, in which only the phenomena that occur in their natural environment are observed and analyzed.

This research is non-experimental because it was conducted without manipulating variables and after the events occurred, with the results identified through the research instruments. Reference [35] supports the concept of cross-sectional research as “the collection of data at a single moment and in a single time.” The study population is finite and consists of the customers of Almacenes Tía in the city of Manta; according to the 2022 census, this corresponds to 1,304,994 individuals. Based on these data, the resulting sample size to be surveyed is 385 people. This research used a probabilistic convenience sampling method, which, according to [35], consists of samples that are accessible.

4. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Presentation of results

According to [36], reliability analysis allows the properties of measurement scales and the elements that make them up to be examined, in order to obtain information about the relationships between the individual elements of the scale. The result obtained was 0.860, which means that this study is highly reliable.

Table 1. Reliability Analysis

Case Processing Overview			
		N	%
Cases	Valid	400	100,0
	Exclude	0	,0
	Total	385	100,0

Table 2. Reliability Statistics

Reliability Statistics	
Alfa de Cron Bach	Nº elements
,860	14

Fuente: software IBM SPSS Statistics

Descriptive statistics					
	N	Minima	Maximum	Media	Des. Deviation
Are you a customer of Almacenes Tía?	385	1	2	1,77	,419
Have you visited any of Almacenes Tía's social networks or website?	385	1	5	3,89	1,208
Have you bought products on any social network or website of Almacenes Tía?	385	1	5	4,40	,937
Do you consider the usefulness of the Almacenes tía website as an informative tool before making your purchases?	385	1	5	3,87	1,186
How do you evaluate the use of social networks to check prices or buy products from Almacenes tía?	385	1	5	4,18	,916
How often do you visit the Almacenes Tía website?	385	1	5	3,76	,974

(continúa)

(viene)

Descriptive statistics					
	N	Minima	Maximum	Media	Des. Deviation
How do you evaluate Almacenes tía's customer service when making your purchases?	385	1	5	3,87	1,131
How do you evaluate the response time to a problem due to the purchase or warranty of a product at Almacenes Tía?	385	1	5	3,78	1,044
How do you evaluate the reputation of Almacenes Tía?	385	1	5	3,93	1,161
How do you evaluate the information provided by Almacenes tía on social networks or website?	385	1	5	4,17	1,063
How do you evaluate the quality of Almacenes Tía's products/services?	385	1	5	4,12	,989
How do you evaluate the honesty and ethics that Almacenes Tía provides when offering its products or services?	385	1	5	3,85	,885
N valid (per list)	385				

Hypothesis Testing

In order to perform the hypothesis test, the Separan coefficient was applied in order to establish the relationship between the variables, the analysis of the RHO coefficient agrees that the values being close to 1 indicate that there is a strong and negative correlation. Positive or negative signs only indicate the direction of the relationship; A negative sign could indicate that one variable is increasing while the other is decreasing or vice versa. If the result obtained is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H0) $\times 2 < 0.05$ is approved, on the contrary, if the result is greater than 0.05, the alternative hypothesis (H1) $\times 2 > 0.05$ is approved.

Statement of the General Hypothesis

Ho: Inbound marketing does not influence the acquisition of customers of Almacenes Tía in Manta

H1: Inbound marketing influences customer acquisition at Almacenes Tía in Manta.

Table 3. Hypothesis Statement

		Correlations		
			Inbound Marketing	Customer Acquisition
Tau de Kendall	Inbound Marketing	Correlation coefficient	1,000	,656**
		Sig. (bilateral)	.	,000
		N	385	385
	Customer acquisition	Correlation coefficient	,656**	1,000
		Sig. (bilateral)	,000	.
		N	385	385
Rho de Spearman	Inbound Marketing	Correlation coefficient	1,000	,700**
		Sig. (bilateral)	.	,000
		N	385	385
	Customer acquisition	Correlation coefficient	,700**	1,000
		Sig. (bilateral)	,000	.
		N	385	385

Source: own work

Interpretation

Through the value of $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ and obtaining a value of 0.656 in the Kendall Correlation Coefficient indicates that there is a high correlation between the variables, therefore, it can be stated that the study between the variables, where inbound marketing shows a positive correlation with customer acquisition. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Specific Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis Statement

Ho: Customers do not influence digital communication at Almacenes Tía in the city of Manta

H1: Customers influence digital communication at Almacenes Tía in the city of Manta

Table 4. Hypothesis Statement

		Correlations		
			Clients	Comunicación Digital
Tau_b de Kendall	Clients	Correlation coefficient	1,000	,585**
		Sig. (bilateral)	.	,000
		N	385	385
	Comunicación Digital	Correlation coefficient	,585**	1,000
		Sig. (bilateral)	,000	.
		N	385	385
Rho de Spearman	Clients	Correlation coefficient	1,000	,521**
		Sig. (bilateral)	.	,000
		N	385	385
	Comunicación Digital	Correlation coefficient	,521**	1,000
		Sig. (bilateral)	,000	.
		N	385	385

Source: own work

Interpretation

The result obtained during data processing shows a bilateral significance of 0.00, which determines that the null hypothesis H0 is discarded, and the alternative hypothesis H1 is approved. This is evidenced by the value of the correlation coefficient $P = 0.521$, which is interpreted as a moderate correlation between the aforementioned variables.

Specific Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis Statement

Ho: Decision-making does not influence the merchandising of Almacenes Tía in the city of Manta

H1: Decision-making influences the merchandising of Almacenes Tía in the city of Manta

Table 5. Hypothesis Statement

		Correlations		
			Decision-making	Merchandising
Tau_b de Kendall	Decision-making	Correlation coefficient	1,000	,296**
		Sig. (bilateral)	.	,000
		N	385	385
	Merchandising	Correlation coefficient	,296**	1,000
		Sig. (bilateral)	,000	.
		N	385	385
Rho de Spearman	Decision-making	Correlation coefficient	1,000	,321**
		Sig. (bilateral)	.	,000
		N	385	385
	Merchandising	Correlation coefficient	,321**	1,000
		Sig. (bilateral)	,000	.
		N	385	385

Source: own work

Interpretation

The result obtained during data processing shows a bilateral importance of 0.00, which establishes that the null hypothesis H0 is annulled, with the alternative hypothesis H1 being ideal.

This can be evidenced by the value of the correlation coefficient $P = 0.321$ which is deciphered as a low positive correlation between both variables.

Specific Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis Statement

Ho: Value content does not influence the product policy of Almacenes Tía of the city of Manta

H1: Value content influences the product policy of Almacenes Tía in the city of Manta

Table 6. Hypothesis Statement

		Correlations		
			Valuable content	Product Policy
Tau_b de Kendall	Valuable content	Correlation coefficient	1,000	,623**
		Sig. (bilateral)	.	,000
		N	385	385
	Product Policy	Correlation coefficient	,623**	1,000
		Sig. (bilateral)	,000	.
		N	385	385
Rho de Spearman	Valuable content	Correlation coefficient	1,000	,686**
		Sig. (bilateral)	.	,000
		N	385	385
	Product Policy	Correlation coefficient	,686**	1,000
		Sig. (bilateral)	,000	.
		N	385	385

Source: own work

Interpretation

The result obtained during data processing shows a bilateral significance of 0.00, which establishes that the null hypothesis H0 is rejected and the alternative hypothesis H1 is accepted. This is supported by the value of the correlation coefficient ($P = 0.623$), which is interpreted as indicating a high similarity between the aforementioned variables.

5. DISCUSSION

In an increasingly competitive and digitized market, marketing strategies play a crucial role in the ability of retail businesses to attract and retain customers. In this context, the research focuses on exploring how inbound marketing influences customer acquisition at Almacenes Tía in Manta. Inbound marketing, characterized by its focus on creating relevant and useful content to attract customers naturally, has become an essential tool in the digital age. Understanding how these strategies affect customer behavior and business decisions is critical to the success of retailers in a highly competitive environment.

The research was carried out using a descriptive and non-experimental approach, with a cross-sectional design that allowed the analysis of the relationships between inbound marketing and customer acquisition. The results revealed high reliability in the data collected, supporting the validity of the study. It was found that 86% of respondents considered Almacenes Tía's customer service to be excellent or good, indicating widespread satisfaction among customers. In addition, a high positive correlation (Kendall's correlation coefficient = 0.656) was found between inbound marketing and customer acquisition, suggesting that the strategies implemented have been effective.

The findings of this research highlight the importance of inbound marketing as an effective strategy for customer acquisition at Almacenes Tía in Manta. The influence of inbound marketing on digital communication, decision-making, merchandising, and product policy has been evident, supporting the relevance of these strategies and technological tools in today's retail environment. These results provide valuable insights for the company and suggest areas of focus to further improve its marketing strategy and strengthen its market position.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The findings confirm that inbound marketing has proven to be an effective strategy for attracting and capturing customers in the context of Almacenes Tía in Manta. The high positive correlation between inbound marketing and customer acquisition suggests that the tactics implemented have been successful in generating interest and engagement among the audience.

The data reveal a high degree of satisfaction among Almacenes Tía customers in Manta, with 86% of respondents rating customer service as excellent or good. This indicates that the company has managed to maintain high quality standards in customer service, which contributes positively to its reputation and loyalty.

The research also suggests that inbound marketing has influenced business decisions related to digital communication, merchandising, and product policy. The positive correlation between these variables indicates that inbound marketing strategies have shaped the way Almacenes Tía communicates with customers, showcases its products, and makes decisions about its offerings.

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