

Chapter 1

Internationalization


Models:

An Integrated Analysis for

Businesses and Brands

in a Global Context

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ABSTRACT

This chapter presents an integrated analysis of key internationalization models, linking classical theories with innovation- and digitalization-oriented approaches. It examines models such as Uppsala, the Eclectic Paradigm (OLI), Network Theory,

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Born Globals, and comprehensive frameworks, aiming to understand how companies and brands expand globally. Drawing on updated literature and case studies (IKEA, Starbucks, Spotify, Skype, Amazon.com), it explores how organizations combine internal and external factors in shaping their strategies. Sectoral perspectives include luxury, ICT, and industry, with attention to emerging markets. The chapter also addresses how digital transformation accelerates and reshapes internationalization processes, highlighting strategic challenges in a globalized world. A systemic view is proposed, emphasizing the coexistence of models and the need for flexibility, learning, and contextual adaptation. The findings provide insights for academics and managers navigating international expansion.

1. INTRODUCTION

Internationalization is a fundamental strategic process for companies seeking to grow, diversify markets and strengthen their competitive position in a global environment marked by high complexity and constant transformation. The classic literature on internationalization has contributed to understanding the motivations, modes of entry and expansion sequences of companies, with emphasis on models such as Uppsala, the eclectic paradigm (OLI), network theory and, more recently, the *born global* models. However, as new business realities emerge — driven by digitalization, the intensification of global value chains, and the pressure to act in multiple markets from the earliest stages — it becomes necessary to integrate these approaches into a more holistic and contingent view (Rask, 2014; Elia et al., 2023).

This chapter aims to analyze the main models of internationalization, articulating theory, empirical evidence and real business examples. Throughout the chapter, references to case studies and internationally recognized companies, such as IKEA, Amazon, Starbucks or Spotify, are included with the aim of illustrating the practical application of the models discussed. This approach aims to provide a critical and applied analysis of internationalization, contributing to the understanding of the challenges and strategic options faced by companies and brands in a globalized and ever-changing context.

The structure of the chapter is organized into eight main sections. Following the introduction, Section 2 presents the fundamentals of internationalization, detailing the most influential theoretical models and positioning them within a comparative perspective. Section 3 examines the impact of digital transformation on the way companies design and implement their international strategies. Section 4 discusses the distinctive challenges and opportunities associated with internationalization in emerging markets. Section 5 outlines sectoral approaches, with particular emphasis on the luxury, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and industrial

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