

Original article

Methodological proposal to promote administrative training in micro-enterprises

Propuesta metodológica para impulsar la formación administrativa en microempresas

Proposta metodológica para promover o treinamento gerencial em microempresas



Mayra Elizabeth García Bravo¹  0000-0002-9615-6880  mayra.garcia2684@utc.edu.ec

Rosa Marjorie Torres Briones¹  0000-0001-5661-3605  rosa.torres@utc.edu.ec

Ketty del Rocío Hurtado García¹  0000-0002-5951-7341  jeansolmadeini@hotmail.com

Brenda Elizabeth Oña Sinchiguano¹  0000-0002-3939-1059  brenda.ona@utc.edu.ec

¹ Technical University of Cotopaxi Extension La Maná. Ecuador.

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ABSTRACT

Microenterprises are the entities with the greatest presence in the business fabric of Ecuador, however their contribution to the generation of employment and wealth is low, which is a reality not only of the country but of the entire Latin American region. In the "La Maná" canton, Cotopaxi province, the presence of this type of business organizations is just as important, diagnosing in previous works the shortcomings in administrative management, especially in the accounting, tax and financial fields. The present research was aimed at making a methodological proposal to promote the administrative training of micro-enterprises in La Maná, for which theoretical research methods such as dialectical, systemic and modeling were used. The proposal is constituted by objective, principles and stages, with an integral and organic character, considering the participation of internal and external actors to the company. The implementation of said proposal will make it possible to increase the training of administrators and managers and, over time, improve the results of business

management and increase their survival and competitiveness rates, as well as contribute to the socioeconomic development of the "La Maná" canton and the country.

Keywords: microenterprises; administration; training; competencies; methodology.

RESUMEN

Las microempresas son las entidades que mayor presencia tienen en el tejido empresarial de Ecuador, sin embargo su contribución a la generación de empleo y de riquezas es bajo, lo cual es una realidad no solo del país sino de toda la región latinoamericana. En el cantón "La Maná", provincia Cotopaxi, la presencia de este tipo de organizaciones empresariales es igual de importante, diagnosticándose en trabajos previos las falencias en la gestión administrativa, especial en los ámbitos contable, tributario y financiero. La presente investigación se dirigió a realizar una propuesta metodológica para impulsar la formación administrativa de microempresas en La Maná para lo cual se emplearon métodos teóricos de investigación como el dialéctico, sistémico y de modelación. La propuesta está constituida por objetivo, principios y etapas, con un carácter integral y orgánico, considerando la participación de actores internos y externos a la empresa. La implementación de dicha propuesta permitirá elevar la formación de los administrativos y directivos y, con el tiempo, mejorar los resultados de la gestión empresarial y elevar sus índices de supervivencia y competitividad, así como contribuir al desarrollo socioeconómico del cantón "La Maná" y el país.

Palabras clave: microempresas; administración; formación; competencias; metodología.

RESUMO

As microempresas são as entidades com maior presença no tecido empresarial do Equador, porém sua contribuição para a geração de emprego e riqueza é baixa, o que é uma realidade não só no país, mas também em toda a região latino-americana. No cantão de "La Maná", província de Cotopaxi, a presença desse tipo de organização empresarial é igualmente importante, e estudos anteriores diagnosticaram deficiências na gestão administrativa, especialmente nas áreas de contabilidade, tributação e finanças. Esta pesquisa teve como objetivo desenvolver uma proposta metodológica para promover a capacitação administrativa das microempresas de La Maná, para a qual foram utilizados métodos teóricos de pesquisa como o dialético, o sistêmico e o de modelagem.

A proposta é composta por objetivos, princípios e etapas, com caráter integral e orgânico, considerando a participação de atores internos e externos à empresa. A implementação dessa proposta permitirá melhorar a capacitação do pessoal administrativo e gerencial e, com o tempo, melhorar os resultados da gestão empresarial e aumentar seus índices de sobrevivência e competitividade, além de contribuir para o desenvolvimento socioeconômico do cantão "La Maná" e do país.

Palavras-chave: microempresas; administração; treinamento; competências; metodologia.

INTRODUCTION

Microenterprises in Ecuador represent 93.8% of the total economic entities, with considerable representation in employment (25.6% of the total number of employees in the country), while their performance levels are lower, represented for example, in participation in total sales of the business sector (0.54% of the total) (Inec, 2022). As it is evidenced, there is no correlation between the number of microenterprises and their performance, which continues to be a debt to be addressed from the point of view of public policies, business management, and socioeconomic research that from academic and scientific institutions are carried out.

The financial analysis of the microenterprise sector developed by Zambrano Farías et al. (2021) in the Guayas province determined that, despite the fact that this is the Ecuadorian region with the greatest representation of this type of enterprise, its financial performance is not significantly superior to that of the rest of the country, hence, the authors consider that it is necessary to reformulate the policies that allow the survival and performance of these entities.

The deficient professionalization of business management, especially, the aspects related to structure, informality, lack of training, financial difficulties, strategic planning and human resource management (Rodríguez Arrieta et al., 2019) are some of the most analyzed in recent literature, which affect the insufficient growth, survival and competitiveness of microenterprises in Ecuador. Toala Bozada et al. (2022), for example, developed a research in which they visualized the high effects of the lack of strategic planning or its empiricism on the indicators of growth and dissolution of microenterprises.

This reality is not exclusive to Ecuador, according to Dini and Stumpo (2019, p. 6) micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in Latin America "continue to be on the margins of the most dynamic markets and their contribution to exports continues to be extremely limited, participate marginally in more dynamic productive relationships with large companies and rarely integrate into associative models with other companies to generate economies of scale and collective goods (...) they fail to accelerate their innovation process and production processes continue to operate with obsolete or scarcely productive technology".

Despite what has been described above, the potential of microenterprises to contribute to the development of local and national economies is also recognized, especially in the field of employment and income. For this, Figueroa González et al. (2020) indicate that measures such as programs to promote values and collaboration, improvement of financing conditions for access to technology, programs for information management, improvement of the regulatory environment, creation of spaces for collaboration and representation of this type of companies, among others, can be applied.

Specifically in the accounting and financial aspect, there are many shortcomings in the management of microenterprises during the early stages of their life cycle and in some, it even becomes the cause of their disappearance. According to Cano Otero (2019), proper accounting and financial management allows microenterprises to focus their structure on value creation, wealth generation, and market competitiveness. In this line, it is essential that from the initial stages, this type of company generates administrative capacities associated with such an important area of its activity, managing to professionalize management over time.

In the "La Maná" canton, Cotopaxi province, the main economic activities are agriculture, livestock and mining, in which, together with the commerce sector, MSMEs have a greater presence and, within them, microenterprises, which were severely affected by the stoppage of activities during the pandemic and post-pandemic, as in many other places in the country and the world (Comas Rodríguez et al., 2022).

Due to the situation they are facing, microenterprises need to streamline their business management, especially in the accounting and financial field, improve the level of training of their technical and managerial staff, to which in recent years the Technical University of Cotopaxi has focused its attention through research projects and links with society.

The link between the academy and the enterprise is one of the fundamental precepts to stimulate local economies, especially when it is aspired to strengthen the capacities for value creation, the promotion of innovation as a source of competitiveness and the sustainability of the management of the companies. In this area, the definition and implementation of methodologically structured training programs are useful to establish in an orderly manner the necessary steps to achieve an improvement in the skills of enterprises administrative staff. Agudelo Orrego (2019, p. 116) states the relationship between training plans and the reinforcement of leadership, the strategic approach and the improvement of administrative capacities, which become a challenge for micro-enterprises due to their low number of employees, since, according to this author, the more employees an enterprise has, the greater the capacity to control "the quality of human talent training".

In the present research, a methodological proposal is proposed to promote the administrative training of micro-enterprises in La Maná; based on participatory methodologies, integrating content associated with the main areas of business activity, especially accounting, tax and financial issues.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present research was developed applying theoretical research methods, which in the first place allowed the collection and analysis of useful information on microenterprises in Latin America, Ecuador and specifically in the "La Maná" canton, as it is the identified object of study. Various bibliographic resources obtained in databases and academic repositories were analyzed, which, with the application of analysis and synthesis techniques, led to the identification of the main features of this type of enterprise, as a basis for the future design of the methodological proposal. It was elaborated with the modeling method, obtaining a graphic representation and the explanation of each of its stages, which will facilitate its subsequent application.

The proposal was submitted for validation by nine academic experts in the subject, applying Kendall's W test to determine the coefficient of agreement between the evaluators.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Current situation of microenterprises and the need for training focused on competencies

Regarding MSMEs in general, Dini and Stumpo (2019, p. 5) affirm that "they become a central actor to guarantee the viability and effectiveness of the transformation that generates a new development dynamic that allows faster and more continuous economic growth, that at the same time be inclusive and sustainable".

Within MSMEs, microenterprises are characterized by being an organization made up of 1 to 9 employees, with a value of sales or gross income per year of up to 100 thousand US dollars, based on the Ecuadorian standard. The conception in the creation of this type of entities focuses on the generation of employment and the improvement of the living conditions of its employees, families and the community in general. Socorro (2020, p. 21) indicates that "a microentrepreneur does not necessarily seek to respond to a market need, it can be a person or a group of them who decide to start an enterprise to satisfy their income need and/or respond to their financial responsibilities".

However, many of the research carried out in recent years show that microenterprises barely manage to self-employ their owners, operate at the family level with excessive emphasis on tradition, and have a minimal impact on improving their income. In this line, Ruiz Torres et al. (2019) identify the following aspects as key to improving business management and its results: training, especially in accounting, finance, marketing, and business organization. This, considering that its main deficiencies are the insufficient experience of the owners, low educational level and business organization, as well as the lack of accounting records and little access to financing.

Pelayo Cortes et al. (2019) delve into the effects that informality has on the growth of microenterprises and how, by focusing primarily on compliance with tax obligations, they have influenced the correct structuring of accounting and financial systems. It is worth noting the importance it has for the stability, transparency and growth of any economic organization in the proper management of these business functions (Fernández Lorenzo & Rivera Rodríguez, 2016, p. 34). These authors propose an integrated accounting and finance subsystem for cooperatives, which could be adjusted and applied in microenterprises, given their characteristics, directing their efforts to "capture financial resources to develop and expand the activity (...), guaranteeing economic profitability and stability that allows compliance with its economic model (...). While the accounting

activity guarantees compliance with established standards and offers timely information for decision making.

Financing in microenterprises is one of the most sensitive issues throughout their life cycle, specifically in the initial stages, not only because of the funds that are necessary for their development, but also because of the impact on profitability. Although financing is one of the critical variables in the initial phase of the microenterprise, in later stages others such as social capital, human capital and management practices are added (Valenzuela et al., 2019). These authors indicate that empirical studies have shown greater survival of microenterprises initially financed with debt than those that do so with their own capital and State contributions.

In compliance with the purpose indicated above, the usefulness of the application of the Financial Information Standards in MSMEs of the "La Maná" canton is considered, which, in turn, requires as a premise the improvement of administrative capacities that allow restructure accounting systems, improve information formats, management mechanisms and the way of presenting information in financial statements as this area of the company is key to its development and growth (Pico Gutiérrez & Núñez Neira, 2018).

The microenterprise is often the result of entrepreneurship, where factors such as the characteristics of the entrepreneurs, their experience, the financing, the management that they are capable of developing and their managerial skills influence (Valenzuela et al., 2019).

Soledispa Rodríguez et al. (2022) systematize the main problems of microenterprises from the internal and external point of view. Among the first are the excessive personal expenses of the owners, the lack of strategic planning, empiricism in decision-making, mismanagement of production and inventories, recruitment and personnel management problems, among others. While among the exogenous problems are the high financing costs, the few public programs and lack of tax incentives and piracy in the market. These authors, in addition to agreeing with others on aspects that would make it possible to boost the management of microenterprises, highlight the role played by information and communication technologies and innovation in both products and processes.

Among all these elements, the one that stands out the most in the literature is the knowledge that must be shared by both managers and all employees of microenterprises, which should be managed effectively to have capital that allows the enterprise to advance in an efficient professional and technically directed way.

In this area, training is essential to overcome many of the problems that have been described about microenterprises, which should be aimed at creating competencies in the members of the organization, considered these as "the appropriate requirements that the worker needs to perform optimally in their functions (...) define the objectives to be achieved in a specific task within the business organization" (Obando Changuán, 2020, p. 168).

This author himself indicates that the beginning of any training plan in enterprises, based on the competency-based approach, is the diagnosis of the level of knowledge, followed by the identification of training needs and from there the rest of the stages that will be considered. in the methodological proposal that was designed in the present work. On the other hand, the bibliography relates the results of the evaluation of personnel performance with training plans (López Giraldo et al., 2020), as tools that lead to increased productivity and the fulfillment of organizational objectives.

Methodological proposal and validation

The designed methodological proposal consists of an objective, principles and stages, all closely related, so as to guarantee the integrality and organization necessary to promote administrative training in micro-enterprises of the "La Maná" canton.

The objective of the methodological proposal is to promote administrative training in microenterprises with the active participation of internal and external actors that contribute to improving work performance, productivity, compliance with the organizational and socioeconomic objectives of the "La Maná" canton.

The principles considered for the design of the methodological proposal were:

1. Flexibility: considering that rigidity does not contribute to the desired change in the enterprise.
2. Simplicity: excessive bureaucracy would not facilitate the training process.
3. Participation: the importance of the active participation of all the internal actors of the microenterprises.

The defined stages were the following:

1. Group awareness workshops.
2. Diagnosis of instructing and training needs of employees of microenterprises.
3. Prioritization of instructing and training needs, definition of budgets and training program, based on stated objectives.
4. Execution of the formation program and delivery of training certificates.
5. Evaluation of the impact of the formation program and holding group workshops to disseminate the results.

Table 1 shows the summary of the stages, with their managers and estimated execution periods, which are a reference for execution in each microenterprise.

Table 1. Summary of stages that make up the methodological proposal

Stage	Responsible	Estimated execution periods
1	Directors of micro-enterprises/allied educational or academic entity(ies)	Two weeks
2	Directors of micro-enterprises/allied educational or academic entity(ies)	Four weeks
3	Directors of micro-enterprises/allied educational or academic entity(ies)	Two weeks
4	Allied educational or academic entity(ies)	twelve weeks
5	Directors of micro-enterprises/allied educational or academic entity(ies)	Two weeks

Source: Own elaboration

Below is a brief explanation of each of the stages.

Stage 1: Awareness is essential for the members of the microenterprises to recognize the importance of developing instruction and training activities that contribute to improving their labor skills.

Various techniques can be applied at this stage, especially group workshops, discussion groups, among others, which also respond to the previously stated participatory principle.

Stage 2: The diagnosis has the function of determining the specific instruction and training needs, in relation to the needs of the members of the organization and the expectations of the company.

At this stage, there are various techniques to be used, such as knowledge assessment questionnaires, interviews with microenterprise employees, skills inventories, group techniques such as brainstorming and workshops, as well as other primary information search methods such as review of files, job manuals and other documents that may exist in the microenterprise, given the level of professionalism that exists in the human talent management activity.

Stage 3: After the diagnosis, the prioritization process of the needs that will be addressed is carried out, according to the existing budget in the organization, the available trainers and the planning of activities in the enterprise.

This is a totally technical stage in which the managers of the micro-enterprises must participate, with the support staff for the management of human talent, if any, supported, in addition, by allied academic and educational entities.

Stage 4: The educational or academic entities that will participate in the execution of the plan, will organize jointly with the microenterprise, the carrying out of the activities, according to the conditions and labor planning of the organization.

Educational and academic entities become an important interest group for microenterprises that will facilitate through agreements or contracts the development of training plans and guidance in the application of the methodological proposal. Among these actors, the Technical University of Cotopaxi stands out.

The training programs may be carried out in microenterprise facilities or isolated institutions; while the training should be carried out as a priority in the enterprise.

This stage concludes with the delivery of the certificates of the activities carried out by the employees.

Stage 5: The evaluation of the impact of instruction and training activities is key to visualize the improvement in competencies and job performance, as well as the socialization of the implementation

of the training plan in the microenterprise and, with it, the establishment of the commitment to its execution in the following years.

At this stage, various techniques can be used, such as interviews with employees and managers of the microenterprise in relation to the development of the programs, level of satisfaction, and others. Additionally, indicators such as participation rates, approval rates and especially post-training and training performance can be measured. This stage, in the same way, is carried out with the support of allied academic and educational entities.

For the validation of the instrument four criteria proposed by Escobar Pérez and Cuervo Martínez (2008) were evaluated: sufficiency, coherence, relevance and clarity of the different components of the proposal (objective, the three principles and the five stages), summarized in the table 2 Kendall's W values determined.

Table 2. Calculation of Kendall's W for the components included in the methodological proposal

Component	Sufficiency	Coherence	Relevance	Clarity
Objective	W=1; p=.000	W=1; p=.000	W=0.97; p=.000	W=1; p=.000
Principle 1	W=1; p=.000	W=1; p=.000	W=1; p=.000	W=1; p=.000
Principle 2	W=1; p=.000	W=0.9; p=.000	W=1; p=.000	W=1; p=.000
Principle 3	W=1; p=.000	W=1; p=.000	W=1; p=.000	W=1; p=.000
Principle 4	W=0.9; p=.000	W=1; p=.000	W=1; p=.000	W=0.99; p=.000
Stage 1	W=1; p=.000	W=1; p=.000	W=1; p=.000	W=1; p=.000
Stage 2	W=0.91 p=.000	W=0.98; p=.000	W=1; p=.000	W=1; p=.001
stage 3	W=1; p=.000	W=1; p=.000	W=1; p=.001	W=1; p=.000
stage 4	W=1; p=.000	W=1; p=.000	W=1; p=.000	W=1; p=.000
stage 5	W=0.93; p=.001	W=1; p=.000	W=1; p=.000	W=1; p=.000

Source: Own elaboration based on statistical results

As can be seen, after validation, the components included in the proposal with significant values of Kendall's W greater than 0.9 (Schmidt, 1997) are ratified, and it is not necessary to make any modifications in the design for subsequent application.

It can be concluded that in order for microenterprises to generate a greater socioeconomic impact in any region of Latin America and, especially, in the "La Maná" canton, Ecuador, it is necessary to identify their main problems and face them with technically structured programs that systematize activities, managers and resources in the achievement of previously defined goals.

In the present research work, a methodological proposal was designed to manage formation in micro-enterprises of the "La Maná" canton, which consists of an objective, principles and stages, designed with an integral and organic character, which will allow it to fulfill its function. The participation of internal and external actors to the enterprise is highlighted in the proposal, especially educational and academic institutions and their participation as facilitators for its execution.

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Conflict of interest

Authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Authors' contribution

Mayra Elizabeth García Bravo directed the project, designed the structure of the article and participated in the design of the methodological proposal and writing.

Rosa Marjorie Torres Briones, Ketty del Rocío Hurtado García and Brenda Elizabeth Oña Sinchiguano participated in the theoretical systematization, the design of the methodological proposal and the writing.

All the authors approved the version finally submitted to the journal.



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