Commercial and Organizational Dimensions of Strategic Innovation in Native Communities of Puerto Vallarta

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Abstract. This research analyzes two dimensions of strategic innovation in indigenous communities of Puerto Vallarta and Bahía de Banderas: commercial and market innovation and organizational and collective innovation. The study was developed under a quantitative approach, with a descriptive scope and a non-experimental cross-sectional design. For data collection, a structured questionnaire was applied to 251 members of indigenous communities in the study area, with the purpose of identifying patterns related to marketing, diversification of sales channels, formalization of organizational practices, and collective work. The results showed that commercial and market innovation reached an intermediate level, with visible efforts to diversify and search for new channels, although limitations persisted in digital marketing, positioning, and access to broader markets. Organizational and collective innovation presented the lowest level of development, reflected in weak formalization, poor consolidation of associations, and difficulties in sustaining collaborative structures. These findings suggest that, although communities have developed adaptive responses to the urban and tourist environment, structural constraints continue to limit the consolidation of their commercial and organizational initiatives. It is concluded that intercultural strategies are required aimed at strengthening collaborative networks, marketing mechanisms, and organizational forms congruent with community identity.

Keywords: Commercial innovation, organizational innovation, indigenous communities.

1 Introduction

The native communities of Puerto Vallarta and Bahía de Banderas participate in economic dynamics influenced by urbanization, the growth of tourism activity, and the growing competitiveness of regional markets. In these contexts, innovation constitutes a strategic factor to strengthen economic sustainability, improve adaptive capacity, and generate opportunities for local development without compromising the cultural identity of indigenous peoples ([1] & [2]). From this perspective, innovation is not limited to the incorporation of technological or productive changes but also involves transformations in the processes of marketing, organization, and community articulation ([3] & [4]). Despite the relevance of innovation for the economic strengthening of indigenous communities, several studies have documented the persistence of structural barriers related to access to markets, the limited incorporation of marketing strategies, insufficient organizational

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formalization, and the difficulties in consolidating collective collaboration mechanisms that allow for sustaining economic initiatives in the long term ([4] & [5]). These conditions are particularly important in consolidated tourist destinations such as Puerto Vallarta and Banderas Bay, where native communities face the challenge of integrating into highly competitive economic dynamics while preserving their cultural practices and traditional forms of organization.

At the local level, native communities have found spaces for economic insertion through the commercialization of handicrafts, textiles, herbal products, traditional gastronomy, and cultural expressions linked to tourism ([6] & [7]). However, participation in these markets is usually characterized by a strong dependence on tourist influx, limited diversification of marketing channels, and few opportunities to consolidate organizational processes that favor the permanence and expansion of community initiatives. As they point out [3], indigenous enterprises face particular challenges derived from the need to balance economic objectives with the preservation of cultural and community values.

In this context, commercial and market innovation is strategic because it allows us to observe how indigenous communities expand their sales channels, adjust their products to new consumers, and seek to integrate into economic circuits with greater visibility. At the same time, organizational and collective innovation makes it possible to examine the level of formalization of their initiatives, the ability to sustain collaboration networks, and the possibility of building associative schemes that strengthen their economic permanence. Both dimensions are decisive because they connect commercial activity with the sustainability of community initiatives and with the preservation of their cultural identity ([3] & [4]).

However, the available scientific evidence on innovation and entrepreneurship in indigenous communities has focused mainly on aspects related to territorial development, cultural preservation, sustainability, and general indigenous entrepreneurship processes. However, there is still limited empirical production aimed at specifically analyzing the commercial and organizational dimensions of innovation in indigenous communities inserted in tourism contexts and highly competitive markets [8], through a systematic review of 84 studies on indigenous entrepreneurship, they point out that the existing literature has focused predominantly on the theoretical construction of the phenomenon and on the analysis of general factors associated with entrepreneurship, identifying the need to develop more specific empirical studies on organizational processes, market strategies, and mechanisms that favor the consolidation of economic initiatives of indigenous people.

In addition, [9] they argue that there are still little-explored areas related to the articulation between indigenous entrepreneurship, organizational networks, and territorial dynamics, particularly in scenarios where communities interact with complex economic environments. This situation evidences a knowledge gap that limits the understanding of the factors that favor or restrict the consolidation of

innovative processes in native communities located in tourist destinations of high economic relevance.

The relevance of this study lies in the fact that indigenous communities not only generate goods and services with economic value but also preserve traditional knowledge, cultural practices, and forms of organization that constitute strategic resources for local development ([4] & [5]). Consequently, understanding the level of development of commercial innovation and organizational innovation allows us to identify strengths, limitations, and opportunities to design strategies that simultaneously promote economic competitiveness and the preservation of community identity.

From an analytical perspective, this research is based on the assumption that the sustainability of community economic initiatives does not depend exclusively on the ability to market products and services but also on the existence of organizational structures capable of sustaining collective agreements, collaboration networks, and internal coordination mechanisms. The specialized literature has indicated that innovation processes in indigenous communities become more effective when there is a balanced articulation between commercial and organizational capacities ([3], [4] & [5]). For this reason, both dimensions are considered interdependent components of the same strategic innovation process.

Under this logic, the following research question arises: what is the level of development of commercial and market innovation, as well as organizational and collective innovation, in the native communities of Puerto Vallarta and Bahía de Banderas, and what are the main limitations that affect the consolidation of their economic initiatives?

To answer this question, the research aims to analyze the level of development of commercial and market innovation and of organizational and collective innovation in native communities of Puerto Vallarta and Bahía de Banderas in order to identify the main limitations that condition the consolidation of their economic initiatives in urban-tourist contexts. It is based on the premise that the strengthening of these practices requires intercultural strategies capable of articulating commercialization, collective organization, and preservation of community identity so that innovation becomes a mechanism to promote sustainable local development without generating processes of cultural disengagement ([10] & [11]).

2 Research method

This research was developed under a quantitative approach, because it allowed the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data to describe and understand the behavior of the dimensions of strategic innovation in native communities of Puerto Vallarta and Bahía de Banderas. According to [12], quantitative studies are characterized by the use of structured measurement and statistical analysis

procedures in order to identify patterns, trends, and relationships between observable variables.

The study had a descriptive scope, since it sought to characterize the level of development of commercial and market innovation, as well as organizational and collective innovation in the participating communities. According to [13], descriptive research aims to specify the properties, characteristics, and profiles of people, groups, or phenomena subjected to analysis, allowing the generation of diagnoses based on a given reality. Likewise, a non-experimental cross-sectional design was used. This design was considered pertinent because the variables were observed in their natural context without deliberate manipulation by the researchers, collecting the information at a single time point [12]. They point out that cross-sectional studies make it possible to analyze social phenomena at a specific time, facilitating the identification of trends and behaviors present in a given population.

The information collection technique consisted of the application of a structured questionnaire designed to evaluate different dimensions of strategic innovation in indigenous communities. For the specific purposes of this article, only two dimensions were taken up: commercial and market innovation and organizational and collective innovation. Each dimension was made up of five items, making up a total of ten items analyzed.

The construction of the instrument was based on the theoretical approaches of strategic innovation, understood as the capacity of organizations and communities to generate new forms of value creation through transformations in their processes, structures, and mechanisms of interaction with the environment ([14] & [3]). The items were adapted to the sociocultural context of the native communities of Puerto Vallarta and Bahía de Banderas in order to guarantee the conceptual and contextual relevance of the measurements carried out.

In terms of content validity, the items were structured based on theoretical categories identified in the specialized literature on strategic innovation, indigenous entrepreneurship, and community development ([3] & [4]). The selection of the items sought to ensure the correspondence between the concepts analyzed and their empirical manifestation in the economic and organizational activities of the participating communities. Likewise, the conceptual consistency of the instrument was based on the grouping of items aimed at evaluating practices related to marketing, diversification of sales channels, collective organization, community cooperation, and internal coordination mechanisms. The reference population was made up of people belonging to native communities located in the municipalities of Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, and Bahía de Banderas, Nayarit. Participants were selected using non-probabilistic convenience sampling, a technique that is appropriate when access to the population depends on specific conditions of availability, accessibility, and willingness to participate in the study [15]. This strategy allowed obtaining

information directly linked to the study phenomenon in contexts characterized by heterogeneous dynamics of location, connectivity, and community participation.

The final sample was made up of 251 participants, a number considered sufficient for the development of descriptive analyses aimed at identifying trends and patterns within the population studied. In addition, an attempt was made to incorporate participants with a diversity of ages, educational levels, occupations, and degrees of cultural attachment in order to obtain a broad vision of the innovation practices present in different community contexts [16].

The questionnaire was administered in person and digitally, considering the conditions of accessibility and technological availability of the participants. Once the fieldwork was concluded, the information was coded and processed using descriptive statistical techniques. Specifically, absolute frequencies, percentages, and measures of central tendency were used to identify the behavior of the analyzed dimensions and establish comparisons between the observed levels of development.

Finally, the methodological procedure allowed building a diagnosis on the state of commercial and market innovation, as well as organizational and collective innovation in native communities of Puerto Vallarta and Bahía de Banderas. The results obtained constitute an empirical basis to understand the strengths, limitations, and opportunities that characterize strategic innovation processes in community contexts linked to economic and tourism activities.

3 Results

The results allowed us to identify significant differences in the level of development of the two dimensions of strategic innovation analyzed in native communities of Puerto Vallarta and Bahía de Banderas. While commercial and market innovation presented an intermediate level of development, organizational and collective innovation showed the lowest values in the study, evidencing an uneven evolution of innovative processes within the participating communities.

Commercial and market innovation reached an intermediate level, with a score of 2.40, while organizational and collective innovation registered the lowest value, with 1.85; These results suggest that communities have developed greater capacities to respond to external market demands than to strengthen internal mechanisms of coordination, organization, and collective collaboration (Table 1).

Table 1. Comparison of the commercial and organizational dimensions of strategic innovation.

Dimension	Value
Commercial and market innovation	2.40
Organisational and collective innovation	1.85

Note. Own elaboration.

Commercial and market innovation presented an intermediate level, while organizational and collective innovation registered the lowest value among the dimensions analyzed. Data taken from the base study.

The difference observed between the two dimensions allows us to infer that innovation efforts have been mainly oriented towards activities related to marketing and adaptation to the conditions of the tourism environment, leaving in the background the consolidation of organizational structures that favor collective management processes and long-term sustainability. This finding is the first evidence that innovation in indigenous communities does not develop homogeneously but responds to specific needs derived from their interaction with the market.

The results corresponding to the dimension of commercial and market innovation showed a moderately favorable trend. As can be seen in (Table 2), 34.7% of the participants indicated that they rarely implement this type of practice, while 29.9% stated that they do it frequently. For their part, 15.1% indicated that they always develop actions related to commercial innovation, while 20.3% stated that they do not carry them out. In aggregate terms, an occasional or intermittent innovation behavior predominated, rather than a continuous and structured practice.

Table 2. Commercial and Market Innovation.

	Frequency	**Percentage**	**Valid percentage**	**Cumulative percentage**
Never	51	20.3	20.3	20.3
Rarely	87	34.7	34.7	55.0
Frequently	75	29.9	29.9	84.9
Always	38	15.1	15.1	100
Total	251	100.00	100.00	

Note. Own elaboration.

Overall, 45.0% of participants reported developing business innovation practices frequently or permanently. This behavior shows the existence of efforts aimed at diversifying forms of marketing, expanding sales spaces, and adapting products and services to the needs of consumers linked to regional tourism activity.

However, the predominance of responses at intermediate levels indicates that these practices are not yet fully consolidated. In analytical terms, the results suggest that commercial innovation operates mainly as a strategy of adaptation to the economic environment, rather than as a systematic process of competitive strengthening. This means that many initiatives continue to rely on specific business opportunities and

seasonal tourism demand, limiting their possibilities for expansion and permanence in wider markets.

Likewise, the presence of a fifth of the participants in the "never" category reveals the existence of community segments that remain on the margins of commercial innovation processes, a situation that can be associated with restrictions on access to market information, digital tools, specialized training, or financial resources.

On the other hand, organizational and collective innovation showed a more marked lag. 51.0% of the participants stated that they had never worked in this dimension, 21.1% indicated that they had done so rarely, 19.9% reported that they did it frequently, and only 8.0% stated that they always developed this type of innovation. These percentages reflected a weak consolidation of practices linked to the formalization of associations, the strengthening of organized groups, and the construction of sustained collaborative schemes. In other words, most of the initiatives had not incorporated in a stable way collective organization mechanism that would strengthen their economic operation and their permanence over time (Table 3).

Table 3. Organizational and collective innovation.

Frequency	n	%
Never	128	51.0
Rarely	53	21.1
Frequently	50	19.9
Always	20	8.0
Total	251	100.0

Note. Own elaboration.

These results show a limited consolidation of mechanisms related to the formalization of associations, the coordination of collective actions, and the construction of organizational networks capable of strengthening community management. Unlike the commercial dimension, where efforts to adapt to the market are observed, the organizational dimension reflects the persistence of important structural challenges associated with the sustainability of collective processes.

The predominance of negative responses suggests that traditional forms of community cooperation do not always succeed in transforming into formalized organizational structures capable of generating sustainable economic benefits. This situation can limit the capacity for negotiation, access to support programs, the generation of joint projects, and the construction of collective strategies aimed at the economic strengthening of communities.

The comparative analysis confirms that the native communities have made more progress in adapting to market dynamics than in strengthening their internal organizational capacities. While commercial innovation reflects moderate efforts at economic insertion and diversification of activities, organizational innovation continues to show significant lags that restrict the consolidation of community development processes.

Taken together, the results allow us to identify a partial and unbalanced pattern of innovation. The communities show emerging capacities to respond to commercial opportunities derived from tourism activity; however, these capacities are not accompanied by equivalent levels of collective organization. This asymmetry is one of the main challenges for the sustainability of community economic initiatives, as it limits their ability to consolidate alliances, strengthen collaborative networks and build long-term development strategies.

4 Discussion

The results obtained show that commercial and market innovation presents a higher level of development than organizational and collective innovation in the native communities of Puerto Vallarta and Bahía de Banderas. This behavior suggests that innovative efforts have been mainly oriented towards activities related to the marketing of products and services, as well as to the adaptation of economic initiatives to the conditions of the regional tourism market. This finding coincides with what has been pointed out by [3], who argues that indigenous enterprises tend to initially develop capacities aimed at generating income and linking with foreign markets before consolidating more complex organizational structures. Similarly, [5] it highlights that indigenous communities face the challenge of balancing cultural preservation with the economic demands derived from their insertion into increasingly competitive markets. Recent studies have identified that innovation in tourism contexts usually manifests itself initially through marketing strategies, diversification of services, and adaptation to the needs of the visitor before translating into profound organizational transformations [17].

In relation to commercial and market innovation, the results show that a significant proportion of the participants develop innovative practices occasionally or frequently, which reflects an emerging capacity to respond to economic opportunities linked to tourism by adapting to consumers linked to urban and tourist circuits, but these did not achieve sufficient consolidation. This result was in dialogue with the background of the base document, where spaces for economic insertion were identified through expo-sales, cultural fairs, craft markets, and some marketing channels promoted by local authorities such as the municipal DIF and [2].

This behavior can be interpreted as an adaptation strategy in the face of environments characterized by high levels of competition and constant changes in consumer preferences. The literature on innovation in tourism ventures indicates that the ability to identify new commercial opportunities, diversify sales channels, and

strengthen promotion mechanisms constitutes a fundamental element for the generation of sustainable competitive advantages ([18] & [17]). However, the predominance of responses in intermediate categories indicates that these processes are still in consolidation stages and depend to a large extent on external factors, such as tourism demand and access to strategic resources.

On the other hand, organizational and collective innovation presented the greatest lag in the analysis. This finding was especially relevant because it indicated that the main weakness was not located in the willingness to participate in the market but in the difficulty of sustaining more formal and lasting collaborative schemes. The low presence of consolidated partnerships, stable networks, or formalized collective structures revealed that community cooperation had not been fully translated into organizational innovation. This reading coincided with [4], which underlines the importance of collaborative networks, cooperatives, and solidarity circuits to strengthen the insertion of native initiatives in markets with greater added value that identifies the need to strengthen organizational capacities to improve the economic sustainability of indigenous communities in Latin America. In contrast, the results of the present study suggested that, in the case analyzed, this transition was still limited.

They also point out that much of the recent research on indigenous entrepreneurship recognizes the importance of social, territorial, and organizational networks for the consolidation of economic initiatives, although these capacities tend to develop unevenly between communities. The limited presence of formal cooperation mechanisms observed in this study could restrict access to support programs, financing opportunities, and collective innovation processes aimed at territorial development.

This organizational weakness could also be understood from the tension between traditional forms of cooperation and contemporary demands for formalization. The base document already warned that many initiatives of indigenous communities are based on family ties, reciprocity practices, oral transmission, and community collaboration, but not necessarily on consolidated associative figures. Therefore, the low level achieved by organizational and collective innovation should not be read as an absence of cooperation but as a difficulty in translating these community forms into shared management mechanisms that strengthen economic permanence, access to support, and the capacity for external articulation.

The results also suggest the existence of an asymmetry between the commercial capacities and the organizational capacities of the communities studied. While the former show moderate progress, the latter have significant lags that could compromise the sustainability of the ventures in the long term. This situation coincides with [19] those who argue that indigenous collective entrepreneurship processes face challenges associated with the coordination of interests, the construction of agreements, and the management of complex community dynamics. Similarly, [20] it argues that external support initiatives can strengthen the commercial capacities of indigenous enterprises; however, if they are not

accompanied by organizational strengthening processes, the benefits obtained are usually limited and difficult to sustain over time.
From a territorial development perspective, the findings allow us to infer that indigenous communities have significant potential to take advantage of the economic opportunities derived from tourism, but they need to strengthen mechanisms of internal governance, cooperation, and community articulation. Recent studies on community entrepreneurship and sustainable development have shown that the generation of economic value depends not only on the ability to access markets but also on the existence of organizational structures that favor collective coordination and the construction of shared goals ([21] & [22]). Consequently, the simultaneous strengthening of the commercial and organizational dimensions could contribute to generating more balanced and sustainable innovation processes within indigenous communities.

Finally, the results provide empirical evidence for a line of research that continues to present knowledge gaps. As noted, ([8] & [9]), the literature on indigenous entrepreneurship has focused mainly on cultural, social, and territorial aspects, and there is still little evidence on how commercial and organizational dimensions interact in specific tourism contexts. In this sense, this study contributes to broadening the understanding of strategic innovation processes in indigenous communities, identifying strengths and limitations that can serve as a basis for future research and for the design of public policies aimed at strengthening community economic development.

5 Conclusions

The research clearly concluded that commercial innovation and organizational innovation did not develop in an equivalent way in the native communities of Puerto Vallarta and Bahía de Banderas. The commercial dimension reached an intermediate level, which evidenced concrete efforts to modify the forms of promotion, diversify customers, use new means of dissemination, and adjust the offer to market conditions. However, these advances were not enough to speak of full consolidation. In contrast, organizational and collective innovation showed the most important lag in the study, which confirmed that the main limitation was not in the intention to sell better, but in the weakness of the collective structures necessary to sustain and strengthen these initiatives. In this sense, the central objective of the work was fulfilled by demonstrating that commercial innovation and organizational innovation operated under an unequal logic. Indigenous communities showed a greater capacity to respond to external market demands than to transform their internal forms of coordination, association, and shared decision-making. This asymmetry is not minor. It reveals that the relationship with the market has advanced faster than the community's organizational capacity and that this gap is today the main obstacle to consolidating more stable, sustainable, and more promising economic processes.

The central finding of the study can be formulated directly: the native communities have innovated in the way they commercialize, but they have not managed to innovate with the same force in the way they organize themselves. This difference

explains why many initiatives achieve visibility or temporary presence in sales spaces but continue to face limits to sustaining alliances, formalizing agreements, strengthening networks, and building lasting collective bases. As a result, commercial innovation, isolated from stronger organizational innovation, tends to remain fragmented, vulnerable, and dependent on short-term opportunities.

The conclusions also allow us to argue that the underlying problem is not reduced to the lack of a market. Reducing the discussion to promotion or the opening of sales channels would be superficial. The evidence showed that the core of the weakness lies in organizational fragility: in the limited capacity to structure forms of continuous collaboration, distribute decisions, consolidate alliances, and translate community cooperation into stable mechanisms of collective action. As long as this base is not strengthened, any commercial progress will continue to be partial and with restricted capacity to stay.

From a perspective of local development with cultural relevance, the study leaves a strong implication: it is not enough to promote the visibility of the products and services of the native communities; it is essential to strengthen, at the same time, their forms of collective organization. Marketing without organization produces weak insertion. Organization without commercial articulation limits economic reach. On the other hand, convergence between the two dimensions can constitute a more solid basis for community strengthening.

In summary, the research confirmed that commercial and organizational innovation in native communities of Puerto Vallarta and Bahía de Banderas advanced in a partial, unbalanced, and structurally limited way. The commercial dimension showed adaptation; the organizational one showed a lag. This difference should not be interpreted as a minor fact but as the analytical key to the study. Therein lies the main conclusion: the economic strengthening of indigenous communities will not depend only on selling more or reaching new customers but on building collective organizational capacities that allow them to sustain, defend, and project their economic activity without weakening their community identity.

As future lines of research, it is proposed to expand the analysis towards comparative studies between native communities of different tourist destinations and regional contexts in order to identify differentiated patterns in commercial and organizational innovation. It is also necessary to carry out longitudinal research to examine the evolution of these dimensions and their impact on the community's economic sustainability. Likewise, it would be pertinent to incorporate mixed methodologies that integrate quantitative and qualitative evidence in order to understand in a deeper way the relationship between innovation, collective organization, commercialization, and cultural identity in urban-tourism transformation scenarios.

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