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INCIDENCE OF PUBLIC POLICY EVALUATION CRITERIA ON MICROENTERPRISE GROWTH: CORRELATIONAL EVIDENCE IN A LATIN AMERICAN URBAN CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT: Microenterprises constitute the largest business sector in Mexico and in the state of Nuevo León; therefore, their importance in the region's economic development is undeniable. Nevertheless, they exhibit high mortality rates and low life expectancy. This study analyzes the incidence of public policy evaluation criteria, relevance, coherence, effectiveness, and efficiency on the growth of commercial microenterprises through an analytical correlational model. Using a cross-sectional quantitative approach, a validated instrument was designed and applied to 286 microenterprises in the Metropolitan Area of Nuevo León that have participated in municipal economic public policies, selected through purposive sampling. Descriptive analyses, Pearson correlations, and multiple linear regression were performed. The results show significant and moderately to highly strong associations between the municipal economic public policy criteria and microenterprise growth, highlighting efficiency as the factor with the highest correlation and coherence as the factor with the lowest correlation and non-significant in the multivariate model. The study provides a replicable conceptual–operational framework for evaluating local economic policies from the beneficiary's perspective and offers inputs for the design of public policies aimed at strengthening microenterprises in Latin American urban contexts.

Keywords: economic public policies; policy evaluation; business growth; microenterprises.

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INTRODUCTION

Mexico, a country located in Latin America, considered one of the fifteen largest economies in the world and the second largest in Latin America, has not been able to generate steady economic growth, showing an average growth rate below that of high-income economies (Banco Mundial, 2025) Mexico's business structure is mostly made up of micro-enterprises, which have a significant impact on the generation of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), in addition to producing a large number of jobs and generating economic stability in the country.

Microenterprises are the backbone of Latin America's economy, accounting for between 85% and 95% of all economic units in the region. In Mexico specifically, it is estimated that 95% of economic units are microenterprises, as is the case in the state of Nuevo León, where 89% of businesses are micro-sized. However, their high vulnerability, limited productivity, and high mortality have been widely documented, which has led to the proliferation of public policies aimed at strengthening them. Despite this, evidence on the effectiveness of these policies remains fragmented, partial, and, in many cases, methodologically weak (Correa et al., 2020; Valencia González and Chiatchoua, 2021). As a result, in Mexico, the life expectancy of microenterprises is less than eight years, and more than 60% disappear during their first five years of operation (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI), 2016).

In this context, local governments have implemented economic public policies aimed at strengthening microenterprises. However, the literature has pointed out that these instruments face problems of dissemination, relevance, institutional coordination, and low actual effectiveness (Becerra Bizarrón and Cortes Palacios, 2018; Saavedra García et al., 2013). Despite the design and implementation of economic policies aimed at the development and growth of microenterprises, empirical evidence on their effectiveness remains fragmented. Most studies focus on general diagnoses or partial results of implemented programs, without incorporating robust evaluation frameworks that allow for estimating how and why certain public policy criteria affect business growth.

To determine the criteria to be used, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECDE], 2021b)

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proposes an approach based on several fundamental variables for evaluating public policy: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, and efficiency. However, there is a gap in the literature on the use of this approach in municipal policies in Latin America, as well as on the direct perception of the beneficiary as a critical performance indicator. The importance and relevance of this study lies in showing local cases (microenterprises in Nuevo León) participating in a regional context of policy evaluation towards MSMEs, as does the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2024) in its study "SME Policy Index: Latin America and the Caribbean 2024," which supports the relevance and timeliness of the study.

Therefore, this article aims to analyze the impact of the public policy evaluation criteria proposed by the OECD: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, and efficiency on the growth of commercial microenterprises using a quantitative correlational model, to identify the mechanisms through which municipal economic policies contribute (or not) to microenterprise development in the state of Nuevo León, Mexico.

The proposed research question is: How do the criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, and efficiency of municipal economic public policies affect the growth of commercial microenterprises in Nuevo León? The proposed study hypotheses are that all municipal economic public policy criteria are positively related to the growth of microenterprises in Nuevo León.

In view of this, this study proposes a multivariate analysis model that examines the impact of four public policy evaluation criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, and efficiency on the growth of commercial microenterprises in the Nuevo León Metropolitan Area, considering the direct perception of the beneficiary. In this sense, this study seeks to contribute empirical evidence and a replicable conceptual framework for the analysis of local economic policies in Latin American urban environments, contributing to the contemporary debate on the design, implementation, and performance of local economic policies.

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THEORETICAL CONTEXT

Public policies: definitions and approaches

The concept of public policy is fundamental to the analysis of business growth, particularly because of the role played by the State in promoting and developing microenterprises. Velásquez Gavilanes (2010) defines public policy as an integrative process of decisions, actions, agreements, and instruments implemented by public authorities with the aim of resolving or preventing situations considered problematic. Similarly, Salazar Vargas (2012) argues that public policies are the State's response to relevant social problems.

Public policies can be generated at all levels of government. However, the decentralization processes that local governments are undergoing as a solution to improve development in their communities have led to an increase in the formulation of public policies on local agendas (Lobelle Fernández, 2017). There is a wide range of public policies, which differ in various characteristics such as: the interest sought to be realized, the result, the nature of the problems being addressed, the degree of configuration, the degree of permanence, according to the purpose it seeks to achieve, the nature of its content, its impact on society, according to the political-administrative jurisdiction, according to the population it targets, the substantive area or sector that the policy will address, and according to the substantive area. Within this last classification are social policies, which have been defined as those that seek to improve the quality of life of a social group, which have a classification from which economic policies are derived, which achieve their objectives through the redistribution of resources, social inclusion, and the creation of opportunities (Velásquez Gavilanes, 2010).

Evaluation of public policies and the criteria proposed by the OECD

Asenjo Ruiz and Grupo de Trabajo Interinstitucional de Evaluación de Políticas Públicas-Evalual (2016) describe the evaluation of public policies as the set of principles, methods, and practices aimed at examining the design, implementation, and impacts of a public policy, to assess its quality, usefulness, and effectiveness. Although there are multiple criteria proposed for this evaluation, there is a certain consensus among authors such as Asenjo Ruiz

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and Grupo de Trabajo Interinstitucional de Evaluación de Políticas Públicas-Evalual (2016); Miranda-Escolar (2019); Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2021b), in considering the following four fundamental criteria:

- Relevance: whether the policy addresses a real and relevant problem
- Coherence: whether the policy is internally consistent and aligned with other existing policies
- Effectiveness: whether it achieves its intended objectives
- Efficiency: whether it does so with optimal use of available resources

One effort to evaluate policies and programs aimed at small businesses and entrepreneurship is the *Framework for the Evaluation of SME and Entrepreneurship Policies and Programs* by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2023), which guides how governments can promote reliable evaluation of policies for businesses and entrepreneurship, as well as key characteristics of evaluation and examples of reliable, high-quality international evaluations.

Microenterprises and business growth

The importance of microenterprises at the international level is widely recognized, which is why various authors have focused their research on their role within national economies. However, there is a wide range of criteria for defining and classifying microenterprises, as each country or international organization establishes its own standards.

Rodríguez et al. (2020) state that there is no universally accepted definition or classification to define what constitutes a microenterprise, and therefore, they present different classifications used in Latin American countries. Similarly, González Díaz and Becerra Pérez (2021) point out that there is no single categorization that is valid across all contexts and mention variables such as the number of workers, annual sales, total assets, initial investment, or combinations of these. In general, countries with smaller economies tend to set lower limits on these indicators than those with developed economies.

In Latin America, approximately 90% of countries use the number of employees, 60% use sales, 35% use assets, 10% use gross annual income, and 5% use net worth. Similarly, in Central America, the predominant criteria are the number of employees, sales, and assets (González Díaz and Becerra Pérez, 2021).

In the case of Mexico, according to the Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI) (2020), the main criterion for stratifying establishments by size is the number of workers. Complementary criteria include total annual sales, income, and fixed assets. According to this classification, a microenterprise is one that has between 0 and 10 employees, regardless of the sector to which it belongs.

Once the classification framework for microenterprises has been established, it is appropriate to address the concept of business growth and its measurement mechanisms. This concept has been analyzed from various perspectives due to its complexity and multidimensional nature, leading to the development of several contemporary theories related to business growth.

Based on resource theory (Barney, 1991) and dynamic capabilities (Teece et al., 1997) business growth is explained as a process of accumulating capabilities, talent, productive assets, and market positioning. Its most common dimensions include:

- Sales growth
- Territorial expansion
- Increased employment
- Acquisition of assets or machinery

Relationship between public policies and business growth

Economic public policies have the capacity to modify organizational capabilities, improve productivity, and influence business survival (Dieppe, 2021). Previous studies have found moderate positive relationships between government support and business performance

(Aragón-Sánchez et al., 2017). Still, low efficiency and limited intergovernmental coordination in Latin America have also been documented (Correa et al., 2020).

There is a direct link between public policy and the development of microenterprises. In Mexico, this link is established in Article 25 of the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States, which assigns the State responsibility for national development through the planning and management of economic activity. This constitutional power is implemented through the National Development Plan, which sets out the government's actions and strategic objectives. Within this framework, the Ministry of Economy acts as the governing body for the sector, with the priority objective of promoting the creation and consolidation of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) through support instruments and collaboration mechanisms in different areas aimed at strengthening these economic units (Secretaría de Economía, 2020).

Some previous studies related to the influence of government and the role of public policy in the growth of microenterprises include that of Becerra Bizarrón and Cortes Palacios (2018) which concludes that one factor preventing microenterprises from remaining in the market is a lack of knowledge about sources of financial support, noting that 85.7% of entrepreneurs are unaware of federal government support programs. The remaining percentage who are aware of such support cannot apply for it due to the requirements of these government support programs. Similarly, Saavedra García et al. (2013) conducted a study to evaluate federal government policies related to the progress of microenterprises, concluding that policies to support and promote micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises in Mexico have not found the right direction, which would allow economic units to develop in the current environment.

For their part, Portal-Boza et al. (2018), mention that, at present, the financing decisions faced by micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises constitute a challenge both for them and for governments, concluding in their study that access to government programs continues to be a challenge, making it necessary to increase the amount of support provided directly by government agencies. Díaz Arreguín (2010), mentions in his research study that, despite the increase in the number and diversity of business support measures in Mexico, these policies have not been sufficiently effective because they are designed in a general way and do not

meet their objectives, as they do not consider the fact that one of the characteristics of microenterprises is their heterogeneity.

Previous academic studies have established a direct link between the public sector and business development and growth, concluding in most cases that the state and its public apparatus can play a leading role in microenterprise development (Vivona et al., 2025).

Conceptual model of the study

From the perspective of *public value* (Moore, 1995) and *policy coherence* (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2019) the effectiveness of public interventions depends on their alignment with real problems, inter-institutional coordination, and the efficient use of resources. These frameworks explain how certain design and implementation criteria directly influence entrepreneurial capabilities, which is complemented by organizational theories such as dynamic capabilities (Teece et al., 1997). Together, these elements underpin the following conceptual model of this study.

The conceptual model of the study proposes that the impact of the design and implementation of public economic policies (evaluated in terms of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, and efficiency) is reflected in the growth of microenterprises. That said, the fundamental assumption of the study is that more coherent, relevant, effective, and efficient policies generate greater organizational capacities and, therefore, greater business growth.

METHODOLOGY

Materials and methods

A quantitative, non-experimental, cross-sectional, and correlational approach was used. The objective was to estimate the impact of public policy evaluation criteria on the growth of micro-commercial enterprises in Latin America.

The target population consists of micro-businesses in the Nuevo León Metropolitan Area that have participated in at least one municipal economic public policy. Intentional non-

probability sampling was used on a sample of 286 micro-entrepreneurs, which was the result of a calculation using the formula for infinite populations, with a confidence level of 95%, a probability of success of 0.5, a standard deviation of 0.5, and a margin of error of 6%. The following inclusion criteria were applied for the selection of participants:

- Be a microenterprise (0–10 workers)
- Belong to the commerce sector
- Have participated in municipal economic public policies
- Be located in one of the nine metropolitan municipalities. (Apodaca, García, Guadalupe, Juárez, Monterrey, San Nicolás de los Garza, San Pedro Garza García, Santa Catarina, and General Escobedo)

To implement the instrument, we collaborated with the trade or economic development departments of the municipalities in the Nuevo León metropolitan area to contact microenterprises that met the criteria and volunteered to participate. Given the number of microenterprises that could participate, the complexity of collaborating with a considerable number of municipalities, and the feasibility of the study, we decided to use non-probability sampling.

A questionnaire consisting of 22 items was designed, most of which were evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale. It was constructed by analyzing the study variables and based on specific assessment tools proposed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2023). However, no previously designed or applied tool was used.

The instrument was validated by expert judgment (five experts in methodology) and by a pilot test on 10% of the sample (30 microentrepreneurs), which yielded Cronbach's alpha values by dimension. Table 1 presents the operationalization of the variables.

Table 1

Operationalization of variables

Variable	Dimension	items	Cronbach's alpha	Scale Type
Public Policies	Relevance	3	.801	Likert scale

	Coherence	2	.725	Likert scale
	Effectiveness	2	.887	Likert scale
	Efficiency	3	.821	Likert scale
Business growth	N/A	5	.919	Likert scale

Source. Own elaboration.

The results shown in Table 1, specifically those from the reliability test, indicate a high internal consistency of the instrument. Therefore, SPSS software was used for data analysis, employing descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations, and multiple linear regression.

The questionnaire was administered to commercial microentrepreneurs located in the metropolitan region of the state of Nuevo León who have participated in municipal economic public policies. They were informed of the purpose of the questionnaire and participated voluntarily. The information was collected in the last months of 2024 and early 2025 by digital means, using an online questionnaire platform.

RESULTS

General Trends

Questions 1 to 3 are identification questions, asking about the name of the microenterprise, how long it has been in operation, and the municipality where it is located. Table 2 below shows the frequency of responses regarding the number of years that microenterprises have been in operation.

Table 2

Frequency of Responses: Years in Operation

2. How many years has your microenterprise been operating?			
	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
0 to 5 years old	174	60,8	60,8
6 to 10 years old	60	21,0	81,8
11 to 15 years old	25	8,7	90,6
16 to 20 years old	13	4,5	95,1
Over 20 years old	14	4,9	100,0
Total	286	100,0	

Source. Own elaboration.

Table 2 shows that 60.8% of microenterprises have been in operation for between 0 and 5 years, and more than 81% of microenterprises have been in operation for between 0 and 10 years, confirming their high vulnerability and short life expectancy.

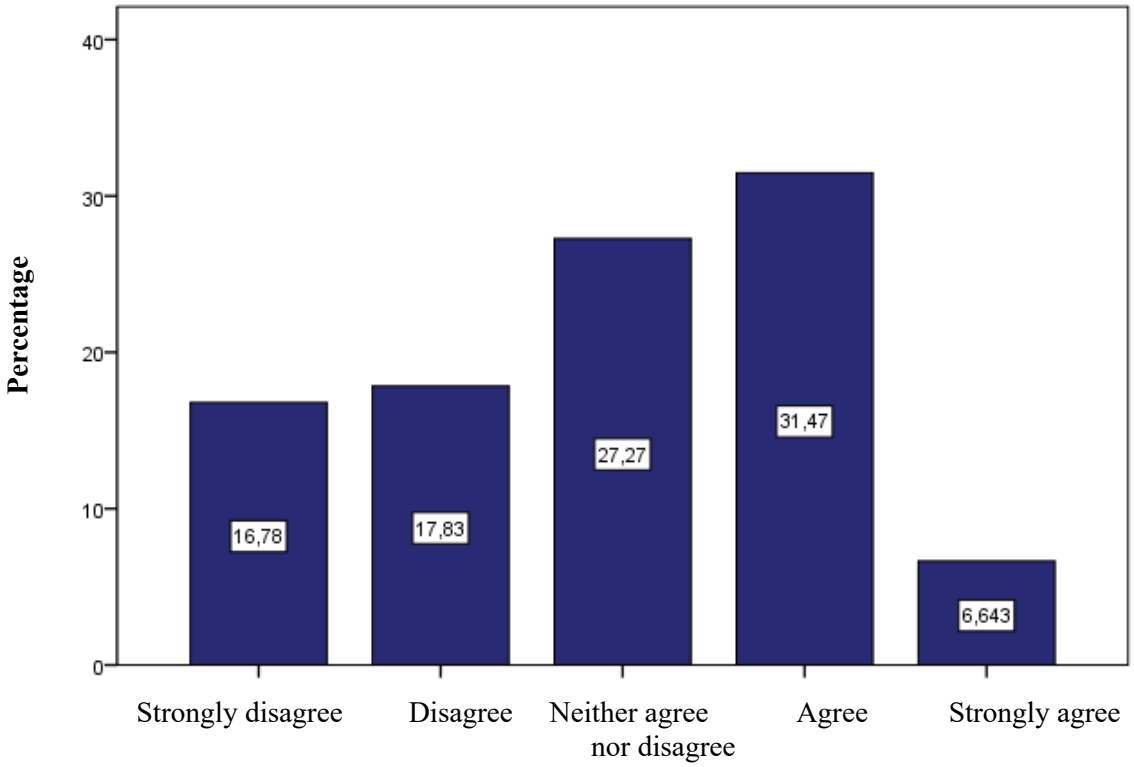
Questions 4 to 7 were about general information on public policies, where respondents were asked about their participation in public policies aimed at their growth, their knowledge of current public policies, the dissemination of public policies, and whether public policies aimed at microenterprises could be improved. Figure 1 shows the results related to knowledge of current public policies in which their microenterprise can participate.

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Figure 1

Bar chart: knowledge of public policies

5. I am aware of the current public policies in which my microenterprise can participate



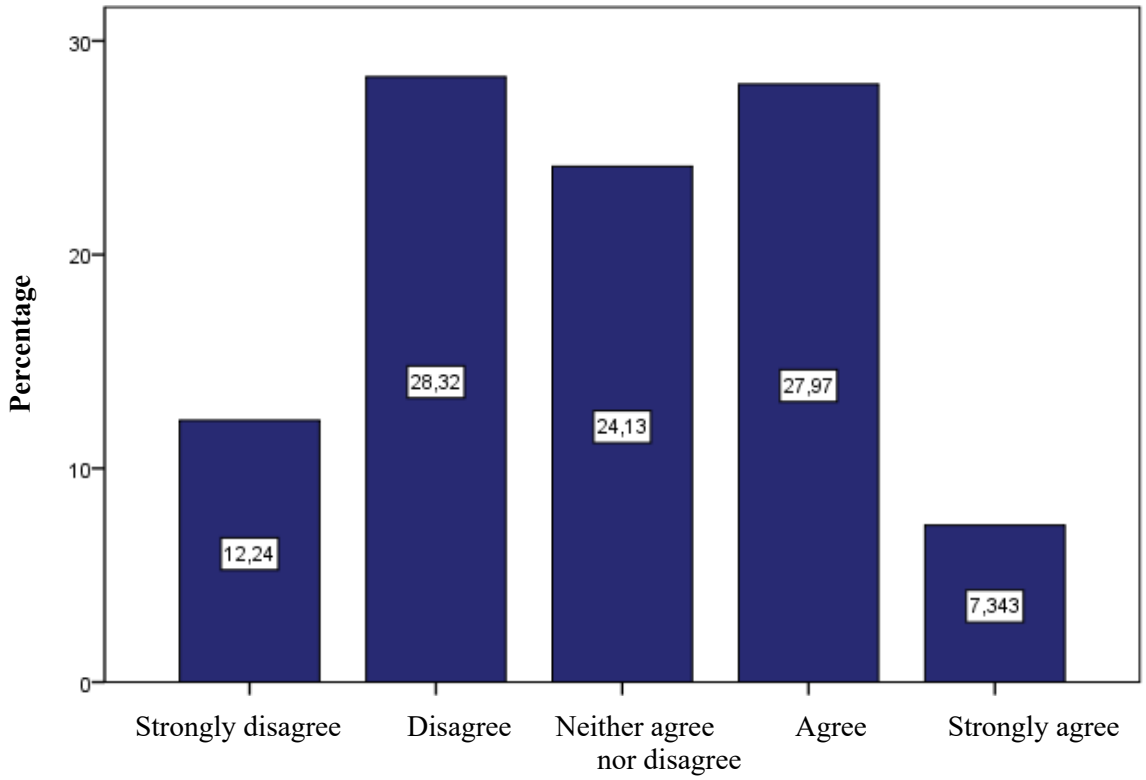
Source. Prepared internally in SPSS.

In view of the data presented in Figure 1, it can be seen that 34.61% disagree that they are aware of current public policies in which their microenterprise can participate, perhaps for different reasons, either because they are already participating in one, because they have participated in one previously, or because they do not meet the requirements. On the contrary, 38.11% agree that they are aware of current public policies in which their microenterprise can participate. Figure 2 below presents the results related to the dissemination of public economic policies.

Figure 2

Bar chart: dissemination of public policies

6. I believe that public policies aimed at microenterprises are properly disseminated



Source. Prepared internally in SPSS.

As shown in Figure 2, 40.56% of participating microenterprises disagree that public policies aimed at microenterprises are disseminated correctly. a percentage similar to those surveyed who claim not to know the current public policies that may apply to their microenterprise. On the contrary, 35.31% agree with the dissemination of public policies aimed at microenterprises, suggesting that dissemination may be the main reason for the lack of knowledge of current municipal economic public policies.

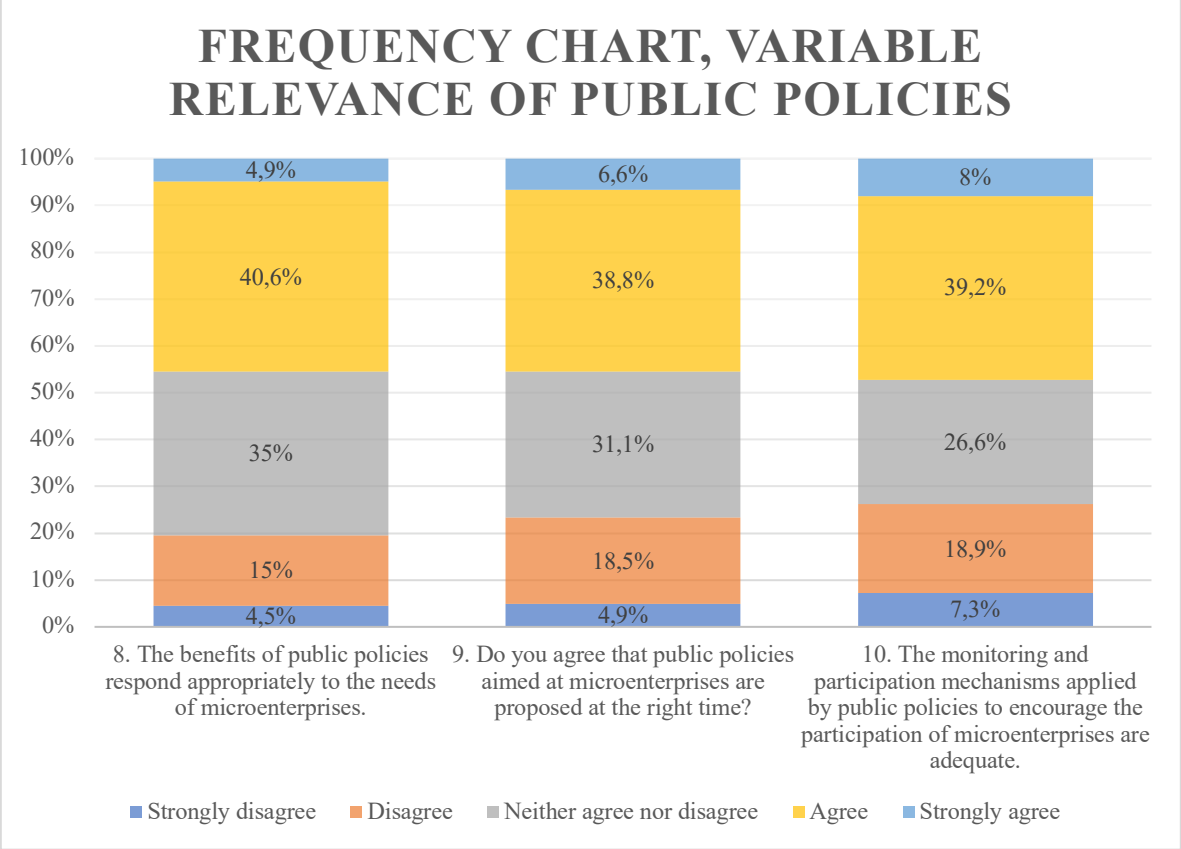
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Relationship between municipal economic public policy criteria and microenterprise growth

Below are grouped frequency graphs related to the variables in this study. Figure 3 shows the results related to the relevance of public policies.

Figure 3

Frequency chart, variable relevance of public policies



Source. Own elaboration.

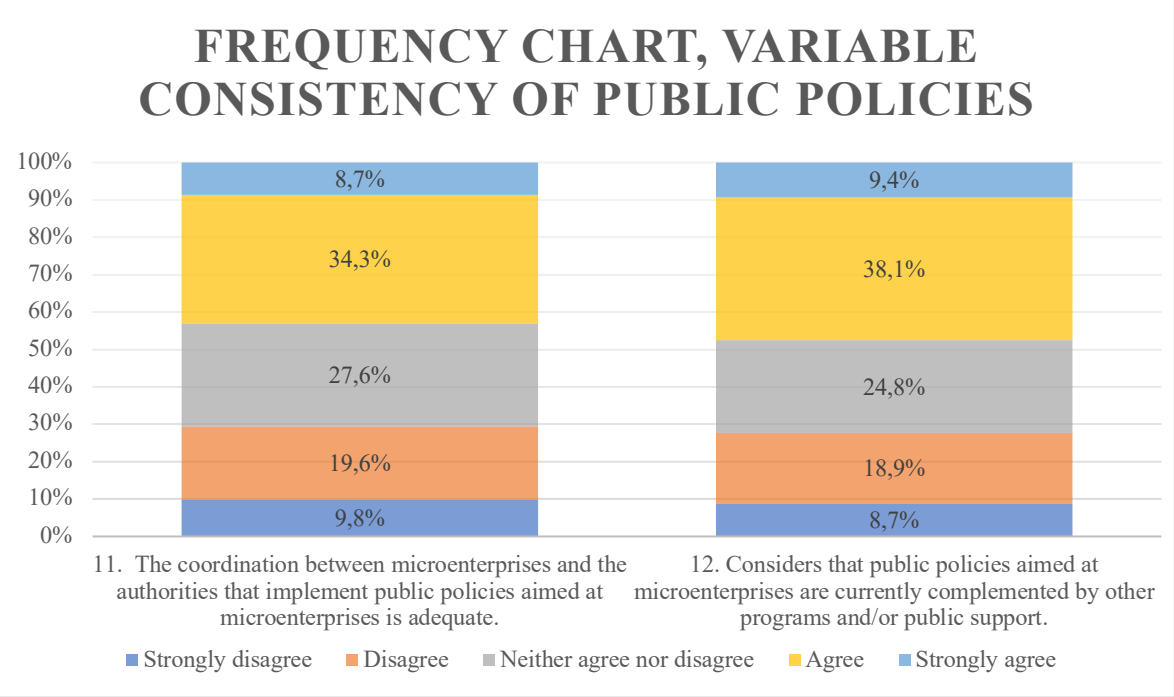
About Figure 3, the frequency of responses to the three questions related to the relevance of public policies shows that between 45% and 47% of participating microenterprises agree that the benefits of public policies correctly respond to their needs, that they are proposed at the right time, and that the mechanisms for monitoring and participation of microenterprises are

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adequate. On the contrary, between 19% and 26% disagree with these statements. Figure 4 below shows the results related to the variable of public policy coherence.

Figure 4

Frequency chart, variable consistency of public policies

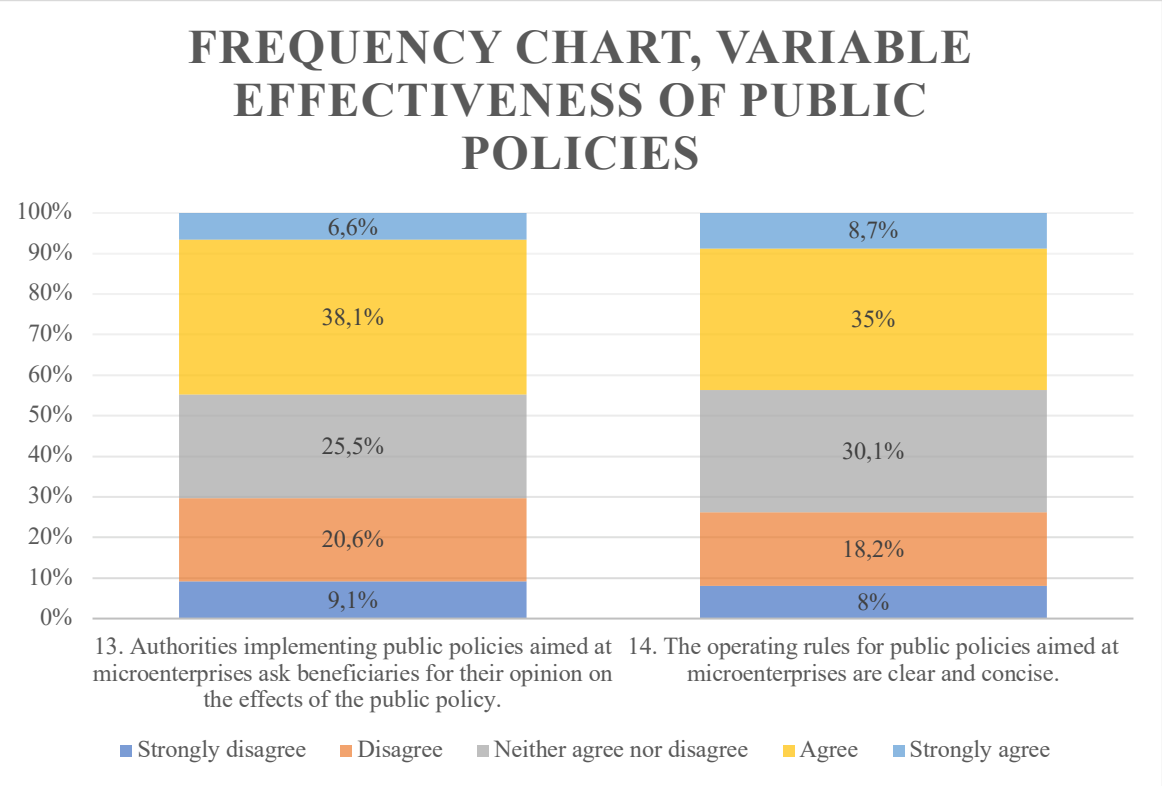


Source. Own elaboration.

Based on the data shown in Figure 4, the responses to the two questions related to the coherence of municipal economic public policies are presented, where between 43% and 47% agree that the coordination between micro-enterprises and the authorities that implement public policies is adequate and consider that there is complementarity between current public policies and other public programs and support, On the other hand, between 27% and 29% disagree with these statements. Figure 5 below shows the results related to the variable of public policy effectiveness.

Figure 5

Frequency chart, variable effectiveness of public policies

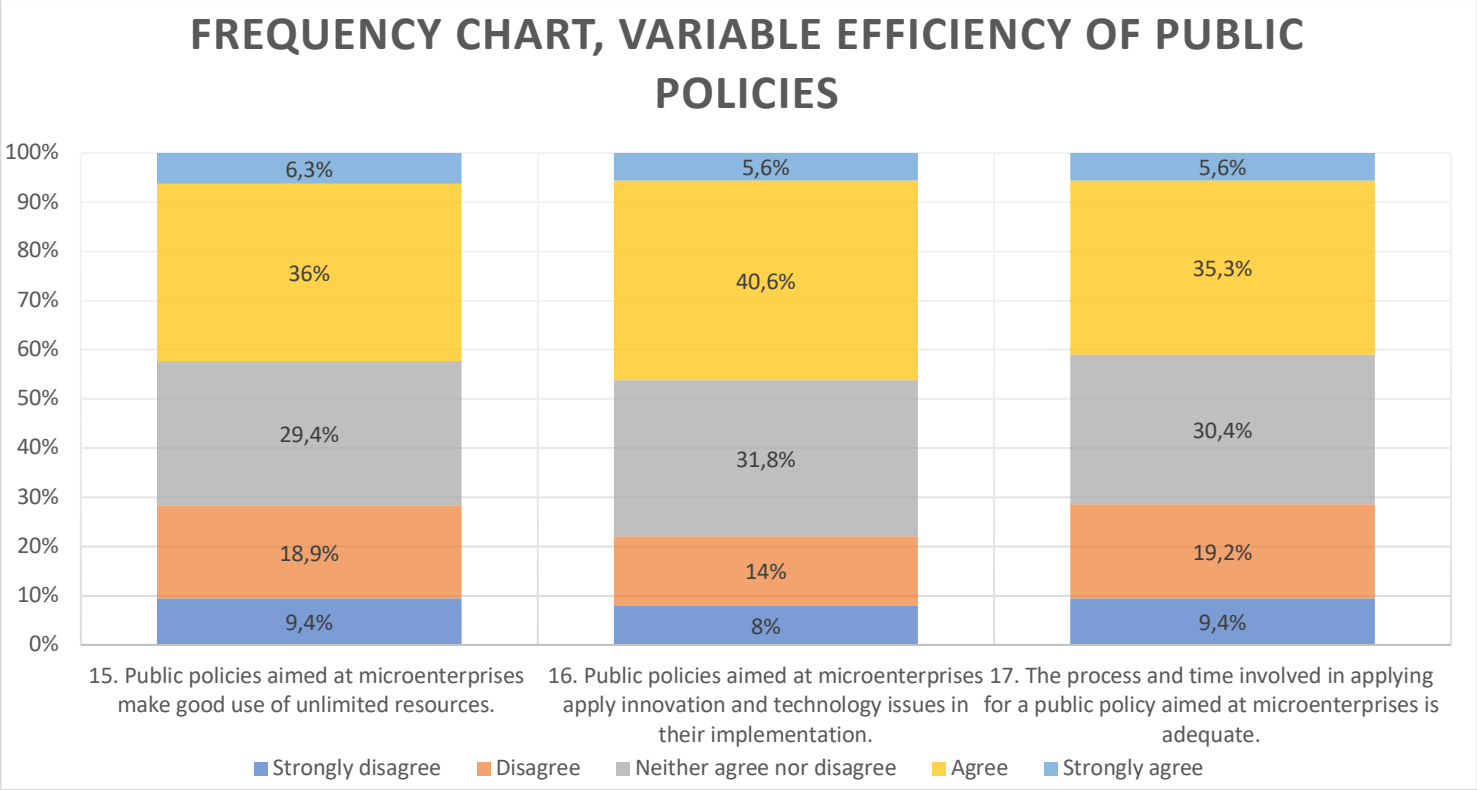


Source. Own elaboration

Based on the responses in Figure 5 regarding the two questions related to the effectiveness of municipal economic public policies, between 43% and 44% of participants agree that the authorities who implement public policies aimed at microenterprises ask beneficiaries for their opinion on the effects of the public policy and that the operating rules are clear and concise. On the other hand, between 26% and 29% disagree with these statements. Figure 6 below shows the results for the variable public policy efficiency.

Figure 6

Frequency chart, variable efficiency of public policies



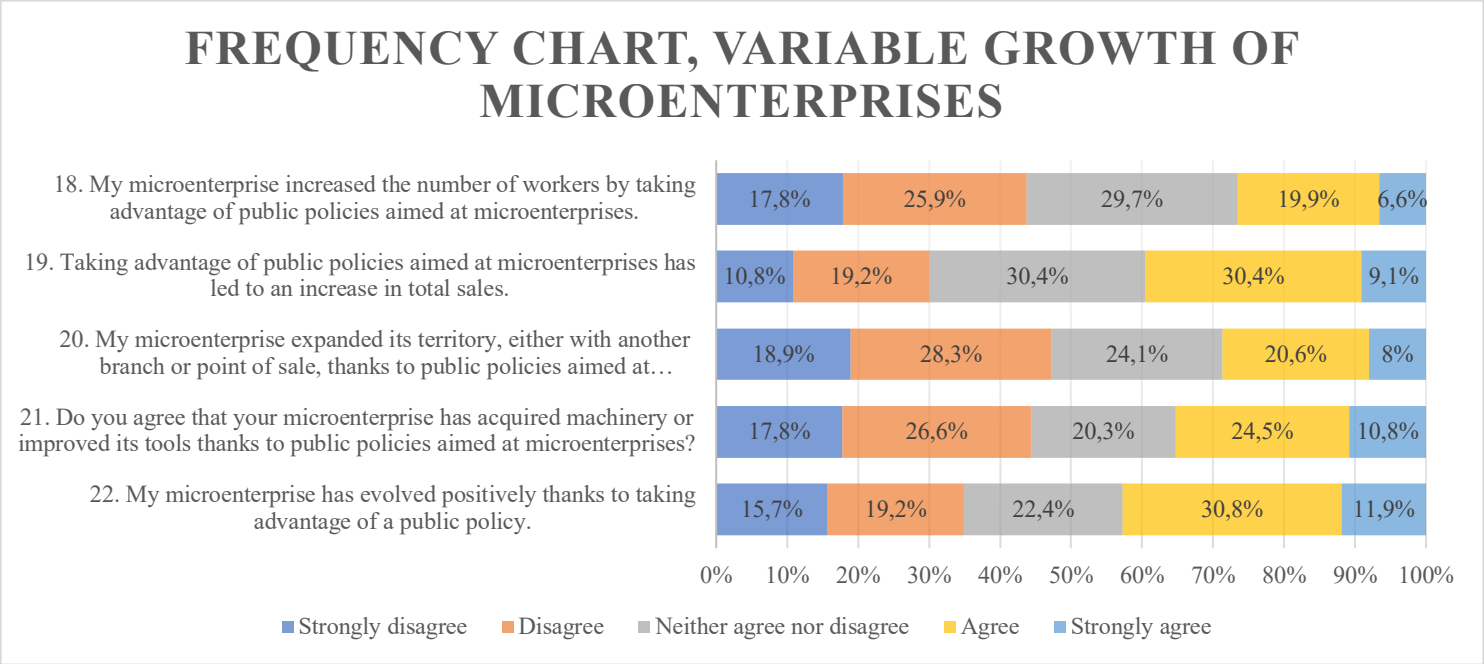
Source. Own elaboration.

Based on the data shown in Figure 6, which displays the responses related to the three questions focused on the efficiency of municipal economic public policies, between 40% and 46% of participants agree that public policies aimed at microenterprises make proper use of limited resources, that innovation and technology issues are applied in their implementation, and that the process and time required to apply for a public policy are adequate. In contrast, between 22% and 28% disagree with these statements. To conclude with the frequency graphs, Figure 7 below shows the variable of microenterprise growth.

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Figure 7

Frequency chart, variable growth of microenterprises



Source. Own elaboration.

The data presented in Figure 7 shows the responses to the five questions related to the growth of microenterprises, where there is a wide diversity in the results, since growth can occur in different ways. However, it is noteworthy that between 26% and 35% of microentrepreneurs report having experienced some growth in personnel, territory, or tools, thanks to the use of municipal economic public policies. Similarly, between 39% and 42% agree that they have seen an increase in sales and a positive evolution in the use of these public policies. On the contrary, between 26% and 35% disagree with these statements.

The descriptive statistics presented above show the frequency of responses from the microentrepreneurs surveyed, which offers a trend in the data collected. The correlation between the variables is presented below to quantify the degree of association between them. For this research, Pearson's correlation coefficient is used, which ranges from -1 to +1. If a correlation is close to zero, it indicates that there is no relationship between the two variables, and if the result is -1 or +1, it indicates a perfect correlation (Fiallos, 2021).

Table 3 below shows the correlations between the variables in the study.

Table 3

Correlation between variables

Correlations

		VARCM	VARPER	VAREFICA	VARCO	VAREFIC
VARCM	Pearson correlation	1	,631**	,623**	,586**	,635**
	Sig. (two-tailed)		,000	,000	,000	,000
	N	286	286	286	286	286
VARPER	Pearson correlation	,631**	1	,683**	,776**	,731**
	Sig. (two-tailed)	,000		,000	,000	,000
	N	286	286	286	286	286
VAREFICA	Pearson correlation	,623**	,683**	1	,744**	,764**
	Sig. (two-tailed)	,000	,000		,000	,000
	N	286	286	286	286	286
VARCO	Pearson correlation	,586**	,776**	,744**	1	,748**
	Sig. (two-tailed)	,000	,000	,000		,000
	N	286	286	286	286	286
VAREFIC	Pearson correlation	,635**	,731**	,764**	,748**	1
	Sig. (two-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000	
	N	286	286	286	286	286

**. The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

Source. Prepared internally in SPSS.

As can be seen in Table 3, there is a correlation between the microenterprise growth variable (VARCM) and the public policy relevance variable (VARPER) of .631, a correlation with the public policy effectiveness variable (VAREFICA) of .623, a correlation with the public policy coherence variable (VARCO) of .586, and finally a correlation with the public policy efficiency variable (VAREFIC) of .635. Therefore, there is a high correlation with the variables of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency, and a moderate correlation with the public policy coherence variable. The results are statistically significant.

The correlations indicate that efficiency has the strongest association with business growth, while relevance and effectiveness show similar relationships, suggesting that factors related

to program design and goal achievement influence perceptions of microenterprise growth. Finally, consistency is the criterion with the least effect.

Table 4 below presents a summary of the multiple linear regression model.

Table 4

Model Summary

Resumen del modelo

Model	R	R-Squared	Adjusted R-squared	Typical estimation error
1	,697[a]	,486	,478	3,14367

Predictor variables: (Constant), VAREFIC, VARPER, VAREFICA VARCO

Source. Prepared internally in SPSS.

Using the data presented in Table 4, it can be seen that the multiple linear regression model has a correlation coefficient of .697, indicating a strong or positive correlation between the variables involved in the multiple linear regression, and with an r2 result of .486, indicating that approximately 48.6% of the total variability of the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables.

Table 5 below presents the results of the coefficients of the proposed model.

Table 5

Model Coefficients

Coefficients [a]

Model		Coeficientes no estandarizados		Coeficientes tipificados		
		β	Error típ.	Beta	t	Sig.
	(Constante)	,349	,752		,465	,642
	VARPER	,627	,158	,291	3,978	,000
	VARCO	,017	,221	,006	,077	,938
	VAREFICA	,694	,209	,241	3,313	,001
	VAREFIC	,476	,155	,234	3,076	,002

a. Dependent variable: VARCM

Source. Prepared internally in SPSS.

Regarding the data presented in Table 5, statistically significant variables can be observed, including the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of municipal economic public policies, which pass the t-test with results greater than 1.96 and significance levels of .05 or lower. Therefore, these variables influence the growth of microenterprises. On the other hand, the consistency variable does not meet these criteria and is therefore not considered. Based on the coefficients of the variables that do influence the growth of microenterprises, the following model is proposed, following the multiple linear regression formula: $y= \beta 0+ \beta 1 x1+ \beta 2x2+\ldots. \beta nxn+ \epsilon$. Table 6 shows the proposed model.

Table 6

Proposed Model

Proposed Model	
Small Business Growth =	
Variable	β
Constant	,349
Relevance	,627
Effectiveness	,694
Efficiency	,476
Growth of microenterprises = .349 + .627*relevance+.694*effectiveness+.476* efficiency.	

Source. Prepared internally in SPSS.

As shown in Table 6, there is a positive influence between relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency, with different coefficients, demonstrating the differentiated impact of each criterion. Below is a discussion of the results from the quantitative study of commercial microentrepreneurs in the state of Nuevo León, interpreting and relating them to the literature and the theoretical framework.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Based on the results derived from the participation of 286 microenterprises located in the municipalities of the Nuevo León metropolitan region, which have participated in municipal

economic public policies that pursue the objective of generating some type of growth in microenterprises, it is confirmed that public policy criteria have a differentiated influence on the growth of microenterprises, which supports previous research on the role of public policies in business performance (Portal-Boza et al., 2018; Quintanilla Alarcón, 2013; Saavedra García et al., 2013).

With regard to demographic data, it is confirmed that most microenterprises are between 0 and 5 years old, which is relevant as it reflects the reality of the microenterprise sector, where the mortality rate of these economic units is very high, and nearly 65% die within the first five years of operation. This coincides with the findings of the Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI, 2016) and occurs for various reasons, due to the nature of microenterprises themselves, in addition to facing economic, legal, administrative, and financial situations, lack of training, failure to use digital tools for business development, and constant pressure from the economic market, among other problems pointed out by Quintanilla Alarcón (2013) and Sumba Bustamante and Santistevan Villacreses (2018).

When it comes to awareness and dissemination of current public policies in which microenterprises can participate, there is low awareness and a high level of disagreement with how calls for participation in these policies are disseminated. This represents an area of opportunity for those responsible for communicating current public support programs and the media to be used. This confirms the findings of Becerra Bizarrón and Cortes Palacios (2018), who conclude in their study that more than 85% of entrepreneurs are unaware of government support programs, which highlights a situation that needs to be improved.

The results derived from the criteria of municipal economic public policies show a similar perception in percentages, where between 40% and 47% agreed with the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, and efficiency of public policies, while between 22% and 29% of respondents had a different perception, responding that they disagreed with the statements related to public policy criteria.

In the microenterprise growth variable, on the contrary, mixed results were observed, with considerable variation. The percentage of microentrepreneurs who perceived growth in their sales reached nearly 40%, while only between 26% and 28% perceived an increase in

employability or territorial expansion. These results suggest a differential impact of municipal economic public policies on business growth, which aligns with the findings of Aguilera Castro and Virgen Ortiz (2014) and Regente Pacheco (2020), who argue that growth is a heterogeneous variable influenced by multiple factors that vary by context and time. So, the growth of a microenterprise that takes advantage of a public policy can be varied.

Regarding the correlation between variables, significant associations are observed between the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, and efficiency of municipal economic public policies and microenterprise growth, with efficiency showing the strongest influence. This coincides with studies that point to the importance of making the most of limited resources at the right time and acting in terms of quality, which means that public support generates a real impact (Lahera, 2004; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2021a).

Although significant, consistency has the least effect on microenterprise growth, indicating a perceived lack of coordination between municipal programs and programs at other levels of government, as well as between microentrepreneurs and the authorities that implement municipal economic public policies, which could be limiting the benefits perceived by beneficiaries. This partly confirms that government coordination, the complementarity of support, and compliance with institutional plans are some of the current challenges in combating institutional fragmentation (Cecchini et al., 2021; Correa et al., 2020).

Regarding the multiple linear regression model, the significant influence of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency is confirmed, highlighting that, despite their correlations with microenterprise growth, they have distinct coefficients in the model, thereby altering the influence of each criterion. Therefore, this study provides a replicable evaluation model that can be applied in other contexts and economic sectors. However, it is important to recognize the limitations of the study, such as the timing of the research, the sample size, the territorial delimitation, the non-probabilistic sampling, the lack of approval by an ethics committee, the design of the information collection instrument, and the generalization of public policies, which directly influence the results presented.

For its part, the study has practical implications for municipal economic policymakers, who must prioritize efficiency, relevance, and effectiveness to generate greater impact on the

growth of microenterprises. Similarly, some future lines of research emerge, such as making comparisons between different economic sectors, analyzing state or federal policies, and integrating different variables related to public policies, in addition to analyzing economic units of different sizes and with different territorial locations, which would be of great relevance for increasing information on the impact of public policies on the growth of economic units.

CONCLUSIONS

The importance of microenterprises for the economic development of the country, states, and municipalities is undeniable, as is the seriousness of the alarming data on high mortality and low life expectancy predicted for these economic units at the national and state levels. Government support is therefore essential to address this situation. Unfortunately, despite the various public policies implemented by the competent authorities, they have not been sufficient to change the landscape, as the situation remains unfavorable for microenterprises. In addition, a large percentage of beneficiaries of these policies do not perceive any growth in their businesses, which highlights an opportunity to improve public efforts aimed at the growth of microenterprises.

The study confirms that the criteria for evaluating public economic policies have differential impacts on the growth of commercial microenterprises in the Nuevo León Metropolitan Area. Efficiency emerges as the criterion with the greatest impact, followed by relevance and effectiveness, while consistency has a limited effect in the multivariate model. These results validate the hypotheses put forward and highlight the importance of policy design and operational functioning on their impact on business performance.

A conceptual-operational model is provided by integrating international criteria for evaluating public interventions with business growth indicators, which allows local economic policies to be evaluated from the perspective of the direct beneficiary, contributing directly to the contemporary debate on the design, implementation, and performance of local economic policies. The results presented provide a more comprehensive view of the impact

of municipal economic public policy criteria aimed at the growth of commercial microenterprises in the Nuevo León metropolitan region, as they reflect the direct opinions of beneficiaries regarding the economic public policies implemented by local governments. The findings provide further insight into the relationship between the functioning of public policies and business growth.

In theoretical terms, the findings contribute to the literature on public policy evaluation by empirically demonstrating how OECD criteria behave in Latin American local government contexts. The study shows that not all criteria carry the same weight in business performance, suggesting the need to refine evaluation models for public policies applied to microenterprises by either incorporating additional variables or retaining only those of greatest relevance.

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Dr. Alan Rivera Villalobos: Conceptualization, Research, Writing, review, and editing. Supervision, Project management.

Dr. Sandy Elizabeth Martínez Lara: Methodology, Validation, Resources, Writing-original draft, Visualization.

MCP. Anahí Marcela Tamez Rodríguez: Software, Formal analysis, Data curation.

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Supplementary Material: Attached is the instrument used in the validation process for commercial microentrepreneurs in the State of Nuevo León.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. *Information collection tool*

	Quantitative Instrument: Questionnaire for Microentrepreneurs	
Instructions	Opinion of microentrepreneurs on public policies aimed at microenterprises for the thesis study entitled "Impact of Public Policies on the Growth of Commercial Microenterprises Located in the Metropolitan Region of Nuevo León." The data collected here will be used exclusively for the study and is for academic purposes only, so we ask that you be completely honest in your answers. The following questionnaire consists of a total of 22 questions: the first 3 questions are about general information about your microenterprise, the first question is open-ended, and for the others, you must choose an answer from the options presented. The other statements offer a satisfaction scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Please answer the following questions according to your point of view and choose the answer with which you most identify. Thank you for your valuable participation.	
General Information	1. What is the name of your microenterprise? 2. How many years has your microenterprise been operating? 3. In which municipality of the Nuevo León metropolitan area is your microenterprise located? 4. How many public policies aimed at microenterprises have you participated in?	Open response 0 to 5 years old, 6 to 10 years old, 11 to 15 years old, 16 to 20 years old, over 20 years old Apodaca, Garcia, Guadalupe, Juarez, Monterrey, San Nicolas de los Garza, San Pedro Garza Garcia, Santa Catarina, General Escobedo From 1 to 3, From 4 to 6, From 7 to 9, Over 10.
Relevance of Public Policy	5. I am aware of the current public policies in which my microenterprise can participate 6. I believe that public policies aimed at microenterprises are properly disseminated 7. Do you believe that public policies aimed at microenterprises could be improved? 8. The benefits of public policies respond appropriately to the needs of microenterprises. 9. Do you agree that public policies aimed at microenterprises are proposed at the right time? 10. The monitoring and participation mechanisms applied by public policies to encourage the participation of microenterprises are adequate.	Likert scale: Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree Agree Strongly agree
Public Policy Coherence	11. The coordination between microenterprises and the authorities that implement public policies aimed at microenterprises is adequate. 12. Considers that public policies aimed at microenterprises are currently complemented by other programs and/or public support.	Likert scale: Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree Agree Strongly agree
Eficacia de la	13. Authorities implementing public policies aimed at microenterprises ask beneficiaries for their opinion on the effects	Likert scale: Strongly disagree Disagree

Public Policy	of the public policy. 14. The operating rules for public policies aimed at microenterprises are clear and concise.	Neither agree nor disagree Agree Strongly agree
Public Policy Efficiency	15. Public policies aimed at microenterprises make good use of unlimited resources. 16. Public policies aimed at microenterprises apply innovation and technology issues in their implementation. 17. The process and time involved in applying for a public policy aimed at microenterprises is adequate.	Likert scale: Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree Agree Strongly agree
Microenterprise Growth	18. My microenterprise increased the number of workers by taking advantage of public policies aimed at microenterprises. 19. Taking advantage of public policies aimed at microenterprises has led to an increase in total sales. 20. My microenterprise expanded its territory, either with another branch or point of sale, thanks to public policies aimed at microenterprises. 21. Do you agree that your microenterprise has acquired machinery or improved its tools thanks to public policies aimed at microenterprises? 22. My microenterprise has evolved positively thanks to taking advantage of a public policy.	Likert scale: Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree Agree Strongly agree

Source. Own elaboration.

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