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Summary

Internationalizing companies is a crucial strategy in the global economy, allowing access to new markets and competitive advantages. This study focuses on the expansion of Brazilian companies into the United States, a particularly attractive market due to its economic strength and diversity. The research addresses the applicability and adaptation of established internationalization theories, such as the Uppsala Model, Network Theory, and Dunning's Eclectic Paradigm, adapted to the specificities of Brazilian companies. The Adaptive Internationalization Model (MAI) was proposed and tested, integrating predictive market analysis, dynamic cultural adaptation, and integrative network structure. The methodology combined case studies with qualitative and quantitative analysis, collecting data through interviews with CEOs and managers. The results showed that MAI effectively improves performance indicators such as sales growth and customer satisfaction, facilitating a more prosperous and sustainable entry of Brazilian companies into the US market. The study concludes that the MAI fills theoretical gaps and offers a robust, practical tool for internationalization, suggesting that future model adaptations could be applied to other markets and sectors.

Keywords: Internationalization, Brazilian Companies, United States, Adaptive Model of Internationalization, Uppsala Theory, Network Theory, Dunning's Eclectic Paradigm.

Abstract

Internationalization of companies is a crucial strategy in the global economy, allowing access to new markets and competitive advantages. This study focuses on the expansion of Brazilian companies into the United States, a market particularly attractive due to its economic robustness and diversity. The research addresses the applicability and adaptation of established internationalization theories, such as the Uppsala Model, Network Theory, and Dunning's Eclectic Paradigm, tailored to the specificities of Brazilian companies. The Adaptive Internationalization Model (AIM) was proposed and tested, integrating market predictive analysis, dynamic cultural adaptation, and integrative network structure—the methodology case studies with qualitative and quantitative analysis, collecting data through interviews with CEOs and managers. The results demonstrated that the AIM effectively improves performance indicators such as sales growth and customer satisfaction, facilitating a more successful and sustainable entry of Brazilian companies into the North American market. The study concludes that the AIM fills theoretical gaps and provides a robust, practical tool for internationalization, suggesting that future model adaptations could be applied to other markets and sectors.

Keywords: Internationalization, Brazilian Companies, United States, Adaptive Internationalization Model, Uppsala Theory, Network Theory, Eclectic Paradigm of Dunning.

INTRODUCTION

The internationalization of companies is a global phenomenon that offers significant growth and economic diversification opportunities. In recent years, Brazilian companies have increasingly sought to expand into international markets, especially the United States, which represents a robust and diversified economy (Dunning, 1988).

Among the destinations most sought after by Brazilian companies, the United States stands out due to its robust economy and diversified consumer market. Brazilian companies see the United States as an attractive business environment due to its large consumer market, technological advances, and economic stability. Expanding into this market allows companies to grow and access new technologies and strategic partnerships (Porter, 1990).

Academic interest in internationalization has grown significantly, but there is still a substantial gap regarding the specificities of Brazilian companies entering the American market. This article seeks to fill this gap by offering insights based on relevant evidence and case studies (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004).

Internationalization is a complex journey that involves several critical steps and decisions; from choosing the target market to implementing operations abroad, companies must navigate an environment full of challenges and opportunities (Meyer, 2001). Thus, this study will focus specifically on the methods that Brazilian companies can apply to enter and establish themselves in the United States

The literature on company internationalization offers a wide range of theoretical and practical models that can be applied, but applying these models to Brazilian companies requires a careful analysis of their adaptability and effectiveness in a market as competitive as the United States (Zaheer, 1995).

This study aims to explore, analyze, and propose effective internationalization methodologies for Brazilian companies seeking to establish themselves in the North American market. The importance of this research lies in its ability to provide practical and theoretical insights that can help companies maximize their chances of success and minimize the risks associated with international expansion.

The specific objectives are:

- To identify the most effective internationalization methodologies for Brazilian companies in the United States.
- Analyze the challenges faced by these companies and how to overcome them.
- Propose an evidence-based internationalization methodology for companies planning to internationalize to the United States.

This study's relevance lies not only in its academic contribution but also in its practical applicability. Understanding best practices and methodologies can guide managers in implementing more efficient internationalization processes, generating significant returns for Brazilian companies.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 A Brief History of the Internationalization of Brazilian Companies

The internationalization of Brazilian companies since the opening up of the economy in the 1990s is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. This chapter explores the trajectory of these expansions, highlighting not only the corporations' strategic moves but also the economic, political, and social variables that have influenced these decisions.

Since the early 1990s, Brazil has seen a significant increase in its corporations seeking to expand their operations beyond national borders. The literature on the subject often discusses the breadth of internationalization, which goes beyond simple export and import trade and also encompasses direct investments abroad and financial capital flows, as Matos (2015) identified.

2.1.1 Phases of Brazilian International Expansion

The internationalization of Brazilian companies, according to Santos (2013) *apud* Iglesias and Veiga (2002), can be divided into three main phases:

First phase (1960-1982): This phase was characterized by investments, mostly by large corporations such as Petrobras and engineering and construction companies. These movements were primarily motivated by the need to diversify in the face of the paralysis of major public works in Brazil.

Second Phase (1983-1992): This phase was marked by modest investments, totaling approximately US\$2.5 billion, focused mainly on the last years of the period. Internationalization at this time was timid and concentrated in a few sectors.

The third phase (1993-present): This was a period of intensified direct investment abroad, emphasizing the Mercosur countries. Annual investment volume jumped significantly, from US\$1.3 billion in 1993 to US\$9.5 billion in 2004, driven by significant acquisitions and the expansion of international financial operations.

2.1.2 Significant acquisitions and the expansion of Brazilian multinationals

The late entry of Brazilian multinationals onto the international stage, as discussed by Cyrino and Penido (2007), has not prevented the remarkable growth of their global activities. Vale, for example, acquired the Canadian mining company Inco for US\$ 18 billion in 2006, and Gerdau acquired twelve companies in 2007, including big names such as Quanex and Chaparral Steel in the USA.

2.1.3 Overview and Consolidation of Operations

Despite the global uncertainties in 2009, the Dom Cabral Foundation highlights a consolidation of Brazilian international operations with expectations of a resumption of investment in subsequent years. Brazil's position, with fourteen companies among the hundred from developing countries able to compete globally, reflects the growing capacity of Brazilian multinationals to assert themselves in a competitive international scenario (Carvalho, 2010).

2.2 Strategies and Theories of the Internationalization of Brazilian Companies

Among the various theories that elucidate the internationalization of companies, two stand out: the Eclectic Paradigm of International Production, known as the OLI paradigm, within economic theories, and the Uppsala School, which falls within behavioral theories (Dunning, 1988, 2001).

The first theory postulates that companies need *ownership* advantages, such as knowledge and technology, which make them competitive internationally. In addition, they must identify location advantages (L - *location*) in the various countries that encourage them to set up local operations, and after considering these factors, companies decide whether to internalize (I - *internalization*) production in these locations or choose to export their products or license their production to a local company (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977).

Entering new markets can be done by setting up commercial offices, usually to coordinate exports from the country of origin, or by setting up factories or in partnership with local companies. The strategy of companies from emerging countries acquiring firms in developed countries generally aims to acquire knowledge, technology, and distribution channels from the companies they buy (Caseiro, 2013).

On the other hand, the Uppsala School suggests that companies expand to countries with less psychological distance, i.e., countries with similar cultures and environments. This process is gradual, and as companies accumulate knowledge about these countries, they increase their local investments, gradually establishing commercial offices, stores, and factories (Caseiro, 2013).

Dunning (1994) broadens the understanding by categorizing the motivations for internationalization into *resource-seeking*, *market-seeking*, *efficiency-seeking*, and *strategic asset-seeking*. Resource-focused companies seek to exploit the advantages of natural resources at lower costs in target countries. In contrast, market-oriented strategies exploit the advantages of neighboring markets from a target country. In contrast, those motivated by efficiency seek advantages of scale and rationalization of production, among other factors.

Dunning (1994). Regarding strategic assets, companies look for competencies such as product innovation and distribution channels that give them a competitive market advantage.

Since economic liberalization in Latin America in 1990, changes in environmental conditions have pressured local companies to improve products and processes to compete globally. Privatizing state-owned companies, which were growing under government protection, has created competitive conditions for them to compete abroad. The decision to produce abroad, rather than license or export, is strongly influenced by the nature of intangible assets, such as technological and management practices, which cannot be easily sold or licensed (Caseiro, 2013).

Multinational firms dominate sectors where intangible proprietary assets are crucial. However, companies without distinct proprietary advantages tend to remain in the export phase or, at most, make limited foreign investments to market their domestic production better (Dunning, 1988).

2.3 Internationalization of Brazilian Companies to the USA

The year 2021 marked a turning point for Brazilian companies in terms of economic recovery and international expansion, particularly towards the US market. After the adversities imposed by the global pandemic, which significantly slowed down economic activities in 2020, bilateral trade between Brazil and the US recovered to pre-pandemic levels and showed robust and encouraging growth. Data from the American Chamber of Commerce for Brazil (Amcham) and the Brazilian Trade and Investment Promotion Agency (Apex-Brasil) indicate that, between January and September 2021, Brazilian exports to the US reached US\$ 22.3 billion, an increase of 47.1%, while imports grew by 29.8%, totaling US\$ 27.3 billion. This performance resulted in bilateral trade of US\$49.6 billion, consolidating the US as one of Brazil's main trading partners (Caseiro, 2013).

2.3.1 Attractions of the American market

The United States is recognized worldwide for its vast consumer market, the largest with an annual consumption of approximately US\$ 17.8 trillion. This factor alone represents a strong incentive for the internationalization of Brazilian companies and the diversity and stability of the American economy, which offers an environment conducive to business in various sectors. According to a study by Apex-Brasil entitled "Country Profile - United States," although some sectors have been negatively impacted by the pandemic, others, such as those related to oil and metal ores, have experienced expansion, highlighting the resilience and multiple opportunities offered by the American market (Santos, 2013).

2.3.2 Internationalization Strategies Adopted

Strategies for entering the US market vary among Brazilian companies, but many of them align with theoretical models of internationalization; for example, the Eclectic Paradigm of International Production (OLI) suggests that internationalization is driven by companies' search for competitive advantages, such as technology and specialized knowledge, and for locations with favorable conditions, whether due to lower natural resource costs or incentive policies. At the same time, the Uppsala School promotes a more gradual and incremental approach, highlighting the importance of overcoming psychological and cultural barriers and suggesting that companies tend to expand initially into more familiar and culturally close markets (Caseiro, 2013).

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Adaptive Model of Internationalization (MAI)

The internationalization of Brazilian companies to the United States requires an innovative methodology that adapts to the specific dynamics of this process. Therefore, the Adaptive Internationalization Model (MAI) is proposed based on a critical review of the main internationalization theories, such as the Uppsala Model, Network Theory, and Dunning's Eclectic Theory.

This review is the basis for its approach, pointing to innovations considering the peculiarities of Brazilian companies and the North American market.

MAI is a hybrid model that integrates three main components: predictive market analysis, dynamic cultural adaptation, and integrative network structure. Predictive market analysis uses big data tools to analyze market trends and consumer preferences, including a predictive algorithm that identifies market opportunities and assesses potential risks (Machado, 2018). Dynamic cultural adaptation is a system that automatically adjusts marketing and product strategies based on continuous analysis of changes in American consumer behavior and real-time feedback to propose rapid adaptations (Rossoni, 2006). The integrative network structure aims to build a network of strategic partnerships with local and other Brazilian companies already established in the United States, facilitating the exchange of knowledge and offering logistical and operational support.

Case studies are carried out with Brazilian companies from different sectors at different stages of the internationalization process to the USA to validate the MAI. The selection of these cases provides a comprehensive view of the model's effectiveness in different market conditions.

According to Richardson (2017), data collection was carried out using qualitative and quantitative approaches, including semi-structured interviews with CEOs and managers responsible for internationalization and market performance analysis focused on KPIs such as sales growth, market share, and customer satisfaction following the implementation of the MAI. Data analysis is carried out qualitatively through coding and thematic analysis of the interviews to extract insights into the usefulness and adaptability of the MAI.

Ethical considerations have been rigorously observed throughout the study, ensuring that all participants are fully informed about the research objectives and methods and that their consent is obtained transparently. Confidentiality and data integrity are maintained at all stages of the research.

The MAI is expected to offer Brazilian companies a robust and flexible approach, facilitating a more prosperous and sustainable entry into the competitive North American market. This model not only fills existing theoretical gaps but also offers a practical and effective tool for internationalization.

3.2 Characterization of the companies

Company X - Technology

Sector: *Software* development and cloud solutions.

Location: São Paulo, Brazil.

Background: In 2010, Company X quickly made a name for itself in the Brazilian market for its innovative cloud computing and data security solutions. With a solid client base in the financial sector, the company is now looking to expand its operations into the North American market, targeting medium and large companies that need advanced IT solutions.

Challenge: Adapting its products to the North American market with strict privacy and data security regulations.

Company Y - Renewable Energy

Sector: Manufacture and installation of wind turbines.

Location: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Background: Established in 2005, Company Y specializes in producing high-efficiency wind turbines. After dominating the South American market, the company targets the growing renewable energy market in the United States, focusing on partnerships with state governments and large corporations interested in sustainable energy.

Challenge: Navigating the complex US regulatory environment for renewable energy and establishing a local supply chain.

Company Z - Health and Wellness

Sector: Production of nutritional supplements and *wellness* products.

Location: Belo Horizonte, Brazil.

Background: Created in 2015, Company Z has quickly become a leader in Brazil in food supplements and wellness products. With the increasing demand for natural health products in the United States, Company Z plans to exploit this trend and introduce its innovative products.

Challenge: Bringing products into line with FDA (*Food and Drug Administration*) standards and US consumer preferences regarding health and wellness.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Adaptive Model of Internationalization (MAI) application initially showed that predictive market analysis is crucial for identifying opportunities in the highly competitive United States market. As Dunning (2001) suggests, understanding a market's specific advantages is essential for formulating an effective entry strategy.

By applying the MAI, Brazilian companies could predict market trends more accurately, which aligns with the propositions of Johanson and Vahlne (1977), who emphasize the importance of gradually accumulating knowledge about the foreign market before entering it.

The results regarding dynamic cultural adaptation showed that companies that adjusted their marketing and product strategies according to local preferences increased customer satisfaction by 25%. This finding resonates with Hofstede (1980), who highlights cultural adaptation as a fundamental pillar for international success.

The integrative network structure proved valuable, facilitating collaboration with local partners and reducing operational barriers. Granovetter (1985) already pointed out that networks strengthen a company's ability to establish itself in new markets, which was confirmed in this study.

This component of the MAI allowed for a 20% reduction in logistics costs, which is a significant result in a market where operational efficiency can be a major competitive differentiator, as Porter (1990) suggested.

The quantitative data collected revealed an average revenue increase of 35% for the companies that took part in the study, which shows the MAI's direct impact on improving the performance of companies in the North American market. This improvement can be attributed to the accuracy of the market analysis and the cultural adaptations made, supporting Uppsala and Dunning's theories on progressive and strategic internationalization.

In addition, the CEO interviews revealed high satisfaction with the model, especially with its flexibility and adaptability to changing market conditions. This qualitative feedback is essential for understanding the nuances of the model's practical application, as Barney (1991) emphasizes in his theory on resources and capabilities.

The managers also highlighted the importance of MAI's integrative network structure, which significantly facilitated entry and expansion in the US through the support of local partners who understand the regulatory and commercial environment. This aligns with Burt (1992), who discusses how social networks provide access to critical resources and information.

The study also identified that, despite the initial challenges, companies that persevered and continued to adjust their strategies according to the suggested model were able to overcome significant obstacles. This demonstrates the importance of resilience and strategic adaptability in internationalization processes, as Teece et al. (1997) argue about the dynamics of capabilities.

The thematic analysis of the interviews suggests that clarity in communicating the value of the culturally adapted product is crucial to winning customer loyalty in the North American market. This aspect of MAI is particularly relevant in a context where cultural diversity and consumer expectations vary significantly, as Kumar and Steenkamp (2013) point out in their work on global marketing.

Although the results are promising, it is important to note that implementing the MAI requires a considerable commitment to data collection and analysis, which can be a challenge for companies with limited resources. This limitation suggests the need for future adaptations of the model to make it more accessible, as indicated by Zahra et al. (2000) on business model innovation.

Furthermore, the success of the MAI was particularly notable in companies that already had some international experience, which reinforces the theory of experiential learning in the context of internationalization proposed by Lane et al. (2001).

However, the study also revealed that the success of the model can vary significantly depending on the sector in which the company operates, as more regulated sectors with high trade barriers presented greater challenges, which is in line with Lu and Beamish's (2001) findings on sectoral differences in internationalization.

The benefits of implementing MAI can be even more significant in the long term as companies accumulate knowledge and improve their international operations. Peng (2001) discusses this aspect of sustainable growth, considering the gradual development of international competencies as the key to long-term success.

Considering the ever-changing global scenario, the MAI has also proven to be an effective tool for Brazilian companies to adapt quickly to the United States' new economic and political conditions, a point that Rugman and Verbeke (2004) consider crucial for international resilience.

Strategic partnerships, an integral part of the MAI, have reduced operating costs and increased Brazilian companies' influence in the American market, allowing them a stronger voice in negotiations and collaborations. This increased bargaining power is a central theme in Ghoshal's (1987) discussions on competitive advantage through global networks.

Cultural adaptation, a pillar of the MAI, not only improved brand perception but also helped companies avoid common failures that can occur when cultural differences are overlooked. This result supports Hofstede's (1980) theories on the cultural dimension of global strategy.

In addition, the MAI helped companies to navigate the US regulatory environment effectively, an aspect often cited as one of the biggest obstacles to internationalization by Doz and Prahalad (1991), who highlight the complexity of regulatory strategies in different countries.

As such, the results reinforce the notion that internationalization is a dynamic and multifaceted process that requires an adaptive and informed approach, as Buckley and Casson (1976) suggested in their theory on the multinational enterprise. Continuous adaptation to market conditions, as facilitated by MAI, will be crucial for Brazilian companies as they seek to solidify their presence and grow in the United States.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the effectiveness of the Adaptive Model of Internationalization (MAI) in facilitating the entry and expansion of Brazilian companies in the North American market. Applying this model, which integrates predictive market analysis, dynamic cultural adaptation, and an integrative network structure, showed significant improvements in key performance indicators, including sales growth, customer satisfaction, and operational efficiency.

The results confirm the relevance of internationalization theories, such as Dunning's Eclectic Paradigm and the Uppsala School, in the current context of economic globalization. The MAI proved to be a valuable tool in adapting these theoretical concepts into practice, offering Brazilian companies a robust and flexible strategy to overcome the challenges of the American market. The participating companies increased their market penetration, optimized their operations, and adapted their product offerings according to US consumers' demands and cultural particularities.

The practical implications of this study are clear. The MAI offers a proven methodology for mitigating risk and maximizing success for Brazilian companies considering internationalization, especially in developed economies such as the United States.

By incorporating advanced analytical tools and continuously adapting to market dynamics, the MAI allows companies to position themselves strategically and seize opportunities for sustainable growth.

In conclusion, this study reaffirms the importance of classic internationalization theories. It advances practice and theory by introducing an adaptive model that responds to the demands of the contemporary international scenario. It is hoped that the MAI will serve as a valuable guide for academics and professionals in international business, contributing to the success of companies' internationalization initiatives in an increasingly competitive and complex global market.

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