"Inbound marketing strategy on social media and the generation of experiences in fast food consumers"

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INBOUND MARKETING STRATEGY ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE GENERATION OF EXPERIENCES IN FAST FOOD CONSUMERS

Abstract

Digital media has allowed restaurants to maintain their sales, positioning, and better relationships with consumers in adverse situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic. This study seeks to determine the relationship between social networks as an inbound marketing tool and the generation of digital experiences in consumers of fast-food restaurants. This is a quantitative, correlational, and non-experimental analysis. The sample includes the most popular fast-food restaurants in Peru (Norky's, Roky's, and Kentucky Fried Chicken) that demonstrate significant presence in social networks and possess potential characteristics to provide customers with a positive experience. One hundred one respondents between 18 and 35 years of age, residents of Lima (Peru), and frequent consumers of fast food establishments were surveyed via Google Forms. The results were tabulated in MS Excel and the quantitative data analysis was performed with the IBM SPSS tool; descriptive and inferential statistics were applied and the correlation was obtained through Spearman's coefficient. The findings highlighted that 61.39% of the respondents agree that the social network experiences of the restaurants influence their expectations; 47.5% react with likes and comments to the publications, and 63.4% recommend the restaurants thanks to the constant dissemination of their content. Finally, a significance level of less than 0.05 was obtained between the variables, demonstrating that one variable has a relationship with the other. The study concludes a moderate direct relationship between social networks as an inbound marketing strategy and the generation of digital experiences in the study group.

Keywords	social networks, experience marketing, blogs, content, fan pages, restaurants, loyalty, brands
JEL Classification	M30, M31, M37

INTRODUCTION

Internet sales have rapidly changed the world and reduced the pandemic's harmful effects. According to the Nielsen market consultant, from the beginning of the pandemic until April 2020, they grew in Europe by 86.6% (Adobe Analytics, 2020). Moreover, in the American continent, the impact of COVID-19 has led to a 49% increase in online sales by April 2020 (Adobe Analytics, 2020). This provides a trend about the changes in current business and the need to adapt to the target audience's needs (Nedaei et al., 2018).

Through digital content, companies are achieving better relationships with consumers (Soegoto & Simbolon, 2018; Ofir & Simonson, 2007). Likewise, the Peruvian retail sector can grow more if companies strengthen the loyalty of their customers by improving their shopping experience (Galvez-Torres et al., 2020; Carpio Maraza et al., 2019).

This investigation is relevant because it studies marketing strategies applied by the most popular fast food restaurants in Peru, which offer grilled chicken as their main product, considered the most consumed fast food dish in Peru. Due to COVID-19, restaurants have had to develop new and better digital media strategies to influence customers' purchases and generate adequate consumption experiences. Despite its importance in business success, this topic needs more scientific attention (Rozas et al., 2021; Huancahuire-Vega et al., 2021).

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

This paper studies the relationship between social media and experience generation. Thus, it is worth understanding the relevance of these variables. According to Carballar (2012), social media is defined as virtual platforms with a social focus where user-created content is shared through the Web 2.0 model. The parts that make up social media are social networks, defined as virtual services where a group of people with common interests can communicate. Next are blog services, defined as websites designed to create and publish content; and, finally, collaborative content services, which are content shared in real-time for the opinion or feedback of participants. Through social networks, marketing specialists can obtain consumer information more quickly and without intermediaries (Hudson et al., 2015; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Cordova-Buiza et al., 2022).

Similarly, companies that pay more attention to the changes generated within the digital ecosystem and efficiently execute social networks can arouse greater consumer interest. These actions are facilitated by the practicality of using social networks through mobile and desktop devices, as they facilitate the processes of publishing and monitoring ads, which, when processed, will give relevant behavioral patterns to better understand the purchasing preferences of consumers (Montañés et al., 2018; Martínez-Guerrero, 2017; Palackal et al., 2011; Pimmer et al., 2012; Aledavood et al., 2018).

It is also evident that social media, although it can be targeted to various audiences, has a more significant impact on the youth audience, especially in fast food advertising, which is more effective for them than traditional broadcast channels such as television and radio (Gaber & Wright, 2014; Hanaysha, 2016). Similarly, considering general audience, it is possible to confirm that social network ads positively affect brand image. They make

a customer have a greater perception of value for the brand and the products it offers and achieve a greater preference for the brand, which leads to an increase in the sales level (Vázquez-Herrero et al., 2022; Laor, 2021; Laferrara & Justel-Vázquez, 2021; Tilleul, 2022).

Aguilera (2016) defines experiential marketing as the set of sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral responses obtained by stimuli related to a brand. Schmitt (2006) mentions that the experience includes having a nexus with the company, the brand, and the customer's life. Kotler (2007) complements this by indicating that when companies offer the same product, the advantage lies in leading the customer to obtain an unforgettable experience.

Vieira et al. (2019) highlighted the importance of inbound tools in companies, as it allows them to obtain customers by providing value through combining digital marketing actions. Dakouan et al. (2019) argued that strategies that lack an inbound approach are intrusive, resulting in a negative customer experience. Brakus et al. (2009) emphasized that creating unique customer experiences will make customers become brand ambassadors. The authors propose four dimensions that comprise a brand experience scale; they conclude that the experience gained from interacting with brands affects consumer satisfaction and loyalty.

Content developed under the inbound methodology aims to improve the customer's shopping experience, which is of great importance to obtain greater brand recognition and position it in the minds of potential customers (Mamani & Nuñez Manchego, 2020). This methodology is of great help within potential growth markets since users have been exposed to thousands of ads with increased navigation within the digital world. Therefore, they have developed some saturation to emerging advertising promoted by brands in

this ecosystem, thus affecting their shopping experience. So, a methodology of a non-intrusive nature is favorable in the commercial area and will boost sales (Salas et al., 2018; Priego Reyes et al., 2021).

It is also revealed that the inbound marketing methodology stands out for the way it adapts to the digital ecosystem, which is composed of constantly changing markets, resulting in an increase in the number of commercial activities in a period and improving processes (Castilla Aguilar, 2019). During its application, the attention of potential customers is achieved within social networks to lead them to the company's website, where various valuable content is presented. Then, it seeks to persuade them to generate a purchase decision without having exerted constant advertising pressure (Araujo Caraballo, 2016; Canedo & Alejandra, 2017).

Megargel et al. (2018) argued that inbound marketing in banking organizations enables large-scale sales and lead generation. They also described the challenges in its implementation and the various technologies that support it. Galvez-Torres et al. (2020) argued that inbound method achieves high-quality content, i.e., creative and value-added, and demonstrated that the financial impact of inbound marketing can be measured in small and medium-sized companies.

For Rancati et al. (2015), inbound marketing allows the preference within the "Top of Mind" of a customer, generating better communication and interaction with him, personalizing the service, and consequently creating a better positioning. The relevance of this methodology is more appreciated in the fast food market (Banerjee & Rishika, 2015; Hussain et al., 2018; Konishi, 2019).

According to the literature review, the importance of inbound marketing in companies for positive customer experiences is established in congruence with market trends, where one of the most important markets is the fast food market. However, although there is ample information about the application of inbound marketing, it could be more specific about fast food companies that apply these strategies in their social networks, which is why it is essential to learn more about it.

2. AIM

The objective of this study is to establish the co-relationship between the management of social media under an inbound marketing strategy and the generation of experiences in fast food consumers.

3. METHODS

In order to determine the relationship between the variables of social media as an inbound marketing tool and the generation of experiences, the study unit consisted of people between 18 and 35 years of age, who reside in the districts of North Lima and who frequently visit Norky's, Roky's, and Kentucky Fried Chicken fast food establishments.

According to Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática (2020), Lima Metropolitan has 9,674,755 inhabitants. Applying the exclusion criteria, according to age, with 29% of the population in North Lima and the market share of the most popular fast-food restaurants in Peru, such as Norky's 12%, Roky's 8.3%, and KFC 7%, a population of 207.181 people was obtained (Euromonitor International, 2018). Non-probabilistic random sampling was applied, obtaining a sample of 101 respondents.

The study instrument chosen for data collection was the questionnaire, which consisted of 20 closed response items with a five-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) as totally disagree to (5) as totally agree; the questions were based on the dimensions of the variables. The validity of the instrument was obtained through the application of Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient with an optimal result of 0.85 and the judgment of experts who reviewed the correct wording of each item and the alignment with the variables and indicators.

Data collection was carried out through the Google Forms tool. Data analysis was done using MS Excel and IBM SPSS tools, applying descriptive and inferential statistics; the correlation was obtained using Spearman's coefficient. Informed consent was requested when applying the instrument to the respondents. It was also explained that personal data such as e-mail would only be used as part of the registry and not for commercial purposes, thus respecting the confidentiality of their data.

4. RESULTS

As the general objective of this paper is to identify the relationship between the variables of inbound marketing and experiential marketing, the data results are presented by applying descriptive and inferential statistics. Tables 1 and 2 show the demographic data of the respondents.

Table 1 shows the correlation between the gender and age variables; the respondents' ages ranged from 18 to 35 years old, and the predominant gender is female with 58.4%, while the male gender predominates between 31 and 35 years old with 6.9%. This means that the profile of respondents is young people who visit fast-food restaurants (KFC, Roky's, or Norky's).

Table 2 shows the profile of respondents according to the correlation between gender and district of residence, within the northern area of Lima, with a predominance of the district of Comas (26.7%), Los Olivos (21.8%), and Independencia (12.9%).

4.1. Descriptive analysis

Figure 1 indicates that respondents agree (61.39%) that their experiences in the fast food restaurant's social network directly influence their expectations. Figure 2 demonstrates the participants' interest in the posts made by these restaurants on their preferred social networks. The results are described further under a descriptive and ordered analysis according to the variables and their dimensions.

4.2. Analysis of the social media variable

Considering social network activities, 47.5% of the respondents in Northern Lima react favorably on social networks, with likes and comments, to the publications of the restaurants studied (Table 3). Viewing blog services, 44.6% of the population in Northern Lima comments favorably on blogs or social networks about restaurant content (Table 4). Regarding recommended contents, 63.4% of the population in Northern Lima recommends the restaurants studied, thanks to the constant dissemination of their content (Table 5).

Table 1. Respondent profile (gender and age)

Data			GENDER		Total
			Female	Male	
AGE	18-20	N	10	6	16
		%	9.9%	5.9%	15.8%
	21-25	N	29	19	48
		%	28.7%	18.8%	47.5%
	26-30	N	15	10	25
		%	14.9%	9.9%	24.8%
	31-35	N	5	7	12
		%	5.0%	6.9%	11.9%
Total %		N	59	42	101
			58.4%	41.6%	100.0%

Note: n = 101.

Table 2. Respondent profile (gender and district of residence)

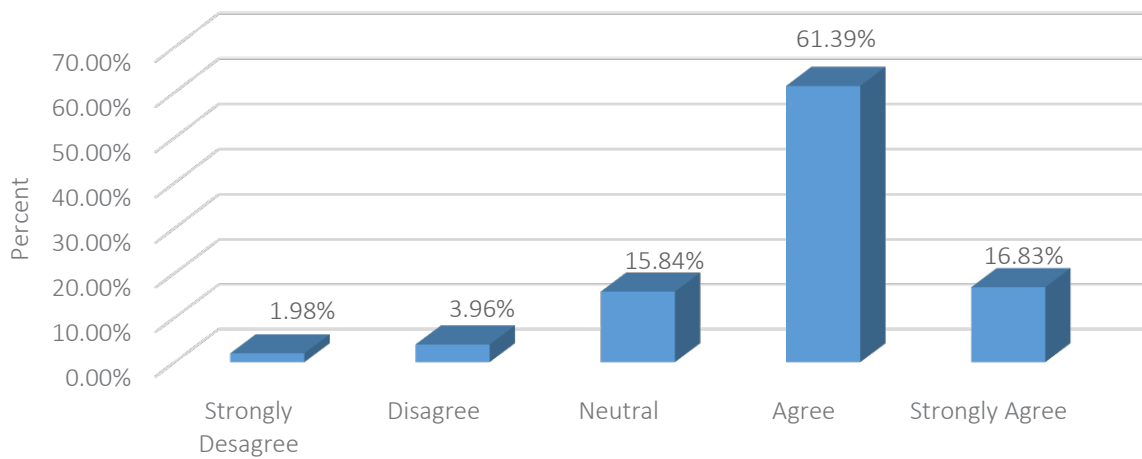| Data			DISTRICT							Total
			Ancón	Carabayllo	Comas	Independencia	San Matin de Porres	Los Olivos	Puente Piedra	
GENDER	Female	N	1	7	16	7	13	11	4	59
		%	1.0%	6.9%	15.8%	6.9%	12.9%	10.9%	4.0%	58.4%
	Male	N	1	3	11	6	5	11	5	42
		%	1.0%	3.0%	10.9%	5.9%	5.0%	10.9%	5.0%	41.6%
Total		N	2	10	27	13	18	22	9	101
		%	2.0%	9.9%	26.7%	12.9%	17.8%	21.8%	8.9%	100.0%

Note: n = 101.

Figure 1. Influence of previous experiences presented in social networks of fast food restaurants on my expectations
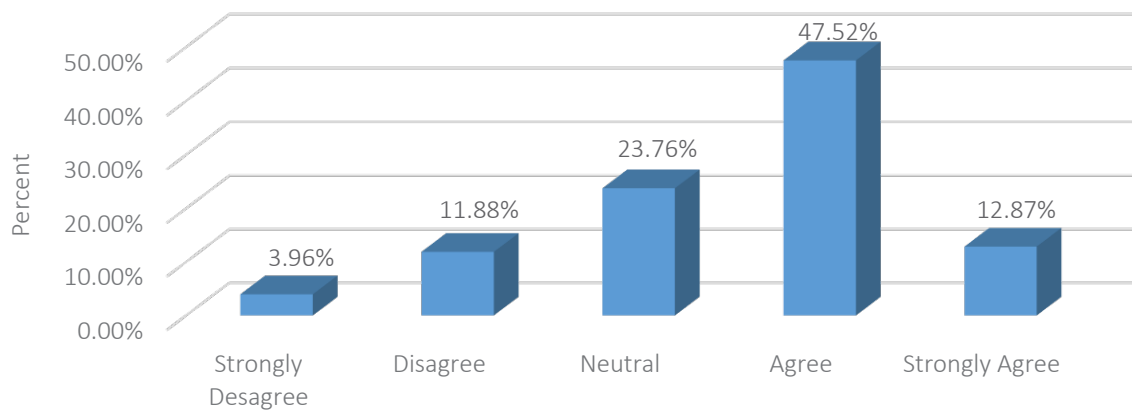
Figure 2. Participation in the publications made by the restaurants

Table 3. Respondents who reply with likes and comments to the content posted

Agreement	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly disagree	4	4.0	4.0	4.0
Disagree	12	11.9	11.9	15.8
Neutral	24	23.8	23.8	39.6
Agree	48	47.5	47.5	87.1
Strongly agree	13	12.9	12.9	100.0
Total	101	100	100	

Table 4. Respondents who spend time reading a blog post and react favorably to it

Agreement	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly disagree	8	7.9	7.9	7.9
Disagree	20	19.8	19.8	27.7
Neutral	21	20.8	20.8	48.5
Agree	45	44.6	44.6	93.1
Strongly agree	7	6.9	6.9	100.0
Total	101	100.0	100.0	

Table 5. Respondents who recommend the restaurants studied thanks to the dissemination of the contents

Agreement	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly disagree	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
Disagree	7	6.9	6.9	7.9
Neutral	17	16.8	16.8	24.8
Agree	64	63.4	63.4	88.1
Strongly agree	12	11.9	11.9	100.0
Total	101	100.0	100.0	

4.3. Analysis of the experiential marketing variable

Regarding the expectations, 68.3% of the population in Northern Lima has favorable expectations about the publications of the restaurants studied (Table 6). Considering interactions and recommendations, 65.3% of the population in Northern Lima are influenced in their purchase after observing interactions and recommendations from the restaurants studied (Table 7). Viewing the social network quality, 66.3% of the population in Northern Lima obtains information about the restaurants studied through their social networks (Table 8).

4.4. Inferential analysis

Next, the relationship between the social media variable and the dimensions of the experiential marketing variable (expectations, recommendations, and quality of the social network) is analyzed, and also the relationship between the experiential marketing variable and the dimensions of

Table 6. Respondents who have favorable expectations after viewing publications from restaurants

Agreement	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly disagree	3	3.0	3.0	3.0
Disagree	8	7.9	7.9	10.9
Neutral	12	11.9	11.9	22.8
Agree	69	68.3	68.3	91.1
Strongly agree	9	8.9	8.9	100.0
Total	101	100.0	100.0	

Table 7. Respondents who are influenced in their purchase by interactions and recommendations

Agreement	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly disagree	3	3.0	3.0	3.0
Disagree	3	3.0	3.0	5.9
Neutral	10	9.9	9.9	15.8
Agree	66	65.3	65.3	81.2
Strongly agree	19	18.8	18.8	100.0
Total	101	100.0	100.0	

Table 8. Number of people who obtain information about the restaurants studied through their social networks

Agreement	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly disagree	3	3.0	3.0	3.0
Disagree	7	6.9	6.9	9.9
Neutral	11	10.9	10.9	20.8
Agree	67	66.3	66.3	87.1
Strongly agree	13	12.9	12.9	100.0
Total	101	100.0	100.0	

Table 9. Relationship between social media as an inbound strategy and experiential marketing

The relationship between social media and experiential marketing		Sum of V1	Sum of V2
Sum of Variable1	Pearson correlation	1	.612**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	101	101
Sum of Variable2	Pearson correlation	.612**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	101	101

Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 10. Relationship between social networks and experiential marketing

Relationship between social networks and experiential marketing		Social networks	Generation of Experience
Sum of Social Networks	Pearson correlation	1	.365**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	101	101
Sum of Generation of Experiences	Pearson correlation	.365**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	101	101

Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 11. Relationship between blog services and experiential marketing among restaurant consumers in Lima

Relationship between blog services and experiential marketing		Blog Services	Generation of Experience
Sum of Blog Services	Pearson correlation	1	.348**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	101	101
Sum of Generation of Experiences	Pearson correlation	.348**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	101	101

Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 12. Relationship between recommended content and experiential marketing

Relationship between recommended content and experiential marketing		Recommended Content	Generation of Experience
Sum of Recommended Content	Pearson correlation	1	.633**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	101	101
Sum of Generation of Experiences	Pearson correlation	.633**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	101	101

Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

the social media variable (social networks, blogs, and recommended content).

Table 9 shows a moderate direct relationship between social media and quality of experience since the significance level is less than 0.05. Likewise, on the Pearson scale, the relationship between both variables is high. Table 10 shows that the significance level is less than 0.05. Therefore, social networks have a low direct relationship with experiential marketing. Table 11 shows that the significance level is less than 0.05. Therefore, blog services have a low direct relationship with experiential marketing. Table 12 shows that the significance level is less than 0.05. Therefore, collaborative content has a moderate direct relationship with experiential marketing.

Under the present inferential analysis, it can be observed that each of the variables studied has a relationship with the dimensions of the other. Likewise, the two variables also maintain a moderate direct relationship.

5. DISCUSSION

Social networks are fundamental for the positioning of fast food restaurants in the gastronomic market. However, they also help to create a corporate image that serves as a reference for consumers about the experiences they can live in these restaurants and provide a high return on digital traffic by making quality content since most people in Lima North tend to share such content. It was also observed that the experience of restaurant consumers improves considerably if they receive recommendations from other consumers who have had a pleasant experience.

Good management of the restaurant's sales department to keep digital communication channels active with inbound strategies is extremely important since the largest traffic of prospects is found in the virtual ecosystem, and they have become entirely familiar with delivery services. The experience of receiving and delivering the order must be described as "unforgettable" to build customer loyalty and turn them into brand ambassadors.

On the other hand, social networks influence consumer expectations before visiting a restaurant. It is also shown that the rating consumers give to restaurants through digital channels increases trust of other consumers; the experience consumers express on social networks influences the experience that others may have when visiting restaurants.

Concerning the consumer's experience in social networks, the results are related to Ruano et al. (2016), who argued that a good brand image produces positive results in all types of consumers, whether the so-called digital natives or immigrants. On the other hand, in relation to Sabate et al. (2014) and Araújo and Zilber (2016), it was observed that the constant interaction on pages such as fan pages generates favorable attitudes and expectations about the brand, translating into consumer loyalty toward the brand.

Similarly, regarding the interaction between the brand and consumers, the results are related to Palazón et al. (2014) and Enginkaya and Yilmaz (2014), who conclude that emotional relationships between the brand and the consumer can be achieved through interactions. In this context, the concept of brand love acquires great prominence from the business point of view. Therefore, similar to Pinedo (2016), it was observed that the number of consumers grows exponentially in the digital world using social interaction.

Regarding the recommendations shared by users derived from the collaborative service, the results are related to Carpio Maraza et al. (2019) since it is possible to verify that there is greater connectivity in social networks, being a channel to share preferences, satisfaction, and dissatisfaction, and allowing recommendations or complaints to arise among the comments. This is also related to Giraldo et al. (2016) and Jiang et al. (2016), who argued that restaurant recommendations in the digital world are due to two-way communication on social networks.

In the same way, regarding the brand image derived from customer expectations, the results agree with Rojas and Herrera (2013) since a significant influence of the previous experience with the brand is demonstrated in subsequent purchases. Likewise, the findings of Erdem et al. (2002) and Ruiz-Mafe et al. (2018) are similar to what was evidenced since a positive brand image generates emotions that lead to the purchase decision.

On the other hand, previous experience gives expectations to the client, a result that coincides with Rojas and Herrera (2013) and Erdoğmuş and Çiçek (2012), who confirm that, as previous experiences are accumulated, the client trusts the company more and thus develop a positive brand image.

Likewise, after analyzing the impact of the recommendations given by the clients, the results obtained show that the relationship in the recommendation plays a vital role in the process of making the purchase decision since those who are loyal to the brand usually share their experiences (Palacios-Banda, 2018; Fiol et al., 2012). These experiences build trust and increase word-of-mouth communication on social media (Hahn et al., 2016).

Finally, regarding the quality of social networks, results are similar to those found by Emamjome et al. (2013), who affirm that the information is easily accessible, permanent, and friendly since it positively conditions customer satisfaction and is very useful when making purchases (Hill & Brierley, 2017).

Regarding the quality of the social network system, similarities are evident with the findings of Connolly et al. (2016) and Hill and Brierley (2017), who mention that the quality of the system, where a company's social network and website are located, is measured in relation to ease of use and agility when purchasing.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates a moderate direct relationship between social networks as an inbound strategy and experiential marketing since the level of significance obtained in the statistical calculations gives a lower level of significance of 0.05, which implies that one variable has a relationship with the other.

Social media is critical for fast food restaurants like KFC, Roky's, and Norky's. Regarding the previous customer experience, consumers of fast food restaurants obtain a previous concept of the restaurant after receiving publicity on their social networks. Therefore, the previous experiences in the social networks of these restaurants directly influence the expectations of their customers.

Also, it is necessary to note that the published content and the comments it may generate are equivalent to the recommendations generated through traditional marketing. Comments about the experience in the restaurant or the service received are highlighted. The collaborative content created by the restaurants generates a good impression on consumers in North Lima, thus improving their expectations regarding their experience in fast food restaurants.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization: Boris John Vasquez-Reyes, Fiorela Judith Bravo-Martinez, Franklin Cordova-Buiza.
Data curation: Jose Antonio Coral-Morante.
Formal analysis: Jose Antonio Coral-Morante.
Investigation: Fiorela Judith Bravo-Martinez, Jose Antonio Coral-Morante, Franklin Cordova-Buiza.
Project administration: Boris John Vasquez-Reyes, Fiorela Judith Bravo-Martinez, Jose Antonio Coral-Morante.
Resources: Boris John Vasquez-Reyes, Fiorela Judith Bravo-Martinez.
Supervision: Franklin Cordova-Buiza.
Validation: Boris John Vasquez-Reyes, Fiorela Judith Bravo-Martinez, Jose Antonio Coral-Morante.
Writing – original draft: Franklin Cordova-Buiza.
Writing – review & editing: Boris John Vasquez-Reyes, Fiorela Judith Bravo-Martinez, Jose Antonio Coral-Morante, Franklin Cordova-Buiza.

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