ISSN: 2310-340X | RNPS: 2349 | COODES Vol. 14 No. 2 e1003 (May-August)
González Arronte, J.; de la Nuez Hernández, D.; González Pérez, M. M. "Methodology for the international marketing plan in vegetable canning companies".
https://coodes.upr.edu.cu/index.php/coodes/article/view/1003
2026

Original article

Methodology for the international marketing plan in vegetable canning companies

Metodología para el plan de marketing internacional en empresas de conservas de vegetales

Metodologia para o plano de marketing internacional em empresas de conservas de vegetais

Jesús González Arronte[1] 0009-0003-8132-9309 director.general@conchita.alinet.cu
Diana de la Nuez Hernández[2] 0000-0002-2184-2034 diana@upr.edu.cu
Maricela María González Pérez[2] 0000-0003-2617-5370 maricela@upr.edu.cu

[1] Vegetable Canning Company "La Conchita". Cuba.
[2] University of Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca". Cuba.

Received: 3/06/2026
Accepted: 8/09/2026

ABSTRACT

An analysis of the international marketing management process at "La Conchita" Vegetable Canning Company in the province of Pinar del Río led to the formulation of the following research question: How can it be contributed to optimizing the export process and maximizing the competitiveness of Conchita products in foreign markets? The objective of this research was to design a methodology for an international marketing plan that would contribute to optimizing the export process and maximizing the competitiveness of its products in foreign markets. A mixed-methods approach with a qualitative focus was applied, supported by document analysis, interviews, surveys, and checklists, as well as the triangulation of primary and secondary sources. The results of the empirical

assessment revealed structural weaknesses in commercial management, the absence of a formal marketing department, insufficient market intelligence, and limitations in adapting the international marketing mix. Based on this assessment, a methodology was designed organized into four stages: preparation, execution, communication, and validation, with an emphasis on planning, cross-functional coordination, control, and continuous improvement. It was concluded that the proposed methodology offers a practical guide for transitioning from reactive export management to a proactive and sustainable approach, with greater capacity for penetration into international markets. The pilot implementation led to the launch of a new registered trademark, an increase in planned sales, and an improvement in export performance indicators.

Keywords: competitiveness; Conchita canned goods; international marketing; methodology; international marketing plan.

RESUMEN

El análisis del proceso de gestión del marketing internacional en la Empresa de Conservas de Vegetales "La Conchita" de la provincia de Pinar del Río permitió formular el siguiente problema de investigación: ¿Cómo contribuir a la optimización del proceso de exportación y a la maximización de la competitividad de los productos Conchita en mercados extranjeros? El objetivo de esta investigación fue diseñar una metodología para el plan de marketing internacional que contribuyera a la optimización del proceso de exportación y a la maximización de la competitividad de sus productos en mercados extranjeros. Se aplicó un enfoque mixto con predominio cualitativo, apoyado en el análisis documental, entrevistas, encuestas y listas de verificación, además de la triangulación de fuentes primarias y secundarias. Los resultados del diagnóstico empírico evidenciaron debilidades estructurales en la gestión comercial, ausencia de una dirección formal de marketing, insuficiente inteligencia de mercados y limitaciones en la adaptación del marketing mix internacional. A partir del diagnóstico, se diseñó una metodología organizada en cuatro etapas: preparatoria, ejecución, comunicación y validación, con énfasis en la planificación, la coordinación interfuncional, el control y la mejora continua. Se concluyó que la metodología propuesta ofrece una guía práctica para transitar desde una gestión exportadora reactiva hacia un enfoque proactivo y sostenible, con mayor capacidad de inserción en mercados internacionales. La aplicación piloto generó el lanzamiento de una nueva marca registrada, incremento de ventas planificadas y mejora en indicadores de desempeño exportador.

Palabras clave: competitividad; conservas Conchita; marketing internacional; metodología; plan de marketing internacional.

RESUMO

Uma análise do processo de gestão de marketing internacional na Empresa de Conservas de Vegetais "La Conchita", na província de Pinar del Río, levou à formulação do seguinte problema de pesquisa: como otimizar o processo de exportação e maximizar a competitividade dos produtos da Conchita nos mercados externos? O objetivo desta pesquisa foi elaborar uma metodologia de plano de marketing internacional que contribuísse para a otimização do processo de exportação e para a maximização da competitividade dos produtos da empresa no exterior. Adotou-se uma abordagem de métodos mistos com ênfase qualitativa, utilizando análise documental, entrevistas, pesquisas e listas de verificação, juntamente com a triangulação de fontes primárias e secundárias. O diagnóstico empírico revelou fragilidades estruturais na gestão comercial, ausência de liderança formal em marketing, inteligência de mercado insuficiente e limitações na adaptação do composto de marketing internacional. Com base nesse diagnóstico, foi elaborada uma metodologia organizada em quatro etapas preparação, execução, comunicação e validação, enfatizando o planejamento, a coordenação interfuncional, o controle e a melhoria contínua. Concluiu-se que a metodologia proposta oferece um guia prático para a transição de uma gestão de exportação reativa para uma abordagem proativa e sustentável, com maior capacidade de inserção nos mercados internacionais. Uma aplicação piloto resultou no lançamento de uma nova marca registrada, no aumento das vendas planejadas e em melhorias nos indicadores de desempenho de exportação.

Palavras-chave: competitividade; conservas Conchita; marketing internacional; metodologia; plano de marketing internacional.

INTRODUCTION

Globalization has transformed international trade dynamics, driving companies to seek opportunities beyond their national borders (Keegan & Green, 2020). In the Latin American and Caribbean context, the agri-food sector represents a strategic pathway for export diversification and access to markets with higher value added (Silveira Pérez et al., 2022). However, state-owned enterprises in developing

economies face structural weaknesses that limit their competitive integration into global value chains, particularly with regard to the strategic management of international marketing (Hernández Garmilla, 2015; Hokmabadi et al., 2024; Obadia & Vida, 2024).

International marketing comprises the set of marketing principles and operations that guide the trade of goods and services between countries, adapting to the cultural, legal, and economic differences of each market (Cateora et al., 2023; Kotler & Armstrong, 2017). Systematic planning through an international marketing plan enables the successful management and coordination of commercial activities, aligning business objectives and resources with changing environmental opportunities (Cohen, 2001). However, the available literature reveals a scarcity of specific methodologies for state-owned canning companies in the context of centralized economies (Hollensen, 2020; López Boudet et al., 2020).

"La Conchita" Vegetable Canning Company, located in Pinar del Río, Cuba, illustrates this problem. Restored as a company in 2022, it has a tradition dating back to 1927 and products recognized for their quality, but it operates predominantly under private label (80% of sales), lacks a formal marketing department, and responds to occasional orders rather than a proactive prospecting strategy. This situation limits its capacity to build brand value, differentiate itself competitively, and maximize the profitability of its exports. The present research aimed to design a methodology for an international marketing plan for vegetable canning companies that would help optimize the export process and maximize the competitiveness of their products in foreign markets.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research was conducted between 2024 and 2025 at La Conchita Vegetable Canning Company, a member of the Agri-Food Industry Business Group and overseen by the Ministry of the Food Industry. A mixed-methods approach with a qualitative focus was adopted, integrating theoretical and empirical methods.

At the theoretical level, the logical-historical method was used to analyze the evolution of international marketing management in the canned food industry, and the analysis-synthesis method was employed to reveal the essential relationships in global marketing (Keegan & Green, 2020; Kotler & Armstrong, 2017). A total of 70 bibliographic texts were consulted, prioritizing up-to-date sources

(2021-2026), and four methodological approaches available in the specialized literature were analyzed (Doole et al., 2022; López Boudet et al., 2020).

At the empirical level, the research followed the diagnostic stages proposed by Sixto Rodríguez and de la Nuez Hernández (2023): determining information needs, defining the objective and scope, identifying sources, designing formats, determining the sample size, collecting and processing data, and presenting the report. Secondary sources included balance sheet reports from 2022-2024, records from the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Foreign Investment, the National Office of Statistics and Information, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and the International Trade Center. Primary sources included: 26 international clients (full portfolio as of the end of 2024), 76 employees (sample determined using the PASS sample size calculator (NCSS, 2026), with a 95% confidence level and a margin of error of 0.10), and 18 executives (100% of the expanded board of directors).

For methodological triangulation, perceptions from different organizational positions (clients, employees, executives) were compared with documentary data, in accordance with Denzin (2012). SPSS version 30.0 was used for statistical analysis. The methodology was validated using criteria for content validity (peer review, Aiken's V coefficient), construct validity (correlation between implementation and results, Pearson's correlation analysis), and criterion validity (benchmarking against comparable companies: Industrial Ceballos and Cítricos Arimao).

Procedures involving human subjects complied with the principles of anonymity, confidentiality, and exclusive internal use. All participants were informed of the research objective, and impartiality in the handling of information was ensured.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The document analysis revealed that La Conchita was established on July 1, 2022, by Resolution No. 131/2022, with a workforce of 369 employees (75% of the approved headcount) and an organizational structure that lacks a formal marketing department, delegating commercial functions to the Logistics Business Unit. This configuration represents a chronic structural weakness that perpetuates a "sell what is produced" mindset rather than a "produce what the market demands" one (Hultman et al., 2023).

The international client portfolio through 2024 comprised 26 firms spread across 14 countries, but 80% of foreign sales came from occasional orders (trade shows, sporadic contacts) versus only 20% from planned prospecting. This strategic duality -a macroeconomic classification as a non-primary direct export with 6% annual growth (2019-2024), yet reactive operational management- confirms the gap between Cuba's public policy on export diversification (PCC, 2016) and business reality.

The customer survey yielded a Net Promoter Score[1] of +44 (57% promoters, 30% passives, 13% detractors), with strengths in product quality (average 4.5/5) and weaknesses in demand-driven variety (3.8/5), promotional materials (3.3/5), and digital presence (3.2/5). Critical logistical issues identified included delays at the Port of Mariel (12 mentions) and container frequency (8 mentions).

The employee survey revealed an Overall Export Perception Index of 3.5/5, with critical gaps in digital marketing (3.2/5), certifications (3.5/5), and professional language/translation (3.4/5). Forty-three percent of respondents prioritized more digital campaigns and a multilingual online catalog as areas for improvement.

Interviews with executives confirmed the absence of a formal market research system (0%), reliance on the wholesale distribution channel (80%), limited digital marketing to the corporate website and emails (75%), and an insufficient marketing budget (75%). 100% agreed on the need for an international brand manager.

Structure of the proposed methodology

The methodology is based on three integrated approaches: the leading authorities on international marketing (Keegan & Green, 2020; Kotler & Armstrong, 2017), the ISO 9000:2015 standards of the National Standards Bureau, and models of excellence (López et al., 2021). It is structured into four procedural stages (Table 1).

[1] Net Promoter Score (NPS). It is a tool that measures customer loyalty, satisfaction, and enthusiasm toward a company, product, or service. It is based on the likelihood that a customer will recommend the company to others. NPS is a key metric for evaluating the customer experience and predicting business growth.

Table 1. Structure of the Proposed Methodology

Stage	Name	Objective	Expected outcome
I	Preparation	Secure management commitment and plan the process.	Agreement on the plan's design, scope, and theoretical and methodological foundations.
II	Implementation	Develop the documented information for the plan.	Documented international marketing plan.
III	Communication	Implement the rollout schedule.	Plan implemented according to a defined timeline.
IV	Validation	Continuously monitor and improve.	Refined international marketing management system.

Source: Prepared by the author

The **Preparation** phase establishes management's commitment, forms the working team (International Marketing Committee, operational group, external consultants), conducts an analysis of the current situation using validated tools, defines the scope of the plan (priority markets: Spain, China; product lines; time frame 2025-2027), and implements initial training tailored to the workforce's educational profile (50.1% with primary/secondary education).

The **Implementation** phase documents the international marketing plan through nine components: executive summary, situation analysis (internal/external SWOT), SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound), market entry strategies, international marketing mix (4 P's (Product, Price, Place, Distribution-Promotion) adapted), segmentation and positioning, budget and ROI (Return on Investment), monitoring and evaluation (KPIs-Key Performance Indicators), and risk management (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Components of the International Marketing Plan

Source: Prepared by the authors, based on the methodology of Kotler and Armstrong (2017)

The **Communication** stage disseminates the plan internally (through business units and orientation workshops) and externally (notifications to customers, launch of a digital catalog, press releases), with a quarterly implementation schedule for 2025-2027.

The **Validation** stage applies the Deming cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act) through quarterly audits based on the ISO 9001:2015 standard, annual surveys of customers and employees, and management reviews, leading to continuous improvement actions.

Validation of the methodology

The content validity, evaluated by three external specialists in international marketing and two executives from La Conchita using a 1-5 Likert scale, yielded an Aiken V coefficient of 0.92 (excellent, above the threshold of 0.80). The specialists positively assessed the model's adaptation to the Cuban context, particularly the selection matrix for entry strategies. The executives suggested incorporating

greater detail into the regulatory analysis of the FDA[2] and the European Union, an aspect that was integrated into the final version.

Construct validity was verified through a pre-post quasi-experimental study (12 months). The Pearson correlation between the methodological implementation index and improvement in composite export performance indicators was $r = 0.84$ ($p < 0.01$), indicating a strong and significant relationship. Linear regression indicated that for every 10% increase in implementation, there was a 7.2% improvement in export volume ($R^2 = 0.71$). Factor analysis confirmed that the nine components of the plan explain 78% of the variance in internationalization outcomes, exceeding the 60% recommended by Hair et al. (2022).

Criterion validity was established through comparison with Industrial Ceballos and Cítricos Arimao, state-owned Cuban canning companies with a history of exporting. La Conchita achieved a position of relative leadership in 4 out of 6 critical indicators: export intensity (42% vs. 38% and 35%), customer retention rate (89% vs. 85% and 82%), new market development time (14 vs. 18 and 22 months), and export gross margin (34% vs. 31% and 29%). The relative efficiency index (simplified DEA[3]) ranked La Conchita at 1.00, Ceballos at 0.94, and Arimao at 0.89.

Pilot implementation and preliminary results

In 2025, the International Marketing Committee was established (approved by the Board of Directors), 45 employees (12% of the workforce) were trained, the trademark registration process in Spain was initiated (pending with the Spanish Patent and Trademark Office), and the B2B catalog was launched in beta version (in Spanish and English). The company developed a new brand, "LC," registered in Cuba and Spain, through which exports were made to ROSTRATA (Madrid) and EMCOTESA (Valencia) totaling 2,221.85 euros, supplemented by private-label sales to SOTABAC (Canary Islands) totaling 44,101 euros, for a total of 46,322.85 euros in 2025.

The proposed methodology overcomes the limitations of the technologies analyzed in the literature. While Doole et al. (2022) do not specify explicit stages for canned vegetables, López Boudet et al.

[2] The acronym FDA stands for Food and Drug Administration. It is the U.S. federal government agency responsible for protecting and promoting public health.

[3] The acronym DEA stands for Data Envelopment Analysis. It is a nonparametric operations research technique used to measure the relative efficiency of decision-making units.

(2020) focus on alcoholic beverages with limitations regarding sectoral adaptation, and Morgan et al. (2012) prioritize specific products without integrating management standards; the present proposal integrates analytical rigor, adaptive flexibility, and process- -based management, with empirical validation in the context of an economy subject to strong external constraints on its development.

The results confirm that the specific characteristics of the canning sector -dependence on seasonal raw materials, stringent regulations, an SME structure, and high competitiveness- determine the need for contextualized approaches (Aaker, 2012; Martínez Paz et al., 2005). Sustainable differentiation through quality certifications, intangible attributes of origin, and innovation in sustainability constitutes the core of global competitive advantage, consistent with the trends in demand for healthy and sustainable products documented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO, 2021).

REFERENCES

Aaker, D. A. (2012). *Building Strong Brands* (4.ª ed.). Simon and Schuster. https://www.google.com.cu/books?id=OLa_9LePJlYC

Cateora, P. R., Money, R. B., Gilly, M. C., & Graham, J. L. (2023). *International Marketing* (19.ª ed.). McGraw-Hill Education. https://books.google.com/books?id=VhRwzgEACAAJ

Cohen, W. A. (2001). *El plan de márketing: Procedimientos, formularios, estrategias y técnicas* (2.ª ed.). Deusto. https://books.google.com.cu/books?id=aNYN0QEACAAJ

Denzin, N. K. (2012). Triangulation 2.0. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, *6*(2), 80-88. https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689812437186

Doole, I., Lowe, R., & Kenyon, A. J. (2022). *International Marketing Strategy: Analysis, Development and Implementation* (9.ª ed.). Cengage Learning.

FAO. (2021). *El estado de la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición en el mundo 2021*. Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura. https://doi.org/10.4060/cb4474es

Hair, J. F., Babin, B. J., Anderson, R. E., & Black, W. C. (2022). *Multivariate Data Analysis* (8.ª ed.). Cengage Learning. https://books.google.com.cu/books?id=PONXEAAAQBAJ

Hernández Garmilla, I. (2015). Las tendencias del comercio internacional y su implicación en la economía en Cuba. *Ciencia & Futuro*, *5*(2), 81-95. https://revista.ismm.edu.cu/index.php/revistacyf/article/view/1084

Hokmabadi, H., Rezvani, S. M. H. S., & De Matos, C. A. (2024). Business Resilience for Small and Medium Enterprises and Startups by Digital Transformation and the Role of Marketing CapabilitiesA Systematic Review. *Systems*, *12*(6), 220. https://doi.org/10.3390/systems12060220

Hollensen, S. (2020). *Global Marketing*. Pearson. https://books.google.com.cu/books?id=De0VyQEACAAJ

Hultman, M., Iveson, A., & Oghazi, P. (2023). Talk less and listen more? The effectiveness of social media talking and listening tactics on export performance. *Journal of Business Research*, *159*, 113751. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2023.113751

Keegan, W. J., & Green, M. C. (2020). *Global Marketing* (10.ª ed.). Pearson. https://books.google.com.cu/books?id=PMMlyAEACAAJ

Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. (2017). *Fundamentos de Marketing* (13.ª ed.). Pearson Educación de México. https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/libro?codigo=822679

López, A. M., Sacco, A., & Cavacini, A. (2021). Modelos de excelencia de las organizaciones. Herramientas utilizadas en la gestión de excelencia en Argentina. *Anuario de Investigación USAL*, (8), 167-169. https://p3.usal.edu.ar/index.php/anuarioinvestigacion/article/view/5694

López Boudet, R., González Breto, C., & Campos Hernández, O. (2020). Metodología para el plan de marketing internacional en la exportación de la empresa CubaRon, S.A. *Retos de la Dirección*, *14*(1), 68-88. https://retos.reduc.edu.cu/index.php/retos/es/article/view/162

Martínez Paz, J. M., Martínez Carrasco Pleite, F., & Dios Palomares, R. (2005). La industria de conservas vegetales de la Región de Murcia. Análisis de eficiencia técnica. *Revista de*

Estudios Regionales, (73), 141-158. http://www.revistaestudiosregionales.com/documentos/articulos/pdf820.pdf

Morgan, N. A., Katsikeas, C. S., & Vorhies, D. W. (2012). Export marketing strategy implementation, export marketing capabilities, and export venture performance. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *40*(2), 271-289. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-011-0275-0

NCSS. (2026). *Sample Size Software: PASS* [Software]. https://www.ncss.com/software/pass/

Obadia, C., & Vida, I. (2024). Export marketing strategy and performance: A focus on SMEs promotion. *International Business Review*, *33*(2), 102229. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ibusrev.2023.102229

PCC. (2016). *Actualización de los Lineamientos de la Política Económica y Social del Partido y la Revolución para el periodo 2016-2021*. Partido Comunista de Cuba. https://www.granma.cu/file/pdf/gaceta/01Folleto.Lineamientos-4.pdf

Silveira Pérez, Y., Sanabria Navarro, J. R., & Barrios Pacheco, E. D. (2022). Modelo de marketing internacional desde las funciones de la economía política para el comercio exterior. *Revista de Ciencias Sociales*, *28*(4), 137-156. https://doi.org/10.31876/rcs.v28i4.39126

Sixto Rodríguez, D., & de la Nuez Hernández, D. (2023). Diseño e implementación de un sistema integrado de gestión para empresas pecuarias. *Cooperativismo y Desarrollo*, *11*(2), e626. https://coodes.upr.edu.cu/index.php/coodes/article/view/626

Conflict of interest

Authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Authors' contribution

Jesús González Arronte: study conception and design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation, and drafting of the manuscript.

Diana de la Nuez Hernández: advisory role, literature review, methodology, review of revisions, and approval of the final version for publication.

Maricela María González Pérez: critical review of the article with significant contributions to its intellectual content.

All the authors reviewed the writing of the manuscript and approve the version finally submitted.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License