

Female market: The challenge for mechanical services

Mercado femenino: El reto para los servicios mecánicos

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21803/adgnosis.10.10.467>

Román Izquierdo-De Dios

Mg. Business Administration, Universidad Autónoma Baja California. Correo: rizquierdo@uabc.edu.mx.

Ricardo Verjan Quiñonez

Mg. Business Administration, Universidad Autónoma Baja California. Correo: ricardoverjan@uabc.edu.mx Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6624-0873>

José Gabriel Ruiz Andrade

Ph. Administrative Sciences, Universidad Autónoma Baja California. Correo: gabruiz@uabc.edu.mx
Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7019-112X>

Cómo citar este artículo:

Izquierdo-De Dios, R., Verjan Quiñonez, R. & Ruiz Andrade, J. Female market: The challenge for mechanical services. Revista *ADGNOSIS*, 10(10), p.29-42. <https://doi.org/10.21803/adgnosis.10.10.467>

Abstract

This document is a theoretical reflection on the changes and updates faced by two actors, on the one hand, the mechanical workshop and on the other hand, the female market, of which a documentary analysis is made with respect to their behavior, which was carried out through the review of the consumer behavior and business marketing approaches. The workshop's position is presented with a strong focus on the male market, and the one taken by the woman who takes the and the one taken by women to require and purchase mechanical services. Finally, ideas are discussed and suggested to influence the competitiveness of prevention, maintenance and vehicle repair shops in Tijuana, Baja California.

Keywords: Behavior; Marketing; Female market; Mechanic workshop.

Resumen

Este documento es una reflexión teórica sobre los cambios y actualizaciones a las que se enfrentan dos actores, por un lado, el taller mecánico y en el otro el mercado femenino, del que se hace un análisis documental con respecto a su comportamiento, mismo que se llevó a cabo a través de la revisión de los enfoques del comportamiento del consumidor y del marketing empresarial. Se plantea la postura del taller con un subrayado enfoque al mercado masculino, y la que toma la mujer para requerir y comprar los servicios mecánicos. Finalmente, se discuten y sugieren ideas para incidir en la competitividad de los talleres de prevención, mantenimiento y reparación vehicular en Tijuana, Baja California.

Palabras Clave: Comportamiento; Mercadeo; Mercado Femenino; Taller Mecánico.

Introduction

Competitiveness in any business is an indicator that implies the search for and achievement of a greater market share. Thus, companies dedicated to automotive prevention, maintenance and repair are not exempt from this indicator. And the fact is that "a company is competitive when it manages to develop products or services whose costs and quality are comparable or superior to those of competitors" (Rubio and Baz, 2015; De la Cruz, 2018), and in line with competitiveness, business and government at a global level join forces to improve the standard of living among other indicators.

One of the issues addressed at the global level, with underlined emphasis is the "mainstreaming" of the gender perspective, equality in all areas involving the involvement of men and women, avoiding gender stereotypes (Munguía & Baca, 2014).

In this sense, (ILO, 1997). Describes "mainstreaming" as: the process of valuing the implications for men and women of any planned action, not only by adding the term "feminine", but also by incorporating experience and knowledge in the interests of men and women alike.

Emphasizing the same theme, Article 5, VII of the General Law for Equality between Women and Men, (LGIMH), establishes that mainstreaming is:

It is the process that allows guaranteeing the incorporation of the gender perspective with the objective of assessing the implications for women and men of any action that is programmed, dealing with legislation, public policies, administrative, economic and cultural activities in public and private institutions. (INDESOL, 2018).

Therefore, it is understood that society has promoted changes for a better quality of life, and these changes, regardless of the area or science, are reflected in the field of markets. This implies that, in order to be competitive, the company must adopt pertinent measures that embrace the changes of a transversal market, where the marketing strategies that were previously used no longer generate the same results in a society that presents updates and changes.

On the other hand, there is the mechanic shop in Tijuana, Baja California. It is a type of company that has been characterized for being managed by men and that serves mainly the male market. According to statistical data, at a national level, 99.9% of the mechanic workshop is made up of men, with an average age of 42 years old, with a high school level and most of them have an entrepreneurial or experimental experience that starts mostly at the age of 15 years old (Diputados.gob.mx & INEGI, 2016).

Table 1.
Mechanical work

Trabajadores a partir de 15 años	Ocupación por hombres	Edad promedio	Escolaridad	Remuneración promedio
454,838	99.90%	42 años	Secundaria	1,850.00

Source: Own elaboration with information from (Diputados.gob.mx & INEGI, 2016).

A 0.06% pursue a career in mechanical engineering, 5.4% seek to prepare themselves as technicians and the rest of this group (94.10%) gain practical experience.

Figure 1.
Preparation of mechanics in Mexico.



Source: Own elaboration with information from (Diputados.gob.mx & INEGI, 2016).

Now, a company dedicated to automotive maintenance, prevention and repair has a direct relationship with market behavior, which implies that it must analyze patterns, study behaviors and changes in such a way that it can evolve with the market and thus supply and meet the emerging needs presented by the market. To this line of ideas, (CESVI, 2018), mentions that the problem that mechanical workshops have is that "they work without any strategy, and are only surviving as far as circumstances allow the entrepreneur to go". This states the areas of opportunity that this business line has, becoming a little more acute when it is added that cars today have high technology, Smart data, internet of things anti-crash sensor among other updates that imply improvement in the internal operations of the workshop.

On the other hand, the strategies that the repair shop has learned and used over and over again for decades have been focused on a male buyer, (Urduin & Entrepreneur, 2006), mentioning that in 1997, *Ford directed 60 percent of its advertising to men, while the remaining 40 percent was aimed at women*. To obtain a different result than expected, since **women were the sector that consumed 65% of automobiles**, and men 35%, an analysis that allowed it to change its strategy in a market that had already changed. These strategies in the short term, in a male-dominated sector, will not have a relevant influence on the female market.

In the same sense, the research of (Flynn, et al, 1996) cited by (Jiménez, 2006), detailed that:

It was "predicted that markets would become more heterogeneous in the coming decades because assemblers would expect an increase in customized cars; and they also identified that sales to female consumers and ethnic minority groups would increase, aspects that have been confirmed.

However, one of the ailments of the mechanical workshop is the ease with which it is able to ignore a growing market that is demanding, has the capacity to pay and, above all, recognizes that, in order to purchase mechanical services, it is necessary to have a male partner to communicate mechanical needs to the service provider.

A competitive company, of relevada importance in the city of Tijuana is "Rendichicas" dedicated to the sale of fuel. This holds the title of being the first gas station to bet on 90% of its staff being female, focusing its strategy to serve not only the female market, but by employing women, it changes the perceptions in buyers by flagging values of "honesty, commitment and respect" social responsibility, with the mere fact of having the staff team mostly women and also connects with the male market, (Rendichicas, 2018).

To go a little deeper, people's behavior has been the subject of study in various fields of science, behaviorism reached the field of business and took root in the field of marketing, joining marketing in the fields of management and behavior in the fields of psychology, to study patterns of behavior of consumers of products and services.

The theory of "behaviorism" has its essence in that the object of study is not consciousness, but the relationships that have in common the stimuli that influence behavior, as well as the response to the stimulus, which in turn, originate new observable behaviors (Watson & Rayner 1920, cited by Weibell, 2011).

Consumers are exposed to various factors that influence their purchasing behavior (Córdoba & Rivera, 2013). In such a case, the relevant study of individual or group attitudes, allows to know behavioral patterns and make better decisions when designing a strategy, although it is true that not all influencing factors can be controlled, they should be known to be taken into account in the strategy. (Cetinã et al., 2012, P. 184).

For his part, (Dennis et al., 2018), mentions that the buying style between men and women are completely different, and starts from the supposed ancestor, where the figure of the male hunter and the female gatherer has influence today in the buying style, as seen in the following paragraph:

Therefore, we argue that men's and women's shopping styles reflect their respective, evolutionarily determined societal roles that is, hunters and gatherers. Gender equality and economic development also magnify the differences in gendered shopping styles (Dennis et al., 2018, p. 41).

Thus, assuming that business or marketing strategies are homogeneous will have a negative impact on both sides of the players in the business field: on the one hand, the company dedicated to automotive maintenance, prevention and repair will redouble its efforts to survive or maintain a position in the homogeneous market, and on the other hand, the female market will be the one that will have a negative impact on the female market.

facing the need for services, but which are not designed to make a woman feel reliable, comfortable, assisted and understood within the facilities of a mechanic shop and that in order to purchase shop services, she has to delegate the activity.

Consumer behavior is subject to mental processes, (Terry, 1997) cited by (Isac, 2016), sometimes purchase decisions are impulsive, (Galeana, 2016), others are programmed and others are very rational, which involves time, processing and probably taken as a group. What is certain is that, for mechanical services, decision making is subject among other factors, to the emergency, it has variations when the car is inside the parking lot of their home, on the public road, or etc. As well as the importance of falling back on services that are not usually sought, the customer knows of the existence of the services, but only requires them until specific moments (Chavez, 2016; Gonzalez et al., 2020).

Several authors agree that customer behavior is the process of analyzing, evaluating, selecting, purchasing, using and disposing of goods and services, for the satisfaction of individual or group needs in the search to satisfy their needs and desires (Ruiz de Maya, 2001; Solomon et al., 2006 cited by Vijayalakshmi & Mahalakshmi, 2014 and Kotler & Keller, 2011).

Another paper that highlights a theory of behavior is: "theory of planned behavior" (TPB) by Icek Ajzen. The model describes that behavior is subject to three considerations. 1, the attitude, 2 the norms and 3 the control one has over the norms (Ajzen, 1991; 2011; 2014, cited by Yadav & Pathak, 2017). This author states that for a behavior to be performed there must be an intention to perform it and this is nourished by the norms, the attitude and the control that the subject has over whether or not to perform the behavior, thus visualizing the subject with a before and after behavior.

Empirical evidence suggests that impulse buying behavior leaves a higher degree of satisfaction to planned purchases, since consumers need to satisfy their self-esteem and desire to gain others' respect. "Moreover, some empirical evidence indicated that consumers need to satisfy their self-esteem and desire to gain others' respect will have a positive impact on their impulse buying intentions" (Saad & Metawie, 2015).

The area of opportunity raised in this reflective analysis is focused on the confrontation of two main actors: Company and consumer.

This document has a documentary cut, the theories and contributions of various theorists are analyzed, the main objective is to reflect on the business behavior that is generated between the female customer and the mechanical service provider, excluding from the subject all those workshops within a dealership or that have the mechanical attention assured by the automotive leasing contract, to conclude with discussions and suggestions that contribute to make decisions. On the one hand, the company with its very masculine environment, derived from long-standing customs and practices in the automotive supply chain.

On the other hand, the female consumer, which today is a decision-maker market

The female market for purchasing automobiles, but their needs with their means of transportation are not sufficient. The female market for purchasing mechanical services tends to delegate the activity to men, regardless of whether or not they know mechanics, so that they can communicate their needs to the mechanic.

The reasons why women are not served with the same emphasis as men cannot be answered by the entrepreneur, due to "workshop blindness", since the company assumes a servant role where it attends and serves whoever arrives at the workshop, however, it requires a particular analysis to understand the specific needs.

The behavioral patterns infer that women do not go to request services on their own because they are poorly attended, because the mechanic tends to raise the price if it is a woman behind the wheel, or because they assume that she does not know about mechanical parts and assume that men know about mechanics, thus falling into stereotypes.

In this line of ideas, (Parkin, 2017, p. 127), mentions that in the history of automobiles, gender has had relevance when requesting mechanical services, and this generally meant that the mechanic assumes that women do not have basic mechanical (...) knowledge, and with this, the rates to women are usually higher by 8% than the cost paid by males.

In the same sentiment (Clarke, 2007, p. 1), he determined in his research that women are in- limited by mechanics, and comments that women are compared to a car, a fact that suggests that the power, comfort and other conveniences of owning a car, were more akin to men than women (Clarke, 2007, p. 194), he refers that the automotive industry as such, aggressively treats the female market.

Everything indicates changes, the government with legislative initiatives to promote gender equality, and this means that business proposals designed for men will also be designed for women. Changes in culture, changes in the market, technological changes, and this means that this confrontation between female consumers and suppliers will have to move on to the next stage: Either women will serve their own niche with a business proposal that is tailored with the approach it deserves, or the companies currently operating will be adapted to focus on this very valuable market.

Reflection

The market

From a business standpoint, economically active women make up the female market. The population in Baja California According to the (INEGI, 2015), has greater weight in the municipality of Tijuana, of which 51% are women.

The role of women as entrepreneurs and workers in areas mostly monopolized by men is increasing, in Baja California women have a competitive role. They are increasingly

more women with greater purchasing power, which implies that they are part of the engine that moves the economy of a geographic area. This means that women have made a significant gap in the company and in society, and with this, the "normative" or customary roles in society have also changed. It is now common to find couples where the roles in the home have been delegated to the man and the woman is the provider, as well as both parties in the couple being providers, among other changes in society.

The behavior of the female market towards the service provider company is one of frustration, since a woman cannot walk with the same confidence that a man walks in a mechanic shop, she feels assaulted, the environment, the walls, the signs, the advertising, the music, the structure, the bathroom, the colors and the customer service, seems to be designed to discourage women to spend a friendly time during the wait, when they bring their car/auto to be repaired. Already mentions (Clarke, 2007, p. 194), that the industry as a whole, is really aggressive with women, as if the image of a woman tarnishes the reputation of the industry Similarly, (Banks & Castillo, 2017, p. 2), directly states that women do not have acceptable and healthy relationship with mechanics, but that it is something is tolerable as long as the emergency of going to the workshop does not arise.

Banks suggests that these activities, which are customary in the mechanic's workshop, fuel the behavior of women to avoid, as much as possible, confronting the workshop, and with this, increase the cost of a late repair (Busse et al., 2017, p. 1), I emphasize that on the part of the workshop, when selling services, there is a tendency to alter the initial budget to those women who apparently do not know about the subject. It is common for men and women in Mexican culture to reach a consensus before making a decision. For example, when a person has a mechanical emergency with his or her car, it is common for him or her to make a phone call to a family member, friend or person he or she considers trustworthy.

According to (Hofstede, 2018) in his analysis of comparison of nations he finds that Mexico, with a low score of individualism, which qualifies it as a collectivist society, this qualification is for societies with a high degree of group commitments, interdependence among group members, family, extended relationships, Hofstede adds that this value overrides most social norms and rules, it is common that an offense is translated into shame and that labor relations are rooted as a family bond, and that this collectivist group is characterized by people deciding to belong to the group in exchange for loyalty.

Well, to know individual or group behaviors also implies knowing their culture, their customs, so it is not surprising that people who fall under this cultural assumption tend to ask for a point of view before making decisions, and in the case of the workshop, men and women alike tend to ask for a personal opinion of who they consider reliable in their social circle, so they appeal to past experiences of others and form an opinion for the selection of a supplier.

Women are not exempt from these customary rules, but apart from following this custom, they also delegate this activity to someone in their social circle, someone who, by virtue of their past experience with the mechanic's shop, they believe will be able to obtain better results.

(Rivas, & Grande, 2004, p. 156) stresses that it is possible to "identify the masculine or feminine character of a society" or culture in order to understand the behavior of women and men.

The mechanical workshop

An enterprise is born from the needs of a society, where the entrepreneur presents a value proposition that satisfies the need in exchange for a benefit. This is how companies enter the competitive arena, where there must be a mutual benefit between the buyer and the service provider for there to be a healthy coexistence in the business ecosystem.

On the other hand (INEGI, 2014), has identified that the importance of the companies in this line of business throughout Mexico, is in 90% microenterprises, as shown in the following graph 2.

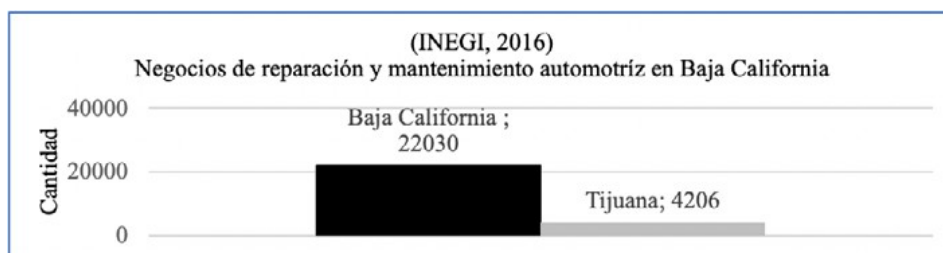
Figure 2.
Automotive workshop in Mexico.



Source: Own elaboration with information from (INEGI, 2014).

Of the total in Baja California, in Tijuana there are 4206 economic units in this line of business, 90% of which are characterized by having 1 to 5 workers, as shown in Graph 3.

Figure 3.
Baja California automotive workshop



Source: Own elaboration with information from (INEGI, 2014).

The reasons why the workshop does not detect the changes usually lie in the lack of market research, or sometimes, to the lack of investment in planning and business development as mentioned by the magazine (CESVI, 2018, p. 37).

Now, it has been seen that the education of the "common mechanic" is based on empirical experience, that there is a minimum margin that studies mechanical engineering to dedicate itself to the workshop. This means that mechanics necessarily continue the line of apprenticeship of expert and pupil, where the younger one learns and develops under the shelter of his master, learning even the ways, tips, tricks and other mechanical and commercial knowledge to approach the final customer.

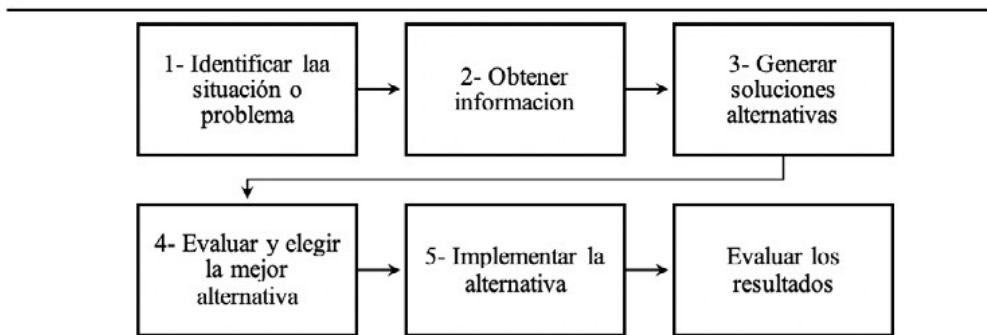
On the other hand, the influence of men in mechanical workshops is related to the origins of the workshop in Mexico, which date back to the "transition from horse-drawn carriages to the first motorized vehicles that circulated in the Mexican capital since 1895" (Portalautomotriz.com, 2016). (Portalautomotriz.com, 2016), where it was very common that the drivers hired to pull the carriages, were men with mechanical skills. (Ruta 401, n/d).

Now, a person who has selected a supplier for mechanical services has often processed the information impulsively, and depending on the emergency, the decision is also often programmed.

In relation to decision making, several authors agree on problem solving through a process of analysis that allows visualizing and selecting the alternative that promises the best solution, Chiavenato (2002), cited by (CUAED, n/d) (Herbert A. Simon, 1947) cited by (Figueroba, 2017).

Chiavenato's decision model, shown in Table 5 below, is one of the most widely used at the business level, but also in everyday life it is a reference through which several decisions are filtered without necessarily knowing the stages or the procedure.

Figure 4.
Chiavenato's qualitative decision making process



Source: Own elaboration with information from (INEGI, 2014).

There are several qualitative and quantitative models that can help in decision making, especially if it is a programmed decision, however, in times of emergency with the breakdown of the car, it is most likely that the user goes to memory, to experience, and through the re-request may have a reinforcement in the decision. The creation of new markets because it is an area that presents an empty niche and can generate profitability in the long term (Salamanca Ospina, Uribe and Mendoza Vega, 2017, p. 108).

This is the importance of customer service in the first appointment, since a customer who knows that his expectations have been met or exceeded. The user turns to his own experiences stored in memory, (Urueña, 2016, p. 6), adds about human memory that it is the ability to acquire, store and retrieve information", and through this, learning, communication, identity building, understanding of the surrounding environment is achieved, in the same feeling, (Olson, 1978), quoted by (Bettman, 1979) says that this information already organized in the memory of the buyer of services and products, infers that when the first opportunity arises, the person repeats the learned process, goes to the experiences to make his first pre-selection decisions and from there can begin to discriminate. If the experiences are not pleasant, he will then turn to the advice of the social circle or the expert, and so on until the possibilities of resolving the situation with the car breakdown are exhausted.

In other words, both the buyer and the seller have reciprocal needs in their communication, a fact that undermines the company's competitiveness. The needs of the female market are ignored.

Apart from the environment and memory, the figure of respect also plays a role, the man or woman to whom people turn to for advice, either because they have already gone through the same situation or because it is normally expected of their social circle, so that the supplier should appear as a problem solver in the buyer's mind based on good experiences and also has the opportunity to be recommended by the figure to whom they turn to when they ask for consensus.

Discussion

Any competitive company is one that achieves the distinctive value, to be and exceed the minimum standard expected by customers and according to this indicator, the workshop should analyze and find the competitive advantage that will guide it to:

- Attracting the female market
- Communicate with this market.
- Learn to listen to this market.
- Redesigning the service focused on the market
- Pleasing this market
- To meet the needs of this market
- Retain and build loyalty in this market.

It is a fact that the social roles between masculine and feminine have changed.

much greater influence at the business level has opened up gaps in areas mostly monopolized by men, managerial impact, purchasing power and with it, the decision making implicit in every daily activity.

As mentioned above, the norms of a society also influence decision making by virtue of reinforcing the bond that exists between the person requesting advice and the counselor; one provides coaching, protection, advice and in return obtains loyalty. Similarly, the figures who serve as authorities in the social circle will influence the decision. Parents, partner, friends, religious leader, etc.

It is also true that the auto repair shop tries to connect with its customers, taking a posture learned from the large car assembly plants, positioning the male figure as the superior being, so the marketing strategy has been built with that approach where the common denominator is that the "calendars" of girls in bikinis are part of the ornament and advertising.

On the other hand, there is the behavior of the female market in relation to the mechanical service, since this niche will not only try to delegate the activity to a third party, but, in order not to be swindled, will also avoid negotiations, due to distrust and lack of good communication with the service provider.

The attraction of both sides of this commercial relationship is considerable, even if it is delegated to a third party, there is a service provider and there is an end customer, trying to justify why the mechanical workshop has not made changes to serve the niche, is the same as apologizing for not visualizing in advance and for not knowing the patterns, behaviors, changes that the market presents on a daily basis.

However, at a commercial level, either you are competitive or you are not; if you are, the business obtains profits; if you are not, the fight for the market leaves you out of the competition, or you survive and subsist as a business.

Surviving at a business level is usually justified at the beginning of operations, but a company that has not passed the break-even or "subsisting" stage for years means that it is not competitive, that it has to pause for analysis, strategic planning and assessment of the market target it wishes to serve.

At the end of the day, the one that takes the lead will always be a company that was able to see in advance the behavior patterns in the market, that found a window to filter through as a different proposal and with it, gain a greater market share, which implies that the company that decides first will be in a position of competitive advantage, leadership and profits.

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