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Business model adaptation in the male grooming industry during international market entry: a comparative analysis of Ukraine and the United States

Kyseliuk Rostyslav
Master's Degree, Chief Executive Officer
RossBossBarber LLC, Sacramento, California, USA,
e-mail: rossbossbarber@gmail.com
https://orcid.org/0009-0003-0700-0927

Abstract. The entry of men's grooming industry enterprises into foreign markets requires scientifically based coordination of the service format with local demand and institutional conditions, since the direct transfer of home practice does not guarantee either value for the client in the form of a predictable result and safe service or economic value for the enterprise. The purpose of the study is to develop a three-level framework for adapting the business model of a Ukrainian men's grooming enterprise to the US market and operationalize it in a comparative matrix of 10 components. A structured integrative review was used to systematize theoretical approaches; comparative management analysis was used to establish differences between the two countries' conditions; thematic coding and matrix synthesis were used to identify group factors. The empirical basis consisted of 23 scientific and official sources from the Scopus, Web of Science Core Collection, EBSCO Business Source Complete, and Google Scholar databases, as well as materials from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, the Executive Office of the President of the United States, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the United States. The developed framework delineates the model's stable core, market localization and institutional fit. It has been established that the stable core includes the service result agreed with the client, the technical quality of its execution, the sanitary safety of the workplace and tools, professional consultation, consistent brand promise and the systematic transfer of knowledge to the staff. It is shown that customer segmentation, service menu, prices, attractions and booking channels, location format, terms of employment and partner network need to be assessed for a specific local segment. Registration, tax, licensing, labor, health, insurance, information and infrastructure requirements must be met by the company and professionals before entering into irrevocable commitments in the selected US state and city. For the first time, the simultaneous assessment of adaptation solutions based on their reversibility and the binding nature of related legal requirements is substantiated for the researched area. The practical significance of the results lies in the possibility for barbershop owners and managers to use the matrix to audit readiness, choose a jurisdiction, design a legal pilot, and decide whether to continue, adjust, or stop scaling. Within the proposed framework, digital tools can be applied for booking, consent capture, repeat demand analysis and consultation support to implement and monitor adaptation solutions.

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Keywords: small and medium-sized service enterprises, service-format localization, regulatory compliance, customer value, staged piloting; digital service channels, occupational licensing, decision reversibility, readiness audit.

Адаптація бізнес-моделі підприємств індустрії чоловічого грумінгу під час виходу на міжнародні ринки: порівняльний аналіз України та США

Киселюк Ростислав
магістр, генеральний директор,
RossBossBarber LLC, м. Сакраменто, штат Каліфорнія, США
e-mail: rossbossbarber@gmail.com
https://orcid.org/0009-0003-0700-0927

Анотація. Вихід підприємств індустрії чоловічого грумінгу на закордонні ринки потребує науково обґрунтованого узгодження сервісного формату з локальним попитом та інституційними умовами, оскільки пряме перенесення домашньої практики не гарантує ані цінності для клієнта у вигляді передбачуваного результату й безпечного обслуговування, ані економічної цінності для підприємства. Метою дослідження є розроблення трирівневої рамки адаптації бізнес-моделі українського підприємства чоловічого грумінгу до ринку США та її операціоналізація в порівняльній матриці з 10 компонентів. Для систематизації теоретичних підходів застосовано структурований інтегративний огляд; для встановлення відмінностей між умовами двох країн – порівняльний управлінський аналіз; для групування виявлених чинників – тематичне кодування та матричний синтез. Емпіричну основу становили 23 наукових і офіційних джерел із баз даних Scopus, Web of Science Core Collection, EBSCO Business Source Complete і Google Scholar, а також матеріали Організації економічного співробітництва та розвитку, Державної служби статистики України, Виконавчого офісу Президента США та Бюро статистики праці США. Розроблена рамка розмежовує стабільне ядро, ринкову локалізацію та інституційну відповідність моделі. Установлено, що до стабільного ядра належать погоджений із клієнтом результат послуги, технічна якість її виконання, санітарна безпека робочого місця та інструментів, професійна консультація, послідовна обіцянка бренду та системне передавання знань персоналу. Показано, що сегментація клієнтів, сервісне меню, ціни, канали залучення та бронювання, формат локації, умови зайнятості й партнерська мережа потребують перевірки в конкретному локальному сегменті. Реєстраційні, податкові, ліцензійні, трудові, санітарні, страхові, інформаційні та інфраструктурні вимоги повинні бути виконані підприємством і фахівцями до укладення незворотних зобов’язань у вибраному штаті та місті США. Вперше для досліджуваної сфери обґрунтовано одночасне оцінювання адаптаційних рішень за їхньою оборотністю та обов’язковістю пов’язаних правових вимог. Практичне значення результатів полягає в можливості використання матриці власниками й менеджерами барбершопів для аудиту готовності, вибору юрисдикції, проєктування законного пілоту та ухвалення рішення щодо продовження, коригування або припинення масштабування. У межах запропонованої рамки цифрові засоби можуть використовуватися для бронювання, фіксації згоди, аналізу повторного попиту та підтримки консультації як інструменти реалізації й контролю адаптаційних рішень.

Ключові слова: малі та середні підприємства сфери послуг, локалізація сервісного формату, нормативна відповідність, клієнтська цінність, поетапне пілотування, цифрові

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канали обслуговування, професійне ліцензування, оборотність рішень, аудит готовності.

Introduction

Relevance of the problem. International scaling of a Ukrainian men's grooming business means transferring not only the service delivery technique or visual identity, but an interconnected system of creating customer value and generating business income. The theoretical issue is to determine the boundaries between the elements that ensure the integrity of the business model and those that should change in response to local demand. The practical issue concerns the sequence of decisions regarding licensing, personnel, location, service menu, prices and channels for attracting customers. The relevance of such a distinction has increased due to the digitalization of services, the international mobility of Ukrainian small and medium-sized enterprises and the significant difference in regulatory and cost conditions in Ukraine and the USA.

Business model studies show that the value proposition, operating procedures, interaction channels, revenues, costs and partnerships form a system; therefore, a local change in one element affects the others [1, p. 36]. For barbershops, this interdependence is particularly important: the service is created through the master's physical interaction with the client, its outcome is partly evaluated subjectively, and repeat demand depends on trust in a particular specialist. Therefore, a format that is effective in one country may be economically or institutionally unsuitable in another due to differences in consumer expectations, work organization, insurance and professional admission. Adaptation should preserve the model's causal logic while changing its market-dependent elements [2, p. 567].

Analysis of recent studies and publications. B. W. Wirtz, A. Pistoia, S. Ullrich and V. Göttel have shown that a business model should be assessed as a configuration of interdependent components, rather than as a list of autonomous solutions [1]. In another study, T. Saebi, L. Lien and N. J. Foss linked the adaptation of a business model to the company's response to opportunities, threats and strategic orientation [2]. These provisions provide a sound theoretical framework, but do not specify what changes are permissible for a regulated contact service and in what sequence they should be tested. However, the authors' conclusion is fundamental: adaptation should be assessed not only in terms of market feasibility, but also in terms of the impact on service quality and the legitimacy of the activity.

Scholars M. J. D. Roberts and E. Muralidharan have established the importance of experiential learning and local networks for the internationalization of service small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) [3], and C. Fernandes, P. M. Veiga and S. Gerschewski have supplemented this approach with attention to institutional conditions, sustainability and post-entry development [4]. W. Reim et al. have shown that digital tools facilitate demand testing, booking and knowledge transfer, but do not eliminate the need to rebuild the business model [5], and S. Denicolai, A. Zucchella, G. Magnani have warned that the effect of digitalization depends on its alignment with the international growth strategy [6], which explains the mechanism of uncertainty reduction. Still, the question of the boundary between a reversible market experiment and a solution that creates long-term legal and financial obligations remains unresolved.

Industry works clarify the content of customer value. For example, A. Byrne and K. Milestone found that the visibility of grooming practices and norms of masculinity affect men's choices [7]. M. F. Arifin, Hartoyo and E. Z. Yusuf linked the quality of barbershop service with customer satisfaction and loyalty [8]. In turn, Ye. Matsapura [9] and S. Nersisian [10] have highlighted the potential of digital visualization and generative artificial intelligence for decision personalization. In contrast, O. Pasulia has highlighted the psychological aspects of the connection between changes in appearance and self-esteem and body perception [11].

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Collectively, these studies confirm the importance of consultation, informed consent and professional control in the service sector. Still, each considers a separate element and does not constitute a holistic algorithm for the enterprise's international adaptation. The conditions under which such adaptation occurs were examined by M. Pasko and co-authors, who identified uneven digital readiness among enterprises and the impact of resource constraints [12]. Ye. Polishchuk, Yu. Herneho and V. Horbov showed that the resilience of a relocated business is determined by the ability to restore processes, customer relationships and digital presence [13]. At the same time, V. Strilets et al. substantiated the role of financial, consulting and educational tools in supporting the digitalization of SMEs [14], and O. Ptashchenko et al. showed the need to coordinate data, platform presence and local marketing communication [15]. Thus, in conclusion, it is worth noting that international scaling requires a comprehensive approach, and while digital accessibility facilitates contact with the market, it does not compensate for inconsistencies in the service format, personnel qualifications or legal conditions.

Unresolved parts of the general problem. Existing research separately highlights the adaptation of business models, the internationalization of SMEs, digitalization, service quality and the peculiarities of consumption in the grooming sector. At the same time, these areas are not integrated into a tool that would allow a men's grooming enterprise to compare the conditions of Ukraine and the USA and determine the sequence of management decisions. The elements that ensure the stability of the business model, as well as reversible local experiments and mandatory institutional conditions, are also insufficiently delineated. It is this gap that led to the development of the proposed framework and comparative matrix.

Purpose of the article is to develop a three-level framework for adapting the business model of a Ukrainian men's grooming enterprise to the US market and to operationalize it in a comparative matrix of ten components. To achieve the goal, the following tasks were set: 1) to establish the features of creating customer value and generating income in the modern barbershop business model; 2) to substantiate the general logic and sequence of adaptation of a service enterprise during international scaling; 3) to compare the market and institutional conditions of Ukraine and the USA according to 10 components; 4) to determine the criteria for attributing management decisions to a stable core, market localization or institutional compliance.

Scientific novelty. For the first time, for men's grooming enterprises, the simultaneous assessment of adaptation decisions according to their reversibility and the binding nature of related legal requirements has been substantiated. The approach to the international adaptation of a service business model has been improved by distinguishing between a stable core, verifiable local hypotheses and institutional prerequisites for activity. The application of matrix analysis has been further developed to link each identified market difference with a specific decision, responsible executor and proof of readiness.

Practical significance. The results of the study can be used by owners and managers of individual barbershops, small chains, and service-product brands to audit their readiness to enter the US market. The matrix allows choosing a jurisdiction, defining the local pilot's content, assigning responsibility for compliance, and making an informed decision about whether to scale, adjust, or terminate the project before making irreversible investments.

Methodology

Research methods. A structured integrative review was used to identify theoretical provisions regarding business models, service internationalization, and customer experience. Comparative management analysis was used to identify functionally significant differences between the conditions of Ukraine and the US. Thematic coding enabled the combination of the identified factors into 10 components, and matrix synthesis allowed correlating each component with a decision to retain, local testing, or mandatory institutional approval. Each

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proposed solution was additionally evaluated according to two criteria: reversibility and the mandatory nature of related legal requirements. Turnover was determined by the feasibility and cost of returning to the previous state: high for changes within a short pilot; medium for retraining or contract revisions; low for long-term leases, permanent staff commitments, or significant exit costs. The mandatory nature of legal requirements was assessed separately, as a commercially viable experiment may not be feasible without the proper license, appropriate premises, or compliance with labor and sanitation requirements. Categories were checked for symmetry, i.e., their definition had to remain the same when comparing Ukrainian and U.S. conditions. Negative case analysis was used to identify situations in which standardization creates legal risk or excessive localization undermines the brand promise. The resulting matrix was checked for coverage of customer, operational, HR, financial, partner, digital, and institutional dimensions.

Data sources. The empirical basis of the study was 23 scientific and official sources: 18 professional publications and 5 official reports or classifications. The search was conducted in Scopus, Web of Science Core Collection, EBSCO Business Source Complete and Google Scholar. The corpus included peer-reviewed works and official documents that directly related to business model change, internationalization of service SMEs, quality and consumption of care services, digital personalization, the Ukrainian business environment or professional and industry requirements of the United States. Materials from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development were used to characterize the digital transformation of SMEs and the Ukrainian business environment [16; 17], the State Statistics Service of Ukraine — to define the service sector according to KVED 96.02 [18], the Executive Office of the US President — to compare the NAICS industry classification [19], and the US Bureau of Labor Statistics — to verify the requirements for training and licensing of specialists [20].

Analysis tools. The evidence matrix and thematic coding results were generated in Microsoft Excel 365. For each source, the market, method, relevant business model component, institutional significance, managerial conclusion, and limitations were recorded.

Research limitations. The proposed framework does not assess the market capacity, causal effects, or financial results of a specific network. Its transfer requires local verification, since in the USA professional requirements vary by state, and in Ukraine market conditions remain dynamic. Therefore, the proposed tool supports preliminary audit and pilot design, but does not replace legal, tax, insurance, or property expertise.

Results

Features of the business model of a men's grooming enterprise. Thematic coding of data indicates that the barbershop business model belongs to high-contact service models, in which customer value is created directly during the interaction between the client and the master. It encompasses not only the final shape of a hairstyle or beard, but also the predictability of the result, sanitary safety, timeliness, respect for individual preferences and the possibility of correcting a mistake. The enterprise receives economic value when this set of characteristics ensures repeat visits, recommendations and sufficient marginal income per productive hour. Therefore, a change in price, booking channel or staffing model simultaneously affects the customer experience, load, costs and quality control, which confirms the systemic interpretation of the business model [1, p. 41; 2, p. 570]. The model's stability is ensured not by a separate visual style but by reproducible professional competence. Studies of the consumption of care services show that the customer's decision is associated with the norms of visibility, self-identification and comfort [7, p. 147–149], and loyalty is associated with the technical and interpersonal quality of service [8, p. 86–87]. It follows that the agreement on the expected result, the technical quality of the service, sanitary safety, correct communication and recovery from a service error cannot be arbitrarily changed when entering another market.

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These elements form a stable core, because their weakening destroys the very mechanism of repeated demand.

The modern service model is both modular and digitally supported. The basic service can be supplemented with express formats, packages, subscriptions, retail sales or visualization of the expected image, without changing the minimum standard of the result. Digital tools simplify the search for a client, booking, payment, recording consent and analyzing repeat visits, but create value only in combination with agreed processes and competent personnel. For Ukrainian enterprises, this modularity further supports sustainability under conditions of resource constraints and forced restructuring of customer relationships.

Generalizing data on the logic of adapting the business model of male grooming industry enterprises during international scaling allows for the identification of three different adaptation mechanisms. The first is maintaining a stable core that guarantees the same minimum result for the client regardless of the country. The second is market localization of the reversible elements: segments, set of services, prices, channels of attraction and booking, atmosphere, partnerships and employment conditions. They should be formulated as hypotheses and tested on a limited local segment. The third is institutional coordination, which determines whether the enterprise and the specialist have the right to provide a specific service in the chosen location. The allocation of this mechanism to a separate level prevents the mistake of assuming that the presence of demand is a sufficient basis for launching. The sequence of decisions depends on the reversibility and legal risk. Changes to the advertising message, test set of services or working hours can be quickly adjusted after receiving feedback.

In contrast, long-term leases, hiring a permanent team, purchasing specialized equipment, and franchising obligations entail market-entry costs and should be undertaken only after confirming demand and marginal revenue per productive hour. Licensing, permissible scope of services, health standards, and employee status are checked even earlier, since non-compliance with these conditions cannot be justified by a successful market test. Thus, the sequence of actions when entering international markets requires a transition from mandatory legal verification to a revolving pilot, and only then to capital-intensive scaling.

Official sources have revealed a fundamental institutional asymmetry between the Ukrainian and US markets. In Ukraine, KVED 96.02 encompasses washing, cutting, styling, coloring hair, shaving, and beard trimming as part of hairdressing and other beauty services [18]. At the same time, in the USA, NAICS 812111 distinguishes barbershops as an independent industry, but the classification itself does not grant the right to perform services [19, p. 574]. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates the need for training according to a state-approved program and passing a licensing exam, with specific rules determined at the state level [20]. Therefore, for a Ukrainian enterprise, the primary focus is not the abstract "US market" but the specific conditions depending on the state, city, premises and the permitted scope of work. The market logic of these countries also differs. In Ukraine, the model must take into account a wider range of purchasing power, the risks of power supply and communication disruptions, the need to quickly restore customer contacts and limited resources for digital transformation [12, p. 126–127; 13, p. 71; 17, p. 13]. In the US, a higher nominal check cannot automatically be interpreted as higher profitability: it is accompanied by different labor and rental costs, insurance, platform fees, premises requirements and professional admission. Therefore, the price should be determined not by currency conversion but by the duration of the service, marginal revenue per productive hour, loading, rebooking and the cost of acquiring a client.

According to the client components, the difference lies in how the same promise is confirmed. In Ukraine, the emphasis may be on a combination of skill, accessibility and sustainable service, while in a specific US segment, it may be on convenience, specialization, regional identity, inclusivity or premium expertise. This does not mean replacing the service's results; wording, portfolio, service modules and communication evidence are localized. According to the operational components, both markets require a single standard of

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consultation, sanitary safety and error correction, but different continuity plans, staffing conditions and partner networks. The comparative logic of business model adaptation according to ten factors is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Comparative Matrix of Business Model Adaptation Factors in Ukraine and the United States

Business Model Component			
Ukraine	USA	Adaptation decision	Managerial rationale
Value proposition			
Craft, trust, contemporary identity, resilient convenience; broad affordability range	Convenience, specialization, neighborhood identity, inclusion, or premium expertise by micro-market	Keep client outcome and quality promise; localize wording and proof	Preserves brand logic while avoiding culturally narrow masculinity cues
Segments and positioning			
Segment by city, travel time, income, lifestyle, language, visit frequency	Segment by neighborhood/state, demographics, hair and beard needs, convenience, identity, spend	Test 2–3 priority micro-segments and their evidence	National stereotypes do not predict serviceable demand
Service portfolio and experience			
Core haircut/beard modules; accessible bundles; mobile-first communication	Core modules plus express, premium, membership, retail, or specialist variants where viable	Standardize checkpoints; localize modules, wording, hospitality, and tipping cues	Modularity protects quality and enables demand tests
Channels and relationships			
Social, messengers, maps, referrals, booking and owned client records	Maps, reviews, booking platforms, local search, referrals, CRM and permission-based follow-up	Using local discovery but build a controllable retention data spine	Reduces platform dependency and makes repeat behavior measurable
Pricing and revenue			
Wider price ladder; purchasing-power sensitivity; selective retail and prepayment	Higher nominal tickets with higher labor, rent, insurance, fees, and gratuity expectations	Rebuilding price tiers and contribution by productive hour; pilot add-ons	Currency conversion hides unit-economic difference
Operations and quality			
Resilience for power, connectivity, supplies, staffing, and rapid communication	Licensing, inspections, accessibility, insurance, landlord, and worker-status controls	One quality minimum; market-specific contingency and launch checklists	Makes the client promise reproducible and risk evidence visible
People and knowledge			

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Local labor availability, portable training, fair schedules, process continuity	State license eligibility, lawful pay and tips, retention, education, schedule stability	Verify credentials; localize employer proposition; assess supervised skills	Professional capability is the main scaling constraint
Partners and supplies			
Local distributors, digital providers, advisers, resilience backups, community ties	Landlords, insurers, board-aware educators, compliant professionals, local demand partners	Define performance specifications, approved substitutes, and partner due diligence	Local networks reduce uncertainty but cannot replace official verification
Cost and scaling			
Control capital exposure; design for disruption; use portable systems and staged sites	Model high fixed and compliance costs; test neighborhood economics before replication	Match entry mode to uncertainty and scale only after predetermined gates	Prevents mature-format costs from preceding validated demand
Regulation and risk			
Verify entity/tax, KVED scope, labor, sanitation, consumer and data obligations	Verify state practitioner/establishment licenses, service scope, payroll, insurance, occupancy	Create a dated, jurisdiction-specific compliance register with owners and evidence	Compliance is an architectural entry condition, not a launch-stage correction

Source: developed by the author based on [1, p. 41; 2, p. 577; 3, p. 902; 5, p. 7; 7, p. 156; 12, p. 132; 18, p. 1; 19, p. 574; 20, p. 1]

The order of testing adaptation factors depends on the enterprise's country of origin and the target market. For a Ukrainian enterprise planning to enter the US market, before testing demand and price, it is necessary to confirm the possibility of licensing specialists, the permissible scope of services, the suitability of the premises, insurance coverage and the legality of the chosen employment model. For an American enterprise entering the Ukrainian market, the affordability of prices for the target segment, continuity of work, reliability of supply and the ability of the local team to support service processes are of primary importance. Therefore, the differences between markets determine not the advantage of one model, but the sequence of testing specific market and institutional prerequisites before sunk costs occur.

The analysis of the factors described in Table 1 allows for the proposal of a three-level framework for adapting a men’s grooming company's business model when entering international markets. The first level — the stable core of the business model — covers the characteristics of the service that must be maintained regardless of the country: the agreed-upon result with the client, the technical quality of execution, sanitary safety, professional consultation, a consistent brand promise and the transfer of knowledge to staff. The second level — market localization — covers customer segments, service menu, prices, channels of engagement and booking, location format, terms of employment and partnership, the effectiveness of which must be verified in a specific local segment. The third level — institutional compliance — defines the mandatory legal and organizational prerequisites for providing services for the company, specialists and premises. Such a structure connects three types of management decisions: immutable service standards, reversible market hypotheses and mandatory conditions of lawful activity.

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The practical application of the proposed framework involves a sequence of management actions that begins with defining a consistent outcome for the customer and identifying the legal, operational, and financial risks that make it impossible to launch a local barbershop pilot in the selected jurisdiction. The company then compares available jurisdictions, conducts local interviews and observations, fills in a matrix for a specific customer segment, and selects a minimum legal pilot format. For each critical hypothesis, an indicator, a threshold, a responsible person, and a review date are defined. This transforms the accumulation of market evidence into a managed process and avoids the intuitive copying of a successful home-market format. At the stage of testing local customer segments, generative AI may be used to adapt visual content to customer and contextual signals; however, its use requires control over data quality, transparency, privacy and the risk of excessive personalization [21, p. 11–13]

1. STABLE CORE
Client outcome • technical quality • hygiene • trust • brand promise • learning

↓

2. MARKET LOCALIZATION
Segments • menu • pricing • channels • location • people • partners

↓

3. INSTITUTIONAL COMPLIANCE
Registration • licensing • labor • sanitation • insurance • privacy • accessibility

Fig 1. Three-layer business model adaptation framework for international market entry

Source: developed by the author

The identified stages create the basis for the transition from piloting to scaling the business model. Expansion is only advisable if the stable technical quality of services, sufficient repeat bookings, staff retention, compliance with legal requirements and positive marginal income per productive hour are simultaneously confirmed. If licensing or other mandatory requirements are not met, the local pilot cannot continue regardless of demand; if repeat demand is insufficient, the local offer should be adjusted; if systemic quality defects are detected, this indicates a violation of the stable core of the business model. Therefore, the framework determines not only the type of adaptation solutions, but also the conditions for their continuation, adjustment, suspension or termination. For demand monitoring, the logic of adaptive forecasting is also applicable by analogy: forecasts should be updated as new market data arrive, because a one-time estimate can reproduce outdated patterns after a structural change [22, p. 11]. In a barbershop pilot, this means rolling review of bookings, repeat visits and marginal revenue rather than mechanically transferring an export-sales model to a contact service.

Discussion

Interpretation of results. The results obtained allow consideration of the international scaling of a barbershop as a selective reconfiguration of interdependent factors within the business system. The stability of the result for the client is achieved through the reproducibility of professional performance: deterioration in the technical quality of the service, sanitary safety, or compliance with expectations cannot be compensated for by a locally attractive price or the institution's design. The effectiveness of market localization, by contrast, is supported by quick feedback mechanisms, since segments, service menus, communication messages, opening hours, and booking channels can be adjusted in response to customers' actual behavior. Institutional compliance is mandatory: if a specific requirement for licensing,

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premises, labor, or sanitary standards is not met, service provision in the planned format cannot begin. Thus, the three levels of the framework perform different management functions: the stable core defines an unchanging standard of service, market localization is the sphere of reversible experiments, and institutional compliance sets the boundaries of legitimate activity. Differences in the functions of the three levels determine the differing orders of management actions in the Ukrainian and US markets. For a Ukrainian company entering the US market, before verifying commercial demand, it is necessary to confirm the professional admission of specialists, the suitability of the premises, insurance coverage and the legality of the employment model. For an American company entering the Ukrainian market, after verifying the mandatory national requirements, the affordability of the price for the target segment, the continuity of service processes and the reliability of supply become especially important. Therefore, comparing the two markets determines the procedure for verifying specific management hypotheses - regarding demand, price, service format, staffing model and operational sustainability - in the selected jurisdiction and client segment. The lower the decision's turnaround time and the more mandatory legal requirements are associated with its implementation, the more convincing the evidence should be before making such a decision. For example, for a short-term advertising experiment, it is sufficient to evaluate conversion over a certain period. In contrast, before concluding a long-term lease, it is necessary to simultaneously confirm the legality of the activity, repeat demand, staffing capacity and financial sustainability. This consistency allows directing limited capital towards solutions whose level of evidence corresponds to their irreversibility.

Comparison with other studies. The conclusion about the interdependence of business model components is consistent with the systemic interpretation of the business model of B. W. Wirtz et al. [1, p. 41]; however, in this study it is specified for contact-regulated services by dividing adaptation decisions into a stable core, market localization and institutional compliance. The provisions of T. Saebi, L. Lien and N. J. Foss on adapting the business model in response to external opportunities and threats [2, p. 570–571] are consistent with the conclusion that market hypotheses need to be tested. Still, the proposed framework additionally separates mandatory legal requirements from market factors and treats them as threshold conditions for a permissible launch. The conclusions of M. J. D. Roberts and E. Muralidharan on the need to take into account institutional differences, local market and partner presence during the internationalization of service SMEs [3, p. 898–903] is specified in the proposed framework through a local legal pilot; indicators and stopping conditions are defined. The directions of international activity of SMEs, related to networks and resources and capabilities of the enterprise, identified by C. Fernandes, P. M. Veiga and S. Gerschewski [4, p. 144–145], are also consistent with the allocation of the partner and personnel components of the matrix. The results obtained complement the conclusions of W. Reim et al. that digital technologies support the solution of various business model problems during internationalization, but are not a universal solution [5, p. 6–7]. Therefore, in the proposed framework, digital means are considered as tools for supporting booking, fixing consent, analyzing repeated demand and transferring knowledge and not as a separate level of adaptation. A similar boundary between technological support and professional judgment is identified by I. Pankulych: generative artificial intelligence can adapt international communication to the customer context, while the human retains strategic, consultative and value-oriented functions [23, p. 11]. This supports the use of AI for consultation preparation and follow-up communication in the proposed framework, but not for autonomous substitution of the master's professional assessment.

Scientific novelty. For the first time, a three-level framework for the international adaptation of a business model has been substantiated for enterprises in the male grooming industry, in which management decisions are simultaneously assessed according to two criteria: the reversibility and bindingness of related legal requirements. In contrast to

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approaches that consider adaptation mainly as a reaction to market changes, it is proposed to separate the stable core of the business model, reversible elements of market localization and institutional prerequisites, the non-fulfillment of which makes it impossible to provide services legally. The approach to determining the sequence of international scaling has been improved: the level of necessary evidence is associated with the irreversibility of a management decision, and the transition to capital-intensive obligations - with the conditions under which investment becomes justified. The matrix approach to service business model adaptation has been further developed, since each identified market or institutional difference is associated with a specific decision, responsible executor, indicator and review criterion.

Practical significance. The results of the study can be useful for barbershop owners and managers, investors, franchise partners, and local team leaders. Before signing a lease, they can use the matrix to compare the requirements of different US states and the requirements for premises depending on the location of the enterprise; during the preparation of the pilot - to determine the permissible service menu, price hypotheses, staffing requirements, and booking channels; after the launch of the local pilot - to monitor repeat demand, quality of service, staff retention, and marginal revenue per productive hour. Negative marginal revenue or weak repeat demand is a reason to adjust the local offer, a systemic quality violation is a reason to suspend, and an unresolved licensing or sanitary requirement is a reason to refuse to launch in the selected format. For the investor, the matrix serves to check management assumptions, show which solutions are already confirmed by documents or pilot data, and identify which remain untested. For the franchise partner, it delimits the mandatory network standards and the permitted space for local changes. For the facility manager, the framework becomes a control calendar in which revisions to hypotheses are aligned with the deadlines for licenses, contracts, training, and financial obligations.

Conclusions

As a result of the study, a three-level framework for adapting the business model of a men's grooming company was developed and operationalized in a comparative matrix of ten components. It was established that international scaling should be considered not as a choice between complete copying of the existing business model and its maximum localization, but as a combination of three different management modes. A stable core ensures the reproducibility of the professional result and the basic standard of service; market localization enables solutions specific to a given segment, while institutional compliance sets the legal boundaries of permissible activities. Therefore, the adaptation boundary is drawn where the change begins to degrade the basic quality of service or conflict with the mandatory regulatory requirements of a specific jurisdiction.

A comparative analysis of the market and institutional conditions in Ukraine and the USA showed that the stable core of the business model does not fundamentally change when entering the international market, but the order of checking adaptation solutions shifts. For a Ukrainian company planning to enter the US market, the primary importance is to verify the legal and organizational feasibility of operating in a specific US state and city, after which it is advisable to test local demand, price and service format. For an American company in the Ukrainian market, after complying with Ukraine's mandatory regulatory requirements, the critical importance is the company's ability to maintain price affordability, service continuity, supply reliability and the stability of the local team in a changing environment. Therefore, during international scaling, the differences between the two markets determine a different sequence of verification of legal, market and operational prerequisites, and not the superiority of one national model over another. The practical value of the proposed matrix is that it allows linking each identified market difference to a specific management decision, a responsible executor and a criterion for its revision. This allows barbershop owners and managers to use

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the framework to assess readiness for entering a new market, design a local pilot and justify further scaling. The decision to expand should be made only after simultaneously confirming the stability of service quality, market demand, organizational capacity and regulatory compliance.

Further research should aim to test the proposed framework on real cases of international entry and to verify the extent to which its application reduces the risk of premature irreversible decisions. The role of digital tools and artificial intelligence in personalizing the consultation and generating repeat demand also requires separate empirical verification.

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