

# **The Factors that Impact the Internationalization of the Artisanal SMES of the Citrus Region of the State of Nuevo León (Theoretical Framework)**

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## **Abstract**

Hand made products (handicrafts) around the world are the expression of culture and traditions of the place where they are made; they have the characteristic of being hand -made and manufactured in small workshops. Commercializing these products stimulates tourism and provides of jobs to the local families that produce them. In our country and the rest of the world, these activity creates jobs in SMEs and there are organizations which support and promote the manufacture of handicrafts, through regulations and support programs that encourage product quality to internationalize them. In Nuevo León, state near to the border, there is a region that produces citric fruits and its geographic location is an advantage. It is proposed that quality of the product, productive capacity, logistics and the knowledge of the external market, influence the internationalization of the SMEs that manufacture handicrafts in that region.

## **Keywords**

Artisanal SMEs, Internationalization, quality product, logistics.

## **1. Introduction**

Nuevo León, a northern state in Mexico, has a variety of economic activities such as mining, manufacturing, services, etc. Most of its population is in Monterrey metropolitan area, but in the south of the state, people have economic activities with potential of growing.

According to the information provided by INEGI, population over 15 years old that receive an income over the minimum salary has increased from 124,090 in 2005 to 241,788 by the end of the first trimester on 2020.

It seems that at least the essential economic activities can cross the borders of other countries, first because quality of the products satisfies the needs of the tourists that arrive every year to the region, they take with them products for

their consumption as souvenirs, second geographical location of the region allows the products to reach the border with the United States of America faster, also, the state has highways and carriers that can be benefited with the export of the products made in the region and more research is required to present information related to this opportunities that SMEs in the region seem to have.

Together, talented local producers and the knowledge acquired by the people of the region who nowadays have access to professional education, increase the possibilities of giving to local people the possibility of trading products out of the same geographical area, enhancing the quality of life of the local families and make the existence of these businesses last longer.

### **1.1 Objectives**

Demonstrate that capacity of production, product quality logistics and the knowledge of the foreign market are the factors that allow promoting the internationalization of SMEs in the artisanal industrial sector of the citrus region of the state of Nuevo León.

## **2. Literature Review**

It is a fact that there are SMEs in the citrus region it can also be said that according to INEGI, there are specific sectors in which the SMEs of the region are good and very few has been done to help their growth further the needs that they satisfy for the tourists.

The relevance of exploring the organizational factors that help to export those goods that are manufactured in the citrus region obeys to the existence of a market out of the region, that it is known that it exists out of the region, and it is known of its existence due to tourists and the geographical location of the area.

The motive of this work is to know, through the variables, the circumstances that can be promoted for small and medium enterprises of the citrus region of the State on Nuevo León, to extend the horizon, giving the organizations and the environment where they are the chance of growing.

It is known that most of the establishments which have the possibilities of producing goods and export them, are the ones that make fruit preserves, candies, wooden appliances and snacks. There are other products that are being demanded by customers out of the region and it is known that they are accepted by the people who visit the cities in the region that is the reason why it is considered that the SMEs have to be studied.

- **Facts that contextualize the problem**

#### **Definition of handicraft**

Handicrafts are products that have a variety of purposes and sometimes are implied in the culture of the place where they are made, they can be made all by hand or with the help of tools UNESCO, dedicated to establish peace through international cooperation for education, science and culture, defines handicraft as “Handicrafts are produced by artisans, whether by hand or with the help of manual tools or mechanical means, provided that the manual contribution from the artisan is the most important component of the finished product...In its official website it is recognized as an organization with a global vision of the economic, social and cultural role of the handicrafts in the society and has programs of cooperation with organizations around the world in aid of the handicrafts. (UNESCO, 2017)

For Yassir M. Mahgoub from University of Khartoum, Sudan y Khalid M. Alsoud from University of King Faisal, Al-Hasa, Saudi Arabia, handicrafts are unique expressions of a particular culture or a community through abilities and local materials and also recognize the importance they have in the productive and export area in the developing countries. (Mahgoub & M., June 2015)

Generally, literature revised makes clear that what's observed in handicrafts around the world, is to promote the connection between cultures and traditions that in the end favors tourism, mainly in the areas far from big cities and in developing economies they represent sources of employment and the possibility to export.

In this work, handicrafts are defined as those objects, no matter the use or purpose, which were made by a person that shapes it manually, with unique characteristics and in some cases they could be part of an industrialized production process.

In Mexico, in an agreement that has the rules for the operation of FONART, handicraft is defined as “Product of cultural and community identity made with continuous manual processes helped with rudimentary tools and using native raw materials” (DOF, 2016)

- **Importance of the industry of handicrafts in the world**

Groups of people around the world, since a long time ago, have traditions and culture that differences them. Artistic and cultural displays are a variety and are peculiar in every region. In the process of preservation of the culture, traditions and knowledge they have been passing from one generation to another through time. These activities include the economic perspective of the development of society along history.

Handicrafts are not produced in mass, they can be made with the help of some tools and machines in some markets to make businesses, in the developing countries trade and export of pieces made by hand are an important economic activity. (Mahgoub & M., June 2015)

To discuss the scenario of the industry of handicrafts around the world, starting with Europe, this sector is essential for the sustainable development.

Analyzing statistics and types of enterprises, the next table shows information of some European economies:

Table 1: European Economic

	<b>0</b>	<b>1 - 9 people</b>	<b>10 - 49 people</b>	<b>50 - 249 people</b>	<b>Year</b>
Bulgaria		225,550.00	22,937.00	4,738.00	2,007.00
Austria	41,545.00	38,661.00	9,604.00	1,390.00	2,007.00
Romania	558,021.00		47,603.00	9,850.00	2,007.00
Italy		1,158,658.00	317,555.00	Not included	2,009.00

Source: own elaboration. Size of artisan companies by country.

	Total companies	SMEs	%
Bulgaria		282,600	
Austria	294,387	92,617	31.50
Rumania	-	615,474	
España		65,000	
Italia	6,065,232	1,480,582	24.40

Source: Own Percentage of artisan companies / SMEs of all companies. (IFES, 2010)

For Latin America, UNESCO, in the Culture and Development magazine says: The countries of the region, to greater or lesser extent, recognize the necessity to protect and develop the craft activity to the economy perfecting quality and enhancing national and international competitiveness. The fact that governments recognize the importance of the craft sector in the social, economic and cultural development, makes better conditions for the sector, besides it is related to tourism and promotes it, it represents an economic activity that promotes employment with a small investment y low level of technology involved. (Benítez Aranda, 2009)

- **Evolution of the artisanal industry in Mexico**

In Mexico, the production of handicrafts dates back to prehispanic times, when the production of crafts was considered as the creation of personal goods or decoration. With the Industrial Revolution, the country experimented changes,

artisanal and agriculture were not priority because big cities were created leaving aside some sectors of the population like native groups of people. Handicrafts activities are still active and they still make products originated in ancestral cultures, contrasting the good made by the technological revolution and the advances in several knowledge areas. (Alemán Tinajero, 2017)

In 1974, federal government through the Ministry of Social Development, constituted FONART, to promote the activities of the artisans of the country and give them the chance of having better income for their families, through five areas: training and technical support, production support, acquisition of handicrafts, trading support and popular art contests. The objective is to improve the sources of income looking with favor on their productive and trading conditions.

In 1988, Official Federal Gazette published regulation to rule small businesses and artisanal activity with the main objective of encouraging the development of small businesses and artisanal activity, addresses through taxes, finances, and marketing and assistance topics and eases the processes to establish companies legally, and helps with the paperwork with local and federal authorities. (Cámara de Diputados de H Congreso de la Unión, 2012)

In 2013, in an agreement made by FONART, criteria for the selection of artisanal projects was published and it includes requirements to have access to economic resources to improve trading of handicrafts. (Diario oficial de la Federación, 2013)

Nowadays in Mexico, products made by hand have several purposes like pottery, furniture, clothes, shoes, jewelry, toys and food. Mexico and Mexican handicrafts work generally in the same way they do in other places, in Mexican touristic places they attract people with the handmade pieces made by local people and besides being useful, they represent culture from those sites.

According to Forbes in 2014, Mexican handicrafts are well known around the world and they are recognized because they are a sample of the cultural diversity of the society, and it is qualified as a growing market; the article says that in Australia, Germany, Canada, Colombia, The United States of America and Italy, Mexican handicrafts are received. (Forbes México, 2014)

According to INEGI in its website, the economic value of culture and its participation in national economy in 2019 is 3.1% in gross domestic product, which is 724,453 million Mexican pesos and 1,395,644 jobs created. (Instituto Nacional de Geografía y Estadística, 2019)

The aim of this research, the first fact is that SMEs, all of them, not just the ones in the citrus region, have limitations in the volume of the operations, that is the reason why it results normal to say that the target market is usually the local one. It is obvious that if a business expands its market, the volume of the sales will grow and will bring money flowing to it, nevertheless, it is not as simple as desiring doing it, if we consider that every single small or medium enterprise, depending on its location, economic resources etc., will face difficulties to expand their products to the international market.

It is worth mentioning that it is not necessary for all the companies to export, but given the circumstances, if they have the chance, they should look for the obstacles for taking the opportunity and sell their products abroad, besides increasing sales, it also helps to diversify the risk they have because of having just one target market and it gives them the chance of taking advantage if the local economy is not in a good moment, to have their products sold in other places where they are not experiencing the same problems diversifying the risk.

Moreover, Araya Leandro (2009) says that the internationalization of the enterprises is the process by which a Company participates of the reality of globalization, in other words, the way that the enterprise uses to display its activities, totally or partially, to an international environment, and generates diverse types of flows (trading, finances, knowledge) among different countries. Linking this idea with export, it is understood that internationalization obeys to the new reality of the companies that can compete in the global market, responding to the given dispositions for that case.

Then, we understand as internationalization that it is the capacity of an enterprise of being able to sell its products or placing its merchandise in another country, different to its homeland.

According to Hernández Perales and Hernández Díaz (2013), internationalization goes from import of goods to strategic alliances across the border of different nature. Besides we can find literature with several theories that fit with the internationalization of SMEs, these authors talk about model Uppsala, which suggests that the process must be in stages based on the experiences acquired, the resources they have, beginning with the level of commitment and moderate risks and then, start increasing them.

Coase (1937) centers his thoughts in the costs and the theory of internationalization has reason to be if opening new markets, the benefits related are superior to the costs of learning and this leads to expansion.

In accordance with the theory of the absolute advantage by Adam Smith (1723 – 1790) states the relationship with the patterns of global production in the global market, it says that starting with this, a country would be capable to export one good or another as a function of its productivity.

For David Ricardo (1772 – 1823), the theory of comparative advantage expresses the concept of productivity in the economy and says that nations should specialize and export whatever they do the best.

Capacity of production is considered by Chase, Jacobs and Aquilano as the amount of production that a system is capable of generating in a specific period of time. For example, if we say that a company sells services, it would be expressed in the amount of customers they can respond to in a given period of time, if we are talking about manufacture, it would be expressed in the quantity of products that can be made in one shift. (Chase Richard B, 2009)

Alemán Tinajero (2017) says that artisans produce in small workshops and they do not have tools to produce, it raises the time and costs of production (Alemán Tinajero, 2017). According to Leticia Hernández (2018) from El Financiero, productivity of SMEs in Mexico grew from 34.7% to 41% and considers that the growing process is slow compared to other countries, members of OCDE (Organización de Cooperación y Desarrollo Económico), they report levels from 50% to 60%. (Hernández, 2018)

For this research, the capacity of production of the SMEs of the citrus region of the State of Nuevo León should be studied because internationalization implies the satisfaction of the demand of the local markets and the ones that are pretended to be reached, so, proper response to higher expectations will be directly related to the capacity of production those goods that both markets require.

For ISO 9001:2015, quality is the degree by which a set of inherent characteristics meet the requirements. Gutierrez Pulido, says that in 1990 Jurán defined quality as the absence of deficiencies in those characteristics that satisfy the customer. (Gutiérrez Pulido, 2010)

Besides, in the program to support artisanal activities, from 1991 – 1994, there is a section that promotes total quality. Also, in the Official Federal Gazette, NOM 051 was published in 2010, with specific directions for packing and labeling of nonalcoholic beverages and food, there we can find the rules of what has to be considered in the levels, statements of quality shown in a comprehensive way and this labeling is required to export products (Diario Oficial de la Federación, 2010).

Tamanini in 2009 said that quality has a positive impact in customer satisfaction and it helps to increase the participation in the market; assures that a quality management system makes competition between SMEs and big companies easier. (Tamanini, 2009). Also, Martínez Duclaud (2015) says how important it is for SMEs to have quality certifications, according to this, certifications could improve productivity and it implies planning during the process and after getting the certification. (Martínez Dulcaud, 2015)

In this work, it is considered that those items that are sold out of the country must have certain standard, depending on where they are going to be sold, and it is important to consider quality of the handicrafts as a factor that affects the internationalization process of them.

Logistics according to Rodríguez, Cruz y Lam, are related to processes that go from the purchase of raw material to the delivery of the final product to the customer. (Rodríguez Sáenz, Cruz, & Lam, 2009)

Avendaño and Silva (2018) say that logistics is a process to export following a series of activities that go from customs documentation to technical and legal aspects required in the importing country, having in mind customers' demands (Avendaño Cárdenas & Silva Guerra, 2018)

Gil Gaytán (2017) mentions Luraschi (2005) and says that some of the aspects that Latin American countries assess are the fact that not all of the countries of the region have moved forward in logistics to advanced levels; organizational culture lacks of a complete vision of the supply chain, transportation and storage are not very effective, etc. (Gil Gaytán, 2017). According to Kirby and Brosa (2011) the efficiency in the logistics of a region or country is conditioned by the development of its infrastructure, laws and regulations, quality of the logistic services and their studies say that Latin America has better rating compared to other emerging regions. (Kirby & Brosa, 2011). Sieso (2015) suggests that, for having good management of the logistics, it is necessary to identify costs and if they are affected by variables like location, or any other. (Sieso, 2015)

For this work, it is important the study of the logistics that handicrafts have to follow, because this is precisely what makes trading with other countries possible.

External market for Westreicher (2020) represents the economic activities of a country with the rest of the world, including the purchase and sale of goods and services. (Westreicher, 2020).

Hernandez Perales and Hernandez Diaz (2013) say that Mexican companies have a strong trade exchange with the United States of America, but it is necessary to know the perception that manager may have about trading with Europe, for example. (Hernández Perales & Hernández Díaz, 2013). Elizabeth Meza says that foreign trade between Mexico and Europe grew from 80,000 million dollar by the end of 2018, this shows diversification of trading in Mexico, instead of just being centered in the USA. (Meza, 2020). Mariana Ramos, says that The Mexican Online Sales Association, 54% of the local businesses have planned to expand through export, selling online; she says that Mexican SMEs can also think of other destinies to exports and that the beverages, textiles and food they produce, have to respond to regulations of the places where products will be received. (Ramos 2020). This work looks for the factors that affect in the internationalization of the artisanal SMEs from the citrus region so, the knowledge of the economic interaction with other countries is considered important for this research.

### **3. Methods**

In this research, bibliography about has been recollected about the variables here presented, it is a documentary research because it shows bibliography of the variables and it is descriptive and explanatory to describe the variables and the relationship that they have.

Central question: Which are the factors that help boost the internationalization of the SMEs in the industry of handicrafts in the citrus region of the State of Nuevo León?

Hypothesis: The organizational environment that help the internationalization of the SMEs in the citrus region in Nuevo Leon, are manufacturing capacity, quality of products, logistics and the knowledge of the external market.

### **5. Results and Discussion**

According with the information that is here presented, the citrus region in the State of Nuevo Leon has cultural background that includes the manual production of certain goods that are being sold with the help of the touristic features. Families in the region are being benefited by this situation and the geographical location of the region can be helpful for the development of opportunities to export their product to other places where they are known (because of the tourists).

If the challenges that the internationalization brings to SMEs are solved, this small businesses may have more sales and they also can grow to that point that enables them to meet the demand of the customers out of the country.

### **6. Conclusion**

Derived from the analysis of the theoretical framework, the leading factors for the internationalization of the artisanal SMEs in the citrus region of the State of Nuevo León and according to the most outstanding authors in the literature that has been analyzed so far, the important variables are: capacity of production, quality of the product, logistics y knowledge of the external market.

- Handicrafts industry has its relevance in the world because those pieces are produced and sold and they have their origins in the traditions of the people who make them.
- The artisanal industry generates jobs for the families that produce them.
- Tourism promotes the consumption of handicrafts.
- In Mexico, artisanal industry is growing, some countries around the world receive Mexican handicrafts.
- In Mexico, handicrafts that attract tourism are produced and there is regulation to support the sector in different ways, it helps to the process of internationalization.
- SMEs should pay attention to the aspects related to quality of their products, because this can make it easier to access to the foreign markets.
- Logistic processes are expensive, so SMEs have to learn about it.
- Nowadays, exports are centered in the United States of America, but it is recommended to look for other places in the world.

Quality of the product, capacity of production, logistics and external market have a positive impact in the internationalization of artisanal SMEs from the State of Nuevo León.

For future research, a measuring instrument will be designed, and a pilot test with the recollection of data will be used to confirm the factors that affect the internationalization of the SMEs analyzed in the literature.

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