CHALLENGES OF NEW COLOMBIAN COFFEE BRAND MARKET ENTRY IN SWITZERLAND WITH A FOCUS IN THE ZURICH MARKET

by

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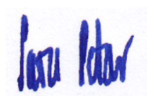

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First and foremost, I want to thank God for the strength and perseverance to complete this journey. But in the storms He has provided peace and perseverance through His leading and protection.

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To all who played a role in this journey, thank you for your profound impact. May God bless you all richly.

ABSTRACT

CHALLENGES OF NEW COLOMBIAN COFFEE BRAND MARKET ENTRY IN SWITZERLAND WITH A FOCUS IN THE ZURICH MARKET

Amal Parokkaran Mohan

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The current study titled CHALLENGES OF NEW COLOMBIAN COFFEE BRAND MARKET ENTRY IN SWITZERLAND WITH A FOCUS IN THE ZURICH MARKET aimed to explore the various challenges that are currently existent in bring Colombian coffee into the Swiss market, with a focus on the Zurich market. The research employed a qualitative research design with four main objectives of mapping and analysing the competitive landscape of major coffee chains and brands operating in Zurich, identifying consumer segments within the Zurich coffee market differentiated by behaviours, preferences, and price sensitivity, and to recommend a go-to-market strategy leveraging local partnerships, community events, and marketing channels reflective of Swiss consumer priorities. The research used a semi-structured interview to explore experiences of Colombian coffee producers who are trying to bring their brand into the Zurich market, and with industry experts in the Swiss coffee market. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the interview responses and findings were divided based on the two sections of sample interviewed. Important challenges were identified for both the sets of the sample. Analysis of interviews for the coffee producers yielded the themes of market entry challenges, sustainable and ethical sourcing and branding and marketing approaches. Each of the themes had their sub-themes highlighting specific challenges that Colombian coffee producers face in finding a foothold within the Swiss market. The thematic analysis of interviews from industry experts also yielded three important themes which included Brand loyalty as challenge for new entrants, Pricing dynamics and Change, trend and innovation. Both these sets of findings show that the Swiss coffee market is highly saturated and entrenched with already existing brands with longstanding loyalty with their customers. Colombian coffee producers will have to therefore identify and develop effective and relevant marketing strategies to be able to establish themselves within the highly competitive market. There is a general lack of awareness about the Colombian coffee heritage which needs to be changed in order for Colombian brands to survive in a Zurich market. Therefore, findings from this research can be utilised as a basis for producers and importers to identify challenges and find effective strategies that will differentiate the Colombian coffee brands from already existing brands in the Zurich markets.

Key Words: Colombian coffee, coffee producers, industry experts, brand differentiation, challenges in market entry, Zurich coffee market

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Coffee is an important commodity in the world economy and has been an ever-rising industry. It has great cultural and economic significance and offers a distinctive landscape with a variety of flavors and customs. New Columbian coffee brands are progressively making their way into the international market as a result of the Columbian coffee market being a major participant in the industry. Switzerland has a large international coffee presence. The consumption of coffee has been rising in the Swiss market in recent years. Zurich is one of the largest cities in Switzerland and is known for its high-end coffee shops and varied selection of coffee brands. There are several challenges faced by new Colombian coffee brands seeking to enter the Swiss market particularly the Zurich market, despite the potential of the Columbian coffee market.

The world coffee market is a highly competitive and complex arena, where consumer taste Preference and market dynamics are in a constant state of flux. While coffee is a major business here (and ever a staple of an über-high-end culture), consumers in Switzerland may be among the most discerning around, which makes establishing a foothold is hardly easy for new entrants like Colombia-based brands seeking to get a leg up here via this initiative in Zurich. Colombian brands generally have a reputation for quality and sustainability, given that Colombia is one of the top coffee producers in the world. But they face particular challenges entering mature markets like Switzerland.

1.2 Market Analysis of Zurich

The Zurich market represents a competitive landscape for new product entry. This market is very attractive because of strong economic indicators, high consumer purchasing power and a sophisticated market environment. An in-depth analysis of the Zurich market explores the multiple dimensions that make this city an enticing market opportunity to explore and offers strategic guidance to businesses looking to enter this market.

Zurich has a population of 447,082 (Stadt Zurich, 2023) and the the population density of the urban area is 1.443 million while the metropolitan area is 1.6 million(The Local Switzerland, 2024). Since 10 years the total population of the Canton of Zurich is steadily increasing. This growth has extended from Zurich city into its surrounds.

The population is increasing into the immediate population growth of the Glattal, Furttal and Limmattal. In addition, growth is taking place along the lakes of Lake Zurich in the Pfannenstiel and Zimmerberg regions as well as along the Lake Greifensee in the Glattal and Zurich Oberland regions. This latter development extends almost as a line further into the Zurich Unterland. In contrast, the population in the Weinland region has increased rather modestly in comparison and three community have even experienced a decline. The same applies to the Furttal, where two community have experienced also a decline. In the Knonaueramt region, everything is represented from strongly growing community to moderately growing and stagnating ones. The population growth is largely reflected in the building behaviour. A lot of building has been done in the community that have grown the most in the past 10 years. However, due to the speculative construction market, construction was carried out regardless of population growth. The growth drivers are immigration from abroad, other cantons and the birth surplus(Manuela Foscaldi & Carla Ringenbach, 2022).

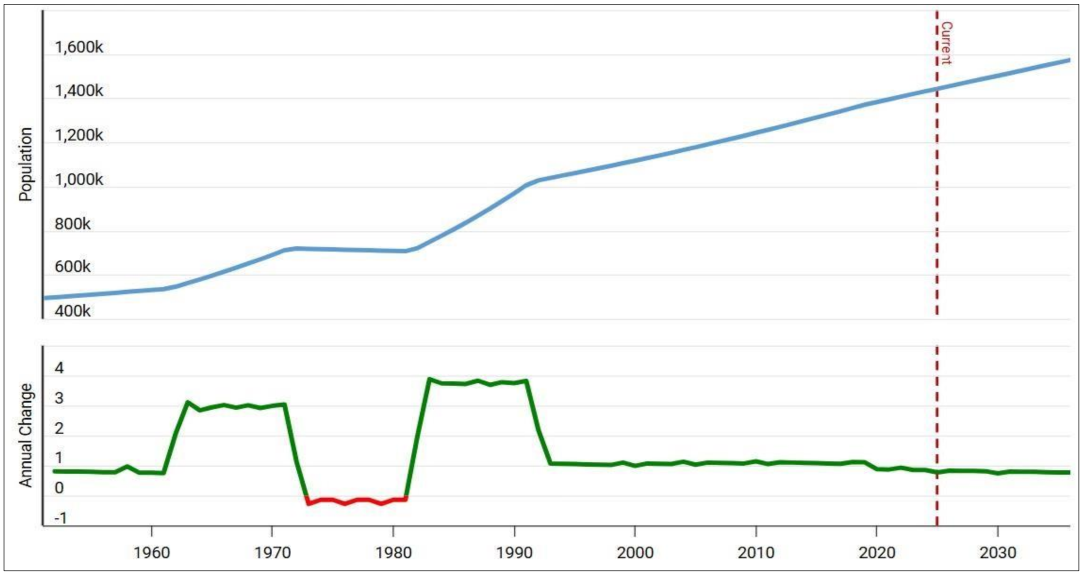

Figure 1: Zurich Population Growth (Source: Macrotrends, 2024)

The labour market and human capital, education, research and innovation, tax and regulatory environment, cost environment, infrastructure, economic performance, as well as quality of life, are the eight key factors that contribute to Zurich‘s attractiveness as a business location. All of these compositional elements contribute to that competition for business and talent in an environment of economic activity in the region. Underlying the canton‘s productivity is a tight labor market, buoyed by a skilled labor force and a strong education system. Conversely, up-to-date infrastructure and lifestyle maintain Zurich as a desirable destination for individuals and businesses alike.

Zurich is not just a financial powerhouse in Switzerland; it‘s a leader of innovation and sustainability. That echoes its competition with other hubs of the continent‘s economic might, including Munich, Stockholm, Amsterdam, Dublin and London. These sectors used to have similar structures economically and are now benchmarks of Zurich‘s competitiveness. Zurich is now positioned as the capital of innovative strength and sustainable growth through business and academic leaders who conduct research on this issue supported by the WEF Global Competitiveness Report.

Economic Overview of Zurich

Zurich is one of the fastest growing city in the world. It has consistent economic growth over the past three decades, with an average inflation-adjusted increase of 1.8% per year (Canton of Zurich Economic Report, 2024). Today the city has a per capita GDP at 102,000 Swiss francs, 22,000 Swiss francs or approximately 25% above the national average. Report from Canton of Zurich highlights people are working 7% less in per capita hours than 30 years ago. Hence people also have more leisure time. Zurich contributes more than 150 billion Swiss francs of national GDP, It is higher than the national average of Switzerland(Canton of Zurich, 2022).

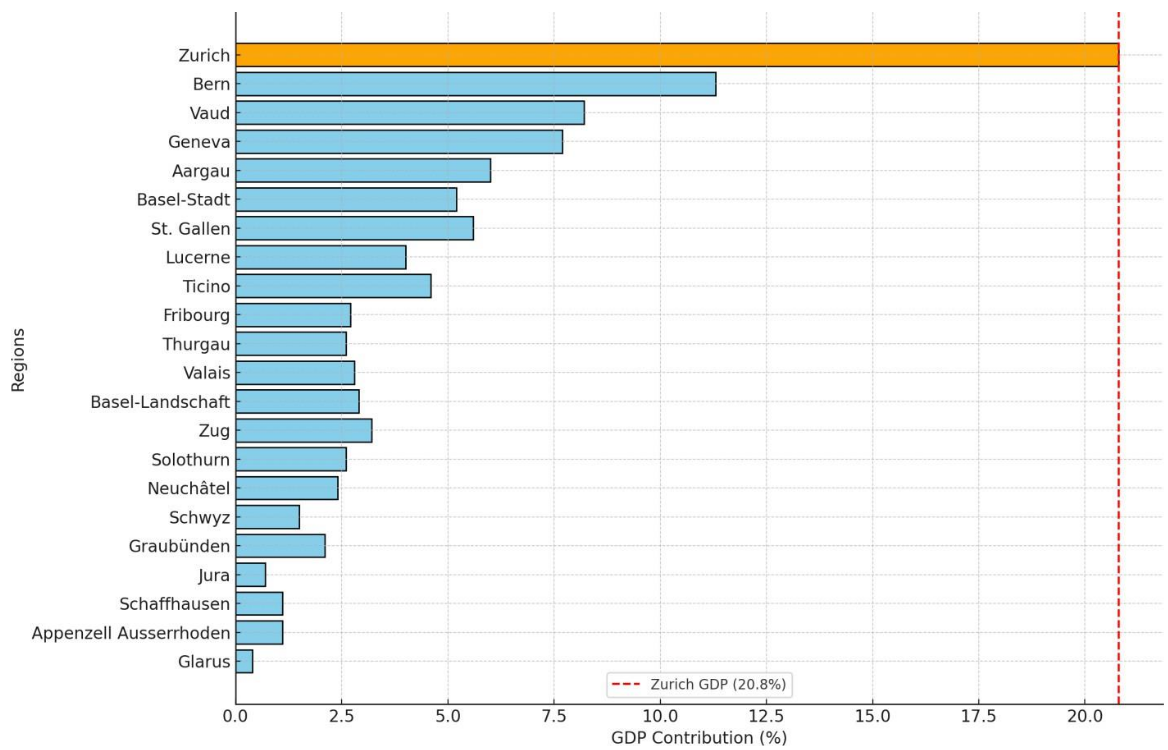

Figure 2: GDP by canton in 2022 (Source: Federal Static Office, 2022)

Here is a graphical representation of the GDP contributions of Swiss cantons in 2022. Zurich highlighted in orange, contributes the highest share at 20.8%. A dashed red line emphasizes Zurich's economic prominence relative to other regions.

The Canton of Zurich has developed from the largest financial centre of Switzerland into a dynamic business location for ICT, cleantech, life sciences and tourism. With more than CHF 60 billion gross value added, this diverse range of sectors also offers a buffer against over-reliance on any individual sector and thus contributes to stable economic performance. Zurich‘s financial sector remains the largest contributor with CHF 26.8 billion value added and more than 76,000 full-time jobs, growing more dynamically than the overall economy from 2011 to 2021 (FSO, 2024). Canton's diversified economy in a booming conditions is key to weather through sector specific or broad economy downturns.

The service sector has been the economic backbone of Zurich for roughly the past 25 years. Zurich‘s SMEs also have a significant international role; they represent 42% of Swiss export volume, and double the share in either Germany or France. Report from Canton of Zurich highlights people are working 7% less in per capita hours than 30 years ago. Hence people also have more leisure time.

The Zurich financial sector also continues to be a pillar of the local economy and employs more than 76,000 people in banks and insurance companies. Yet, the canton‘s economy is still protected from such risks thanks to diversification into ICT, cleantech, life sciences, and tourism. Together they produce a gross value added of 60 billion Swiss francs per year, which makes up an important share of Zurich‘s GDP and jobs.

Retail Market Overview of Zurich

The retail market of Zurich has a broad base of segments, the food and beverage segment is significant, especially due to the vibrant dining culture and strong grocery retailing (Euromonitor, 2024). This is also backed by apparel and consumer electronics, which are major drivers of this given that this is a multicultural city with high income earners (Euromonitor, 2024).

The basis of Zurich‘s retail power is the annual GDP growth of 1.8% and a per capita GDP of CHF 102,000, which is higher than the national average (Canton of Zurich, 2024). High labour costs enhance the city‘s strong purchasing power ensures strong retail demand. Tourism also boosts the retail industry and Zurich holds numerous festivals and events (Canton of Zurich, 2024).

In Zurich, the e-commerce sector reached 15% of total retail sales in 2023 because of the rise in consumer usage and enables smooth shopping (Canton of Zurich, 2023). Retail is highly influenced by seasonality and the business is usually at its peak during the tourist season, which is between May to September since tourists become more engaged. This is also supported by local events such as Zürifäscht and Christmas markets in hospitality and gifts (Canton of Zurich, 2023).

Startup Ecosystem and Innovation

The strong innovation landscape in Zurich is demonstrated by the fact that close to 40% of all Swiss startups receive investment within the canton.

New business registrations per year in Zurich increases in all years. For the total cumulative in 2023 and 2024 is much higher than that of 2016 and 2017. This shows an upward trend of increasing new businesses in Zurich over time. The business environment for new registrations are favorable in Zurich compared to earlier years. This reflects growing economic conditions and favorable circumstances for new business formations in Switzerland. The seasonal patterns of business registrations are stable across all years without considerable deviations or jumps of any sort in growth rates.

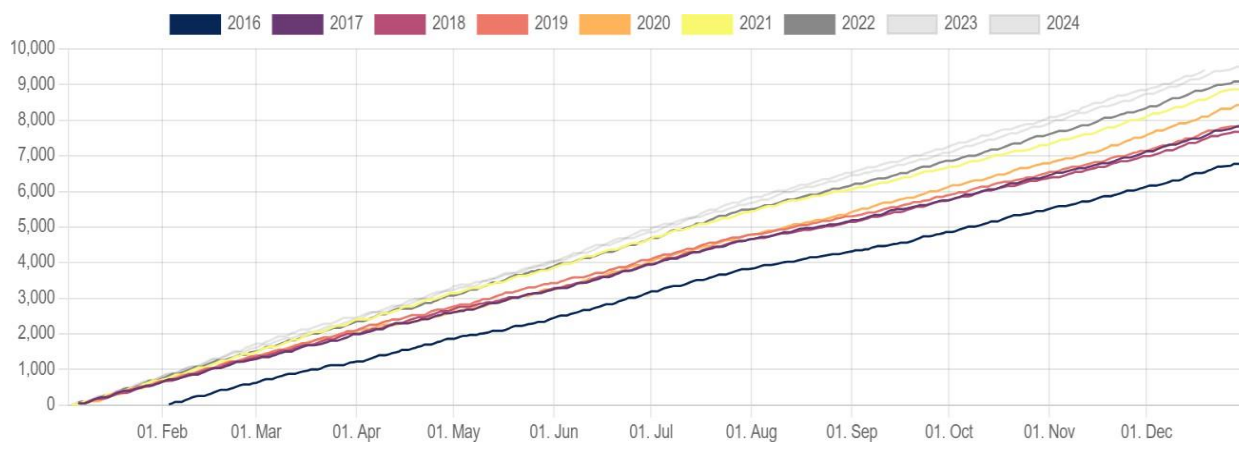

Figure 3: Cumulated daily business registrations in Zurich (Source: Startupmonitoring, 2024)

Labour force

Switzerland is rich with highly qualified employees. The Canton of Zurich scores high in labor force potential and its ability to attract talent. Zurich ranks highly on ICT specialists, a metric that weighs a lot because it is a significant factor of future economic success, and lifelong learning, reflecting the adaptability and willingness of its workforce to master new skills.

Zurich takes advantage of Switzerland's number one position in the IMD World Talent Ranking (WTR, 2024). Strong employment rates highlight the region‘s skill at mobilizing its workforce. Still recruiters in Zurich faces labor shortages in many sectors. It is a byproduct of Zurich‘s robust economic growth and job creation. These recruitment challenges reflect both demand for skilled workers and the region‘s economic success. According to the Federal Statistical Office

(FSO) the number of jobs in the Swiss economy grew by 1.2% (+65,800) in the third quarter of 2024 compared to the previous year.

Taxation and regulatory framework

The taxation and regulatory framework is a crucial factor to the attractiveness of Zurich as a business centre. Taxation hits companies directly in terms of profitability and indirectly influences top executives because taxation affects the region‘s attractiveness for highly-qualified workers.

Zurich is comparatively generous to corporate tax abroad. Based on the ranking, Zurich has a competitive average effective tax rate (BAK Taxation Index) for companies in the five benchmark regions. In Dublin, for example, lower taxes may favor (some) companies while those in Munich endure far higher taxes. Such international competitiveness makes Zurich a more attractive location for companies. But within Switzerland, Zurich is also one of the two cantons has highest corporate tax in the country.

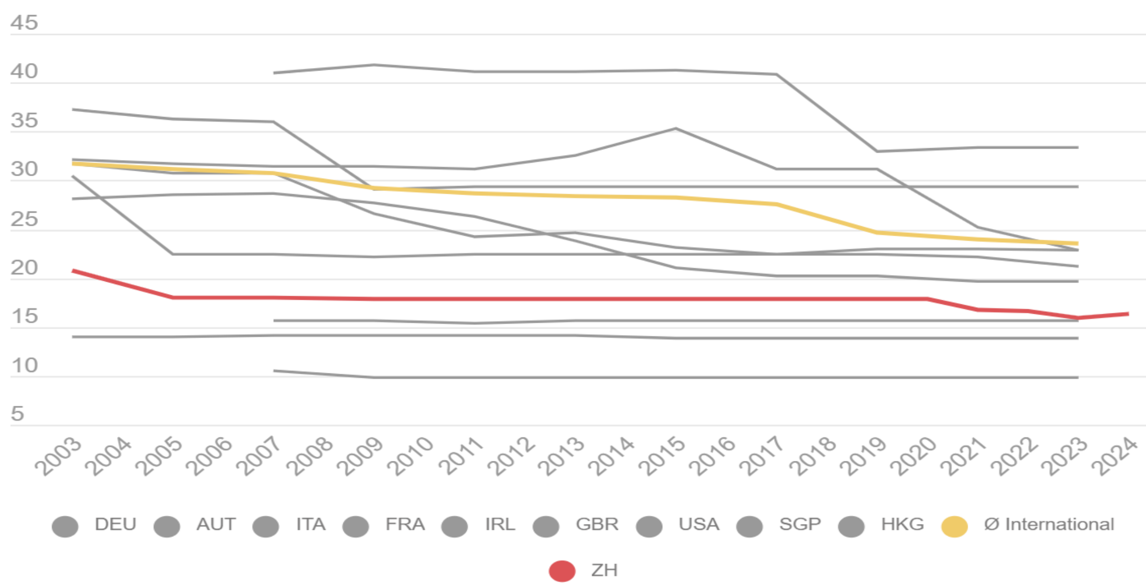

Figure 4: Effective average tax rate (EATR) for companies in the Canton of Zurich (Source: BAK Economics, 2024)

Corporate tax rates have slowly decreased, and in 2021 the profit tax rate fell from 8% to 7% with even more cuts expected (source: Canton of Zurich Tax Office) However, the economic capacity of the extremely rich Zurich is somewhat weaker compared to other Swiss cantons, as measured by its lower resource index in the national fiscal equalization system. However, competitiveness on the world stage is still broad in Zurich largely due to its efficient and balanced tax structure (Source: Swiss National Fiscal Equalization Report).

Tax environment for highly qualified specialists The Canton of Zurich scores on the tax environment for highly qualified specialists. And the BAK Taxation Index also accounts for this, showing that Zurich is far ahead of the benchmark regions in this respect. Zurich is a relatively high scorer in this area even by Swiss standards, which makes it a magnet for talent.

Zurich‘s tax system is favorable because of its competitiveness, simplicity, predictability, and efficiency. More than that collaborative and efficient tax authorities further enhance the region‘s reputation, ensuring companies and individuals enjoy a reliable system for tax compliance and planning. Even though the tax burden in Zurich is high compared to other Cantons in Switzerland, It is moderate when compared internationally. Corporate tax rates gradually decrease from 2020. Despite this, Zurich‘s economic capacity has slightly declined relative to other Swiss cantons, as indicated by its lower resource index in the national fiscal equalization system. Zurich remains competitive globally due to its balanced and efficient tax structure.

Infrastructure of Zurich Canton

Both physical and digital infrastructures are essential for business operations and competitiveness. Although Zurich has the benefits of good infrastructure, there are still areas for improvement, particularly in digital governance, space availability, and rent.

The famed Bahnhofstrasse in Zurich is a high street shopping trophy destination with elite retail and sky-high rentals at CHF 9,750 per square meter per annum (JLL, 2024). The street is mainly occupied by luxurious brands, big brand outlets and departmental stores. During holidays, foot traffic peaks at 78,000, which draws retailers looking for visibility and turnover (Swiss Tourism, 2024). Zurich Airport Mall is a modern mall that combines luxury and convenience, for locals and travellers alike (Zeurich, 2024). Urban and artisanal products are available at neighbor markets, like in Zurich-West, or festive Christmas markets (Zeurich, 2024). Zurich has a highly efficient public transport network such that, back to forth trips between retail centres are convenient (Zeurich, 2024). The efficient public transport network in Zurich does permit easy access to all those retail areas, thus creating frequent, spontaneous kinds of shopping trips (Zeurich, 2024).

The Canton of Zurich well established with global, regional and local public transportation. Zurich is one of the most accessible locations in Europe. The biggest international airport in Switzerland is Zurich Airport. It serves as an intercontinental hub that connects global destinations. Zurich railway station is famous for high-speed railway network to Germany, France, and Germany. One long-distance train connects Zurich and Amsterdam. Excellent Air and railway transportation ensures it is easier to access other countries. Efficient regional transportation network (ZVV) makes it easier to navigate locally.

Zurich‘s E-government performance is impacted by Switzerland‘s slow pace of digital transformation, driven in part by its federal system. For the E-government services in Zurich, the usability drop region between the maturity level and comparison regions is quite large and represents a large room for improvement can be achieved. The lack of availability of rental space is major problem for Zurich city.

There are Limited Building Zones in Zurich. This zones limiting development and transformation opportunities. Commercial rents and land prices are the highest in Switzerland, reflecting the limited availability of space. Although these factors emphasize the spatial limitations of the canton, they also underscore Zurich‘s appeal as a business location, which increases demand for real estate.

Education and Quality of life

Zurich is successful in high-quality education, economic performance, and quality of life. The Zurich canton has strong vocational training systems, world-class universities, and high labor productivity. With stability, security, and great healthcare, it is also considered a center for international corporations.

Quality of life is subjective and includes a wide variety of things like good environmental conditions, cultural offerings, safety, stability, healthcare quality, infrastructure, and education. Zurich meets these demands quite well within its small spatial territory. Local residents are able to live next to nature and then also be able to access high-skilled jobs without being forced to take hours-long commutes. Zurich also does well in international comparisons for the quality of its environment, safety, health care and the availability of schools.

Zurich has many strengths but the cost of living in the city, notably for housing and health care is a challenge. Moreover, when housing is scarce, it can impact the ability of people moving in from outside to find reasonable and affordable housing. But Zurich‘s high salaries compensate for these problems to a certain extent, giving residents significant purchasing power compared with the international benchmark. Zurich with its natural environment, great infrastructure, and economic perspective, while providing economic and environmental factors, is a very attractive place on a global scale as well as a perfect home that comes with a high price.

According to Mercer‘s 2023 Quality of Living survey, Zurich is the second highest quality of living for expatriates. This annual ranking brings interesting insights about daily life for expats and their families and shows that Zurich is ranked 2nd in the top 10 cities worldwide. One of the other cities in Switzerland Geneva is ranked 5th. (source Mercer Quality of Living Survey (2023)

Zurich is a viable business location as it has connected economic, environmental and social issues successfully. This makes development oriented to quantitative growth innovation, quality of life, and long-term sustainability. By creating opportunities for leading industries to develop, Zurich not only retains and attracts research and development-driven companies, but also supports climate and environmental goals. This leads to good jobs, more wealth for its residents, and income for the canton, tax revenue that supports social and environmental policies, and, ultimately, reinforces the canton‘s sustainable goals.

Consumer Behaviour

Zurich has a strong consumer market which is supported by high income earners. The population of Zurich is 447,082 (Stadt Zurich, 2023), the population density of the urban area is 1.443 million and that of the metropolitan area is 1.6 million with a good economic health (The Local Switzerland, 2024). Those figures of 31.1% youth dependency ratio and 27.4% old age dependency ratio indicate a healthy working age base (Federal Statistical Office, 2024). Convenience and top-quality purchases favour small household sizes with young professionals and couples residing the city (University of Zurich, 2024). But income levels are far above the national average for discretionary spending on luxury and quality products.

Zurich accommodates quality and sustainability conscious consumers. There are high end local brands like Freitag and Qwstion that cater to eco conscious buyers, and their goods are made from recycled or organic materials (Zuerich, 2024). Both luxury as well as budget options are accommodated in the city's retail environment, thus making an appeal to the market (Zuerich, 2024). International luxury labels maintain a very strong position in the market, while local brands are celebrated for Swiss craftsmanship and sustainable practices, and appeal to affluent shoppers (Zuerich, 2024).

Zurich shoppers are a product of seasonality and cultural values. Consumers are especially active during winter holidays, such as Christmas, and in summer sales, when they shop for discounts (Canton of Zurich, 2024). Eco conscious purchases include vintage and second hand items: Styles supported by Swiss cultural values of sustainability and community engagement (Canton of Zurich, 2024). Further seasonal retail is driven by festivals such as the Zurich Film Festival and Christmas markets (Canton of Zurich, 2024). Reduced working hours, and focus on leisure, make Zurich a place where consumer spending on products and experiences that enrich personal time is encouraged. (Canton of Zurich, 2024).

Labour Costs and Wages

In terms of labor cost Zurich ranks very poorly with the highest hourly labor costs of all the other regions. These costs are influenced mainly by high wages, not excessively high social security contributions. Zurich performs better on indicators like the ―Costs for social security contributions‖ and ―Average tax burden,‖ measuring how much the share of taxes and social security in total labour costs. However, this comparison does not take into account compulsory contributions to occupational pensions (BVG) in Switzerland, which employers must pay from a certain level of income.

These high labor costs can represent a headache for businesses, they can also be a great offset when it comes to attracting talent. Zurich's attractiveness as a place to live and work is driven in part by its high wages and strong purchasing power as well as its high quality of life. Highly competitive salaries reward and allow companies to attract and keep highly skilled personnel in a time of labor shortage. This dynamic makes high wages of Zurich is an asset for the city to showcase its attractiveness as the ideal spot for talent as well as high-quality businesses.

SWOT Analysis of Zurich

Strengths: High income residents and strong industries such as finance, ICT and tourism. Zurich generate more than CHF 150 billion to Switzerland‘s GDP. This retail market brings in CHF 14 billion a year, with strong purchasing power and Christmas markets among the cultural events.

Weakness: Some of the challenges include high labour costs and limited venture capital for scaling up start-ups. Retail rents especially on Bahnhofstrasse are among the highest in the world, which makes it difficult for small enterprises to compete.

Opportunities: Offer avenues for innovation include growing e-commerce adoption (15% of total retail), and seasonal tourism. Eco-conscious products and experiences are created because of consumers who are sustainability focused.

Threats: External economic disruptions are vulnerabilities because of labour shortages and dependence on tourism.

Zurich ranks high based on the most important location factors like "education", "economic performance" and "quality of life". The high quality universities, an apprenticeship-based vocational training program, a stable economic base, and a cluster of innovative industries indicate a competitive edge. Zurich‘s attraction is enhanced by its stability, security and quality health care system. These strengths make it high in international index, making it attractive for business and employees.

There are a number of challenges that Zurich needs to address. These factors are ―labour market and human capital‖, ― research and innovation ―, ―tax and regulatory environment‖ and ―infrastructure ― which are less uniformly performing. Scoring low in much of the sub-indicators, these sectors offer obvious areas which could be improved.

―Labour market and human capital‖ records a major hiring challenge with Zurich unable to entice enough qualified personnel. Expatriates and foreign professionals face even greater challenges due to the language barrier. Many Swiss people speak English but generally speaking swiss-german or German is the dominant working language and fluency is often a prerequisite for advancement. This language barrier can potentially discourage talent and restrict Zurich from remaining competitive in the global labor market.

Zurich also shows potential for improvement in the category of ―research and innovation.‖ Although Switzerland is a good provider of venture capital for start-ups, Zurich ranks poorly in terms of scale-up funding compared to its leading competitors. Zurich has the largest number of traditional firms among European innovation hotpots, but SME tend to participate in fewer innovations collaborations than SMEs which limits their long-term innovation capacity.

Another area for improvement is the ―tax and regulatory environment.‖ Zurich‘s corporate taxes, compared internationally, are competitive but within Switzerland they are among the highest. In addition, outdated labour laws in Switzerland have led to labour market rigidity, which restricts flexibility for businesses. Zurich stands out when it comes to infrastructure with smooth accessibility and a swift Zurich Airport. But, as in the rest of Switzerland, it has a hard time with E-government implementation, which improves administrative efficiency and ease of doing business.

The living cost in Zurich is very high, with huge prices for housing, rental, and health care. The housing shortage does add some of its own challenges for newcomers, although high wages do offset some of this overall cost.

Overall, Zurich shines in education, economic performance and quality of life. But, solving problems including talent shortages, language issues, innovation deficiencies, regulatory inertia, and E-government uptake is crucial to keeping its competitive advantage and making it more globally attractive.

1.3 Analysis of Colombian Coffee Sector

Market Overview

Colombia is the third-largest global coffee producer after Brazil and Vietnam (Statista, 2020). They mainly produce and exports the high-quality Arabica coffee beans (Hawksworth, 2024). The high-altitude farms and favorable climate make Colombian coffee to have a special taste and known for high quality (Hawksworth, 2024). It also draws on sustainable farming practices which are relevant to the present global shift towards green consumption (Hawksworth, 2024).

Europe is one of the big market for coffee, and the United States remains the largest importer for Colombian Coffee. Top importers in Europe are Germany, Italy, Belgium. The total exports to Europe are worth USD 2.91 billion in 2023 (ECF, 2024).

Colombian coffee is a high opportunity specialty and sustainable coffee with growing demand which gives Colombia a chance to continue to expand their presence in these key markets (ECF, 2024).

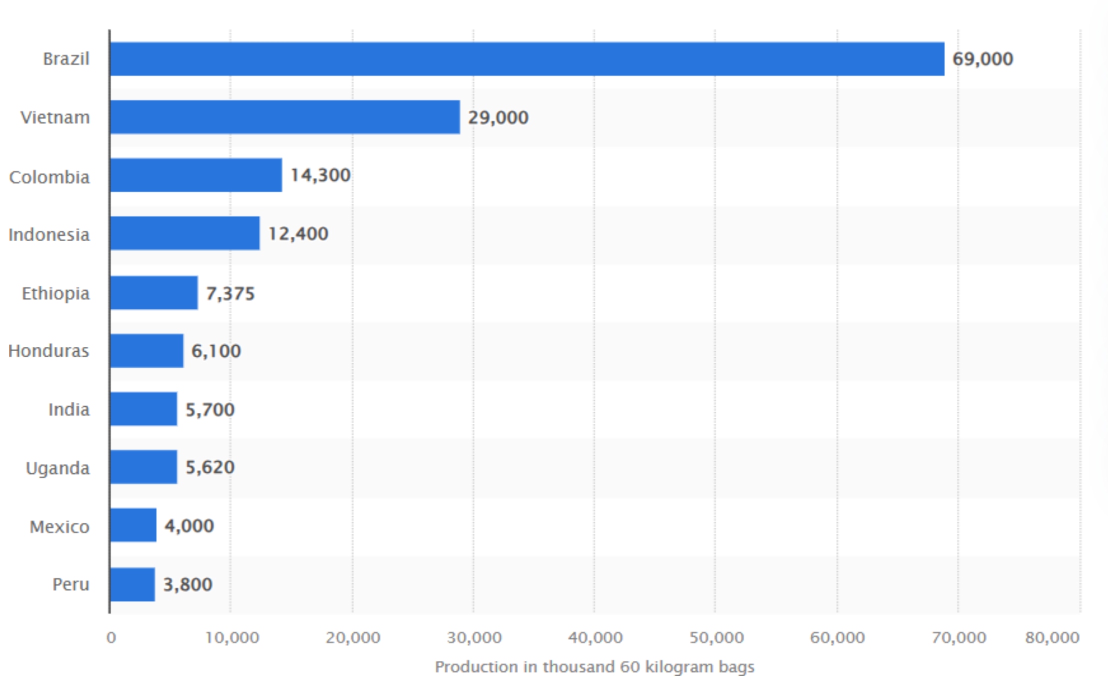

Figure 5: Coffee production worldwide in 2020 (Source: Statista)

Economic Significance

The cultivation of coffee is the pillar of Colombia's agricultural economy and also contributes to the stability and growth of the country. It provides 15% of agricultural GDP and supplies jobs to 2.5 million people (Cano-Sánz et al., 2013). The Coffee Industry is a significant contributor of Colombia's industrialization and play an important role in determining Colombia's industrial and infrastructure development. The coffee exports accounted for 80% of Colombia's total export value.

Colombian Coffee Production Trends

As the third-largest coffee producer in the world, Colombia has had important production volumes though with also important fluctuations over time. In the earlier years, between 2014 to 2019, Colombia's coffee production was remarkably consistent with around 13-14 million 60KG bags produced each year. It was when Colombia's coffee sector, buoyed with stable agricultural bean production technologies and solid institutional support, was experienced and mature. This period reflected the maturity and reliability of Colombia's coffee sector, supported by well-established farming practices and strong institutional backing.

There was a declining phase from 2019 for the overall Colombian coffee production. It caused a low Coffee production in 2022 of about 10.7 million bags. This drop reflects various problems encountered by the Colombian Coffee industry including weather hazards and market pressures. However, Coffee production in Colombia started booming again and 12.76 million bags produced in 2023.

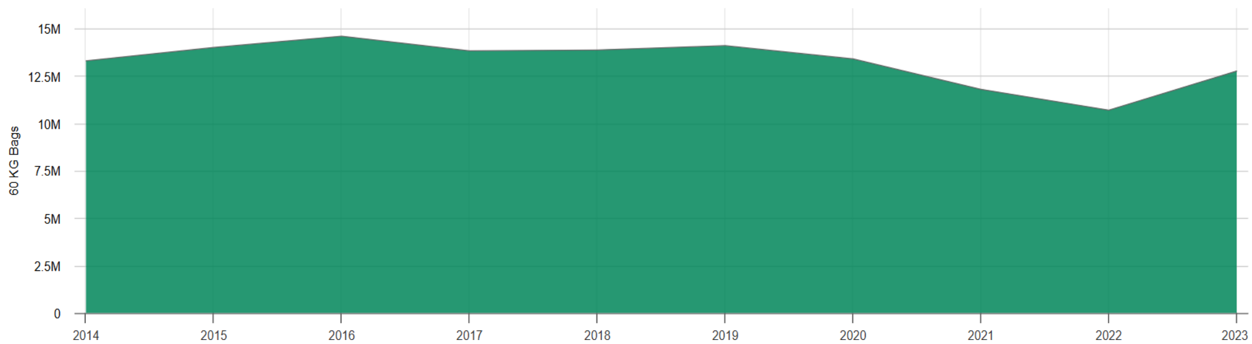

Figure 6: Colombian Coffee Production Trends 2014-2023(Source: USDA)

Geographic and Climatic Advantages

Very few coffees in the world can carry with them the title of ―the world‘s best‖ and Colombia is one of those as a producer of top-wash Arabica coffee known for its fair weather and microclimates. Various factors play a crucial role in shaping the region's ideal coffee growing conditions. The soil is enriched with centuries of volcanic ash deposits, giving coffee plants the ideal balance of minerals and organic matter to thrive. The naturally fertile soil has excellent drainage properties and high phosphorous content, which is critical for root establishment and cherry production. The consistent rainfall pattern; about 200 millimetres of rain per month, keeps the soil sufficiently wet whilst maintaining aeration. This consistent water availability is important in the sensitive flowering and fruiting stages.

Areas with elevations from 1,800 to 2,000 m above sea level, these areas have a distinctive microclimate where temperatures are mild and it is most of the time between 15–21 °C (59–70 °F)(Lara-Estrada and Vaast, 2005). These higher altitudes slow down the development of the berries and it gives beans more time to develop complex flavors. The slopes of the mountains provide natural shade, and wind protection and the thinner atmosphere prompts coffee plants to produce more protective compounds. In the end, it leads to richer flavor profiles in the cup.

Quality and Consistency

Colombia is the leading producer of washed Arabica coffee. Their commitment to maintaining exceptional standards across the vast network of coffee farms is very famous. Whether it's small family holdings or larger estates, Colombian coffee producers perform strict cultivation and harvesting techniques that ensure consistency.

The National Federation of Coffee Growers (NFCG), known in Spanish as "Federación Nacional de Cafeteros de Colombia" (FNC), is Colombia's primary coffee organization. They are known for their comprehensive approach to quality assurance of the Coffee industry in Columbia. Their multi-level strategy consists of:

- Routine inspections of farms to check compliance with cultivation standards
- Specific assessment of harvesting and post-harvest processing approaches
- A multi-tier systematic quality test at supply chain
- Professional cuppers(taster) who do extensive sensory analysis
- Moisture content and defect analysis through advanced laboratory testing
- Export cargo sampling covering physical and sensory traits

NFCG helps Colombia to maintain its premium position internationally and to offer higher prices and long-term relationships with quality buyers around the world. Their strict standards have become a model for other coffee-producing nations seeking to improve their quality control systems.

Moreover, this commitment to quality helps to classify it as an elite product standard that yields better prices on the markets. This systematic, quality management approach has been key to conserving Colombia's coffee heritage whilst securing the future of its Beans in a global market that becomes increasingly competitive.

The main coffee-producing areas in Colombia: Nariño, Norte de Santander, Antioquia, Valle del, Cauca, Huila, Tolima, Caldas, Risaralda, Quindio and Cundinamarca and the cities are Pereira, Armenia and Manizales.

Challenges of Colombian Coffee

There are several internal and external challenges for Colombian coffee. Lower productivity and increased disease susceptibility are associated with aging plantations (Salamanca, 2024). Traditional farming methods minimizes the mean efficiency, increases input costs and producers become financially strained (Salamanca, 2024). Global volatile coffee prices are making income unpredictable for farmers (Salamanca, 2024). But high quality coffee at cheaper price is emerging from competitors like Peru and Honduras and this is increasing market pressures (Salamanca, 2024). Weather variability and extreme events complicate risk and reduce the productivity of yields (Salamanca, 2024).

Furthermore, the cost of certification is very high. Fair Trade or Organic certifications makes it hard to access premium markets and trade tariffs are also a challenge (Salamanca, 2024). These are the challenges that threaten the sustainability and competitiveness of Colombian coffee industry globally.

Opportunities and Strategies

The demand for high quality beans and ethical sourcing in the specialty coffee market continues to grow(Grandview Research, 2024). The organic certifications are gaining more and more significance to meet customer demands (Grandview Research, 2024). New technologies lower the labour costs and increase productivity (Babou et al., 2024). Planting crops that complement coffee is likely to increase diversity and bring farmers more money (Babou, 2024). Online campaigns are important for global outreach as they help bring producers in touch with new audiences (Babou, 2024). A strong coffee brand synonymous with quality can help niche markets. The use of these trends and innovations will allow Colombian coffee to be positioned in a premium position in a competitive global market (Babou, 2024).

1.4 Background and Significance

The Swiss coffee market has undergone major trans-formations in recent years driven largely by growing interest in specialty coffee, sustainabliity and ethical sourcing practice As consumers become more discerning, they are also more familiar with the products they buy. Often they will seek out products conforming to their own sense of values as regards quality and responsibility to the environment (Faber et al., 2021).This sea change offers an opportunity for Colombian coffee brands, traditionally linked closely with top-notch Arabica beans and farming that doesn't harm nature. However, entering a market dominated by established brands and consumer loyalty presents considerable challenges (Möller & Schmid, 2020).

Although the Colombian coffee brands have possible advantages, they find it hard to penetrate into the Swiss market, a problem that can be linked to several barriers. Such challenges are dealing with the intricate reinforced regulatory frameworks, competing with already established product brands and communicating their offering_s unique value proposition to a more savy customer (Böhler et al., 2021). In addition, given Zurich being a hotbed of coffee innovation & culture; new entrants will have to hedge marketing strategies and build relationships with local stakeholders such as distributors and cafés.

It is important to understand these issues, not only from the perspective of Colombian producers wanting to expand their markets but also as part of ensuring a more competitive context for Swiss coffee sector. As global coffee consumption continues to rise, insights into the experiences of Colombian coffee brands in Switzerland can contribute to a broader understanding of market entry strategies in international trade contexts (Mintel, 2022).

Coffee is one of the most popular beverages in the world, all cultural, geographical and social divides aside. Food represents much more than just something to eat; it includes social rituals, cultural traditions and economic significance. Being the second most traded commodity after oil, coffee is an important factor of the economies in many producing countries and consumption behaviour in consuming countries.

Coffee consumption practices vary widely by region throughout the world. Coffee is all about socialization, lounging, and elegance in Europe. Preparation techniques and types used also vary as per local preferences along with the style of serving. As an example, filter coffee is often preferred in northern European societies; whereas southern Europeans such as Italians and Spaniards are well-known for espresso and its adaptations. Unlike many others, countries such as the United States have made coffee a portable beverage where specialty coffee drinks have become more and more popular (International Coffee Organization, 2021).

Research indicates that consumer tastes are shifting towards speciality coffee with values of quality, variety in taste and origin, and sustainable sourcing procedures (Faber et al., 2021).With customers actively seeking out unusual experiences instead than just a caffeine hit, this trend emphasises growing awareness and respect of the subtleties of coffee.

Switzerland represents a unique case within the global coffee landscape. Swiss coffee consumption is among the highest in the world, with an average per capita consumption of approximately 7.9 kg per year (CBI, 2020). This places Switzerland among the top coffee-consuming nations, reflecting deep-rooted coffee culture and consumer engagement.

Swiss consumers have shown a great love for good coffee, and this is even the case with specialty coffee. Third-wave boutique coffee shops have transformed the local coffee landscape to focus on artisanal brewing, single-origin beans, and transparent sourcing of coffee (Möller & Schmid, 2020). Indicating a cultural shift in that coffee has transformed from a mere commodity to an experience consumers are willing to pay for.

Coffee drinking forms part of daily activities and social interactions in Switzerland. The Cafés are a real community where people meet to talk, work or just relax together, so coffee makes around the Swiss culture an important component. In Switzerland, coffee is also part of the original experience together with pastries or chocolates, which really adds significance to this drink here.

History of coffee in Switzerland Coffee was introduced on the territory of Switzerland only in the 18th century Years later Swiss began to import coffee directly from Africa and South America all over Europe. These institutions promoted discussions, intellectual interaction and socialization (Driessen, 2018). It was also described as a "luxury" drink that since then has transformed from an high class beverage consumed by the riches to a daily habit performed regularly by many Swiss citizens, embedding itself deep into the heart of Swiss society (Böhler et al., 2021).

The coffee market in Switzerland has witnessed an increased arrival of international brands in the last few decades. Major global players like Nestlé, Starbucks, and Illy have established a firm presence in Switzerland, employing various strategies to build market share (Mintel, 2022) For example, Nestlé markets its single-serve coffee Nespresso brand to capture Swiss consumer preferences for convenience and quality (Kantar, 2021).

In addition, foreign brands frequently localize their products or services to match local tastes. This means highlighting sustainability efforts, as an increasing number of Swiss consumers are concerned with how their coffee is sourced as well as its environmental impact (Davis et al., 2021). Fair Trade and organic brands, for instance, are preferred over their unsustainable counterparts by this particular consumer group, indicating the relevance of ethical issues in consumer choices (Böhler et al., 2021)

Swiss consumers love good coffee (even specialty coffee). The local coffee environment has been reshaped by the emergence of third-wave boutique coffee shops, which seek to emphasize artisanal brewing methods, single-origin coffee beans, and transparency in sourcing coffee (Möller & Schmid, 2020). Pointing to a cultural change in that coffee has gone from being a commodity to an experience consumers are prepared to pay for.

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Understanding consumer segmentation is crucial for navigating the Swiss coffee market effectively. Research indicates that Swiss coffee consumers can be categorized into several segments based on their preferences, behaviours, and values. These segments include:

Quality Seekers: This segment prioritizes high-quality, specialty coffee and is willing to invest in premium products. They are often very knowledgeable about the coffee origins and preparation methods (Böhler et al., 2021).

Sustainability Advocates: This segment is motivated by environmental awareness; they prefer companies that highlight sustainable sourcing and responsible practices. They tend to select certified products (Davis et al., 2021), e.g. Fair Trade or organic coffee.

Convenience-Oriented Consumers: Due to their lifestyles, this subsector is fond of ready-to-drink coffee or "easy" brewing methods (like coffee pods or instant coffee) (Kantar, 2021).

Social Coffee Drinkers: Coffee for many Swiss consumers is a social experience. This group visits cafés and coffeehouses regularly, for the aesthetics and experience more than the coffee itself (Schmitz & Stoll, 2021).

Traditionalists: Many consumers are more comfortable with classic coffee preparations and loyal to established brands. This segment is less inclined to experiment with new coffee trends

(Faber et al., 2021). Swiss consumers have shown a great love for good coffee, and this is even the case with specialty coffee.Third-wave boutique coffee shops have transformed the local coffee landscape to focus on artisanal brewing, single-origin beans, and transparent sourcing of coffee (Möller & Schmid, 2020). Indicating a cultural shift in that coffee has transformed from a mere commodity to an experience consumers are willing to pay for.

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In addition, the rise of third-wave coffee culture has prompted international brands to invest in storytelling and transparency in their marketing efforts. By sharing the narratives behind their coffee sourcing and production processes, brands can connect with consumers on a deeper level, enhancing their perceived authenticity and value (Glozer & Brown, 2021).

Why the Importance of Branding and Positioning for International Coffee Brands in Switzerland? Scholarly research highlights how branding relies on authentic narratives (Glozer

& Brown, 2021). Brands with an ability to explain where its products come from, how they are sourced and created, will do much better a job in resonating with consumers on the emotional level.

Meanwhile, experiential marketing has become more popular as brands look to create memorable experiences with consumers. Such methods often involve pop-up events, tastings and collaborations with local artists or chefs (Ritchie & Lewis 2021), helping to bolster brand visibility and engagement. These strategies work best in key urban markets including Zurich and Geneva, where consumers are more amenable to new brands and experiences.

Digital MarketingHow International Coffee Brands Use Digital Marketing to Engage with Consumers in Swiss market Social Media Platforms — Social media platforms are an area of importance for communication about brands and along with customer interaction. Brands use social media in such a way that it creates community engagement and increases brand loyalty (Möller et al., 2020). Additionally, influencer marketing has proved to be a highly effective instrument for brands targeting youth as this demographic group values authenticity and peer-to-peer recommendations (Lentz & Wulf, 2021).

International brands are also directed towards attention, which is to e-commerce. COVID-19 pandemic, the move to online shopping increased rapidly and brands that embraced this change quickly were able to thrive (Davis et al., 2021). Adding new subscriptions or online only products can not only retain your loyal customers but woo those that enjoy the ease of home delivery.

One of the most consumed beverages globally, coffee is not only a demographic and economic pillar for many producing countries — such as Colombia. Colombia is a major coffee-producing nation, and it is cherished for its high-quality arabica beans due to its diverse ecosystem, unique climate, and pristine growing conditions. This introduction is about an overview of Colombian coffee, the problems and possibilities that Colombian coffee producers face (taking into consideration the market in Switzerland with a focus on Zurich).

Coffee in Colombia is one of the most important exports for the Colombian economy and cultural identity, along with being the third largest producer of coffee in the world following Brazil and Vietnam. Colombia: Colombia also grows exclusively Arabica coffee, and as well features unique geography that is distinguished by mountainous regions and diverse climates for coffee (FNC, 2020). Colombian coffee has gained an international reputation, frequently identified by its quality and taste attributes that express the local soil and climate conditions (López & Gutiérrez, 2018).

The FNC(Federación Nacional de Cafeteros) was essential for the support of producers in training, marketing, and sustainability initiatives applying some best practices to cultivation and post-harvest processing (FNC, 2020). Such support is crucial as thousands of smallholder farmers depend on coffee as their main source of revenue, with the industry directly impacting more than 540,000 households (Cenicafé,2021).

Even there is high global reputation still Colombian coffee producers are facing numerous challenges, including fluctuating prices, climate change, and competition from other coffee-producing countries. The coffee market is highly volatile, and smallholder farmers often lack the resources to manage risk effectively (Bacon et al., 2018). Furthermore the effects of climate change, including rising temperatures and erratic rainfall patterns, pose a risk to coffee farming and production (Zhao et al., 2019).

More than that expanding into international markets can be daunting because of certification demands, export regulations and establishing a sufficient distribution network (Meyer, 2020)

Producers also have to contend with branding and promotion issues, especially when attempting to differentiate themselves in saturated markets (Davis et al., 2019). On its part, there is a very special and interesting coffee market for Colombia in Switzerland, with the highest per capita consumption of coffee and also with preference for quality and sustainability. Also, consumers in Switzerland are increasingly demanding specialty coffee with ethical sourcing and environmental responsibility (Faber et al. 2021). The emphasis on quality coffee is a straight shot for a burgeoning specialty coffee movement, which Colombian producers should leverage their well-recognised expertise in professionalism to do.

However, getting the swiss visa is also one of the main challenges to do business in Switzerland. Traditionally high barriers to entry (Möller & Schmid, 2020) exist in the marketplace due to existing brands and historical consumer preferences and keeping up with consumer tastes and trends is something that new entrants have little way of knowing. However, Swiss consumers are highly loyal to their brands which suggest that Colombian coffee brands need to be able to demonstrate a clear differentiator (Böhler et al., 2021).

Bringing Colombian coffee to the Swiss market, and specifically to Zurich, faces barriers and gaps. Competitive analysis From Colombian producers who are required to compete against the world with expensive high-quality coffee but cannot afford the same brand loyalty as the rest of the world, The barrier to market entry against the rest of the world with a high-quality bean to drink or not can be difficult to overcome but these consumers will do so if the product offered is of quality, sustainable, and unique good coffee. Swiss could cater to the Colombian coffee brands by utilising their strengths in quality and ethical sourcing, creating a pocket in the industry through which both can survive, and adding variety to the world's coffee.

Coffee consumers, producers and sustainability matters made lot of effort to shape a whole new changing world coffee market. The world changing drastically in terms of coffee consumers, producers and sustainability. As the second most consumed beverage globally, coffee has become the centre of innovation and differentiation among producers, retailers and consumers. Switzerland, known for high-end coffee, is where these trends are especially evident. This creates a special environment for coffee brands, both national and international. The introduction will look at the global coffee market trends and their specific manifestations in the Swiss coffee market. One trend that has been especially prominent in the worldwide coffee industry is specialty coffee. According to Specialty Coffee Association (2021), the specialty coffee segment has witnessed substantial growth, with more consumers ready to pay a premium for high-quality, ethically sourced beans. This trend focuses on unique flavors through artisanal preparation and direct trade links with the producers (Fowler, 2020). As consumers become more selective, they further require unique experiences reflective of the origin and cultivation of their coffee products (Rao & Narasimhan, 2021).

Sustainability has become an important issue in the coffee value chain. A study by Luthra et al. (2020) its because these days, humans are holding a higher regard and attention towards ethically and morally sourced touchpoints and therefore positively impacts and improves the demand for certified coffee, like for example Fair Trade and Rainforest Alliance. Why this trend is happening: This behaviour corresponds to consumers increasingly becoming candles in the dark for eco-responsible consumption as mentioned by Nielsen (2020) found that 66% of consumers worldwide willing to pay more for sustainable products. According to Bacon et al. in 2018, the coffee brands that adopt sustainability-focused practices improve their market appeal and drive socio-economic stability in the coffee-growing regions.

The boom of the digital era has painfully touched coffee sector too. E-commerce websites have emerged as a popular category, enabling the consumer to access more varieties of coffee products from different origins and brands (Schoenfeld et al., 2021). Many consumers started to buy their coffee needs online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which fast-tracked this transition (KPMG, 2021). The new digital transformation led a way for brands to come up with innovative marketing strategies like social media, influencer touch points, and consumer engagement (Davis et al., 2021).

Higher Coffee Quality Purchasers Swiss consumers have long been known to appreciate a sophisticated coffee culture. This has been noticeable recently in a drive towards specialty coffee focusing on artisanal roasting methods and diverse flavour profiles (Faber et al. 2021). The trend away from traditional Swiss coffee culture and focusing on single-origin coffees and blends that highlight particular growing regions is a part of the larger global movement in bean connoisseurship (Mintel, 2022).

There is also an increased focus on sustainability and local sourcing in the Swiss coffee market. Research by Böhler et al. (2021)) indicates that consumers in Switzerland tend to have a preference for brands that are perceived to be sustainable and that care about ethical sourcing. As a result, many Swiss coffee companies are now striving to establish direct trading relationships with Colombian and other international producers in order to ensure transparency, trust and mutual respect from the supply chain (Möller & Schmid, 2020).

Another new trend is the increase of market for plant based coffee replacement (ex oatmilk, almondmilk). According to Kantar (2021) nearly half of all Swiss consumers choose to use non-diary milk for their coffee to reflect greater all over pattern changes in diet towards plant-based consumption. Besides affecting the way coffee is made, this change in coffee appreciation paved the way for cafes and coffee brands to reinvent their products to suit the taste of this market segment.

The Swiss café scene is changing, with more places trying to offer social spaces to better enjoy the drinking experience. Cafés are evolving from simple places of consumption to community hubs, where consumers meet not only for coffee but also (Schmitz & Stoll, 2021) socializing, working and participating in cultural event; This trend has led a lot of coffee brands to make an effort on the atmosphere and decorativeness of their place that contributes into customers experience.

Meanwhile abroad it is the importation and regulation of coffee that handles those dynamics in favor/against a particular country, ultimately creating a market for coffee. Switzerland is among the world leaders in coffee consumption, and high standards of quality assurance are well-maintained here, as well as in safety and sustainability. The coffee imported in Switzerland is under a complex system of regulation which aims to guarantee quality and compliance with national as well as international regulations. Importation is regulated by the Swiss Federal Office for Food Safety and Veterinary Affairs (FSVO), under food safety, labelling and hygiene regulations to ensure robust observance of such legislation (Federal Office for Food Safety and Veterinary Affairs, 2020). Lastly, existing Swiss customs tariffs for imported coffee have the potential to affect pricing and competitiveness on the market (Böhler & Stoll, 2021).

There are several barriers that international coffee growers face, when it comes to entering the Swiss market. The main problem is stiff competition from established local brands and international heavyweights like Nestlé and Starbucks. With these brands already having established market positions and loyal customer bases the entry of new players is challenging (Mintel, 2022). Moreover, the international producers can find it as a challenge due to the regulatory environment. However, getting certified in these requirements for organic and Fair-Trade labelling is often lengthy, expensive, and a barrier to market entry (Davis & Hodge 2021). In addition, international producers need to deal with logistical related complications of importation like — shipping, storage or distribution which can make it hard to purely compete.

In Switzerland, distributors serve as intermediaries between producers and retailers in the coffee supply chain. They import, store, and distribute coffee products, taking care to maintain Swiss conformity with the whole process (Ritchie & Lewis, 2021). Distributors with long standing status in the country will likely have large networks and relationships with retailers to grant international brands access to the market.

But the world of distributors is changing. Market forces shift, and other trends emerge including an increasing demand from consumers for specialty, more sustainably produced coffee leading to a desire by distributors to seek new producer partners (Möller & Schmid, 2020). As a result, producers and distributors are working more closely together than ever to bring many new brands into the mix.

The latter of which has seen a significant uptick in direct trade deals between coffee producers and their roasters or retailers within the past few years here in Switzerland. In direct trade, producers can build closer relationships with buyers, increasing prices adequate to the quality of the product and contributing to a more effective quality control process (Böhler et al. This is in contrast to conventional supply chains that include many intermediaries, which can reduce margins for producers.

Direct trade is also in line with the increased consumer expectation for transparency and traceability in the coffee supply chain. There is an increased demand in Switzerland for transparency and ethically sound coffee production methods (Schmitz & Stoll, 2021). Through direct trade international producers can improve the image of their brand and gain a unique and loyal customer they can count on that cares where he or she gets his or her products from. The online sale allows producers to reach out to consumers directly without the intervention of any third distribution venues, resulting high margins for producers (Möller & Schmid, 2020) It provides the opportunity to build brand loyalty and message consumers differently and creatively.

This chapter illustrates on global and local scale several of the nascent trends in the coffee market that are helping consumer choice as well as production practices in Switzerland. Challenges and Opportunities in the New Landscape for Coffee Producers and Retailers Specialty coffee, sustainability, digital transformation, and changing café culture are driving change in the global coffee supply chain. Identifying those trends is essential knowledge if you want to successfully navigate the complexities of today‘s coffee world.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This research is focused on understanding the unique business environment of Zurich coffee market dynamics, distribution channels and the preferences of the consumers in the region. This knowledge will benefit both Colombian coffee brands seeking entry and industry stakeholders like policymakers and researchers.

By analysing the specific challenges and opportunities faced by Colombian brands, the research develops actionable and tailored market entry strategies for success in Zurich. This will equip Colombian companies with valuable insights and practical tools for navigating the market effectively.

Moreover, this research extends beyond identifying challenges and opportunities. By providing actionable insights and tailored strategies, it aims to directly contribute to the sustainable growth and success of Colombian coffee brands in the Zurich market.

Significance of the Swiss Coffee Market

Switzerland is well known for its coffee culture and has one of top per capita coffee consumption worldwide (CBI, 2020). Switzerland, the country of rations and high taxes on consumer goods is home to a very discerning coffee drinker who has matured into a voracious appetiter for basics such as quality in terms of food quality, sustainability and ethical responsibly sourced products. Therefore, we believe the market has an upside and downside for international coffee brands. For producers in the industry, being cognizant of these dynamics becomes one of the most important facets to successfully communicate with consumers in a competitive environment.

Regulatory Framework and Compliance

The impact of the Swiss regulatory environment on the coffee industry is based on FSVO food safety and quality requirements, international producers encounter great barriers on the way to compliance (Böhler & Stoll, 2021). In this regard, this research aims to shed light on the nuances of such regulations and their significance for coffee importation. This study provides ideas of successful market entry methods into Switzerland for international Coffee producers through a new understanding of their processing program through examining the regulatory framework in place.

Challenges Faced by International Producers

International producers face so many challenges when entering the Swiss coffee market. It includes competition from established brands, logistical issues and the need of different certifications (Mintel, 2022). This study lay out these problems by offering a complete overview of the obstacles that new entrants must overcome. By identifying these challenges, the research aims to provide actionable ideas that can inform the strategies of international producers helping them to better position themselves within the market.

The Rise of Direct Trade

Direct trade is another trend that is changing the way coffee is bought and sold, which allows producer to communicate directly with consumers and retailers. This is believed to increase transparency. Also easy to get feedback and understanding consumption ideals held by many Swiss consumers (Glozer & Brown, 2021). This research examines the effects of direct trade on foreign suppliers and market structure. It will pursue this trend to show the chances that arise in order to get stronger connection between producers and consumers.

Contributions to Academic and Practical Knowledge

This research contributes to both academic and practical knowledge. It firstly contributes to a research gap around the complexities of coffee importing and sale in Switzerland. Integrating insights from regulatory frameworks, consumer behaviours and market dynamics this research delivers a nuanced resource of the Swiss coffee landscape. Second, the results will provide market entry and strategy recommendations for international coffee producers and industry stakeholders. This research is will provide producers and distributors in the Swiss Coffe-market with the data that will help them to make better decisions by highlighting how compliance, distribution, and direct trade important to them.

1.6 Research Problem

Despite Colombia's reputation for quality coffee production, Colombian coffee brands face significant challenges when entering the Swiss market, particularly in reaching the lucrative Zurich market segment. Meanwhile, the specialty coffee market in Switzerland shows strong growth. But Colombian brands failing to realize a significant market share (CBI Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022). One area where this disconnect arises is from insufficient knowledge of the unique preferences and purchasing habits of Swiss consumers, resulting in inefficient product presentation and advertising initiatives.

In particular, several knowledge gaps have been noted in the existing literature:

More specifically, existing research has highlighted several gaps in knowledge:

1. Unfamiliarity with Local Market Dynamics: Colombian coffee producers having lack of knowledge of unique characteristics, preferences and current trends in Switzerland and its coffee market (Demont & Dessemontet,2017). This lack of understanding limit their ability to tailor their products and marketing strategies to attract Swiss consumers.

2. High Import Costs and Trade Barriers: Entering the Swiss market has additional challenges for example: high import costs, trade barriers, and regulatory requirements (Statista, 2023). Without a clear understanding of these complexities, Colombian brands struggle to develop cost-effective and feasible entry strategies that ensure profitability (CBI Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022).

3. Competition from Established Brands: Though the Swiss retail coffee market is dominated by incumbent Italian and French brands (Demont & Dessemontet, 2017), there is insufficient consumer research distinguishing brand attributes and positioning strategies preferred by Swiss consumers.

4. Limited Knowledge of Successful Market Entry Strategies: Despite growing interest in entering Switzerland, research on optimal product, pricing, and partnership strategies

from the perspective of Swiss consumer preferences remains scarce (Hofinger et al., 2019).

Considering these knowledge gaps, the following research questions need to be addressed:

1. What are the most popular coffee chains in Zurich and what brand attributes and values resonate most with Swiss consumers?

2. How price sensitive are Zurich coffee drinkers across value-added attributes like organic certification, fair trade, specialty roasts, and customization?

3. What specific product mix, pricing model, and positioning strategy represents the optimal new entrant approach for a Colombian coffee brand in Zurich?

4. Can connections with local partners such as Swiss coffee houses, community events, or sustainability initiatives help drive adoption of a new Colombian specialty coffee offering in Zurich?

This research can answer above questions with a survey of Zurich coffee consumers, and would help Colombian coffee brand to develop strategy for market entry and positioning their Coffee brand. These consumer insights would help to understand Swiss consumer preferences and also in having an upper edge over the existing brands in the midst.

1.7 Purpose of Research

This research aims to deliver the framework for new Colombian coffee brands to successfully enter into the Swiss Coffee market. Particularly within the Zürich region. This includes understanding the competition landscape, consumer preferences and behaviours, best positioning; product mix; pricing and communicating plans.

The primary aim of the present study is to profile the Zurich coffee consumer and market landscape as a basis to discuss a market entry strategy for a new Colombian coffee brand. In particular, this study aims:

1. To understand the most popular coffee chains in Zurich and what brand attributes and values fits most with Swiss consumers
2. To understand how price sensitive Zurich coffee drinkers are across value-added attributes like organic certification, fair trade, specialty roasts, and customization
3. To understand what specific product mix, pricing model, and positioning strategy represents the optimal new entrant approach for a Colombian coffee brand in Zurich
4. To explore if connections with local partners such as Swiss coffee houses, community events, or sustainability initiatives help drive adoption of a new Colombian specialty coffee offering in Zurich

Along with the above objectives, the study also aims:

1. To map and analyse the competitive landscape of major coffee chains and brands operating in Zurich.
2. To identify consumer segments within the Zurich coffee market differentiated by behaviours, preferences, and price sensitivity.
3. To recommend a go-to-market strategy leveraging local partnerships, community events, and marketing channels reflective of Swiss consumer priorities.

The findings of this research will provide a clear avenue for a new Colombian coffee brands to launch products adapted to Zurich preferences, gain market compatibility, and encourage successful acceptance with knowledge of profitability. This will allow Colombian specialty coffee producers to seize opportunities of the growing Swiss market. The results of this research will shed light on important elements Colombian coffee producers should consider if they want to enter and sell well in Switzerland. Also, it will add to the academic literature on international marketing and trade in developing countries penetrating established markets. The present study will seem to focus on the Zurich market and will indeed extend the understanding of local consumer behaviour and industry practices, thus enhancing the understanding of market entry challenges in Switzerland.

1.8 Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into several chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 reviews the existing literature on various topics associated with the research title and objectives including but not limited to coffee market dynamics, consumer behaviours, and market entry strategies. Chapter 3 will outline the research methodology employed in this study, which includes data collection methods and analytical approaches. Chapter 4presents the results and findings and Chapter 5 will present the discussion on the findings from interviews with Colombian coffee producers and Swiss industry experts, respectively. Finally, Chapter 6 draws these conclusions from the findings of this research, provides practical suggestions, and discusses ideas for future research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

For decades, coffee has maintained its status as a global icon. In 1824, Thomas Jefferson famously hailed it as "the favourite beverage of the civilized world," a sentiment that still resonates today, given coffee's enduring popularity worldwide.

For centuries; the global coffee industry which borders on a rich tapestry of vast aroma and flavors has been woven into the pattern of global culture (Ponte, 2002). Coffee is much more than cultural significance, it acts as a global economic staple that represents comfort, social interaction and entrepreneurship. Over the recent years, many transformative changes have occurred in the coffee industry, especially with the increasing demand on specialty and artisanal coffee products (Chen,2022).

The immediate expansion of business into new markets, though, brings with it its own set of difficulties, a quagmire of complications and ambiguity (Amin and Rezaei, 2017). Switzerland, with an experienced coffee scene, is an interesting and potentially lucrative target market for Colombian coffee brands (SCTA, 2022). The Swiss coffee market is attractive to Colombian coffee producers as it contains a diversified consumer base as well as a tendency of consumers to prefer high-quality coffees (Swiss Federal Office for Agriculture, 2022). But entering the Swiss market, especially Zurich, comes with its own unique challenges. Abstract This literature review has explored the complex landscape of Colombian coffee brand market entry in Switzerland and it has opened up a number of discussions about how intricacies and nuances accompany this process. It seeks to know how the Zurich market works, what are the consumer patterns of its selective consumption and what are the challenges and opportunities that Colombian coffee brands can have there.

This literature review explores the challenges Colombian coffee brands face when entering the Swiss market, specifically in Zurich. It aims to understand the unique aspects of the Zurich market, uncover consumer preferences, and identify both obstacles and opportunities for Colombian coffee brands.

In the subsequent sections, we will navigate through an extensive array of research studies and academic insights, traversing the terrain of coffee consumption habits, market dynamics, and successful market entry strategies. To enhance the comprehensiveness of this literature review, we will undertake a systematic approach, reviewing at least 30-40 research papers. Additionally, we will incorporate seminal research work related to entry and competitive strategies by Michael Porter to provide a more robust theoretical foundation.

2.2 Coffee Consumption Trends and Habits

According to the International Coffee Organization (2020) we consume nearly a trillion cups of coffee each year globally. Davis et al. note that coffee consumption has a long cultural history and is still an important aspect of global culture. (2019) and Mussatto et al. (2011). Researchers can agree that coffee is deeply embedded in cultures across the globe. Consumption trends seem to be changing, with an increasing popularity of specialty and artisanal coffees (Rieder et al., 2014; Morales & Thomé, 2019).

Research by Tudisca et al. The 2015 Messina, Italy show also shows how consumer preferences are moving to quality, provenance and origin. Traceability and Italian sourcing come at a premium, and consumers are willing to pay for it. Although instant coffee is also a common medium for coffee consumption, in recent years coffee capsules and pods have been on the rise.

Such evolving tastes raise questions for Colombian coffee brands about how best to position themselves amid growing demand for distinct and specialty coffees in markets such as Switzerland. It requires careful navigation to meet changing preferences while giving consumers a sense of their cultural identity and heritage. Their success might hinge on promoting superior quality and flavor profiles relative to mass-market coffee. Gourmet capsules, however, might open a window of opportunity.

The success of the coffee market is strongly driven by unique Swiss consumer preferences. A study by Faber et al. SCA (2021) — Specialty Coffee Sector GrowsMore with Consumers Less Focused on Quantity and More Qualitative Principles: SCA Workplace Trends Report We see this transformation with the popularity of third-wave coffee shops that emphasize artisanal approaches and high end beans. Consumer behaviours have changed drastically, considering that 60% of all coffee consumed in Switzerland is already a specialty class (Swiss Coffee Association, 2022). On top of that, consumers can also put sustainability in the key to consumer decision-making. According to a survey conducted by Nielsen (2020), 66% of global consumers say they are willing to pay more for sustainable brands, a trend we also see reflected in Switzerland. In Switzerland, consumers are notably focused on ethical sourcing and environmental impact, thus putting pressure on brands to embrace open supply chain practices (Böhler et al., 2021).

Sustainability has become a decisive concern on the Swiss coffee market. Sourcing and environmental sustainability have become a top priority for consumers and industry alike. According to a report by the International Coffee Organization (2021), a large number of Swiss consumers would specifically look for Fair Trade and Rainforest Alliance certifications when buying coffee.It has been shown through studies that brands that focus on sustainability not only enhance their attractiveness in the marketplace but they are also gain a competitive advantage. According to research by Mintel (2022), more than fifty percent of Coffee consumers in Switzerland are willing to pay more for brands that actively engage with sustainable or environmentally friendly practices.

The Swiss coffee market is booming and the competition is very tight. While established brands continue to crush it, the surge of new entrants especially artisanal and specialty coffee roasters has intensified competition. The rise of cold brew and nitro coffee has been an important innovation in product offerings (Möller & Schmid, 2020). More into this, the local roasters collaborate with cafes and create business tactic to improve brand awareness and marketing techniques.

According to the research conducted by Schmitz and Stoll (2021), the collaboration between local roasters and cafes helps startups to take advantages of pre-established customers and gives them unique experiences with new coffee brand. This trend is important for the significance of engaging with the local community in developing brand loyalty in the Swiss marketplace.

It indicates the Swiss coffee market is changing rapidly, driven by evolving consumer behaviour, a diversity of players in the market, and an increasing emphasis on sustainability. There are issues with brand loyalty and competition for new entrants but there are opportunities with quality, ethical sourcing and new routes to market. Strategies behind these dynamics must be understood by Colombian coffee producers and new entrants trying to break into this complex and inter-dependent market.

2.3 Attractiveness of Swiss Market

Switzerland Switzerland's high-quality coffee culture is well known as well as its well-established market that presents unique opportunities and challenges for coffee producers globally. This literature review studies the attractiveness and opportunities of the Swiss coffee market. This study particularly from the point of view of producers, focusing on consumer preferences, market dynamics, and who needs to know the impact of sustainability and quality. According to the 2018 Global Competitive Index published by World Economic Forum, Switzerland is the 4th most competitive economy in the world (WEF,2018).

The coffee market strength of Switzerland can be concluded in the following points (gov.uk, 2016):

- low Value Added Tax (VAT)
- excellent public infrastructure
- one of the highest purchasing powers in the world
- central location and key transit country within Europe
- financial and political stability
- reliable business, legal and regulatory environment
- skilled workforce
- high productivity
- high level of innovation through large research and development and technology investments.

Startup Overseas gives a very colourful promotion of Switzerland as business destination. The Swiss market is an attractive business destination by offering free trade with EU, low taxes on imports, especially for some agricultural sectors (Schönenberger, 2008). Switzerland is one of the largest importers of Food and Drinks (per capita) with a growing popularity of organic products (Schönenberger, 2008).

The Swiss coffee market is one of the most lucrative in Europe, characterized by a high per capita consumption rate and a strong preference for quality. According to the CBI (2020), Swiss consumers consume approximately 7.9 kg of coffee per person annually, which is significantly higher than the global average. This robust demand creates a favorable environment for coffee producers looking to enter or expand within the market. Furthermore, the market has shown consistent growth, driven by a rising interest in specialty coffee and diverse brewing methods (Mintel, 2022).

Two Swiss cities Zurich and Geneva are among the most popular financial centres of the world. Despite poor local raw material supply, the Swiss market remains a popular trade platform for international businesses (Switzerland Global Enterprise, 2016).

Switzerland has a relatively small population of 8.7 million (Federal static office Switzerland, 2021) yet represents a highly diversified market with 4 national languages and a varied cultural tapestry composed of Swiss people and foreign residents. English and Spanish are the two most spoken non-national languages. This creates a strong motivation for foreign businesses to enter the Swiss market.

2.4 The Swiss Coffee Market Dynamics

Recent research has provided updated insights into Swiss consumer preferences and the competitive landscape. Studies show that sustainability certification from organizations like Fairtrade and Rainforest Alliance have grown in importance for Swiss consumers in the last 5 years (Dupont-Willemin, 2020). There is also rising demand for single-origin coffees that can directly trace place of origin (DataM Intelligence, 2022). While Italian and French roast profiles still account for significant market share, studies point to growth potential for specialty coffees from Colombia and other origins that Swiss consumers perceive as high-quality (CBI Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022).

The Swiss coffee market generated significant revenues of US$661.6 million in 2024 from retail channels such as supermarkets and convenience stores (Statista, 2023).

However, capturing shelf space from dominant brands in major Swiss supermarkets like Coop and Migros poses ongoing challenges. Research recommends that emerging brands invest in product sampling through local coffee shops and events to build brand awareness before attempting to access mass retail channels (Jacob, 2014).

In global comparison, Switzerland's retail coffee market revenue is dwarfed by that of the United States, which stands at US$11 billion in 2024. Looking at average spend per capita, the typical Swiss consumer spends US$74.74 per year on store-bought coffee as of 2024.

In terms of volume, the Swiss retail coffee market is expected to reach 36.1 million kilograms by 2028, up slightly from 34.5 million kg in 2024. On a per capita basis, the average Swiss consumes approximately 4.03kg of store-bought coffee per year (Statista, 2023).

Switzerland is a highly heterogeneous coffee market with diverse regional preferences. In Italian-speaking Ticino, the espresso rules, while café crème is preferred in the French-speaking regions. In urban centres such as Zurich, specialty coffees are increasingly becoming part of the coffee culture with over 200 coffee houses and micro-roasteries (Panhuysen & Pierrot, 2018). Younger consumers in particular value sustainable sourcing and production Fairtrade certification has increased but is expensive and therefore prohibitive for smallholder farmers (Karangwa, 2010). Like any other product, roasters use their relationships with growers to differentiate their products to make sure that consumers are able to connect back to origins (Caprioli, 2019).

However, the Swiss specialty coffee market is growing, so competition is rising as well. Ave Coffees: ―Coffee chains are adopting fast technologies such as mobile ordering, delivery and contactless payment, to boost speed and convenience (Fassio, 2019). Independent coffee houses struggle to keep up. How they adapt to these shifts towards digital yet, remain true to their artisanship and relationship with customers is crucial in this changing environment. Giant players, like Nestlé, have cornered most of the shelf space, but small brands with sustainable, traceable coffees that appeal to Swiss consumer values can still find opportunity within the category.

The Swiss coffee business consists of both large multinationals and small local roasters. Based in Switzerland, the Swiss Coffee Association (2022) states that the market in Switzerland is fragmented, with more than 1,200 registered coffee roasters in the country. This crowd means a very diverse tapestry of products and offerings targeted at everything from mass-market consumers to niche-artisan.

Möller and Schmid (2020) highlight how both co-branding and brand loyalty are particularly stressful in the Swiss market. Significantly, a stable brand loyal consumer base based on quality and heritage is common for iconic brands. Such loyalty leads to challenges for new entrants, challenged by established preferences. Consumer sensitivity to price varies significantly across segments, with wealthier consumers more inclined to pay a premium for specialty and ethically sourced coffee, while price-sensitive customers gravitate to more affordable options (Faber et al., 2021).

2.5 Challenges Faced by Colombian Coffee Producers

Nearly a trillion cups of coffee are consumed annually worldwide (International Coffee Organization, 2020). While global coffee consumption figures have steadily increased over the years, the coffee industry is today facing serious challenges, affecting its key stakeholders: the farmers and producers at the start of the supply chain. Many of these men and women have experienced a drop in their standards of living, being in unstable financial circumstances (Fairtrade Foundation, 2020).

To understand the issues of market entry in Switzerland, this literature review explored the available literature, and aimed to gather insights in regards to the Swiss coffee market, the current challenges Colombian coffee producers face when entering the Swiss coffee market and strategies that are currently in place from the successful market entrants.

Many studies were conducted on market dynamics, consumer choices and value propositions from producers and retailers in the Swiss coffee market. Previous research shows Italian brands are the most commonly purchased coffee brands by Swiss consumers, followed by French brands, and specialty coffees and premium instant coffees are also gaining in popularity in recent years (Demont & Dessemontet, 2017).

Nowadays people are also ready to pay higher prices for specialty coffees (Rieder et al., 2014). Organic and Fairtrade certified coffees are highly preferred in the Swiss market (Loos et al., 2011). In addition to the existing research related to the Swiss coffee market, there is also a growing body of research on the challenges faced by Colombian coffee producers entering the Swiss market. These challenges include an unfamiliarity with the Swiss market, the high cost of importing coffee into Switzerland, the need for strong relationships with distributors and retailers. Moreover, the Swiss market is very competitive with established brands, the new entrants must differentiate their product from the competition in order to retain the market share, according (Tauber et al., 2018).

2.6 Strategies for Successful Market Entry

Research has proved that successful coffee producers have already focused on developing good relationships with their customers and marketing their products in a way that impress Swiss consumers. They are also offering premium quality coffees at competitive prices (Hofinger et al., 2019). Hence the importance of establishing their products in the Swiss market through a local partner, and engaging and investing in the local community by local events or promotions are already proven (Richemont, 2023).

2.7 The Role of Localization

Localization is an important part of market entry (Peters et al.,2016). Whether it‘s by attending events, forming partnerships, or investing in the community, those strategies are par for the course. But the controversial part is how to balance local tastes with the Colombian coffee taste. How far can you adapt before it dilutes the essence of the brand?

On that note, we venture to explore how these themes play out in the reality of Colombian coffee brands trying to come to market in Switzerland. Not all facets have found agreement, however, and areas of contention and disagreement represent a rich landscape for further inquiry and strategy development. These pillars will guide our journey into Colombian coffee in Switzerland.

2.8 Michael Porter's Competitive Strategies in Coffee Market Entry

To provide a more robust theoretical foundation, it is essential to integrate Michael Porter's seminal work on competitive strategies into the context of Colombian coffee brands entering the Swiss market. Porter's three generic strategies—Cost Leadership, Differentiation, and Focus—offer valuable insights for crafting a competitive advantage in the coffee industry (Porter, 1980).

2.8.1 Cost Leadership

The essence of the Generic Strategy of Cost Leadership is that you are the lowest cost producer in the industry. Applying this strategy to Colombian coffee brands entering the Swiss market would demand a detailed emphasis on economies of scale, production efficiency, and cost management. Cutting production costs might allow those brands do offer competitive pricing in a market where savvy consumers value value.

Workman (2007) stated that the competitive roasted neighborhood gourmet coffee beans were another factor that increased the coffee prices in Switzerland. This creates a pricing issue for Colombian brands that want to be competitive in the market. Cautious pricing and partnership strategies might cushion some of these costs and compete with premium Swiss and European coffees.

2.8.2 Differentiation

This strategy involves providing competitive advantage via its unique and differentiated (not just products, but what products are good for what person and how are we satisfying the needs). For Colombian coffee packaging and labeling specifically, this could mean highlighting the unique flavors and high-quality beans that make Colombian coffee different. If you intend to follow a differentiation strategy in the Swiss market, the three crucial elements are innovation, branding, and effective marketing.

2.8.3 Focus

Focus, also known as the Niche strategy, involves concentrating on a specific market segment. Colombian coffee brands could identify niche markets within the Swiss consumer base that align with their unique offerings. Whether it's targeting a specific demographic, emphasizing sustainability, or catering to particular taste preferences, focusing on a niche can provide a competitive edge.

2.9 Colombian coffee, it's culture and presence in the Swiss market

Colombian coffee is renowned throughout the world for its quality, identifying flavour profiles, and cultural richness around the process of growing it. Various challenges and opportunities have emerged in an evolving global market for the Colombian coffee industry, which is predominantly composed of smallholder farmers. The purpose of this literature review is to provide background on the historical and economical importance of Colombian coffee, the forces at play affecting Colombian coffee producers, and the unique setting of Colombian coffee as it exists in the Swiss market. Colombian coffee especially its Arabica is known for its rich flavor, medium body and bright acidity. This unique characteristic is credited to Colombia‘s varied microclimates, altitude and fertile volcanic soil (FNC, 2020). The Colombian Coffee Growers Federation (FNC) is a key actor in promoting these qualities of coffee as a cultural and economic good that is part of the Colombian ethos and often considered a national icon (López & Gutiérrez, 2018). Research by Bunn et al. (2016) mentions Colombian coffee producers using traditional farming methods and modern agricultural practices to improve coffee quality. In specific areas like Antioquia and Caldas, the altitude influences and harmonizes flavor differentials that also make Colombian coffee stand apart on the international market (Orozco & Rodríguez, 2019).

Despite the appealing market potential, as they enter the Swiss market, Colombian coffee brands encounter considerable hurdles.

Market entry for new brands could be tough due to competitive environment and customer loyalty of established brands(Möller & Schmid, 2020). On the other hand, Swiss consumers are loyal to traditional brands making it important to show the unique selling propositions by Colombian producers (Cenicafé, 2021).

This literature illustrates the challenges and opportunities in the Colombian coffee sector. It is mainly among the smallholder producers and who are looking for market entry into Switzerland. Colombian coffee is well known for its quality and sustainability, which go hand in hand with the growing preferences of Swiss consumers for specialty coffee. Colombian coffee producers can increase their presence through clear engagement with the competitive environment and strategic partnerships in terms of visibility and market, in Switzerland, thus serving broader objectives of economic significance and cultural exchange.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Although Colombian coffee is renowned worldwide, its entry into the Swiss market has been challenging. Despite need for speciality coffee, Colombian producers have had difficulty in placing foothold. Therefore, it is important to understand the specific challenges faced by coffee producers. A lack of local market insights regarding consumer preferences, competitive forces, optimal positioning strategies and localized tactics represents a key barrier to successful entry (World Coffee Portal, 2024). The Swiss coffee landscape is highly flooded with already established European brands that have cultivated strong customer loyalties over decades (Demont & Dessemontet, 2017). Shaping out a distinguished place and connecting with local tastes presents as a demanding task for new entrants in the coffee market.

The research problem centres around the misalignment and lack of knowledge that exists between:

1. The product/brand offering Colombian producers seek to bring to the Swiss market
2. The specific preferences, behaviours and decision criteria of Swiss urban coffee consumers.
3. The competitive landscape and strategic context they must navigate as new entrants

Based on the above research problem, the main objectives of this research were to:

1. To understand what the most popular coffee chains in Zurich are and what brand attributes and values resonate most with Swiss consumers

2. To understand how price sensitive Zurich coffee drinkers are across value-added attributes like organic certification, fair trade, specialty roasts, and customization
3. To understand what specific product mix, pricing model, and positioning strategy represents the optimal new entrant approach for a Colombian coffee brand in Zurich
4. To explore if connections with local partners such as Swiss coffee houses, community events, or sustainability initiatives help drive adoption of a new Colombian specialty coffee offering in Zurich

This chapter, therefore, highlights the methodology, design and procedures used to explore the challenges faced in the entry of a new Colombian coffee brand in the Zurich Market. Having a strong methodology forms the basis of a good research and the overall aim of the study determines what design a researcher wants to employ. Through this the researcher can ensure that the study is of good quality and can be used effectively in policies and processes (Kalu and Bwalya, 2017).

3.2 Research Design

This research fills the knowledge gap between the specific preferences of Zurich coffee consumers and the challenges faced by Colombian coffee brands in entering to the Zurich market. The results of this study enables the successful introduction of Colombian coffee brands into the Swiss market, specifically the urban center of Zurich. It is important to have an appropriate research design that will effectively answer the research questions (Kalu and Bwalya, 2017). This study uses a qualitative research design to achieve the research objectives and answer the research questions. The qualitative design allows the researcher to explore perspectives and challenges more effectively than the quantitative design in the context of this study. A qualitative design is more suitable than a quantitative design in this particular situation, as it enables the researcher to elicit perspectives and challenges. Qualitative design is, by nature, exploratory, yielding rich insights about real-life issues. This aids in exploring the experiences, perceptions and attitudes of participants which adds in the usefulness with a wealth of data. This qualitative design also allows for open-ended questions which will answer the ‗how' or ‗why' of a context and allow the participants to be more active in the research process. Data reveals patterns in perceptions that allow for robust data (Tenny, Brannan and Brannan 2017). Challenges faced by coffee producers are from their experiencess and it is not possible to understand by quantifying the experiences. Therefore, a qualitative design is strongly suited in exploring these experiences and situations. Another benefit of this is it further lays out the current culture and understandings already in the coffee market in Zurich, which shows why Colombian coffee has a hard time entering the market (Kalu and Bwalya, 2017).

The research will have an inductive, qualitative exploration aimed at developing a contextual understanding and generating insights. Research has also shown the effectiveness of qualitative studies in business and management (Myers, 2019). This will therefore involve:

- Semi-structured interviews with Colombian coffee producers to document their experiences, challenges, and perspectives on entering the Swiss market.
- Semi-structured interviews with Swiss coffee industry experts and stakeholders to map the competitive landscape and category dynamics.

Therefore, with these advantages, for this study, qualitative design is a strong fit. Previous studies have also used qualitative design in understanding customer experiences in the coffee world and identified complex patterns in the attitudes about the coffee market (Luca, Pegan and Vianelli, 2020). Therefore, it validates the use of a qualitative design in this study.

Although qualitative design offers flexibility, context, personal insights, and in-depth understanding, they also come with limitations:

One of the primary criticisms of qualitative research is its inherent subjectivity. Researchers' biases and perspectives can influence data collection and analysis, potentially affecting the study's credibility (Finlay, 2012). To mitigate this, researchers must practice reflexivity and transparency throughout the research process (Pillow, 2003).

Generalizability: Qualitative findings have been criticized for poor generalizability because of small sample sizes and non-random sampling techniques. Even qualitative research uses in-depth, complex, and rich data, the results of these studies are not easily generalizable to larger populations (Thorne et al., 2004). Sometimes the researcher should explain the context of findings to avoid generalizations.

Time-Intensive: The data collection and analysis for qualitative research can be more time-consuming. The overall process of coding and data interpretation inqualitative research often requires more time consuming (Kuckartz, 2014). So it requires Proper planning and allocation of resources to minimize this challenge.

To minimize the risks associated with qualitative design, the researcher took the following steps:

Sampling Strategies: Purposeful sampling is a common technique use in qualitative research. This method allows researchers to choose the participants who can provide rich and relevant information (Palinkas et al., 2015). Therefore, for this research Purposeful sampling technique was implemented.

Data Collection Methods: The data collection methods in qualitative research are interviews, case studies, focus groups, and observations. The choice should depend on the specific goals of the study (Kvale, 2007). The interview method used for this research because it gives deep information.

Data Analysis Techniques: Analysing qualitative data requires rigorous coding and thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasize the importance of using systematic approaches to ensure that the analysis is thorough and reliable. All the steps suggested by Braun and Clarke were followed in the thematic analysis process to ensure robust data.

3.3 Population and Sample

This study was done on ten participants which included:

- Five Colombian coffee brand representatives with experience in the Swiss market
- Five industry experts that included Swiss coffee shop owners and managers and Swiss coffee consumers, particularly those interested in specialty coffee

Due to the exploratory nature of this study, the sample size is relatively small for the study. The researcher used a non-probability design using purposive sampling technique and identified ten stakeholders in the coffee industry. When conducting qualitative studies, the non-probability techniques used in quantitative studies are seldom appropriate. Therefore, probability sampling technique is used (Marshall, 1996). The synthesis of research is based on informed decision-making about the sampling design. Using purposeful sampling designs to answer the research questions is pertinent in finding multiple perspectives and interpretations that help answer the research question effectively (Suri, 2011).

Five of the stakeholders identified are industry experts within the coffee industry and five of them are coffee producers. These participants were chosen through industry listing, trade membership lists, and coffee export databases. They will be chosen firstly based on having direct experience in attempting to enter the Zurich market, representation of company sizes within Colombia, and the willingness to participate in a 45–60-minute interview. Industry experts included café owners, retailers and distributors, etc.

The qualitative samples are in line with accepted practices for exploratory interviews and focus groups which prioritize information richness over statistical representativeness. There is evidence to show that the sample size for a qualitative study is based entirely on the nature of the study and objectives of the study, the specificity of the sample, and analysis strategy (Malterud, Siersma and Guassora, 2016). Therefore, this makes sampling for qualitative studies more subjective (Marshall et al., 2013). The existing concept of identifying a sample for qualitative studies is based on Saturation which is tied to a specific methodology (Malterud, Siersma and Guassora, 2016). Moreover, there is very little literature on justification of sample sizes in qualitative studies in comparison to quantitative studies (Boddy, 2016).

The sample was identified using Purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, offers several advantages within this research context. It allowed the researcher to select participants based on the needs for the study within a targeted population. These participants have experience and knowledge within the coffee industry to provide diverse perspectives. Therefore, criterion sampling was employed. This comes with the disadvantage of the sample not representing the entire population, but only for the purpose of the researcher‘s study. The results are also only generalised to the sub-population used within the study (Andrade, 2021). Therefore, a further quantitative study is suggested in the future for results to be generalised to a larger population. Nevertheless, by judiciously defining the sampling selection criteria, the researcher can take pains to ensure that the sample that were selected are relevant to the aims of the research to provide sound findings. Research methods would particularly benefit from the establishment of best practices for exploratory qualitative research. Guidelines for doing design, data collection, and analysis can improve the credibility and reliability of qualitative studies (Hesse-Biber, 2010).

Future studies are required to develop protocols that can assist researchers when conducting qualitative exploratory studies. This may lead towards mixed-method design but in Future the exploration of qualitative designs in addition to quantitative methods can be explored in this research. Such integration can provide wider perspectives on research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Qualitative exploratory research enables data collection and analysis. On online interview platform, qualitative data analysis software improves efficiency, access to diverse groups of participants (Bazeley, 2018).

3.3.1 Participant Selection

Selection of participants in qualitative studies is even more contextual and depends on the nature of the study(Boddy, 2016).

The selection of those suitable participant groups were included with the following criteria:

Colombian Coffee Producers

Potential participants will be identified through industry listings, trade association membership rosters, and Colombian coffee export databases. Criteria for selection will include:

- Direct experience attempting to enter the Swiss coffee market within the last 5 years
- Representation of different company sizes and coffee origins within Colombia
- Willingness to participate in a 45–60-minute interview

Swiss Industry Experts

Cafe owners, roasters, distributors and other coffee experts operating in the Swiss market will be recruited through a combination of:

- Outreach to regional food/beverage associations and industry groups
- Referrals and snowball sampling starting from initial contacts
- Direct outreach to prominent industry entities identified through market reports
- Criteria will include actively working in a coffee-related role in Switzerland with knowledge of market dynamics, consumer trends and the competitive environment.

To qualify, participants must be residents of the Canton of Zurich and self-report consuming coffee from cafes/shops at least once per week on average. In addition, demographic quotas will be enforced to reach balanced representation across criteria like:

- Age: 18-30, 31-50, 51+
- Gender
- Income levels
- Household status (single, married, children at home, etc.)

This participant recruitment approach aims to access a broad representative sample of the target Zurich coffee consumer population. Screening criteria will ensure primary coffee consumption patterns.

3.4 Data Collection and Instrumentation

3.4.1 Data Collection Method and Procedure

After choosing the sample, the researcher used an in-depth semi-structured interview to collect data. It combines the elements of a structured interview and unstructured interview but provides more flexibility in data collection. Using this type of interview offers the opportunity to explore specific topics, but also aids in spontaneous exploration through asking more probing questions based on the participants' responses (Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik, 2021).

In-Depth Semi-structured Interviews

The qualitative data collection commenced with in-depth interviews with two distinct groups of participants - Colombian coffee producers and Swiss coffee industry experts. These interviews were conducted virtually using secure video conferencing software like Zoom or Microsoft Teams. The virtual format allows for convenient scheduling across geographies (Sah, Singh and Sah, 2020). Engaging in virtual interviews requires the number of methodological challenges that could also come along with it (Roberts, Pavlakis and Richards, 2021). Therefore, the researcher ensured there were enough measures put in place to mitigate any risks associated with virtual interviews.

For the producer interviews, a sample of five participants were recruited through a purposive sampling approach. Criteria will include Colombian coffee exporters who have direct experience attempting to enter the Swiss market within the past 5 years. The interviews will represent a range of company sizes, coffee origins within Colombia, and extent of market entry progress. Each interview will be scheduled at a mutually convenient time and is expected to last approximately 45-60 minutes.

For the expert interviews, a separate sample of five participants operating within the Swiss coffee industry were recruited. This may include cafe owners, roasters, distributors, trade association representatives, market analysts and other stakeholders with in-depth knowledge of the local market dynamics. Potential participants will be identified through professional networks, industry groups, and referral sampling starting from initial contacts. Each expert interview will run approximately 30-45 minutes.

All interviews from both groups involved taking detailed field notes during the interviews to capture ancillary observations and contextual information not represented in the recordings.

Notes are important in qualitative studies to ensure there is enough sufficient contextual information (Phillippi and Lauderdale, 2018). Effective note taking during the interview process will allow the researcher to have a clear vision of their methodological design and expected outcomes of the study (Mulhall, 2003).

Semi-structured interviews are a popular method for collecting qualitative data, and they come with both strengths and weaknesses. Semi-structured interviews provide a framework of predetermined questions while allowing interviewers to explore topics in depth. This adaptability can lead to richer, more nuanced data. They encourage participants to elaborate on their thoughts and experiences, providing insights that might not emerge in more structured formats. The conversational nature can help build rapport, making participants feel more comfortable sharing sensitive or complex information.

It enables researchers to choose the targeted area where the research focuses. while also inviting for some discovery of unanticipated themes, delivering broad insights. The findings of semi-structured interviews prioritized the perceptions of the participants. It often results in findings rooted in the participants` experiences.

However, interviews have the following disadvantages in addition to their advantages:

Interviewer Bias: The presence and behaviors of the interviewer can influence their responses.

Interviewers may unintentionally bias the path of participants or the path of interpretation on responses may get biased by them.

Data Variability: The open-ended nature means that not all interviews will yield comparable data, which can complicate analysis and interpretation.

Time-Consuming: Conducting, transcribing, and analysing semi-structured interviews can be labour-intensive, requiring significant resources.

Skill Dependency: The quality of the data is heavily reliant on the interviewer's skills in questioning, probing, and listening. Inexperienced interviewers may miss critical insights or fail to engage participants effectively.

Participant Limitations: Some participants may struggle with articulating their thoughts or may provide socially desirable answers, impacting the authenticity of the data.

3.4.2 Instrumentation

The interviews followed an interview guide and protocol. The researcher prepared a list of questions or topics to be asked to the participants; however, the researcher did not restrict to those questions and explored further if there was an opportunity to probe (Magaldi and Berler, 2020). The researcher had two different interview guides for the two different participant demographic (Appendix -). Each of the guides had ten questions which the researcher used to explore the research question. The key topics intended to explore within the interviews included but not restricted to import process and challenges faced, local distribution channels, pricing, market preferences. Each interview lasted between 45 minutes to 60 minutes which is considered effective for a qualitative study (Adams, 2015). The researcher also asked follow-up questions or probing questions based on the answers of the participants and if there was a need to explore further. Overall, semi-structured interview is best suited for this study because it offers a balance between structure and flexibility and explores the research question more in-depth which adds to the information acquired in the process.

The use of self-developed instrumentation in semi-structured interviews for qualitative studies involves crafting your own interview guides or question sets. This approach has several advantages and disadvantages:

Researchers using self-developed instruments create questions more closely aligned with their particular research questions and the study context. Such a method can produce more relevant and nuanced data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This inherent flexibility associated with semi-structured interviews will be maximized through the use of self-developed instruments. Unlike other qualitative methods, the interview methodology allows researchers to shift questions in the midst of conducting the interview based on the participant response, thus giving rise to exploration of salient emergent themes (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Custom questions can feel more human to participants and open up an engaging environment for the interview. This leads to richer and more candid responses enhancing the quality of the data (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Researchers can potentially present new ideas or concepts that existing instruments are not designed to interrogate. Such an innovation has the potential not only to lead to new theories and new ways of thinking about qualitative research (Maxwell, 2013).

Alternatively, they also have a few limitations. Most particularly, self-developed instrumentation does not have established validity and reliability. It can be difficult to know if the instrument truly measures what it is supposed to without rigorous testing (Trochim & Donnelly, 2007). Questions Developed by Participant: Self-created questions are often colored by the biases or assumptions of the researcher and may lead to skewed data. Well-posed, or leading concept questions can sway the respondents, creating questionable data (Yin, 2018). Given the use of self-developed instruments, we did not have any pre-existing benchmarks for comparison. This may hamper having the findings situated in relation to wider literature and ability in assessing importance of results (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Developing an instrument you create can be labor-intensive involving careful thought to pilot and refine, impacting the overall timeline of research (Creswell, 2013). The effectiveness of self-developed instruments depends largely on the researcher‘s ability to articulate clear, unbiased questions. Designing questions in experienced can lead to flawed questions that do not produce data (Patton, 2015).

One tool commonly used in qualitative research is the interview guide which depends on the semi-structured interview format. This method strikes a middle ground between structured and unstructured interviewing, as it still allows for the collection of data but in a more focused and efficient manner. The guides help keep the interview process consistent and ensure that themes are the same across interviews, but also allow room for exploration. This duality allow to cover relevant topics, bringing a systematic feel to data collection process (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). A guide allows researchers to compare answers across participants more easily. This is comparable and it helps to put the data in perspective and gives the researcher a sense what is, qualitatively, "similar" and "different" data (Creswell 2013). An interview guide helps keep the qualitative research method organized, which ultimately makes it more rigorous. This format allows for the findings to be enhanced for reliability (Flick, 2018). Interviewers who are well-acquainted with the guide will find interviews flow much more smoothly, which helps to alleviate participant stress and increases the likelihood of open conversation. This enables richer and more contextual responses (Brinkmann, 2013). Guides offer structure, but also allow for follow-up questions and probing depending on the response of participants. This adaptability can provide a deeper understanding of complex subjects (Patton, 2015).

As mentioned earlier, there are also several disadvantages of using interview guides in a semi-structured interview. Focused use of an interview guide may stifle the natural conversational flow. The structure of the focus group may limit participants to respond less spontaneously and not fully authentically (Mason, 2002). Because the guide is designed by the researcher, it may reflect her or his biases or assumptions, ultimately affecting the questions asked and the data collected. Such bias can affect the neutrality of the research (Yin, 2018). There is a balance to strike between being consistent, yet too adherence to the guide can result in a failure to investigate unwasted themes that emerge during the interview process (Maxwell, 2013). Varying interpretations of the guide by different interviewers may result in variation in both how questions are asked and answers are elicited. It may undermine the reliability of data (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). An interview guide is skillfully used in both posing questions as well as in the responsiveness to the participants. Less-experienced interviewers may have difficulty negotiating the tense balance between structure and flexibility while collecting data (Lune & Berg, 2017).

Coffee Producer Interview Guide:

This guide covered key areas such as the producer's background, export history, their motivations for entering the Swiss market, and the specific challenges encountered. Some key topics will include:

- Import processes and regulatory hurdles faced
- Difficulties in establishing local distribution channels
- Pricing strategies employed and their effectiveness
- Marketing efforts targeting Swiss consumers and their resonance
- Perceptions of Swiss consumer preferences compared to other markets
- Competitive landscape and positioning relative to established brands

The guide featured open-ended questions to allow producers to share their experiences and perspectives in detail.

Industry Expert Interview Guide:

For interviewing Swiss coffee experts like cafe owners, roasters, and market analysts, the guide focused on developing a comprehensive understanding of the market dynamics. Key areas will include:

- Mapping of major coffee brands and their positioning
- Perceived consumer preferences regarding origins, certifications, roast profiles
- Challenges faced by new entrant brands from abroad
- Perspectives on Colombian coffee's quality positioning and awareness among Swiss consumers
- Preferred marketing channels and partnerships for reaching local consumers
- Gaps or white spaces where a new brand could effectively differentiate

As with the Coffee producer guide, a semi-structured format with open-ended questions was used which allowed experts to share their in-depth knowledge.

3.5 Data Analysis

The following qualitative data analysis process is based on the information collected through semi-structured interviews with Colombian coffee producers and Swiss industry experts. We perform this analysis to uncover valuable insights on market entry barriers, consumer preferences, and competitive landscapes in the Zurich Coffee market.

The analysis began with verbatim transcription of all recordings from the interviews. During this transcription phase, initial notes on emerging themes and patterns were, initiating the first step of the analysis process.

The researcher used Thematic Analysis as the method of data analysis in this study. Thematic analysis is the most used data analysis method in qualitative studies which allows for identification of new themes and patterns emerging from the interview data. Data analysis was done using the six-step framework suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). The coding process is highlighted in (Appendix)

The researcher first familiarized themselves with the data through reading and re-reading of the interview transcripts that were recorded verbatim. This allowed the researcher to review the transcript and highlight any key and relevant responses that suits the objectives.

The second step is identifying initial codes from the data. Through highlighting similarities, the researcher was able to find patterns which were then generated as initial codes. These codes were recorded as first order and second order codes.

Once the codes were finalised, the researcher then identified patterns between the codes and organised them into themes. This was done through establishing relationships and connections between the codes. This step was iterative, in that, the researcher had to adjust and refine the themes multiple times, so they were accurate. This was done through reviewing the themes and they were checked against the objectives of the study and original transcripts.

After getting the finalised themes, the researcher named the themes according to the core of the theme and what the theme demonstrates. Finally, the findings section described and discussed the themes in relation to existing text and theoretical frameworks. Inductive approaches were used for coding data throughout the process of analysis. This would enable the discovery of new themes while also covering specific elements of the market entry strategies. This allowed for the operationalisation of thematic analysis and provided enough time to establish themes that are instrumental in achieving the study‘s goals.

3.5.1 Reliability and Validity of data

Ensuring the reliability and validity of this Qualitative study is crucial to establish the trustworthiness of the findings. Reliability and validity of a study demonstrate the effectiveness of the research process and the findings (Roberts and Priest, 2006). The following measures will be implemented to address these critical aspects.

Reliability: Reliability refers to the consistency and repeatability of the research findings. It describes how a test, procedure or tool can produce similar results in different circumstances (Roberts and Priest, 2006). The researcher ensured measures were taken to maintain reliability of this study, such as using a standardized interview protocol for the semi-structured interviews. This acted as a verification strategy which ensures reliability and validity are present in the study (Morse et al., 2002). This ensures consistency in the questioning process across all participants. All interviews and focus group discussions were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The researcher personally reviewed each transcript to ensure accuracy. The codes were iteratively verified as and when new themes emerged to ensure accuracy and representative codes.

Validity: Validity relates to how accurate and credible the findings are. This evaluation determines whether a study or tool actually measures what it intends to measure (Roberts and Priest, 2006). At the end of every interview, participants received a short summary of important findings from their individual interview to check the validity of the interpretation and prompt any clarifications if necessary. To enhance the transferability of the findings, detailed information regarding the context, participants, and findings were presented.

Focus was also given to the data that contradicted the emerging patterns, to ensure all perspectives were included. Frequent conversations with academic supervisors were held to review the process of research and interpretations which facilitated the credibility of findings.

Data Analysis Limitations: No analysis and method come without limitations. Although thematic analysis offers multiple perspectives and insights in exploratory qualitative research, it is accompanied by its own limitations. Thematic analysis requires a lot of subjective interpretations by the researcher diving into explaining both implicit and explicit ideas in the data. This could lead to researcher bias (Guest, Macqueen and Namey, 2012). This could then lead to the compromise of reliability like in other qualitative designs. The analysis largely depends on the data collected; therefore, if the researcher did not collect sufficient data from the semi-structured interview, the analysis would not be in-depth or efficient.

The qualitative sample consisted of a limited number of interviews. Each case study will allow for depth of exploration but the approaches will restrict the breadth of perspectives, and consequently compromise generalisability. So triangulation of data could aid in avoiding this limitation.

Geographical constraints were also imposed by the study. The selected sample was limited to the Zurich market only. For this reason, it may again restrict the generalizability of results. Language barriers again presented some challenges during the research. Being a non-native German speaker, I may have missed differences in interaction in interviews that were conducted in German, which could have influenced data interpretation and thematic analysis while transcribing the data verbatim.

Despite these limitations, the thematic analysis still proved to be effective in identifying relevant themes associated with challenges of coffee producers in entering the Zurich market.

3.6 Ethical considerations

Ethics are crucial to any research to protect the rights of the participants, but also of the researcher. It ensures well-being of both the participants and the researcher. Due to the in-depth nature of qualitative studies, being ethical is all the more the responsibility of the researcher. Considering ethical principles in a qualitative study, therefore ensures a balance between risks and benefits of the study (Arifin, 2018).

The four important ethical principles to consider in a qualitative study according to Pietilä et al., (2020) are autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence, and justice. These principles form the basis of protection of the participants in a qualitative study.

To ensure that the study was conducted ethically, the researcher employed the following steps. The researcher ensured that every participant in the study signed an informed consent sheet (Appendix 1). This clearly outlined the objectives and purpose of the study, procedure of data collection and risks and benefits associated with the study. The informed consent also highlighted on the voluntary nature of the study and suggested that participants are free to withdraw at any point in time of the study without a penalty. Steps were also taken to minimise emotional distress and harm to the participants. Achieving truly informed consent can be complex, especially in studies involving vulnerable populations. Researchers must ensure that participants understand the information provided, which may require careful consideration of language and comprehension levels (Liamputtong, 2007)

Due to the large number of information being collected in the study, the researcher ensured steps for privacy and confidentiality of the participant details and responses. The details were anonymised and pseudonymised throughout the process. The researcher ensured that participants real names were not used during the analysis process to avoid bias. The participants were also informed of the same before the start of the interviews. Data storage was also discussed, and participants were informed that their data will be stored securely in an encrypted drive following data protection and regulation guidelines. They will only be accessed by the researcher and finally destroyed securely upon the completion of the research. Despite best efforts, breaches of confidentiality can occur, particularly in small communities or specific contexts where participants can be easily identified. Researchers need to balance the need for rich data with the obligation to protect participants (Lune & Berg, 2017).

Ethical qualitative research requires treating participants with respect and dignity. This includes valuing their perspectives and experiences, allowing them to voice their narratives without undue influence from the researcher (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Researchers must remain aware of power dynamics in the interviewer-participant relationship. They should strive to minimize any potential coercion or pressure that may arise from their role (Patton, 2015).

Researchers need to carefully evaluate the potential for physical, emotional, or psychological harm to participants. Essentially, this also connects to the potential consequences of sensitive matters being explored; alongside participants not being exposed to triggering situations without appropriate assistance (Flick, 2018).

There can be strong emotional reactions in participants in qualitative studies in talking about traumatic experiences. Simultaneously, researchers should maintain some resources or referrals availability for individual participants if required (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2020).

All qualitative research in the social sciences must be ethical and sensitive to the background of participants. It includes understanding cultural norms, values, and practices, and adjusting research strategies (Creswell, 2013).

Cultural misunderstandings can go a long way to creating misinterpretations or discomfort for participants. Researchers must practice reflexivity, consistently questioning their biases and presumptions in the research process (Smith, 2013).

It is an ethical obligation to debrief all participants after their involvement in the study. Researchers clarify any misunderstandings that may have arisen and offer the participant insights about the findings of the study (Liamputtong, 2007) It can be difficult to provide feedback that is both useful and easy to understand for participants, especially in studies that use complex or academic language (Maxwell, 2013).

In designing qualitative studies which involve the use of human subjects, ethical considerations are an intricate and essential aspect of conducting ethical research. Researchers must work through a host of issues including informed consent, confidentiality, respect for participants, potential for harm, sensitivity to culture, and debriefing. Conducting research ethically helps build trust with their audience, which will only further validate their conclusions.

3.7 Research Design Limitations

While this study employs a qualitative approach to address the research questions, it is important to acknowledge several limitations fundamental in a research design. The limitations of the current research.

1. Sample Size and Representativeness:

    - The qualitative phase involves a relatively small number of interviews with a total of ten participants. While this allows for in-depth exploration, it may limit the scope of viewpoints captured.

2. Geographic Scope:

    - The study focuses specifically on the Zurich market. Findings may not be generalizable to other Swiss cities or rural areas with possibly different coffee consumption models.

3. Time Constraints:

- The cross-sectional nature of the study provides a snapshot of current market conditions and consumer preferences. It does not capture potential changes over time or seasonal variations in coffee consumption behavior.

4. Language Barriers:

    - As the researcher was a non-native German speaker, distinctions in communication during interviews conducted in German may be missed, potentially impacting data interpretation.

5. Self-Reported Data:

    - The data collected relied on self-reported information from participants, which may be subject to social desirability or incorrect recall.

6. Researcher Bias:

    - As the sole researcher conducting both data collection and analysis, there was potential for personal biases to influence interpretation, especially since the researcher used thematic analysis. Efforts to maintain objectivity was made, but complete elimination of bias is difficult.

7. Lack of Behavioral Observation:

    - The study does not include direct observation of coffee purchasing or consumption behavior, but only relied on reported preferences and habits which may not always be accurate.

8. Resource Constraints:

- Due to limited financial and time resources, a larger-scale study or more advanced data collection tools (e.g., eye-tracking for packaging preferences) cannot be run.

The qualitative approach and careful research design are trying to mitigate those issues (I understand they are known) and gain valuable insights to describe the challenges and opportunities that Colombian coffee brands might encounter when entering the Zurich market. Longitudinal studies, larger sample sizes, or extension to additional geographic areas may address some of these limitations in future research.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This section details the results and findings of the thematic analysis conducted with Colombian coffee producers and industry experts in the Swiss coffee market. This insight help gain an extensive understanding of the complexities of entry into the Swiss market, consumer preferences, brand dynamics, pricing and other factors that can be used by new coffee producers while aiming to enter the Swiss market. These findings also highlight the challenges faced by the producers and different stakeholders in this process.

Through this thematic analysis, the researcher aimed to answer the following four objectives:

1. To understand what the most popular coffee chains in Zurich are and what brand attributes and values resonate most with Swiss consumers
2. To understand how price sensitive Zurich coffee drinkers are across value-added attributes like organic certification, fair trade, specialty roasts, and customization
3. To understand what specific product mix, pricing model, and positioning strategy represents the optimal new entrant approach for a Colombian coffee brand in Zurich
4. To explore if connections with local partners such as Swiss coffee houses, community events, or sustainability initiatives help drive adoption of a new Colombian specialty coffee offering in Zurich

The semi-structured interview was conducted with 10 participants who are stakeholders within the Swiss coffee market, with a focus on the Zurich market. Five of the stakeholders were Colombian coffee producers and five of the stakeholders were Swiss coffee industry experts.

The results section is divided into two: findings from interviews with Colombian coffee producers and findings from interviews with Swiss industry experts.

4.1 Findings from interviews with Colombian coffee producers

The thematic analysis of interviews from Colombian coffee producers yielded three major themes and each theme yielded sub-themes. The major themes identified are:

1. Market entry challenges
2. Sustainable and ethical sourcing
3. Branding and marketing approaches

4.1.1 Theme 1: Market Entry Challenges

This theme describes the various challenges due to the current market landscape in the Zurich coffee market which slows the entry of Colombian coffee producers to enter their brand into the market. The themes and the sub-themes are summarised in the figure below and further described elaborately.

Figure 7: Summary of the themes and sub-themes of market entry challenges faced by Colombian coffee producers

Successful companies are heavily focused on satisfying customer needs in specific and target markets. Therefore, new Columbian coffee producers must understand the market landscape in the current Zurich market to set foot into the market and see profits while also building a loyal customer base (Welliver, 2017). Scoping the current market climate allows for the coffee producers to successfully enter and place themselves within the market through appropriate market selection and customer segments (Fennelly, 2021). This was identified as a challenge from the analysis of the interviews. For a new brand and product to enter the market, coffee producers in the interviews revealed that there are challenges that accompany them. Some of the major challenges described by the coffee producers in entering the Zurich market included establishing relationships with local distributors, complexities in the bureaucratic and regulatory policies, lack of recognition for the new brand and consumer preferences. Having knowledge of the above about the current Zurich market could help coffee producers penetrate the market with more ease and establish relationships (Paunescu, 2013).

"…We've found the Swiss market extremely difficult to crack. Establishing relationships with local distributors has been a major roadblock…"

These challenges are due to the already existing coffee market climate in the Swiss and these are further described in three subthemes:

a) Saturation and Competition

b) Distribution challenges

c) Consumer preferences

4.1.1.1 Sub-theme 1: Market Saturation & Competition

The first sub-theme identified from the analysis of market entry challenges faced by Colombian coffee producers in entering the Swiss market is that of market saturation and existing competition. It was described by the producers that the Swiss coffee market is a heavily saturated market with already existing local brands and players with well-established relationships and consumer base. Saturation of a market arises when a particular product is already heavily available through different distributors within a market (O'Kelly, 2001). The highly saturated nature of the Swiss coffee market makes it difficult for the new Colombian producers to find a foothold within this marketplace. Being a mature coffee market with a history of consumption of traditional blends of coffee, the Swiss market already has a plethora of Italian and French roasters that are beloved by the consumers. This becomes a barrier for any new producer trying to enter the market and bring in niche and new types of coffee into the market.

"…severely underestimated the degree of local brand loyalty and failed to find the right variation versus officers…"

"…Even cafes that claimed to want unique origins still stuck with their usual suspects…"

This indicates the level of competition that exists within the Swiss coffee market which influences brand loyalty. Swiss consumers and retailers favour the already established Italian and French coffee brands and are sceptical to try new Columbian products. This is in part due to the lack of awareness and uncertainty about the Columbian coffee products. Columbian producers trying to enter the Swiss market are having to begin from scratch and re-evaluate their branding and marketing strategies to be visible within the Swiss markets.

"…They have an inclination towards premium, artisanal regional brands rather than mass-market national brands like we see in other countries..,"

"…there is very little awareness or knowledge about Colombian coffee producers and our origins in general. We're having to start from scratch…"

The Swiss coffee market is dominated by large Italian and French chains, along with this, the Swiss consumers are also loyal to their regional roasts through their local café scenes. This shows that the Swiss market offers a wide range of coffee products including traditional coffee blends, specialty coffee and free-trade options for its customers. This diverse offering makes it difficult for the Columbian coffee producers to be able to differentiate themselves and offer a variety that is not already available to garner the customers‛ attention. Therefore, this shows that producers intending to enter the coffee market in Zurich need to study the market landscape thoroughly in order to establish themselves and thrive.

4.1.1.2 Sub-theme 2: Distribution & Regulatory Barriers

Another challenge that Columbian coffee producers described in the interviews was that of distribution challenges and regulatory barriers. As seen above in sub-theme one, the Swiss market is already well-established. This would mean that the local and already existing coffee houses have a well-established chain of distributors; therefore, when new entrants try to penetrate the market, they would have to establish new and strong relationships in order to have a foothold in the market. Local distributors already have longstanding relationships with Italian and French roasters and as a result forming relationships with local distributors is seen as challenging and a major roadblock in the entry process.

"…they seem to already have long-standing partnerships with Italian and French roasters…"

They also described that the already entrenched relationship between local Swiss distributors and European brands poses a serious challenge as they wouldn‛t add on Columbian producers on the list even if local café were interested in trying their product.

"…The existing relationships between Swiss distributors and European brands are so rooted. Even if local shops were interested in new starts, these distributors wouldn't add us…"

Producers are having to directly link in with local and independent café, but even that comes with challenges such as volume of production and being able to scale up. This is due to the high standards and expectations of the Swiss retail market; the producers have to either go directly to retailers or maintain their competitive prices in order to flourish. This also comes with a challenge of reassuring retailers and distributors of the quality of the Columbian coffee as there is a lack of awareness about other roasts of coffee within the Swiss market, further delaying the brand establishment process for Columbian coffee producers.

"…Convincing potential distributors and retail buyers of our quality and brand story has been an uphill battle given our lack of awareness in the market…"

Along with distribution barriers, also comes high import duties and taxes that are imposed by the regulation laws in Switzerland, which increases the overall cost of entry for Columbian coffee products. Due to this, competing with local prices and remaining competitive with pricing becomes difficult. Import tariffs on coffee are regulated by the World Trade Organisation and many importing countries levy lower rates for developing countries than for countries that are industrialised (Slob and Osterhaus, 2006). Switzerland is not part of the EU but a part of the European Free Trade Union, and to facilitate free trade, Switzerland has also adapted its food laws to the general European laws, and they are therefore based on the European legislation (CBI Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022). Producers in this study have described that they have to rely on importers to make industry connections and on their own is a challenge to establish this relationship.

"…Because Switzerland isn't part of the EU, we faced tariffs and duties that significantly increased the cost of importing our beans there versus other European countries…"

Columbian coffee producers have said there are also complex regulatory challenges bringing their products into Switzerland. These include specific and complex labelling and packaging requirements which are different and more severe in comparison to Columbia. Producers often incur more time and cost in ensuring compliance with these rules. Compliance with Swiss food and safety standards is also a must for Columbian coffee producers, and therefore this involves additional certifications, licenses and testing. In addition to this, Columbian producers are also having to understand trade agreements between Switzerland and Columbia as it is crucial in traversing any restrictions that maybe imposed on their coffee imports.

"…Navigating the various product registrations, food safety requirements, and customs rules was an administrative nightmare with tons of paperwork. It took months to get approvals…"

These additional regulatory compliance steps often caused administrative delays and logistics issues causing issues with keeping the product fresh. The producers have described that it could be three to four weeks from roasting to when it reaches the Swiss market and the shelves of retail stores in Zurich.

4.1.1.3 Sub-theme 3: Consumer Preferences

As discussed above, an important task of any product is to garner customers and loyalty towards the product and the brand. Coffee is one of the most consumed drinks in the world and has millions of consumers worldwide with different taste preferences (Czarniecka-Skubina et al., 2021). Consumers prefer tastes ranging from traditional to artisanal blends and roasts of coffee, and therefore, understanding coffee preferences and habits is important as a coffee producer. One of the key challenges that Columbian coffee producers entering the Swiss market have identified is studying the specific tastes of the consumers.

"…Understanding precise Swiss consumer preferences and taste profile desires has really been our dire knowledge gap…"

"…Understanding the specific tastes of the Swiss consumer has been complex. We thought our medium roasts would go over well but they've indicated a strong preference for lighter, fruitier roast profiles…"

Producers have described that what was produced was not necessarily what a Swiss consumer would go for. Swiss consumers preferred lighter, fruitier profiles in their coffee in comparison to preferences for medium-dark roasts in other European markets. This makes it a roadblock as Columbian coffee with its more acidic profile will find it difficult to be palatable to a Swiss coffee drinker, and therefore, will have to alter their production to suit specific Swiss profiles. This makes production more expensive.

The Swiss consumers also preferred local and artisanal brands rather than the mass-produced market brands. In recent times, Swiss consumers also preferred their coffee to be fair-trade, organic and sustainable, in comparison to their European counterparts. The producers also found it challenging that average Swiss coffee drinkers are habituated to certain tastes, and therefore, introducing them to newer tastes would be difficult, thereby making it difficult for them to penetrate Swiss markets. They are loyal to already established brands with longstanding reputations, therefore new entrants like the Columbian coffee brands find it difficult to find a space in the shelves of the Swiss markets.

"…Zurich seems to have a more sophisticated palate and higher expectations when it comes to specialty coffee compared to some other Swiss cities…"

Another consumer-specific challenge identified was price sensitivity. Swiss consumers tended to be more price sensitive towards their everyday consumables such as coffee, and therefore, will not want to pay a premium for a Columbian coffee product. Customers are more acquainted to affordable coffee and coffee-based products; however, there seems to be a dichotomy among consumers of coffee in the Zurich market. While they are sensitive to prices, they also do not mind paying a lot for specialty coffee which indicated that quality is paramount over cost considerations.

"…Pricing expectations in Switzerland are really high. Coffee is viewed as a premium product that consumers seem willing to pay a lot for…"

The above challenge could arise from the fact that many Swiss consumers are unaware or unfamiliar with the profiles of Columbian coffee that is available. There seems to be little knowledge about Columbian coffee production and their origins. Therefore, if Colombian coffee producers, raised awareness about their unique characteristics to the Swiss consumers, they would have a better chance at entering and sustaining in the Swiss markets.

"…Swiss consumers tend to have familiarity with Colombia as an origin in theory, but no specific brand knowledge…"

The producers also suggested that even industry insiders tended to have lower familiarity with Colombian brands. This makes all Colombian coffee as described as _mild' or _balanced' profiles when sold in cafes. There seems to be a lack of distinction for Colombian coffee profiles from other south American originated profiles, making it less appealing to the consumer tastes.

4.1.2 Theme 2: Sustainable and Ethical Sourcing

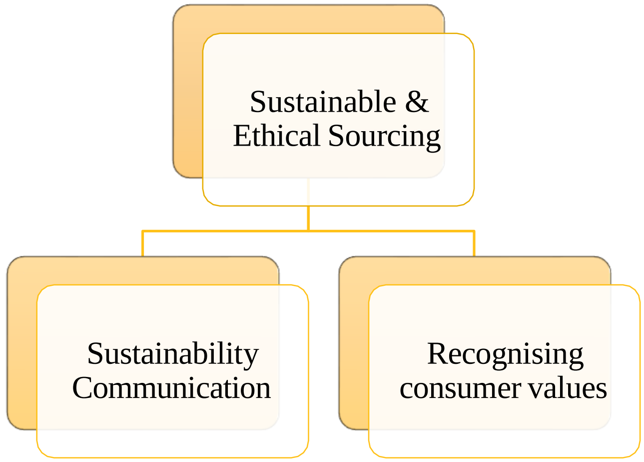

Figure 8: Summary of the theme of Sustainable and Ethical Sourcing

In recent times, Swiss consumers are becoming more intentional about ethical and sustainable coffee sources and consumption. Sustainable sources of coffee are viewed as a key factor in purchase tendencies and a credible attribute for their products (Merbah and Benito-Hernández, 2024). Swiss consumers also willing to pay an extra price if the product is seen as more environmentally sustainable and tend to have a positive attitude towards the brand. This would allow for producers to find a place in the market; however, it would still be difficult to compete with the already existing products and brands. Therefore, Columbian coffee producers will have to demonstrate their commitment towards sustainable production of coffee through various certifications such fair-trade and organic coffee, along with sustainable packaging, zero-waste, etc. This reveals a *cultural alignment* between Swiss coffee consumers and socially responsible coffee producers; therefore, Columbian coffee brands will have to openly communicate their values to gain the trust and loyalty of a Swiss consumer.

Through the interviews, it was seen that the Columbian coffee producers believe that their coffee brands stand for sustainability and are environmentally conscious. They are also aware of the importance that Zurich coffee consumers have on these values; however, they are unaware of how much importance to place within the market and found that communicating this to the Swiss market has been challenging. This could lead to further marketing issues which slows down the market entry process.

"..Our entire brand is built around the value of sustainability, but it hasn't converted into a competitive advantage in Switzerland yet. Consumers seem interested, but perhaps we're not marketing it in a compelling enough way…"

This can be summarised in two key points: Colombian brands recognising the changing sustainability values of their customers and acknowledging them; especially in a large and entrenched market such as Zurich and being able to transparently communicate their values of sustainability and environmental impact. Swiss consumers often demand this transparency and traceability; therefore, Colombian producers and importers will have to provide this detailed information to be deemed credible, which is often difficult to do as there is already existing competition from brands with similar values within the Swiss market.

"…Ethical sourcing is crucial, and we've seen a growing interest in these issues. However, communicating our sustainability story effectively to Swiss consumers has been a challenge due to the strong competition from other brands with similar claims…"

As the Swiss market is known to have several requirements for sustainability and ethical sourcing, Colombian coffee producers and importers could be often confused and therefore may not always be fully compliant with all the requirements. It involves a lot of cost of time in obtaining these certifications which can deem a challenge to the Colombian coffee producers. The interviews showed that although the Colombian brands are built around sustainability, because of the complexities in the supply chain processes worldwide, it is difficult to ensure that coffee is sourced ethically throughout the process.

4.1.3 Theme 3: Branding and marketing approaches

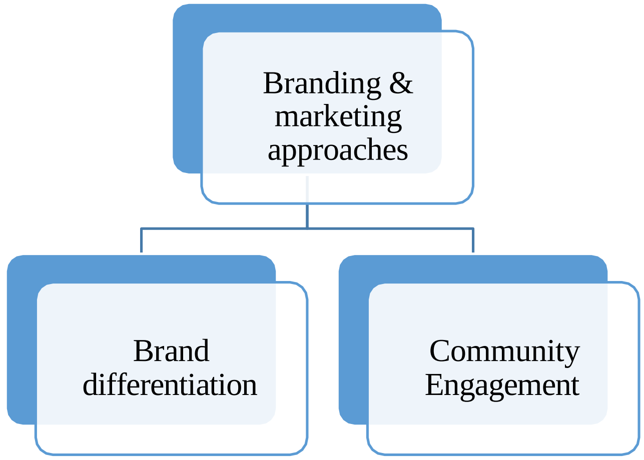

Figure 9: showing the summary of the theme branding and marketing approaches

This theme summarises the marketing and branding approaches that Colombian coffee producers are currently engaging in to penetrate the Swiss, and specifically, the Zurich markets. This is further divided into two sub-themes based on the two major challenges the producers have described to experience in the process:

1. Brand differentiation
2. Community engagement

4.1.3.1 Sub-theme 1: Brand differentiation

Brand differentiation is the identity of a brand that sets it apart from its competitors. It helps create an identity for a brand and build a loyal customer base for itself (Bhasin, 2023). Branding is an important and powerful market tool, especially in the current context of Columbian coffee producers wanting to enter a new market. A brand‘s position in the market influences a customer‘s purchasing decisions; therefore, the perceived brand differentiation becomes important (O‘Rourke, Carrillat and Wang, 2022).

The thematic analysis of interviews from the coffee producers evidenced the importance of marketing and branding strategies in Colombian coffee producers finding a foothold in the Swiss market. The interviews revealed that Colombian producers have tried to place themselves as premium, artisanal and specialty brands depicting their direct trade and unique origins; however, they have been unsuccessful in building traction with the retailers and customers. Producers have also demonstrated sustainable practices as part of their branding and marketing strategy, but it didn‘t seem to differentiate the brands enough due to the highly saturated market.

"…Our marketing has emphasized our sustainable farming practices and organic/fair trade certifications. But that messaging didn't seem to differentiate us enough…"

Analysis showed that many Colombian brands struggle to differentiate themselves from the existing competition and establish a brand identity for themselves. The marketing message communicated often lacks any uniqueness and does not highlight any specific attributes that may be relevant or interesting for Swiss consumers. Given the lack of awareness about the Columbian products in the Swiss market, producers should leverage by highlighting the Colombian heritage of coffee production and origins which adds a unique touch to their marketing strategy, which is often not seen.

The current distribution strategies involve reaching out to local distributors since national distributors seemed to be dismissive to the brand as it was from Colombia, and as a result, convincing distributors and retail buyers of their quality has been a major challenge. This also impacts the price margins that allow Colombian brands to remain price competitive.

Producers seem to have less success on their own in reaching out to industry connections, as there seems to be a gap in the marketing strategies. This could be because many Colombian brands allocate scanty resources for their branding and marketing which deters their ability to successfully reach and engage with Swiss customers. Colombian producers should focus on long-term establishment of themselves in the market rather than short-term sales and promotions. Producers have said they have also tried digital marketing and social media platforms to reach Swiss consumers, but it hasn‘t deemed to be effective. They feel that the purchasing habits are still more traditional within the Swiss markets.

"…Our website and social media platforms are our main tools for marketing directly to consumers in Switzerland, but we've had trouble getting traction. Paid ads haven't yielded the engagement we expected…"

As seen in the interviews, they seem to heavily rely on distributors for marketing which can devoid them of any connect with the consumers and a lack of control over how they communicate their brand, thereby, hindering brand differentiation and positioning.

4.1.3.2 Sub-theme 2: Community engagement

There seems to be some challenge for Colombian coffee producers to localise their brand and form engagement with the local community in a highly entrenched Zurich market. Within their marketing strategy, producers have not been able to successfully resonate with local Swiss consumers. Word-of-mouth is seen to remain a very essential and reliable marketing tool. Through reviews and sharing of opinions from customers and dialogue between consumers, producers could build their customer-base (Chen and Yuan, 2020); however, Colombian producers have found this to be a challenge. Participants highlighted the difficulties they had when communicating information about their brand and marketing strategies due to language barriers. This was a major roadblock in building meaningful relationships with the local community and comprehend their needs and preferences to effectively build marketing strategies. There may be cultural misalignment and misunderstanding which further hinders the ability to engage with Swiss customers. A lack of understanding of Swiss norms and culture posed as a significant test in creating trust and credibility among Swiss consumers.

Producers are heavily reliant on distributors. A lack of local partnerships and networks further hinders market entry.

"…We're relying mostly on our importers for now to try making local industry connections and sampling events. We've had little success so far on our own…"

In their effort to engage with the local community, the producers have said that they started a Swiss-specific Instagram campaign and targeted Facebook ads that were aimed at the Zurich coffee enthusiasts, but creating the brand awareness process has been very slow. They have also worked on feedback and changed their strategy as the general observation was that Swiss consumers engaged more with local influencers, This shows an eagerness to adapt and grow the brand.

"…Swiss consumers seem to engage more with local influencers and community-driven campaigns rather than large digital marketing efforts, so we're reevaluating our digital strategy…"

Producers have said that they are trying their best to hire some local brand ambassadors to communicate directly with local cafes and conduct some more base-line sampling and promotion. They have also said that they find it difficult to engage with local sustainability and fair-trade events. However, one light at the end of the tunnel has been that of being able to connect with coffee media and social media influencers in Zurich, which has offered some expansion potential; however, that is still a work in progress.

Consumers' lack of awareness and general ignorance about the Colombian coffee market has made it difficult to generate any interest about their products, thereby, reducing demand. Market penetration is further reduced due to using ineffective marketing strategies that did not resonate with Swiss consumers. Tailoring branding and marketing messages to specific Swiss population will help generate some traction towards Colombian brands.

4.2 Summary of findings for coffee producers

The overall summary of findings from the thematic analysis of interviews with coffee producers showed that there are major challenges that the Colombian coffee producers face in their attempt to enter the Swiss market. The main challenges are high import duties, lack of local partnerships, and a gross misalignment between branding and market strategies and product placement and consumer preferences and habits. Colombian producers will have to make a concerted effort in order to establish local relationships instead of heavily relying on local distributors and develop more effective marketing strategies to improve their stronghold within the Swiss market especially due to it being a heavily saturated market. Efforts should be made by Colombian coffee producers to enhance their local knowledge and expertise and know what customers expect from them and also be able to adapt based on feedback from retailers and consumers to stand a chance in finding a place in a highly competitive Swiss coffee market.

4.3 Findings from interviews with Swiss coffee industry experts

The thematic analysis of interviews from Swiss coffee industry experts yielded three major themes and each theme generated sub-themes. The major themes identified are:

1. Brand loyalty as challenge for new entrants
2. Consumer Segments
3. Change, trend and innovation

4.3.1 Theme 1 – Brand loyalty as a challenge for new entrants

The thematic analysis of interviews with Swiss coffee industry experts revealed some challenges that new entrants usually face because of pre-existing brand loyalty. It was identified through interviews with coffee producers that brands that are already established have developed strong relationships with their customers, which makes it a challenge for newcomers to penetrate the market. The current Swiss market is flooded with big national chains along with regional roasters and coffee chains who are popular among consumers. Consumers are also very loyal to the local cafes and roasters. Although there is growth seen in the market with some boutique brands, they have described the Swiss market to still be dominated by mainstream Swiss and Italian brands across the country. This confirms the highly entrenched and mature nature of the Switzerland coffee market.

Analysis also showed that this could be a result of the particular taste of Swiss coffee consumer's tastes and preferences which shows a resistance to change. They are usually hesitant to shift from their choice of flavours and habit, which makes it difficult for new entrants to mark their place with them. The younger population, however, are more open to tasting new brands and profiles, provided the brands have something unique to provide.

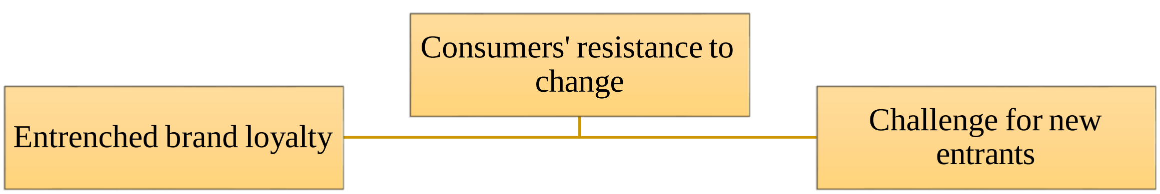

Figure 10: showing the summary of brand loyalty as a challenge for new entrants into the Swiss coffee market

Mass market brands are also described to struggle because Swiss consumers are more loyal to their local, regional and boutique brands. Consumers are also loyal to brands that are open about their credentials and place a lot of emphasis on certifications like Fair Trade, Organic, etc.

However, if what the brand offers aligns with the Swiss cultural expectations, consumers are more willing to experiment.

"…As long as offerings align with Swiss cultural beliefs around quality, craft and prestige - a new brand can possibly gain pull. But having a point of differentiation and story is critical…"

"…As specialty intake grows, the category loyalties seem to be fading a bit and there is more openness to trying new things. But deep regional Swiss allegiances remain hard to overcome…"

Established brands also have well-connected distribution networks and connections with retailers and cafes. These can also be a barrier for new entrants to gain traction in shop shelves or secure their place in popular locations. By understanding factors that drive consumer loyalty and strategies that that help increase brand awareness and differentiation, new entrants can increase their likelihood of success within the competitive Swiss market.

If new entrants are unable to gain the trust of the local consumers and communicate effectively the uniqueness of their brand, they would find it difficult to breach the already existing loyalty and trust of the consumers posing a significant threat to their ability to survive in the market. Therefore, it is important for new entrants to understand and educate themselves on the Swiss coffee culture, consumer preferences and habits.

"…Understanding and aligning with the specific taste profiles of Swiss consumers, who tend to prefer lighter roasts and artisanal processes, is another significant challenge…"

4.3.2 Theme 2– Consumer segments

Thematic analysis of interviews with Swiss coffee industry experts revealed that there is a diversity in the consumer segments in the Swiss coffee market which poses a significant challenge to new entrants. Industry experts felt there was a need to highlight this varying preference among the Swiss coffee consumers and their expectations.

They key insights from this analysis showed that there is a distinct segmented consumer base for coffee in Switzerland. The most common division of consumers in based on age and wealth levels. The younger consumers were described as more adventurous, open and experimentative in trying new brands and flavour profiles in comparison to the older population. The upscale and more affluent segment of the consumer base preferred to stay with their local and premium brands.

There is also a general global divide between casual coffee drinkers and coffee enthusiasts that is also visible in the Swiss coffee consumer segments. There are also segments of the population that care about certifications and causes that the brands are associated with, and on the other hand there are people that are only concerned with taste and profile. There is also a divide between urban/sub-urban and rural coffee drinkers. The urban consumers are seen to be more open while the rural consumers seem to be more traditional in their preferences. Another divide that came to light are the convenience-based coffee drinkers versus the individuals that drink coffee as an experience.

This diversity in tastes and preferences make it difficult to effectively segment the population of coffee consumers. This diversity in tastes, preferences, demographics and cultural experiences that Swiss consumers evidence shows that new entrants in to the market will have to do their due diligence on the consumer and purchasing behaviours of the market before trying to step in to it. Experts suggest that these will also be essential in developing marketing strategies that are more relevant to the Swiss consumer.

The segmentation is also based on the preferred roast tastes. The general preference is for lighter profiles, while the darker roasts struggle to find a place with the consumers. Consumers also feel inclined towards brands that leverage the Swiss culture and heritage.

"…premium specialty coffee in the Starbucks or Peet's vein seems to be gaining in popularity, as long as it is coupled with a strong regional identity. But very few national mass brands thrive…"

"…premium specialty coffee in the Starbucks or Peet's vein seems to be gaining in popularity, as long as it is coupled with a strong regional identity. But very few national mass brands thrive…"

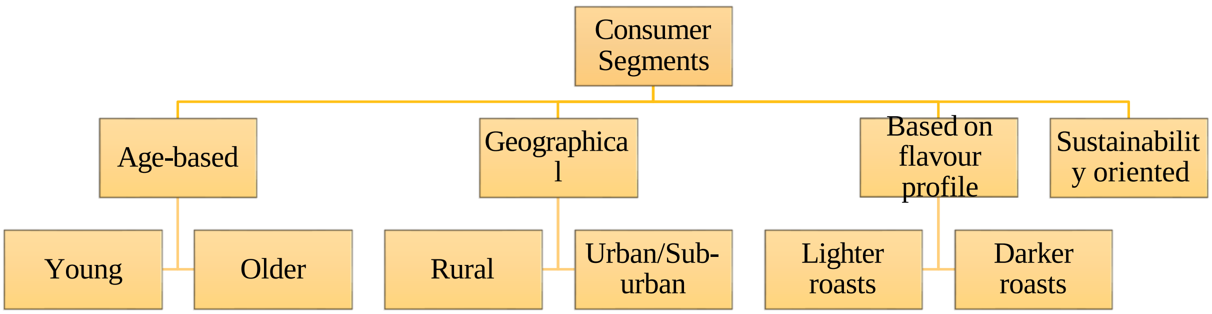

Figure 11: showing the summary of the different consumer segments in the Swiss coffee market

4.3.3 Theme 3– Change, trend and innovation

The industry experts have described the Swiss market as a dynamic and ever-changing market. The landscape is marked by continuous changes, emerging trends and an emphasis on innovation and growth.

Swiss consumers are increasingly demanding coffee that is sourced ethically and sustainably. This has led to a growing emphasis on fair trade, organic practices, and direct relationships with coffee producers. There is a enhanced recognition of the environmental footprint that is left by producing coffee. The majority of the consumers support brands that show initiatives in environmental sustainability practices. Also, consumers are seeking transparency regarding the coffee supply chain, from bean sourcing to roasting and packaging. This has driven a trend towards coffee producers providing detailed information about the origin, processing, and sustainability certifications of coffee products. For new startups, this could be difficult to prove because this slows down their move into a new market. The Swiss market has also begun to include the third wave coffee movement, which is characterised by a focus on quality, single-origin beans, and artisanal brewing methods. Coffee shops have evolved to being more than just beverage providers and becoming more like social hubs and places where people can meet. Coffee enthusiasts can have unique experiences and great atmospheres in cafes. The popularity of coffee machines for home brewing has also increased.

The consumers investing in high-quality equipment and explore diverse brewing methods to recreate the coffee shop experience at home. Brewing technology also sees innovations that has resulted in smart coffee machines, with automatic methods, precision temperature control, programmable brewing profiles, and connected features.

The popularity of sustainable packaging or zero waste methods and technologies has resulted in more environmental friendly alternatives for example- compostable cups and recyclable packaging has environmentally been increased.

The rise of online platforms (website) and social media (facebook, instagram) has has an influence on promoting coffee brands to new customers and allowing for direct-to-consumer sales. Options for low-caffeine and decaffeinated coffee have become more popular to cater to consumers seeking healthier alternatives. Innovations in food and beverage industries have led to the development of coffee-infused products, such as energy drinks, snacks, and desserts.

The Swiss coffee market is influenced by global trends, such as the growing popularity of cold brew, nitro coffee, and coffee cocktails. Swiss baristas and roasters actively participate in international coffee competitions, contributing to the country's reputation as a coffee-centric nation.

"…Cold brew and nitro coffee have been gaining popularity, especially among younger, urban consumers. There's also a rise in plant-based milks and alternative brewing methods like AeroPress…"

"…We've seen a growing interest in coffee subscription services and home brewing equipment. Swiss consumers are becoming more engaged in the brewing process itself, seeking personalized experiences…"

"..There's a demand for traceability and transparency. Consumers increasingly want to know the exact farm their beans came from and the ethical impact of their purchase…"

New coffee producers and entrants have to keep up with the trends and produce their products accordingly to be accepted within the Swiss coffee market.

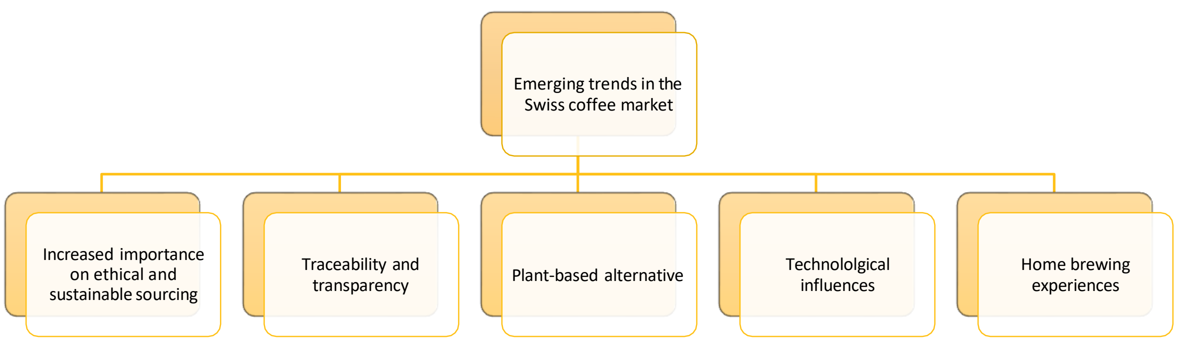

Figure 12: summarising the emerging trends in the Swiss coffee market

4.4 Summary of findings for industry experts

The findings show that the industry experts believe that there are many challenges that new entrants must face while entering the Swiss market. There is a lot of overlap between the feelings of the coffee producers in terms of the diversity in consumer segments and preferences, taste profiles, import duties and taxes. They have described the market to be dynamic and ever-changing which means that new producers and entrants will have to constantly study the market and be in touch with the trends and innovations that are happening in the market in order to survive. The consumption patterns have changed since the COVID-19 pandemic and people are more open to exploring and trying new roast profiles. There is increased emphasis on environmental sustainability and more and more producers will have to be transparent about their affiliations and credibility.

Breaking through the entrenched loyalty among the Swiss consumers for established French and Italian roasts will be difficult to get past for new entrants; however, with the right marketing strategies, it is achievable.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This chapter presents a summary of the key findings of the qualitative part of the study, which looked at the experiences of Colombian coffee producers interested in entering the Zurich market. Insights from Swiss coffee industry experts are also analyzed within the chapter.

Semi-structured interviews followed a thematic analysis approach; the key themes that answered the study's objectives included:

1. To understand what the most popular coffee chains in Zurich are and what brand attributes and values resonate most with Swiss consumers
2. To understand how price sensitive Zurich coffee drinkers are across value-added attributes like organic certification, fair trade, specialty roasts, and customization
3. To understand what specific product mix, pricing model, and positioning strategy represents the optimal new entrant approach for a Colombian coffee brand in Zurich
4. To explore if connections with local partners such as Swiss coffee houses, community events, or sustainability initiatives help drive adoption of a new Colombian specialty coffee offering in Zurich

Through semi-structured in-depth interviews with Colombian coffee producers (N=5) and with Swiss industry actors (N=5), the study derives valuable insights regarding the market landscape and challenges facing new entrants from two distinct perspectives.

Through the analysis, we found that different Colombian coffee producers articulated challenges regarding entry into foreign markets, particularly with the need to understand the nuances of the regulatory environment, develop distribution points in foreign territories, and establish visibility in a well-controlled and established market. Producers emphasised how challenging it was to decipher the Swiss market landscape that is entrenched with established brands holding a firm grasp on consumer preference.

Furthermore, there is extensive literature indicating that international entrants are often at a disadvantage in the local competitive context where they must tailor strategies for entering local markets along with dedicating considerable investment to market research (Johanson & Vahlne, 2009).

These results suggest that competing in this market involves a complex set of factors whereby just launching a great product is not going to be enough. Colombian coffee producers need to adapt to the particular preferences of Zurich consumers, especially in terms of roast profile; they also need to navigate the competitive landscape through branding and marketing, so to differentiate their product.

The study indicates that a strong strategy for Colombian coffee producers would be to sell on the unique attributes of the coffee, including the origin and flavor profile as well as movements consistent with the ethics of Zurich consumers. This entails acquiring and displaying certifications associated with sustainability and fair trade, which are increasingly important for consumers in Zurich.

Equally significant is the need to build robust distribution networks. Colombian coffee producers should seek to partner with local distributors mentioned in the study that understands the Zurich market and the complexities of how to enter this market. These relationships can also yield meaningful data on consumer behaviour and preferences that Colombian producers can then use to refine their offer. Sustainability has also been a significant theme, with producers showcasing their commitment to sustainable sourcing practices. Many Colombian producers have embraced sustainable-farming practices and pursued certifications that enhance their marketability. But they also described hurdles in getting the certifications that appeal to Swiss consumers. Sustainability has become an important purchasing criterion for consumers, with popularity especially among younger demographics concerned with ethical consumption, leading Swiss industry professionals said. This is supported by the Specialty Coffee Association, who found that consumers are more willing than ever to pay a premium for sustainably sourced coffee (SCA, 2021). So while the producers' dedication to sustainability could help increase their competitiveness, they need assistance with the certification process. On branding and marketing strategies were discussed the challenges producers have when trying to differentiate themselves from each other in the Swiss market. Many were unsure of how to tell their brand story and what makes Colombian coffee special. Swiss experts emphasized branding in a field cluttered with established vendors. And they stressed the importance of creating a new value proposition that distinguishes Colombian coffee from already existing brands. This reflects marketing theory which suggests that branding is crucial to newcomers looking to find a space within crowded markets (Keller, 2020).

Swiss coffee experts identified brand loyalty as a significant barrier for new entrants. Many consumers in Zurich have established preferences for certain brands, making it challenging for Colombian producers to gain a foothold. Experts indicated that overcoming this loyalty requires not only high-quality products but also strategic marketing efforts that effectively communicate the unique attributes of Colombian coffee.

This is well documented in consumer behaviour research, where it can be commonly seen that incumbent brands enjoy strong loyalty based not only on their long-time presence in the market, but also on their history, reputation and emotional bonds with consumers (Aaker, 1991). New comers need to create creative techniques for the consumers to get rid of this loyalty like making some targeted promotional strategies or partnering with neighborhood coffee shops which can introduce Colombian coffee to potential consumers.

Experts highlighted the importance of understanding the diverse consumer segments within Zurich. Different demographic groups exhibit varying preferences for coffee, ranging from traditional to specialty coffees. Understanding these segments allows producers to tailor their offerings and marketing strategies to align with consumer tastes. One of the most important drivers shaping the Swiss coffee market was the theme of change, trend and innovation; However, experts also noted that the market is constantly changing and consumer preferences are forced to adapt to trends like specialty coffee, sustainability, and new brewing methods. They said that, in order to succeed, new entrants needed to not just keep up with these trends but to also anticipate future trends.

This aligns with the Global Coffee Report, explaining that consumer preferences are pivoting towards unique, high-quality coffee experiences Colombian producers who are willing to innovate be that through fascinating processing methods or collaborations with local artisans can give themselves time off at this dynamic market landscape.

Colombian Coffee brands will have to consider the product mix and marketing strategies, in order to be successful in the Zurich-market. This would be much more in line with local thinking and taste these types of roast profiles (especially lighter roasts). Pricing should be competitive, in the 7-9 CHF range for a 250g package, ideally, which is in line with their expectations for high-quality specialty coffee. These brands will need to differentiate themselves, emphasizing certifications (e.g. Fairtrade, organic) and the unique characteristics of Colombian coffee.

To what extent is the company looking to utilize the direct sales route through specialty coffee shops and strong online presence? Tapping local cafes as partners in grassroots marketing campaigns involving product tasting/sampling events in-store could provide excellent brand awareness and build consumer loyalty. Moreover, by utilizing the power of local influencers and aligning with sustainable events, visibility and market credibility could be generated. The results highlight significant challenges, but with the appropriate strategy implemented, there is potential for Colombian coffee to carve out a niche in the competitive Zurich coffee space. Hence, the qualitative nature of this research weaves a multi-faceted narrative for one segment of the Colombian coffee producers attempting to enter into this market, that is Zurich. The primary concerns are the regulations that come with operating in a new market, questions about sustainable sourcing, and branding. Listing out species such as brand allegiance, consumer diversification, alongside the demand for carving out the latest trends & innovation as important contributors towards shaping the future for the market

This entry strategy requires Colombian producers to critically analyze and adapt their products to the Swiss market, as its peculiarities influenced by the Basel region are very different from those of Latin America; in addition to a sustainable and environmentally friendly supply chain with active participation of local producers. Local partnerships may help respective companies to enter the market with much more credibility and eliminate some barriers that were raised in this research paper. With the research above leading to in-depth understanding of the dynamics of the coffee international trade, future research should focus on barriers and case studies related to particular market entries. In order to achieve the best results in the Zurich coffee market, a well-thought-out strategy must be employed including product adaptation, targeted marketing, and effective distribution. Focusing on these aspects will allow Colombian coffee producers to establish themselves in Zurich, not only entering the market but also creating a sustainable and competitive presence.

Although there are obstacles, the study is also encouraging; several opportunities for the Colombian coffee producer are pointed out. In this regard, an opportunity is fundamentally the growing need for ethically-sourced and environmentally sustainable products among the Zurich people. Zurich consumers are getting a bit more natural, so Colombian coffee producers also have to embrace sustainability. This movement can be further emphasized by certifications like Fair Trade, Rainforest Alliance or Organic, in the Zurich market this makes a lot of sense. Its flavor profiles are unique to Colombian coffee and that is another opportunity. The Zurchers tend to be interested in unique and new experiences and by focusing on these diverse flavour profiles as well as offering a variety of roast levels, Colombian coffee producers can cater to the Zurchers. Local cafes and specialty shops can be other potential pathways for market access through cooperatives.

By partnering with establishments that are already trusted by Zurich consumers, Colombian coffee producers can gain visibility and credibility, which are crucial for building a loyal customer base in a new market.

The discussion also highlighted that while entering the Zurich specialty coffee market poses many challenges, it also emerges as an area for significant opportunity for Colombian coffee producers willing to navigate these challenges strategically. Market saturation, certainly brand recognition will present challenges for Colombian coffee producers, it is still over-looked main market where Colombian producers can concentrate their efforts, ensure sustainability as well as consumer education; having partnerships with local businesses that complement sales efforts of Colombian produce around the world. In the end, the producers‘ ability to adapt and innovate, while remaining true to the unique qualities that make Colombian coffee shine on the world stage, will determine the success of the expansion into Zurich‘s market. This analysis aimed to identify the best marketing strategies that Colombian coffee producers could pursue to cut through the noise and succeed in Zurich‘s specialty coffee market. The results indicate that a mix of digital marketing, storytelling, and community engagement are key to successfully reaching Zurich‘s discerning coffee consumers.

Digital Marketing:

This study brings one of the most important lessons to the surface, an extremely influential digital presence for Colombian coffee brands. Coffee consumers in Zurich — and especially specialty coffee experts, enthusiasts, and aficionados — are online and reach out to brands on social media channels, brand websites, and review sites. You only have to invest in an inclusive digital marketing strategy like a good website, established social media channels, or online advertising, and Colombian coffee producers can exploit this comparator. Platforms that are visual in nature, such as Instagram and Facebook, can be of great importance for the differentiation of Colombian coffee. Outstanding visual content showcasing your coffee journey—from berry to bean to cup—can help you develop a compelling story that will appeal to lovers of coffee in Zurich. Moreover, influencers and local Swiss coffee blogger can be used as a useful way of promoting the brand in the targeted way.

Storytelling and Brand Identity:

The research also highlights the power of storytelling in differentiating Colombian coffee in a competitive market.

'Zurich consumers are not just buying a product, they are buying into a story, an experience, and a set of values'

Colombian coffee producers can effectively highlight their story and create a strong brand identity that emphasizes the rich cultural heritage of Colombian coffee. This would be achieved by showing 'behind the story' and also operational steps of coffee making to the consumers. It emphasizing the journey of the coffee from the Colombian farms to the consumer‘s cup and it can create an emotional connection and build brand loyalty. The behind the story could be created and conveyed to the customers by involving the camera to capture moments of raw materials, packing and in-store states. Thus differentiation happens within consumers and also for other markets. This was also said by industry experts in their interviews as an expectation by the Swiss consumers.

Community Engagement and Events:

Events and collaborations with people are strong marketing strategies that can be done in Zurich market. The community engagement events such as, coffee-tasting events, pop-up store, and even farm tours will create a good perception to the coffee consumers.

The Consumers can experience different experiences and feel the actual taste of the product. It also helps coffee producers to understand the needs of consumers and it is most effective way to reach and make the consumers to give a try.

The Consumers get an opportunity to experience new products in the market, learn about their origins, and processes, and interact with the people behind it. Coffee producers can collaborate with local cafes, roasters, and specialty shops to do brand exposure and direct consumer engagement programs.

The research tells that a multifaced marketing approach which includes digital marketing, story telling and engagement with the community can improve brand recognization. Thus the coffee producers can reach consumers by an effective way by using this strategy.

These strategies not only create brand visibility but also it create brand loyalty, emotional attachment between the coffee producers and target group. These approaches may enhance brand recognition and helps to establish a deep bond with the coffee consumers.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research was to analyze the challenges and potential for Colombia's coffee producers entering the specialty coffee market of Zurich. The study aimed to answer four core research questions: What are the most popular coffee chains in Zurich and what brand attributes and values resonate most with Swiss consumers? How price sensitive are Zurich coffee drinkers across value-added attributes like organic certification, fair trade, specialty roasts, and customization? What specific product mix, pricing model, and positioning strategy represents the optimal new entrant approach for a Colombian coffee brand in Zurich? Can connections with local partners such as Swiss coffee houses, community events, or sustainability initiatives help drive adoption of a new Colombian specialty coffee offering in Zurich?

The study found that the primary challenges faced by Colombian coffee producers include intense competition from established coffee brands, high entry barriers related to certification and quality standards, and the need for a strong market presence amidst a well-informed and quality-conscious consumer base in Zurich. Moreover, there is a great consumer preference for good quality coffee in Zurich. This can be summarized, the potential consumers have increased interest in sustainability, especially in the supply chain of coffee. Thus the opportunity for Colombian coffee producers to rank the coffee according to their quality and ethical coffee production methods. The successful market entry into the Swiss coffee market is by establishing a strong digital presence, showcasing the cultural story behind Colombian coffee and origin of the brand, and engaging in community events. Overall, the commercial options available for

Colombian coffee producers to enter the Specialty coffee sector in Zurich, utilizing the most adequate strategies. For this reason is important to take these aspects in to account in order to enter to a specific segment in it. This research is based on the extrapolation of evidence to inform Colombian producers in their ambitions to leverage the opportunities Zurich presents as a new market and it highlights the need for a strategic, culturally-informed and passionate approach to marketing Colombian produce in this city.

Finally, covering a strategic position in the market of Zurich specialty coffee, Colombian producers have the chance to break into this new product. These findings guide Colombian producers to define better their approach to the Zurich market, emphasizing the importance of a compelling and skin-deep strategy.

6.2 Implications

After analyzing the findings, the implications are included and illustrated below for Colombian coffee producers (sellers) and market strategists and policymakers.

Market Adaptation and Strategy Development:

For Colombian coffee to be imported to the Zurich specialty coffee scene, the producers need to understand the local market, and tailor-make their product. In our high-quality standard, as well as relevant certification, in a market where sustainability and ethical sourcing is important. This is indicative of a growing need for producers to invest in sustainable practice and transparent supply chains to cater for Zurich‘s discerning consumers.

Focus on Sustainability and Ethical Sourcing:

The growing demand for ethically sourced and sustainable products in Zurich suggests that Colombian coffee producers can gain a competitive advantage by emphasizing these aspects in their marketing and production strategies. By promoting the ethical and sustainable nature of their coffee, producers can align themselves with consumer values, potentially leading to increased market share and brand loyalty in Zurich.

Digital Presence and Storytelling:

This research emphasizes adopting a digital presence and presence throughout the consumer journey cycle to tell a story and build a brand experience with Zurich consumers. This means Colombian coffee producers should focus on shaping the way digital marketing platforms tell their best stories about the coffee they produce, where it comes from, and who‘s behind it. This in turn helps them forge a more personal and emotional connection with consumers.

Policy and Industry Support:

The findings point to the need, for policymakers and other players in the industry, to help Colombian coffee producers to access certifications, sustainable practice improvement strategies and marketing skills. This may matter giving them access to training, funding and platforms that will allow producers to meet international standards and successfully market it overseas.

Potential for Market Diversification:

The discoveries made through this research suggest that Colombian coffee producers could theoretically expand their market share outside of Zurich. Producers could use this experience to venture into other European markets with similar consumer habits if they understood and catered to the high standards set by Zurich‘s specialty coffee scene. This means the planning made for Zurich may represent a pilot for even larger market growth in Europe. All in all, the potential outcomes of this study indicate that Colombian coffee producers would be able to work through the challenges of the Zurich market and leverage its opportunities if using the correct supportive and branding strategies. This will not only increase the market share in Zurich but also give access to other global and European markets where similar consumer trends are available.

6.3 Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, several recommendations for future research can be proposed:

Comparative Studies Across Different European Markets:

Future research could explore the specialty coffee market in other European cities or regions to compare consumer preferences and market dynamics with those identified in Zurich. This would help in understanding whether the strategies effective in Zurich are applicable in other markets or if there are unique factors in different regions that require tailored approaches.

Longitudinal Studies on Market Trends:

It would be interesting to track consumer preferences, trends, and the effectiveness of marketing strategies over time. Such virtues may assist coffee producers in navigating a turbulent and adaptive market environment, enabling them to anticipate emerging consumer trends.

Analysis of Consumer Perception and Branding:

Incorporating elements of branding, such as ethical sourcing, sustainability, and storytelling to analyse their impact on consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions that could help build brand loyalty and establish the brand within a market, would be fertile territory for future research.

Impact of Digital Marketing Strategies:

In light of the significance of digital presence outlined in this study, it would be interesting for future works to investigate the effect of different digital marketing approaches on consumer engagement and sales in the specialty coffee industry. This might consist of studies on social media marketing, influencer engagements and online storytelling that would aid producers in sharpening their digital marketing work. It could also lead to better digital media ads for the brands.

Role of Certifications in Market Penetration:

It would be interesting to explore how certifications (Fair Trade, Organic, Rainforest Alliance, etc.) influence market penetration and consumer trust. Future studies, using experimental designs, might investigate the extent of direct effects of these certifications on consumption choices across market segments, and their effects on the profits and competitiveness of coffee producers.

Cross-Cultural Consumer Behaviour Analysis:

Since the specialty coffee market is not one cultural context it would be interesting for future research to investigate possible cross-cultural differences of consumer behavior and preferences across different markets. The stakeholders are able to design marketing strategies to compete in the diverse markets as they would understand the cultural and relatively other factors influencing the consumption of the coffee product.

Supply Chain and Producer Challenges:

Other useful long-term studies could include work identifying the constraints for Colombian coffee producers to comply with the international specialty coffee market. Research could study things like cost barriers, logistical challenges, and the effects of global trade policy on small leaders. This would enable a fuller understanding of barriers to market entry and success.

Environmental Impact Studies:

With an increasing emphasis on sustainability, future research options may include the environmental impact of coffee production and how various farming best practices impact the environment as well as consumer perceptions. An example could be experimental study on how sustainable methods can help reduce carbon footprints while also building a positive brand image among consumers. Conclusion Although this study comprised important tendencies of the Zurich specialty coffee market, we consider there is still much ground to cover in order to complement our comprehension and support Colombian coffee producers improving their offer. The areas mentioned above offer considerable opportunities for future research that could help to inform improved marketing, production, and sustainability activities in the global specialty coffee industry.

6.4 Conclusion

This research has provided a comprehensive analysis of the specialty coffee market in Zurich, with a specific focus on the market opportunities and challenges faced by Colombian coffee producers. The study highlights the growing demand for high-quality, ethically sourced coffee and the importance of brand differentiation in a competitive market. Key findings indicate that consumer preferences are strongly influenced by factors such as flavor profile, sustainability, and the narrative behind the product, which underscores the need for coffee producers to strategically align their offerings with these market demands.

After investigating three research questions, It showed that success is related to quality, sustainability certifications, and effective marketing strategies. The emphasis of the findings tells that despite of the opportunities, the Colombian coffee producers are obliged to conquer the different challenges such as market entry, consumer education, and competition from rivals. Finally, this research adds to a great emphasis of understanding the specialty of coffee market dynamics in Zurich. Furthermore, it gives different information for coffee producers who are required to expand the coffee market in Europe. By applying the findings and suggestions of the study, producers are likely to achieve greater success while aligning themselves with the changing needs and demands of the specialty coffee sector, an approach that would guarantee market satisfaction as well as economic sustainability. There is wide focused research and adaptation of approaches in this scenario to stay competitive amongst the global Coffee Industry continue to thrive in the best possible scenario.

APPENDIX 1:

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Study Title: Challenges of New Colombian Coffee Brand Market Entry in Switzerland: A Focus on the Zurich Market

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Institution: Swiss School of Business and Management Geneva

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Introduction: You are being invited to participate in a research study exploring the challenges faced by new Colombian coffee brands entering the Swiss market, particularly in Zurich as part of my DBA dissertation. This study aims to gather insights from Colombian coffee producers and Swiss coffee industry experts through semi-structured interviews on these challenges and thereby provide marketing strategies

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research is threefold:

1. Explore the challenges faced by new Colombian coffee brands in entering the Zurich market.
2. Identify specific barriers in this process.
3. Investigate market preferences for Colombian coffee brands compared to existing brands in Zurich.

Participation Requirements: Your participation will involve:

- Taking part in a semi-structured interview lasting approximately 30 to 45 minutes

- Discussing your experiences, insights, and opinions related to the Colombian coffee market and its entry into Switzerland.

Confidentiality: Your responses will be kept confidential. All data collected will be anonymized, and no identifying information will be included in any reports or publications. The data will be stored securely and only accessible to the researcher.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate or withdraw at any time without any consequences. If you decide to withdraw, your data will be deleted from the study.

Potential Risks: There are no foreseeable risks associated with participating in this study. However, if you feel uncomfortable at any point, you may choose to stop the interview.

Potential Benefits: While there may not be direct benefits to you, your insights will contribute to a better understanding of the challenges faced by Colombian coffee producers in Switzerland and may inform strategies for successful market entry.

Contact Information: If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please feel free to contact the researcher at the contact information provided above. You may also contact Swiss School of Business and Management Geneva for any ethical concerns regarding this study.

Consent Statement: By signing below, you agree to participate in this study and acknowledge that you have read and understood the information provided above. You also consent to the recording of the interview.

Participant's Name: ______________________________

Date: ______________________________

Thank you for considering to participate in this research study. Your insights are very important and highly appreciated.

APPENDIX 2:

INTERVIEW GUIDES

Coffee Producer Interview Guide:

This guide will cover key areas such as the producer's background, export history, their motivations for entering the Swiss market, and the specific challenges encountered. Some key topics will include:

- Import processes and regulatory hurdles faced
- Difficulties in establishing local distribution channels
- Pricing strategies employed and their effectiveness
- Marketing efforts targeting Swiss consumers and their resonance
- Perceptions of Swiss consumer preferences compared to other markets
- Competitive landscape and positioning relative to established brands

The guide will feature open-ended questions to allow producers to share their experiences and perspectives in detail.

Industry Expert Interview Guide:

For interviewing Swiss coffee experts like cafe owners, roasters, and market analysts, the guide will focus on developing a comprehensive understanding of the market dynamics. Key areas will include:

- Mapping of major coffee brands and their positioning
- Perceived consumer preferences regarding origins, certifications, roast profiles

- Challenges faced by new entrant brands from abroad
- Perspectives on Colombian coffee's quality positioning and awareness among Swiss consumers
- Preferred marketing channels and partnerships for reaching local consumers gaps or white spaces where a new brand could effectively differentiate

APPENDIX 3:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions for Colombian Coffee Producers:

1. Can you describe your experiences attempting to enter the Swiss coffee market so far? What have been the biggest challenges or barriers you've encountered?

2. What have been the key issues around importing your coffee into Switzerland - in terms of logistics, costs, regulations, customs, etc?
3. How have you approached establishing distribution partnerships or retail channels in Switzerland/Zurich? What difficulties have you faced?
4. In your market research and interactions, what are your perceptions of the Swiss coffee consumer's tastes and preferences? How do they differ from other markets you've targeted?
5. What marketing, branding or positioning strategies have you employed to appeal to Swiss consumers? How well have these resonated?
6. How have you determined pricing for your coffee offerings in the Swiss market? What factors influenced your pricing decisions?
7. What kind of brand awareness and recognition do you feel Colombian coffee has currently among Swiss consumers and the industry?
8. What resources, connections or localized tactics have you utilized or plan to utilize to drive consumer adoption and visibility in the Swiss market?
9. Overall, what do you feel are the gaps in your knowledge or strategy that have impeded success so far in Switzerland?

10. What kind of market insights, guidance or local Swiss expertise would be most valuable to you in improving your market entry approach going forward?

11. What role do sustainability and ethical sourcing play in your overall brand strategy, and how important do you think these aspects are to Swiss consumers?

12. What kind of partnerships or collaborations have you considered to boost your brand‘s visibility in Zurich or the broader Swiss market?

13. Have you noticed any significant regional differences within Switzerland that have affected how you approach the Zurich market versus other Swiss cities or regions?

14. How does your brand handle feedback from Swiss retailers or consumers? Have you made any product or strategy changes based on local input?

15. In your view, what role does digital marketing play in gaining traction in the Swiss coffee market? Have you made any efforts in this area?

Interview Questions for Swiss Coffee Industry Experts:

1. How would you characterize the current coffee market landscape in Zurich/Switzerland? Who are the major players, chains and officials?
2. How would you describe the average Swiss coffee consumer's tastes and preferences? What attributes, certifications or qualities do they value most?
3. Are there distinct consumer segments in the Swiss market? If so, how would you describe their differing behaviors or preferences?
4. What type of coffee brands or products tend to resonate most with Swiss consumers currently? Conversely, what falls flat?

5. What are the typical pricing levels or ranges you see for commodity vs specialty coffee? How price sensitive are consumers?
6. In your experience, how strong is brand loyalty to existing Italian, French and local Swiss coffee companies? Is there openness to new, international brands?
7. What type of marketing channels, tactics or partnerships tend to be most effective for building awareness and driving trial of a new coffee offering in Zurich?
8. What barriers or challenges do you perceive for a new Colombian coffee brand trying to gain entry to the Swiss market currently?
9. What trends or innovations in the Swiss coffee market are you currently observing? How are they shaping consumer preferences?
10. How has the Swiss coffee market evolved in recent years? Are there any shifts in consumer preferences or behaviors that stand out?
11. How important are certifications (e.g., Fair Trade, Organic) in the Swiss coffee market? Are there other certifications or sustainability measures that Swiss consumers prioritize?
12. What role does local Swiss culture play in shaping the coffee preferences and behaviors of Swiss consumers?
13. What challenges do you foresee for international coffee brands trying to establish themselves in the Swiss market?
14. What qualities or characteristics would help an international coffee brand differentiate itself and succeed in the Swiss market?
15. What role does technology play in the Swiss coffee market? Have you observed any innovations around how coffee is produced, sold, or consumed?

APPENDIX 4:

CODING FILE FOR INTERVIEWS WITH COFFEE PRODUCERS

Overarching theme	First order codes	Second order themes
Market Entry Challenges	• Difficulties establishing relationships with local distributors. • Complex bureaucratic and regulatory hurdles. • Lack of brand recognition and loyalty to existing brands. • Misjudgment of Swiss consumer taste preferences. • Pricing challenges due to high import costs	• Distribution Barriers • Regulatory Complexity • Consumer Preferences

Sustainable and ethical sourcing	• Core value of sustainability in brand strategy. • Importance of ethical sourcing to Swiss consumers. • Challenges in effectively communicating sustainability efforts. • Growing interest in environmental issues among Swiss consumers.	• Sustainability Messaging • Consumer Values
Marketing and Branding Strategies	• Positioning as a premium, artisanal brand. • Emphasis on sustainability and ethical sourcing. • Efforts to enhance brand awareness through tastings and local engagement. • Mixed results from targeted marketing efforts	• Brand Differentiation • Local Marketing Effectiveness

APPENDIX 5:

CODING FILE FOR INTERVIEWS WITH INDUSTRY EXPERTS

Overarching theme	First order codes	Second order themes
Brand Loyalty and Challenges for New Entrants	• Entrenched Brand Loyalty • Brand loyalty is extremely high • New entrants face an uphill battle • Resistance to Change	• Openness to Innovation • Younger consumers more open to new brands • Interest in unique offerings
Consumer segments	• Consumer Preferences and Behaviour • Taste Profiles • Convenience and Environment • Overall coffee shop environment drives loyalty	• Younger, adventurous consumers vs. older, traditionalists. • Urban vs. rural preferences • Emphasis on Organic, Fair Trade. • Willing to pay premium for quality.

Change, Trend and Innovation	• Emerging Trends • Rise in cold brew and nitro coffee • Interest in home brewing equipment • Technology Integration • Subscription services and online retail growth • Smart home coffee machines gaining traction	• Evolution of Consumption • Shift toward personalized coffee experiences

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