

MANAGEMENT SKILLS FOR THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF AN ECUADORIAN COFFEE SHOP

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this article is to evaluate the most effective managerial skills to promote the internationalization of an Ecuadorian coffee shop; it reflects on the natural cultural and regulatory barriers that exist, as well as the need to innovate in the supply of products and services in terms of tastes and preferences in other countries. The purpose is to make the results visible in order to show the skills required to take on the challenge of internationalization. Attention is focused on the following dimensions: Management skills, internationalization and management skills for internationalization. The methodology is of mixed approach, using information gathering instruments such as: semi-structured interview and survey, being also documentary, field and non-experimental. The results show that cultural diversity, differentiating trends and new technologies turn out to be important in internationalization, demanding new ways for success, very different from the already known managerial skills. As for the conclusions, they emphasize the need for managers whose management skills are disruptive, generating innovative proposals and capable of generating changes in a new market.

Keywords: Cafeteria, managerial skills, internationalization

INTRODUCTION

In Latin America, there are countless examples of the internationalization of brands, products or processes. And it could be said that a good part of them are successful. But what makes them successful? Beyond speculating on the importance of the brand, the business trajectory and the history of the organization itself, it can be considered that there is the component that gives rise to this research that can be decisive when implementing internationalization strategies: Management skills.

Managerial skills represent those skills that every manager, director or those who have high leadership positions possess, which allows them to give an adequate strategic direction to the company or organization to which they belong. These skills can be innate (they are part of the human being), and others as part of a learning process (including one's own experiences). Undoubtedly, today every business organization is committed to having managers and directors with managerial skills to be able to face the future, and especially the new trends that occur in the markets (national and international). The latter makes companies begin to focus their interest on those with a managerial profile with a high

concentration of skills for the internationalization of their products, or marketing processes. Discovering this situation is the great challenge of many organizations.

Among the theorists consulted, it is mentioned about the existence (already demonstrated) of two categories (name given by the author of this work) of skills that are imposed in the managerial context: Hard Skills and Soft Skills. Both are of utmost importance to find the necessary connection between one's own skill and the internationalization strategy. As is well known, hard skills (*hard skills*) they are those that are part of the techniques of the professional individual (linguistics, oral and written expression) that allow them to successfully develop their work; Regarding soft skills ([*soft skills*](#)) These are reflected in good communication, resilience, teamwork, leadership, being proactive, among others no less important.

Based on the new trends in the global market, companies are beginning to think about their strategy on how to make their way into another market(s), other than the local one; deciding between setting up as a foreign company in a country other than that of its origin; this first instance seems to be more complex due to the dimension it represents: substantial investment, reliable and solvent internal partners, educated market for the product to be offered, different legal and fiscal regulations, among other variables of great relevance. On the other hand, there would be the transfer of rights to use their brand and business model (franchise) to other companies, which means that the risks of the first mode are exponentially minimized. A brand is a mental construction that is nourished by the experiences and perceptions of consumers, transforming itself into an entity with a life of its own. The brand is an emotional bridge between the company and the consumer, allowing the latter to identify with and connect with the values and personality of the consumer. (Baskin, 2020, p.220)

Taking the path of franchising implies, for example, applying a kind of business logic: 1. Taking advantage of the opportunities of expanded markets; 2.- Diversify products and markets to face international competition; 3.- Distribute the risk of being in a single market (because the market is the world); 4.- Need to integrate into the world market due to the globalization of the economy; and, 5.- Ensure the long-term survival of the company. In Latin America, there is a diversity of franchises, among the most visible (the North American ones are imposed) are *McDonalds*, *KFC*, *Marriott*, *Starbuck* among others; in Latin America, Mercado Libre and Juan Valdez Café stand out, the latter being an inspiration for other companies of the same commercial procedure.

For the purposes of this research, it is initially intended to explore the managerial skills that allow determining the most convenient international markets for internationalization, and since the research takes place in the Ecuadorian context, the researcher proposes to work as a case study an Ecuadorian cafeteria (today converted into a national franchise, and whose name is kept confidential). It is expected that the strategic components that emerge from this research will allow it to be replicable to companies with similar business activity.

Throughout the research, the following questions emerged: What are the most effective management skills that allow promoting the internationalization of an Ecuadorian cafeteria? What management skills allow determining the most convenient international markets for the internationalization of an Ecuadorian coffee shop? What kind of innovative

proposals does an Ecuadorian cafeteria present for its internationalization? What is the strategic intention of an Ecuadorian coffee shop with its internationalization?

This has allowed the following objectives to be set [General objective]: To evaluate the most effective management skills that allow promoting the internationalization of an Ecuadorian coffee shop, having as specific objectives: OE1: To identify the management skills that allow determining the most convenient international markets for the internationalization of an Ecuadorian coffee shop; OE2: Describe the innovative proposals of an Ecuadorian coffee shop for its internationalisation, and OE3: Analyse the strategic intention of an Ecuadorian coffee shop with its internationalisation.

Within the route of theoretical consultations, there is an encounter with Katz's skills model, which differentiates three fundamental categories that every manager must possess: Conceptual, technical and human. See.

Conceptual: They are associated with strategic thinking skills, they refer to a manager's ability to understand and analyze abstract and systematic situations, that is, (González et al, 2022, p.592). *Techniques:* They are associated with knowledge and experience in a specific area and are usually acquired through training and training (Artieda et al., 2021, p.153). *Human:* Also known as interpersonal, they refer to the ability that managers have to interact, communicate, and work effectively with other people. These include leadership skills, conflict resolution, teamwork, effective communication, and empathy. (Cárdenas & Neyra, 2021, p.735)

Based on the above positions, and analyzed from the business context, it is necessary for managers to have solid competencies in process management to effectively direct the design, implementation and continuous improvement of the organization's systems and procedures.

Business internationalization

Internationalization is another of the vital axes of the research. This may become simply a target, because managers see how other companies in their industry make decisions to try or impact the buyer. In general, there are good results when the decision to internationalize is made, such as improving the reputation of the company, and the experience and ability to make decisions. Let's look at some theoretical positions.

Internationalization is the process through which a company projects the development of its economic activities within a global context, generating flows of commercial, financial, and technological exchange in countries other than its country of origin (Salazar-Araujo, 2023, p.1). This process involves not only the export of goods and services, but also the adaptation of marketing, sales, and management strategies to different cultural and economic contexts. It can be added that it represents the process through which a company projects the development of its economic activities within a global context, generating flows of commercial, financial and technological exchange in countries other than its country of origin. (Salazar-Araujo, 2023, p.1)

1.1 Theoretical Models of Internationalization

To better understand the internationalization process, it is useful to consider several theoretical models that explain how and why companies internationalize.

1.1.1. *Uppsala Model*

This model is based on the identification of common growth patterns, based on an evolutionary sequence based on the accumulation of knowledge and experience in international markets over time, distinguishing four stages within this process, starting with companies that do not carry out any regular export activity; then they initiate export activities through independent representatives or agents; the establishment of subsidiaries abroad continues; and finally they establish factories or production units abroad. (Salazar-Araujo, 2023, p.9)

Born Global Company Model

The organizational processes developed by these companies depend to a large extent on ICTs, relying on various technological tools for management to achieve their international objectives. These technologies enable low-cost global communications and the acquisition of market and other data from around the world. (Salazar-Araujo, 2023, p.9)

1.1.2. *Competitive Advantage Model*

The proposal of this model is based on the fact that international trade activities contribute to increasing the productivity of a country, facilitating its specialization in those sectors and industries where its companies are more productive, also recognizing that international trade can be a threat factor in the increase of the productivity of the national industry. given that it is at the expense of international standards (Salazar-Araujo, 2023, p.10)

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The approach is a mixed methodology, which is represented by a combination of the qualitative and quantitative approaches. Qualitatively, because an instrument such as the in-depth interview will be used, subsequently requiring an interpretative analysis by the researcher. As for the quantitative approach, by the use of a Likert scale-type instrument to know the impressions of the respondents in relation to the topic addressed. This information collection strategy (Likert survey) contributed to the collection of statistical and numerical data, which facilitated the descriptive analysis concerning the proposed objectives, in which the workers of an Ecuadorian cafeteria expressed their appreciation in relation to the possibilities of internationalization of the company.

The type of research is documentary and bibliographic, which was based on the review of official websites, reference texts (physical, digital and/or electronic), scientific articles, official documents, among others. Naturalistic (Field), since a strategy of direct participant observation was developed, in which the headquarters of an Ecuadorian cafeteria were visited, being in this case, one in the canton of Portoviejo and one in the canton of Manta, both belonging to the Province of Manabí (Ecuador); and, finally, the research is non-experimental, since there is no manipulation of the variables during the research.

Two types of methods are applied in research: Inductive and deductive. As for the inductive, it is opportune in this research because it allows identifying elements that are typical of a knowledge that is born from daily managerial praxis and from the experience collected, therefore, attention has been focused on an Ecuadorian cafeteria in terms of the originality of its business idea and that may well result as an anchor for its internalization.

From the deductive point of view, it is applied in this research because it is based on proven knowledge, that is, the consultation of theories and positions on managerial skills and their influence to give viability to internationalization. Here the theory has been valued, giving a process of constant comparison on the theory itself and the strategic intention of an Ecuadorian cafeteria.

The target population has been the workers of the Sweet & Creamy Cafeterias , in which surveys (Likert scale type) and in-depth interviews have been applied to the workers and managers of the cafeteria.

RESULTS

The results in the research represent part of the findings. Its presentation is given after applying steps and methods according to a process of analysis that allows approaching, from the most objective way, the existing reality.

Interpretation of what was expressed in the semi-structured interviews

Among the questions asked to the interviewees are: 1.- Does the Ecuadorian cafeteria have the managerial skills to venture into international markets for its internationalization? Does the Ecuadorian cafeteria have innovative proposals to assume a possible internationalization? Does the Ecuadorian cafeteria have a strategic direction for its internationalization?

As is well known, what was expressed by the interviewees represents for themselves an interpretation of their own reality. In order to make use of objectivity in her appraisals, the researcher makes use of an analysis strategy very typical of qualitative methodology, known as Grounded Theory, through which the use of a tool widely used for these cases is allowed, and which is known in the world of science as hermeneutics, that is, "interpret what is interpreted". This can be seen in table 4 of this document: *Axial Categorization Matrix*.

The matrix includes part of the discourse (for space reasons) of the interviewees, who with a time limit of twenty minutes each, of their perceptions on the questions posed, requesting the greatest honesty, objectivity, and precision of their words since they are shared in this research, safeguarding sensitive information for themselves, if required by the interviewee. This matrix is justified since its applicability facilitates the systematization of the interviewees' discursive patterns.

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The matrix includes part of the discourse (for reasons of space) of the interviewees. This matrix is justified since its applicability facilitates the systematization of the interviewees' discursive patterns . Below, part of the findings are shown in the axiological matrix called the *Axial Matrix of Categorization* (Table 1), and the *Matrix of Discourse Interpretation* (Table 2), both of which, for reasons of space, are presented in a summarized manner

Table 1.
Axial Matrix Categorization

Description			
1. Man			
Questions to	In vivo code	Sub category	Family Category
INTERVIEWED			
Does the Ecuadorian coffee shop have the managerial skills to venture into international markets for its internationalization?	-Mapping consumer behavior -Global culture	Market and customer knowledge	Skills
Does the Ecuadorian cafeteria have innovative proposals to assume a possible internationalization?	-Know how to negotiate with foreign partners	Forward-looking view	Management Internationalization
Does the Ecuadorian cafeteria have a strategic direction for its internationalization?	-Ability to anticipate -Calculated financial risk-taking -Team builder -Strategic alliances -Reading trends - Familiaritywithtechnology	Adopting a global perspective Vision of new opportunities	Strategies Internationalization Model of management Business

Note. This matrix shows how data emerge and how categorization is generated, as a result of the association between family components (2025)

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4. Management skills for internationalization
 - 4.1. These are the skills that the senior management of a company has to lead strategies and processes that consolidate the position of the organization in the international arena; maintaining a clear understanding of the current global context.
 - 4.1.1. Business management with an international focus
 - 4.1.2. Mastery of the technologies and digital media present
 - 4.1.3. Strategic vision of the economic, political and social environment at a global level and its interaction with the company
 5. Internationalization
 - 5.1. It represents a process by which the company develops a part of its activities, specifically in the placement of its products or services in other countries, for commercialization. Innovation and differentiation play an important role in its offer.
 - 5.1.1. Products and services that generate a valuable experience for customers
 - 5.1.2. Service differentiating itself from other international brands: Digitization of its services (apps)
 - 5.1.3. Fairprice-quality ratio
 6. Internationalization Strategies
 - 6.1. Those forms of action for the implementation of actions aimed at the internationalization of a product, service or business brand, under a strategic objective that responds to the Why internationalize? What is sought to be achieved?
 - 6.1.1. Starting from the business management model (Presence, adding reputation, dividing production into different countries)
 - 6.1.2. Decide on the most convenient route (Export; Franchises; Direct Investment, E-commerce Strategy and Digitalization)
 - 6.1.3. Factors to consider: Available financial resources, reliable partners, host country's interest in foreign investment
 - 6.1.4. Destination country: Inputs and human talent available; economic and legal aspects; Tax structure
-

Table 2. Discourse Interpretation Matrix

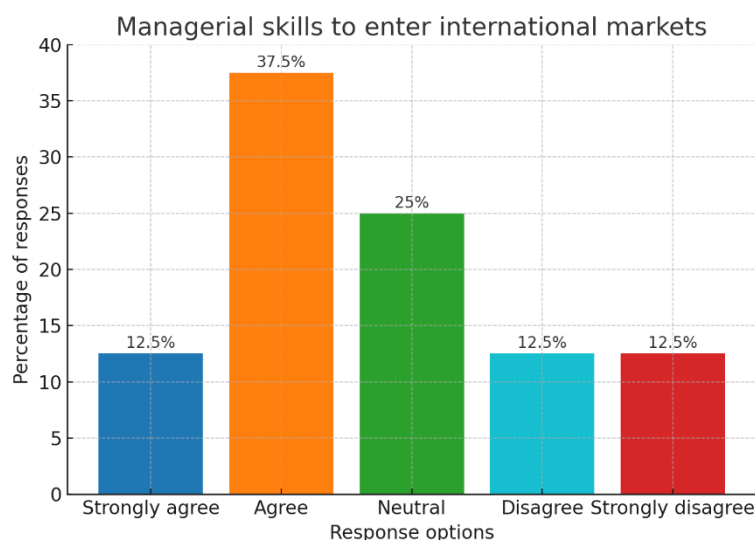
Note. Matrix showing the researcher's interpretation based on the interviewees' narrative, triangulated with the thematic axes of the research (2025)

Survey Analysis (Likert Scale)

For reasons of space, only two results have been selected with their respective graphs, to illustrate part of the findings found

1. The managerial skills of the directors of an Ecuadorian coffee shop contribute to a business management with a global focus that allows them to venture into international markets.

Figure 1.
Management skills for internationalization



Note. The numbers to the left of the colon represent the number of contributors who chose each option, and the percentages to the right represent the proportion of total responses.

As shown in Figure 1, those who consider themselves to be in total agreement and those who agree add up to fifty percent (50%) of the respondents, which shows the confidence that this group of collaborators has in the managerial capacity (skills) of their managers to be able to venture into international markets, however, and no less important, 25% of the total (2) consider the opposite of having the conditions to venture into international markets, this can affect the strategies that they want to implement since they must start from conviction to face a challenge such as internationalization, and finally, there are the neutrals (25%) who surely due to ignorance prefer not to give an opinion.

2. There are innovative proposals by the management of an Ecuadorian cafeteria that facilitate a process of internationalization

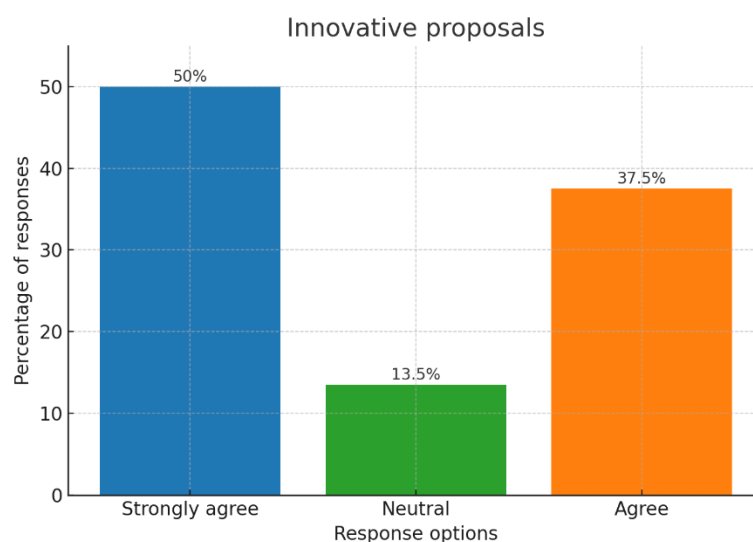


Figure 2
Innovative proposals for internationalization

Note. The numbers to the left of the colon express the number of contributors who chose each option, and the percentages to the right symbolize the proportion of the total responses.

Figure 2 shows that 87.50% (4 and 3, respectively) total 87.50% (4 and 3, respectively) in that they consider that the D&C Cafeteria has innovative proposals to be able to venture into the international market, this becomes an advantage, therefore, the conviction of the collaborators makes them intuit that there are differentiating conditions in service and competitive products; 13.5% assume a neutral position, for which it is understood that they do not want to give an opinion on the matter.

DISCUSSION

The discussion in this research work takes place on the premise of how the findings/results are interpreted by the researcher, starting from the initial hypothesis, to the triangulation of the theories, information and data collected.

From the researcher's perception, in the interviews applied to the management of an Ecuadorian cafeteria, located in the cantons of Portoviejo and Manta, they maintain a kind of reasonable doubt as to a possible success of the cafeteria in international markets, given the characteristics and conditions that in a certain way in relation to managerial skills they must possess to assume the challenge of internationalization; however, the collaborators with their answers in the survey, are more optimistic about the possibility of venturing into foreign latitudes.

The theory of managerial skills, explained in different positions, states that it represents a set of skills on the part of a human talent, with managerial functions, which

allow them to develop and manage situations and processes linked to the company's strategy, with outstanding organization and knowledge. For which, among what has been observed, studied and interpreted, the Ecuadorian cafeteria, if it wants to take on the challenge of venturing into other markets, must have managers/directors with enough experience and knowledge to trace and make viable the internationalization route in a successful way, or at least, with the minimum risk.

On the other hand, from the researcher's point of view, there is no clear innovation proposal by an Ecuadorian coffee shop that would allow it to face internationalization successfully. Locally, it is well received, and is recognized among the most successful ventures, being found in certain parts of Ecuador, but its organizational structure does not prove to be sufficient to become corporate; which, without a doubt, is a disadvantage in relation to brands already positioned in international markets. To take on an internationalization challenge, you must have an innovative proposal that makes the consumer think about what they can experience when identifying a product that is high consumption, but that is different in its process, service or usefulness.

In the context of strategic intention, it can be considered that the most viable internationalization strategy is that of franchising, but for this, it is necessary to act (organization) in a corporate way. To do this, it is necessary to have managers with managerial skills beyond those usually known (leadership, communicator, motivator, trainer of work teams, among others), whose vision in prospect allows them to anticipate changes, with a good reading of the trends and needs of the market itself, with global and cultural knowledge of businesses, and especially that of cafeterias; being bold in establishing commercial relationships with strategic partners who are knowledgeable about the business, as well as strategic alliances with those who can give viability to the entry into the local market where they want to venture. All of the above involves a prior diagnosis, whose initial objective is exploration, identifying the culture and the unmet needs of the consumer in relation to the product to be offered.

CONCLUSIONS

In order to reach objective conclusions and with the intention of maintaining relevance, the objectives proposed in the research in which their scope is shown are considered.

Regarding *OE.1 Management skills that allow determining the most convenient international markets for internationalization*, the research has concluded that, if the management of the Dulce & Cremoso Cafeteria decides to address the issue of internationalization for the brand, it must consider that its human talent must have disruptive management skills. The traditionally known managerial skills (Leadership, teamwork, conflict resolution, communication, among others) are still important; but, today new managerial skills are added that seek to respond to the complexities of the globalized world, and of course take advantage of the changes that are generated as a result of the always *new technology*, as well as the constant search for differentiation. You must find a *market discoverer*, capable of having a broad intercultural communication and at the same time focused on the destination country. Nowadays, *Networking* is a very important skill to develop and sustain global collaboration networks between partners and business allies,

obtaining data and relevant information on local markets in other countries, as well as visualizing new business opportunities.

On the other hand, for the *OE.2 To describe the innovative proposals of the Dulce y Cremoso cafeteria for its organizational internationalization*, no innovative proposals are observed by the Dulce & Cremoso Cafeteria, which represents a weakness in case of thinking about the internalization of the business model. To this end, if it takes on the challenge, this cafeteria must seriously consider hiring for senior management a human talent that has a full knowledge of what it means to present innovative proposals for foreign markets, whose prospective vision allows it to form work teams focused on new technological trends and contact with customers; trying to generate expectations, and in a certain way "*consumption needs*" so that the market can feel that there are other options that satisfy these needs, generating the sensation of a quality product or service, in addition to feeling that the brand represents a unique art and flavor in its kind, making it feel that it is an ideal meeting point to share with family members, friends, partners or spend a moment in solitude to reflect on the future; thanks to a warm, modern atmosphere and a sense of respect for the country's own culture.

And, finally, in relation to the *OE.3 To analyze the strategic intention of the Dulce y Cremoso coffee shop with its internationalization*, it is concluded, after establishing the analysis strategy, which consisted of the triangulation of the information collected and available, it can be deduced that the Sweet & Creamy Coffee Shop does not have a defined strategic intention to advance a process of internationalization of its brand. A good atmosphere is perceived in terms of confidence in what can be achieved in an internationalization of the cafeteria, a situation seen by the collaborators; however, we agree with the perception of the managers/managers of the cafeterias consulted, that there are not enough managerial skills and strategies on the part of senior management to embark on the path of internationalization.

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