



Strategic analysis for Imbocar enterprise, Valledupar branch, Colombia

Análisis estratégico para la empresa Imbocar, seccional Valledupar, Colombia

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ABSTRACT

The critical challenge of contemporary management involves making effective, efficient, and accurate decisions that drive the effectiveness of internal processes and, consequently, achieve organizational goals. Such decision-making must consider internal and external factors to optimize organizational outcomes. In line with this, a strategic analysis was carried out at the Imbocar branch in Valledupar, with the explicit aim of identifying strategies that promote internal improvement and growth in various market sectors. The analysis was based on a study designed with an interpretivist methodology and a qualitative approach. It included an interview with the coordinator of the organization under study and the development of analytical matrices, including Porter's Five Forces, EFE, EFI, IE, SWOT, PESTEL, CPME, and MICMAC. As a primary outcome of this strategic analysis, various strategies were identified, focusing on market growth, product/service development, and market penetration. These strategies are presented as significant contributions to internal improvement and the sustained growth of the aforementioned branch.

Keywords: business administration, economic growth, enterprise, decision-making.

JEL Classification: D24; O14

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RESUMEN

El desafío crítico de la gerencia contemporánea es la toma de decisiones efectivas, eficientes y certeras que impulsen la efectividad de los procesos internos y, en consecuencia, permitan alcanzar las metas organizacionales. Dicha toma de decisiones debe tener en cuenta factores internos y externos para optimizar los resultados de la organización. En línea con esto, se llevó a cabo un análisis estratégico en la sucursal de Imbocar en Valledupar, con el propósito explícito de identificar estrategias que fomenten la mejora interna y el crecimiento en diversos sectores del mercado. El análisis se basó en una investigación fundamentada en una metodología interpretativista con un enfoque cualitativo y un diseño de caso de estudio. Incluyó una entrevista con el coordinador de la organización en estudio y la elaboración de matrices analíticas incluyendo las Cinco Fuerzas de Porter, EFE, EFI, IE, DOFA, PEYEA, MPCE y MIC MAC. Como resultado principal de este análisis estratégico, se identificaron diversas estrategias centradas en el crecimiento de mercados, desarrollo de productos/servicios y penetración de mercados. Estas estrategias se presentan como aportes significativos al mejoramiento interno y al crecimiento sostenido de la mencionada sucursal.

Palabras clave: administración de empresas, crecimiento económico, empresa, toma de decisiones.

Clasificación JEL: D24; O14

INTRODUCTION

The transportation sector has become a fundamental pillar of Colombia's economic development. The Ministry of Transportation regulates and establishes policies, plans, and projects for this sector. In particular, food transportation is crucial for connecting the region's populations and fostering economic growth. In this context, the transportation company Imbocar has been dedicated, mainly and for more than 20 years, to land freight transportation and logistics services, offering guaranteed logistics processes and a commitment to quality service and vehicle condition. The company



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also provides unique transportation services to private entities in Valledupar (Cesar) and has achieved a high-quality image in this area. However, opportunities for improvement have been identified to offer an alternative transportation system that guarantees workers' punctuality and optimizes their performance.

Thus, it is necessary to perform an organizational analysis to identify tools and strategies to create action plans to strengthen all areas of Imbocar, sectional Valledupar. This will contribute to a better development of the processes and the fulfillment of the goals set. In this regard, Abejón et al. (2018), Álvarez et al. (2018), Benalcázar (2018), and Tomlinson and Robert (2018) point out that strategic analysis is a previous work that must be materialized to structure and implement strategies efficiently. To this end, different tactics must be analyzed to understand business performance. In turn, Calabro et al. (2018), Manera and Valle (2018), Florido et al. (2019), and Pérez et al. (2020) state that strategic analysis alludes to the generation of information flows, which are aimed at making decisions for action; furthermore, they require planning and a continuous process to decide what to do, how to do it, when to do it and who will carry it out. Similarly, Angulo et al. (2018) and Rodríguez et al. (2023) describe that both managers and directors, in their leadership roles, must play essential roles for the processes to achieve the desired levels.

In the field of business strategy, Salas et al. (2018), Castro et al. (2019), and Brandon et al. (2021) point out that strategic analysis lies in understanding the organizational position, both in its external environment, own competencies, and expectations, as well as the influences of stakeholders. Likewise, Martín et al. (2019), Mañas et al. (2020), Mejía et al. (2020), and Sartori et al. (2021) agree that the objective of strategic analysis is to define the strategic posture, both external and internal the organization, considering various factors, such as threats and opportunities in the external context, and strengths or weaknesses in the internal sphere.

In the context of strategic analysis, Ramírez et al. (2019) argue that Porter's diamond is a graphic representation that allows analyzing and studying the different small or micro category signalers, which impact in a forceful way, seeking to improve the competitiveness of nations, societies, and territories, up to business organizations. Cedeño and Benavides (2019) and Velásquez et al. (2020) state that this theory is a model where factors are established as determinants in a country with greater competition than others, and corporate victory can be achieved through these elements.

Regarding the SWOT matrix, Pérez (2017) and Shum (2018) have defined it as a business study methodology that analyzes, from the external side, the functioning of society and assesses the present circumstances of the institution; which provides some advantage when interpreting and making any decision to favor the organization or company in a particular context. Núñez et al. (2019) propose an internal analysis based on the SWOT matrix to evaluate companies' weaknesses, threats, strengths, and opportunities when making strategic business moves.

The authors above state that the SWOT matrix and the PEST matrix are valuable tools to measure a company's potential market, considering external factors such as economic, political, and socio-technological factors. Thus, doing the PEST analysis before the SWOT is suggested because the former measures the market and the latter the business unit offered or venture idea. Therefore, the SWOT matrix reviews and organizes data in its format, which allows a better understanding, presentation, and discussion when making decisions. In conclusion, properly using these strategic analysis tools can improve the organization's competitive position in its business environment.

The importance of evaluation matrices in companies' strategic planning is worth noting. For example, Rojas and Vargas (2018) and Pérez and Motis (2018) warn that the PEYEA matrix is a tool that allows evaluating the strategic position of the company and its action evaluation, taking into account four parts: aggressive, conservative, defensive and competitive. This is useful for defining whether the tactics used by the company are appropriate. Likewise, Peñafiel et al. (2020) indicate that the PEYEA matrix is essential to determine whether the strategy is most convenient at a given time.

For their part, Martinus and Sigler (2018), Boisier and Cevallos (2019), and Wang et al. (2020) state that the MPCE matrix is a tool that enables the unbiased evaluation of the different strategic options, considering the internal and external factors of the company. Also, Gil et al. (2020) allude to the importance of this matrix for quantitative planning since it helps to compare the alternatives proposed in the SWOT analysis to determine which one best fits the context. In addition, Wang et al. (2020) admit that the MCPE uses the information gathered from the stage 1 studies and the results of the stage 2 adjustments examination to resolve in an equitable manner which is the most efficient alternative strategy.

Likewise, Shum (2018) defines the EFE external factor evaluation matrix as a tool that helps to summarize economic, political, sociocultural, environmental, governmental, legal, and technological information. He also

points out that this matrix is used to concretize the information collected from the company's external and internal environment. This author agrees that this matrix allows summarizing and analyzing diverse information and facilitates the creation of strategies to take advantage of opportunities and reduce threats; González et al. (2020) also emphasize the importance of external analysis.

In this order of ideas, according to the existing literature, the EIF (Evaluation of Internal Factors) matrix is a technique widely used by companies to evaluate the internal factors that positively or negatively affect their growth and sustainability in the market. In this sense, the company's internal strengths and weaknesses can be identified and used to evaluate its competitive position with other market players. It is important to note that the EFI matrix tool summarizes the information gathered to analyze the company's internal environment (González et al., 2020).

Another method used to analyze the factors influencing a system is the structural analysis software MicMac (Matrice d'Impacts Croisés Multiplication Appliqués à un Classement). This tool helps establish a group reflection by describing a system with a matrix that links its constituent elements. The objective is to determine the influential and dependent variables of the system. In this way, the MicMac software allows a more detailed assessment of the internal and external factors that can affect the company's performance (Zhang et al., 2021).

Structural analysis is a reflective and, in turn, group-based tool: it allows a system to be represented through a matrix that relates its constituent elements. The MICMAC tool, part of structural analysis, seeks to conduct a qualitative analysis of the relationships between variables in a given organization, society, or country. Additionally, it is reinforced through the judgments of actors and experts that make up the system. The authors above maintain that this method, also known as "structural analysis," helps structure ideas and identify the fundamental variables that affect the system's evolution.

In contrast, Salas et al. (2018) and da Silva et al. (2021) argue that the External Internal (IE) matrix is a tool used to evaluate an organization, considering its internal factors, such as strengths and weaknesses, and its external factors, such as opportunities and threats. According to the same authors, the EI matrix is also known as a "portfolio" because it allows the company's products to be plotted in the divisions corresponding to each matrix quadrant.

In order to carry out the strategic analysis of Imbocar, Valledupar branch, it was necessary to analyze the causes of the problems that affect the work environment and the company's processes. For this purpose, a consultancy focused on the Valledupar branch and its 14 collaborators. It is essential to point out that the strategies formulated in this project will only solve the situations presented in that branch. In summary, the strategic analysis was carried out through the application of the IE matrix, which made it possible to identify the entity's strengths and weaknesses, as well as the external opportunities and threats in its context. This and the consultancy applied identified specific actions and strategies for improvement to solve the problems recognized in that section.

METHODS

According to Finol and Vera (2020), the interpretive approach is an alternative that consists of assuming reality through the subject-object relationship and the procedural logic to generate scientific knowledge. Therefore, the work was structured from this paradigm, and a qualitative approach was used to diagnose and identify Imbocar. At the same time, a case study research design was implemented, in which the company's personnel (14 collaborators) was taken as the population and one worker (coordinator) as the sample, to whom an interview was applied for data collection.

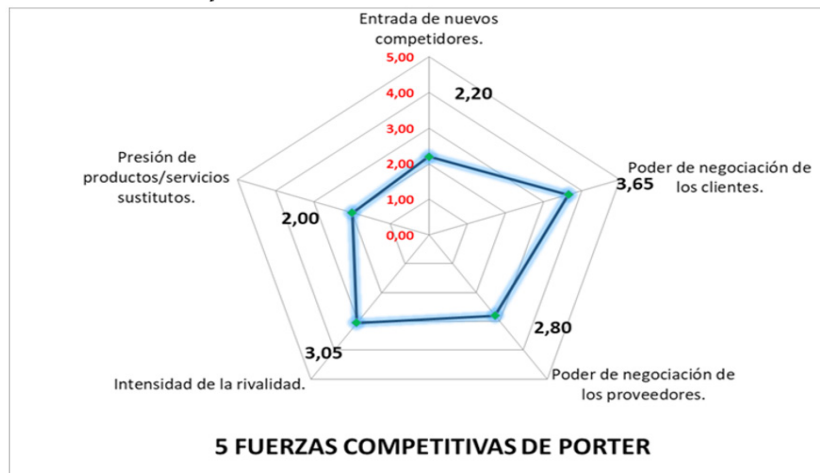
The interview applied had a qualitative approach and was carried out through a convenience sampling of the coordinator. With the information provided by the selected population, the main topics selected were addressed in depth, and the variables to be addressed in the research were identified. This approach made it possible to obtain more detailed and contextualized data on the problems affecting the work environment at Imbocar, which facilitated the identification of effective strategies to address and deal with them.

RESULTS

It was essential to conduct exhaustive research on the environment surrounding Imbocar. To do so, it was crucial to understand the economic situation of the companies in the sector that provide logistic solutions and their transportation and cargo services effectively and efficiently. One of the most relevant aspects of these companies is shipments, characterized by different types of shipments, including those that are indiscriminate and do not meet specific specifications.

Consequently, it was essential to analyze how Imbocar can position itself in a highly competitive market with companies with a longer trajectory in the segment. However, young companies such as Imbocar may have the opportunity to stand out and satisfy the unsatisfied needs that older companies still need to meet, which can increase users and consolidate the company's reliability. In order to carry out a more detailed analysis of the attractiveness and profitability of the sector in which the company is located, Porter's five forces model was applied, which allowed obtaining valuable information for decision-making (see figure 1).

Figure 1.
Porter's Five Competitive Forces



Source: own elaboration.

Note: the figure appears in its original language.

In the analysis conducted using Porter's Five Forces tool, it was observed that the entry of new competitors has been a minor threat to Imbocar since the industrial zone in the city of Valledupar has, to date, few organized companies that legally offer similar services. As for the bargaining power of the clients, there was evidence of high bargaining power on the part of Nutressa, the main client of the Valledupar branch. However, Imbocar has the advantage of being able to choose the suppliers that provide a fleet in optimal conditions and establish price agreements. On the other hand, the market rivalry is evidenced as high, all due to several companies nationwide offering similar services, which could directly affect Imbocar, particularly the Valledupar branch, which is not open to new clients.

When analyzing the company internally using the MEFÉ tool, it was found that the Imbocar branch faces more external threats than opportunities, highlighting factors such as the increase in fuel prices, eventualities related to climate change, and the country's instability in terms of roadblocks and insecurity, among others. Thus, the branch needs to adopt measures to minimize the impact of these threats and take advantage of existing opportunities in the market. The activity to which a company is dedicated can be a determining factor for its performance. Although there are factors that cannot be controlled, strategies must be identified and adopted to potentiate the appropriate variables and minimize the risks in the matrix so that they do not significantly affect the company within the sector.

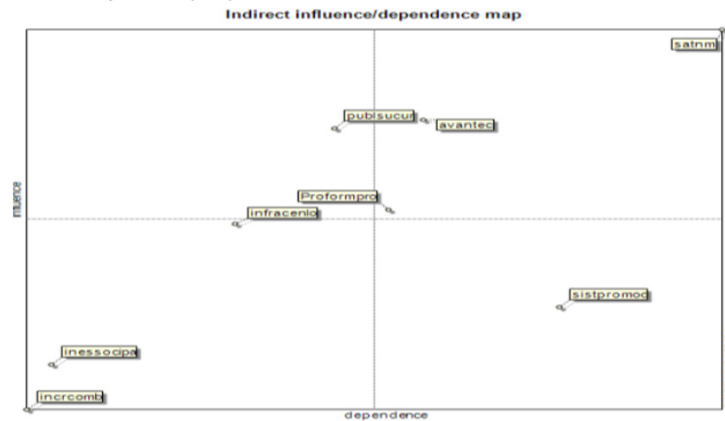
On the other hand, the internal factors evaluation matrix showed that the company is at a break-even point and generally has more strengths than weaknesses. However, it is crucial to recognize weaknesses in the long term. In the EI matrix, the weighting of the previous matrices placed the company in quadrant V (selectivity), which implies the need to generate strategies that allow it to enter the market and serve new clients.

The SWOT matrix identified market development, internal development, and product development strategies coinciding with the IE matrix. The construction of the PEYEA matrix showed that the company is located in quadrant I, suggesting the implementation of aggressive strategies that take advantage of internal strengths and market opportunities, such as market penetration and development, to boost sales and focus efforts on new market niches.

The MCPE yielded a score of 1.99 for the market development strategy, which was based on a marketing technique to expand the Imbocar branch in Valledupar and attract potential customers to grow in the market. To evaluate the most suitable strategy, the Mic Mac instrument was used, and the essential components and factors

were identified in the company's strategic study (see figure 2).

Figure 2.
Indirect plane of influence



Source: own elaboration.

Note: the figure appears in its original language.

According to the analysis carried out through the direct map, it became evident that advanced technology, professional training, and the satisfaction of new markets are the most vital variables that will drive Imbocar's growth. However, certain variables have been identified, such as the logistics center's infrastructure, the country's instability, and the increase in fuel, which are in the quadrant of obstacles and may affect the growth of the branch in Valledupar. Therefore, to mitigate them, it is essential to identify and develop strategies to minimize their impact and ensure steady growth.

In addition, it was evident that the advertising variable in the branch was in the entry quadrant, which suggests that strengthening and identifying strategies for its potentiation will contribute to the company's growth in the market. Finally, the variable of Imbocar's modern systems was identified in the exit quadrant. It was found that the branch in Valledupar did not use them adequately and, therefore, they did not influence the other variables. Regarding the strategic analysis, the construction of the balanced scorecard allowed the creation of a strategic map that offered a clear vision of the company's objectives and actions, which made it possible to trace pertinent strategies to be implemented in the analysis.

Thus, it was found that the Balance Scorecard is a valuable tool for any company seeking to improve its performance and achieve its strategic objectives.

Additionally, similarities are established with the studies of researchers such as Pérez (2017), Benalcázar (2018), and Siltori et al. (2021). In general, this research evidence that strategic analysis is determinant to guarantee an ideal orientation to help in decision-making and, consequently, to establish objectives and goals in the business sector. Likewise, conducting evaluations to measure the effectiveness of business or company strategies is fundamental to guarantee favorable results. At the same time, with the implementation of strategic analysis, it is possible to measure results and to know in which lines of work the organization, entity, or company should focus.

Therefore, during the analysis of Imbocar, several critical aspects were evaluated, such as strategic management, economic environment, organizational parameters, human talent, market management, financial management, and the implementation of different strategies. This analysis enabled the identification of critical variables and strategies that could improve the company's position in the market and homogenize practices in all branches nationwide.

CONCLUSIONS

Imbocar's Valledupar branch should consider consolidating a long-term physical plant to serve new clients. However, several external factors, such as the country's instability and others, which may directly and indirectly affect the provision of services, must be considered. Therefore, it is necessary to identify strategies that minimize these risks and consider implementing a recognition plan that promotes a synergistic and competitive environment in the company.

It is also essential to adopt a functions manual for the Valledupar branch that will allow for optimal performance in the various areas of the company and reduce the possibility of unplanned liquidation. The consulting firm also suggests that the coordinator or manager of the Valledupar branch supervise the ongoing management of social networks and consider implementing advertising strategies to expand the reach and recognition of the brand in the city.

Similarly, it is necessary to conduct medium-term market research to provide detailed information on potential future customers and the company's growth in the sector. In conclusion, implementing these suggestions will allow Imbocar, the Valledupar branch, to strengthen its presence in the market and positively improve customer satisfaction while minimizing external risks and maximizing its growth in the medium and long term.

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