

NEGOTIATION EFFECTIVENESS IN COMPANIES OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR: ARE THERE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN INTERNATIONAL AND NON-INTERNATIONAL TRADERS?

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1. ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to know about the impact of the international trade on the negotiation effectiveness of companies in Ecuadorian's agricultural sector.

The used methods were quantitative with a deductive logic and a non-experimental design with a correlational scope in which it was found that depending on the activity of the company, this is an exporter or an importer, the sales level will be increased through the negotiation effectiveness with other companies. However, if the company is engaged in these two activities at the same time, it will not significantly influence its sales levels.

the results observed after the validation of the statistical model, the companies that decide to operate in international markets will also be able to achieve effective negotiations. Without any doubt, they will opt for exit trade to expand sales, reduce risks, and acquire resources; on the other hand, they will choose entry trade if they require inputs or raw materials for their production processes.

Keywords: Growth; Efficiency; Economy; Sales; Market Access.

JEL Codes: A10

2. INTRODUCTION

In, Ecuador, the agricultural sector realized by companies contributes 8% to the total annual production of the country (GDP). Farmers generate sources of employment in the rural sector, thereby contributing to reducing poverty in the countryside. Besides, it is the main source of employment since more than 1.6 million people work in this sector. The development of the agricultural sector realized by Ecuadorian companies leads to marketable surplus (Ventanilla Única de Inversiones Ecuador, 2024).

Associated Equipment Distributors (2021) mentioned that as the country develops, more and more people will be engaged in mining, manufacturing, and other nonagricultural sectors, and all these people depend on the production of food that they can obtain from a marketable surplus. However, one part of the population remains in the activities of the agricultural sector, or the entrepreneurs have their own crops of raw materials to export or to manufacture and commercialize in international markets. While the agriculture develops, production increases and the marketable surplus also expands, and these products can be sold to other countries. In this context, Ecuador is always working to expand its international trade signing free trade agreement with other countries. Agriculture has been the source of raw material for the main industries such as cereals, corn, sugar, edible and inedible oils, etc. all of which depend directly on agriculture. From above, it can be said that agriculture occupies an important place in the development of an economy. In fact, it is a precondition for economic growth.

Unfortunately, the agricultural sector in Ecuador is not going through its best moment due to several discrepancies that do not allow its optimal development. For example, transport for the commercialization of agricultural products has been affected, meaning that many do not have a vehicle or their own means to travel to the city; on the other hand, external situations to the country have not allowed the export of products and this has meant low results in the financial sphere. Many countries have opted for generalized quarantines that restrict the movement of goods and people due to the global pandemic caused by COVID-19 and to minimize the number of infections (Moreano-Logroño, J.A., & Mancheno-Herrera, C.A., 2020).

Pawlak & Kolodziejczak (2020) mentioned that although most countries in the region have decreed the agricultural sector as essential to guarantee food security, the situation has brought several challenges related to the transportation of production, the procurement of inputs, the hiring of labor, uncertainty about prices and demand, and the lack of liquidity and credit, among others. Although all the problems mentioned above, international trade concerning exports and imports will always be related to the fact of negotiation effectiveness according to the number of products in terms of sales, the principal hypothesis to be probed in this paper. It is very important to mention that the success of the negotiation among the companies has a lean with the kind of relationship between the two countries where they belong to.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Due to the nature of this article, precisely, the definition of important concepts should be included in the literature review. International trade is a concept that can be broader and encompass the flow of international trade relations without reference to a specific country, that is, it is the set of commercial and financial movements and operations in general, whatever their nature, that are carried out between nations; it is therefore a universal phenomenon in which the various human communities participate (Osorio, 1995). International trade can be defined as trade that takes place between the states that make up the international community, either through official bodies or by means of formal organizations. International trade can also be considered as that which takes place between a state and a community (Garrone, 1986).

In international trade, open economies are distinguished by the degree of interventionism that states, through their leaders, tend to exert on their international trade activities; that is, the flow of trade that takes place depends on the level of protectionism or free trade in force in the country. Economies that have lower tariffs are considered free trade, while economies that set very high tariffs are known as protectionist economies. There are also closed economies, which are the opposite of open economies (Nanot, 2022).

For the commercialization process among companies, it is necessary to accomplish with the regulations and agreements previously established by the countries through their authorities in charge of fixing a commercial economic policy. This policy refers to tariff barriers, technical barriers in international trade; as well as the benefits of agreements among countries. These regulations are the ones that will allow the establishment of trade relations of mutual interest, legal and in accordance with international law among the countries with a direct impact on the companies.

This process is characterized by the exchange of different goods and services from one country to another and is subject to the variations of the world market (Euroinnova, 2022). International trade has transformed the world, as it has allowed various countries to exchange valuable goods, it is vital for exporting countries to grow. A clear example is Germany and China, which have boosted their economies with exports of all kinds. It improves conditions for the end consumer. Trade, in the long run, allows companies that produce with higher quality and, in some cases, lower costs to survive (Ceballos, 2022).

Fiallo (2017) mentioned that there are three fundamental aspects that can make agriculture an essential pillar in the Ecuadorian economy. Firstly, it should be mentioned that on average it represents 9% of the country's total gross domestic product (GDP). It is worth mentioning that it is the third largest source of income in the country. Similarly, we have the basis of the food sovereignty policy, which specifies that the State must ensure permanent food self-sufficiency. According to The World Trade Organization (WTO) estimates, global agricultural trade reached a record \$1,820 billion in 2018, which was 5% higher than the previous year. However, trade in agricultural products has its inherent drawbacks, such as its perishable nature, long supply chain, strong requirements to transport conditions, storage facilities, safety, and quality (Xu, 2015, cited in Vasylieva & James, 2020, p. 80). Large scale international commercial agriculture has also been successful in several Latin American countries where agricultural producers and exporters may have more than 100,000 hectares; nevertheless, smallholder production known as family farming is a key segment of global agriculture for the provision of food and services for agribusiness, normally these small farms grow up if they count on financial support and technical training. In Latin America, family farming coexists with commercial agriculture in most countries in the region (Alfaro, 2017).

According to estimates by (Hoekstra, 2010), if a comparison is done about the amount of water used for global agricultural production with the amount of water required to produce the same number of products if international trade did not occur, that is only domestic trade, international trade would reduce water use in agriculture by 5%.

As can be seen, agricultural production remains an indispensable and central link in all food systems; without it there is no food security. Only a systemic approach that recognizes the central role and contributions of agriculture to the SDGs will make it possible to make progress in achieving them (Arias, 2021).

In this context, the region's importance in international agri-food trade stands out. Indeed, agri-food exports from Latin American countries account for about 14% of the world's agri-food exports and a quarter of the region's total exports of goods (Rodriguez, 2021); being Ecuadorian products a very important part of this percentage.

The gross production of industry in the ISIC category according to the National Institute of Statistics and Census, the activity of agriculture, forestry and fishing has a growing behavior and in 2007 it imposes a growth of 80% in relation to the previous year (Merchan, et al., 2017). International trade contributes to the transformation of food systems, connecting them with each other and helping to make them more sustainable.

In 2009, Puchol, et, al. mentioned that a negotiation is considered as an activity in which two factions, both of which have interests that are on the one hand complementary and on the other hand opposing, try to reach an agreement that achieves maximum satisfaction of the interests of both, as well as facilitates the execution of new negotiations in the future. In 2019, Zurita described negotiation as the process that is carried out in order to find solutions when the interests of both parties involved are not aligned. In a business environment, where the objective is to increase profits and have a wide range of customers, negotiation can be categorized as a strategy, which when used correctly and applied in conjunction with tactics, means that it will be possible to obtain all the objectives proposed for the company. In a company, whether it is an exporter, importer, or mixed company, it is possible to observe the effectiveness of its negotiations with various companies in the sector at an international level through the objectives achieved by the company, which is it can be measured depending on the sales made. For this purpose, it is necessary for the company to plan the international negotiation, to know its plan B and the concessions it can make to its counterpart. The international market is wide and gives rise to several negotiations in the field of labor and sales, so the term "international negotiation" involves negotiation as a strategy for achieving general and specific objectives such as obtaining a greater number of customers and much more profitability in the company (Zurita, 2019, p.19).

Aims

Determine the impact of the international trade on the negotiation effectiveness of the companies that belong to the agricultural sector in Ecuador.

Hypothesis

International trade has a positive impact on the negotiation effectiveness within the agricultural sector Ecuadorian companies.

4. METHODOLOGY

Pramono et al. (2022) mentioned that, when talking about a quantitative approach, it is to use data in the form of numbers to analyze and detail predetermined variables. Prokešová defined quantitative research as "the collection and evaluation of data using statistical methods" (2022, p. 95).

Caicedo (2008) defined deductive logic as: Deductive logic is the theory of the validity of logical reasoning or logical inference. A necessary and decisive condition for the validity of a logical inference is the following: if the premises of a valid reasoning are true, then the conclusion must also be true" (p. 29). The principles of deductive logic can be seen in Euclid's axiomatization of geometry: making inferences to a whole field of mathematics from certain postulates (Ortiz, 2009). The design of this research is focused on non-experimental, because, by obtaining the data according to the initial collection, they are found without manipulation by experiments or stimuli to determine the cause of the problem. "Non-experimental or ex-post-fact research is any research in which it is impossible to manipulate variables or randomly assign subjects or conditions" (Kerlinger, 1979, p. 116).

For Cabezas et, al. (2018, cited in Arias et, al., 2020, p.4) described that a correlational scope, or better known as correlational level, has the purpose of being able to estimate the existing relationship between two variables, with the use of the application of statistical techniques, as well as, with the measurement of one variable, we will be able to find out what is the behavior of the other variable.

This research had a quantitative approach, a deductive logic, a non-experimental design, and a correlational scope. The population to be analyzed were the companies in the agricultural sector in Ecuador, registered with the Superintendence of Companies, Securities, and Insurance. A balanced panel of data of approximately 3811 companies was extracted for each year with the periods of analysis being 2019, 2020 and 2021. The variables used for the model are shown below in Table 1:

Table 1. Variables used for the model.

Variable	Description
Number Employees	Number of employees per company
Affix	Stock of Fixed Assets
Exports	Total Exports
Imports	Total Imports
Salary	Total Wage Cost
Equity	Total Equity
Dx	1 = Exporter, 0= non-exporter
Dm	1 = Importer, 0= non-importer
DxDm	Interaction of exporter and importer

Source: Own elaboration

To analyze the data and test the research hypotheses, two stages were carried out. The first stage consists of analyzing the data in a descriptive and exploratory way. The second stage consists of estimating the econometric model. To analyze the data and test the research hypotheses, two stages were carried out.

The first stage consists of analyzing the data in a descriptive and exploratory way. The second stage consists of estimating the econometric model. In the first stage of the results, a descriptive and exploratory analysis of the data was carried out, a data table was prepared in the periods 2019 - 2021, the metrics of central tendency and dispersion of the entire data set for the investigation are shown. The descriptive analysis contributes to see of the data set situation, however, this is an analysis of the variables at the present time, so it is necessary to know if this behavior will be sustainable given the predicted impact.

In correspondence the second step is to make an inferential model that evidences the research assumptions. Finally, in this first stage, a correlation analysis was estimated between the analysis variables with the application of logarithms to adjust the behavior of the variables by the variance obtained in the descriptive ones. In this correlation analysis, the Pearson correlation was applied, the which explains the strength of the relationship that the variables have with each other. The second stage consists of the application of a regression model for panel data, which is very useful because it takes advantage of the cross-sectional variability of the information. The functional form of a regression model for panel data responds to the following structure:

$$y_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1 X_{1it} + e_{it} \quad (1)$$

Where y_{it} represents the dependent variable at the i unit at time t , X_{1it} represents the matrix of independent variables at the i unit at time t and reflects the error of the estimated model. To be more precise, the regression model for Panel Data, estimated by generalized least squares, responds to the following structure:

$$totalincome_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1 Affix_{it} + \beta_2 Numberemployees_{it} + \phi_1 Dx_{it} + \phi_2 Dm_{it} + \phi_3 Dx Dm + \beta_3 Salary_{it} + \beta_4 equity_{it} \quad (2)$$

Where Dx and Dm are dummy variables that represent the presence of an exporting firm or an importing firm respectively, and $DxDm$ represents the interaction between exporting and importing, that is, the firm that has both characteristics at the same time. To estimate the model, several tests were carried out to guarantee the robustness of the results, including the Breusch multiplier test and the Pagan Lagrangian for random effects that allow determining the feasibility of using panel data for the estimations. In addition, the Hausman Test was performed to select the appropriate model between random effects and fixed effects. Finally, the Wooldridge test was performed to verify the existence of first-order autocorrelation between the independent variables and the modified Wald test was analyzed to detect heteroskedasticity problems in the errors.

By applying the panel data methodology, also known as panel data or longitudinal data, it allows to analyze a type of data set that contains observations of the same variables during multiple periods of time and/or between different individuals or units. For example, a panel data set might include information on the same set of variables for a group of people over several years, such as their income, age, education level, and employment status. Alternatively, you could include information on the same set of variables for a set of companies over multiple quarters or years, such as their revenue, profit, assets, and liabilities.

In this case, it is used in an econometric setting to analyze how variables change over time and how they are related to each other. Panel data analysis techniques can help researchers control for individual differences

and time-specific effects that could confound their findings if they were based only on cross-sectional or time series data.

5. RESULTS

Table 2. Variables to be analyzed.

Variable		Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	Obs.
income~1	overall	2448403	1.63e+07	0	1.10e+09	N = 11433
	between		1.58e+07	0	7.96e+08	n = 3811
	within		4134983	-1.95e+08	3.07e+08	T = 3
Affix	overall	1512319	8310717	0	5.32e+08	N = 11433
	between		8100389	0	4.04e+08	n = 3811
	within		1860963	-8.82e+07	1.29e+08	T = 3
Number employee~s	overall	3.813.225	2.494.226	0	15085	N = 11433
	between		2.225.109	0	10491.67	n = 3811
	within		1.127.352	-3.931.868	7.973.132	T = 3
Export~s	overall	1022852	1.38e+07	0	1.00e+09	N = 11433
	between		1.33e+07	0	7.30e+08	n = 3811
	within		3556830	-1.81e+08	2.73e+08	T = 3
Import~s	overall	87412.77	1601234	0	8.68e+07	N = 11433
	between		1511278	0	5.90e+07	n = 3811
	within		529515.6	-1.79e+07	2.82e+07	T = 3
Salary	overall	230777.8	1247003	0	7.26e+07	N = 11433
	between		1224785	0	5.74e+07	n = 3811
	within		234906.3	-1.02e+07	1.54e+07	T = 3
Equity~o	overall	1081441	8023761	-5600518	5.16e+08	N = 11433
	between		7857461	-4546970	4.03e+08	n = 3811
	within		1628451	-7.36e+07	1.14e+08	T = 3

Source: Own elaboration

Table 2 shows the variables under analysis, the companies analyzed in this research have an average of \$2,448,403.00 dollars in revenues, with a maximum value of approximately \$1,100,000,000.00 dollars. Also, on average, exports per firm are higher than imports per firm. On the other hand, the average number of workers per company is more than 38 people, however, the maximum number of staff per company is 15085 employees.

To check that the application of the panel model is better than the classical ordinary least squares, a Breusch and Pagan Lagrangian multiplier test was performed and is shown below.

Table 3. Application of the Breusch and Pagan Lagrangian multiplier test for random effects.

Test	Var	sd = sqrt (Var)
income~1	2.66e+14	1.63e+07
e	1.83e+12	1351076
u	1.44e+13	3791991

Source: Own elaboration

Test: Var (u) = 0, chibar2 (01) =8048.60, Prob > chibar2= 0.0000

There are several alternatives to be able to similar an econometric model, however the use of panel data is relevant since it captures the variability not only at the cross-sectional level but also at the temporal level. Based on what has been indicated, it is necessary to be able to prove the implementation of this type of data by means of a statistical test. Table 3 shows the application of the Breusch and Pagan Lagrangian multiplier test, the P-value is less than 0.05 and therefore the null hypothesis recommending the non-application of panel data is rejected. Given the result shown, the application of panel data for data analysis is not rejected. Subsequently, the Hausman model was applied to determine the applicability of a fixed or random effects model as shown below.

Table 4. Application of the Hausman test for fe1 and re1 models

Var	Coeff (b) Fe1	Coeff B Re1	Difference b-B	S. E.
affix	- . 43082	- . 2141292	- . 2166908	. 007853
number of employees	191. 9135	376. 6907	- 184. 7771	.
exports	. 8547454	. 8154258	. 0393196	. 0029357
imports	. 6846093	1. 006814	- . 3222046	. 0106839
salary	. 37938	. 6241386	- . 2447586	. 0520954
equity	1. 13443	. 8407067	. 2937234	. 0107089

Source: Own elaboration

b = consistent under Ho and Ha; obtained from xtreg. B= inconsistent under Ha, efficient under Ho; obtained from xtreg. Test: Ho: difference in coefficients not systematic. chi2 (5) = 1351. 43. Prob>chi2= 0. 0000

The variability at the temporal and cross-sectional level is of great importance, therefore, it must be considered in the model. A fixed effects model may be a suitable alternative; therefore, it must be statistically validated at a minimum confidence level of 95%. Table 4 shows the application of the Hausman test for the fe1 and re1 models, which stand for fixed effects and random effects respectively. The p-value of the Hausman test is less than 0.05, therefore the null hypothesis that recommends the use of random effects is rejected, hence the application of a fixed effects model is recommended.

To rule out autocorrelation problems, the Autocorrelation Test (Wooldridge Test) was applied as shown below:

Table 5. Application of the Wooldridge test.

Wooldridge test for autocorrelation in panel data	
H0: no first – order autocorrelation	
F (1, 3810) =	0.502
Prob > F =	0.4785

Source: Own elaboration

The autocorrelation of the residuals can cause problems in the final estimation of the model; therefore, it must be analyzed in order to be able to fit the model. The autocorrelation test is shown below to guarantee

the robustness of the model. Table 5 shows as results the application of the Wooldridge test to detect first order autocorrelation problems. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis indicating that the model does not present problems of first-order autocorrelation is not rejected. Subsequently, a homoscedasticity analysis of the errors was performed using the modified Wald test as shown below:

Table 6. Application of the modified Wald test

Modified Wald test for groupwise heteroskedasticity	
H0: $\sigma^2(I) = \sigma^2$ for all i	
chi2 (3811) =	1.8e+35
Prob>chi2 =	0.0000

Source: Own elaboration

Table 6 shows the application of the modified Wald test to detect heteroskedasticity problems. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the hypothesis is rejected, therefore, the model presents heteroskedasticity problems. Given the presence of heteroscedasticity in the model, a generalized least squares model for panel data is estimated. Once the different statistical tests have been analyzed, we proceed to analyze the significant difference in the negotiation measured in sales of companies that open up to international trade, through exports, imports and the interaction of both.

Table 7. Generalized least squares model estimation for panel data.

Income total	Coef.	Std. Err.	Z	P> z	Low [95% Conf. Interval]	Up [95% Conf. Interval]
Affix	.0642502	.0038104	16.86	0.000	.056782	.0717184
Number employees	4.144.725	2862667	14.48	0.000	3.583.652	4705797
dx	1816590	61770.66	29.41	0.000	1695522	1937658
dm	1768900	56372.16	31.38	0.000	1658412	1879387
dxmx	-494484.5	260798.8	-1.90	0.058	-1005641	16671.88
salary	395.958	.0448692	88.25	0.000	3.871.638	4047522
Equity	.5880353	.009703	60.60	0.000	.5690177	.6070529
_cons	-172663.5	3111974	-55.48	0.000	-178762.9	-166564.2

Source: Own elaboration

Cross – sectional time – series FGLS regression. Generalized least squares. No autocorrelation. Estimated covariances = 3811. Number of obs = 11,433. Estimated coefficients= 8. Wald chi2 (7) = 42212. 12. Prob > chi2= 0. 0000

Table 7 shows the estimation of the generalized least squares model for panel data where it is observed that the variables fixed assets, employees, exports, imports, wages, and equity are significant at a significance level of 5%. In addition, the direct relationship between the variables mentioned and the efficiency of a business measured in terms of sales is observed. It is important to note that, whether a company is an exporter or an importer, this is an incentive for its level of sales and therefore its effectiveness as a

negotiator. On the other hand, if these two variables interact, that is if a company is an exporter and an importer at the same time, this will not have a significant influence on sales levels and therefore on the effectiveness of the negotiation.

6. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

In Ecuador, the agricultural sector is not going through a relatively favorable moment due to various factors, and in the same way, it has not been possible to export products, representing low results for the financial sphere. This research article managed to demonstrate the relationship between the effectiveness of negotiation with sales encompassed in international trade, focusing on Ecuadorian companies in the agricultural sector. In this project it was mentioned that the relationship between negotiation effectiveness and sales was positive, which showed that, if the company does not have a good level of sales, it means that it does not have a stable negotiation, in other words, it shows that the company is not competitive and is below others from the same sector.

The research of León and Noelia (2013), described that the strength of sales does influence the competitiveness of companies, becoming a fundamental part of the organization. In the same way, Freire, and Mera, mentioned that it is essential to have trainings for the development of negotiation, because this action involves two or more people, who seek to reach a mutual satisfaction (2017, cited in Quijije & Intriago p.8). It could be inferred that, if the company is dedicated only to one sector, it will increase its negotiation tactics, to improve and surpass its competition. However, if a company works in both sectors, imports, and exports, they will have a relatively stable level, having two participations, therefore, it does not influence their sales levels, consequently, they would be normal in their negotiating efficiency.

To conclude the negotiation effectiveness through the sales correlates positively with the agricultural sector in Ecuador, this means that the purpose of this paper has been accomplished due to the business practices where the relation between good negotiations and international trade normally take place in different kinds of companies. That is why the relationship between international trade and negotiation effectiveness are a very good combination to keep the Ecuadorian products position in foreign countries and to continue with imports to get manufacture.

This paper has used as a sample the companies that belong to the agricultural sector, which are registered in the Superintendence of Companies, Securities, and Insurance.

According to the analyzed population that belongs to the agricultural sector in Ecuador, a balanced panel of data was extracted from approximately 3811 companies for each year, being the periods of analysis 2019, 2020 and 2021. It could be determined that on average the exports of the companies were higher than the imports per company. Finally, it could be determined that the various variables such as: fixed assets, employees, exports and imports, wages and equity are relatively significant. It is worth noting that there is a direct relationship between the above variables, where the effectiveness of a negotiation is measured in terms of sales.

It is recommended to be clear that whether the company is an exporter or an importer, the level of sales will be encouraged through the negotiation effectiveness. Likewise, if the company is mixed, that is an importer and an exporter at the same time, it will not significantly influence the level of sales, in other words, the effectiveness of the negotiation. From the above, it could be drawn that international trade through exports or imports will be always a good mechanism to obtain effectiveness in negotiations.

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Manuscript received: 10.08.2023

Manuscript received in revised form: 18.04.2024

Manuscript accepted: 25.06.2024