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**ESTRATÉGIAS COMPETITIVAS PARA PEQUENOS MERCADOS DE  
RAMILÂNDIA - PR**

**COMPETITIVE STRATEGIES FOR SMALL MARKETS IN RAMILANDIA - PR**

**[TRADUÇÃO INGLESA]**

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**CASCADEL/PR**

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**[TRADUÇÃO INGLESA]**

Dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Administration in the Department of Administration, Western Paraná State University. Dissertation Supervisor: Dr. Ronaldo Bulhões

Dissertação apresentada ao Programa de Pós-Graduação em Administração (PPGAdm) – Mestrado Profissional da Universidade Estadual do Oeste do Paraná, como requisito parcial para obtenção do grau de **Mestre em Administração**. Orientador: Dr. Ronaldo Bulhões

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GOVERNO DO ESTADO

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**ESTRATÉGIAS COMPETITIVAS PARA PEQUENOS MERCADOS DE  
RAMILÂNDIA - PR**

Dissertação apresentada ao Programa de Pós-Graduação em Administração em cumprimento parcial aos requisitos para obtenção do título de Mestra em Administração, área de concentração Competitividade e Sustentabilidade, linha de pesquisa Estratégia e Competitividade, APROVADO(A) pela seguinte banca examinadora:

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*"Success in life is not measured by the path you have achieved, but by the difficulties you have overcome along the way."*

*(Abraham Lincoln)*

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my family, especially to my parents, Alcides Stahl (in memoriam) and Rosa Schons Stahl, for all their teaching and support, but especially for never letting me give up and always believing in my potential.

I also dedicate it to my brothers, Arnildo, Jonas, Joel and my sisters, Diva, Alice, and Neiva. To my son Dyeferson Stahl Rocha, for being the best son in the world, the reason for my existence, thus, there is the search to be a better person every day, to serve as an example and dedication, showing that everything is possible with persistence and effort.

I dedicate it to the entrepreneurs in the research-based markets, for promptly opening the doors of their companies, for observations, for taking interviews and for learning from their experiences and business vision.

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## RESUMO

O presente trabalho teve como objetivo propor estratégias para os mercados A, B e C de Ramilândia - PR, visando torná-los competitivos diante das incertezas do mercado de bens de consumo. A metodologia empregada foi qualitativa, de natureza exploratória e descritiva. Para a coleta de dados, foram realizadas entrevistas semiestruturadas com os proprietários dos mercados A, B e C, observações e revisão sistemática. Para analisar os dados da pesquisa, utilizou-se a técnica de análise de conteúdo. Os resultados desta pesquisa indicam que, apesar das diferenças entre os mercados A, B e C, todos enfrentam desafios comuns. Embora possam variar em suas características específicas, como público-alvo e estrutura organizacional, compartilham algumas dificuldades similares. Tais desafios podem ser superados ou minimizados por meio de ações estratégicas específicas, o que tende a contribuir para a competitividade dessas pequenas empresas. Sugere-se, como pesquisas futuras, que seja realizada uma análise de *benchmarking* com mercados semelhantes em outras regiões para identificar melhores práticas e *insights* que possam ser aplicados aos mercados de Ramilândia - PR.

**Palavras-chave:** Estratégia competitiva; Gestão estratégica; Pequenos mercados;

## **ABSTRACT**

The present work aimed to propose strategies for markets A, B and C in Ramilândia - PR, aiming to make them competitive in the face of uncertainties in the consumer goods market. The methodology used was qualitative, exploratory, and descriptive in nature. To collect data, semi-structured interviews were carried out with the owners of markets A, B and C, observations, and a systematic review. To analyze the research data, the content analysis technique was used. The results of this research indicate that, despite the differences between markets A, B and C, they all face common challenges. Although they may vary in their specific characteristics, such as target audience and organizational structure, they share some similar difficulties. Such challenges can be overcome or minimized through specific strategic actions, which tends to contribute to the competitiveness of these small companies. It is suggested, as future research, that a benchmarking analysis be carried out with similar markets in other regions to identify best practices and insights that can be applied to the Ramilândia - PR markets.

**Keywords:** Competitive strategy; Strategic management; Small markets;

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## ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS

**ABRAS** - Brazilian Association of Supermarkets

**BNDES** - National Development Bank

**EPP** - Small Businesses

**GCI** - Interorganizational Cost Management

**IBGE** - Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics

**JUCEPAR** - Commercial Board of Paraná

**MDIC** - Ministry of Development, Industry, Commerce and Services

**ME** - Microenterprise

**MEI** - Individual Microentrepreneur

**ROB** - Gross Operating Revenue

**SEBRAE** - Brazilian Support Service for Micro and Small Businesses

## SUMMARY

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

With globalization, the competitive scenario is becoming increasingly progressive and challenging due to the rapid intensification of competition, which requires entrepreneurs to adopt strategies to ensure their permanence in the market.

Thus, strategy is the action plan that a company uses to achieve its objectives, creating a competitive advantage and generating value for its stakeholders. It is a set of actions aimed at achieving a goal that is also pursued by competitors. Therefore, the strategy involves defining a competitive advantage that ensures market leadership and, consequently, the success of the business. However, this strategy must be carefully designed and formulated to optimize the combination of resources and capabilities, which will result in greater competitiveness and a stronger market position (Romero et al., 2020).

According to Porter (1996), strategies are an integrated set of tasks for a company, in which the results depend on being able to execute several activities in an integrated manner. If this integration between tasks does not happen, there is no remarkable or sustainable strategy, and the results depend on the efficiency of the organization.

Furthermore, the process of building strategies requires companies and managers to align efforts and business resources to develop planning, taking into account both the internal and external environment in which it operates, which is fundamental to achieving a competitive advantage and create value for various interest groups (Romero et al., 2020).

Typically, micro, and small companies do not have strategies in their management. The administrators and employees of these companies tend to dedicate their efforts to carrying out operational activities (Sugahara, Jannuzzi & Falsarella, 2018).

Within this environment, there are small food markets, which sell basic consumer products and lack strategies to obtain a competitive advantage. This is because they are often threatened by large markets or supermarket chains that increasingly serve remote locations.

In 2020, in Brazil, there were 165.132 companies in the retail trade of food products, making them one of the ten largest economic activities in terms of number of companies in the country. That same year, Paraná had 11.773 and, in the Western Region of Paraná, there were 1.283 in this sector (SEBRAE, 2020).

## 1.1 RESEARCH PROBLEM

The installation of large supermarkets and wholesale markets in the Western Region of Paraná has impacted small consumer goods markets, which are suffering from a reduction in sales and, consequently, a drop in their revenues. Attracted by lower prices and the possibility of reducing expenses, consumers in the cities where these wholesalers are located, as well as in nearby cities, end up stopping shopping at small local markets.

Faced with this reality, we find Ramilândia, a city located in the west of Paraná, which, according to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), indicates a population, in the year 2021, estimated at 4,500 people, with an average monthly income, in 2020, 2.3 minimum wages (IBGE, 2022).

Ramilândia has three small markets operating in the food sector, here called A, B and C. Market A began its activities in 1971, with a grocery store. Over the years, the need for a new physical space arose and, in 2003, the owner built new facilities measuring around 600 m<sup>2</sup>. It is run by the family, and the children continue to manage the business, which operates in the food trade, with a butcher shop and bakery. To maintain the operation, in total, it has nine employees.

Market B began serving customers in the form of a warehouse in 1980; It is still located at the same address, and the owner seeks to maintain some characteristics from when it opened, such as the bulk sale of some products, namely ropes, rope tobacco and some other products not commonly found in markets. The market structure is approximately 350 m<sup>2</sup>, with three employees, and does not have a structured management model.

Market C was opened by the owner in 1973; It still operates in the same block where its activities began, on the way out of the city towards the interior. Operating in the sale of basic food products, it has an installation of approximately 480 m<sup>2</sup>, without a defined management model. The administration is family-owned, so the owner and his children work in the market, with no other employees.

In the city of Ramilândia, in the state of Paraná, there is a large supermarket from a consolidated cooperative network in the region, which greatly affects trade in the three small markets. As if that weren't enough, the constant offers of products made available by this supermarket and the baskets provided to the chain's employees have caused a drop in sales in markets A, B and C, and, consequently, a reduction in revenue, which is causing difficulties for these companies. It is also worth noting that a portion of the population travels to nearby municipalities to buy from other supermarkets and wholesale markets, in search of lower prices.

### 1.1.1 Research Question

In this context, the question arises: What strategies can small markets A, B and C, located in the city of Ramilândia - PR, adopt to become competitive?

## 1.2 OBJECTIVES

### 1.2.1 General

Analyze and propose strategies so that small markets A, B and C in the city of Ramilândia - PR become competitive.

### 1.2.2 Specifics

- a) Identify the main difficulties of markets A, B and C;
- b) Develop strategies that can improve or resolve the main difficulties in markets A, B and C.

## 1.3 JUSTIFICATION

Market transformations, driven by a continuous process of globalization, have generated a demand for micro and small companies to compete successfully in broader markets. To meet this demand, these companies must adopt strategies that allow them to acquire knowledge and resources, which make them stand out from other companies in the sector (Inês et al., 2021). This implies decisions by businesspeople who need to implement different strategies to ensure that their companies continue to operate and remain competitive in the market.

Given this, this study is justified by the need to identify strategies that minimize the gap between large supermarkets and small supermarkets in Ramilândia, considering the peculiarities and difficulties, with the resources and labor available, as they are small companies that lack of information and perspectives focused on your business, which contribute to decision-making. This research seeks to propose strategies so that small markets A, B and C in the city of Ramilândia - PR become competitive. The objective is to develop strategies that can improve or resolve the main difficulties in these markets. With the expected results, companies

will be able to better redistribute their human and material resources, aiming to increase competitive advantage or remain in the market in a more balanced way.

The adoption of appropriate strategies can assertively define the main actions that small markets can adopt to present a competitive advantage. This study may become relevant for managers in markets A, B and C, as it allows them to expand their view of the microenvironment that surrounds these companies. Demonstrating to managers the importance of knowing this reality in a technical way and highlighting the relevance of using well-structured strategies will be contributions of this work, so that they can retain customers, maintain, or increase their revenues and, thus, increase competitive advantage.

Carrying out this research is also justified by the need for reflection, debate and analysis regarding strategies that indicate actions, so that markets A, B and C remain competitive in the face of wholesale markets and larger supermarkets, which buy in greater quantities and, thus, they are able to offer customers products at lower prices.

This study allows other supermarkets, regardless of their size, to be inspired to reorganize their own strategies in order to optimize their processes. This involves analyzing the internal and external environment, in addition to adapting strategies to your plans according to the specific demands and needs of each company. Furthermore, this work prepares professionals to deal with similar situations in the future.

## 2

## THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL REFERENCES

### 2.1 STRATEGY

With constant market transformations and technological advances, the adoption of strategies is essential for the survival of companies. According to Porter (1996), strategy is the construction of a unique and valuable positioning composed of a different set of activities, which aims to choose the best competitive positioning, with the purpose of deciding what not to do. A strategic positioning is to opt for activities that are different from those of competitors, such as: using available resources more efficiently, eliminating wasted effort, more effectively motivating employees and obtaining better insights into the management of specific activities or a set of them.

The concept of strategy involves creating the company's future vision, mission, objectives, and goals, along with an action plan to achieve them. This takes into account both the company's internal strengths and weaknesses and the effects of external forces from the environment and competition (Oliveira, 2014).

Building clear and concrete strategies is fundamental to the potential success of any company. Without a well-structured and correctly executed strategy, the company may encounter several difficulties, or the possibility of failure is high (Stanislav, 2022). In this context, Porter (1996) highlights the importance of building scenarios for the process of organizing strategies, arriving at the five competitive forces.

Porter (1996; 2009) describes five competitive forces, which are: threats from new entrants; bargaining power of suppliers; threats of substitute products; customers' bargaining power; and rivalry between competitors (Frameworks 1). These five forces together help to understand the competitive environment and help companies formulate strategies to stand out and achieve competitive advantage.

When examining the five forces, it is possible to note specific characteristics that point to the importance of making adjustments to the limits or strategies in question (Poter, 2008). In addition to helping to analyze competition and understand the profitability of different business sectors, the model created by Poter also supports the reasoning of entrepreneurs who want to improve their long-term strategies (Michaux, 2023).

PORTER FORCE	CHARACTERISTICS
<b>Threats from new entrants</b>	Barriers to entry must be assessed in relation to the capabilities of potential entrants, which may be startups, foreign companies, or companies in related sectors. The aim is to discover ways to overcome these constraints, without compromising the profitability of involvement in the sector through costly investments.
<b>Suppliers with negotiating power</b>	They are able to obtain more value for themselves, whether through higher prices, restrictions on the quality of services, or the transfer of costs to sector participants. These suppliers do not significantly depend on this trade for their revenue. Powerful suppliers, including labor suppliers, can reduce the profitability of a business that is unable to pass on cost increases to its own prices.
<b>Threat of substitute products or services</b>	In this case, the profitability of the sector is negatively affected. Substitutes compete directly with products or services, limiting earning potential by setting a price limit. If a company is unable to differentiate itself from substitutes through product performance, marketing strategies or other approaches, it will struggle in terms of profitability and often potential growth. Substitutes not only restrict profits in normal times but also diminish the ability of commerce to reap benefits in favorable times.
<b>Customers with negotiating power</b>	They can obtain more value by forcing price reductions, demanding higher quality or more services (which increases costs) and, in general, by pitting company participants against each other, all to the detriment of profitability. Buyers have bargaining power when they have influence over industry participants, especially if they are price sensitive, using their influence mainly to pressure price reductions.
<b>Competition between competitors</b>	It takes several well-known forms, such as price discounts, new product launches, advertising campaigns and service improvements. Intense rivalry limits a company's profitability. The impact of rivalry on reducing profit potential depends, firstly, on the intensity of competition between companies and, secondly, on the basis on which they compete. Rivalry is especially harmful to profitability when it focuses exclusively on price, as price competition shifts profits directly from the company to its customers.

#### Frameworks 1. Porter's Five Competitive Forces

Source: Adapted from (Porter, 1996; 2008; 2009).

Poter describes three main strategies that managers can use to face the five competitive forces, which are: Cost leadership, product or service differentiation and focus on customers, products, and markets. The cost leadership strategy is an approach adopted by companies that aim to stand out with low-priced products or services. Differentiation consists of making the product or service offered by the company unique and distinct from its competitors. In focus strategy, the approach is based on strategies that seek to concentrate on a particular set of buyers, products, and specific markets (Porter, 2008).

Strategic competition can be understood as the procedure of developing innovative approaches, gaining the preference of customers who are already being served by conventional approaches or attracting new customers to the market (Poter, 1996).

To be successful in business, micro and small companies need to create adapted plans that face their own challenges and take advantage of available opportunities. This involves adopting technologies, improving team skills, establishing strategic alliances, and expanding the variety of products offered. Through appropriate competitive strategies, micro and small companies have the potential to increase their ability to adapt and grow (Banerjee, 2023).

## 2.2 MICRO AND SMALL COMPANIES

The Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service (SEBRAE), commerce and services sector, highlights that micro and small businesses in Brazilian Commerce are predominant in generating wealth, as they are responsible for (53,4%) of the domestic product gross domestic product (GDP) of the sector. In Industry GDP, the participation of micro and small companies (22,5%) is already close to that of medium-sized companies (24,5%). And, in the Services sector, more than a third of Brazilian production (36,3%) originates from small companies. The SEBRAE trade and services sector considers micro and small companies to be those with annual gross revenue of up to R\$ 4.8 million (SEBRAE, 2022).

Classifying the company by size can be useful for creating strategies, which allow a better understanding of the company's position in relation to competitors and guide the definition of realistic goals and objectives.

The company size categorization established by the National Development Bank (BNDES) is valid for the industrial, commercial, and service sectors, which is determined based on the annual revenue of the company or the economic conglomerate to which it belongs (BNDES, 2023). The size classification of companies based on Gross Operating Revenue (ROB) is presented in Frameworks 2.

<b>COMPANY CLASSIFICATION</b>	<b>ANNUAL GROSS OPERATING REVENUE OR ANNUAL INCOME</b>
<b>Micro enterprise</b>	Equal to or less than R\$ 360.000,00 (three hundred and sixty thousand reais).
<b>Small business</b>	Greater than R\$ 360.000,00 (three hundred and sixty thousand reais) and equal to or less than R\$ 4.800.000,00 (four million and eight hundred thousand reais).
<b>Medium Company</b>	Greater than R\$ 4.800.000,00 (four million and eight hundred thousand reais) and equal to or less than R\$ 300.000.000,00 (three hundred million reais).
<b>Big company</b>	Greater than R\$ 300.000.000,00 (three hundred million reais).

Frameworks 2. Classification by Annual Revenue

Source: Adapted from (BNDES, 2023).

This classification provides clear and objective criteria that allow companies to be identified and grouped according to their size and financial capacity, which is useful for a number of purposes, including market and competitive analysis. By defining these categories based on revenue ranges, it is possible to create specific measures and strategies to meet the needs and characteristics of each type of company. This promotes a more segmented and targeted approach when dealing with issues related to the business and economic environment (BNDES, 2023).

In 2006, Complementary Law No. 123 was created, known as the General Law for Microenterprises and Small Businesses, to regulate the differentiated treatment of these companies already included in the Brazilian Constitution, based on Annual Revenue (SEBRAE, 2023). This is evidenced in Frameworks 3.

<b>CLASSIFICATION</b>	<b>ANNUAL RECIPE</b>
<b>Small Business (EPP)</b>	Greater than R\$ 360 thousand and equal to or less than R\$ 4.8 million.
<b>Micro enterprise</b>	Equal to or less than R\$ 360 thousand.

Frameworks 3. Classification by Annual Revenue

Source: Adapted from (SEBRAE, 2023).

Small companies do not lose the classification when they have export revenue of up to R\$ 4.8 million. Micro-enterprises are business companies, simple companies, individual companies with limited liability and entrepreneurs (SEBRAE, 2023).

The size of companies can also be defined by the number of employees. Microenterprises (ME) are those with up to 9 employees; Small Businesses (EPP), from 10 to 49 employees; Medium-sized companies, between 50 and 99 employees; and large companies, when they have 100 or more employees, for the commerce and services sectors (SEBRAE, 2013).

Between the months of January and April of 2023, the Ministry of Development, Industry, Commerce and Services (MDIC) registered the opening of 1.331.940 new companies in Brazil, which resulted in a number of more than 22 million active CNPJs all over the country. It is important to highlight that the vast majority of these registrations belong to the Individual Microentrepreneur (MEI) (MDIC, 2023). Figure 1 shows the number of companies by size in Brazil in 2023.

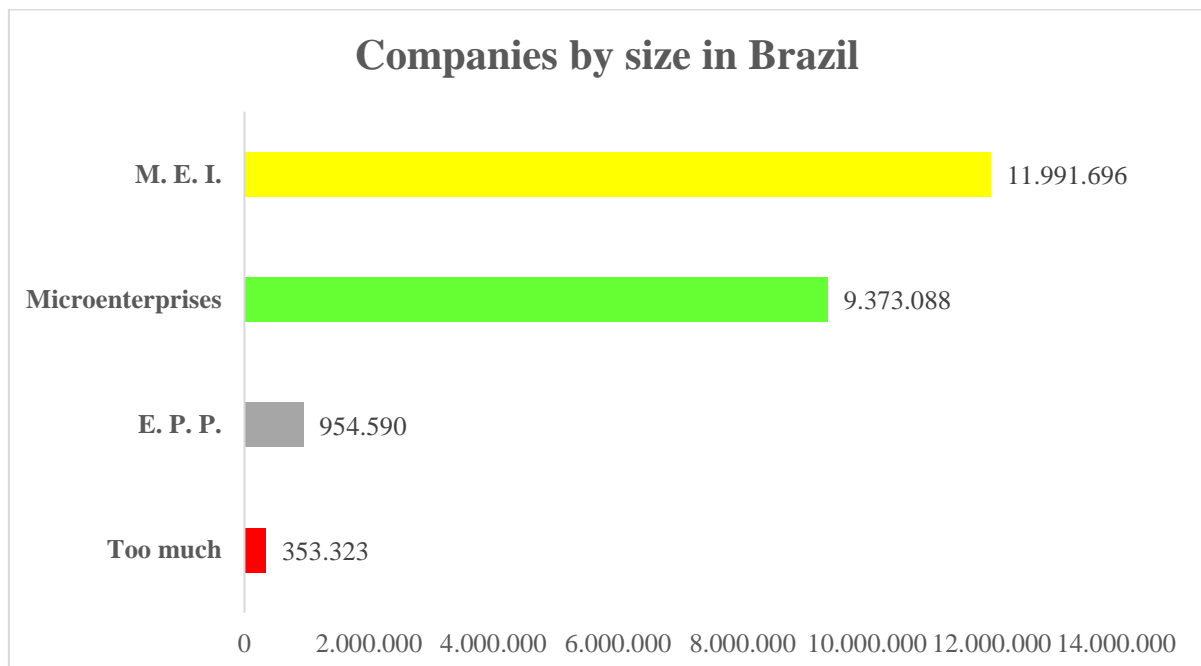


Figure 1. Number of companies by size in Brazil

Source: Adapted from (Econodata, 2023).

According to Figure 1, it can be seen that MEIs represent approximately 45,7% of companies active in Brazil in 2023; then, micro-enterprises represent approximately 35,7%, small companies represent approximately 3,6%, and the others, which include medium and large companies, represent approximately 13,4% (Econodata, 2023).

Of the 22.672.697 companies existing in Brazil until the month of June 2023, 1.046.168 belong to the logistics and transport sector, 1.122.525 restaurants, 1.105.713 in civil construction, 1.320.185 in manufacturing industries, 1.413.862 from the manufacturing sector,

3.052.989 from the food trade, 4.800.069 from the retail trade and 8.811.186 from the services sector (Econodata, 2023).

Figure 2 shows the percentage distribution of active companies in the first four months of 2023, divided by sectors.

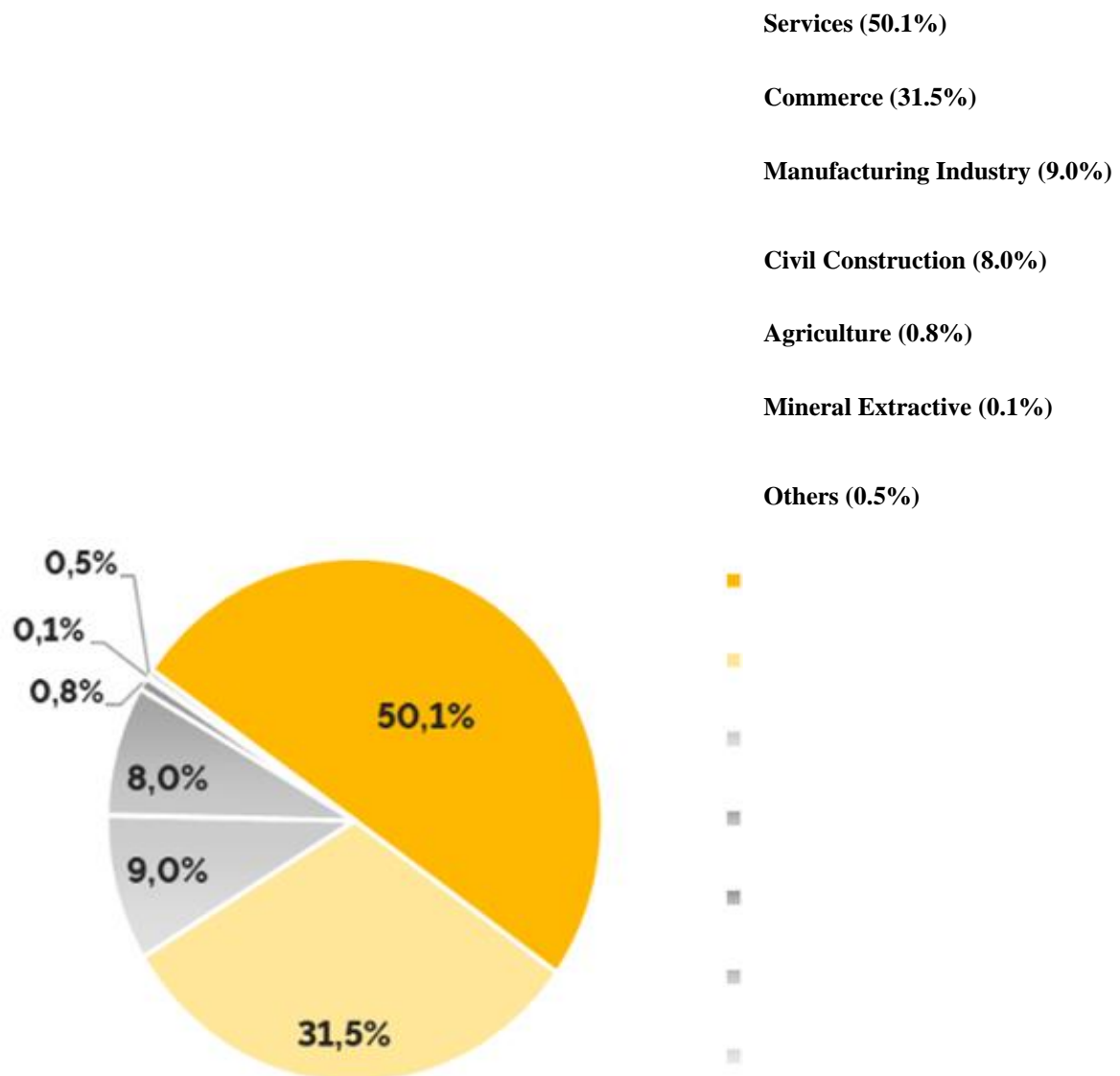


Figure 2. Number of active companies in Brazil in 2023 by sectors  
Source: (MDIC, 2023).

As can be seen in Figure 2, the Services and Commerce sector corresponds to approximately 81,6% of companies operating in the country in 2023. In the first four months, approximately 50,1% of these companies are dedicated to providing services, followed by approximately 31,5% of companies linked to commerce, and 18,4% correspond to other sectors (MDIC, 2023). This information is crucial for understanding the composition and distribution

of companies in different sectors of the economy, providing valuable insights for business decision-making and economic analysis.

According to the Commercial Board of Paraná (JUCEPAR), in the first quarter of 2023, 122.406 new companies were opened in Paraná. Figure 3 shows the total number of new companies opened in Paraná in the first quarter of 2023 by size.

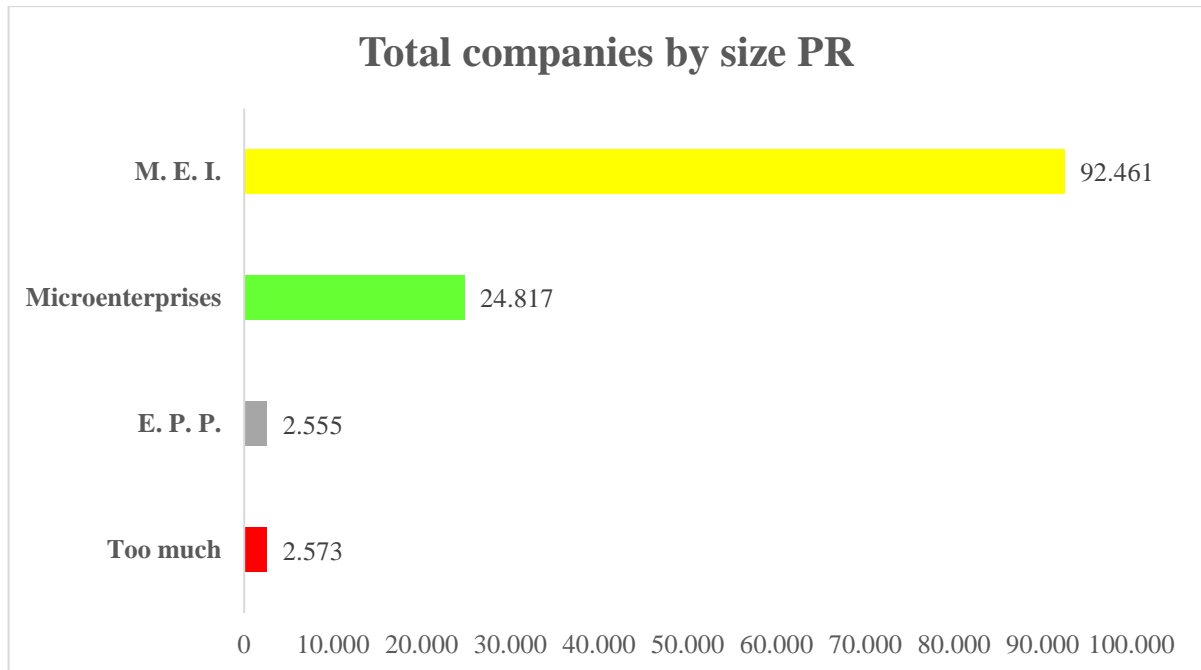


Figure 3. Total companies by size PR 2023

Source: Adapted from (JUCEPAR, 2023).

In Paraná, there was an increase similar to that observed across the country in the number of companies. In the first quarter of 2023, 95.8% of all new companies opened are made up of MEIs and micro-enterprises, while small, medium, and large companies make up 4.2% of the total (JUCEPAR, 2023). These data not only highlight the dynamics of entrepreneurship and business activity in the state, but also have important implications for policies to support economic development, programs to encourage entrepreneurship and strategies to promote small businesses.

In Paraná, in June 2023, there were 1.987.623 companies, distributed by sector according to Table 1, which shows their distribution until June 2023. The state of Paraná follows the rest of the country, with most economic activities concentrated in the services and commerce sectors. The services sector encompasses 741.409 companies, while the retail and food sector encompass 528.889 companies. These two areas together represent 63.9% of all

companies in the state. The other sectors combined account for 717.325 companies operating in the state in 2023, which corresponds to a share of 36.1% of activities (Econodata, 2023).

SECTOR	AMOUNT
Services	741.409
Retail business	329.643
Foods	199.246
Manufacturing	147.725
Transformation industries	142.454
Construction	140.013
Logistics and Transport	98.599
Restaurants	95.776
Education	46.755
Health	46.003
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.987.623</b>

Table 1. Number of companies by sectors in Paraná 2023  
Source: Adapted from (Econodata, 2023).

In the Western Region of Paraná, in the first four months of 2023, 11.619 new companies were opened, as can be seen in Figure 4.

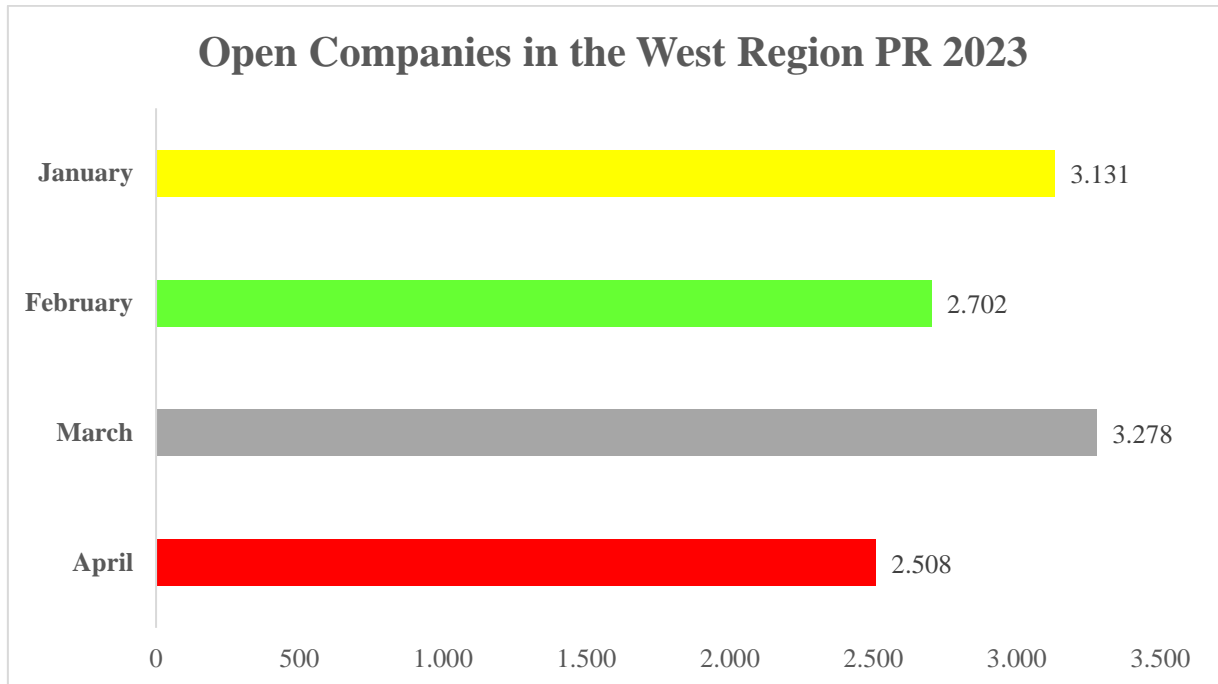


Figure 4. Open Companies in the West Region PR 2023

Source: Suitable from (JUCEPAR, 2023).

Of the 11.618 companies opened in Western Paraná, in the first four months of 2023, the variation in the number of new companies over the months stands out: in January, approximately 26,9% were opened; in February, around 23,3%; March recorded the highest number of openings, representing approximately 28,2%; and April, with approximately 21,6%, accounting for the lowest number of open projects. (JUCEPAR, 2023). This information is essential for understanding the dynamics of entrepreneurship in the region, identifying seasonal patterns and areas of potential growth or challenges for economic development policies and business support.

In the Western Region of Paraná, until June 2023, there were a total of 189.967 companies distributed by size, as shown in Figure 5.

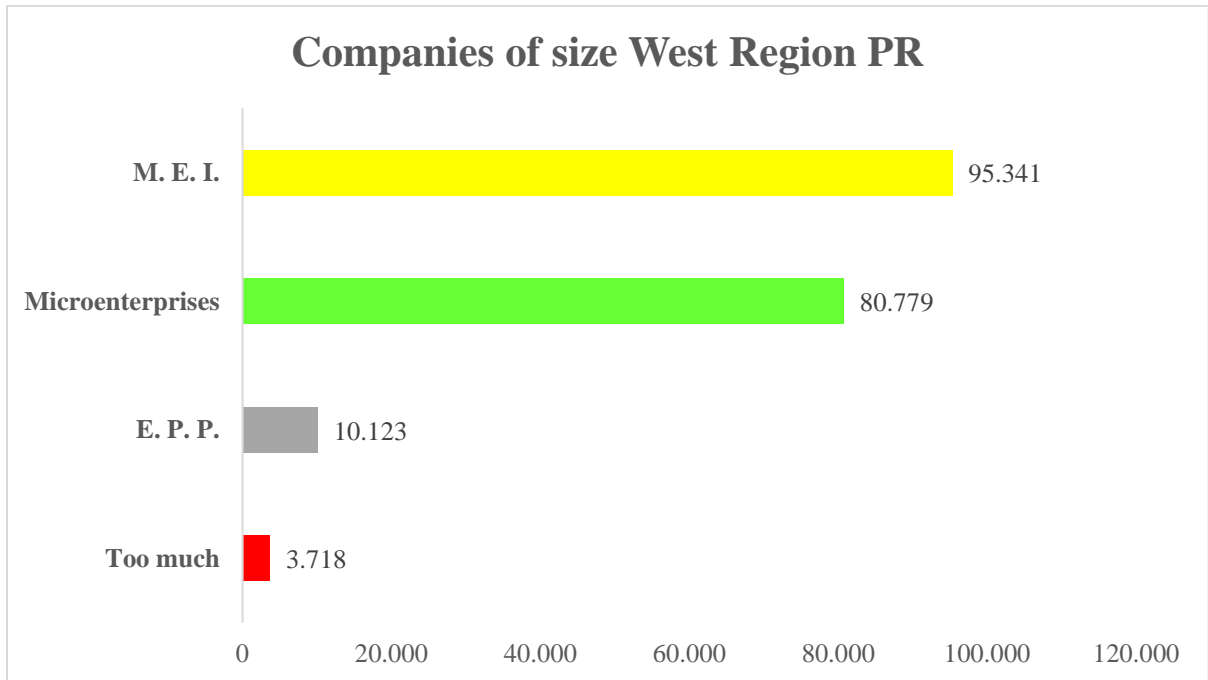


Figure 5. Number of companies by size in the Western Region PR 2023  
Source: Adapted from (Econodata, 2023).

In the Western Region of the state of Paraná, there is a correspondence with the general propensity for an increase in the number of companies, both at state and national level. This trend is particularly significant in data related to MEIs, which represent approximately 56,7% of the total number of enterprises, followed by microenterprises, which correspond to approximately 48,0%. Small companies comprise approximately 6,0% of the total, while companies of other sizes represent approximately 2,2% (Econodata, 2023). This data is crucial for understanding the distribution and importance of different types of companies in the economy, highlighting the preponderant role of MEIs and micro-enterprises in the business scenario.

Table 2 shows the 189.967 companies in the Western Region of Paraná distributed by sectors.

SECTOR	QUANTITY
Services	71.560
Retail business	29.231
Foods	17.307
Construction	14.436
Manufacturing	12.538
Transformation industries	12.210
Logistics and Transport	11.202

<b>Restaurants</b>	10.334
<b>Health</b>	6.012
<b>Education</b>	5.137
<b>Total</b>	<b>189.967</b>

Table 2. Companies by sectors in western Paraná 2023

Source: Adapted from (Econodata, 2023).

In the Western Region of Paraná, there is a predominance of the services sector with 71.560 companies and 46.538 companies in the retail and food sector; both sectors constitute 62,1% of the total number of companies. The remaining sectors total 71.869 companies, accounting for 37,9% of the enterprises in operation in the west of the state in June 2023 (Econodata, 2023).

Thus, it appears that the food sector plays an important role in the national, state and regional economy. The sector involves an extensive production chain, ranging from raw material producers to distributors and retailers. This generates investments, financial movements and boosts internal trade.

In the supermarket sector, these companies make up a large part of establishments in the commerce and services sector, influencing competition, the supply of products and services, and even prices.

### 2.3 SUPERMARKETS IN BRAZIL, PARANÁ AND WEST REGION OF PARANÁ

In 2020, in Brazil, there were 165.132 companies in the retail trade of food products, ranking among the ten largest economic activities in terms of number of companies in the country (SEBRAE, 2020). Figure 6 represents the number of food stores in Brazil in 2020, classified by size.

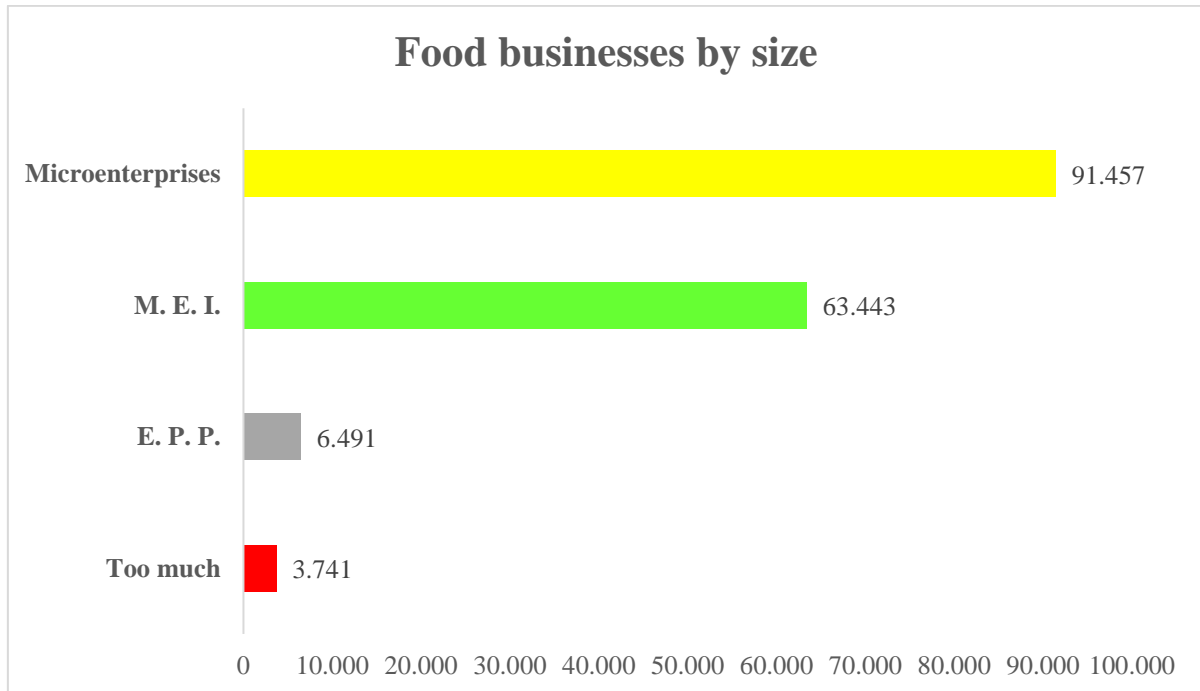


Figure 6. Number of companies by size in the Western Region PR 2023

Source: Suitable from (SEBRAE, 2020).

Micro-enterprises represent approximately 59,3% of food trading companies active in Brazil in 2020, followed by MEIs, which correspond to approximately 41,0%. Small companies comprise approximately 4,2% of the total, while the others, which include medium and large food trading companies, represent around 2,4% (SEBRAE, 2020). There is a predominance of micro-enterprises and MEIs in the food trade sector, indicating the relevance of these small enterprises for the country's economy.

The state of Paraná has a diversified economy and a strong presence of companies related to the production, distribution, and marketing of food. 2020 data from SEBRAE, the trade and services sector, showed the existence of 11.773 food product retail companies in Paraná. In Figure 7, there is the number of food products companies in Paraná in 2020, classified by size.

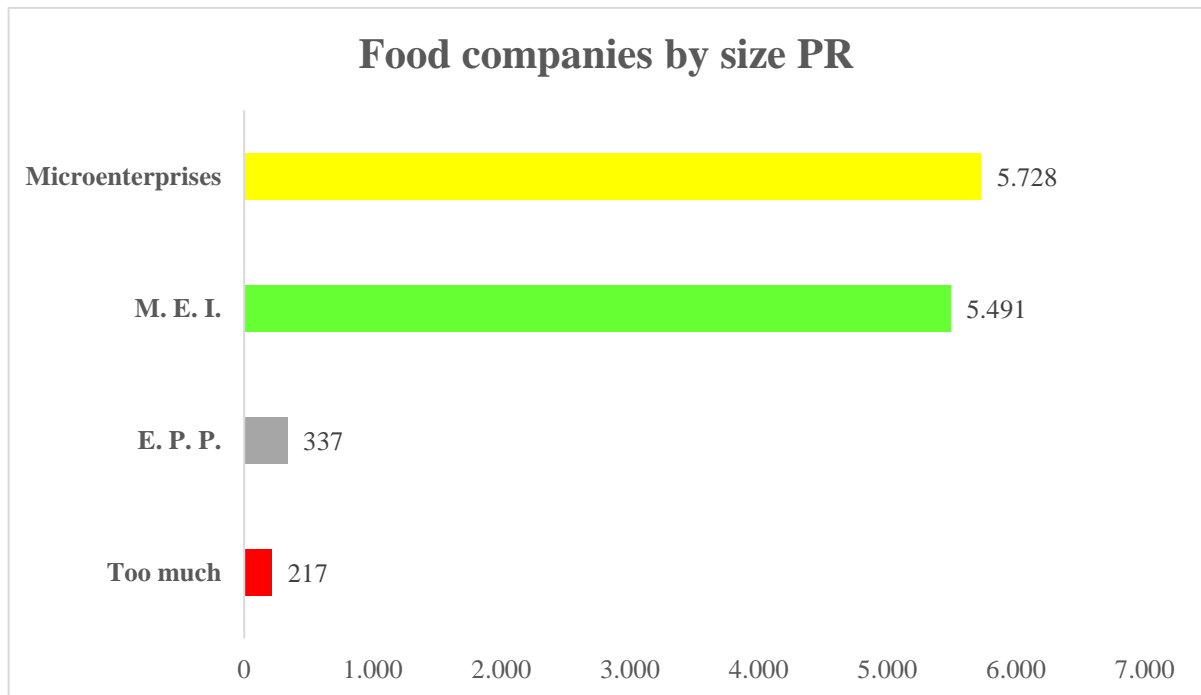


Figure 7. Food companies by PR size

Source: Suitable from (SEBRAE, 2020).

Paraná has a high number of micro-enterprises in the food trade sector. In 2020, micro-enterprises represented approximately 48,9% of the total, while individual micro-entrepreneurs accounted for approximately 47,1%. Small companies comprised approximately 2,9% of the total, while companies classified as other sizes, which include medium and large companies, represented approximately 1,9% (SEBRAE, 2020). These numbers highlight the predominance of micro-enterprises and individual micro-entrepreneurs in the sector, highlighting their importance for the state's economy. Figure 8 shows the number of food companies registered in the Western Region of Paraná in 2020, classified by size.

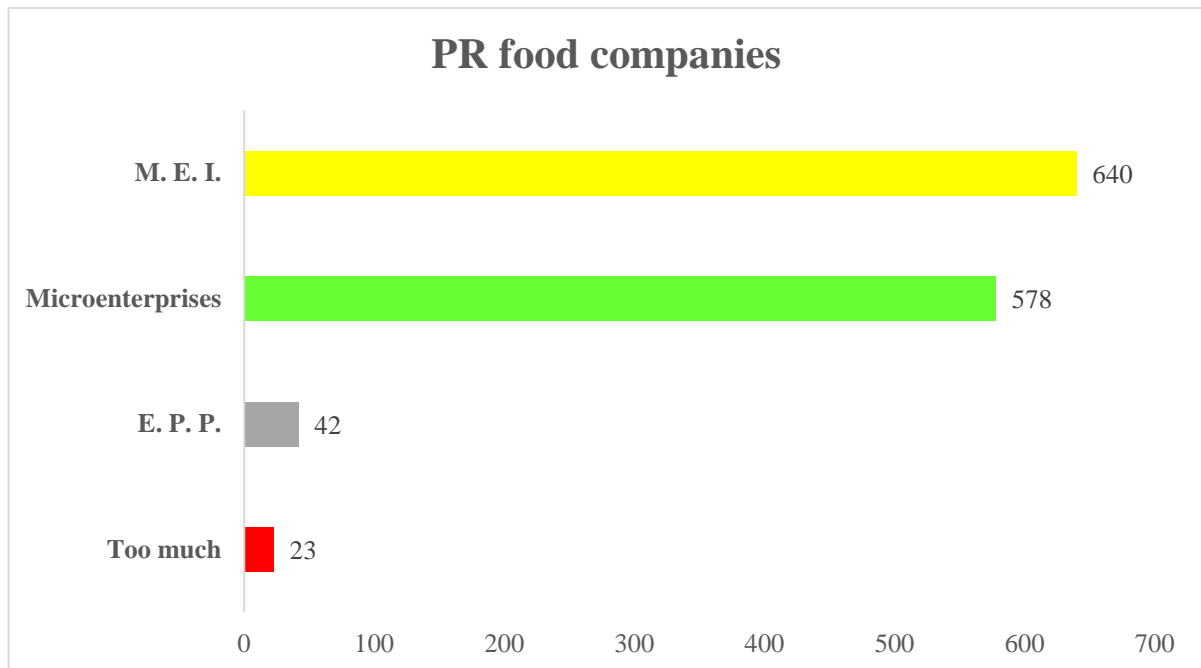


Figure 8. West PR food companies

Source: Sutable from (SEBRAE, 2020).

In the Western Region of Paraná in 2020, there were 1.283 registered food product retail companies, with MEI, with 49,9% companies, 45,0% micro-enterprises, 3,3% small and the others, 1,8%, representing the sum of medium and large food companies (SEBRAE, 2020). These numbers highlight the predominance of micro-enterprises and individual micro-entrepreneurs in the food retail sector in the region, highlighting their economic importance and their role in offering food products to the local population.

Supermarkets represent a significant portion of retail food sales, reaching up to fifty percent of the total, which play a particularly important role in food choice (Carroll & Samek, 2018). In the Western Region of Paraná, there are several supermarket chains that also operate throughout the state and in other Brazilian states. It is possible to highlight the Lar Supermercados, Super Muffato and Muffato Max chains.

Grupo Muffato is the largest retailer in Paraná and among the largest in Brazil. The chain has 82 stores between retail (Super Muffato) and wholesale (Max Atacadista), offering other services. The Muffato Group operates in 32 cities in Paraná and the interior of São Paulo; Furthermore, it has 19 thousand direct employees and more than 10 thousand indirect employees (ABRAS, 2022).

Lar Supermercados is part of Lar Cooperativa Agroindustrial, founded on March 19, 1964, in the municipality of Missal. It has 13.300 employees and 10.900 cooperative members with business fronts that involve agriculture, industry, supermarkets, gas stations and own-

brand products. The first supermarket was opened in Medianeira in 1983. Until June 2023, it had 15 stores distributed in municipalities in western Paraná, including Ramilândia, Céu Azul, Itaipulândia, Matelândia, Medianeira, Missal, São Miguel do Iguaçu and others (Lar, 2023).

## 2.4 STRATEGIC EXPERIENCES OF MARKETS THAT HAVE BECOME MORE COMPETITIVE

In various parts of the world and in Brazil, research related to Porter's five forces is conducted in various sectors, such as health, education, industry, services, commerce, and others. Among the articles obtained through the systematic review, there are the articles below that had the objective is to understand the competitive environment and assist in formulating strategies so that companies stand out and achieve competitive advantage.

Cuthbertson, Furseth & Stephen (2015) describe a case of competition strategy between competitors of the companies Apple and Nokia. The Nokia brand, created in Finland in 2007, produced more than half of all cell phones sold on the planet and its Symbian mobile operating system commanded a 65.6% share of the global market. Apple, for its part, in the first quarter of 2013, had captured almost 40% of the US smartphone market and more than 50% of the operating profit in the global cell phone industry. Apple realized that it wasn't just about cell phones themselves but leveraging software to create a platform to develop compelling mobile experiences, including not just telephony but also other applications. Furthermore, it sought to build a business model that allowed partners to earn money alongside the company.

Silva (2017) carried out a study based on Porter's five forces, in which Facebook represents a "threat of new entrants" and highlights that new competitors do not necessarily need to belong to the same line of business to unbalance the market and redefine existing relationships. Facebook has become an important source of news, defying previous predictions about the possible replacement of traditional media, especially print. Surveys carried out by the Pew Research center show that 61% of users use Facebook as their main source of information. In Brazil, this number is 70%, as pointed out by Quartz. This change in news consumption has negatively impacted newspaper newsrooms, resulting in mass layoffs of journalists both in Brazil and abroad.

Another study also based on Porter's five forces reports the case of Gerda which interrupted the supply of steel to Aço Cearense, what was a relationship between customer and supplier turned into a rivalry between competitors within the same market. Vilmar Ferreira, the founder of Aço Cearense, one of the main industry entrepreneurs in the Northeast of Brazil,

acted as an authorized distributor for Gerdau, becoming the company's largest customer. Faced with this situation, Vilmar chose to import steel at a time when, in the Brazilian market, there was little openness to foreign products. This strategic change was crucial for the survival of your business. Instead of being a weak link in Gerdau's extensive chain, Aço Cearense repositioned itself as a competitor, building its own customer base (Silva, 2017).

The article by Mozzato & Gollo (2011) analyzed a cooperation network between small and medium-sized supermarkets, in Passo Fundo, Rio Grande do Sul, which were finding it difficult to operate in isolation in increasingly competitive markets. The text highlights that small and medium-sized supermarkets found, in cooperation networks, a way to survive and compete with large supermarkets. The results reveal that the analyzed network maintains cooperative relationships, achieving competitive advantages in this system. It represents a successful case of an inter-organizational relationship of cooperation in constant improvement and innovation. This network is horizontal and formal, based on common objectives, interaction, and management. It is concluded that the chain is a strategic alternative that provides competitive advantages for associated supermarkets.

A 2019 case study, carried out in a supermarket cooperation network in Rio de Janeiro, sought to analyze the relationship between the purchasing center and its members, identifying specific problems and benefits. It found that involvement in associative networks offers significant advantages, such as sharing costs, carrying out joint operations, implementing marketing actions and diversifying the product mix. In this way, it was possible to confirm the importance of greater agility and flexibility in transactions, promoting more equitable competition among associated members. Furthermore, it highlighted the importance of commitments and responsibilities within the network, in which trust and the exchange of information (communication) are essential elements for the success of the relationship (Rocha & Correio, 2019).

Another research carried out in Piracicaba, state of São Paulo, analyzed marketing strategies for low-income consumers in supermarket retail. Two supermarkets were analyzed regarding their marketing strategies; The study involved bibliographic and documentary research, as well as interviews with supermarket leaders experienced in the area. The results indicated that, despite the different approaches adopted by the organizations, both achieved relative success and competitive advantage by understanding the consumer profile. They stood out by adding value to the offer, offering credit, and facilitating access to the products desired by this social class (Costa & Pizzinatto, 2015).

The Pinheiro brothers have 36 years of experience in the supermarket sector. A study carried out with them in the city of Fortaleza, Ceará, revealed that it is possible to identify elements that are related to the development of an entrepreneurial approach. This includes creating strategies that evolve both deliberately and emergently, implementing effective strategic management, and the ability to adapt to organizational changes to meet the needs of new markets (Santos et al., 2018).

An article published by Refas magazine, in February 2023, presents a study carried out in three supermarkets in Nova Cruz in Rio Grande do Norte. It highlights that, in recent years, the evolution of markets has driven organizations to seek strategic management and management techniques. The formation of alliances between companies has become a common practice to create competitive advantage along the entire value chain, both intra-organizational and inter-organizational. The results highlight that entry into cooperation networks is mainly motivated by wholesale acquisitions and joint purchases, reducing costs with suppliers, in addition to the standardization of intra-organizational processes for operational efficiency and resource optimization. In the context of Interorganizational Cost Management (ICM), relationship variables, especially trust, interdependence, cooperation, and mutual benefits, are fundamental to success (Silva et al., 2023).

## 2.5 STRATEGY STUDIES IN SMALL CONSUMER GOODS MARKETS

In the metropolitan region of Baixada Santista, a group of small and medium-sized supermarkets maintains its presence in the market through a Business Center, called Rede Litoral. This center addresses the competitive elements faced by independent supermarkets, using Porter's five forces model. Membership in the Network represents an essential instrument for the competitiveness of these supermarkets, taking advantage of the economies of scale and scope that it offers. Through associations, this union became a valuable source of competitive advantage, overcoming the individual limitations of each establishment (Barros & Claro, 2013).

A survey conducted at the Mercasa supermarket, located in the city of Toledo - PR, aimed at internal and external analysis, for the company to gain an advantage over its competitors. After data collection, it was suggested to the merchant to invest in marketing, in weekly or monthly promotions, according to the company's competence, establish efficient cash control, form strategic alliances with large companies, which have a demand for food products, thus, making customer loyalty and greater market competitiveness possible (Bazzotti et al., 2017).

A case study was conducted at W R Netos e Mercearia Ltda., in Itaboraí, Rio de Janeiro, to investigate its relationship marketing strategies. It was observed that the neighboring supermarket adopts several strategies, which can be considered by the Roserwal market. It was proposed to the owner to increase investments in marketing strategies to maintain existing customers and develop new relationship strategies. The company must adapt to the market reality, satisfy customer needs, and maintain the quality of products and services to strengthen relationships with customers, thus obtaining greater competitive advantage (Marins & Silva, 2019).

After conducting detailed research in a small supermarket in the city of Coronel Fabriciano, in Minas Gerais, the need for significant improvements in several aspects of the establishment was identified. The layout analysis revealed several areas that require attention, including errors in the use of space, lack of organization on the shelves, lack of clear information about the sectors, lack of attractive signs and a substantial number of products without price identification. Furthermore, the assessment also considered external factors, allowing the identification of both threats and opportunities for the supermarket. Based on these findings, suggestions for targeted improvements were developed, aiming for a more competitive position in the market, which provides a more satisfactory shopping experience for its customers and maximizes its operational efficiency (Costa et al., 2020).

A survey conducted at the Jacomar supermarket in Piraquara – PR aimed to analyze the challenges faced as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Through various analyses, we sought to identify the opportunities, threats, weaknesses, and strengths of this unit, aiming to develop an action plan that promotes a more favorable and advantageous performance for the Jacomar supermarket. Using the SWOT Matrix tool, it was possible to map the main aspects related to the organization's specific opportunities, threats, weaknesses, and strengths. Based on this analysis, an action plan was created based on the information obtained, using the tool known as 5W2H. This reinforced the importance of good organizational management to face challenges in a rational and effective manner. The focus is always on the search for profitability, operational efficiency and safety of both customers and employees. By implementing the strategies outlined in this work, the Jacomar supermarket, in Piraquara, can more assertively face the challenges posed by the pandemic and maintain its competitive position in the market (Cruz et al., 2021).

Pão de Açúcar, founded in 1959 by Valentim dos Santos Diniz, in São Paulo, began as a small grocery store called "Pão de Açúcar", which later expanded to become a supermarket chain. In 1999, it took a big step by merging with Grupo Sendas, expanding its presence beyond

São Paulo, mainly in the southeast region of the country. Today, it is a nationally recognized brand, known for its quality, variety, and convenience. With a wide network of stores and a strong online presence, the company continues to be one of the main references in the Brazilian food retail market (Canineo, 2023).

### 3 RESEARCH METHOD AND TECHNIQUES

This chapter presents the scientific method used to carry out the research, as well as the design and procedures adopted in its conduct.

#### 3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION

To better meet the research objectives, the nature of this work is based on applied research, which is the most appropriate way to resolve the situation to be resolved. In other words, what strategic actions can market A, B and C in Ramilândia - PR adopt to increase competitive advantage.

Applied research involves the search for sufficient information, through research with categorical methodological rigor, to improve the issue studied in a short space of time. This study can identify practices that improve results and instruct us how to put them into practice (Lieu & Platt, 2017). The growth needs and institutional difficulties of adapting to changes in applied research studies were influenced by political, cultural, and socio-cognitive contexts and tasks (Maclean, 2021).

The research is also classified as qualitative, as it was carried out through interviews, used to collect data relating to small markets and analyze the opinion of the owners, with the purpose of defining the main difficulties and strategies already used by small markets, which served basis for research.

Qualitative research is essentially narrative and tends to be more extensive than quantitative research and sometimes requires a different structure. This method provides information about how the research was applied, quality criteria or a checklist, which can be attached to the manuscript (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

In the initial stage, interviews and observations were carried out in small markets A, B and C in the city of Ramilândia - PR, with the aim of identifying the relevant actions that served as a basis for proposing strategic actions.

Observation is a research data collection method normally used to capture participants' activities, aiming to know how, when and where events are happening in a given environment. The method verifies the description of the phenomena with which the researcher perceives a fact in the context of analysis; it provides direct access to the social manifestations under consideration. The challenges in applying observation are related to adopting the role of participant or non-participant researcher as observer (Salmon, 2015).

To carry out the semi-structured interview, a script with previously established questions was used, applied flexibly so that interviewees could ask questions and make comments, even if it was not among the planned questions; In this way, a dialogue is established so that it is possible to collect as much information about the markets, which served as a basis for research.

The application of a semi-structured interview guide provides contributions to the objectivity and reliability of the researched phenomena and makes the results more acceptable (Kallio et al., 2016). This interview format allows directing the focus and also provides the researcher with the autonomy to explore pertinent ideas that may arise during the interview (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021).

The semi-structured interviews carried out with the owners of markets A, B and C resulted in 6 pages of transcribed content, in addition to a logbook containing observations totaling 10 pages. To support the research, the interviewees signed a consent form in which they agreed to the recording of the interviews and the dissemination of data for academic purposes. To complement the research, a systematic review was also carried out.

The systematic review allows the researcher to identify studies that investigate what has already been explored on a specific topic. To conduct the systematic review, it is necessary to formulate the research question, search and select studies, assess the quality of studies, extract and synthesize data, analyze and interpret results and prepare the final report (Senra & Lourenço, 2016).

Between July and August 2023, articles were selected to support this section, from the Science Direct, Google Scholar and Web of Science databases. The keywords used were competitive strategy for small markets and competitive strategy for small markets. A total of 1940 articles were found. In Table 3, the exclusion criteria are presented, and, of this total, thirteen articles present a similar context to the research.

		Total	Post Deletion
EXCLUSION CRITERIA		1940	-
Title	Repeated titles	903	1037
Title	Those that did not refer to companies were discarded	505	532
Keywords	Articles that did not have search-relevant words	297	235
Summary	Those that did not involve the basic theme of the research were excluded	201	34
Others	Outside the research context	26	13

<b>Total</b>		<b>13</b>	
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Table 3. Exclusion criteria

Source: Research data (2023).

After removing duplicate titles, articles unrelated to companies, articles without relevant keywords, and those that did not address the central topic of the research, along with articles that were outside the scope of the research, thirteen articles remained. These articles were used as reference for section 2.4 Strategic experiences in markets that have become more competitive and section 2.5 Strategy studies in small consumer goods markets.

### 3.2 DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

After carrying out the research, content analysis was carried out to better understand the interviewees' views and the main points to be evaluated during the research. Content analysis is an autonomous method that can be used at different levels of abstraction and interpretation (Graneheim, Lindgren & Lundman, 2017). It comprises conventional, targeted, and summative approaches to data analysis. They are used to provide descriptive knowledge and understanding about the researched phenomenon (Assarroudi et al., 2018).

Content analysis can transform textual documents into quantitative data and establish logical relationships through qualitative analysis, explore propositions, questions, or hypotheses, and can be applied to different types of research. In this analysis, the researcher has the ability to decide which approach to adopt when outlining his strategy, which depends on the objectives, questions, assumptions, and hypotheses of the research (Silva & Hernández, 2022).

Thus, data analysis was carried out qualitatively through the information collected and presented through tables. To facilitate the visualization of the methodological procedures aligned with the objectives of this research, Frameworks 4 was proposed.

<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>DATA COLLECTION</b>	<b>DATA ANALYSIS</b>
<b>Identify the main difficulties of markets A, B and C;</b>	Observation and interview.	Qualitative and content analysis.
<b>Develop strategies that can improve or resolve the main difficulties in markets A, B and C.</b>	Observation, interview, and systematic review.	Qualitative and content analysis.

Frameworks 4. Objectives and methodologies

Source: Prepared by the author (2024).

To achieve the general and specific objectives, data collection was carried out through observations carried out by the researcher, interviews with managers from markets A, B and C and a systematic review. To analyze the data, qualitative and content analysis was carried out.

The results found were interpreted within the specific context of markets A, B and C, that is, small supermarkets, which operate in the food segment, located in the city of Ramilândia. The results obtained cannot be broadly applied to other companies that operate in the same sector, have the same size or are located in the same region. Furthermore, a crucial part of obtaining data was conducted through interviews, with the aim of understanding the feelings and perceptions of the people involved in the preparation and due to the execution time and the diversity of scenarios, it is not possible to generalize its results to replication in other locations.

## 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this chapter, the data, analyzes and results obtained through research carried out in markets A, B and C are presented. The observations carried out to achieve the general and specific objectives were carried out between August 8, 2022 and December 12, 2023, generating ten pages of content.

The articles from the systematic review served as a basis for developing strategic actions and have the potential to assist markets A, B and C in resolving or mitigating the problems identified during the observations and reported during the interviews.

The interviews were carried out between December 8th and 12th, 2023. In market A, on December 11th, at 4:11 pm; market B, December 8th, at 8:37 am; and, in market C, on December 12th, at 9:42 am. The answers are in accordance with the sequence of questions asked.

### 4.1 MAIN DIFFICULTIES OF MARKETS A, B AND C

Table 4 provides information on the longevity of markets A, B and C. It highlights the time of existence of each of them, revealing that market A has been present for 45 years, market B for 35 years and market C for 53 years old. This data is important for understanding the context and stability of each market, providing a valuable perspective for analysis and strategic actions proposed for each of them.

MARKET	RESPONSE
A	45 years
B	35 years
C	53 years

Table 4. Time of market existence

Source: Prepared by the author based on interviews and observations carried out in 2023 (2024).

This data is crucial to understanding the context and stability of each market. They provide a historical perspective that allows us to better understand the evolution, development, and trajectory of each of them over time. This understanding is fundamental for analysis and strategic actions, as it allows you to identify trends, patterns and specific challenges faced by each market. Additionally, knowing the longevity of each market can help assess its resilience,

adaptability, and future growth potential. This data is valuable for guiding strategic decisions and business planning aimed at each of the markets in question.

Frameworks 5 highlights the main difficulties faced in market A, as identified in interviews and observations. Among the challenges mentioned are the difficulty in retaining customers, hiring committed labor, publicizing offers, cashier service and high shipping costs. These issues represent significant obstacles to the efficient functioning and growth of the business in this specific market.

DIFFICULTY	ANSWERS
<b>Difficulty retaining customers</b>	When asked about the difficulties, the manager of market A highlighted that the main one is keeping customers. In his speech, he mentioned that the key is keeping customers, identifying the difference that the company provides to the customer. When we notice that the customer is not coming, it could be due to the price or poor service. Often, in a small city, we know the customer profile well. Sometimes that customer who used to come regularly doesn't show up and we wonder what happened. It is essential to establish more direct contact with the customer to better understand the situation.
<b>Hiring labor</b>	He also highlighted that one of the biggest difficulties they face is recruiting labor. Often, hired employees do not show the essential commitment to their work, which results in situations where the team is short-handed at critical moments. The search for committed and reliable individuals for the job is a matter of paramount importance.
<b>Disclosure of offers</b>	During a conversation with the owner, in an observation made on 09/05/2022, he mentioned facing difficulties in publicizing offers due to the overload in managing the business. As he is the one who takes care of orders, payments and general organization of the company, the dissemination of offers ends up being compromised. This is because it is necessary to invest time in creating leaflets and distributing them through advertising channels.
<b>Cashier service</b>	In the market, water, electricity, and other bills are received, which can cause delays in service, especially when there are many customers. This happens because checking and authenticating payments takes more time, as noted on 08/14/2023.
<b>Shipping cost</b>	On 11/24/2023, during a conversation with the owner during one of the observations, he mentioned that in the last year there was an increase of approximately thirty percent in the price of a 20-liter gallon of water on the market. The main reason for this is the high shipping costs, because the city is far from large centers and the volume, as the product itself did not have a significant price increase at the distributor.

#### Frameworks 5. Main difficulties in market A

Source: Prepared by the author based on interviews and observations carried out in 2023 (2024).

The information reflects common challenges faced by many businesses, especially small ones, and is worthy of consideration and analysis. Maintaining a customer base is essential for any business; Difficulty recruiting and retaining committed employees is a common challenge for many companies, especially in sectors with high turnover; the lack of time and resources to publicize offers can limit the market's ability to attract customers and increase sales; receiving

additional bills at the cash desk may negatively impact the efficiency of customer service; and rising freight costs are a challenge faced by many companies, especially those located in remote areas.

Frameworks 6 highlights the main difficulties faced in market B, as reported in interviews and observations. Among the challenges mentioned are the lack of payment by customers, the unavailability of payment via Pix, the need for renovations in physical facilities, problems with organization and cashier service, in addition to high shipping costs. These challenges constitute important barriers to ensuring the operational efficiency and growth of the enterprise.

The data indicates a series of significant challenges facing the B market, which need to be addressed urgently to ensure its operational efficiency and sustainable growth. Lack of payment from customers is a valid concern, as it directly affects cash flow and financial sustainability, poor conditions of physical facilities can negatively impact the customer experience. Cashier service reveals organizational problems and lack of efficiency, which can result in queues and customer dissatisfaction. The fact that the owner uses his truck to collect goods may be unsustainable in the long term and limit the variety of products available on the market.

DIFFICULTY	DIFFICULTY
<b>Lack of payment</b>	<p>In market B, the main difficulties highlighted by the owner were in relation to the circulation of money and lack of payment from customers. The interviewee stated that one of the difficulties faced is when customers do not show up to pay their bills. Additionally, in Ramilândia, the lack of industries represents a challenge, as it reduces employment opportunities for residents. This results in many people having to look for jobs in other cities, which constitutes a significant difficulty.</p> <p>On 11/30/2023, in market B, the owner, who does not accept payments via Pix, faced difficulties due to a lack of change to receive purchases. This market offers some different products, such as ropes, fishing rods, creolin, sulfur and other items not easily found. Due to the diversity of customers who frequent the establishment, the absence of the payment option via Pix represents an obstacle to receiving purchases efficiently.</p>
<b>Physical facilities</b>	<p>In the observation made on 08/19/2023, it was found that the market facilities are quite old. The facade is in need of renovation, the floor has irregularities and is quite damaged. Furthermore, the shelves, vegetable shelves and cold cuts islands are in a state of deterioration (Research Data, 2023).</p> <p>The most urgent aspect is the construction of a new market, as my current structure is practically collapsing on me. We were supposed to start a new construction some time ago.</p>
<b>Cashier service</b>	<p>On 10/30/2023, I noticed that there were boxes with merchandise blocking the passage between the shelves, which is already a limited space. Furthermore, some people were drinking beer and talking to the owner near the cashier, which ended up interfering with the service of other customers who were passing by the cashier, forming a queue, and delaying service.</p>

<b>Organization</b>	On 11/30/2023, in market B, there was a box with boots blocking the entrance, making it difficult for customers to pass through. Furthermore, inside the market, there were other boxes with products that also hindered customers' movement. The shelves were disorganized and lacked products.
<b>Shipping cost</b>	Generally, I pick up the goods using my truck. This allows me to select products personally and avoid high shipping costs. Occasionally, I am able to purchase some items from suppliers who deliver to the market.

#### Frameworks 6. Main difficulties in market B

Source: Prepared by the author based on interviews and observations carried out in 2023 (2024).

Frameworks 7 highlights the main difficulties faced in market C, as revealed in interviews and observations. Among the challenges mentioned are the difficulty in retaining customers due to the preference for large supermarkets, problems with cashier service, challenges in publicizing offers, organizational issues such as queues and scattered carts, as well as problems with the lack of goods, especially perishable items. These challenges are major barriers to ensuring the business operates efficiently and achieves success.

<b>DIFFICULTY</b>	<b>DIFFICULTY</b>
<b>Difficulty retaining customers</b>	<p>The owner of market C highlighted, as main challenges, the preference of customers to shop elsewhere and the lack of appreciation for local establishments. According to him, "I believe that the main difficulty lies in the lack of recognition by the population. In small towns, our work is often not valued as it should be. I'm not sure if this happens because people don't want us to succeed or if it's because of some kind of envy. They tend to prefer large supermarkets, such as Max Atacadista and Lar supermarkets, which prevents us from offering a wide range of products. To move forward, it is essential to gain recognition from the community. Although I would like to offer a wider variety of products, it is crucial to focus on what is really in demand by customers."</p> <p>During an observation carried out on 03/23/2023, the owner of market C mentioned the difficulties faced with attracting and retaining customers. He also highlighted that this difficulty impacts the ability to maintain competitive prices and results in losses of perishable products, such as produce and bakery.</p>
<b>Cashier service</b>	On 08/16/2023, during the observation, there was a queue at the cashier due to the availability of only one of them open. On 11/27/2023, the scale of one of the cashiers was faulty, causing the cashier to have to weigh the products at the other cashier, which resulted in slowness and queues at both cashiers.
<b>Disclosure of offers</b>	The owner mentioned that he faces challenges in advertising the offers due to scarcity of time as he and his daughter are the only ones in charge of the tasks. This makes it difficult both to design and disseminate promotions, which are mainly carried out through social media and leaflets.
<b>Organization</b>	In an observation carried out on 08/16/2023, the presence of queues at both the cashier and the bakery was noted, as well as baskets and shopping carts spread throughout the market. On 10/28/2023, carts were again observed obstructing customers' passage. On 11/27/2023, during observation, it was found that some shopping carts were positioned between the shelves, obstructing the passage.
<b>Lack of goods</b>	The manager of market C mentioned the difficulties faced with fruits and vegetables due to their high perishability. Some suppliers already deliver products with low quality, which also occurs with bread, cakes, cakes, and cookies, causing some loss

	of goods. Furthermore, there may be a shortage of other products due to delays in deliveries by suppliers.
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#### Frameworks 7. Main difficulties in the C market

Source: Prepared by the author based on interviews and observations carried out in 2023 (2024).

This data reflects the various obstacles that the C market faces in its daily operations, from attracting and retaining customers to logistical and inventory management issues. To overcome these challenges, a concerted effort may be required to improve operational efficiency, customer communication and resource management.

Frameworks 8 shows the payment methods offered by markets A, B and C.

Market	Money	Credit and Debit Card	Pix	Food card	Market Card	Installment Sale (Spun)
Market A	X	X	X	X	X	Does not offer
Market B	X	X	Does not offer	Does not offer	Does not offer	X
Market C	X	X	X	Does not offer	Does not offer	X

#### Frameworks 8. Payment methods

Source: Prepared by the author based on interviews and observations carried out in 2023 (2024).

Markets A, B and C offer their customers different ways to pay for their purchases; while market A does not sell on credit to its buyers, markets B and C sell on credit to a few people, older customers who pay their bills on time. Market B does not offer the payment option via Pix, while the others offer the market's own food card; only market A accepts these payment methods.

Frameworks 9 highlights the main competitors in markets A, B and C, as mentioned in interviews. In market A, Atacadões and the Lar supermarket chain exert great influence, making it difficult to attract customers. In market B, Lar and Gabiatti are competitors, but the focus is on maintaining their own strategy, offering exclusive products. In market C, competition is represented by Lar, Gabiatti and Max Atacadista, but the focus is on setting prices based on the value offered to customers, without being influenced by the size of competitors.

In addition to the Lar supermarket chain, Gabiatti market and Max Atacadista, mentioned by the interviewees, there are other relatively large markets in the region, wholesale markets and gas and beverage distributors; We can highlight the Condor Super Center, Lar Supermercados, Super Muffato and wholesale markets chains, which, in most cases, offer lower

prices than those offered by markets A, B and C, as they buy in larger quantities, managing to maintain a lower price.

MARKET	RESPONSE
<b>MARKET A</b>	Wholesale markets and the Lar supermarket chain have great influence in the region. Lar chain employees receive baskets from the supermarket itself as a benefit, which reduces their motivation to shop elsewhere, even if they offer better prices. Furthermore, many customers end up buying other products at Lar while picking up their baskets, making competition even more difficult. Despite efforts to offer competitive prices, it is challenging to attract these customers to shop elsewhere.
<b>MARKET B</b>	Lar and Gabiatti are my competitors, but they don't cause me any concern. Each establishment follows its own strategy, and I focus on mine. I seek to differentiate myself by offering a variety of exclusive products, such as ropes and fishing rods. Here, I always say that customers find everything they need. Although competition is a reality in the market, I don't allow it to influence me. My main goal is to manage my business in the best way possible while allowing competitors to do the same with theirs.
<b>MARKET C</b>	Lar and Gabiatti are my competitors, but they don't cause me any concern. Each establishment follows its own strategy, and I focus on mine. I seek to differentiate myself by offering a variety of exclusive products, such as ropes and fishing rods. Here, I always say that customers find everything they need. Although competition is a reality in the market, I don't allow it to influence me. My main goal is to manage my business in the best way possible while allowing competitors to do the same with theirs.

#### Frameworks 9. Main Competitors

Source: Prepared by the author based on interviews and observations carried out in 2023 (2024).

Frameworks 10 lists the improvements to be implemented in markets A, B and C. In market A, improvements include increasing physical space, expanding the variety of products, maintaining, and increasing the number of customers, in addition to taking advantage of the positive impact of new asphalt that will connect two cities. In market B, the proposed improvements are the construction of new facilities, investment in exhibition and sales infrastructure, maintaining competitive prices and increasing the number of customers. In market C, the improvements made include investing in the facade, expanding the diversity of products, maintaining lower prices, and attracting more customers. These actions aim to improve the competitiveness and overall business performance of each market.

The strategies proposed for markets A, B and C were designed to be aligned with the specific challenges and opportunities faced by each. Investing in improvements to facilities, expanding the variety of products, maintaining competitive prices, and attracting more customers are important steps to ensure the success and sustainability of businesses in a competitive environment.

MARKET	RESPONSE
<b>MARKET A</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase physical space;</li> <li>- Increase the variety of products;</li> <li>- Maintain and increase the number of customers;</li> <li>- Through the asphalt that will connect Ramilândia to Santa Helena, because it will increase the circulation of people in the city.</li> </ul>
<b>MARKET B</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Build new facilities for the market;</li> <li>- Investment in exhibition and sales infrastructure;</li> <li>- Maintain more competitive prices;</li> <li>- Maintain and increase the number of customers.</li> </ul>
<b>MARKET C</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Invest in the market facade;</li> <li>- Increase product diversity;</li> <li>- Try to maintain lower prices;</li> <li>- Attract more customers.</li> </ul>

#### Frameworks 10. Improvements to be implemented

Source: Prepared by the author based on interviews and observations carried out in 2023 (2024).

Frameworks 11 addresses the interviewees' views on the advantage of shopping online. In market A, it is not considered advantageous due to customer loyalty to specific brands and the difficulty of competing on prices with markets in the same city. In market B, although it is an interesting option, the interviewee prefers to work independently so as not to share information with competitors and preserve their profit margin. In market C, previous attempts to form a network were unsuccessful due to the lack of unity among businesspeople and fears related to competition.

Markets A, B and C's decisions not to engage in associations or networks are based on factors such as brand identity, operational autonomy, and cultural challenges in the local business sector. These considerations reflect the complexity of commercial and competitive relationships in a diverse market environment.

In Frameworks 12, interviewees are invited to mention issues not addressed during the interview. In market A, the difficulty in hiring committed labor stands out. In market B, there are no additions to the information previously provided. In market C, the attempt to introduce a new product to the market is mentioned, which faces acceptance difficulties despite its quality and attractiveness.

MARKET	RESPONSE
MARKET A	I believe it would not be worth it, as we once considered joining a network and realized that it would not be advantageous. There, they often look for a specific brand for a certain product, while our audience tends to be loyal to the brands they already know. If we offer a generic or lesser-known product, even if it is cheaper, it is unlikely that it will be sold, as it would not have the same acceptance. Another difficulty in associating with markets in the same city is that it would not be possible to generate price competition with them.
MARKET B	It would be an interesting option, however, personally, I don't get involved in that. I prefer to work independently, without sharing information with my competitors. I don't like them knowing what I'm doing, nor am I interested in knowing about their operations, like who they buy from or don't buy from. Even though we are competitors, if I have a product that I sell at a more competitive price, I prefer not to disclose it to them. This could end up reducing my profit margin and my space in the market.
MARKET C	About eight years ago, SEBRAE tried something similar. There were meetings with businesspeople in an attempt to create a network like Superarma. However, this initiative was unsuccessful. Businesspeople are like citizens and lack unity. Many businesspeople are afraid to collaborate, perhaps for competition reasons. I even tried buying drinks together, but it didn't work. The "every man for himself" mentality prevails. I recognize that it is not easy. I remember the SEBRAE meetings and their efforts, but unfortunately, they failed to make progress.

#### Frameworks 11. Joint purchases

Source: Prepared by the author based on interviews and observations carried out in 2023 (2024).

MARKET	RESPONSE
MARKET A	Being an entrepreneur is something that always requires thinking about innovations, constantly looking for improvements and ways to facilitate processes. Currently, one of the main difficulties faced is hiring labor. Often, the people hired do not demonstrate the necessary commitment to the job, leaving the company in complicated situations when they need them most. This difficulty in hiring labor is one of the challenges here in the market.
MARKET B	I have nothing to add, our reality is the one I told you about.
MARKET C	I tried to introduce a product here, but it is stuck in stock because it doesn't sell. Previously, I sold roasted peanuts, walnuts, and a variety of other items. I bought this product to test, it's really a quality product, the best seasoning available, but it doesn't sell. When I have it in stock, no one is interested, but when I don't have it, people look for it. The price is a little high, costing almost R\$18, but it's a kilo and yields a lot. It is ideal for those who barbecue frequently, as it is already seasoned and the packaging is attractive, although it is difficult to introduce new products for sale.

## Frameworks 12. Other relevant questions

Source: Prepared by the author based on interviews and observations carried out in 2023 (2024).

Despite the differences between markets A, B and C, it is important to highlight that these markets face common challenges. Although they may vary in their specific characteristics, such as target audience and organizational structure, they share some fundamental difficulties. Furthermore, it is notable that many of the competitors operate in multiple markets, which amplifies the similarity of the competitive pressures they face.

It is important to recognize that, despite the distinct nuances of each market, there is a convergence in the need for improvements to boost competitiveness. This can include improvements in areas such as product innovation, operational efficiency, marketing strategies and customer service. By recognizing these similarities and directing efforts to address these common needs, companies can position themselves more solidly and effectively in the competitive landscape.

### 4.2 TYPE OF INTERVENTION AND MECHANISMS ADOPTED

In this section, strategic action proposals derived from the research carried out are presented. The identified challenges and opportunities are addressed, providing guidelines and measures to address obstacles and capitalize on opportunities identified during the research process. Competitive strategies based on Porter's Five Forces model are also outlined. Intervention proposals are prepared to deal with competitive dynamics, considering the macroeconomic factors identified by the Porter model.

#### 4.2.1 Challenges and opportunities: strategic action proposals based on the research carried out

The research resulted in proposals for strategic actions presented to the owners of the markets studied. These actions aim to provide a competitive advantage to markets A, B and C, allowing them to purchase products more efficiently and at lower prices. Furthermore, the proposed strategies aim to increase the number of customers, which, in turn, would contribute to expanding the markets' revenues.

Frameworks 13 presents an analysis of the main problems faced by market A, together with proposals for strategic solutions. Each identified problem is accompanied by a specific

suggestion for action to address it, aiming to improve competitiveness, customer satisfaction and operational efficiency in the market in question.

PROBLEM	SOLUTION PROPOSAL
<b>Keep customers</b>	Developing loyalty programs, exclusive discounts or special offers for frequent customers can increase customer loyalty.
<b>Hiring labor</b>	Creating a strong organizational culture and shared values can help differentiate the company as an employer and attract candidates who identify with these values, retaining workers and preventing them from becoming new competitors.
<b>Hiring labor</b>	Closely monitoring competitors' strategies and adjusting your own strategies accordingly can help you stay competitive and retain existing customers.
<b>Cashier service</b>	Offering added value and excellent customer service can help keep customers happy and reduce their price sensitivity.
<b>Shipping cost</b>	Diversifying partnerships with different transport providers and negotiating long-term contracts with preferential rates can help mitigate the impact of suppliers' bargaining power; Network purchases, sharing shipping with other markets, can also be an alternative.

Frameworks 13. Problems and proposed solutions market A

Source: Prepared by the author (2024).

Bimonthly meetings, to provide training and listen to employees, are essential to reduce employee turnover, as they are the ones who are in constant contact with customers and know the needs for improvement; Employees involved in the planning process tend to produce better results. It is important to describe the processes, as there is employee turnover, this description is important to maintain the quality of service.

Listening to customers can provide constant improvements in the market, and a suggestions and complaints box is an option to find out what customers think. Offer announcements need to be maintained and updated periodically, in addition to pamphlets and advertising on social media. We suggest that a sound broadcast be carried out once a week, aiming to reach people who do not have access to social media and pamphlets.

Frameworks 14 highlights the main challenges faced by market B, accompanied by strategic suggestions to face them. Each identified problem is accompanied by a specific solution proposal, aiming to improve operational efficiency, customer satisfaction and general market competitiveness.

PROBLEM	SOLUTION PROPOSAL
<b>Lack of payment</b>	Implement strict collection policies and establish efficient debt monitoring and recovery processes. It may also be useful to offer incentives for early payments or create penalties for late payments to dissuade customers from missing payment deadlines.
<b>Physical facilities</b>	Investing in differentiation, whether through state-of-the-art facilities, unique design, prime location, or unique services, can help create a competitive advantage and deter new entrants.
<b>Cashier service</b>	Offering added value and excellent customer service can help keep customers happy and reduce their price sensitivity.
<b>Organization</b>	Identify and capitalize on the company's strengths, differentiate itself from the competition and offer superior value to customers. Investing in organization and continuous innovation can help increase market share and maintain a competitive advantage over competitors.
<b>Shipping cost</b>	Diversifying partnerships with different transport providers and negotiating long-term contracts with preferential rates can help mitigate the impact of suppliers' bargaining power; Network purchases, sharing shipping with other markets, can also be an alternative.

Frameworks 14. Problems and proposed solutions for market B

Source: Prepared by the author (2024).

It was proposed to the owner to create a Pix key, to facilitate payment methods for customers. Investment in the construction of new physical facilities is also important for the company, as well as hiring an employee to help with cash flow and general organization of the market. To reduce shipping costs, the possibility of joining a purchasing network in conjunction with other markets should be evaluated.

Frameworks 15 outlines the main obstacles faced by market C, accompanied by strategic suggestions for dealing with them. Each problem identified is accompanied by a specific solution proposal. The suggestions offer valuable guidance to strengthen business practices and overcome challenges in the market in question.

It was suggested that the merchant form partnerships with nearby produce and bakery producers, aiming to keep the products fresh and of high quality; These partnerships are beneficial because they are located a shorter distance from the market, which makes it possible to deliver products in smaller quantities and more times a week. An investment in infrastructure and dissemination of offers is also necessary to maintain and attract new customers.

PROBLEM	SOLUTION PROPOSAL
<b>Keep customers</b>	Developing loyalty programs, exclusive discounts or special offers for frequent customers can increase customer loyalty.
<b>Cashier service</b>	Offering added value and excellent customer service can help keep customers happy and reduce their price sensitivity.
<b>Disclosure of offers</b>	Closely monitoring competitors' strategies and adjusting your own strategies accordingly can help you stay competitive and retain existing customers.
<b>Organization</b>	Identify and capitalize on the company's strengths, differentiate itself from the competition and offer superior value to customers. Investing in organization and continuous innovation can help increase market share and maintain a competitive advantage over competitors.
<b>Lack of goods</b>	Establishing strong relationships with trusted suppliers, diversifying supply sources, and negotiating favorable contracts can help mitigate risks; Also, taking strategic actions, such as more accurate demand forecasting and optimized inventory management systems, can help avoid shortages of goods.

Frameworks 15. Problems and proposed solutions market C

Source: Prepared by the author (2024).

The distribution of tasks is necessary to relieve the owner of work overload, who will have more time to carry out the company's strategic, tactical and operational planning. Publicizing weekly offers and listening to customers are also fundamental actions for obtaining new clientele, consequently increasing profit and competitive advantage in the market.

#### 4.2.2 Intervention proposals based on Porter's five forces

In this subitem, intervention proposals were developed for markets A, B and C based on the analysis of interviews and observations carried out, considering the macroeconomic concepts outlined by Porter's Five Forces model. The strategies were formulated to address the identified challenges and opportunities, based on competitive forces: rivalry between competitors, threat of new entrants, bargaining power of buyers, bargaining power of suppliers and threat of substitute products.

Proposals for strategic action, based on the challenges and opportunities identified in markets A, B and C, are presented in Table 16:

ACTION	PROPOSAL
<b>Suppliers' Bargaining Power</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cooperate between markets A, B and C to purchase in a network, with a view to mitigating the impact of suppliers' bargaining power and reducing freight costs;</li> <li>- Diversify partnerships for product supply;</li> <li>- Expand the variety of products offered to meet consumer needs and preferences.</li> </ul>
<b>Rivalidade entre Concorrentes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase physical space and modernize the establishment's facilities to accommodate more products and improve the customer shopping experience;</li> <li>- Implement strategies to maintain and increase the number of customers, such as loyalty programs, special promotions, events, partnerships with other local companies and improvements in customer service;</li> <li>- Invest in the market's facade to attract consumers' attention and improve the establishment's image.</li> <li>- Invest in exhibition and sales infrastructure to highlight products and stimulate sales;</li> <li>- Monitoring and adjusting strategies in response to competitors' actions can help maintain competitiveness and retain customers;</li> <li>- Maintain competitive prices to ensure market attractiveness in relation to competitors.</li> </ul>
<b>Threat of new entrants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establishing solid relationships with distribution channels or controlling exclusive channels can make it difficult for new competitors to reach customers;</li> <li>- Building a loyal customer base and a strong brand can make it difficult for new competitors to gain market share;</li> <li>- Experience accumulated over time can create a competitive advantage that is difficult for new entrants to replicate.</li> </ul>
<b>Buyers' bargaining power</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Offering discounts or additional benefits to customers who purchase in large volume can encourage loyalty and reduce buyers' bargaining power;</li> <li>- Identifying less price-sensitive customer segments and directing marketing and sales efforts to these segments can reduce pressure on prices;</li> <li>- Use customer relationship management systems to better understand customer needs and preferences, allowing for a more personalized offer and better relationship management.</li> </ul>
<b>Threat of substitute products</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developing unique products or services with high perceived value can reduce buyers' bargaining power, as they have fewer comparable options;</li> <li>- Constantly invest in innovation and maintain a competitive advantage over substitutes.</li> </ul>

Frameworks 16. Proposals for strategic actions

Source: Prepared by the author (2024).

Actions based on Porter's Five Forces can be important for small markets, as they offer an analytical framework for understanding the dynamics of competition in their sector, as well

as developing effective strategies to compete more effectively. By applying these actions, companies can identify their competitive advantages, weaknesses, and opportunities; This allows them to develop specific strategies to face the competition and achieve long-term success.

#### 4.2.3 Suggestion for implementing the proposed actions

To implement the actions mentioned, it is suggested that two forms be adopted: (i) the first involves individual actions for each market and (ii) the second, collective actions between the three markets.

In the case of individual shares for each market, recommended shares are presented in the specific tables for each market. Frameworks 17 presents the actions to be carried out by market A, together with the execution proposals. In addition, there is the suggested time for carrying out each action.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>EXECUTION TIME</b>
<b>Keep customers</b>	6 months
<b>Retain employees</b>	1 year
<b>Analyze competitors</b>	Immediate
<b>Service</b>	2 months
<b>Reduce shipping costs</b>	Immediate

Frameworks 17. Proposals for executing market A actions

Source: Prepared by the author (2024).

In short, actions such as keeping payments up to date and reducing shipping costs should be treated as immediate priorities, while improvements in facilities, service and differentiation from competitors can be planned and implemented over time, according to a realistic schedule.

In Frameworks 18, the actions planned to be carried out in market B are listed, accompanied by suggestions on how to carry them out, as well as the recommended period for carrying out each of these activities.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>EXECUTION TIME</b>
<b>Keep payments on time</b>	Immediate

<b>Improve facilities</b>	6 months
<b>Improve service</b>	Bimonthly
<b>Differentiation from competitors</b>	2 months
<b>Reduce shipping costs</b>	Immediate

Frameworks 18. Proposals for executing market B actions

Source: Prepared by the author (2024).

The proposals for implementing actions for market B demonstrate a balanced and strategic approach to facing challenges and taking advantage of opportunities for business improvement. The defined schedule is adapted to the specific needs of the market and can be implemented.

In Frameworks 19, the actions planned to be carried out in market C are detailed, together with the proposals for carrying out each of them and the recommended period for carrying them out.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>EXECUTION TIME</b>
<b>Manter os clientes</b>	6 months
<b>Melhorar o atendimento</b>	Immediate
<b>Melhoria contínua</b>	2 months

Frameworks 19. Proposals for executing market C actions

Source: Prepared by the author (2024).

The proposed actions for market C demonstrate a balanced approach between short-term actions and medium-term strategies to promote business growth and sustainability. The focus on retaining customers, improving service, and striving for continuous excellence reflects a commitment to quality and long-term success.

In the case of collective market actions, recommended actions are proposed in Frameworks 20. This lists the activities planned to be carried out in markets A, B and C, accompanied by suggestions on how to carry them out, as well as the recommended time for carrying them out. of each of these activities.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>EXECUTION TIME</b>
<b>Keep customers</b>	1 year
<b>Establish solid relationships with customers</b>	1 year

<b>Offer discounts or benefits</b>	Immediate
<b>Identify less price-sensitive customer segments</b>	Immediate
<b>Use customer relationship management systems</b>	1 year
<b>Reduce freight costs</b>	6 months
<b>Online shopping</b>	6 months
<b>Diversify suppliers</b>	6 months
<b>Expand the variety of products</b>	6 months
<b>Facility improvements</b>	1 year
<b>Increase physical space</b>	2 year
<b>Invest in the facade</b>	2 months
<b>Invest in infrastructure</b>	1 year
<b>Maintain competitive prices</b>	Immediate
<b>Develop unique products or services</b>	Immediate
<b>Invest in innovation constantly</b>	Immediate
<b>Monitor and adjust strategies</b>	Immediate

Frameworks 20. Proposals for executing market actions A, B and C

Source: Prepared by the author (2024).

The proposals for implementing actions for markets A, B and C reflect a comprehensive and strategic approach to face challenges and take advantage of opportunities for business improvement. The execution time for each action was carefully planned to ensure effective implementation and achievement of the established objectives.

The importance of involving employees in meetings as determined by market managers is highlighted; Furthermore, it is crucial to create customer feedback channels and continually adapt strategies in response to market demands, attitudes that are emphasized as key elements for the successful implementation of suggested actions. In short, if the proposed improvements are implemented correctly, markets A, B and C can be structured to face environmental challenges and maintain their competitiveness in the long term.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

This work aimed to analyze and propose strategies so that small markets A, B and C in the city of Ramilândia - PR become competitive. Although each market has particular situations, the problems they face are common. Therefore, the implementation of strategic action proposals not only combats the immediate challenges faced by the markets, but also establishes solid foundations for future growth, guaranteeing, if put into practice, their competitiveness and sustainability over time.

The proposals for strategic actions resulting from the research carried out reveal a keen understanding of the challenges faced by markets A, B and C, together with pragmatic solutions to overcome them. The strategies outlined aim to not only provide a competitive advantage, but also improve operational efficiency and increase customer satisfaction.

The development of intervention proposals for markets A, B and C, based on Porter's Five Forces, reflects a strategic approach to face challenges and explore opportunities present in the competitive environment. By considering factors such as rivalry between competitors, threat of new entrants, bargaining power of buyers, bargaining power of suppliers and threat of substitute products, the proposed strategies seek to promote business competitiveness and sustainability.

Therefore, implementing these proposals not only strengthens the competitive position of markets A, B and C, but also prepares them to achieve long-term sustainable success through proactive management of the forces that influence their operating environment. After completion of the survey, individual feedback was provided to the markets, including the proposed actions. Managers are already carrying out some of these actions and obtaining positive results.

It is necessary to be alert to possible difficulties in implementing the proposed actions, due to cultural issues of market owners, adherence to joint actions to be adopted, the fact that markets are competitive and, at the same time, cooperative, and adherence to collaborators to the change project, among others.

It is suggested, as future research, that a benchmarking analysis be carried out with similar markets in other regions to identify best practices and insights that can be applied to the markets in Ramilândia, Paraná. In addition, an analysis of emerging trends in the consumer goods market can be carried out, both locally and globally, to identify future opportunities and challenges that could impact small markets, such as those in Ramilândia. These suggestions can

provide a solid basis for future research that seeks to improve the competitiveness of small markets and address uncertainties in the consumer goods market.

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## APPENDIX A – INTERVIEWEE CONSENT TERMS



### CONSENT TERMS AND PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH

Through this agreement, I declare that I accept to participate in the research entitled **COMPETITIVE STRATEGIES FOR SMALL MARKETS IN RAMILÂNDIA – PR.** This research is the responsibility of researcher Daiani Stahl, student of the Postgraduate Program in Administration at the State University of Western Paraná (Unioeste), of the Professional Master's Degree in Administration (Line: Strategy and Competitiveness), conducted under the supervision and guidance of Professor Doctor Ronaldo Bulhões.

As a research participant, I, on my own initiative, declare that I agree to be interviewed, one or more times by the researcher, in a previously defined location, format and date, allowing the recording and complete transcription of the interviews and text for analysis and interpretation of the researcher. I also authorize publicly disclosing my name as well as the trade name of the company I represent along with the research results.

The researcher undertakes to use the information only for the purposes of this research. Therefore, the data obtained in the interviews will be used exclusively for academic purposes to answer the aforementioned research question, and therefore there will be no commercial, profit-making purpose.

As this is the purest expression of the truth, I declare, for all necessary purposes, my perception and experience of the facts investigated in this master's thesis.

Ramilândia, \_\_\_\_ December 2023.

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Fantasy name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Whatsapp: \_\_\_\_\_

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**INTERVIEWEE'S SIGNATURE (A)**

## **APPENDIX B – APPLIED RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **INTERVIEW SCRIPT**

Questionnaire applied during the semi-structured interview, in markets A, B and C.

- 1 - How many years has the market existed?
- 2 - What are the main difficulties faced?  
-
- 3 – What payment methods are offered to customers?
- 4 - Which market do you consider the main competitor?
- 5 - In your opinion, what could be improved in the company and how could it be done?
- 6 - Would you shop together with other markets, looking for lower prices?
- 7 - Would you like to highlight any issue relevant to the market that has not been questioned?

Thanks!