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# CORPORATE IMAGE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION: CASE OF THE QUISAPINCHA LEATHER AND RELATED ARTISAN ASSOCIATION

# IMAGEN CORPORATIVA DESDE LA PERSPECTIVA DE LA COMUNICACIÓN EMPRESARIAL: CASO ASOCIACIÓN ARTESANAL CUERO Y AFINES DE QUISAPINCHA

**Freddy Lalaleo-Analuisa:** Higher Technological Institute "España". Ecuador. <u>freddy.lalaleo@iste.edu.ec</u>

**Manuel Chenet-Zuta:** Higher Technological Institute "España". Ecuador. <u>manuel.chenet@iste.edu.ec</u>

**Amanda Martínez-Yacelga:** Higher Technological Institute "España". Ecuador. <u>amanda.martinez@iste.edu.ec</u>

**Diego Bonilla-Jurado:** Higher Technological Institute "España". Ecuador. <u>diego.bonilla@iste.edu.ec</u>

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# ABSTRACT

The objective of the research is focused on creating a corporate image from the perspective of business communication for the Quisapincha Leather and Related Artisan Association. The applied methodology is based on a mixed approach, that is, quantitative and qualitative, the purpose of the study may depend on the explanatory nature in the sense that the opinion of the associates is described. The population identified for him was structured by a total of 65 people to whom the study-designed instrument was applied in order to know the current state of the association regarding the management of corporate image and business communication. On this basis and as the main results, a serious drawback was evidenced, which lies in the identification of a corporate image that characterizes the institution, given that 58% of the partners mention not knowing any image that is in charge of identifying the organization, likewise, the absence of strategies aimed at managing business communication is another of the identified weaknesses, a situation that has generated a stagnation of the institution, which has prevented the possible incursion into new markets and therefore obtaining better economic returns. With this background and in order to improve the situation of the association, we proceeded to design a corporate image



manual where the representative graphic elements of the brand are presented, in addition, giving the organization the opportunity to distinguish itself from competitors, as well as attract new customers.

**Keywords:** business communication, internal communication, external communication, business strategies, business management, business identity, corporate image, business brand, organizational reputation.

## RESUMEN

El objetivo de la investigación se centra en crear una imagen corporativa desde la perspectiva de la comunicación empresarial para la Asociación Artesanal Cuero y Afines de Quisapincha. La metodología aplicada se fundamenta en un enfoque mixto, es decir, cuantitativo y cualitativo, el propósito del estudio puede considerarse de naturaleza explicativa en el sentido de que se describen la opinión de los asociados. La población identificada para el estudio, lo estructuraron un total de 65 personas a quienes se les aplicó el instrumento diseñado con la finalidad de conocer el estado actual de la asociación en torno al manejo de la imagen corporativa y la comunicación empresarial. Sobre esta base y como principales hallazgos se evidenció un grave inconveniente, el cual recae en la identificación de una imagen corporativa propia que caracterice a la institución, dado que, el 58% de socios mencionan no conocer ninguna imagen que se encarque de identificar a la organización, asimismo, la ausencia de estrategias direccionadas al manejo de la comunicación empresarial es otra de las debilidades identificadas situación que ha generado un estancamiento de la institución lo que ha impedido la posible incursión en nuevos mercados y por ende la obtención de mejores réditos económicos. Con estos antecedentes y con la finalidad de mejorar la situación de la asociación se procedió al diseño de un manual de imagen corporativa en donde se establecieron los elementos gráficos representativos de la marca, además, dar la oportunidad a la organización de distinguirse de los competidores, así como también, captar nuevos clientes.

**Palabras clave:** comunicación empresarial, comunicación interna, comunicación externa, estrategias empresariales, gestión empresarial, identidad empresarial, imagen corporativa, marca empresarial, reputación organizacional.

# IMAGEM CORPORATIVA NA PERSPECTIVA DA COMUNICAÇÃO EMPRESARIAL: O CASO DA ASSOCIAÇÃO QUISAPINCHA LEATHER AND RELATED CRAFTS ASSOCIATION

### RESUMO

O objectivo da investigação centra-se na criação de uma imagem corporativa da perspectiva da comunicação empresarial para a Asociación Artesanal Cuero y Afines de Quisapincha. A metodologia aplicada baseia-se numa abordagem mista, ou seja, quantitativa e qualitativa, o objectivo do estudo pode ser considerado de natureza explicativa, no sentido em que descreve a opinião dos associados. A população identificada para o estudo foi composta por um total de 65 pessoas a quem foi aplicado o instrumento concebido com o objectivo de determinar o estado actual da associação em termos de gestão da imagem corporativa e comunicação empresarial. Nesta base

e como principais conclusões, foi evidenciado um grave inconveniente, que reside na identificação de uma imagem corporativa que caracteriza a instituição, dado que 58% dos sócios mencionaram não conhecer qualquer imagem que seja responsável pela identificação da organização, também a ausência de estratégias destinadas a gerir a comunicação empresarial é outra das debilidades identificadas que gerou uma estagnação da instituição que impediu a possível incursão em novos mercados e, portanto, a obtenção de melhores retornos económicos. Com este pano de fundo e com o objectivo de melhorar a situação da associação, procedemos à concepção de um manual de imagem corporativa no qual foram estabelecidos os elementos gráficos representativos da marca, para além de dar à organização a oportunidade de se distinguir da concorrência, bem como de atrair novos clientes.

**Palavras chave:** comunicação empresarial, comunicação interna, comunicação externa, estratégias empresariais, gestão empresarial, identidade empresarial, identidade corporativa, imagem corporativa, marca empresarial, reputação organizacional.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A revolution in the business landscape has forced companies to change their management model and adapt to the current business environment. These changes are directed based on the needs and behavior of customers, the market, and technology (Lalaleo-Analuisa et al., 2021), which have affected the practice of corporate communication, as corporate communication plays an important role in creating value for a company (Mora-Sánchez and Guerrero-Marín, 2020). Digging deeper into the corporate line, current organizations are part of a volatile, unstable, and competitive environment that demands the design of corporate strategies and objectives to establish links with different stakeholders in order to strengthen trust and project their image (Bonilla et al., 2018; Peñafiel et al., 2020). To see results in this dynamic communication based on a model that is visibly aligned with the organization's structure is needed, and consequently, the communication vision must be adjusted to a corporate vision and model (Lozano, 2019).

Communication is strengthened through the building of bonds, emotions, and experiences; as social beings, they are configured in everyday life according to the experiences, orientations, and contexts of communication, since it allows for the construction and management of shared realities. Furthermore, it can be seen as an integrating methodology that generates results within social groups (Apolo et al., 2017; Lalaleo et al., 2023). Corporate communication has been defined as the process by which two or more people exchange and share information, usually with the intention of motivating or influencing behavior. It is important to note that this definition of communication emphasizes its intention, meaning a purpose that can go beyond simply transferring information (Johan and Noor, 2013).

In addition to what has been mentioned, corporate communication is important for a company because it is through it that an organization establishes contact with its clients, suppliers, and other internal and external elements of the organization (Castro-Martínez et al., 2022). On the other hand, corporate communication is essential for a company to create its own corporate image. It refers to a type of communication that

is used to promote a product, service, or organization and can also be used for legal matters or to communicate information within the organization itself (Pineda, 2020).

Corporate communication aims to analyze and understand the relationship between corporate image and reputation, where reputation is selective and private and is forced by the public and notorious image (Balmer, 2017). This involves taking into account the corporate philosophy and culture and how its management contributes to achieving objectives (Rodríguez-Fernández and Vázquez-Sande, 2019). In this sense, corporate communication must be incorporated within a corporate vision and model, so that the role it presents within organizations can be given relevance to ensure the development of superior quality management processes, complementing information and communication (Lozano, 2019).

Based on this, corporate image is an important factor in the survival of a company, demonstrating a positive relationship between customer/consumer perspectives on the organization and the behavior of the organization. The image is a personal perception that can be different in each person and may not be a reflection of the organization but is created by recipients of personal or indirect experiences (Tran et al., 2015). The image can change depending on the activities involved or the development of the organization; however, it may differ from reality, but the organization can orient it towards what it wants. Therefore, it can be defined as what individuals or consumers perceive about the organization through media or their direct or indirect experiences, becoming a sense, attitude, and image (Dokmaipum et al., 2019).

Organizational reputation is one of the objectives that organizations must manage to create awareness of their corporate image. Reputation is derived from the organization's image in different areas, such as the brand, long-standing business, experience, professionalism, and safety, which often lead to trust and recognition of the organization, including the retention and expansion of customers (Dokmaipum et al., 2019). A positive reputation for the organization in all its dimensions requires good management. Therefore, having a good corporate image leads to better attitudes and beliefs, followed by customer patronage and loyalty behavior. In addition, having a good corporate image can also reflect corporate reputation and performance (Pérez and Del Bosque, 2014).

Organizational reputation is developed from the corporate image, the perception of identity includes the perception of attitudes, sense, and personal impressions that customers have about the organization, which also covers the products, services, and conditions of the institution (Balmer, 2017). This perception can be realized through the media, the experience of using services, or the management of the organization in terms of products, employees, services, and activities, such as the place and time that consumers can access or receive services conveniently. Communication of credible and consistent messages across all corporate platforms is essential when building a strong corporate image through corporate reputation and trust through the media used (Johan and Noor, 2013).

Business growth reflects the efficiency of management, and in this sense, organizational management must take into account the positive image of the

organization because the corporate image is the reflection or perception of the target audience that the organization communicates through its corporate identity in various forms such as corporate symbol, messages, brand, services, personality, and uniformity of its personnel, towards the external target audience (Castillo et al., 2020). If the target audience has perceived, understood, and responded to what the organization communicates, they will recognize the image of that organization. Additionally, if the target audience has consistently accumulated it, the corporate image will eventually become the organization's reputation, leading to trust and value for the organization (Rivera, 2018).

Corporate image management, whether in terms of services, stores, or products, is important. A good image influences attitudes and confidence, motivates satisfaction, and partly drives the decision-making process and purchase behavior of the organization's products and services (Ramos and Valle, 2020). Therefore, to create and maintain the corporate image, organizations must build a strong relationship with various components that promote their business, such as customers, community members, and related individuals. Additionally, the corporate image also influences the behavior of stakeholders (Vire, 2019). A good corporate image directly impacts stakeholders and enhances the trend of attracting qualified personnel and profitability.

# 2. OBJECTIVES

Communication strategies are used to improve, recover, or rebuild the organizational image, and in this sense, when a company or organization adopts image improvement strategies, they can be the key to success. The purpose of this document is to obtain a deeper understanding of corporate image under business communication. Therefore, the following research objective has been developed: To create a corporate image from the perspective of business communication for the Leather and Related Crafts Association of Quisapincha.

# 3. METHODOLOGY

This study took a quantitative and qualitative approach, and the purpose of the study can be considered explanatory in the sense that it describes the opinions of the members to create a corporate image from the perspective of business communication for the Cuero y Afines Handicraft Association of Quisapincha. Additionally, this study follows the design of a case study, which involves investigating a particular phenomenon within its real-life context and is useful for gaining a better understanding of the research.

The Leather and Related Handicraft Association is located in the Quisapincha parish in the province of Tungurahua. It was established in 2003 and currently has 65 registered members. Over the past 20 years, the association has been offering its products locally and nationally, and it offers a wide variety of leather-based products such as wallets, jackets, purses, caps, boots, among others (Chávez et al., 2016; Lalaleo, 2021).

The data analyzed to create the brand image of the institution was the opinion of 65 associates that was collected through a direct survey. The data was used to understand how the company has communicated its corporate image externally as an example of

direct communication to understand its implicit communications that would shape the reputation and institutional image.

Regarding the applied instrument, it was structured with a total of 10 questions designed under the Likert scale in order to obtain responses that facilitate their processing and subsequent analysis through descriptive statistics. However, to achieve this, it was necessary to establish the internal consistency of each of the proposed items by calculating Cronbach's alpha in the statistical software SPSS version 24. The result obtained was 0.801. Since this value is higher than 0.70, which according to the literature represents the minimum acceptable value, an acceptable level of reliability is determined.

On the other hand, when analyzing the information, it was taken into account that there may be a bias in the sense that those who expressed their opinions (associates) probably have a different point of view than what is actually happening. Although the information was useful for the study and contributed to the credibility of the research, it served the purpose of building a description of the company in the case.

## 4. RESULTS

The first part of the results of this research adheres to a descriptive analysis of the most relevant items of the applied instrument, while subsequently, to establish the relationship between the variables under study, the Pearson correlation coefficient was applied. Based on the above, the main results obtained are presented below.



Figure 1. Do you, as a member of the Association, identify the corporate image?

Source: Author's own work.

Of the surveyed associates, 58% of the population claim to have never identified the corporate image, likewise, 22% state that they have rarely identified the association's brand, while 12% mention that they sometimes identify it, and finally, the remaining 8% of associates state that they almost always identify the corporate image. These findings demonstrate the level of knowledge most associates have given that the corporate image should be in line with what is desired to be communicated, such as the products to be marketed, the desires and needs of customers, and current trends. This could be considered one of the reasons why associates do not identify the corporate image.





Source: Author's own work.

Out of the 100% of surveyed members, 62% stated that communication strategies to promote the corporate image of the institution have never been defined. Additionally, 18% mentioned that these types of actions have almost never been established, while 12% stated that communication strategies have been defined occasionally. Finally, the remaining 8% agreed that communication strategies had been developed almost always. According to the opinion of the members, most of them indicate the absence of strategies to promote the corporate image, which has led to a stagnation of the institution, hindering the possible entry into new markets and therefore obtaining better economic returns.

**Figure 3.** *In the field of business communication, what type of advertising does the Association apply for the corporate image?* 



Source: Author's own work.

Out of the total respondents, 69% of the population mentioned that they do not apply any type of advertising for the corporate image, 19% stated that they apply online advertising, and the remaining 12% indicated that they apply outdoor advertising. In this context, advertising can be considered a weakness within corporate communication.

On the other hand, to establish the level of relationship between the variables considered in the study (corporate image and corporate communication), the Pearson coefficient was used, finding the following level of correlation:

 Table 1. Pearson's correlation coefficient.

		The corporate image of the organization	Business communication strategies
The corporate	Pearson's correlation	1	,984**
image of the	Statistical significance		0,000
organization	at a two-tailed test		
	Ν	65	65
Business	Pearson's correlation	,984**	1
communication	Statistical significance	0,000	
strategies	at a two-tailed test		
	Ν	65	65

**Source:** Author's own work.

In this case, it is observed that the value of Pearson's correlation coefficient R is 0.984, indicating a highly significant correlation. Therefore, it can be stated with 95% confidence that there is a high positive correlation between corporate image and business communication in the study area because the value of the Statistical significance at a two-tailed test is 0.000, which is below the required 0.05 level.

Furthermore, as a complement to the diagnosis made and with the aim of improving the organization's situation, a series of strategies were established aimed at managing the institution's corporate image. To this end, as an initial diagnosis, the SWOT analysis of the Cuero y Afines Artisan Association was carried out, with a prior review of the information and the participation of those involved. The strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats both internally and externally were identified. Consequently, the Analytical Matrix for Strategy Formation (AMSF) was proposed, as shown in Table 1.

FACTORS		STRENGTHS		WEAKNESSES
	<b>S1</b>	Experience in manufacturing leather products	<b>W1</b>	Deficiency in business management processes
	<b>S</b> 2	Products made entirely of leather (Quality)	W2	Little organization among associates
	<b>S</b> 3	Product range	W3	Low business growth
Asociación Artesanal Cuero y Afines	<b>S</b> 4	Original product designs	W4	Inadequate communication with external customers
	<b>S5</b>	Price competitiveness	W5	Lack of corporate identity
	<b>S</b> 6	Location in the tourism sector	W6	Absence of added value in the product
	S7	Legal support to associates	W7	Insufficient information about prices
OPPORTUNITIES	STRENGTHS- OPPORTUNITIES STRATEGIES		WEAKNESSES- OPPORTUNITIES STRATEGIES	

Table 2. Analytical Matrix for Strategy Formation.

-			
Ο	Reception of leather		
1	products		
Use of information		S2: S3: S4: O1: O2: O3: O5: To	
<b>O</b> and communication		generate a virtual catalog with	
2	technologies to	attractive and innovative content	
_	market products	aimed at capturing new real	W4:O2: Promote communication
0	Technological tools	customers, using a variety of high-	that visually and massively impacts
3	progress	quality products in conjunction	the products and brand of the
0	Inclusion of new	with the location of the	association
4	markets	association.	
-			
0	Innovative product		
5	designs		
	THREATS	STRENGTHS-THREATS	WEAKNESSES-THREATS
	IHREATS	STRENGTHS-THREATS	STRATEGIES
т	Market		
T 1	_		
-	Market		STRATEGIES
-	Market competitiveness Wide investment	STRATEGIES S1: S3: S4: T1: T4: Guarantee the	<b>STRATEGIES</b> W5: T1: T2: T5: To design a
1	Market competitiveness Wide investment capacity and	STRATEGIES S1: S3: S4: T1: T4: Guarantee the range of products based on brand	<b>STRATEGIES</b> W5: T1: T2: T5: To design a corporate image manual where the
1 T	Market competitiveness Wide investment	<b>STRATEGIES</b> S1: S3: S4: T1: T4: Guarantee the range of products based on brand design, taking advantage of the	STRATEGIES W5: T1: T2: T5: To design a corporate image manual where the graphic elements representative of
1 T 2	Market competitiveness Wide investment capacity and competition variation	STRATEGIES S1: S3: S4: T1: T4: Guarantee the range of products based on brand design, taking advantage of the associates' experience to position	STRATEGIES W5: T1: T2: T5: To design a corporate image manual where the graphic elements representative of the brand are established, and to
1 T	Market competitiveness Wide investment capacity and competition variation The low economic	STRATEGIES S1: S3: S4: T1: T4: Guarantee the range of products based on brand design, taking advantage of the associates' experience to position themselves in a competitive	STRATEGIES W5: T1: T2: T5: To design a corporate image manual where the graphic elements representative of the brand are established, and to give the organization the
1 T 2 T 3	Market competitiveness Wide investment capacity and competition variation The low economic flow of the country	STRATEGIES S1: S3: S4: T1: T4: Guarantee the range of products based on brand design, taking advantage of the associates' experience to position themselves in a competitive market where similar products to	STRATEGIES W5: T1: T2: T5: To design a corporate image manual where the graphic elements representative of the brand are established, and to give the organization the opportunity to distinguish itself
1 T 2 T	Market competitiveness Wide investment capacity and competition variation The low economic flow of the country Sale of products that	STRATEGIES S1: S3: S4: T1: T4: Guarantee the range of products based on brand design, taking advantage of the associates' experience to position themselves in a competitive	STRATEGIES W5: T1: T2: T5: To design a corporate image manual where the graphic elements representative of the brand are established, and to give the organization the
1 T 2 T 3 T 4	Market competitiveness Wide investment capacity and competition variation The low economic flow of the country Sale of products that are similar	STRATEGIES S1: S3: S4: T1: T4: Guarantee the range of products based on brand design, taking advantage of the associates' experience to position themselves in a competitive market where similar products to those of the association are	STRATEGIES W5: T1: T2: T5: To design a corporate image manual where the graphic elements representative of the brand are established, and to give the organization the opportunity to distinguish itself from competitors, as well as to
1 T 2 T 3 T	Market competitiveness Wide investment capacity and competition variation The low economic flow of the country Sale of products that	STRATEGIES S1: S3: S4: T1: T4: Guarantee the range of products based on brand design, taking advantage of the associates' experience to position themselves in a competitive market where similar products to those of the association are	STRATEGIES W5: T1: T2: T5: To design a corporate image manual where the graphic elements representative of the brand are established, and to give the organization the opportunity to distinguish itself from competitors, as well as to

**Source:** Author's own work.

At this point, only the guiding strategies (WO) were taken into consideration, where the objective is to promote communication that generates a visual impact and has a massive reach of the association's products and brand. The survival strategy (WT) is also considered, aimed at designing a corporate image manual that establishes the graphic elements representative of the brand, in addition to giving the organization the opportunity to stand out from its competitors and attract new customers.

In this sense, as a response to the identified inconvenience, a corporate image was proposed to characterize the institution. It is structured by a logotype composed of a letter (Q), which represents the geographic location of the Association, which in this case is the Quisapincha parish, and consequently, the series of words form the name of the Association (Asociación Artesanal Cuero y Afines).





**Source:** Author's own work

On the other hand, the corporate image manual contains guidelines for the strategic use of the ASOARCAF brand (Asociación Artesanal Cuero y Afines). In this sense, the use of the image involves the identity of the association and its communication instances. Therefore, the respect area suggests an ergonomic space where the brand is visually isolated from the rest of the elements, for which a modular reference was extracted to achieve this.

Figure 5. Brand Respect Area.



Source: Author's own work.

CMYK, RGB, and Hexadecimal color systems were used for the color palette.





### Source: Author's own work

The selected typography is Arial, which is included in the original installation package of Microsoft and Mac OS.

Figure 7. Brand typography.

#### Arial - Regular ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTU BC VWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 0123456789 Arial - Bold ABC ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTU VWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 0123456789 Arial - Italic ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTU B( VWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 0123456789 Arial - Italic BC ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTU Δ VWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 0123456789

Source: Author's own work.

# 5. DISCUSSION

Given the importance of corporate brand management, it was necessary to work on the characterization of the Association's own image. In this sense, the members have the opportunity to use the corporate image to showcase the products they offer and sell. Based on the results of the evaluation prior to the creation of the corporate image, according to the study carried out by Solis (2015), the members of a commercial company were evaluated, and it was concluded that 81% of them do not clearly recognize the corporate image. This coincides with the results presented by Bonilla et al. (2020), where a similar scenario is presented, given that most customers do not clearly identify the institutional image. These results present some similarities with the current scenario of the association under study, where 58% of the members do not identify the organization's corporate image.

On the other hand, the study conducted by Girón (2017) is also taken as a reference, who highlights within the presented results that the massive communication medium used by companies in their management are digital tools (81%), which differs from the results of the present study since the association does not have means of diffusion as evidenced by 69% of members. In a similar case within the business context, the results are not similar to those of the present study since external press predominates (45%), unlike the association which has 0% (Solis, 2015).

In the research conducted by Tran et al. (2015), it is established that the importance of corporate image is efficiently managed through dimensions such as visual expression, positive feelings, expression of environments, online appearance, appearance of personnel/employees, attitude and behavior, and external communications (offline, online, and effectiveness), thus coinciding with the results of the present research. The understanding of the conceptualization of corporate image is very similar to that mentioned by other authors such as Bidin et al. (2014), therefore it is very important that managers develop a corporate identity strategy to ensure a positive image.

Considering the opinion of Charry (2018), the internal audience sees these intangible factors as a significant aspect that is essential to improve the organization's image, as was the case in the research where the needs of the associates were taken into account. Therefore, the findings of the study conducted by Triatmanto et al. (2021) found that corporate image is based on attractiveness and the element of trust. Thus, the minimum standards that must be handled include having knowledge and the ability to create trust.

# 6. CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study show that corporate communication is a factor that has positive implications for the perception of the corporate image. The approach to the corporate image was based on the expectations and needs of the members, focusing on customer expectations and the products to be offered. It is understood that there is a great need for a holistic experience with the association, suggesting that both experiences should be consistent and representative of the corporate image.

Based on the importance of corporate branding, it was necessary to work on characterizing the Association's own image, giving associates the opportunity to use the corporate image to promote the products they offer and sell. In this sense, the corporate image is determined by the perception of the studied elements of corporate

identity, such as the inspiration lines behind the logo design, the brand's area of respect, the color scheme, and typography.

Finally, members of the association see the possibility of creating a corporate image from the perspective of business communication for the Asociación Artesanal Cuero y Afines de Quisapincha as a positive aspect, which will allow the organization to gain space in the local, national, and international market with concrete actions that support the institution's brand management. Along with the quality of the products, this will generate trust in the final consumer.

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### **Author Contributions:**

**Writing-Preparation of the original draft**: Lalaleo Analuisa, Freddy Rodolfo, Chenet Zuta, Manuel Enrique, Martínez Yacelga, Amanda Patricia y Bonilla Jurado, Diego Mauricio.

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### AUTHOR/S:

### Freddy Rodolfo Lalaleo Analuisa

Master in Business Administration, with a specialization in Socio-Productive Innovation from the Indoamerica Technological University (Ecuador). He holds a degree in Marketing and Business Management from the Technical University of Ambato. He is currently a teaching researcher at the Administration of Business Career at the Spain Higher Technological University (ISTE). In his work experience, he has been a manager at Editorial Queyám Cía. Ltda., a company dedicated to the editing and publishing of books and academic articles. He has also participated as a trainer in courses offered by universities in the search for information for the publication of scientific articles in high-impact journals and is a coach at Atlas. Ti for qualitative studies. His scientific production covers research areas such as business administration, marketing, and education.

Orcid ID: <u>https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0108-3365</u>

#### **Google Scholar:** <u>https://scholar.google.es/citations?user=h-0f9tAAAAAJ&hl=es</u>

### **Manuel Enrique Chenet Zuta**

Principal lecturer at the National Technological University of Lima Sur UNTELS. He has been recognized as Doctor Honoris Causa, Honorary Professor, Visiting Professor and Invited Professor in various Latin American countries and the USA. Post-Doctorate in Diachronic and Synchronic Systems of Scientific Research and Post-Doctorate in Education Sciences. Doctor in Administration with a mention in Strategic Management from San Ignacio de Loyola University USIL, Global Business Administration from Ricardo Palma University and Education Sciences from the National University of Education "Enrique Guzmán y Valle". Master in Education with a mention in Teaching at the Higher Level and a mention in Evaluation and Accreditation of Educational Quality. Second specialty degree in University Didactics. Bachelor's degrees in Administration, Education, Law, Public Accounting and Industrial Engineering.

Orcid ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2088-2541

**Google Scholar:** <u>https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=59vVwR8AAAAJ&hl=es</u>

### Amanda Patricia Martínez Yacelga

Master's degree in Financial Management and International Trade. Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the Faculty of Administrative Sciences at the Technical University of Ambato. Technical degree in Export Management. Diploma in Quality and Productivity from the Monterrey Institute of Technology. OAS scholarship recipient. With 12 years of business experience and 3 years of teaching experience. Her areas of expertise include Project Coordination, Strategic Planning, Operations Management, Process Management, Quality Management, Administration, and Teaching.

Orcid ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9352-5583

**Google Scholar:** <u>https://scholar.google.es/citations?hl=es&authuser=1&user=aQ4bH-YAAAAJ</u>

#### Diego Mauricio Bonilla Jurado

PhD candidate in Projects at the International Iberoamerican University - Mexico (UNINI), Master in Editorial Design and Digital Publications from the School of Design in Barcelona ESDESIGN, Master in Socio-Productive Project Management from the Indoamerica Technological University (Ecuador). He holds a degree in Marketing and Business Management from the Technical University of Ambato. He is currently a teacher-researcher in the Business Administration Career at the Higher Technological University of Spain (ISTE), has organized International Scientific Congresses, and has also served as a peer reviewer for several national and international scientific journals. He has been invited as a Guest Editor of some special issues in the social sciences. He works in conjunction with the Roberto Hernandez Sampieri brand and McGraw Hill LATAM.

Orcid: <u>https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4784-7861</u>

**Google Scholar:** <u>https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=fiKvuXcAAAAJ&hl=es</u>

ResearchGate: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Diego-Bonilla-6



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