



Cocoa marketing in the Malimpia parish of Quinindé canton: Analysis of the macro and microenvironment

Comercialización de cacao de la parroquia Malimpia del cantón Quinindé: Análisis del macro y microentorno

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Abstract

Cocoa marketing in Ecuador represents one of the main economic activities that generate employment. The objective was to analyze the macro and micro-environmental factors that influence cocoa marketing in the Malimpia parish of Quinindé canton. For this purpose, a descriptive and exploratory research was carried out. The information was collected through interviews and documentary review. The results showed opportunities that favor the commercialization of the bean. The analysis of the microenvironment revealed high rivalry among marketing companies, low bargaining power of suppliers, and medium bargaining power of buyers. In addition, threats from new entrants and exit barriers were identified and it was found that there are no substitutes for cocoa beans. It was concluded that among the final proposals is the participation in

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working groups that transcend the borders of cocoa marketing in the canton and the Malimpia Parish and even the province, to benefit through the evaluation of management plans that are carried out in other areas and measure the possibility of replicating or contributing to producers of the same agronomic species through a research and development network to enhance the economy and strengthen the bonds of strategic alliances.

Keywords: Cocoa marketing, Macro-environmental analysis, Micro-environmental analysis

Resumen

La comercialización de cacao en Ecuador representa una de las principales actividades económicas generadoras de empleo. El objetivo fue analizar los factores del macro y microentorno que influyen en la comercialización de cacao de la parroquia Malimpia del cantón Quinindé. Para ello se realizó una investigación descriptiva y exploratoria. La información se recolectó a través de entrevistas y revisión documental. Los resultados evidenciaron oportunidades que favorecen la comercialización del grano. El análisis del microentorno evidenció rivalidad alta entre las de las empresas comercializadoras, bajo poder de negociación de los proveedores, un nivel medio del poder de negociación de los compradores. Además, se determinaron amenazas de nuevos entrantes y barreras de salida y se encontró que no hay productos sustitutos para el grano de cacao. Se concluyó que entre las propuestas finales se estima la participación en mesas de trabajo que trasciendan más allá de las fronteras de comercialización de cacao del cantón y de la propia Parroquia Malimpia e incluso de la provincia, para beneficio mediante la evaluación de los planes de manejo que en otras zonas se llevan a cabo y medir la posibilidad de replicar o aportar a productores de la misma especie agronómica para a través de una red investigación y desarrollo se potencie la economía y se afiancen los lazos de alianzas estratégicas.

Palabras clave: Comercialización del cacao, Análisis de macroentorno, Análisis de microentorno

Introduction

Commercial activity is crucial to the functioning of a country's economic system, since it generates profits and jobs. In addition, it provides services and goods that buyers require. In this way, the needs of the population are mitigated (Guevara and González, 2020, p. 62). Therefore, economic growth resulting from trade provides the resources to improve human development and maintain the prosperity of the population in the context where it takes place.

Currently, organizations operate in an environment characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. In that sense, it is necessary to understand and interpret these elements when formulating and implementing strategic decisions; to achieve this, according to Ruíz, Criado and Merino (2014) According to Ruíz, Criado and Merino, this requires an analysis of the macro- and micro-environment. These authors focus on the analysis of the macro-environment as the characterization of the environment surrounding the organization, from the external point of view to develop plans that direct the company to achieve its long-term objectives, having a knowledge of the market behavior and its projections. In this way preventing and anticipating possible threats and opportunities that may arise. Macro-environmental factors include: political, economic, social, technological, ecological and legal factors. (Soria, 2017). The microenvironment analysis focuses on analyzing the situation of the business in relation to its market. For this reason, it is necessary to obtain information about the business or company, the products offered in the market, customers, suppliers and competition. (IICA, 2018).

On the other hand, according to Ullauri (2015) According to Ullauri, cocoa marketing has been carried out under three systems: the marketing board, the stabilization fund and the free market. Of these, the most widespread is the free market. In the first, once the cocoa is purchased, the marketing board manages it at all stages of the marketing chain. Under this system, international price fluctuations are not detrimental to the producer, since the price is fixed for the entire period. With respect to the stabilization fund, the author explains that this system is similar to the first, but with less intervention by the State. The physical handling of cocoa from the producer to the export points is conducted by private agents. This system set guaranteed prices for producers and export reference prices for each stage of the chain.

On the other hand, in the free market system, private agents participate without direct government intervention, both in internal and external commercialization. In this system, prices are determined in accordance with international prices.

Specifically in Ecuador, cocoa marketing represents one of the main economic activities and generators of employment. Currently, the Ecuadorian cocoa sector is growing due to the increase in international demand for organic, semi-finished and processed cocoa products such as chocolate and cocoa liquor.

The cocoa activity in Ecuador is a representative agricultural activity due to its climatic conditions and rich soil properties that make it prosperous for planting and cultivation of quality beans. (ANECACAO, 2018). This fact has allowed Ecuador to be the main exporter of cocoa beans in Latin America. Globally, it ranks third behind Ivory Coast and Ghana. (The universe, 2020). In addition, for 2019 it was the leader in the production of fine aroma cocoa (Alcívar et al., (2021).

Two varieties of cocoa beans are grown in Ecuador: CCN-51 (Castro Nacional Collection) or also called current. This is the most produced worldwide and nationally due to its high yield and resistance. The second variety corresponds to Cacao Fino de Aroma or Nacional, which is highly demanded by European and U.S. industries for the manufacture of premium quality chocolate. (Redagrícola, 2017). Due to its organoleptic properties of taste and smell, qualities of origin, quality and history.

Particularly in rural areas of the country, cocoa production is one of the main sources of employment for families, through which direct employment is created for more than 120 thousand families. With a harvested area of more than 450 thousand hectares, production of more than 300 thousand tonnes and a national yield of 0.63 t/ha (See Table 1). Of the total number of producers, 90% are small and medium-sized, producing less than half a ton per hectare, but around 30% are part of associations. (Telegraph, 2017).

Table 1. *Cocoa Area, Production and Yield*

Harvested area (ha)	Production (t)	Yield CCN51 (t/ha)	National Fine Aroma Yield (t/ha)	National Yield (t/ha)
498.794	313.284	0,75	0,45	0,63

Source: SIPA (2020)

On the other hand, in the cocoa commercial chain, elements such as the cocoa bean producer, intermediaries, the semi-processed industry, processed industries and exporters of cocoa beans and processed products are evident. In this regard, Morales et al. (2018) identify in cocoa production a linkage to the external and internal market. As for the former, it is carried out when the two varieties of beans Sabor Arriba and Colección Castro Naranjal CCN51 are exported. Likewise, semi-finished products (liquor, butter, cake, powder) and processed products (bars, tablets, chocolates, toppings, powder, fillings, baths, among others) are exported abroad. (ANECACAO, 2018). Regarding domestic marketing, sales are made to rural stockpilers in the area, who expect to collect large lots to offer it to wholesalers who then sell to exporters.

Another type of internal marketing is evidenced when the producer travels to closer population centers to sell his product to intermediaries, who stockpile cocoa in large quantities to offer it to the exporter. Another type of circuit is when the farmer sells his product directly to the exporter (Morán and Villavicencio, 2008, cited in Morales et al., 2018).

Specifically in the province of Esmeraldas, cocoa plantations cover an area of 5 hectares, making it the fourth province with the largest area planted, behind Los Ríos, Manabí and Guayas. Cocoa production is around 525,000 quintals of cocoa, making it an agricultural activity that generates sources of employment for approximately 15,000 families who work in the planting and cultivation of cocoa. (El Universo, 2019). In the Malimpia Parish of the Quinindé Canton, farmers dedicated to cocoa cultivation see their income diminished due to aspects such as: location of collection centers, accessibility to cooperatives for transporting goods and people, road conditions, and traceability of the cocoa chain. This translates into the sale of their products to intermediaries at below fair prices. However, the lack of detailed knowledge of the state of cocoa marketing in terms of internal situations (weaknesses and strengths) and external situations (environmental and market factors) does not allow the opportunities and threats of the environment and the market for cocoa marketing to be pinpointed (Mendoza, 2014).

The preceding approach shows descriptors of the problem of cocoa marketing in the parish of Malimpia. Due to this problem, the objective is to analyze the factors of the macro and micro environment that influence the commercialization of cocoa in Malimpia parish, Quinindé canton, Esmeraldas Province.

Consequently, from the above analysis, the macro and microenvironment factors affect directly or indirectly, positively or negatively the marketing of a good or a company in general. For the context of this research, no research was found on the analysis of the macro and micro environment of cocoa marketing in the Malimpia parish. The cocoa activity is important for this parish, so it is important to analyze the macro and microenvironment factors that affect its commercialization.

Materials and methods

The research was descriptive and exploratory, which allowed an analysis of the cocoa market and sector to detail the factors of the macro and micro environment that affect the marketing of cocoa in the Malimpia parish. The techniques used for data collection were documentary review and interview. Through the documentary review, information was collected from primary and secondary sources that allowed an analysis of the macro-environment and the sector. The interviews with cocoa producers and traders revealed aspects of marketing. For the macro-environment analysis, the PESTEL model was used, while for the micro-environment analysis, the factors were described by analyzing aspects of Porter's five forces. (Guevara, Pérez, & Quint, 2014)..

Results

It is important to point out that in any strategic management process it is important to propose possible scenarios supported by a diagnosis of the organization's external and internal environment. For the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) (2018) this guides the use of strengths to take advantage of opportunities and confront threats. Specifically, the analysis of the macro-environment is essential because it can provide guidance on what to do about situations that affect the company's productivity and competitiveness,

address critical points and take advantage of opportunities that can improve the company's situation (Philip, 2012).

For the analysis of the microenvironment, IICA (2018) considers that the analysis of the situation in which the company finds itself in relation to innovation, efficiency, quality and capacity to satisfy the consumer, would allow progress to be made in building competitive advantage. In this regard, the capabilities and resources that represent its competitive advantages, the characteristics of its products and/or services and its marketing and organizational processes or methods should be reviewed. Therefore, the core capabilities that generate innovation, quality, efficiency and capacity to satisfy the customer in the functional areas of the company should be made visible. In order to subsequently through differentiation or lower costs of products and / or services concrete value for target consumers and increased profitability, forging a competitive advantage for the organization. (IICA, 2018).

Macro and micro-environmental factors of cocoa marketing in the Malimpia parish.

With respect to the analysis of the macro-environment, the political, economic, social, technological, ecological and legal factors that affect the cocoa sector in Malimpia parish were determined. Likewise, the forces of the sector were determined, pointing out the following fundamental aspects in the dynamics of the research:

1. In terms of political factors, a positive scenario was determined for the cocoa production sector, despite the uncertainty caused by economic, fiscal and labor measures. In fact, there are policies for the promotion and reactivation of the agricultural and productive sectors to strengthen micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. Among these, the Coffee and Fine Flavored National Cocoa Reactivation Project and the Plan for Competitive Improvement of Cocoa and its Derivatives stand out. The first seeks to increase production, developing training for different stakeholders, in addition to providing seeds and inputs and economic credits. (MAGAP, 2019). The second initiative is aimed at increasing the production and export of cocoa

and its derivatives. The agroindustrial chain of cocoa and its derivatives was declared a priority to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

2. With regard to economic factors, despite the economic situation and the stoppage of activities due to the sanitary crisis, the production sector presents a positive scenario. The Plan for the Competitive Improvement of Cocoa and its Derivatives was approved as public policy, with a public and private investment of US\$600 million over the next 10 years. The program is expected to increase the number of hectares of cocoa planted and increase exports of cocoa and its derivatives, as well as generate 12,000 jobs and maintain the 120,000 jobs currently generated. (Ministry of Production, Foreign Trade, Investment and Fisheries, 2019)..

3. With respect to social factors, there are measures such as the generation of discussion spaces, visits to sectors with similar characteristics and technical and educational guidance to the inhabitants of the sector, to maintain employment and access to food, basic and social services to ensure the welfare of families.

4. With respect to technological factors, the Plan for Competitive Improvement of Cocoa and its Derivatives has promoted investments in agricultural research, development and innovation, as well as in cultivation and harvesting technology. This represents an opportunity for the cocoa sector of the Malimpia parish, to be able to count on training in technification during the traceability of cocoa. In addition to knowing and having access to inputs, materials and machinery to improve productivity, as well as innovate in the development of new products.

5. In attention to ecological factors, efforts for the production of organic and quality cocoa are evident. Proof of this is the project "Cacao Bioandino" together with Colombia and Peru, aimed at sustainable development, fair trade and the promotion of quality organic fine aroma cocoa. (Diario Expreso, 2019).

6. Regarding legal factors, a broad legal framework was found that defines the competencies of all the institutions that regulate the activities of the cocoa sector. These include: the Organic Agricultural Health Law, Organic Health Law, Resolution No. 266, Procedures Manual for the Registration of Operators of AGROCALIDAD, Technical Resolution No. 183, AGROCALIDAD, Good Agricultural Practices Guide for Cocoa and NTE INEN Standard 176 "Cocoa beans. Requirements" and other related laws.

In relation to the analysis of the microenvironment, the analysis of Porter's five external forces yielded the findings highlighted below. With respect to rivalry among existing competitors, there was evidence of high rivalry among cocoa marketing companies.

The bargaining power of suppliers is low because the price of beans is determined by the New York Stock Exchange. While the bargaining power of buyers is medium, although the price of cocoa is already determined, they negotiate the purchase price in relation to the quality of the cocoa.

On the other hand, the threat of new entrants and exit barriers are low, so low restrictions on cocoa marketing allow new companies to market cocoa beans. Likewise, it is not difficult for companies to exit the market and stop trading. For the threat of substitute products or services, it was found that there are no substitute products for the cocoa bean. However, there is a risk of crop change in the plantations. This leads to a decrease in supply. On the other hand, there are studies and improvements in varieties, but there is no threat of substitute products.

The results are in line with those obtained by Pila (2016) regarding sustainability in the commercialization system evidenced through the analysis of the macro-environment. Pila found that such sustainability leads to improvements for the quality of life in the region and therefore in the producers of the communities. This offers opportunities to the cocoa producing and marketing organizations, giving the opportunity to improve the form of marketing and allowing to expand the market, access to these marketing opportunities as it is

based on the knowledge of all the factors that affect the productivity and competitiveness of the marketing activity. This will make it possible to mitigate the critical nodes and take advantage of the opportunities that arise.

In this sense, the analysis of the macro-environment shows a positive and supportive scenario that benefits the commercialization of cocoa in the Malimpia parish, by being able to receive advice and support in the process of cocoa processing at the national level. According to CESLA (2019) According to CESLA, this political panorama represents an opportunity for the commercialization of cocoa, by being able to access economic credits with payment facilities promoted by the state. This is the result of the government's political strategy to benefit the agricultural sector and promote cocoa as a potential product. Initiative to turn Ecuador into a world reference in the production and export of cocoa and its derivatives.

In economic terms, the public and private investment policy represents an opportunity for cocoa marketing, aiming to focus resources on smaller companies and productive sectors. By prioritizing the sector's activities and maintaining jobs. This is established in the Development and Land Use Plan of the Malimpia parish, which states that the aforementioned plan will be implemented in the area. (2014) The aforementioned prioritization generates an assurance of the well-being of families. In this regard, the Ministry of Production, Foreign Trade, Investment and Fishing agrees with the Ministry of Production, Foreign Trade, Investments and Fisheries (2019) which states that this aspect favors the cocoa commercialization chain, ensuring that producers and other actors do not paralyze their activities due to lack of resources and support.

The results referred to the support in Research, Development and Innovation make it possible to carry out the process of technification during the traceability of cocoa. In addition, to know and obtain inputs, materials and machinery to improve productivity. The current legal framework for the traceability of the cocoa chain would ensure quality in each of the processes, which adds value in marketing.

In this sense, all the aspects mentioned above: agricultural, economic, environmental, social welfare, research, development and innovation, food security, as well as foreign trade, technological implementations in agriculture, sustainable development policies, laws and quality standards represent an opportunity, while the political instability of the government, the health emergency due to COVID 16, and the economic situation are a threat to cocoa marketing.

Regarding the internal analysis of the microenvironment of the cocoa sector, the research conducted by Bone (2015) on the improvement plan for the association of cocoa producers of Atacames. It highlights the advantages of the organization of having a very good quality cocoa and that it has all the necessary elements to grow as a marketing organization. By improving sustainability, the organization has sufficient collateral and can obtain economic resources more easily. As for the need to devise strategies to promote cocoa marketing. (Soria, 2017) to promote the commercialization of cocoa.

Conclusions

This study was driven by the analysis of the macro and micro environment of cocoa marketing in the Malimpia Parish, Quinindé Canton of the Province of Esmeraldas-Ecuador, which despite being a cocoa area does not have an analysis of the environment of internal and external factors to implement actions based on these factors, This not only generates a lack of knowledge of fundamental aspects for local development, but also neglects concrete situations that allow commercial and financial exchange within and outside the zone under fair conditions that add value to the productive sector in general.

In this way, achieving the necessary momentum to consolidate processes, energize production actions, generate in the community the culture of local development and project their products beyond the established value chain, will be some of the goals that are proposed so that the change is not only superficial, but transversal that influences and leaves a mark on each of those involved in the business proposals. This raises the need to benefit the producers of the parish by contributing to increase their income by accessing fair

prices, as well as the creation of sources of employment for all actors in the cocoa chain of the Malimpia parish.

In this order of ideas, participation in working groups that transcend the borders of the canton and the province is of great benefit to evaluate the management plans that are carried out in other areas and measure the possibility of replicating or contributing to producers of the same agronomic species to strengthen the economy through a research and development network and to strengthen the ties of strategic alliances. It is imperative to establish alliances between cocoa producers through associations. All this in order to sensitize and raise awareness among cocoa growers in Malimpia and its area of influence about the importance of improving the marketing of the bean, carrying out a process of technification throughout the chain that adds value and ends with better quality beans that are paid at the price determined by the market.

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