Internext
Review of International Business
São Paulo, v.17, n. 2, p243-263, may. /aug. 2022| e-ISSN: 1980-4865 | http://internext.espm.br
ESPM

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT INTERNATIONALIZATION BARRIERS IN THE CREATIVE ECONOMY: A MULTIPLE-CASE STUDY WITH BRAZILIAN SMES

[1]Fernando Januário Lopes Soares & Jorge Ferreira da Silva
Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro – PUC, Rio de Janeiro (Brasil)

ARTICLE DETAILS

Article history:

Received: 01 october 2021
Accepted: 03 april 2021
Available online março 17 th 2022

Double Blind Review System

Scientific Editor
Ilan Avrichir

Keywords:

International business
Internationalization barriers
Export barriers
Creative economy
Creative industries

ABSTRACT

Objective: to explore perceptions that stakeholders of Brazilian firms from the Creative Economy have regarding internationalization barriers.

Method: a multiple-case study was carried out involving three small- and medium-sized Brazilian enterprises (SMEs), all of them producers and experienced exporters of creative goods.

Main findings: internal barriers, mainly those functional- and price-related, are perceived as the most important, while product-related barriers seem to be irrelevant. Among external barriers, economic and governmental constraints seem to stand out, which indicates the need for some regulatory and export incentive improvement.

Relevance/ originality: while exports of creative goods from emerging economies have grown since the beginning of this century and even surpassed those from developed economies, Brazil has gone in the opposite direction, reducing its exports of this kind of goods. This suggests the existence of relevant barriers to the internationalization of local firms belonging to the Creative Economy. This study adds to the literature about export barriers, traditionally focused on large manufacturers from developed economies.

Theoretical/ methodological contributions: the identified preponderance of internal barriers to internationalization, mainly due to the scarcity of human and financial resources, also makes it harder for the firms to deal with external barriers imposed by governments and competitors. On the other hand, low product-related and socioeconomic barriers suggest that creative products are most valued precisely by their originality and differentiation.

INTRODUCTION

Used since the turn of this century, the term Creative Economy is still somewhat open to different interpretations and delimitations (Sung, 2015). Nonetheless, it essentially refers to a set of economic activities that depend on its symbolic content, including creativity as the most relevant factor for producing goods and services (Oliveira, Araujo, & Silva, 2013). At the heart of the Creative Economy are the creative industries, whose primary input is creativity, knowledge, or intellectual capital, and include some of the most traditional economic activities, such as architecture, cinema, television, music, photography, advertising, fashion, and craftwork, also including some more recent technology-related activities, like game design, software and application development, etc.

Despite the fluidity of the term, the Creative Economy has drawn a lot of attention over the last decade and originated diverse initiatives from governments at different levels in various countries, as well as international organizations, such as the United Nations Conference on Trade

[1] Contact of the author E-mail: fernando.soares@hotmail.com
DOI:10.18568/internext.v17i2.676

and Development (UNCTAD), which initiated in 2004 the "Creative Economy Programme," that has as its primary goal the creation of platforms "for the promotion of the Creative Economy as a tool for economic diversification and sustainable, equitable and inclusive livelihoods" (UNCTAD, 2018b, Goals section).

The increased interest in the Creative Economy is justified by the spiked growth of some of its sectors during the last decades, such as software, social media, mobile apps, and video game development, as well as the emergence of big enterprises and valuable brands connected to the creative industries. In this vein, it is worth mentioning that the 'Best Global Brands 2021', a list of the one hundred most valuable brands in the world, developed by the consulting firm Interbrand, featured many companies closely related to the Creative Economy, such as Disney, Netflix, Nintendo, Tiffany & Co., plus many others with at least some involvement (Interbrand, 2021). Moreover, governments tend to foster the Creative Economy in their territories because firms from creative sectors usually pay above-average salaries. The Creative Economy is also often associated with better job quality and high levels of employee satisfaction, in addition to frequently promoting social inclusion and reducing gender inequality (Oliveira et al., 2013); despite this optimistic view about jobs in the sector is not unanimous (Banks & Hesmondhalgh, 2009; Popiel, 2017).

In Brazil, Creative Economy has also become increasingly relevant: the local Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA) estimated that the formal Creative Economy represented approximately 2% of the Brazilian formal workforce and 2.5% of the total formal salary income during the 2009-2010 period (Oliveira et al., 2013). Another study carried out by the Industry Federation of the State of Rio de Janeiro (FIRJAN, 2019) estimated that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the Creative Economy amounted to BRL 171.5 billion in 2017, which represented 2.61% of the total Brazilian GDP.

The Creative Economy has also become important in global trade, which indicates its strength and resilience: even after the great economic crisis in 2008 that affected economies all over the world, the value of creative goods commercialized across the globe amounted to USD 509 billion in 2015, which represented a growth of 145% since 2002 (UNCTAD, 2018a). The participation of emerging economies in this percentage also grew rapidly, and in 2015 the value of creative goods exported by developing countries surpassed the value of exports of the same kind of products originated in developed countries. However, Brazil has let this opportunity pass: despite representing around 2.6% of the total Brazilian Gross Domestic Product (FIRJAN, 2019), the local creative industries account for only 0.2% of all the international trade of creative goods, and their exports dropped 11% from 2005 to 2014 (UNCTAD, 2018a).

The context above points to the growing relevance of this theme and suggests the existence of significant barriers hindering the internationalization of local firms from the creative sectors, leading us to the research question: how do the leaders of Brazilian firms in the Creative Economy perceive internationalization barriers? To raise comprehension of this scenario, the general objective of the present research is to explore the nature of these barriers and understand how they are perceived by their leaders.

Most studies about internationalization barriers involved large companies from manufacturing sectors based in developed countries (Cahen, Lahiri, & Borini, 2016; Kahiya, 2018). So, this study aims to contribute to scientific knowledge by adding a different point of view, analyzing the theme from the perspective of smaller firms from creative sectors established in a developing economy. Entrepreneurs and managers of firms from these sectors can benefit from this study by understanding the most relevant barriers perceived and preparing their firms to overcome them. And hopefully, this study can help government agents to improve public policies to reduce those barriers and improve export incentives for creative goods and services.

After this introduction, our article is organized into five other sections. The next one presents the theoretical background on which this study was based, followed by a section detailing the methodology used. We start the analysis by describing and analyzing each of the three cases (within-case analyses), then complement it by comparing the cases to identify similarities and differences (cross-case analysis). The conclusion section summarizes the key findings, contributions, limitations, and suggestions for future research on the theme.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review elaborated for the present study was structured based on two key themes, namely, the Internationalization Barriers and the Creative Economy.

INTERNATIONALIZATION BARRIERS

Research on internationalization barriers, or more specifically on export barriers, started in the early 1960s and soon became a popular theme in the International Business area (Kahiya, 2018). In this sense, “export barriers are all those attitudinal, structural, operational, and other constraints that hinder the firm's ability to initiate, develop or sustain international operations”(Leonidou, 1995a, p. 31). In other words, export barriers are any element or factor, whether internal or external, that blocks or discourages companies from initiating, increasing, or maintaining export activities (Arteaga-Ortíz & Fernández-Ortíz, 2010).

Even though there is little debate on the definition of export barriers, the same cannot be said about other relevant aspects of the subject, starting with the establishment of a standard classification for the barriers: there is no consensus regarding the most informative way of classifying them (Kahiya, 2017). Scholars frequently use new terms to refer to barriers similar to others already identified in previous research, which generates a significant and increasing variety of export barriers. For instance, Leonidou’s (2004) systematic review of 32 empirical studies originated a taxonomy featuring 39 export barriers. Notwithstanding, a review conducted 14 years later in one hundred articles published in renowned journals over the last 50 years has identified over 80 export barriers (Kahiya, 2018).

The misalignment goes beyond the list of barriers, encompassing the way they are classified and grouped, being the locus of origin of the barriers the most common criterion adopted. The taxonomy proposed by Leonidou (2004) is the most used, and it distinguishes internal barriers (those that are intrinsic to the firm, encompassing informational, functional, and marketing barriers; the latter encompassing barriers related to the product, price, distribution, logistics, and promotion) from external barriers (those that are associated with institutional, cultural and economic aspects of both the country of origin and the host countries, encompassing procedural, governmental, task-related and environmental barriers; the latter including economic, political-legal and sociocultural barriers). Similar propositions were made by other researchers (Cahen et al., 2016; Paul, Parthasarathy, & Gupta, 2017; Tesfom & Lutz, 2006), but each of them used a slightly different approach to the way barriers are grouped.

As pointed out in previous studies, “each researcher tends to use his or her own list, extracted from the literature and from exploratory work in such a way that it is difficult to compare the results from different studies” (Rocha, Freitas, & Silva, 2008, p. 107), resulting in excessive fragmentation of the studies on the theme and to the lack of homogeneity in terms of number, kind, or relative importance of the identified export barriers (Arteaga-Ortíz & Fernández-Ortiz, 2010). Trying to solve this problem and reach a universally accepted classification for future research, a scale was proposed and empirically tested by Arteaga-Ortíz & Fernández-Ortíz (2010), grouping 26 barriers into four dimensions (knowledge, resources, procedure, and exogenous barriers), but up to now there seems to be some reluctance in its acceptance and use, so “there remains no cross-nationally validated export barrier scale, much less a universal one” (Kahiya, 2018, p.1177).

Decisions about a firm's internationalization are often determined by management's perceptions of risks (José Acedo & Florin, 2006), knowledge and barriers (Hultman, Iveson, & Oghazi, 2021). Perceptions of internationalization barriers are influenced by many factors, including a firm's demographics (Al-Hyari, Al-Weshah, & Alnsour, 2012; Cardoza, Fornes, Farber, Gonzalez Duarte, & Ruiz Gutierrez, 2016; Shaw & Darroch, 2004; Silva, Franco, & Magrinho, 2016; Silva & Rocha, 2001), managerial characteristics (Hultman et al., 2021; Pinho & Martins, 2010; Tan, Brewer, & Liesch, 2018), export characteristics (Kahiya & Dean, 2016; Rocha et al., 2008; Shaw & Darroch, 2004; Silva & Rocha, 2001; Uner, Kocak, Cavusgil, & Cavusgil, 2013), as well as institutional and cultural factors (Al-Hyari et al., 2012; Cardoza et al., 2016; Shaw & Darroch, 2004; Silva & Rocha, 2001).

These perceptions can also change over time, especially when there are relevant institutional changes, such as reduction of export incentive programs, deterioration of the economic environment in the country of origin or international markets, changes in the structure of the industry and in the profiles of exported products (Bjarnason, Marshall, & Eyjólfsson, 2015; Kahiya, Dean, & Heyl, 2014; Rocha et al., 2008).

Regarding the influence of the internationalization barriers, several studies analyze their impact as antecedents of export performance (Altıntaş, Tokol, & Harcar, 2007; Dean, Mengüç, & Myers, 2000; Julian & Ahmed, 2005; Kahiya & Dean, 2014; Köksal & Kettaneh, 2011). As expected, a large majority of the studies confirm the existence of an inverse relationship between these barriers and export performance. Some of the barriers and their negative impacts may be notably weakened by firms by interacting with their network (Baum, Schwens, & Kabst, 2013; Boehe, 2013; Sinkovics, Kurt, & Sinkovics, 2018; Sraha, Sharma, Crick, & Crick, 2020) or by applying technological tools (Hosseini, Fallon, Weerakkody, & Sivarajah, 2019). Few studies point out that specific barriers may even cause a positive impact in the long run, such as developing adaptability to foreign markets and international competition (Kahiya, 2018; Kahiya & Dean, 2014), because they force firms to seek more efficiency and become more competitive.

One important aspect to highlight regarding export barriers research is the sectoral and geographic concentration of the studies on this theme: most of them focused on large manufacturing firms from developed countries (Kahiya, 2018). This indicates an opportunity to expand research on this subject involving emerging economies, as also as studies with small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and firms from the service sector (Cahen et al., 2016; Chandra, Paul, & Chavan, 2020; Javalgi & Martin, 2007; Kahiya, 2018).

CREATIVE ECONOMY

Even though the concept of Creative Economy appeared at the beginning of the 21st century (Howkins, 2001), a consensus on its exact definition has not yet been reached, and the term is often mistaken as a synonym for Cultural Industry and Creative Industry. Additionally, the Creative Economy is understood differently by each academic realm, signaling that it encompasses a variety of concepts and is not well established as a new economic paradigm (Sung, 2015).

The idea of Cultural Industry emerged during the post-war period and was related to fierce opposition to mass entertainment. The term, initially used in contempt for cultural products as sources of mass consumption such as newspapers, movies, magazines, and music, which supposedly distracted the mass from "high culture," slowly became a general reference to industries that provided cultural goods and services such as the aforementioned (UNCTAD, 2010), despite still today its delimitation may vary across research field (Wang, Gu, Von Glinow, & Hirsch, 2020). In turn, the idea of the Creative Industry emerged in Australia in 1994, later inspiring the creation by the United Kingdom of the "Creative Industries Task Force", an initiative to promote creative goods and their industries beyond encouraging the consumption of artistic goods (United Kingdom, 2001, p. 5). This program defined the term "creative industries" as "those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property" and listed thirteen economic activities, namely: advertising;

the art and antiques markets; crafts; design; designer fashion; film and video; interactive leisure software; music; the performing arts; publishing; software and computer services; television and radio (United Kingdom, 2001).

The term Creative Economy was proposed by Howkins (2001), who associated it with human talent and the ability to capitalize on new and original ideas by transforming them into products that can be purchased. Nonetheless, the Creative Economy is based on the creative industries but goes beyond them (Hartley, 2005), contemplating the impact of their goods and services on other sectors, especially those from the knowledge economy, and on economic processes; not to mention the impact of the connections between them. Hence, even though its interpretations are slightly different, the term Creative Economy essentially refers to a set of economic activities related to creative industries, whose primary input is knowledge, creativity, or intellectual capital, in a way that value generation is achieved in all its activities through the production of creative goods and services (Oliveira et al., 2013).

Two dimensions are commonly used to define the scope and quantify the Creative Economy, namely, the occupational and the sectorial views (Markusen, Wassall, DeNatale, & Cohen, 2008; Oliveira et al., 2013), although both have limitations: creative and non-creative jobs can be found in any industry, and the definition of creative occupations and creative sectors can be, at some degree, grounded on stereotypes (Dubina, Carayannis, & Campbell, 2012). From an occupational perspective, the center of attention of the Creative Economy is the creative class, constituted by professionals who can add economic value through their creativity (Florida, 2004). From the sectorial viewpoint, the scope of the Creative Economy is determined by the operation of creative industries. However, there is relative inconsistency in defining which creative industries are considered part of the Creative Economy, and different models were proposed to address this issue. For instance, the original "Creative Industries Task Force" document defined them as "those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill, and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property" (United Kingdom, 2001, p.5). The model defended by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO, 2003, 2017) limits creative industries to the sectors involved with the creation, production, and distribution of work protected by copyrights. And the UNCTAD model adopts a broader scope, including various creative sectors, such as crafts, cultural festivities, audiovisual works, new media, etc. (UNCTAD, 2010, 2018b).

Under the concept of Creative Economy, we can find industries that are different in many aspects, and such differences can be noted, for instance, in the value chain, which can be extremely simple in some sectors, such as plastic arts, or highly complex in others, like the movie industry (UNCTAD, 2010). However, it is possible to state that the characteristics creative sectors have in common outweigh their differences, being the most remarkable similarity the relevant and intangible nature of the value added through creativity to the goods and services delivered to their customers.

In organizational terms, a relevant characteristic of the Creative Economy is a relative lack of medium-sized companies, since few large companies that have internationalized their operations frequently control the main distribution channels. Meanwhile, many micro and small businesses are primarily local and often provide services for more prominent companies (UNCTAD, 2010). The operation of micro and small businesses may be explained by low entry barriers, which are related to the reduction of the amount of capital required to start a business, and also to a high level of informality in many creative sectors (Banks & Hesmondhalgh, 2009; Reis, 2008).

While the industrial economy features many hierarchical organizations, the Creative Economy, in contrast, is generally structured on multiple and collaborative networks (Reis, 2008). The most common type of organization in the Creative Economy is forming groups that conduct projects. These teams include professionals from the same company or from informal networks who are selected according to the specific needs of each project, after which the configuration of these groups changes for the articulation of new projects (UNCTAD, 2010).

The insertion of creative enterprises in collaborative networks contributes to the cluster grouping process, which is also promoted by other factors, like the existence of related industries or companies with a similar cultural background in the same region (Lazzeretti, Capone, & Boix, 2012). This facilitates access to a creative talent pool and the rehiring of skilled professionals to work on new projects. The physical proximity and the mobility of the workforce ultimately promote constant knowledge circulation and updates, plus expertise sharing in projects within companies (UNCTAD, 2010). It also helps promote the economic development of these regional clusters (De-Miguel-Molina, Hervas-Oliver, Boix, & De-Miguel-Molina, 2012). Moreover, the driver of the economic development observed in regional clusters are the connections and synergy observed among industries in the same group (Innocenti & Lazzeretti, 2019).

The Creative Economy has also become relevant in global trade: between 2002 and 2015, the value of creative goods commercialized internationally increased by 145%, amounting to USD 509 billion, which indicates its resilience even after the global financial crisis in 2008 (UNCTAD, 2018a). The same UNCTAD document reported that creative services amounted to nearly USD 600 billion annually, considering only 38 developed economies.

The participation of developing countries in the international trade of creative goods and services has increased rapidly, and in 2015 the value of exports of creative goods from these countries amounted to USD 265 billion, exceeding the exports from developed economies for the first time. According to the UNCTAD, China, Hong Kong, India, Singapore, Taiwan, Turkey, Thailand, Malaysia, Mexico, and the Philippines are the top ten exporters of creative goods, leading especially in sectors like design, fashion, and film. Nonetheless, Brazil is a developing country that has been going in the opposite direction and has wasted the opportunity of being a relevant player in the Creative Economy: the country's exports of creative goods dropped 11% between 2005 and 2014, the year when the country's creative goods exports amounted to USD 914 million, and the most recent figures show that Brazil accounts for only 0.2% of the global trade of creative goods (UNCTAD, 2018a). This scenario suggests the existence of relevant barriers that may be hindering the internationalization of Brazilian creative enterprises.

Considering the above, the objective of this study is to explore how the internationalization barriers are perceived by the leaders of Brazilian firms from the Creative Economy, aiming to identify some of the reasons for the scenario described above and expand current knowledge on the theme.

RESEARCH METHOD

To achieve the defined objective of the present work, the case study method was applied since it is recommended when the researcher has little control over the data, and the focus of the analysis is a contemporary phenomenon within its real-world context (Yin, 2018). It is considered the best option to conduct research that aims to understand "how" or "why" different phenomena happen. Additionally, it also answers exploratory questions such as the "what" questions (Yin, 2018), a possibility emphasized by Ghauri and Firth (2009), who point out that case studies have been conducted over the years to answer various "what," "how," and "why" questions, covering numerous themes related to International Business.

A multiple-case study was chosen since its findings tend to be more robust, strengthening the study's evidence (Yin, 2018). It is worth mentioning that, unlike in the search for statistical generalization, typically associated with surveys, the selection of more than one unit of analysis, as it occurs in a multiple-case study, seeks a theoretical generalization of the findings through the use of a replication logic, analogous to that used in multiple experiments (Yin, 2018).

The number of cases should not be considered a quality criterion for a multiple-case study (Pauwels & Matthyssens, 2004). The case selection should be carried out with caution, taking into account the time available for the conclusion of the study, the financial resources for the necessary trips, the availability of personal contact, and other practical and important issues: depending on the context and potential constraints, it might be best for the researcher to select fewer cases and conduct in-depth investigations than to choose many cases that will not be subject to thorough research that would adequately support the arguments of the analysis (Ghauri & Firth, 2009).

Two criteria were applied in the initial selection of the cases to be studied: (1) the core business of the firm should be compatible with the scope of the Creative Economy, and so, be among the creative industries list as defined by the UNCTAD, since this is one of the most inclusive and commonly used models; and (2) the firm should regularly provide goods or services internationally, through direct exports or subsidiaries, for at least 12 months straight.

The present study focused on enterprises that manufacture fine jewelry, fashion jewelry, and accessories due to the relevance of these sectors to the exports of Brazilian creative goods: they are consistently among the top-three creative products exported by the country and, together, correspond to around 14% of such exports. An analysis of the 2018 Registration of Exporting Companies spreadsheet, made available by the Secretariat of Foreign Trade, part of the Brazilian Ministry of Economy, was carried out to list exporting companies whose National Classification of Economic Activities (CNAE in Portuguese) was associated with the selected sectors. A second step was the search for information, on the firm’s website and sectorial reports, about the internationalization experience of each firm, followed by the approach of the leaders of selected organizations through phone calls, e-mail or messages via LinkedIn, explaining the research objective and inviting them to collaborate. After careful consideration and application of the selection criteria, three companies were chosen to be the object of this research.

The data collection was carried out through multiple instruments and information sources, both primary (in-depth semi-structured interviews with the founders, owners, or directors of the organizations; analysis of documents provided by the firms; direct observation of the firm’s operation) and secondary (information collected from other sources, such as the company’s website, interviews and articles published in media etc.), to access different sources of evidence and enable data triangulation (Yin, 2018).

The interviews were conducted in November and December 2019 at the facilities of the enterprises in Brazil. They followed a semi-structured script covering company history, its internationalization process, and the interviewee’s perception of export barriers. The researcher filled a checklist at each interview to ensure all the critical points were covered. However, the interviews were intended to resemble guided conversations rather than structured queries (Yin, 2018). The interviews with the three companies selected for the multiple-case study featured all three owners or managing partners plus, in one of the cases, the professional responsible for the enterprise’s international affairs (in the other two cases, the managing partners or owners interviewed were also in charge of handling the firms’ international operations). The duration of the interviews ranged from 56 to 115 minutes. All of them were recorded with the permission of the interviewees and later transcribed for documentation purposes and to clarify any questions that could have emerged during the analysis process.

Leonidou's (2004) export barriers taxonomy was used as the foundation of the chosen analytical model due to its simplicity and because it is the most used one by scholars who study this theme: at the time of this study, it had been cited at least four times more than other similar classifications. It is based on the locus of origin of the barriers, classifying them as internal (informational, functional, and marketing barriers) or external (procedural, governmental, task-related, and environmental barriers), and some of these barrier categories are broken down into other subcategories (which will be further detailed in the analysis section of this article).

The analysis of the cases was carried out in two stages. In the first one, each case was analyzed individually (within-case analysis), and this consisted of a three-step process according to the suggestion of Ghauri and Firth (2009): firstly, the cases were organized in chronological order (storytelling); next, data were filtered, processed, rearranged and analyzed in light of the chosen analytical model, and the ATLAS.ti software was used for coding and analyzing the interviews; finally, evidence was collected and attributed to different categories (types of barriers), according to the analytical model, and then systematized in tables and charts to facilitate visualization. This process was indispensable for the researcher to conduct the proposed four-level classification (absent, weak, moderate, or strong) of the intensity of each one of the barriers identified, based on the interviewees' perception, according to the pieces of information documented and other sources of evidence collected. After these individual analyses were completed, the second stage involved a cross-case analysis to compare the cases from different perspectives to observe similarities and differences, looking for potential patterns.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF INDIVIDUAL CASES (WITHIN-CASE ANALYSIS)

Case 1: Sobral Design

Sobral Design produces and commercializes items made from polyester resin, especially fashion jewelry, accessories, and decorative objects. The firm was founded in the late 1960s, when the couple Carlos Sobral and Rita Sobral, inspired by the hippie movement, started producing and selling artisanal fashion items. However, it was not until 1976 that Carlos Sobral first learned about polyester resin. The couple's business started to grow, at first only in Brazil and then overseas, where it became prestigious and received various international awards. After having to adapt to many economic and competitive scenarios, in 2020 Sobral Design had a company-owned production facility in the state of Rio de Janeiro, plus 21 points of sale all over Brazil, which include company-owned and franchised stores, and three company-owned stores in France, in addition to online stores in both countries.

Sobral Design's internationalization process started in 1982, when Carlos Sobral traveled to Paris and closed a distribution deal with Marc Labat Difusion, a wholesale firm that began to commercialize Sobral's pieces to retailers, mainly in Europe. Sobral Design reached its internationalization peak in 1988, when the company's exports amounted to USD 1 million. However, the increased competition of Asian products led to a decrease in exports during the 1990s, which forced the firm to change its strategic positioning, ending its partnership with Marc Labat, and opening its first company-owned wholesale store in Paris, in 2001.

After adopting a more artistic approach, embracing authorship, and showcasing their product at international fine jewelry and fashion jewelry fairs, Sobral soon drew attention to the company's creations, receiving many *Etoile de Mode* awards at the main international trade show dedicated to jewelry and luxury accessories, the *Éclat de Mode Bijorhca Paris*. Sobral was also invited to showcase its creations in one of the Louvre's wings and, in 2008, to create accessories for the Spring/Summer season of *Maison Karl Lagerfeld* fashion show at the Paris Fashion Week. In 2011, the enterprise took part in the New York Fashion Week and was selected as a finalist in the *WGSN Global Fashion Awards*.

Aiming to make the most of the attention and recognition his company had received, Carlos Sobral expanded the company's operation in 2009, opening wholesale stores in New York, Paris, and Heidelberg, Germany. Nonetheless, being well-known did not make the firm successful, and amidst disagreements with partners and operational problems, the stores in Germany and the United States were soon closed.

At the beginning of 2020, Sobral Design maintained its overseas operations only in Paris, where the company has, in addition to its online shop, two retail stores, and one wholesale outlet, from where its creations reach customers all over France and other European countries, as also as from other continents. The exports, which once represented 80% of the firm's annual revenue, currently account for around 15% of the firm's revenue, reflecting a strategic move to prioritize retail and company-owned stores, reducing dependency on large wholesale volumes.

Regarding internationalization barriers, there is a clear predominance of internal barriers, as perceived and expressed by the firm's owner himself. Of them, it is worth mentioning the functional barriers, derived mainly from limited company-owned financial resources, which, associated with a conservative financial perspective (characterized by the aversion to external financing), hinder the expansion of this firm's operation through their company-owned retail stores. Additionally, the profit from overseas is used to sustain Brazilian operations, limiting capital abroad and hindering international expansion. Functional barriers resulting from the scarcity of financial resources also elevates another internal barrier, namely, the informational barrier, once it becomes harder to hire external professionals or specialized consulting teams to map market opportunities and to elaborate a more structured project focused on international expansion via franchises, after a frustrating attempt in Heidelberg, Germany. The functional barrier derived from limited human resources also hinders international expansion. Considering the worrying economic scenario observed in the last years both in Brazil and in France, the company's leadership has been devoted to surviving economic and financial hardships, putting off their plans to expand their operation. At the same time, the reduced international team, whose focus has been on operating the existing stores, does not seem to have the capabilities required to explore new market opportunities or develop solid expansion plans. Another functional barrier observed in this case results from difficulties to expand production capacity, due to the highly artisanal manufacturing process, which is inherent to the premium approach that is part of the company's differentiation strategy.

Concerning internationalization barriers related to marketing, the only ones that seem to be relevant, to a certain extent, regard the company's inability to compete in price with Asian producers, as well as the difficulty to obtain reliable representation in some countries (which ultimately led to the closing of the operation in the United States, and probably makes the selection of potential partners for the international expansion more difficult and slower).

Regarding external barriers, perceived as of moderate intensity were the task-related barriers (e.g., strong competition in international markets) and environmental barriers, which derived from economic aspects (e.g., deteriorated international economic conditions) and from political-legal conditions (e.g., instability due to the Paris terrorist attacks). The remaining external barriers have been perceived as being of weak intensity (i.e., procedural or sociocultural barriers) or even absent (i.e., governmental barriers). Although some complaints were noted regarding bureaucracy and related transaction costs in the company's internationalization process, procedural barriers have also lost some of their perceived intensity after decades of exporting their products.

Case 2: Antonio Bernardo

Named after its founder and managing partner, Antonio Bernardo, the company produces and commercializes jewelry made from noble metals, especially gold and silver, eventually adorned with precious stones. Their pieces are characterized by their creative design and a certain lightness in terms of style. Several pieces have received important Brazilian and international design awards.

Antonio Bernardo designed his first ring in 1969 and never stopped creating since then, initially using third parties to produce his designs, later producing himself at home. At first years his pieces were sold to friends, but the increasing success of his creations enabled the opening of his first store in 1981 and of his studio two years later. In the following years, other own stores were opened in the wealthiest neighborhoods in Rio de Janeiro, then in São Paulo, and later in other Brazilian states, in partnership with local entrepreneurs, reaching up to eighteen stores in Brazil, not all of them successful: celebrating 51 years since the design his first ring, in 2020 Antonio Bernardo had eleven stores in eight Brazilian cities, and his pieces were also sold internationally by partner galleries and jewelry stores in 18 cities of ten different countries.

Although having frequently heard clients saying how much people had been interested in his jewelry when they wore his pieces abroad, the entrepreneur postponed his entrance into international markets until 2003, when he decided to take part in the Baselworld Watch and Jewellery Fair, the most famous event of luxurious jewels in the world, held for over a century in Basel, Switzerland. In the year after that, two of his rings were awarded one of the most prestigious recognitions in his industry, the iF Product Design Award. Since then, other seven of Bernardo's creations have been honored with the same prestigious award, besides other relevant international recognitions such as the Red Dot Design Award in 2004 and 2010, the International Jewellery London in 2004, and the Inhorgenta Awards in 2011.

Motivated by the visibility and prestige obtained by his brand abroad, the entrepreneur started to attend the leading design and jewelry fairs and events in the United States and Europe. In these events, he met many international peers and became a part of a creative and valuable network, which helped him identify ideal partners to represent his brand abroad, mainly at high-profile jewelry stores or art galleries. Antonio Bernardo currently commercializes his pieces in eighteen stores in ten countries, including Germany, Austria, Belgium, China/ Hong Kong, Denmark, Spain, the United States, Holland, Japan, and Portugal.

The analysis of the internationalization barriers perceived by the entrepreneur shows a relative balance of internal and external barriers.

Among the internal barriers, marketing barriers stand out, mainly because of the difficulties of improving Antonio Bernardo's brand knowledge abroad, due to the firm's limited financial resources, and the chosen distribution model via nonexclusive representatives, which also deal with limited resources to promote several brands and products. Another marketing barrier with moderate intensity is the enterprise's difficulties in offering their clients relatively stable prices due to frequent and intense currency fluctuations. Still regarding internal barriers, some functional barriers presented moderate intensity, such as financial and human resources constraints, which hinder more intense penetration of the brand in international markets. Informational barriers and distribution barriers were considered weak, having been attenuated with the help from the solid international network established by the firm during its trajectory.

As to external barriers, economic barriers were considered strong, resulting from currency fluctuations and exchange rate risk, which, in turn, create marketing/ price internal barriers, as aforementioned. Governmental barriers were also considered strong, deriving from the perception that the regulations in force in Brazil make the flow of international goods between this and other countries more complicated and more costly, which affects the interest of potential foreign partners. Sociocultural barriers are perceived as having moderate intensity, mainly due to a non-explicit prejudice faced by the firm for being from a developing country without tradition in the design and jewelry markets.

Case 3: Donna Si

Donna Si is a small business that produces and sells semi-jewels made from metallic materials that receive a layer of gold coating, eventually combined with com other materials such as semi-precious stones, pearls, crystals, leather, etc. Run by its owner, the jewelry designer Simone Wagner, Donna Si was a spin-off from another firm, named M.Gold, that she and her husband at the time started in 1997. Having developed proprietary technology to enhance the quality of the gold coating, M.Gold soon conquered loyal customers, initially in Brazil and then abroad. After their divorce, the couple agreed to share the brand M.Gold: her ex-husband kept using it in the Brazilian market, while Simone used it for exports until the creation of her brand, Donna Si, in 2012.

The internationalization of the business occurred only five years after the creation of M.Gold. Believing that her semi-jewels had the potential to enter the international market, in May 2002 the entrepreneur showcased her creations at the Accessories The Show NY, one of the biggest international fairs in the sector. Even though most of the participants knew extraordinarily little about gold coating, her debut as an international designer exceeded all expectations, motivating Wagner to incorporate this fair into the firm's official calendar. Additionally, she started to showcase her creations in other international fairs, first in North America (Coterie Trade Show; Jewelers International Showcase Miami, among others), then in Europe (*Bijorhca Paris*, *Bisutex Madrid*, among others) and in Asia (Hong Kong Jewellery & Gem Fair, in addition to other events in Japan).

After nearly two decades of exporting, the entrepreneur has a solid customer portfolio that allows her to select the international fairs she wishes to participate in, besides developing custom-made pieces and collections for some of these clients, mostly retail chains and outlets. The company promotes its designs on social media (e.g., Instagram), besides having an e-commerce platform focused on international customers: the access is limited to registered clients, all content is presented only in English, and its domain is the internationally known ".com." The pieces are exported, with the logistic support of FedEx, to nearly twenty countries such as Australia, Austria, Canada, Chile, China, South Korea, Spain, the United States, France, England, Japan, Mexico, Portugal, the Dominican Republic, Czech Republic, etc.

Regarding internationalization barriers perceived, more intensity has been attributed to internal barriers, mainly functional, price/ marketing, and informational barriers. Human resource constraints stand out as functional barriers, since the highly manual production process demands skilled artisans and limits production capacity. Associated with this constraint are financial resources restrictions, typical of small-sized companies, which force the firm to operate with small structures, limiting its capacity to explore new opportunities worldwide. Informational barriers were a strong constraint when the firm started its internationalization, but they were attenuated as it got experience in exporting. Price barriers are currently perceived as the most relevant by the entrepreneur because of the aggressive competition from Asian suppliers, who forced a substantial decrease in industry prices and margins. Unable to compete with the Asian prices, Donna Si adopted a differentiation strategy, emphasizing the quality of its products and its artisanal work, in addition to creating exclusive collections for selected customers. Regarding other marketing barriers, only logistics is perceived as having moderate intensity, due to the shipping costs. Product barriers were of moderate intensity initially because semi-jewels with gold coating were virtually unknown in most countries. Now, this scenario is different, and, as the firm nearly only works with exports, its products are designed considering the preferences of international customers. Distribution is made directly to foreign retailers, and the business model adopted demands little investment to promote its brand, since its client's customers do not generally detect it.

Regarding external barriers, both task-related and governmental barriers have been perceived as moderate. The former derived essentially from fierce price competition, especially with Asian competitors; these barriers are related to internal barriers regarding price/ marketing. The latter is due to the difficulties imposed by Brazilian regulation and bureaucracy, and by the ineffective support provided by governmental agencies to foster exports.

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FIRMS AND THEIR INTERNATIONALIZATION PROCESSES

In addition to being typical firms from the Creative Economy, the objects of the present multiple-case study have other aspects in common, such as being all family-led businesses with relevant presence of the founders, who are still in charge of the creative process in the three firms and lead the entire operation in two of them. Moreover, all studied firms can be classified as small or medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), reached a relatively high pristine status in their segment when it comes to the quality of their products, and have been operating for over two decades (even if under different names, in one of the cases), having successfully overcome various economic cycles.

The presented internationalization processes followed relatively different paths, having been initiated at different maturing stages. The time from the foundation of the business to the initial internationalization stages varies from five years (Donna Si case) to 34 years (Antonio Bernardo case). Sobral Design was the pioneer among the three companies and found its own path over two decades earlier than the other two companies. It can be assumed that all three companies have presented long-lived internationalization trajectories, for they have been exporting their goods for at least 16 years when data was collected. Even though their internationalization processes are long-lived, all firms operate through means that do not demand an elevated level of resource commitment to foreign markets, which facilitates direct exporting of their goods; only one of these companies, Sobral Design, chose to have subsidiaries abroad.

None of the enterprises followed a gradual internationalization process, and all of them came to export to more than one foreign country within the first years of their internationalization trajectories. All three companies initiated their internationalization process in Europe or North America, culturally distant regions from the Brazilian market. The initial market selection seems to have followed intuitive criteria both in the case of Sobral Design (whose owner decided to explore the French market because that country is famous for its fashion) and in the case of Donna Si (whose owner decided to initiate the company's internationalization path in the United States because New York hosts one of the most important international fashion jewelry and accessories fair). Differently, in the case of Antonio Bernardo, market opportunities were identified because of the international awards and recognition that the designer received for his work. The subsequent entry into other markets does not seem to have been carefully planned out by any of the studied companies either, resulting more from market opportunities that emerged from the fairs and events held and as their networks abroad expanded over the years.

Establishing a solid network overseas was fundamental for the internationalization processes of the three firms, facilitating the identification of potential partners to represent and distribute their products. Taking part in renowned international fairs and events in their respective market segments was also beneficial to all three internationalization trajectories studied, allowing them to showcase their products, map potential interest from different markets, and expand their international network. It is also worth noting the impulse given by international awards in the internationalization trajectories of the cases studied, increasing the perceived value of their creations and giving them more visibility in the international market.

Table 1 summarizes some of the basic characteristics of the firms analyzed and of their internationalization processes:

Table 1: Characteristics of the Firms

	Sobral Design	**Antonio Bernardo**	**Donna Si**
Main products	Fashion accessories and décor objects	Fine Jewelry	Semi-fine Jewelry (gold coating)
Founder(s)	Carlos and Rita Sobral	Antonio B. Hermann	Simone Wagner
Current firm leader	Daniel Sobral	Antonio B. Hermann	Simone Wagner
Current creative director	Carlos Sobral	Antonio B. Hermann	Simone Wagner
Annual revenue	BRL 15 million	N.D.	BRL 2 million
Number of employees	100-120	104	6
Firm size	Medium	Medium	Micro/ Small
Year of foundation	1970	1969	1997
Year and country of 1st internationalization	1982 (France)	2003 (USA)	2002 (USA)
Main international market	France	Portugal	Spain
Number of export destination countries	~5	10	~20
Number of countries with physical points of sale	1	0	0
% exported/ total revenue	10-15%	5%	98%

Source: Prepared by the authors, 2021.

INTERNATIONALIZATION BARRIERS PERCEPTION BY THE ANALYZED FIRMS

Table 2 presents a comparison of the perceptions of the firms studied about their internationalization barriers, grouped as per Leonidou's (2004) taxonomy:

Table 2: Comparison of Internationalization Barriers Perceptions

Types of Barriers			**Sobral Design**	**Antonio Bernardo**	**Donna Si**
Internal	Informational		Moderate	Weak	Moderate
Internal	Functional		Strong	Moderate	Strong
Internal	Marketing	Product	Weak	Absent	Weak
Internal	Marketing	Price	Moderate	Moderate	Strong
Internal	Marketing	Distribution	Moderate	Weak	Weak
Internal	Marketing	Logistics	Absent	Absent	Moderate
Internal	Marketing	Promotion	Absent	Strong	Weak
External	Procedural		Weak	Weak	Weak
External	Governmental		Absent	Strong	Moderate
External	Task-related		Moderate	Absent	Moderate
External	Environmental	Economic	Moderate	Strong	Weak
External	Environmental	Political-legal	Moderate	Absent	Weak
External	Environmental	Sociocultural	Weak	Moderate	Weak

Source: Prepared by the authors, 2021.

It is possible to state that the leaders of these firms perceive internal barriers as having more relevance and impact than external barriers. Among the internal barriers, functional and price barriers stand out. A possible explanation for this is that, for being SMEs, the firms studied endured scarcity in terms of resources, a fact that, in addition to originating the main internal barriers mentioned (such as a lack of financial resources to hire external consultancy firms to map market opportunities abroad, the lack of skilled human resources to prospect new markets, the lack of modern productive resources that provide greater efficiency and lower costs, etc.), makes it more difficult for the firms to deal with external barriers imposed by governments, competitors and other actors, both in Brazil and abroad (such as bureaucracy, complex laws, unfavorable regulatory conditions, exchange rate risk, etc.).

Among the external barriers, the firms analyzed in the present study perceived economic barriers as the most critical ones, usually associated with the currency risk, as also as governmental barriers, mainly regarding insufficient export incentives and unfavorable regulatory conditions. This suggests the necessity to update the current legal and regulatory framework to facilitate the international goods flow in Brazil. It is also essential to reconsider current export incentive programs to increase efficiency and pragmatism.

A relevant and maybe surprising finding of the present study was that, according to the perceptions of the analyzed firms, export barriers related to product and sociocultural aspects are not relevant. Even though attractiveness and the value perception of creative goods are directly connected to subjective criteria such as originality and beauty, which, in turn, are influenced by sociocultural characteristics of each place, the enterprises studied did not need to adjust their creations to satisfy different preferences worldwide. It is possible to say that the success of the creative goods they export derives from their original features, becoming more valued precisely because they are unusual and stand out from what commonly is available in these markets.

CONCLUSION

By addressing the research question ("how do the leaders of Brazilian firms in the Creative Economy perceive the internationalization barriers?"), the present study aims to bring an innovative approach to the theme, analyzing it from the perspective of SMEs from creative industries of a developing economy, differently from most of the existing literature, which involved large manufacturers based in developed countries.

The study showed that internal barriers, mainly those functional- and price-related, are perceived as the most relevant by the analyzed firms.

The perceived preponderance of internal barriers to internationalization is compatible with a survey conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2009) based on eighteen studies involving SMEs from fifteen countries. This predominance of the internal barriers occurred across the various industries analyzed, from most traditional ones to technology-related industries, such as software development (OECD, 2009). This suggests that, despite the particularities that Brazilian firms of the Creative Economy may have, their main internationalization barriers are probably more related to their size and, consequently, to resource constraints.

Having creativity as the most relevant factor for the value perception of their goods (Oliveira et al., 2013), the analyzed firms fundamentally depend on the creative talent of their founders and on the specific skills of their artisans, something difficult to replicate. Additionally, the firms face perceptible restrictions on financial resources, a scenario familiar to most small and medium-sized companies typical of the sector. Those difficulties restrict their production capacity and limit their sales and marketing capabilities, creating functional barriers that may hinder their internationalization.

On the other hand, the intangibility of creativity, mixed with cultural characteristics from Brazil reflected in their creative products, adds value to them and provides a competitive advantage (Reis, 2008), which allows the studied firms to adopt a differentiation strategy for their products to conquer markets and circumvent price-related barriers.

The influence of international experience on reducing the perceived intensity of some barriers, mainly external, like the procedural ones, is evident in the analyzed cases, aligned with the literature (Silva & Rocha, 2001). This happens because experience in external markets fosters learning and creates a knowledge reservoir the firm can access (Kahiya, 2018). Similarly, we found evidence in the cases of the relevance of business networks for overcoming barriers to internationalization, which is also in line with the literature (Sincovicks et al., 2018).

Besides the academic contribution, managers at creative companies may also benefit from this study. They are urged to prioritize the development of internal capabilities, mainly production and human resources, to overcome the internal and external barriers that hinder the internationalization of the companies they manage. Hopefully, this study also contributes to improving public policies by suggesting that incentive programs to foster exports in creative sectors should focus on reducing bureaucracy and providing more practical support to enterprises, mainly during their initial stages of internationalization.

Future research may focus on similar case studies with firms from several creative industries, including exporters of creative services, which might identify barriers common to the Creative Economy as a whole and distinguish them from those specific to a particular sector. Comparing firms of a same creative sector but from different countries may also provide interesting insights into the influence on barriers perceptions due to public policies or institutional factors related to their country of origin. Analyzing the influence of the support given to companies by their networks to overcome internationalization barriers is also an approach that could produce exciting studies on the theme. Finally, it is suggested to evaluate the impact of the barriers on the internationalization process of firms from creative industries, including export performance, market selection, entry mode, etc.

REFERENCES

Al-Hyari, K., Al-Weshah, G., & Alnsour, M. (2012). Barriers to internationalisation in SMEs: Evidence from Jordan. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning, 30*(2), 188–211. https://doi.org/10.1108/02634501211211975

Altıntaş, M. H., Tokol, T., & Harcar, T. (2007). The effects of export barriers on perceived export performance: An empirical research on SMEs in Turkey. *EuroMed Journal of Business, 2*(1), 36–56. https://doi.org/10.1108/14502190710749947

Arteaga-Ortíz, J., & Fernández-Ortíz, R. (2010). Why don't we use the same export barrier measurement scale? An empirical analysis in small- and medium-sized enterprises. *Journal of Small Business Management, 48*(3), 395–420. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-627X.2010.00300.x

Austrália (1994). *Creative Nation: Commonwealth cultural policy*. Retrieved from https://apo.org.au/node/29704

Banks, M., & Hesmondhalgh, D. (2009). Looking for work in creative industries policy. *International Journal of Cultural Policy, 15*(4), 415–430. https://doi.org/10.1080/10286630902923323

Baum, M., Schwens, C., & Kabst, R. (2013). International as opposed to domestic new venturing: The moderating role of perceived barriers to internationalization. *International Small Business Journal: Researching Entrepreneurship, 31*(5), 536–562. https://doi.org/10.1177/0266242611428343

Bjarnason, A., Marshall, D., & Eyjólfsson, E. B. (2015). Export barriers and problems associated with exporting Icelandic marine products under conditions of export or die. *Journal of International Food & Agribusiness Marketing, 27*(4), 290–310. https://doi.org/10.1080/08974438.2014.940121

Boehe, D. (2013). Collaborate at home to win abroad: How does access to local network resources influence export behavior? *Journal of Small Business Management, 51*(2), 167–182. https://doi.org/10.1111/jsbm.12013

Cahen, F. R., Lahiri, S., & Borini, F. M. (2016). Managerial perceptions of barriers to internationalization: An examination of Brazil's new technology-based firms. *Journal of Business Research, 69*(6), 1973–1979. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2015.10.143

Cardoza, G., Fornes, G., Farber, V., Gonzalez Duarte, R., & Ruiz Gutierrez, J. (2016). Barriers and public policies affecting the international expansion of Latin American SMEs: Evidence from Brazil, Colombia, and Peru. *Journal of Business Research, 69*(6), 2030–2039. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2015.10.148

Chandra, A., Paul, J., & Chavan, M. (2020). Internationalization barriers of SMEs from developing countries: a review and research agenda. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research, 26*(6), 1281–1310. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEBR-03-2020-0167

De-Miguel-Molina, B., Hervas-Oliver, J.-L., Boix, R., & De-Miguel-Molina, M. (2012). The importance of creative industry agglomerations in explaining the wealth of European regions. *European Planning Studies, 20*(8), 1263–1280. https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2012.680579

Dean, D. L., Mengüç, B., & Myers, C. P. (2000). Revisiting firm characteristics, strategy, and export performance relationship: A survey of the literature and an investigation of New Zealand small manufacturing firms. *Industrial Marketing Management, 29*(5), 461–477. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0019-8501(99)00085-1

Dubina, I. N., Carayannis, E. G., & Campbell, D. F. J. (2012). Creativity economy and a crisis of the economy? Coevolution of knowledge, innovation, and creativity, and of the knowledge economy and knowledge society. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy, 3*(1), 1–24. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13132-011-0042-y

FIRJAN - Federação das Indústrias do Estado do Rio de Janeiro. (2019). *Mapeamento da indústria criativa no Brasil [Mapping of the creative industry in Brazil]*. Rio de Janeiro. Retrieved from https://www.firjan.com.br/economiacriativa/downloads/MapeamentoIndustriaCriativa.pdf

Florida, R. (2004). *The rise of the creative class: And how it's transforming work, leisure, community and everyday life*. New York: Basic Books.

Ghauri, P. N., & Firth, R. (2009). The formalization of case study research in international business. *Der Markt, 48*(1–2), 29–40. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12642-009-0003-1

Hartley, J. (2005). *Creative industries*. (J. Hartley, Ed.). New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell.

Hosseini, S., Fallon, G., Weerakkody, V., & Sivarajah, U. (2019). Cloud computing utilization and mitigation of informational and marketing barriers of the SMEs from the emerging markets: Evidence from Iran and Turkey. *International Journal of Information Management, 46*(April 2018), 54–69. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2018.11.011

Howkins, J. (2001). *The creative economy: How people make money from ideas*. London: Penguin Books.

Hultman, M., Iveson, A., & Oghazi, P. (2021). The information paradox in internationalization: Can ignorance ever be bliss? Evidence from emerging market SME managers. *Journal of Business Research, 131*, 268–277. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.03.043

Innocenti, N., & Lazzeretti, L. (2019). Do the creative industries support growth and innovation in the wider economy? Industry relatedness and employment growth in Italy. *Industry and Innovation, 26*(10), 1152–1173. https://doi.org/10.1080/13662716.2018.1561360

Interbrand. (2021). *Best global brands 2021*. Retrieved from https://interbrand.com/best-global-brands/

Javalgi, R. G., & Martin, C. L. (2007). Internationalization of services: identifying the building-blocks for future research. *Journal of Services Marketing, 21*(6), 391–397. https://doi.org/10.1108/08876040710818886

José Acedo, F., & Florin, J. (2006). An entrepreneurial cognition perspective on the internationalization of SMEs. *Journal of International Entrepreneurship, 4*(1), 49–67. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10843-006-0482-9

Julian, C. C., & Ahmed, Z. U. (2005). The impact of barriers to export on export marketing performance. *Journal of Global Marketing, 19*(1), 71–94. https://doi.org/10.1300/J042v19n01_05

Kahiya, E. T. (2017). Export barriers as liabilities: near perfect substitutes. *European Business Review, 29*(1), 61–102. https://doi.org/10.1108/EBR-12-2015-0160

Kahiya, E. T. (2018). Five decades of research on export barriers: Review and future directions. *International Business Review, 27*(6), 1172–1188. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ibusrev.2018.04.008

Kahiya, E. T., & Dean, D. (2014). Export performance: Multiple predictors and multiple measures approach. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics, 26*(3), 378–407. https://doi.org/10.1108/APJML-11-2012-0119

Kahiya, E. T., & Dean, D. L. (2016). Export stages and export barriers: Revisiting traditional export development. *Thunderbird International Business Review, 58*(1), 75–89. https://doi.org/10.1002/tie.21741

Kahiya, E. T., Dean, D. L., & Heyl, J. (2014). Export barriers in a changing institutional environment: A quasi-longitudinal study of New Zealand's manufacturing exporters. *Journal of International Entrepreneurship, 12*(4), 331–364. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10843-014-0131-7

Köksal, M., & Kettaneh, T. (2011). Export problems experienced by high- and low-performing manufacturing companies: A comparative study. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics, 23*(1), 108–126. https://doi.org/10.1108/13555851111100021

Lazzeretti, L., Capone, F., & Boix, R. (2012). Reasons for clustering of creative industries in Italy and Spain. *European Planning Studies, 20*(8), 1243–1262. https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2012.680585

Leonidou, L. C. (1995a). Empirical assessment on export barriers: Review, assessment and synthesis. *Journal of International Marketing, 3*(1), 29–43. https://doi.org/10.1177/1069031X9500300103

Leonidou, L. C. (1995b). Export barriers: Non-exporters' perceptions. *International Marketing Review, 12*(1), 4–25. https://doi.org/10.1108/02651339510080070

Leonidou, L. C. (2004). An analysis of the barriers hindering small business export development. *Journal of Small Business Management, 42*(3), 279–302. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-627X.2004.00112.x

Markusen, A., Wassall, G. H., DeNatale, D., & Cohen, R. (2008). Defining the creative economy: Industry and occupational approaches. *Economic Development Quarterly, 22*(1), 24–45. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891242407311862

OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2009). *Top Barriers and Drivers to SME Internationalisation* (Vol. 9789264045). OECD. Retrieved from https://www.oecd.org/cfe/smes/43357832.pdf

Oliveira, J. M. de, Araujo, B. C. de, & Silva, L. V. (2013). *Panorama da economia criativa no Brasil: Texto para discussão [Creative economy landscape in Brazil: Text for discussion].* Retrieved from http://repositorio.ipea.gov.br/bitstream/11058/2026/1/TD_1880.pdf

Paul, J., Parthasarathy, S., & Gupta, P. (2017). Exporting challenges of SMEs: A review and future research agenda. *Journal of World Business, 52*(3), 327–342. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2017.01.003

Pauwels, P., & Matthyssens, P. (2004). The architecture of multiple case study research in international business. In *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods for International Business* (pp. 1–22). Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781781954331.00020

Pinho, J. C., & Martins, L. (2010). Exporting barriers: Insights from Portuguese small- and medium-sized exporters and non-exporters. *Journal of International Entrepreneurship*, 8(3), 254–272. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10843-010-0046-x

Popiel, P. (2017). "Boundaryless" in the creative economy: assessing freelancing on Upwork. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 34(3), 220–233. https://doi.org/10.1080/15295036.2017.1282618

Reis, A. C. F. (2008). Introduction. In *Creative economy as a development strategy: a view of developing countries* (pp. 14-49). São Paulo: Garimpo de Soluções. Retrieved from https://garimpodesolucoes.com.br/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/EconomiaCriativaIngles.pdf

Rocha, A. da, Freitas, Y. A., & Silva, J. F. da. (2008). Do perceived export barriers change over time? A longitudinal study of Brazilian exporters of manufactured goods. *Latin American Business Review, 9*(1), 102–128. https://doi.org/10.1080/10978520802189328

Shaw, V., & Darroch, J. (2004). Barriers to internationalisation: A study of entrepreneurial new ventures in New Zealand. *Journal of International Entrepreneurship, 2*(4), 327–343. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10843-004-0146-6

Silva, J. R., Franco, M., & Magrinho, A. (2016). Empirical investigation of the effects of industry type and firm size on export barriers. *Journal of Business Economics and Management, 17*(6), 1052–1065. https://doi.org/10.3846/16111699.2016.1143874

Silva, P. A. da S., & Rocha, A. da. (2001). Perception of export barriers to Mercosur by Brazilian firms. *International Marketing Review, 18*(6), 589–611. https://doi.org/10.1108/EUM0000000006296

Sinkovics, R. R., Kurt, Y., & Sinkovics, N. (2018). The effect of matching on perceived export barriers and performance in an era of globalization discontents: Empirical evidence from UK SMEs. *International Business Review, 27*(5), 1065–1079. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ibusrev.2018.03.007

Sraha, G., Sharma, R. R., Crick, D., & Crick, J. M. (2020). International experience, commitment, distribution adaptation and performance: a study of Ghanaian firms in B2B export markets. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing, 35*(11), 1715–1738. https://doi.org/10.1108/JBIM-05-2019-0197

Sung, T. K. (2015). The creative economy in global competition. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change, 96*, 89–91. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2015.04.003

Tan, A., Brewer, P., & Liesch, P. (2018). Rigidity in SME export commencement decisions. *International Business Review, 27*(1), 46–55. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ibusrev.2017.05.002

Tesfom, G., & Lutz, C. (2006). A classification of export marketing problems of small and medium sized manufacturing firms in developing countries. *International Journal of Emerging Markets, 1*(3), 262–281. https://doi.org/10.1108/17468800610674480

UNCTAD - United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. (2010). *Creative economy report 2010*. Retrieved from https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ditctab20103_en.pdf

UNCTAD - United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. (2018a). *Creative economy outlook: Trends in international trade in creative industries (2002-2015) and country profiles (2005-2014)*. Retrieved from https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ditcted2018d3_en.pdf

UNCTAD - United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. (2018b). *Creative economy programme: Development trough creativity*. Retrieved from https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ditc2018d4_en.pdf

Uner, M. M., Kocak, A., Cavusgil, E., & Cavusgil, S. T. (2013). Do barriers to export vary for born globals and across stages of internationalization? An empirical inquiry in the emerging market of Turkey. *International Business Review, 22*(5), 800–813. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ibusrev.2012.12.005

United Kingdom. (2001). *Creative industries mapping document - Creative industries task force*. London. Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/creative-industries-mapping-documents-2001

Wang, S. L., Gu, Q., von Glinow, M. A., & Hirsch, P. (2020). Cultural industries in international business research: Progress and prospect. *Journal of International Business Studies, 51*(4), 665–692. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41267-020-00306-0

WIPO - World Intellectual Property Organization. (2003). *Guide on surveying the economic contribution of the copyright-based industries*. Retrieved from https://www.wipo.int/publications/en/details.jsp?id=259

WIPO - World Intellectual Property Organization. (2017). *How to make a living in the creative industries*. Retrieved from https://www.wipo.int/edocs/pubdocs/en/wipo_pub_cr_2017_1.pdf

Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: design and methods* (6th ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE.

Fernando Januário Lopes Soares: Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro – PUC, Rio de Janeiro (Brasil). E-mail: fernando.soares@hotmail.com Orcid id: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3414-9041

Jorge Ferreira da Silva: Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro – PUC, Rio de Janeiro (Brasil). E-mail: shopshop@iag.puc-rio.br Orcid id: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0021-8398

PERCEPÇÕES SOBRE BARREIRAS À INTERNACIONALIZAÇÃO NA ECONOMIA CRIATIVA: UM ESTUDO DE CASOS MÚLTIPLOS COM PMES BRASILEIRAS

Fernando Januário Lopes Soares & Jorge Ferreira da Silva
Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro – PUC, Rio de Janeiro (Brasil)

DETALHES DO ARTIGO

Histórico do Artigo:

Recebido em: 01 de outubro de 2021
Aceito: 03 de april de 2021
Disponível online: 17 de março de 2022

Sistema de revisão "Double blind review"

Editor Científico
Ilan Avrichir

Palavras-chave:

Negócios internacionais
Barreiras à internacionalização
Barreiras à exportação
Economia criativa
Indústrias criativas

RESUMO

Objetivo: explorar as percepções que stakeholders de firmas brasileiras da Economia Criativa têm sobre as barreiras à internacionalização.

Método: um estudo de casos múltiplos envolvendo três pequenas e médias empresas (PMEs) brasileiras, produtoras e experientes exportadoras de produtos criativos.

Principais achados: barreiras internas, principalmente as funcionais e as de preço, são percebidas como as mais importantes, enquanto barreiras relacionadas aos produtos mostram-se irrelevantes. Dentre as barreiras externas, destacam-se as econômicas e as governamentais, indicando a necessidade de aperfeiçoamento em regulações e programas de incentivo à exportação vigentes no país.

Relevância/ originalidade: enquanto as exportações de bens criativos de economias emergentes cresceram desde o início deste século até superar as de economias desenvolvidas, o Brasil foi na contramão, reduzindo suas exportações desse tipo de produto. Isto sugere haver barreiras relevantes à internacionalização de firmas locais pertencentes à Economia Criativa. Este estudo contribui para a literatura sobre barreiras à exportação, em sua maior parte centrada em grandes manufaturas de economias desenvolvidas.

Contribuições teóricas/ metodológicas: a preponderância de barreiras internas identificada, decorrente principalmente da escassez de recursos humanos e financeiros, também torna mais difícil para as empresas lidarem com barreiras externas impostas por governos e concorrentes. Por outro lado, barreiras de produto e socioeconômicas são baixas, sugerindo que os produtos criativos são mais valorizados exatamente por sua originalidade e diferenciação.

PERCEPCIONES SOBRE BARRERAS A LA INTERNACIONALIZACIÓN EN LA ECONOMÍA CREATIVA: UN ESTUDIO DE CASO MÚLTIPLE CON PYMES BRASILEÑAS

Fernando Januário Lopes Soares & Jorge Ferreira da Silva
Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro – PUC, Rio de Janeiro (Brasil)

DETALLES DEL ARTÍCULO

Historia del Artículo:

Recibido: 01 de octubre de 2021
Aceptado: 03 de abril de 2021
Disponible en línea: 17 de marzo 2022

Double Blind Review System

Editor Científico
Ilan Avrichir

Palabras-clave:

Negocios internacionales
Barreras a la internacionalización
Barreras a la exportación
Economía creativa
Industrias creativas

RESUMEN

Objetivo: explorar percepciones de los stakeholders de empresas brasileñas de la Economía Creativa sobre las barreras a la internacionalización.

Método: un estudio de caso múltiple involucrando a tres pequeñas y medianas empresas (PyMEs) brasileñas, productores y exportadores experimentados de bienes creativos.

Resultados principales: las barreras internas, especialmente las funcionales y las de precio, se perciben como las más importantes, mientras que las relacionadas con los productos son irrelevantes. Entre las barreras externas, destacan las económicas y gubernamentales, indicando la necesidad de mejorar la normativa y los incentivos a la exportación vigentes.

Relevancia/ originalidad: mientras que las exportaciones de bienes creativos de las economías emergentes crecieron desde principios del siglo, superando a las de las economías desarrolladas, Brasil redujó sus exportaciones de esos productos. Esto sugiere haber barreras relevantes a la internacionalización de las empresas locales de la Economía Creativa. Este estudio contribuye a la literatura sobre barreras a la exportación, generalmente centrada en grandes manufacturas de economías desarrolladas.

Contribuciones teóricas: la preponderancia de barreras internas, principalmente derivadas de la escasez de recursos humanos y financieros, también dificulta a las empresas hacer frente a las barreras externas impuestas por gobiernos y competidores. Por otro lado, las barreras socioeconómicas y de producto son bajas, sugiriendo que los productos creativos son más valorados precisamente por su originalidad y diferenciación.

How to cite this article:

Soares, F. J. L., & Ferreira da Silva, J. (2022). Perceptions about Internationalization Barriers in the Creative Economy: a Multiple-Case Study with Brazilian SMEs. ***Internext***, *17*(2), 243–263. https://doi.org/10.18568/internext.v17i2.676