

Strategic Optimization of Gastronomic Business Cooperation through the Value Chain

Optimización Estratégica de la Cooperación en Negocios Gastronómicos mediante la Cadena de Valor

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ABSTRACT

In the competitive environment of gastronomic business, the implementation of effective strategies has become essential for success and adaptability. This study set out to explore the value chain as a strategic analysis system to foster cooperativeness in this sector. Three fundamental objectives guided the research: first, to explain the value chain as a tool for strategic analysis and cooperation in business; second, to determine its relevance as a strategic system in the restaurant industry; and third, to identify the application of Porter's value chain in this sector. The results of a survey revealed that gastronomic entrepreneurs value the implementation of strategic systems, highlighting the importance and relevance of such systems. The value chain is perceived as an influential instrument in achieving successful objectives in these businesses. In terms of knowledge, it was found that most participants have a moderate familiarity with the

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concept of the value chain in the business context, and its importance is recognized at various levels.

Keywords: strategy, cooperation, value chain

RESUMEN

En el competitivo entorno de los negocios gastronómicos, la implementación de estrategias efectivas se ha vuelto esencial para el éxito y la adaptabilidad. Este estudio se propuso explorar la cadena de valor como un sistema de análisis estratégico para fomentar la cooperatividad en este sector. Tres objetivos fundamentales guiaron la investigación: primero, explicar la cadena de valor como herramienta de análisis estratégico y cooperación en los negocios; segundo, determinar su relevancia como sistema estratégico en el ámbito gastronómico; y tercero, identificar la aplicación de la cadena de valor de Porter en este sector. Los resultados de una encuesta revelaron que los emprendedores gastronómicos valoran la implementación de sistemas estratégicos, resaltando la importancia y relevancia de dichos sistemas. La cadena de valor se percibe como un instrumento influyente en la consecución de objetivos exitosos en estos negocios. En términos de conocimiento, se encontró que la mayoría de los participantes posee una familiaridad moderada con el concepto de la cadena de valor en el contexto empresarial, y su importancia es reconocida en diversos niveles.

Palabras clave: estrategia, cooperación, cadena de valor

INTRODUCTION

In today's business environment, the adoption of effective strategies plays a fundamental role in the success and competitiveness of businesses in different sectors. One of the fields that has experienced a significant evolution in terms of strategic approaches is the gastronomic sector. The dynamics and increasing competition in this field have driven the need to implement strategic systems that enable businesses to adapt and thrive in a changing environment.

In this context, the value chain has been highlighted as a strategic analysis system that can make a difference in the way gastronomic businesses plan, operate and compete in the market. The value chain, proposed by Michael Porter, addresses the identification of key activities that add value in the production process and the delivery of products or services. Its application can provide clarity on the strengths and areas for improvement within a company, in addition to fostering cooperation between the various components of the chain.

The purpose of this paper was to address three closely related goals that highlight the importance of the value chain as an integral system of strategic analysis to promote business cooperation. First, it sought to clarify the role of the value chain as an essential tool for assessing strategy and promoting collaboration in business. Since cooperation between different elements of a value chain has become fundamental for today's business success, this tool not only facilitates the internal understanding of a company's operations, but also fosters efficient cooperation with key partners and suppliers, driving joint process optimization.

In addition, it was intended to determine how the Value Chain can operate as a strategic system especially adapted for gastronomic businesses. In this highly competitive sector, the implementation of strategic systems is essential for growth and sustainability. Through value chain analysis, businesses can discover opportunities to maximize efficiency at every stage, from input procurement to final delivery to the customer. Simultaneously, strategies for fostering cooperativeness in food businesses were explored, recognizing how collaboration and teamwork can drive competitiveness and success. The value chain, by identifying opportunities for collaboration between different actors in the chain, can generate synergies and optimize the overall efficiency of these ventures. Ultimately, it focused on analyzing the application of Porter's Value Chain in the gastronomic sectors, demonstrating how this conceptual framework can be effectively adapted and leveraged in this specific context.

Based on the data collected and the objectives set out in this research, significant conclusions have been obtained. The survey results highlight that the majority of respondents recognize the importance of implementing strategic systems in their restaurant businesses. This perception is reflected both in the levels of importance and in the levels of relevance, where there is a solid recognition of the need for solid strategies to guarantee success and competitiveness in the gastronomic sector.

In addition, participants have a positive perception of the influence of strategic systems in achieving successful objectives in their restaurant businesses. This indicates that entrepreneurs in this sector recognize the connection between strategic planning and operational success. Porter's value chain has also been identified as a widely valued and understood concept in the business context. The majority of respondents have a medium level of familiarity and value the value chain at different levels of importance.

In summary, the results of this research underline the relevance of the implementation of strategic systems, such as Porter's value chain, in gastronomic businesses. These findings support the importance of strategy in the success and cooperativeness in the foodservice sector, and highlight the potential of the value chain as a strategic tool in this area. Strategic planning, particularly through approaches such as the value chain, proves to be essential to achieve success and competitiveness in today's gastronomic environment.

For the development of this work it is essential to take into consideration the significant contributions of Porter (2004). (2004)who emphasizes that the value chain represents a source of competitive advantage. This approach implies that a company should not be conceived of as a homogeneous entity, since each of the activities it encompasses can contribute both to the relative cost position and to the creation of bases for differentiation.

The structured evaluation of the development and interaction of the activities, whether primary or support, carried out by a company requires the use of appropriate tools, such as the Value Chain. This tool breaks down the various activities in order to analyze cost behavior and sources of differentiation in an effective and feasible manner.

The term "value chain" has been defined from multiple perspectives in the literature. Nutz and Sievers (2016)for example, emphasize that the value chain encompasses a diversity of activities ranging from the conception of a product or service to the different intermediate stages of production, culminating with delivery to end consumers.

In the culinary field, it is essential to explore various strategies to attract the general public. Thompson Jr., Strickland III, and Gamble (2008) cited by Albán María Belén (2020) propose that one of the most effective strategies in restaurants consists of "providing greater value to the customer for their investment" (p. 76). (p. 76). This refers to the search to provide high quality products and services that exceed customer expectations in terms of aspects such as quality, service, variety and features, among others.

(Thompson Jr, Strickland III, & Gamble, 2008, cited by Albán Maria Belen, 2020) indicate that "A best-cost-price strategy works best in markets where buyer diversity makes product differentiation the norm, and where many consumers are also price and value sensitive." (p. 76). This approach suggests that in a market characterized by the relevance of time, cost, price and quality, an effective strategy would be to provide high quality at an affordable price, in addition to standing out in terms of differentiation from the competition. An affordable cost and price approach could enable the restaurant to acquire the necessary inputs and ingredients in an efficient manner.

According to Thompson Jr., Strickland III and Gamble (2008) cited by Albán María Belén (2020), it is argued that "A cost-plus pricing strategy works best in markets where diversity of purchase makes product differentiation the norm, and where many consumers are also price and value sensitive." (p. 76). This approach implies that, in markets characterized by the preeminence of factors such as time, cost, price and quality, it is optimal to offer products of the highest quality at an affordable price, achieving differentiation from the competition through low costs and prices. This facilitates the acquisition of the necessary supplies and ingredients by the restaurant.

According to the research presented in the scientific journal *ECOCIENCIA* by Fernández-Sánchez, Auquilla Belema, Reyes Vargas & Sancho Aguilera. (2018), it is highlighted that "In the last decade worldwide, the social recognition to the indigenous gastronomy of indigenous peoples has reached increasing levels, for its great contribution to the competitive value of the tourist offer, becoming in many cases the main actor in the discovery of new sensory pleasures and culinary experiences, and agglutinating axis of several tourist modalities" (p. 2). In the Ecuadorian context, specifically in the Amazon region, these typical dishes have been well received in the gastronomic sectors, and have established themselves as a solid economic business strategy to satisfy tourists by providing them with the culinary delicacies typical of this region. For these visitors, these flavors and gastronomic pleasures are novel.

In the Ecuadorian context in general, this strategy is applied to offer tourists the most exquisite dishes, specifically oriented towards this type of consumers who wish to

experience authentic Ecuadorian food. This trend also highlights the importance of tourism in the country as a fundamental factor behind these initiatives.

According to the research presented in the scientific article by Diego Salazar Duque and Camila Burbano Argoti (2017) in the Inter-American Journal of Environment and Tourism - RIAT, it is highlighted that the food and beverage field is considered a primary service activity that exerts a positive impact on the promotion of tourism in a specific region. Consequently, business strategies developed in a planned, continuous and systematic manner to meet the culinary needs, desires and expectations of customers play a crucial role in generating economic income for the company, as well as in achieving a competitive position in the market.

Within the Ecuadorian context, the gastronomic sector emerges as a highly viable and competitive option in the field of tourism. This is due to the fact that visitors, particularly those from other nations, feel an affinity for our native dishes. An effective strategy consists of enriching the culinary offer for this segment of the public, thus surpassing the traditional food and beverage options.

These tactics are not limited to international audiences, but also apply to local tourists from other areas of the country.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This work adopts a qualitative approach, as it is developed through an exhaustive bibliographic review in university databases. It employs the descriptive method to analyze the information provided by various authors. In addition, the comparative method is used to discern the differences between various aspects, as is the case of the various gastronomic sectors within Ecuador.

In order to obtain accurate and relevant information, we began by exploring both standard and academic search engines, which allowed us to find an initial synthesis of the assigned topic. Based on this knowledge base, the search continued in the REDALYC databases, using keywords to gather the required information. The first specific objective investigated focused on "Determining the value chain as a strategic system for gastronomic businesses". The second objective addressed "Analyze strategies to foster cooperation among gastronomic businesses". Likewise, the third objective focused on "Examining the applicability of Porter's value chain in the gastronomic sectors".

Each of these topics revealed extremely valuable and relevant information, which was systematized and stored in a template or matrix in Excel format. So far, a series of research from different journals and authors has been accumulated, contributing to a solid and diversified approach.

The research adopts a quantitative approach in its second stage, where a survey was conducted with the objective of evaluating the degree of implementation of the value chain in gastronomic enterprises. This survey seeks to identify its development and the impact it has generated, with a particular focus on Canton La Troncal.

The value chain is an essential strategic approach for gastronomic businesses, providing a detailed methodology that maximizes efficiency, competitiveness and value creation at each stage of the process. Its power lies in the disaggregated identification of the primary and secondary activities that make up the company's operation, thus allowing a comprehensive understanding of the way in which gastronomic products or services are generated and delivered.

Primary activities refer to the essential steps in the value chain that are directly related to the creation, production and distribution of the culinary product. They include inbound logistics (procurement of raw materials), operation (food preparation), outbound logistics (distribution to customers) and marketing and sales (promotion and sale of the product). The detailed identification of these activities allows a thorough analysis of the processes, facilitating the optimization of each stage and the identification of possible inefficiencies.

Secondary activities, on the other hand, support and complement primary activities. This encompasses infrastructure functions (human resources, technology, administration), technology development (innovation and process improvement), procurement (obtaining necessary inputs, such as equipment), and human resource management (staff training and motivation). These indirect activities are vital to ensure that the primary activities run smoothly and effectively.

Process optimization, fundamental to the value chain, is achieved by analyzing each activity and stage to identify opportunities for improvement. From the selection of fresh ingredient suppliers to the way the dish is presented to diners, each step is critically analyzed with the objective of eliminating inefficiencies, minimizing costs and increasing quality.

The value chain also contributes to the creation of competitive advantages. By thoroughly understanding how each activity affects the final product and its perception

by the customer, foodservice businesses can differentiate themselves in the marketplace. This could manifest itself in excellence in preparation, unique presentation of the dish, personalized customer service or efficiency in delivery. By leveraging these differentiations, businesses can gain a strong and distinctive position in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

The value chain provides a robust and detailed framework for foodservice businesses to analyze, optimize and differentiate their operations. By identifying primary and secondary activities, optimizing processes and creating competitive advantages, businesses can improve their efficiency, quality and market position, delivering exceptional and sustainable culinary experiences to their customers.

The promotion of cooperativity among gastronomic businesses represents a strategic approach that can significantly boost the development and competitiveness of the sector. Collaboration between different actors and the sharing of resources and knowledge emerge as fundamental pillars for achieving beneficial and sustainable synergy.

First, collaboration between different gastronomic businesses fosters an atmosphere of community and reciprocity in the sector. The creation of cooperative networks allows restaurants and related establishments to come together to address common challenges, such as changing market trends or logistical problems. Through collaboration, supply chain management can be optimized, best practices can be shared and lessons can be learned from the experiences of others, resulting in greater efficiency and resilience.

Resource sharing, another pillar of cooperativity, can lead to a more equitable distribution of the operational burden. For example, restaurants can join together to purchase raw materials in greater volume, which could lead to better supplier agreements and cost savings. In addition, collaboration in the use of equipment and tools can reduce individual operating expenses and facilitate access to more advanced technologies that a single business might not be able to afford.

Cooperation also facilitates the sharing of knowledge and experiences among gastronomic businesses. This can manifest itself in joint workshops, seminars and trainings, where participants learn from each other and acquire new skills. The resulting synergy can lead to innovations in terms of menus, culinary techniques and customer service, which ultimately enriches the dining experience offered and attracts a broader customer base.

On the economic front, these cooperative strategies can help strengthen the entire sector. Greater collaboration and efficiency can help reduce operating costs, which

could be reflected in more competitive prices for consumers. In addition, by raising the quality of culinary services and products, the reputation of the sector as a whole could improve, thus attracting more tourists and visitors.

The promotion of cooperativity among gastronomic businesses is a strategic approach that boosts the sustainable development and competitiveness of the sector. Collaboration between actors and the sharing of resources and knowledge can generate beneficial synergies that optimize the value chain, enrich the culinary offer and strengthen the gastronomic economy as a whole.

The application of Porter's value chain in the foodservice industry provides a solid framework for analyzing and optimizing each stage of the culinary operation, from ingredient procurement to end-customer satisfaction. The various elements of the value chain are directly related to the operation of the foodservice business, and a detailed understanding of them can make a difference in terms of efficiency, quality and competitive advantage.

Inbound logistics (procurement of raw materials), this is the starting point in the value chain. A gastronomic business must obtain fresh, quality ingredients for its dishes.

Operations (Food Preparation), this is where ingredients are transformed into delicious dishes. Efficient kitchen management and the use of advanced culinary techniques can increase productivity and improve the quality of the dishes offered.

Outbound logistics (Distribution to customers), once the dishes are prepared, they must be delivered to customers in a timely and appropriate manner. Home delivery logistics or the organization of the presentation in the restaurant are examples of how this stage of the value chain relates to customer service.

Marketing and sales, promotion of the dishes and the dining experience is crucial to attract customers. This includes online advertising, social media presence and the creation of attractive menus that reflect the culinary identity of the business.

Customer service, friendly and attentive service is essential in the restaurant industry. Interaction with diners, the willingness of the staff and the speed with which problems are resolved are factors that influence customer satisfaction.

Infrastructure, human resource management, technology and internal systems are vital aspects for the efficient operation of the restaurant, an example of which is the use of

online reservation systems to optimize table management and improve the customer experience.

Technology development, innovation in the kitchen and in the operation can lead to new ways of preparing dishes and improving efficiency. The introduction of modern culinary techniques or the use of advanced equipment are examples of how technology can influence value creation.

Procurement, selection of the right equipment and supplies is critical to the operation. Choosing high-quality cookware and efficient point-of-sale systems can streamline processes and enhance the customer experience.

Porter's value chain provides a comprehensive structure that connects all of these elements and enables foodservice businesses to analyze, optimize and differentiate themselves in a competitive marketplace. Understanding how each stage affects the final product and customer experience is essential to achieving efficiency and quality in all areas of the culinary operation.

RESULTS

This analysis is based on the results obtained from the survey that was applied to evaluate the degree of implementation of the value chain in gastronomic enterprises, as described in the methodology. The analysis of the items that contribute to the focus of this study is presented below.

Regarding the question "What level of importance do you consider appropriate for the implementation of strategic systems in your business?", the results reveal the following observations:

Very High (13%): A significant percentage of respondents substantially value the importance of implementing strategic systems in their businesses. This suggests that these participants recognize the need for sound strategic approaches to ensure the success and growth of their restaurant ventures.

High (48%): The majority of respondents consider the implementation of strategic systems in their businesses to be of high importance. This supports the idea that most entrepreneurs in the foodservice sector understand the need to plan and execute effective strategies to stay competitive and achieve their objectives.

Medium (39%): A notable percentage of respondents have an intermediate perspective on the importance of strategic systems in their business. This could indicate that these participants recognize some importance, but may not be fully convinced of the need to implement highly elaborated strategies.

Low (0%) / Very Low (0%): No respondents considered the importance of implementing strategic systems in their businesses to be "low" or "very low". This suggests that most survey participants recognize that strategy plays a crucial role in the success of their restaurant ventures, and none underestimate its importance.

In summary, the survey results indicate that the majority of respondents value the implementation of strategic systems in their restaurant businesses, attributing "very high" and "high" levels of importance. In addition, a considerable percentage also consider "medium" levels of importance. These findings highlight the relevance of strategic planning in the context of gastronomic businesses to achieve success and competitiveness in the market.

In relation to the question "In your opinion, how relevant is the adoption of a strategic system for a gastronomic business?", the results provide the following interpretation: Very High (32%): A significant percentage of respondents consider that the adoption of a strategic system for a gastronomic business has an extremely high relevance. This suggests that these participants understand and deeply value the importance of having well-defined and planned strategies in the context of the gastronomic sector.

High (20%): One-fifth of respondents consider the relevance of adopting a strategic system to be high. Although this percentage is lower than "very high," it is still notable and supports the idea that a significant number of participants recognize the need for sound strategies in their restaurant businesses.

Medium (48%): The majority of respondents assign a medium level of relevance to the adoption of a strategic system. This indicates that almost half of the participants consider that having a strategic approach is important, but there may be some variation in the perception of its importance.

Low (0%) / Very Low (0%): No respondent considered the relevance of adopting a strategic system to be "low" or "very low". This suggests that all participants recognize at least some degree of importance in the implementation of strategies in gastronomic businesses.

In summary, the survey results indicate a generalized recognition among respondents of the relevance of adopting a strategic system in the foodservice business. Although opinions vary in levels of "very high", "high" and "medium" importance, none of the participants underestimate the importance of having strategies in the foodservice sector. This supports the notion that strategic planning is essential to achieve success and competitiveness in the restaurant business.

In reference to the question "On what scale do you think it would be feasible to implement a strategic system in your venture within the gastronomic sector?", the results offer the following interpretation:

Very High (19%): A considerable percentage of respondents believe that it would be feasible to implement a strategic system in their venture on a "very high" scale. This suggests that these participants have strong confidence in the feasibility and effectiveness of implementing large-scale strategic strategies in their restaurant businesses.

High (26%): More than a quarter of respondents believe that it would be feasible to implement a strategic system in their venture on a "high" scale. This indicates that a significant number of participants believe that strategic strategies have the potential to be implemented effectively and beneficially in their businesses.

Medium (52%): The majority of respondents assign a "medium" scale of feasibility to the implementation of a strategic system in their gastronomic ventures. This suggests that most see a balance between the possibility of implementation and the challenges associated with strategy adoption.

Low (3%): A small percentage of respondents consider the feasibility of implementing a strategic system to be "low". This could indicate that some participants have doubts about the effective applicability of strategies in the gastronomy sector.

Very Low (0%): No respondents selected the "very low" level for the location of Porter's value chain implementation. This suggests that, in general, participants do not see this option as unfeasible for their business.

In summary, the survey results suggest that the majority of respondents consider it feasible to implement a strategic system in their ventures within the gastronomic sector, on a scale tending towards "medium". Although there is a range of opinions, from "very high" to "low", the absence of responses in the "very low" range suggests that, in general, the participants consider the implementation of strategies in the gastronomic field to be feasible.

With respect to the question "What is the influence of the strategic system on the achievement of successful objectives in your business?", the results suggest the following: Very High (23%): a considerable percentage of respondents perceive a "very high" influence of the strategic system on the achievement of successful objectives in their gastronomic businesses. This suggests that these participants consider that the implementation of strategies has a significant and direct impact on the achievement of successful goals in the gastronomic sector.

High (32%): Just over a quarter of respondents believe that the influence of the strategy system is "high". This indicates that a significant number of participants recognize the relevance of strategies in achieving successful results, although their level of influence may vary.

Medium (45%): The majority of respondents attribute a "medium" influence of the strategic system on the achievement of successful objectives. This suggests that most participants see a positive correlation between strategy implementation and culinary success, but there may be a range of opinions on the degree of influence.

Low (0%) / Very Low (0%): No respondent rated the influence of the strategy system as "low" or "very low". This suggests that participants recognize that strategies have a positive impact on the achievement of successful objectives in their businesses, and none of them underestimate this influence.

In summary, the survey results indicate that the majority of respondents see the influence of the strategy system as a positive factor in achieving successful objectives in the foodservice sector. Although there is a range of opinions from "very high" to "medium", all participants recognize the importance of strategies in achieving successful results in their foodservice businesses.

In reference to the question "To what extent are you familiar with the concept of the value chain in the business context?", the results provide the following interpretation:

Very High (2%): A small percentage of respondents indicate a "very high" level of familiarity with the value chain concept in the business context. This suggests that these participants have a deep and comprehensive understanding of how this concept operates in companies.

High (7%): A higher percentage than before reported a "high" level of familiarity. This indicates that a larger group of participants has a solid and significant knowledge of the value chain concept and its application in the business environment.

Medium (68%): The majority of respondents report having a "medium" level of familiarity with the concept of the value chain in the business context. This suggests that most participants have at least a basic understanding of the concept, although they may not be fully versed in its details.

Low (16%): A considerable percentage of respondents consider their level of familiarity with the value chain concept to be "low". This could indicate that some participants have limited or partial knowledge of how the value chain works in companies.

Very Low (7%): Another small group of respondents indicated a "very low" level of familiarity with the value chain concept. This suggests that these participants have minimal or virtually no knowledge of this concept in the business context.

In summary, the survey results show that the majority of respondents have a "medium" level of familiarity with the value chain concept in the business context. Although there are participants with higher and lower levels of knowledge, most have at least a basic understanding of the concept. This suggests that there is a knowledge base about the value chain among participants, although there is room for further education and understanding in some cases.

In relation to the question "From your perspective, what level of importance does the value chain have in business operations?", the results provide the following interpretation:

Very High (19%): A significant percentage of respondents consider the value chain to be of "very high" importance in business operations. This suggests that these participants have a strong belief in the fundamental and critical impact that the value chain has on the functioning and success of business operations.

High (29%): Almost one-third of respondents attribute a "high" level of importance to the value chain in business operations. This indicates that a considerable number of participants recognize the relevance of the value chain as a factor that significantly influences business operations.

Medium (52%): The majority of respondents consider the value chain to be of "medium" importance to business operations. This suggests that while many participants recognize its relevance, they may have a more balanced view of how it affects overall business operations.

Low (0%) / Very Low (0%): No respondent rated the importance of the value chain as "low" or "very low". This suggests that all participants recognize at least some degree of value chain importance within business operations.

In summary, the survey results indicate that the majority of respondents see the value chain as a relevant component of business operations. Although there is a distribution of opinions at the "very high", "high" and "medium" levels, the absence of "low" and "very low" responses suggests that all participants value the importance of the value chain in business operations, with particular emphasis on the "very high" and "high" levels of importance.

In relation to the question "If you were to consider the implementation of Porter's value chain as a strategic system in your business, at what level would you place it?", the results provide the following analysis:

Very High (16%): A significant percentage of respondents believe that they would rank the implementation of Porter's value chain at a "very high" level. This suggests that these participants have strong confidence in the ability of Porter's value chain to be a highly effective strategic system in their businesses.

High (36%): More than one-third of respondents choose to place the implementation of Porter's value chain at a "high" level. This indicates that a substantial number of participants see great potential in the application of this strategic system in their businesses.

Medium (45%): The majority of respondents choose a "medium" level to place the implementation of Porter's value chain. This suggests that most participants see a balance between the usefulness and feasibility of this strategic system in their businesses.

Low (3%): A small percentage of respondents consider that they would place the implementation of Porter's value chain at a "low" level. This could indicate that some participants have doubts or concerns about the applicability or effectiveness of this strategic system in their businesses.

Very Low (0%): No respondents selected the "very low" level for the location of Porter's value chain implementation. This suggests that, in general, participants do not see this option as unfeasible for their business.

In summary, the survey results indicate that there is a range of opinions on the placement of the implementation of Porter's value chain as a strategic system in business. Although

the majority of participants choose to place it at "high" and "medium" levels, a significant percentage also consider "very high" levels of placement. This suggests that there is a general interest in the implementation of Porter's value chain as a strategic system in gastronomic businesses.

In relation to the question "What is your level of experience in implementing strategic systems in business?", the results provide the following interpretation:

Very High (3%): A small percentage of respondents indicate having a "very high" level of experience in implementing strategic systems in business. This suggests that these participants have broad and deep experience in successfully applying strategic approaches in business contexts.

High (13%): A higher percentage than before reported having a "high" level of experience. This indicates that a larger group of participants has solid experience in implementing strategic systems in business.

Medium (39%): The majority of respondents indicate having a "medium" level of experience in implementing strategic systems in business. This suggests that most participants have at least some experience in implementing strategic approaches, although they may not be experts in the subject.

Low (36%): A considerable percentage of respondents consider their level of experience in implementing strategic systems to be "low". This could indicate that some participants have limited experience in this area or have not had many opportunities to implement strategies in their businesses.

Very Low (9%): A small group of respondents indicate having a "very low" level of experience in implementing strategic systems in business. This suggests that these participants have minimal or virtually no experience in implementing strategic approaches.

In summary, the survey results indicate that there is a range of experience levels in implementing strategic business systems among the participants. While most have at least some experience at either the "medium," "high," or "very high" levels, there is also a significant percentage with "low" and "very low" levels of experience. This suggests that while some participants have a solid understanding of strategic implementation, others may be less familiar with this area.

In reference to the question "What challenges do you perceive as the most important for the successful implementation of a strategic system in a gastronomic business?", the results offer the following interpretation:

Internal Challenges (54%): The majority of respondents identify internal challenges as the most important to the successful implementation of a strategic system in a restaurant business. This suggests that participants recognize the significant influence of internal factors, such as organizational culture, resource management and staff training, on effective strategy implementation.

External Challenges (46%): Almost half of the respondents consider external challenges to be equally important for the successful implementation of a strategic system in a restaurant business. This indicates that participants also recognize the influence of external factors, such as market competition, consumer trends and the economic environment, on strategy implementation.

In summary, the survey results suggest that participants perceive both internal and external challenges as important factors influencing the successful implementation of a strategic system in a restaurant business. This highlights the complexity and interplay between various internal and external elements that must be considered when implementing strategies in the foodservice environment.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the data collected and the objectives of this research, the following conclusions can be drawn:

The survey results indicate that the majority of respondents recognize the importance of implementing strategic systems in their foodservice businesses. Both importance and relevance levels are significant, with a considerable percentage of participants valuing the need for sound strategies. This supports the first objective of the research, which was to determine the value chain as a strategic system in restaurant businesses. The participants show an understanding of the importance of strategy in the success and competitiveness in the gastronomic sector.

The data also reveal that participants have a positive perception of the influence of strategic systems on the achievement of successful goals in their restaurant businesses. The majority believe that strategy implementation has a significant impact on the achievement of successful goals. This suggests that food entrepreneurs recognize the

connection between strategic planning and success in their operations. This finding supports the second research objective, which was to analyze strategies for cooperativeness in food businesses.

In relation to familiarity with the value chain concept, most participants have a medium level of knowledge. Although there are some with higher and lower levels of knowledge, this suggests that there is a general knowledge base about the value chain in the business context. In addition, most value the value chain at different levels of importance, with a particular focus on "very high" and "high" levels. This supports the third objective of the research, which was to identify Porter's value chain within the gastronomy sectors. The participants show a recognition of the relevance of the value chain in gastronomy business operations.

In summary, the results of this research underline the importance of implementing strategic systems, such as Porter's value chain, in gastronomic businesses. Entrepreneurs in the sector recognize the positive influence of strategy in the achievement of successful objectives and competitiveness. They also have a general understanding of the value chain and value its relevance in the context of their operations. These findings suggest that strategic planning, particularly through approaches such as the value chain, plays an essential role in the pursuit of success and cooperativeness in the gastronomy field.

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