National College of Ireland

Analysis of the challenges and feasibility of introducing "Mezcal" a Mexican agave spirit to the Irish Market.

Diana Laura Dorantes Arevalo

MSc in Management

National College of Ireland

Abstract

A lack of consideration for the spirits sector can result in lost sales for businesses within the industry, preventing development. The contribution to the Irish economy produced by the drinks industry provides employment for over 90,000 people in Ireland (CSO 2010) and €329.5 million of drinks trade surplus (Revenue commissioners 2009). This is in addition to €213 million in VAT and excise.

The aim of this study is to investigate the current state of the Irish spirits market and analyze the main challenges of introducing a new player, in this case a Mexican agave spirit called Mezcal, to the industry;while taking into account the variables that could affect the decision on the feasibility of the business development, in order to gain a unique perspective from managers in the industry who are responsible for the decision-making process to achieve a positive business level outcome.

Through a cross-sectional survey, the study focuses on four counties in Ireland (Kildare, Limerick, Dublin, and Cork), which the researcher personally visited to provide a self-completion questionnaire to managers in the Irish drinking industry, such as restaurants, pubs, and hotel/bars, using a quantitative research methodology to learn about the management perspective and assess the viability of introducing a new spirit in the Irish market.

A significant lack of previous research for the spirits sector was encountered, as well as limitations of the study such as the negative response from publicans to provide responses regarding the business's private information. Furthermore, due to managers' regular duties iming was a key factor, which is why a pilot survey was implemented to adapt and obtain better answers.

According to preliminary findings, more than half of the respondents (51.4%) agreed that businesses are willing to sign contracts with a new distributor that offers "Mezcal," while 30.8% disagree, and the remaining respondents are undoubtedly interested in incorporating the agave spirit into their businesses in the near future.

Declaration

Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

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Student Number: x21104271

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CHAPTER 1 | Introduction

In Ireland, where spirits account for 21.4% of all drinks sales (CSO, 2018), the drinks industry directly supports nearly 92,000 jobs. This is due in part to Ireland's membership in the European Union, as well as the country's robust alcohol industry, high alcohol consumption, and distinctive drinking culture. It is common practice in business to focus on the largest markets, such as the United States or Germany in the case of Europe, but markets like the Irish are very intriguing and understudied in terms of the beverage industry, particularly the spirits industry, which should be researched to support and boost economic growth.

The study takes into consideration the product description and explains the implications of the advantages of promoting international trade and the competitive advantage that both economies—Ireland and Mexico—benefit from International Trade Agreements by lowering obstacles to boost economic growth. In addition, while analyzing the factors that influence how a business develops and their effects, it is crucial to account for the major obstacles, such as governmental regulations, market forces, and outside variables.

Due to project limitations, a cross-sectional survey was initially tested with a relatively small portion of the sample and then changed to meet the objectives and anticipated results. This quantitative research methodology is being used to examine the correlation between variables. A self-completion questionnaire was created to learn the perspective from the management experts in the Irish industry because there was a dearth of prior research in this area.

In order to address the research question, which examines the analysis of the main challenges of introducing a new player—in this case, a Mexican agave spirit—into the Irish market and measure the feasibility from the perspective of managerial positions—the researcher personally delivered the surveys in four counties in Ireland, which were analysed using a cluster method for research samples.

CHAPTER 2 | Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

There are many different business strategies widely available, but for a strategy to succeed, it must conduct market research in order to comprehend the dynamics of the industry and effectively allocate the resources at their disposal. In this study, it is essential to keep in mind that the research is conducted from a business perspective. Given that economies benefit greatly from international trade, it is worthwhile to analyze the variables that influence or the introduction of a Mexican agave spirit into the Irish market and to estimate the feasibility of taking those variables into account.

In this sense, the introduction of this chapter begins with a description of "Mezcal," an agave spirit, in order to provide a broad overview of the product's cultural background and illustrate how sharing Mexican culture with the world through the export of ancestral spirits and distinctive production methods is a result of generations of hard work by Mexican distillers.

The advantages of global trade are then discussed, along with several international accords that can boost chances of success by giving products a competitive edge over those of other countries once they have international backing. It is imperative to stress the importance of having lower entry barriers because of trade agreements, as well as the benefits that having Geographical Indicators would bring to the product and its distribution worldwide, since lower tariffs and taxes offer a significant economic opportunity for producers, as well as big benefits for the receptor markets.

The chapter also analyzes the current market situation in Ireland, taking into account alcohol consumption and the presence of spirits, after establishing the significance of international trade. The feasibility of the introduction of the product into a new market, which represents business development, is the primary focus of the current study. It is thoroughly analyzed in light of all the factors involved, including production, transportation, and, most pertinently, factors that can lead to a successful product launch. Competition, the value of promotion and advertising,

target market, and distribution are the next aspects, which, if the proper strategy is implemented in the market, can completely alter the outcome.

The second focus of this research is on the difficulties that the process will encounter, such as consumer behavior, and the fact that the product is foreign and has some restrictions based on its alcohol content in the Irish market. This makes it important to include a study of Irish government regulations as well as potential problems with the market's development.

Finally, it's important to take into consideration outside variables even when they are outside the company's, markets, or product's control. Overall, every aspect of the process, both internal and external, will have an impact on or benefit from how well the product performs in the market and is worth researching to make sure it is feasible and that the resources will be used wisely to expand the firm and both economies.

2.2 Mezcal: The liquid Culture of Mexico

The Mexican agave spirit known as "Mezcal" must first be described for research purposes; it will only be referred to as that term in the future. The Nahuatl words Metl (Maguey/Agave) and Calli (cooked), which translate to "cooked agave," are the source of the name "Mezcal." The original meaning refers to the food made from heating the sugar-rich stem and base of the leaves, which was the main source of nourishment for many ancient cultures.

The type of Mezcal obtained as a finished product depends on the environment, agave species utilized, fermentation process, and distillation method (Garcia, 2019). Every region has producer knowledge, which is tied to their cultural identity since they are geographically located in indigenous territories. If one of the variables involved in the production process changes, the ancient tradition also changes.

Despite coming from the same plant as tequila, mezcal is distilled using a different method, which gives it a distinct flavor. This distinction in flavor is worth noting.

2.3 Benefits of International Trade

Once domestic business units are exposed to foreign competition, they tend to become more efficient since international trade increases global competitiveness. Additionally, this increases productivity and connection with the global economy. Since the study's objective is to examine the viability of international trade between Mexico and Ireland,
it is essential to consider the benefits that the trade would offer for both sides.

In this section of the chapter, the advantages will be addressed in order to provide a broad overview of why it is crucial to examine the plausibility of conducting business between the parties, as well as what they would use to their advantage and how they will profit from it with the alcoholic beverage "Mezcal" in this particular scenario.

The increasing levels of production and the recent addition of the Denomination of Origin of Mezcal by national and international authorities provide the Mexican republic, an important opportunity to consolidate the agave spirit international presence, expand into new markets and develop the industry. Upon ratification of the EU-Mexico spirits agreement, Mexico will be able to target a potential market that offers tangible benefits from both value chains.

Outside of the EU, Mexico is Ireland's 7th biggest trading partner, performing a trade value of €3.6 billion in 2019 (DETE IE, 2021). Introducing the agave spirit to the Irish market would have a considerable impact on both Irish and Mexican alcohol industries if this is feasible and positive results are obtained. This would allow for the establishment of a long-term international partnership between the parties.

According to the European Commission, 2020, the EU-Mexico Trade Agreement promotes negotiations breaking some barriers, bringing trade benefits as tariffs displacements. The fact that the agreement includes all the members of the European Union represents to Mexico several wide possibilities to find better logistic routes to reach specific markets and reduce costs of transportation and Estimated Time of Arrivals, enhancing environmental consciousness.

Meanwhile, the Agreement EU-Mexico for Spirits was ratified the past 31st January 2020 by the European Community and the United States of Mexico on the mutual recognition and protection of designations for spirit drinks (European Union Law, 2020), with the aim of improving the trade of specific spirits between the parties. From the European side, the agreement lists spirit drinks such as Irish Whiskey, Brandy, and Ron. On the other hand, from the Mexican side, the agreement lists Tequila, Mezcal, and Sotol.

Agreements upgraded within the European Union allow the parties to have better cooperation, providing opportunities for importers and exporters. The bilateral trade between Ireland and Mexico reached €3.6 billion in 2019, reaching €1.2bn by 2020 with 4% growth. Mexico, for its part, imported recent values of $420 billion and exported $2.5 trillion (DETE, 2021). The efforts, capabilities, and value chains of both countries support the development of new trade opportunities for both countries' companies.

Geographical Indications, which identify a location as the source of a good when a certain quality, reputation, or other attributes of the good can be directly connected to that location, are essential to being able to take advantage of the international accords to improve the growth of the business. This allows the market-based identification of items. They are a significant marketing tool with powerful economic worth and enable the nation's agricultural wealth and its population's abilities to be enhanced, providing a recognizable identity around the world (Addor, Grazzioli 2002).

The global reach of product legal protection has significantly increased since the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights to GIs wines and spirits came into effect (Bowen, 2010). The benefits for the international trade for "Mezcal" in this case primarily include protecting producers from unfair competition and safeguarding consumers from inaccurate product origin statements.

Tequila, which is also a Mexican agave spirit, is the oldest GI in the spirits category outside of Europe and is frequently used as an illustration of a successful GI in a developing nation, having a clear market share advantage. The Irish Whiskey,

which has been made in Ireland since the sixth century, is the oldest GI in Europe. Both promote rural development and safeguard biodiversity and ancient knowledge (Barham & Sylvander, 2011; Crespi & Marette, 2003; Rangnekar, 2004). Irish Cream, and Poitin are among the other spirits produced in Ireland that are GI protected, meaning they can only be produced there lawfully.

On 30th September 2021, the Official Journal of the Federation (Diario Oficial de la Federación) published ratification of the Geographical Indication given to Mezcal (DOF, 2021). This gives the product a special category of origin and protects the history and culture of the spirit abroad as well as its means of production. This is recognized and registered in the International Bureau of Intellectual Property and aligned with the World Trade Organization (WTO).

2.4 The Irish market

To assess the viability of introducing a new product, it is critical to understand the current market scenario as well as the offer and demand. In this case, the Irish market will be examined.

The World Health Organization (WHO) presents that the European zone is the heaviest drinking region in the world with patterns of alcohol consumption peak levels in the United Kingdom and Ireland between aged 18-29 young adults (Davoren, 2016). Alcohol screening tools have been developed to categorize alcohol consumption levels, which have an impact on the ability to compare research on this topic and lead nations to release health policies and statements to regulate the industry.

In Ireland, Minister Donnelly and Feighan reported the results of the health survey in 2021. Where 66% of the population consumed alcohol between the ages of 15-24 and 70% overall are men and 84% of women drinkers are of reproductive age (OECD, 2020). There has been a drop in binge drinking since the pandemic from 28% to 15%, a decline that will likely resurge with the ending of restrictions applied in January 2022.

The consumption of alcohol overall, measured in Liters of Pure Alcohol (LPA), on the island over a three-year period, is shown in Table 1 as the average amount consumed by an adult in Ireland in 2020.

Average consumption per adult 2020			
	2018	**2019**	**2020**
Litres of Pure Alcohol (LPA), Total consumption	42,691,031	42,476,575	40,291,740
Adult population (over 18) Millions	3.8482	3.9126	3.973
Spirits (LPA)	10.14	10.86	11.09

Table 1. Average consumption per adult 2020. (Revenue Commisioners , Alcohol Celarences data 2020).

However, just adult population consumption throughout this period and a concentration on spirits consumption show a quite limited handful but a little growth over the periods, which also indicates a slight but not significant increase in sales.

According to the Irish Spirits Market Report 2020 and the Revenue Commissioners, wine, beer, cider, and spirits make up the four categories of alcohol use. Table 1 below displays the percentage of consumption over a three-year period. It is clear that the consumption of spirits over time has increased gradually but steadily.

Alcohol Consumption in Ireland 2018-2020			
Category/Year	2018	2019	2020
Spirits	20.5%	20.8%	22.3%
Wine	26.7%	27.2%	32.2%
Beer	45.2%	44.6%	38.9%
Cider	7.5%	7.4%	6.6%

Table 2. Consumption in Ireland (Revenue Commissioners)

In addition, we can see that beer and wine are the two categories with the highest consumption among the four in Figure 1, which illustrates the graphic of Irish alcohol consumption only in the year 2020. Spirits are in third place; however the numbers are not far behind those of wine, which is encouraging for the project.
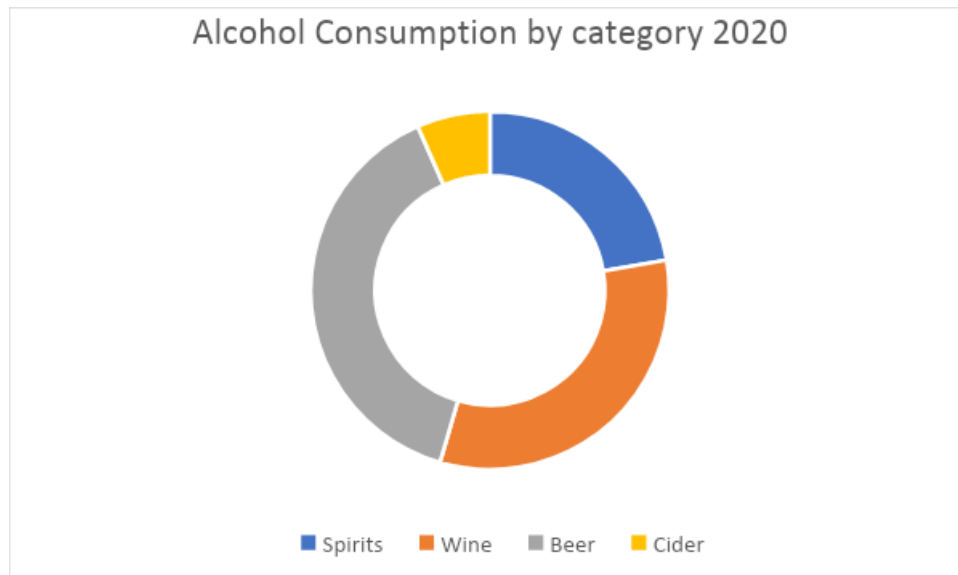
Figure 1. Alcohol Consumption by category 2020 (Revenue Commissioners)

The overall spirits sales in Ireland in 2020 value was 2.3 million nine-litre cases with a 22.3% of market share out of the total alcohol consumption. The spirits total consumption had a decrease of 5.1%, in the same year, there was an increment of the adult population equivalent of 1.6% showing an average spirits consumption of 10 litres per adult (IBEC, 2020) In terms of foreign drinks, Tequila a Mexican spirit is situated in fifth place in the list of most consumed and it is well-accepted internationally with high exportation levels and consumption around the globe.

2.5 Business Development

It should take advantage of advances in circulation organizations and channels and implement state-of-the-art development methodologies as well as work on institutional assistance. On the economical side, according to Mariani and Pomarici (2010), this area should initially experience positive ongoing development, based on entrants retooling their systems to enhance production, quality, distribution channels, and expansion of supply in the worldwide market.

As Macnamara, et al, (2018) found this opposition was a successful technique for distilleries attempting to draw attention to the nature of their alcoholic beverage as they attempted to expand their commodity trades into China. However, after producers had effectively learned to buy abroad through competition, at that point they concentrated on creating vertical beneficial associations with wholesalers to reach buyers. Overall, competition was best for progress in outsourced business sectors, while collaboration with vertical accomplices was more important for outcome in domestic business sectors.

In the distillery industry, validity is a topic that has come up in virtually every article regarding storytelling. If the story is true, it gives validity to the brand, however, if the story being told appears to be a false idea, the brand can lose that trust. When looking at how the legacy narrative drives buyer interest, it will be essential to discern how valid the story is being released and to know what the refinery is doing to ensure the story is portrayed as such. In addition, it demonstrates methodologies for each client in the market by reducing the number of elements and grouping buyers.

When it comes to building higher standards of value, consistency, and advancement, expanding the personality of larger subscribers, and producing the most diversified mixing company on the globe, the distillery global industry can learn from successful brewers in these areas. Home brewing, which is the small-scale brewing of lager for private, non-commercial purposes, has its roots in the actual beginning stages of lager production.

According to Machuca (2018), the first charges on agave distillates were made in 1616 in what the important town of Tequila in Jalisco is now. It was proposed that agave distillates were primarily delivered by native gatherings in Amatitán, where families were working refinery bars, creating what was known as mezcal at the time from tequila.

According to Luna (2015), the ideal production strategy used by producers to address the inadequacies of agave was to contaminate their product by adding sugars from diverse plants, particularly sugar cane. To combat this trend, the major government standard governing the spirit was developed in 1949 and distinguished tequila as mezcal, which was entirely made from the numerous agave species.

In any case, tequila organizations were compelled to improve processes to increase production capacity as a result of the rising popularity of tequila in the United States beginning in the 1960s, which was commonly attributed to the growing importance of margaritas and other mixed beverages. However, agave development is only now beginning to expand, with the goal of increasing production capacity over time to meet international demand.

Jones and Comfort (2019) conducted a review of the beverage industry's storytelling in general. They looked at managerial positions at Diageo, two of the largest preparation and fine-tuning organizations, as part of the test. They discovered that the stories the organizations told as they researched the various topics all had a strong corporate flavor to them. The topic of validity has come up in almost every article about storytelling in the distillery industry.

Furthermore, they demonstrate consumer behaviors in the Swiss market using quantitative methodologies by reducing the number of elements to study and grouping buyers into clusters. Association, lifestyle, and rationale were split models in which each of the three portioning measures played a unique role in comparison to previous research. They found six different types of alcohol store customers to define the demand.

In contrast, Furst (2019) discovered that a review should concentrate on narrative in the beverage business. Examined Suntory Diageo, one of the biggest testing and preparation companies, as part of the test. They discovered that the narratives the group used to study the various subjects were all quite corporate in nature.

According to Cui and Wu (2016), if quality standards are not incorporated into the product development process, an organization's brand and corporation may develop unreasonable future expectations. To increase a product's chances of success in an international market, clear standards must be developed, as well as consistent performance in meeting customer expectations for value.

Several external parties may be involved in the shipment of a product, all of whom fall beyond the direct control that a company's and a brand's influence over one another. The quality of the materials used in manufacturing may decline if they are not transported in the proper containers or preserved at the proper temperature, for example, or transportation providers may change delivery dates, tax and regulations may apply, or they may not be preserved at the proper temperature. The final product that is being delivered to a different country could be affected by all these factors.

Cooper (2019) emphasizes that it is preferable to stay with something that the business and the consumers are already familiar with in the industry rather than forging ahead into uncharted territory. Yet there is a lot of uncertainty involved when entering a new market, from ironing out the issues in unproven production processes to offering customers options they may or may not want.

In their study, Foerstl and Franke (2020), the features of cross-functional groups for acquisition are examined. The exam uses a sample of specialists with relevant industry experience to evaluate the effects of variables like objective dissonance, political behavior, and group struggle on group behavior and peer fulfillment. This gives the industry a unique and special point of view because it is the voice of people who are employed and have firsthand knowledge of the sector.

The research provides insightful opinions for individual academics as well as those that have been put to the test to ensure that the cross-functional commitment fulfills its true potential. Additionally, considering distinct sorts of information, Craighead et al. (2020) investigate the potential for successfully announcing new products in expanding business sectors.

Although different types of information (specifically, client information) become more interchangeable as business sectors mature, the two last information assortments produce different results that suggest that developing business sectors benefit greatly from coordinated factors and uncompromised information. According to research, coordinated operations and various types of information can be useful when distributing new products in developing commercial sectors.

As per the opinion of Ma et al., (2021), if a new product is released successfully and succeeds in the market, it might be able to recuperate the costs associated with its development and marketing, enabling the company to make a profit. The suggested statement is under the condition that the product will be utilized for a substantial amount of time.

On the other hand, Hosseini et al. (2018) states that when more people learn about the product's potential, sales will increase. If the distribution is planned and there is still time to meet demand, customers will be able to purchase it. Businesses

could recoup a sizable amount of the funds required to produce and sell the products in this manner.

According to the findings of the previous two studies, the first few months after a product enters a new market are critical for its overall sales. This finding is relevant to the current study, and the contributing factors will be examined and discussed in order to gauge the situation and performance of mezcal in the Irish market.

According to Cooper (2016), a company will start manufacturing the product, or in the instance of this study, importing it, and then launch a marketing campaign after developing the idea for the product, testing it on the market, and determining that it is ready to launch. Customers must be aware of the product and spread the word about it to persuade people to buy it for the product launch to be successful.

The product success in the market depends on the promotion, which is also a great approach to provide the product some exposure. Customers should perceive it as having a high value, and it should use the necessary marketing tactics. To highlight the added value that the spirit itself has in the case of mezcal, it is crucial to discuss the history of the culture.

Doorasamy (2015) states that one may assess the demand for a product by looking at its introduction. Based on this information, it will then be possible to design and carry out strategies as well as other requirements, such as the required staff and training, new business ties, or collaborations.

A corporation can gain an edge over its competitors in the market through effective planning. If the product is introduced properly, it can influence consumers' perceptions of it favorably, which helps build the brand's reputation and image among them, allowing it to expand and persuade customers to choose it over competition.

Thus, according to Dadzie et al. (2017), marketing entails a wide range of tasks, many of which actually require extensive research and planning well in advance of any advertising, promotional, or public relations efforts. Companies have long

relied on a four-point guideline to overcome potential roadblocks because of the difficulties associated with marketing goods.

The emphasis of these key elements is on the product, the price, the sale location, and the advertising. The ability to identify and overcome challenges linked to the product and the market is one factor that will increase the likelihood of success in the sector. Consider the distribution channels, which would each provide their own set of challenges that may either help or hurt overall sales.

As per Paul (2019), creating a better product takes more than just employing high-quality manufacturing techniques. Whether or not buyers need or want the product, how it is marketed will ultimately determine its viability. Creating a strategy with distribution channels and a distinctive marketing method will give you a clear advantage in doing this.

Additionally, by examining the competitors, getting input from customer focus groups, and researching the market, you can also decide which target market is more appropriate. In this instance, a study was conducted into alcohol usage, including what kinds of alcoholic beverages people wanted, consumed, and where they bought them.

Also, to utilize market research to ascertain the most likely price that consumers will accept for the product. On the one hand, there is the potential to charge more than the competition to provide the appearance that the product is of better value. On the other hand, it should have a lower price to qualify as an inexpensive choice. If possible, test the market with a few different prices at a few different stores before deciding on a final price.

The target market is essential because, first of all, choosing the population that has the best probability of success is crucial rather than simultaneously focusing on a large number of demographics. Second, rather than focusing on the product itself, the objective is to understand the population that is more willing to consume and, with that knowledge, create the strategy while presenting to that key demographic the characteristics that would improve their experience. The communication process with the audience is greatly facilitated by this.

The main challenge that needs to be addressed in order to successfully sell the product, according to Liang & Frösén (2020), is persuading buyers that they have a need for the new product. The majority of businesses find it challenging to communicate their message in a way that will be understood and valued by their ideal customers. However, it will have a better chance of effectively launching the new product on the market by picking the right messaging.

No matter how great the product is, it won't sell if the marketing is not targeted properly, according to Murray et al. (2016). In the worst-case scenario, it is also possible that the public is unaware that the product even exists, in which case it is unreasonable to anticipate that they will make a purchase. And perhaps most significantly, what tactics will be used to get people to purchase the product.

When a product is first introduced in a new foreign market, the importance of marketing and promotion as well as the target market are considered. The following stage, which is also the cause of many issues, is to choose the best platform and channel to reach the target audience. This effort's goal is to promote it on a website or platform where your target market is already active.

There are several ways to market, including social media platforms like LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat, Youtube, or Facebook, as well as television, movies, print ads, and perhaps organizing a contest or launching a test campaign. Given the nature of the product, tester campaigns should be required at some point throughout the negotiation, especially if the spirit beverage has a distinctive flavor.

2.6 Challenges of internationalization

2.6.1 Consumer behavior

The manufacture and usage of alcoholic beverages have a very lengthy history, according to Bellut et al. in 2021. Lager, wine, and spirits are the three most frequently used alterations for cocktails. The statistical association Euro screen dissected the methods used globally to manage users' money and identified various trends in the sector.

In addition, Bruwer et al. (2017) developed a lifestyle instrument for alcohol that incorporated use and purchase patterns in addition to typical psychographic questions. The pieces were made based on five factors: the environment in which alcohol was consumed, shopping techniques, drinking rituals, quality attribution, and alcohol use's results. To distinguish between different markets' purchasing percentages, which is useful for the present study and strategists.

According to Wolf et al. (2019), the practice of segmenting alcohol consumers based on their age is well-known and generally accepted as an effective promotional strategy. Despite this, a sizeable chunk of the academic test related to the generation gap is outdated and needs further evaluation. Spirit preferences are flexible, and as consumers mature, their propensity to constantly browse alcoholic beverage selections also varies.

Their study's objective was to specifically account for people who waste money by characterizing age disparities in alcohol preferences and purchasing behavior. The findings of quantifiable tests and a parallel model of integrity show stark differences between the ages and make a clear case for particularly special support systems that focus on one age in contrast to another. Males, baby boomers, consumers of luxury goods publications, and lovers of spirits will typically be the spenders.

Due to the unique pattern, clients now need and expect more creative contributions that enable them to satisfy new tastes and flavors whose aptitude may lie outside the bounds of classification. Classification obfuscation, also known as cross-fertilization, happens throughout the beverage sector, but particularly in the cocktail business.

2.6.2 Irish Government Measures

The Republic of Ireland law specifies the primary policy objectives, which include efforts from the government to reduce alcohol consumption per person and postpone the introduction of alcohol to children and young people in an effort to reduce harms in society. Every country has different regulations for various products. Along with these measures, there are rigorous controls over the supply and price of alcohol, considering minimum unit pricing and structural differentiation on product labels. Most notably, there are limitations on marketing and advertising

campaigns. The industry can access public materials and detailed instructions to comply with the law.

The import, distribution, and sale of alcoholic drinks are regulated by the law. This means that businesses need a license to serve and sell alcohol. Selling to a person younger than 18 is considered a major offense. Businesses such as pubs, hotels, restaurants, and off-licenses can only serve alcohol during designated hours, and retailers with a license must offer less than 23% alcohol on their products. Irish alcohol laws impose fines and penalties of up to €5,000 for violating any rules, and the gardai oversee enforcing them.

Most relevantly, alcohol is subject to expenditure tax, and in the case of Ireland within the European Union, from twenty-seven economies, Ireland is one of the economies with the highest level of alcohol excise tax. Alcohol taxes vary globally and are part of the regulations that each government considers for local and international competition.

The two applicable taxes are VAT and excise. The VAT is assessed as a percentage of the selling price for all types of beverages in the majority of countries, meaning that if the price of alcohol rises, so does the amount of VAT. However, whether alcohol is subject to reductions or additional taxes depends on the economy because of potential environmental problems with packaging and shipping containers.

Excise is a special tax depending on the amount of alcohol in the beverage and has nothing to do with the overall cost of the product. Compared to other EU members, the emerald island has one of the highest prices for alcohol, but it also has one of the fastest expanding businesses, where breweries and distilleries create products and encourage exports.

It is clear that Ireland's high tax burden is a significant problem for business and consumers, and the market would shift right away if the government implemented a cut. It would be quite advantageous for brewers, distillers, publicans, and proprietors in general to focus their resources on hiring new staff and expanding their business, which undoubtedly implies offering consumer-friendly prices.

Although a hypothetical drop could signal favorable market improvements, it is unlikely to occur because doing so would encourage alcohol consumption, and one of the government's goals is to reduce consumption.

The Irish government recently introduced policies regarding product pricing, such as the minimum unit pricing (MUP) from January 2022, which requires that alcoholic beverages be sold at a price corresponding to the amount of alcohol contained at 10 cents per gram (CI, 2022). Furthermore, any price reduction during particular hours of the day, including loyalty card programs or promotions, is illegal and prohibited.

It's noteworthy to note that "happy hour" promotions at bars are prohibited because they encourage binge drinking and could result in the closure of establishments if not complied with. Similarly, alcohol sponsorships are legally prohibited on the Irish market. Advertising alcohol on trains and buses, in close enough proximity to schools, at activities where the majority of spectators are kids, at unlicensed movie theaters, on children's clothes, and at sporting events is prohibited.

2.6.3 Market driven factors

Recognition of a product is a critical aspect of a market introduction. This is because customers are more likely to consume a product they have heard of, tried before, or is recommended by someone who knows the product. Mexican exporters' efforts to internationalize and share an ancestral culture with the world should be noble and sincere (Bowen, 2017). However, they should be tailored to the region, target market, different cultures, consumer behavior, income levels, and consumption.

A product's unique selling proposition (USP) relates to its positioning which is an essential element since every product must communicate a distinct benefit to its customers (Hooley et al., 2008). Mezcal, from its name and the plant that it is made from, to its unique production techniques, history, and distribution channels, is Mexican tradition and culture in a bottle.

In this sense, it is possible to position Mezcal in a manner that is based on cognition and affect by highlighting the meaning of the product. This approach focuses on

emotions, feelings, or drivers associated with the product to win hearts and minds, and it is powerful in an industry where this strategy has not previously been widely used.

Furthermore, as per Volschenk (2018), competitors are key in the market, so two main types of important value acquired through competition were financial value and informational value. Furthermore, they thought that rather than informative value, a large portion of what bidders could appropriate was money. In a time of long-term loss in financial returns for the worldwide market industry, competitive enterprises had the chance to minimize CO_2 emissions by delivering bulk rather than packaged liquors and by lowering the inactive limit with respect to their bottling plants through this coordinated effort.

2.6.7 External Factors

Changes in the environment could reduce yields and destroy grape content in warmer regions, although it could also affect the nature of some wines delivered in cooler regions. Finally, the area should satisfy the growing social and institutional interest in natural controllability, which will require further significant development of the creation cycles, and this will be difficult to achieve because the use of pesticides in winemaking in Italy and elsewhere is very high.

Significant progress will require not only new hardware to reduce the use of variable information sources, but in addition a particularly careful step-by-step control of cycles or, on the other hand, the use of new safe hybrids, with serious results on the supply connection.

There are many units currently in use that greatly contribute to the sustainability of creation processes and guarantee implementation, but these include a rather modest number of organizations currently.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected economies and industries negatively in a wide range of countries around the globe due to travel bans, lockdowns, quarantines, and business closing operations (Newswire, 2017). The Irish alcohol industry has been one of the most affected industries. Due to the closure or suspension of

nearly all chain operations, many pubs, restaurants, bars, and retailers will not be able to reopen again, losing jobs and market share.

2.7 Conclusion

The chapter reviewed the product, its characteristics, and a brief component of its production, highlighting the background and cultural significance that the spirit represents to Mexico and its long-standing traditions. It also discussed the key international trade agreements, such as the EU-Mexico Trade Agreement, which encourages negotiations by removing some barriers to entry. And perhaps more significantly, the EU-Mexico Spirits Agreement included spirits that are subject to lower taxes rates, which constitutes a significant competitive advantage over other international alcoholic beverages and should be taken into consideration.

The parties to an international agreement should promote its use in their benefit because it takes a lot of time and effort to negotiate an agreement before it is signed and ratified. There are 27 countries that are a part of the European Union, but there are only three spirits listed for Mexico compared to more than twenty for the EU. Why it is crucial for Mexican states and producers to investigate economic opportunities and utilize the benefits of international accords.

The chapter analyzes the Irish market where it is obvious how influential the sector is and how much alcohol is consumed, which provides an overview of the study and highlights its relevance to the Irish market in particular. It also provides information on the factors involved in business development and demonstrates how distillery output affects the course of product launches. Even though there are numerous possibilities on the market, how you sell will have an impact on how successful you are, therefore it's crucial to consider the value of marketing and advertising.

Comfort and Furst (2019) published a variety of research studies, but they all agree that it's crucial to use quantitative methodologies and understand the perspectives of those working in the industry because they have all the relevant experience, know-how, and interactions with customers and associations. An essential

component of the feasibility assessment and a direct correlation to the relevant difficulties.

Another significant problem is that there is a dearth of study on alcoholic beverages because they are seen as harmful to the general population's health and many studies are focused on lowering usage rather than raising it. A variety of topics were examined as part of the difficulties in positioning mezcal in the market, including product recognition and selling position.

In particular, there is a deficit in the literature when it comes to succinct information and industrial perspectives. Because of this, the researchers' study intends to analyze how the industry perceives those in charge of making decisions as owners and publicans once they are the team members working to grow their own company and the sector in Ireland.

CHAPTER 3 | Methodology

3.1 Research Methodology

The researcher will define and analyze the research goals and objectives in this third chapter, which also establishes the secondary research questions. The researcher will also review the methodological philosophy and approach that will be used, depending on the requirements and goals of this study, throughout the chapter. To ensure that the results are the most trustworthy and accurate and best address the research topic's hypothesis, the research instrument will also be chosen along with an explanation of how the data will be distributed and collected, the relevant participant group, and how the data will be analyzed.

The methodology explains the justification for each method chosen, why it is best suited for the research, and the ethical considerations that were applied and shared with the participants to ensure the study's confidentiality and neutrality. The information will be gathered from the real managerial positions of companies in the hospitality sector with the aim of having a business-level proposition in order to determine whether the introduction of the agave spirit would be effective.

A quantitative technique and a five-minute self-completion questionnaire are chosen after careful analysis of the time restrictions, the limits of prior research on the topic and product, and the resources available. Using this method is a trustworthy way to gather important quantitative data that can then be examined to answer the study questions. The analysis can be concluded by going through how profitable the expected foreign trade business will be.

3.2 Aim & Objectives

In a climate of growing global market competition, which has been compounded by the detrimental effects that the COVID pandemic had on economies, the production and trade industries should observe a positive development of domestic interest. protecting the social integrity of moderate alcohol use from adversarial influences and by working well with shipping substances to support growth and expansion. (Mariani, 2010).

Taking into account this context, the goal of this research is to pinpoint the major difficulties and ascertain whether it is feasible to introduce a foreign spirit to the Irish market while taking the industry's management's perspective into account in order to support the development of both economies.

3.3 Research Question

The research in this case intends to respond to the following question from the managerial point of view, given that they are the ones with full expertise and knowledge about the current market scenario: " Which are the main challenges and is it feasible to introduce successfully a Mexican agave spirit in the Irish market?" aiming to analyze the full overview of variables that impact industries with international trade to support economy growth. To ascertain whether the market is appropriate and ready to welcome a new participant, the results will indicate the analysis of specific variables.

3.4 Research Philosophy

There are several different kinds of research philosophies, and each one considers various ways to develop and form an appropriate and effective research methodology. By delving deeply enough into the philosophies proposed by Saunders et al. (2007), three major philosophies—ontology, epistemology, and axiology—are examined.

The first is ontology, which consists of two essential traits: first, objectivism, which gives social entities status, and the presence of meaningful idealism, which distinguishes social actors who are interested in their overall existence from each other. The second is subjectivism, which maintains that social phenomena are shaped by the perceptions and subsequent behaviors of social actors who are impacted by those perceptions.

The second is epistemology, which describes a way of seeing the world we live in and attempts to rationally explain it all. It also has two characteristics, the first of which is positivism, which places emphasis on direct experience with things and discourages speculation about things that are unidentified. Second, interpretivism, which emphasizes many specific variables and context-related elements and holds that individuals vary from physical phenomena, makes studying humans more challenging and complex.

Axiology, often known as the theory of value, is the third branch of approach. It examines how judgments about values are made and provides a unifying framework for various moral and aesthetic issues.

The author chose the interpretivism paradigm after carefully weighing all the various ideologies since this approach places a great emphasis on topics like relationships with people, communication, and the individual modification of behavior. Given that this study's focus is on the perspectives of those who hold managerial positions within the sector, it is a highly individualized issue that is subject to change.

3.5 Rationale for Research Approach

Examining the "Research Onion", which was established by Saunders et al. (2007) and is frequently used as a catch-all phrase to represent the entire research process, is a useful place to start when conducting research. It suggests how knowledge develops and the nature of that information. Prior to choosing a research approach, it is crucial for the researcher to analyze the philosophies.

The implications of such an understanding will support the investigation's approach and instrument, as well as its executed procedure and findings. The process is illustrated by the research onion in Figure 2, where the last phase of the study is where data collection and analysis are completed. The next layer shows the various process timeframes, and the third layer indicates the research strategy.
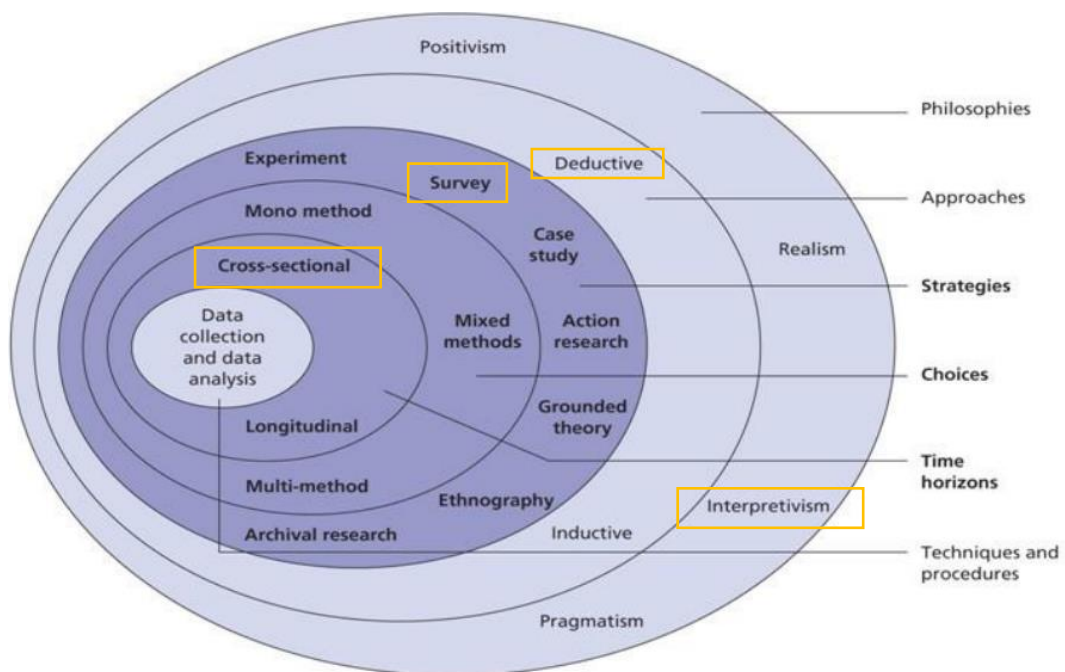
Figure 2. Research Onion (Saunders et al 2007)

The author gave this philosophy significant consideration, starting at the edges and advancing toward the center. Each variety selected for the study is highlighted in Figure 1 in this regard such as the interpretivism, deductive and cross-sectional surveys.

3.6 Research Instrument

The author selected a cross-sectional survey as the research instrument for the aim, which includes all assessment methods involving asking participants questions. In order to simplify and shorten the time required for responses, a guide response survey type design is implemented with multiple-choice questions.

A self-completion survey was designed to be distributed to the sample participants. There was no pre-existing validated questionnaire that could be used or modified for the main objectives of this study, reason why to acquire a full picture of respondents' perspectives on the challenges that the spirit might encounter if introduced to the Irish market, the questionnaire was designed in three sections made up questionnaire style.

The purpose of the first set of questions, under "Getting to Know the Business & Respondents," is to learn more about the type of business that each respondent is employed by and their level of expertise. The respondent is questioned about the products the company is selling and how they rank them in the second section, "Sales & Product." In the third and final section, "Getting to Know Your Perspective," the author seeks to understand how managerial positions view the product and potential sales if it were to reach the Irish market.

Due to the sheer questionnaire's simplicity, clarity, and ease of completion, it did not require extensive instructions. Appendix 3 Final Questionnaire contains a sample of the questionnaire. Simpleness and speed were valued as essential elements in maximizing replies to the less than five-minute questionnaire.

A note outlining the survey's purposes and the motivations for requesting managerial positions' participation was distributed along with the questionnaire. The responding group was made aware of the confidentiality of the procedure and that no information will be disclosed to outside parties. In Appendix 1 Questionnaire Confidentiality and Explanation, a copy of the notice that was issued is available.

3.6.1 Participants Group

This study's target audience is a very specific group of employees operating in Ireland's hospitality industry in line management positions like owners, managers, and supervisors.

Since the primary objective of the research is to place the product "Mezcal" in locations that sell alcohol face-to-face with customers and are aware of their consumption preferences, retail and off-license sites were left out of the analysis.

Additionally, within this potential respondent group, the target is made up of three distinct categories, such as pubs, restaurants, and hotel bars, and for the purposes of the research, four of the twenty-six counties, only four are under study: Dublin, Limerick, Kildare, and Cork which explanation on the decision is at data collection section.

The Drinks Industry Group of Ireland (2017) estimates that 7,193 public houses (pubs) with individual licenses are located on the emerald island, where constituencies are made up of more than one county. 2,406 restaurants were also referred to as those that were in possession of a complete license to sell alcoholic beverages under Irish law. Finally, it is crucial to note that each type of business previously mentioned has data provided from the Revenue database, which includes 983 hotels with licensed bars.

The possibility that the research might be constrained by the willingness of the upper-management group, nevertheless middle-management was also included due to the different schedules of managers in the business hours operation to include participation in this research. Therefore, assurance of confidentiality was a crucial consideration when choosing to engage with the businesses. This is discussed later in the section on ethical issues and in Appendix 1.

3.6.2 Pilot Survey

The surveys will be handled on a business level for the study's aims; thus, managers and owners of bars and restaurants were chosen as the target respondent population since they are typically quite occupied. The initial attempt to get them to complete the survey did not go as expected as ten minutes was too lengthy for them to complete it before continuing with their other activities.

The author chose to conduct a shorter survey with fewer and even more focused questions so that managers would have a maximum of four to five minutes to thoughtfully respond. The first survey, is at Appendix 2 Pilot Questionnaire, was filled out by a relatively small sample of Dublin residents who fit the target responder profile.

Although all five pub managers agreed to fill out the questionnaire, they were unable to do so due to other commitments. Nevertheless, the sections and questions went smoothly before they had to leave. However, it was able to modify and make use of the managers' responses to the survey's second and final questions, which is the major instrument mentioned in the research instrument section.

3.7 Data Collection

Samples, a portion of the population chosen for the analysis to estimate this population's characteristics, are the collecting data method chosen by the author. Once the participants are chosen based on their availability and the researcher's personal assessment that they are representative of the population, the sampling technique to utilize is non-probability sampling to get it to a competitive business level.

To obtain better results, the sample should accurately reflect the features of the population. For this reason, the type of sample used is a cluster sample, in which the population is divided into clusters using geographical or other naturally occurring boundaries. The twenty-six counties that compose the Republic of Ireland are grouped into regions for the purposes of this research after looking at the Irish market. Only four of these counties were chosen for the sample since they had greater per-capita incomes.

Regarding the cluster selection, Dublin County has the greatest average disposable income in 2019 when considering roughly €24,399 per person, according to the CSO Ireland. The Mideast is followed by the Mid-West, the Southwest, and finally the Border Region in order of the numbers.
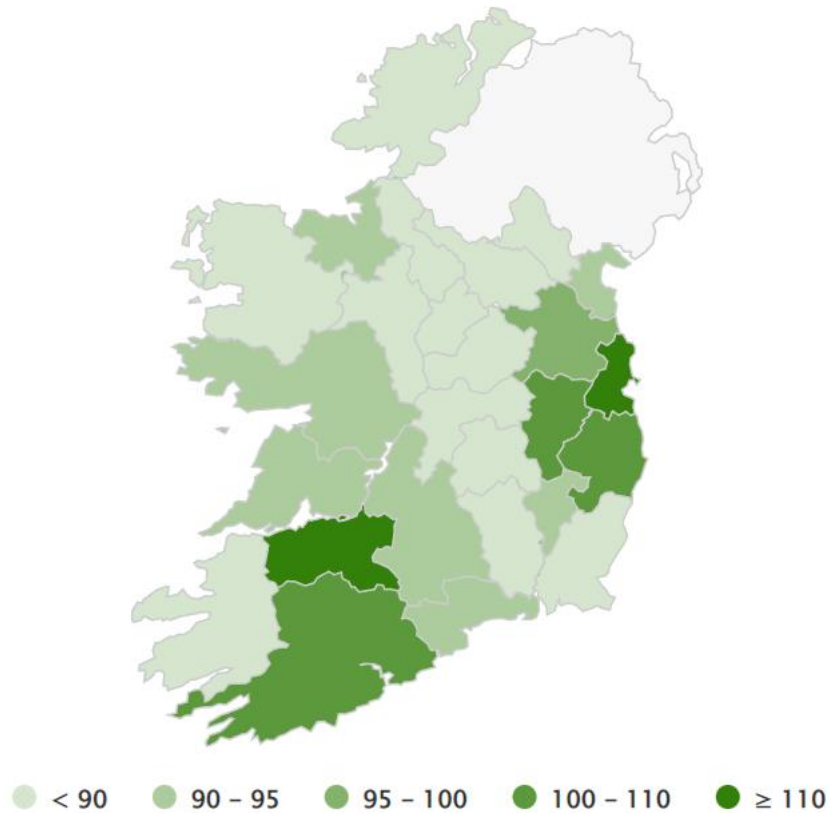

Figure 3. Household Disposable Income per person in 2019. (CSO Ireland).

The disposable income per person is illustrated in Figure 1 using a state average of 100. Not to note that the only chosen counties where per capita disposable income in 2019 was higher than the state average were Dublin, Limerick, Kildare, and Cork, in that order (CSO, 2022).

Because of the decision to segregate the entire number of restaurants, pubs, and hotel bars that are the subject of the research into clusters and analyze fewer counties in Ireland, the targeted population was divided into areas that compose the four counties of Ireland and the sample will only be applied under those.

The table 1 shows the number of pubs, restaurants, and hotel bars located in each area, with a total number of Pbs (n=2,198), Rst (n=1211), and HBr (n=230), under a total group of (n=3,639), in the context of maximizing the response rate. The targeted population was divided into areas that compose the four counties of Ireland.

Pubs, Restaurants and Bars in the selected counties of Ireland				
County	Pubs	Restaurants	Hotel/Bar	Total per County
Cork East	210	62	14	
Cork North-Central	215	64	14	
Cork North-West	160	48	11	
Cork South-Central	217	65	14	
Cork South-West	153	45	10	1302
Dublin Bay North	89	97	16	
Dublin Bay South	70	77	12	
Dublin Central	54	58	9	
Dublin Fingal	86	93	15	
Dublin mid-West	66	72	12	
Dublin North-West	55	60	10	
Dublin Rathdown	53	58	9	
Dublin South-Central	70	76	12	
Dublin South-West	88	95	15	
Dublin West	69	74	12	1582
Kildare North	104	48	12	
Kildare South	79	37	10	290
Limerick City	206	47	13	
Limerick County	154	35	10	465
Total	**2198**	**1211**	**230**	**3639**

Table 3. Pubs, Restaurants and Bars in the selected counties in Ireland. (Personal elaboration. Data collected from the Drinks Industry Group of Ireland, Alcoholic Beverage Federation of Ireland, and Restaurants Association of Ireland).

3.8 Ethical considerations

The ethical behavior assurance is intended to prevent harm through the execution of the research (Saunders 2012). The National College of Ireland's ethical guidelines for conducting participant-involved studies are used in the current study.

The survey's specifics were communicated to the participants. Additionally, the researcher will create a legend outlining the study's objectives and assure the

response group that participating in the study is entirely choice, confident, and solely for academic purposes.

Additionally, they should have had the freedom to express any concerns or make any suggestions regarding their involvement in the study. The name of the company listed in the Appendix 2 pilot questionnaire was removed from the survey because several respondents were worried about the confidentiality of the replies given that the research covers managerial roles in hospitality-related businesses. The final questionnaire for those who desire to remain anonymous might be found in the Appendix 3.

3.9 Distribution of Questionnaire

The option of distributing the questionnaire online was chosen in order to reach the target audience effectively and to maximize completion ease. The questions were distributed throughout the Republic of Ireland, due to the distances and time provided, some of those were mostly by in-person interactions, which were helped by a created QR to improve timing and facilitate the process but also email, and phone calls were used.
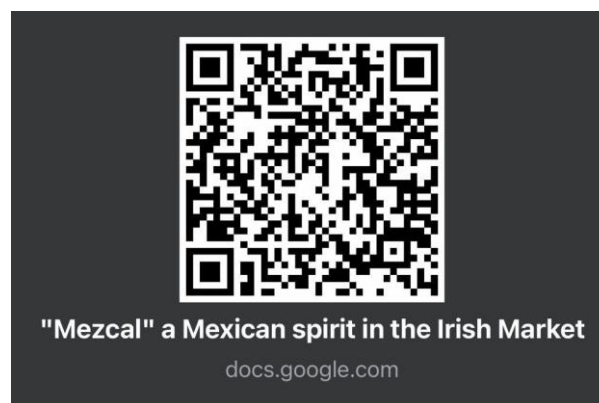
Figure 4. Mezcal Survey QR (Personal creation)

After a respondent completed the survey, it was saved to the database. To preserve the privacy of the participants and their responses, access to the database was restricted to the author exclusively. Following completion of the survey, even if the questions were answered by phone call, they were filled into the online survey like, a copy of the 200 questionnaires completed on the database was recorded.

3.10 Data Analysis

Microsoft Excel was used to enter and evaluate the information from both the online and offline questionnaires. The type of business, location, availability of tequila and mezcal, industry presence, and more important, exploration and understanding of the internal based on the respondent's experience, were all factors in the data analysis. Close attention to the scenario involving sales and their knowledge, insight, and competence on the spirit. In order to visualize some of the important trends that emerged from the responses to the questions, bar charts were given.

CHAPTER 4 | Findings & Analysis

This chapter aims to discuss and analyze the research hypotheses by displaying the results and findings from data collection based on a personalized design by the author.

First, it's essential to recognize the types of businesses that took part in the study. In terms of the study's limitations, most respondents—42.4% of the population—work currently in restaurants. Once the researcher visited the businesses personally, a second factor emerged: the consumption of spirits in restaurants is cocktails, which refers to consumer behavior.

In the second place despite the rejection of many publicans, the ones that accepted to answer the survey are pubs where the customer use to drink spirits in shots mainly rather than cocktails. This suggests that if most of their visitors are tourists, they will be more likely to drink traditional Irish drinks.

Finally, in third place are bars in hotels, where contrary to expectations the rejection to the surveys was higher than the pubs, and even considering that international visitors have more opportunities to consume international spirits, their preference goes to local beverages and beer.
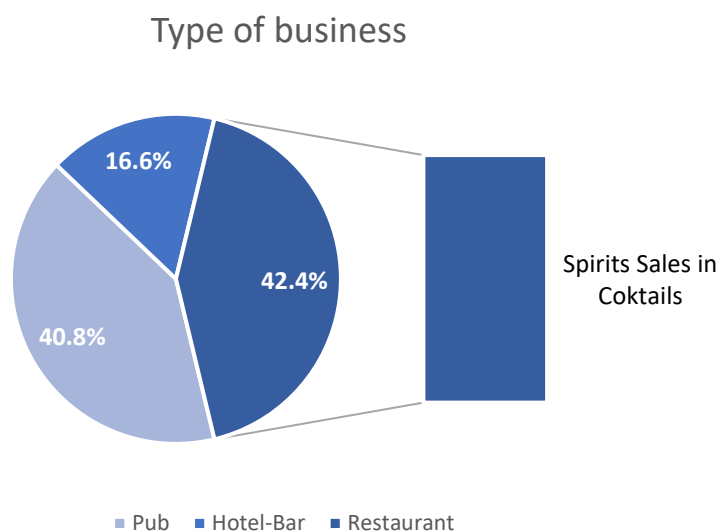
Type of business

Figure 5. Type of business (Personal elaboration)

Surprisingly, among the firms that were the topic of the study, Cork had the largest percentage (33%), while Limerick had the lowest percentage (20% of the population) (n=400). Even though these final two counties were visited many times for data collection, Dublin comes in second with 26% of the responses and Kildare comes in third with only 21%.

To address the first section of the questionnaire, which aims to learn about the business and management, it is critical to emphasize that it was only given to executive roles as it was discovered that owners only visit their businesses for short periods of time and at random times. As a result, only 1.3 percent of proprietors were included in the study, compared to similar percentages of managers and supervisors (52.5 and 46.2, respectively).

Response by county
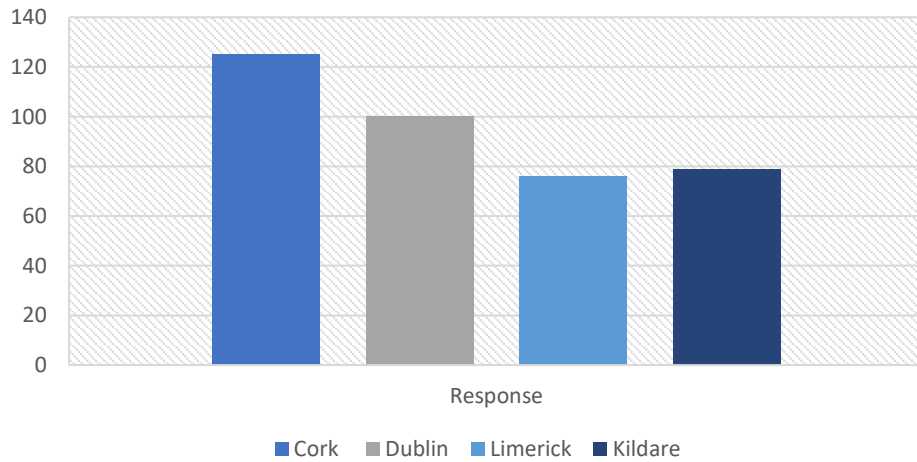
Figure 6. Response by county (Personal elaboration)

It is also interesting to note that the experience obtained was measured and the relation it exists accompanied with the amount of time that the business has been in operation to explore whether the relation breaks or not if it is a new opening or a pub that has been operating in the market for many years, because typically owners that run the business have the responsibility within their positions for decision-making.

Experience vs Operation

	Experience	Business in operation
■ 5	20.2	9.6
■ 10	43.2	26.4
■ 15	36.6	64
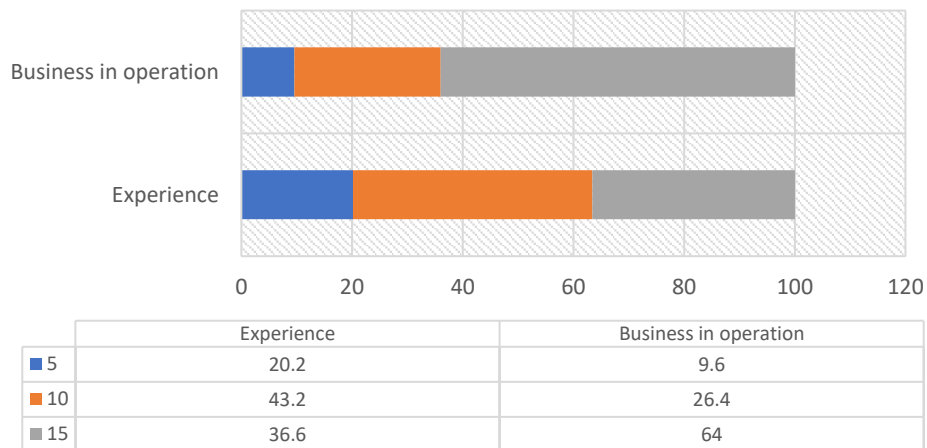
Figure 7. Experience vs Operation. (Personal elaboration).

As seen in Figure 7, the length of experience of the employees does not necessarily correlate with the length of time that the business has been in the

industry. Businesses with more than ten years receive the highest pick because older establishments acquire more market knowledge over time. Businesses with fewer than ten years receive the highest pick because, among other reasons, people may have worked at other locations or started later.

It is necessary to seek out which type of alcohol has the best sales after this last product, in order to be able to see if there is a possibility in the current scenario for customer behavior to introduce an international spirit. After the author personally visited places where alcohol sales take place, within the menus, and in accordance with the literature review that shows that the highest consumption goes to beer overall the beverages.

Industry Best Seller (After Beer)

| Spirits 52.8% | Wine 37.6% |
| | Cider 9.6% |
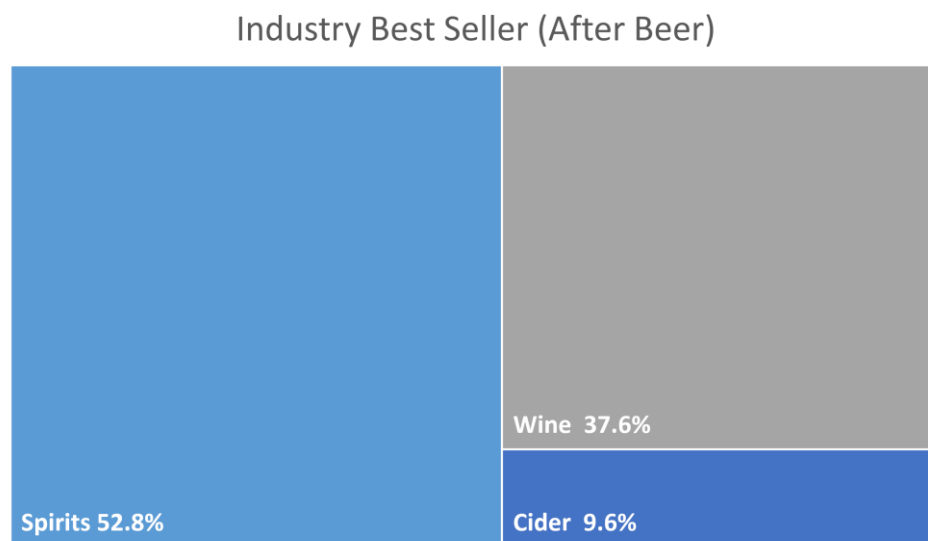
Figure 8. Best seller after beer. (Personal elaboration).

Spirits are the liquor that consumers prefer most nowadays, with a 52.8% overall preference, according to the findings of the surveys that were given (see figure 8), which indicates that this preference will have a beneficial impact on the study. Wine, on the other hand, is ranked third, accounting for 37.6%, which is representative but not as much as beverages based on spirits, while cider, with a less than ten percent, shows that the drinks are still consumed but do not have a representative impact on sales for the company.

As a result of the inquired respondents to rate the spirits sales within the company based on their managerial experience, it is important to note that in the pilot survey the question asked for numbers, but respondents declined to respond due to the need to protect their privacy. As a result, the question was changed to ask respondents to rate the sales as (excellent, good, or poor) without providing any numbers or other information that might compromise their positions.

The following graph shows that the majority of businesses agree that sales are only strong because their primary source of revenue is beer. However, in the case of some bars, whose menu is primarily cocktail-based, spirits sales are rated as excellent because this is their primary line of business, yielding very similar results to the last position 1 out of 20 in which local pubs rated foreign spirits as poor.

Figure 9. Spirit Sales. (Personal elaboration)

The strategy can be implemented once the lowest results are very close to each other, giving the best opportunity to analysts to plan the best fit strategy to lower those numbers for the better. As it is evident, people who believe that sales are poor and excellent are very similar, with a huge gap between those who expressed is good.

To mention the availability of spirits and their sales is now analyzed the correlation that these have with businesses, whether they offer international spirits as the first variable and if they offer Mezcal as the second. The result is a correlation coefficient at 1.0, which indicates that there is a positive relationship between the

two variables as shown in the figure 10. Accordingly, for a positive increase in one variable, there should be the same for the second.

In this context, it makes sense if the company already sells international spirits (given the strong competition from other alcoholic beverages from across the world), but it doesn't necessarily follow that they also sell mezcal at the moment. Instead, it refers to how likely it is for the company to do so, given that they also distribute international spirits, or not, depending on their own demystification strategy
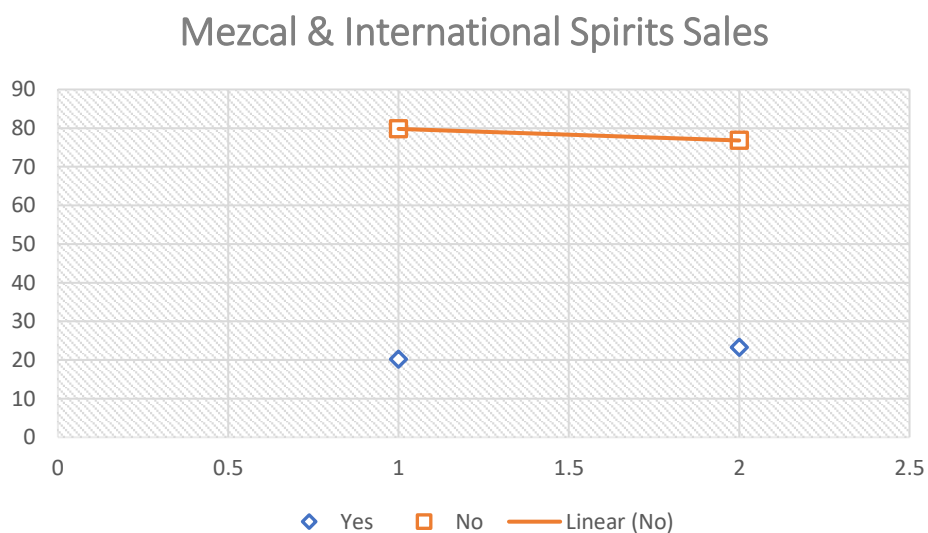
Figure 10. Mezcal & International spirits sales. (Personal elaboration).

The study surveyed if the location sells Mezcal and Tequila with the aim of evaluating the relationship between those variables and investigating whether, in the case of Mexican spirits, if they are currently selling Tequila, then also Mezcal, and how many of them belong to which side and to find out how many of them are actually already working with the Mexican spirits presented.

The standard deviation for both spirits is comparable, but for both responses, it was discovered that tequila is offered by 74.8% of Irish establishments that sell alcohol, which is the majority. As a result, these establishments have distributors who adhere to all legal requirements, as opposed to 25.2% who do not deal with the spirit.

In the case of mezcal, which is surprisingly different from what was anticipated, there are owners who take the risk and work with the distribution of the spirit even though the sales are not as high as Tequila. This means that even though it is a very small amount, they are willing to take the risk. Although both exhibited spirits are agave-based, they exhibit opposite results, and their correlation coefficients are -1, indicating that they have a negative association and are traveling in separate ways whenever one variable increase while the other decreases.

Tequila vs Mezcal supply
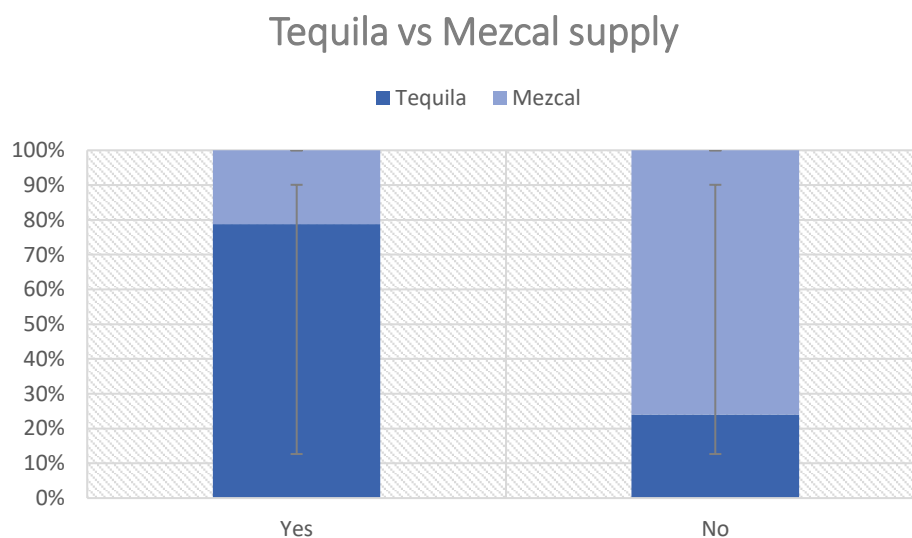
■ Tequila ■ Mezcal

Figure 11. Tequila vs Mezcal supply. (Personal elaboration).

To confirm the findings of the previous correlation presented, the participants were also asked how likely they thought it would be that "Mezcal" would sell similarly to tequila. Fortunately for the research, the results are confirmed right, with the majority (76.5%) expressing that it is likely that the sales will match tequila sales at the beginning of the project, which is good news because is a new product in the market in the area. On the other side, only 2% of respondents thought that was extremely likely, and 21.5% agreed that spirt sales wouldn't match those of tequila.

For the subsequent analysis, respondents that sell imported spirits (n=350), offer tequila (n=280), and offer mezcal (n=30), were addressed to measure the relation between them (see figure 12). Even though they are all aligned due to the similarity of variables, the coefficient of -1 (n=450) between them represents contrary to the expected, a negative relation, and it represents a negative impact for the research.

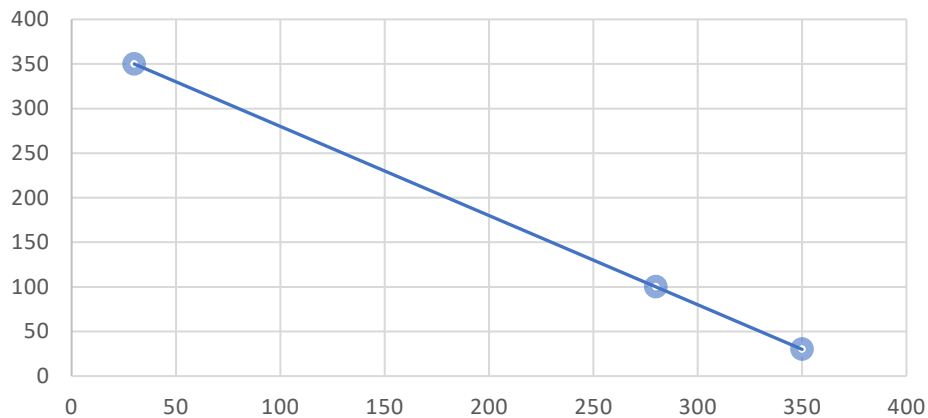## Mexican Spirits in the Irish Market Correlation

Figure 12. Mexican spirits in the irish market correlation. (Personal elaboration).

To address one of the study's main objectives, the literature review analysis revealed four key issues that would limit the sales of mezcal in the Irish market: taxes, transportation costs, consumer preferences, and the product's general market acceptance.

The highest challenge from the perspective of business owners and managerial decision-makers is not tax and price, which could be expected to be the main factors preventing sales, but rather product recognition, which means that once the customer knows about the product and requests it, resulting in consumption, would make up for the price and tax together, which are currently a secondary factor for the industry.

Top selling challenges
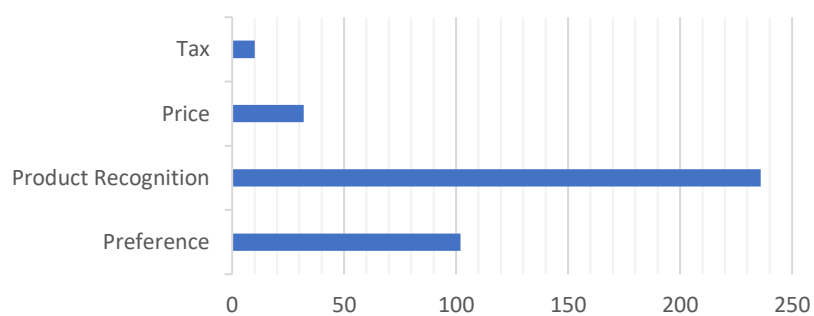
Figure 12. Top selling challenges. (Personal elaboration).

44

The population was questioned about three main instruments, including competitive pricing negotiated in a distributor contract, free tastings offered to customers so they can experience the product and decide if they would rather purchase Mezcal than another spirit, and f. In this sense, once the main challenges and their rates are known, it is important to explore what could be the game changer to counter those.

According to the findings, the majority of management (68%) agree that having support from marketing campaigns would definitely encourage them to add the Mexican spirit to their menus rather than tastings in place (24%) because they have the lowest approach of people in the market and the attention to price is the lowest (8%), indicating that it is more important for them that customers know about the product and ask for them in place.

In addition, for the analysis to make sense, it is crucial to explain the conclusions regarding how the market views and accepts new distributors. In the absence of these conclusions, the product won't be able to gain a place in the market and may not even be able to be offered. How keen they are to do business with a new player, according on their point of view.

A significant portion of the population, 26.8%, stated that it is not likely that owners would even accept to have conversations with new players because they are currently working with exclusive contracts and that more than fifty percent said likely because more factors are involved, such as the agreed price and how the negotiations would take place. Only 14.2% consider it to be extremely likely to sign contracts regardless of price or tax if the product was lawfully imported.

Figure 13 displays the deviation of the variable along with the number of years the company has been in operation. The strength of the relationship accounts to 0.718 for the coefficient, showing a positive correlation but it is weak and unlikely to be taken into consideration due to the value is lower than 0.8, which means there is not a very strong relationship. This is because most participants are restaurants with fewer years in operation than other types of businesses.
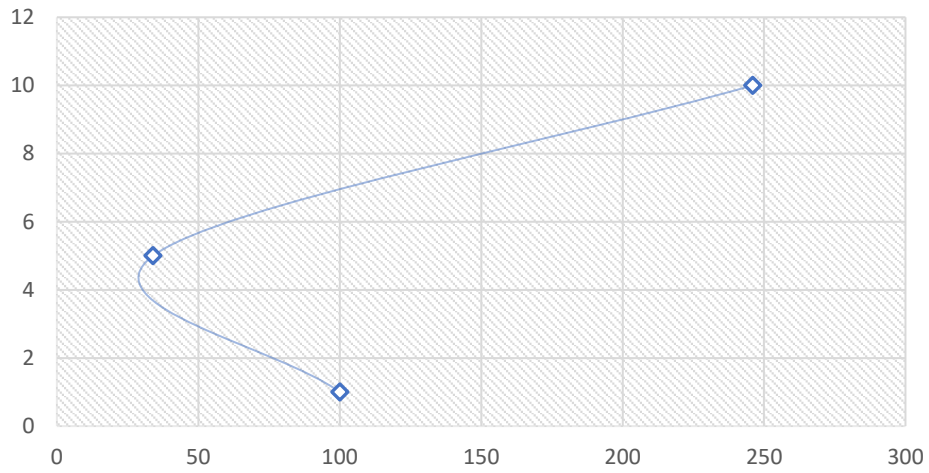
New player vs Operation

Figure 13. New player vs operation. (Personal elaboration).

This trend is shown in Figure 14 and can be used to infer that, based on consumer behavior and managerial expertise, it is unlikely that Irish consumers will accept the spirit, as measured by the acceptance of the customers of mezcal based on the experience of the respondents in the sector, where high acceptance records the lowest (16.4%), followed by medium (38.3) and, lastly and negatively for the study, low acceptance (45.3%).

Mezcal acceptance trend
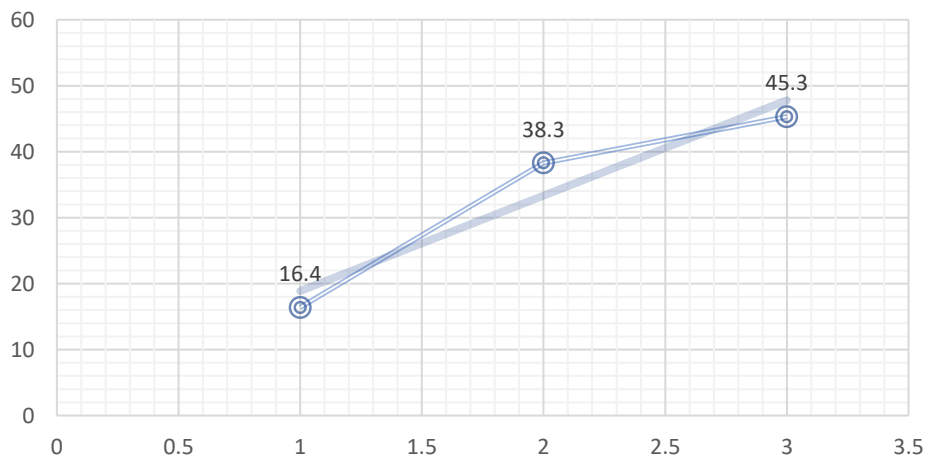
Figure 14. Mezcal acceptance trend. (Personal elaboration).

CHAPTER 5 | Results Discussion

Limitations of the Study

To discuss the study's limitations, first a pilot survey was conducted to determine how the distribution of the questionnaire would work. This survey was conducted in five locations in Dublin, and it was clear that changes were required for several reasons. First, the questions were in paper and electronic versions (I-pad) and were difficult for the respondents to follow, secondly, the first people who responded said that it was too long, even if it was the opening-shift.

Third, two of them refused to respond since one of the questions was about the name of the place, and they explained that even as a manager, they were not allowed to use the name of the business for academic purposes, so that question was removed from the form.

After the adjustments, a QR was put in place so that respondents could use their own devices and react more quickly, the number of questions was decreased consistent with the study's goal, and the timing was improved. The author traveled repeatedly over the course of three months to Kildare, Limerick, and Cork to speak in person with managers and supervisors of the operating pubs, restaurants, and bars in each county because, despite the use of emails and phone calls, there was no response from anywhere once the instrument and method were established, working, and had a chance to get responses with quality.

The researcher's limited resources prevented from visiting other counties in Ireland. One of the biggest challenges was that the majority of publicans refused to respond, stating that the information related to their business was private and confidential (Even showing student ID and the ethics form). Around 105 of the 450 locations visited during the three-month data collecting period completely refused to respond, which was highly challenging. However, speaking with individuals who had first-hand knowledge of the Irish market was incredibly interesting and exciting for the researcher.

Challenges and feasibility

The results of the literature review and the data analysis that led to this study's discussion first demonstrate that there is a dearth of research on the subject and a gap between variables, which distinguishes the current study and makes it valuable for management decision-making. After analyzing the product's characteristics and the market's current state, it becomes clear that despite the challenges discussed, there is a high likelihood that new players will enter the alcohol consumption market. Among the many factors considered, the price of the product—which includes not only production costs in the home country, in this case Mexico—but also costs associated with bottling and packaging related to logistics movement—is the most important.

Since the product is only permitted to be produced in certain regions and is supported by geographic indicators, it must first meet all government requirements to leave the country. This is followed by the cost of shipping if there is no direct route from the point of origin to the destination, in this case Ireland.

To get a competitive edge in global trade, one should first arrive at any other port in Europe, such as one in Germany or the Netherlands. This is advantageous because international agreements are made with the entire European Union, not just Ireland. The product can then be shipped to Ireland once it has arrived in a European port, but it is important to keep in mind that mezcal must meet all the country's specific shipping requirements and pay any additional taxes due there. Therefore, the costs are higher, but they can be offset by the volume of purchases made in the origin country and even more by the industry's share of sales.

In addition to the overall cost of the product, taxation and regulations are other issues that the product must deal with. However, even though these issues are not of high importance to the business, product recognition is a critical issue that must be addressed and considered when making decisions and developing a strategy. This challenge might be overcome with the aid of marketing and promotion, which could raise costs as well as the time it takes for the majority of people to become familiar with the product. This is a long-term project because the entire campaign might take two to five years to pay off for publicans and bar owners after investment.

The final and most important challenge is customer preference, which received the second-highest score in the study and, when compared to a study of a comparable product, in this case tequila, with numbers that are not the highest within the industry, could lead to the conclusion that it is not the best. However, the reason is that the customer is unaware of the product or even its taste, which could change the data once it is offered along with tastings and marketing campaigns.

The relationship between the discussed factors and, more importantly, the perspective of management expertise in the Irish beverage industry are addressed with the goal of building the layout conducting a negative for the assess the viability of the project of successfully introducing the product in the Emerald Isle due to the results of the study the probabilities to ensure publicans and bar owners return on investment is very low and implies taking the risk and accepting the path offering the agave spirit which, if there is high acceptance from the populace, would yield a profit.

CHAPTER 6 | Conclusion & Recommendations

Conclusion

In the present day, worldwide efforts are geared toward improving international trade by establishing trade cooperation agreements. This is the case between Mexico and the European Union, where Ireland is a member. In the current dynamic of bilateral trade between these two countries, there are many development opportunities.

The found literature indicates that numerous factors can be used to introduce a Mexican product into the Irish market, to raise the Mexican component's export levels, and to boost employment in the Irish alcohol industry. In accordance with the findings, this research would generate benefit for both countries and their commercial relationship.

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the key obstacles and viability of effectively introducing a Mexican agave spirit into the Irish market. The researcher gained a deeper understanding of the relationships between variables, such as the correlation between businesses selling tequila and mezcal combined with the

businesses that offer international spirits, with a negative relation even though all of them are in the same category, in the case of the Irish market current scene, through quantitative research methodology using a cross-sectional survey for the data collection and interpretivist approach.

Due to the difficulties encountered, including the need for product recognition—which is crucial because it is highly improbable that the general public would use it—the investigation came to the conclusion that it is not possible. The interested party, in this case Mexican exporters, must make a significant investment and exert significant effort in a nationwide or perhaps international marketing campaign.

It is true that a large number of respondents agree completely that they are willing to accept and sign contracts with a new distributor and sell mezcal, with the understanding that there will be marketing campaigns or tastings in place. However, there are additional difficulties, such as the taxation prices that will increase the final price, which is a problem that the management is not fully considering.

Due to consumer preferences and the historically more likely consumption of beer in Irish drinking culture, mezcal may not be well received in the Irish market, according to the majority of respondents. This is the second significant concern that emerged from the research.

However, it is important to note that the sector is composed of many different kinds of spirits and the Mexican agave ones are a very small part of them. One-quarter of respondents' responses that Mezcal won't sell similarly to tequila represents a negative factor to the research. The second sector of alcoholic beverages accounting the highest sales after brews is the spirits sector.

The introduction of mezcal, a Mexican agave spirit, into the Irish market is not currently practicable, but Mexican producers should continue working and perhaps look into other markets, according to the analysis of the variables and difficulties discussed.

Managerial Implications-Implications of the study

The main findings of the current study's implications, which focus on the situation and current scenario of the Irish market from the perspective of managerial positions within the industry, are that it is a strong market to investigate because of alcohol consumption, customer preferences, the sheer number of locations that sell alcoholic beverages, and the distinct Irish drinking culture.

A very limited number of locations are already taking the risk to offer the product despite the product's recognition, tax, and price, it was also observed that the majority of proprietaries are willing to accept a new participant in their distributors acquisition. The study's conclusion is that, after taking into account all the relevant elements, the introduction of agave spirit would represent a positive development for both economies, but there is still more work to be done and a significant investment to be made.

The findings are original and suggest a very significant addition to the industry, which was severely impacted by the COVID pandemic and needs innovation and development. By introducing new products, it will be able to interact with the market and earn more money. Also, because the spirits distillery only considers statistics and trends from clusters rather than the actual expertise of people working every day and interacting face-to-face with customers, which makes it possible for the income to increase, the methods applied are crucial to the studies in the area. By understanding that point of view, the decision-maker can make an informed choice.

The current study not only has the potential to help businesses increase their revenue, but it also has the potential to assist policy makers in improving taxation and regulations, conducting analyses of international agreements, and determining whether they can propose bilateral agreements to support specific industries, like the research's primary focus and the alcoholic beverage industry.

Future Research

In fact, there is a gap in data collection and the issue of private information from the public and businesses, but these factors are still important to gauge the market, the industry, and be able to plan strategies in both a micro and macroeconomic

environment. This is because the unfavorable perception from many publicans can be lifted by having the support of any association that works within the industry and is able to gauge potential tax decreases, for instance.

Given that this component was previously very challenging to get, it will be crucial for future study to consider tax regulations to a greater extent because they might have a favorable impact on imports and exports and provide a competitive edge for global trade in general. However, talking about tax is more difficult to cover because that is only a decision of the higher decision-makers in the government scheme.

Nevertheless, by analyzing and conducting possible research about this variable would be helpful for them to look at the pros and cons. Even though it was discovered that it is not the biggest issue for owners like the product recognition is, the strategy to that would be lifted by marketing and promotion campaigns coordinated within the government measures.

It is important to note that, although data for this study were difficult to gather, accurate information and a more thorough understanding of the potential effects of different options and legal changes with the appropriate practical approach would be required to conduct research on the taxation of spirits with a potential reduction. This would require support from associations and possibly approval from any government institution.

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Appendix 1. Questionnaire Confidentiality and Explanation

Survey- "Mezcal" a Mexican Spirit in the Irish Market

As part of my final dissertation project for the Master of Science in Management program at the National College of Ireland, I am conducting a brief survey aimed at the management in the hospitality sector on this occasion to gather information about the industry's main concerns regarding the introduction of "Mezcal" a Mexican agave spirit in the Republic of Ireland.

This questionnaire, which comprises of fifteen questions, aims to assess whether internationalizing the product is feasible. It is crucial to note that all information and data are intended exclusively for academic purposes and will not ever be shared with a third-party firm.

You can write me at (ddorantes0595@gmail.com) if you have any questions or recommendations. Thank you so much in advance for your support.

Appendix 2 | Pilot Questionnaire

Survey for International Spirits in the Irish Market
Question 1 | Name of the business
R:
Question 2 | Type of business
- Pub   - Restaurant   - Bar
Question 3 | Where is the business located?
- Dublin   - Limerick   - Cork   - Kildare
Question 4 | What is your position within the company?
- Owner   - Manager   - Supervisor
Question 5 | How long have you been working in the industry in Ireland?
- Less than 1 year   - More than 5 years   - More than 10 years
Question 6 | How long have the business been in operation?
- Less than 1 year   - Less than 5 years   - More than 5 years

Question 7 | From 1 to 4 (Considering 1 as the higher number of sales and 4 the lowest), mention the business best sellers

- Beer
- Cider
- Wine
- Spirits

Question 8 | Does your business offers international spirits?

- Yes
- No

Question 9 | How would you rate international spirits sales?

- Poor
- Good
- Excellent

Question 10 | Does the business offers "Tequila"?

- Yes
- No

Question 11 | Does the business offers "Mezcal"?

- Yes
- No

Question 12 | From your experience in the industry, how likely would you say is that the customer knows what is "Mezcal"?

- Not likely
- Likely
- Very likely

Question 13 | From your point of view, how likely is that "Mezcal" would have similar sales as Beer?

- Not likely
- Likely
- Very likely

Question 14 | From your point of view, how likely is that "Mezcal" would have similar sales as Tequila?

- Not likely
- Likely
- Very likely

Question 15 | From your point of view, from the following reasons choose the strongest barrier to sell Tequila/Mezcal?

- The customer prefers beer
- The customer doesn't know tequila or Mezcal
- The price is very high
- The regulations to sell are very strict

Question 16 | If a new distributor offered your business to sell Mezcal, how likely is that to happen?

- Not likely

• Likely • Very likely
Question 17 | From your point of view, which could be the strongest game-changer for the business to introduce "Mezcal" in your menu?
• Price to sell • Advantage over the competition • Free tastings in-place • Product Promotion-Marketing campaigns
Question 18 | From your experience in the industry, how likely do you think the customers would accept Mezcal?
• Low acceptance • Medium acceptance • High acceptance
Question 19 | How likely is that the business work with a new distributor?
• Not likely • Likely • Very likely
Question 20 | How likely is that the customer accepts successfully "Mezcal" after 6 months of launching the spirit?
• Not likely • Likely • Very likely

Appendix 3 | Final Questionnaire

Survey- "Mezcal" a Mexican Spirit in the Irish Market
Section 1. Getting to know the business & respondent
Q1. What kind of organisation do you work for?
o Pub o Restaurant o Hotel/Bar
Q2. Where is the business based?
o Dublin o Limerick o Cork o Kildare
Q3. Which position do you have within the business?
o Owner o Manager o Supervisor
Q4. How long have you been employed in the drinks sector in Ireland?
o Less than 1 year o More than 5 years

o More than 10 years

Q5. How long has the business been in operation?

o Less than 1 year
o More than 5 years
o More than 10 years

Section 2. Sales & Product

Q6. Mention the top-selling product for your organization after beer.

o Cider
o Wine
o Spirits

Q7. Does your business sell imported spirits?

o Yes
o No

Q8. How would you rate imported spirits sales?

o Poor
o Good
o Excellent

Q9. Does the business sell "Tequila"?

o Yes
o No

Q10. Does the organisation sell "Mezcal"?

o Yes
o No

Section 3. Getting to know your perspective

Q11. How likely do you think it is that "Mezcal" will sell similarly to Tequila, in your opinion?

o Not likely
o Likely
o Very likely

Q12. Choose the factor that you believe is most likely to block the sale of Tequila or "Mezcal" in Ireland from the list below.

o The customer prefers beer
o The customer doesn't know tequila or "Mezcal"
o The price is very high
o The regulations to sell are very strict

Q13. How likely is it that your business would accept a new distributor's proposition to sell "Mezcal"?

o Not likely
o Likely
o Very likely

Q14. What would need to happen that would make your business consider adding "Mezcal" to the menu?

- o   Price improvement
- o   Free tastings in-place
- o   Marketing campaigns

Q15. How likely do you consider the public is to accept and consume "Mezcal" based on your experience in the sector?

- o   Low acceptance
- o   Medium acceptance
- o   High acceptance