

Standardization Vs Adaptation Of Marketing Strategy - A Qualitative Study

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INTRODUCTION

S. Carter defines marketing as:

"The process of building lasting relationships through planning, executing and controlling the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create mutual exchange that satisfy individual and organizational needs and objectives".

It is a fact that the major occupants of marketing are "customer value", "competitive advantage" and "focus". This means that companies have to not only study the market, but also have to develop products or services that satisfy customer needs and wants, develop the "appropriate" marketing mix, and satisfy its own objectives as well as give customer satisfaction on a sustainable and continuing basis. However, the years of obsession by the marketers with the tactical workings of the marketing mix resulted in neglecting long term product development. Thus, the requirement of a long term plan cropped up and subsequently, the concept of "Strategic Marketing" took wings. Many scholars came out with a variety of definitions. According to Wensley (1982), Strategic marketing has been defined as:

"Initiating, negotiating and managing acceptable exchange relationships with key interest groups or constituencies, in the pursuit of sustainable competitive advantage within specific markets, on the basis of long run consumer, channel and other stakeholder franchise".

Based on Innumerable workings and researches on Strategic Marketing, many concepts and theories have already been conceptualized, and so to say, the count is still on. As the products, countries, cultures patterns, prices, markets involved are quite different and varying in nature and style, the importance of bringing in a Standardized framework was felt. Many Researchers turned focus to this development aspect and brought out many interesting insights and findings. A simple definition of Standardization of Marketing Strategy as provided by Ted Levit is that of less segmentation and considers adaptation worldwide.

In this paper, an attempt is made to identify specific parameters, which could be used to create an integration between the Standardization concept and a Company's Marketing Strategy.

MARKET FORCES AND DEVELOPMENT

Over the last few decades, internationalism has grown because of a number of market factors, which have been driving development forward, above and beyond those factors which have been attempting to restrain it. These include market and marketing related variables. Those factors which drive internationalism are Technology, Legal among macro and Segmentation, Positioning, Sales Promotion, Product Features, etc. among micro factors and on the other hand, the factors which resist the development are Economic, Culture among macro and Pricing, Distribution, etc. among micro factors.

Many global opportunities have arisen because of the clustering of market opportunities worldwide. Companies have found that similar basic segments exist worldwide and, therefore, can be met with a global orientation. Cotton, as an ingredient in shirting, suiting, and curtain material can be globally marketed as natural and fashionable. One can see in the streets of New York, London, Kuala Lumpur or Harare, youth with the same style and brand of basketball shirts or American Football shorts. Coca Cola can be universally advertised as "Adds Life" or appeal to a basic sense "You can't beat the Feeling" or "Come alive" as with the case of Pepsi. While one can question the global neutrality of these advertisements, the more culturally unbounded, the product is, the more a global clustering can take place and the more a standardized approach can be made in the design of marketing programs.

Among the Market Forces that drive such a standardized approach, Technology application has been considered to be

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an aid and abet. Also, as rarely is technology culturally bound, it has been identified as one of the single most powerful driving forces to internationalism.

Companies sometimes assume that what works in their home country will also work in another country. They take the same product, same advertising campaign, even the same brand names and packaging, and with virtually no chance to try to market it the same way in another country. Ultimately, following a Standardized Marketing Strategy universally across the globe has resulted in a mixed outcome—Success as well as failure. This has led to specific questions, which require argument and hypothesis to find solutions.

(a) Is the Standardization Marketing Strategy approach workable irrespective of the country of origin?

(b) Do the brand names play a significant role with regard to the cultural vignettes of a country?

(c) How is the Packaging issue taken care of globally?

(d) Can the same Advertising campaign be used universally? Why and Why Not?

Clearly, Philip Kotler points out that there are circumstances where a multinational can gain through increased Standardization of its product and marketing mix, and circumstances where this strategy would hurt the company. The issue can be framed through the following **Big Question**:

Under what circumstances can a company in Country X market its product in Country Y without changing the Segmentation Targeting, Positioning and Product, Promotion, Price, or Place and earn a good return?

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Apparently, it is worthwhile to mention that the issue of Standardization was first raised by Elinder (1961) with reference to advertising. Elinder stressed that emerging similarities among European consumers make uniform advertising both desirable and feasible. Fascinatingly, advertising continues to be the leading Standardization concern as per Killough 1978; Miracle 1968; Peebles, Ryans, and Vernon 1977, 1978. Seemingly, it is also reported that in the last 25 years, of the 34 major studies on the subject, 14 have been on advertising. In addition, almost 55% of these studies have been conceptual.

The background review established that empirical evidence in this matter comes from a study showing that industrial and high technology products such as computer hardware, airliners, photographic equipment, heavy equipment, and machine tools are considered most appropriate for global brand strategies.

On the other hand, Peterson Blyth Cato Associates, Inc. and Cheskin & Masten (1985) points out that confections, clothing, food, toiletries, and household cleaners are considered much less appropriate. Also Bartlett (1979) and Levitt (1988) states briefly that, if a product meets a universal need, it requires little adaptation across national markets, and Standardization is facilitated.

Subhash C. Jain in his paper quotes an example of Corning Glass Works. He points out that Corning Glass Works considered its electronic and medical products to be universal products that did not vary by country. They tended toward Standardization in product policy, product development, and pricing. He further added that Corning ware, in contrast, is not a universal product. It must be adapted to suit various market needs. For example, the "oven-to-freezer" feature has been very popular in the United States, but was not appropriate in France; a soufflé dish was popular in France but did not have a big market in the U.S. Subhash C. Jain also confers that as a research idea, country markets can be segmented; say on the basis of occupation, and the needs and shopping traits of a particular segment can be examined on a worldwide basis.

The literature review outlines that the significance of the inter-market segmentation concept can be illustrated with reference to India and Kuwait. Kuwait's per capita GNP in 1983 was \$18,000 and India's \$260. On the basis of these figures, Kuwait is about 70 times more attractive than India. However, India's total GNP in 1983 was eight times greater than Kuwait's, and its population was 400 times as large. If we assume that only 5% of the Indians would have the purchasing power of a Kuwaiti, the Indian market would be 20 times as attractive as the Kuwaiti market. Thus, segments for Standardization may be present in both rich and poor countries. Segmenting world markets in isolation of market-specific contexts is insufficient. *Market development, market conditions, and competitive factors* must be considered. Different national markets for a given product are in different stages of development. A convenient way of explaining this phenomenon is through the product life cycle concept. Jain (1984), Kirpalani and Macintosh (1980) indicate that if a product's foreign market is in a different stage of market development than its host market, appropriate

changes in the product design are desirable in order to make an adequate product/market match. Polaroid's Swinger camera is claimed to have failed in France, because the company pursued the same strategy there as it did in the United States, when the two markets were in different stages of development. De la Torre (1975) supports the claim and pointed out that the United States market was in the mature stage, whereas, the French market was in the introductory stage.

MARKET CONDITIONS INFLUENCING STANDARDIZATION

According to Lipman (1988), the three market conditions that influence the Standardization decision are cultural differences, economic differences, and differences in customer perceptions in foreign markets. Culture influences every aspect of marketing. The products' people buy, the attributes they value, and the principals whose opinions they accept are all culture-based choices. Parameswaran and Yaprak (1987) have pointed out as an example that different levels of awareness, knowledge, familiarity, and effect with people, products in general, and specific brands may result in differential attitudes toward similar products. Schiffman, Dillon, and Ngumah (1981) indicate that cultural differences influence consumer acculturation which, in turn, affects acceptance of standardized products. These arguments stem from the point of view propounded by Britt (1974) & Keegan (1969), which stands that where a product is culturally compatible with the society, it is likely to be more suitable for Standardization.

Further, Henzler and Rail (1986) and Porter (1986) bring out that in the absence of current and potential competition, a company may continue to do well in a market overseas with a standard product. However, the presence of competition may necessitate customization to gain an advantage over rivals by providing a product that ultimately matches local conditions precisely. Similarly, if the competitive position of the firm does not vary among markets, pursuing a global strategy may be worthwhile. For example, if a company has a "*leadership*" position (in terms of market share) in both the U.S. and select overseas markets, other things being equal, it can successfully standardize its marketing strategy in all those countries.

In addition, Copeland and Griggs (1985) & Quelch and Hoff (1986) indicate that if the firm competes with the same rivals, with similar share position, in different markets, Standardization would be more likely.

Researchers have developed a model for making the Standardization decision by synthesizing both theoretical and empirical works in marketing, international business, and strategic planning. A distinction has also been made between process and program Standardization. Program Standardization is proposed to be a function of several factors and can be reviewed with reference to product, price, promotion, and distribution decisions. Finally, scholars point out that the ultimate relevance of Standardization depends on its real economic payoff. It is also true that although previous research has focused primarily on program Standardization, with emphasis on the product and advertising areas, a comprehensive framework has been lacking. This framework could be useful in future studies in directing research attention to key variables and relationships.

As pointed out earlier, that Standardization is less of segmentation and more of worldwide adaptation, Philip Kotler had examined the issue of Standardization/adaptation with respect to a specific product that has been introduced in many foreign markets, for example, Mattel's Barbie doll.

CASES ON STANDARDIZATION

Because there is a segment in many countries that is likely to respond positively to the Barbie doll's western features, the company may reap economies of scale from a standard look, and accordingly, price the doll lower; if demand is price elastic, then worldwide sales volume will rise. Barbie sold well without modification in 60 other countries.

Coca-Cola applied global marketing principles, for example, to the worldwide introduction of Diet Coke. The brand name, concentrate formula, positioning, and advertising themes are virtually standard worldwide, but the artificial sweetener and packaging differ across countries. Local managers are responsible for sales and distribution programs, which they run in conjunction with local bottlers (John A Quelch, 1986).

Renault follows a very stringent policy of Standardization in its Product design across the globe. For example, in the case of the Car Brand "*Mahindra Logan*", the specification as laid by Renault with respect to the length of the car cannot be modified in spite of the fact that the issue involves a huge cost advantage as an implication of excise duty in India.

CASES ON ADAPTATION

1) Philips began to earn a profit in Japan only after it had reduced the size of its coffee makers to fit in the smaller Japanese kitchens; Coca-Cola withdrew its 2-liter bottle in Spain after discovering that few local refrigerators had large enough compartments. Crest initially failed in Mexico with the U.S. campaign using a scientific appeal; Mexicans do not put great weight on the decay prevention benefit of toothpaste.

2) After Mattel allowed its Japanese affiliate to "*Japanize*" Barbie Doll's features, sales blossomed from near zero to 2 million. Mandatory adaptations involve changes that have to be made before the product can be used, e.g., appliances made for the U.S., and Europe must run on different voltages, and a major problem was experienced in the European Union, when hoses for restaurant frying machines could not simultaneously meet the legal requirements of different countries. "*Discretionary*" changes are changes that do not have to be made before a product can be introduced (e.g., there is nothing to prevent an American firm from introducing an overly sweet soft drink into the Japanese market), although products may face poor sales if such changes are not made. Discretionary changes may also involve cultural adaptations, e.g., in Sesame Street, the Big Bird became the Big Camel in Saudi Arabia.

3) In the United States, where fuel is relatively less expensive, many cars have larger engines than their comparable models in Europe and Asia;

4) In Japan, while Kentucky Fried Chicken serves almost the same chicken with the eleven herbs and spices, a lesser amount of sugar is used in the potato salad, and fries are substituted for mashed potatoes.

5) When P&G International introduced its sanitary napkin as a global brand, it permitted local managers to make some adjustments in areas that were not seen as core to the program, such as couponing and sales promotion. More importantly, it encouraged them to suggest changes in features of the core global program.

6) As per John A. Quelch and Edward J. Hoff, The Nestlé approach also has its roots in history. To avoid distribution disruptions caused by wars in Europe, to ease rapid worldwide expansion, and to respond to local consumer needs, Nestlé granted its local managers considerable autonomy from the outset. While the local managers still retain much of that decision-making power today, Nestlé headquarters in Vesey has grown in importance. Nestlé has transferred to its central marketing staff, many former local managers who had succeeded in their Nestlé businesses and who now influence country executives to accept standard new product and marketing ideas.

One might also consider Nestlé. Although the Swiss company has been rationalizing its product line in the West, when it introduced coffee into the Chinese market, it developed a highly differentiated product. Kennedy explains, when coffee came into China, people just didn't know how to drink coffee. Nestlé created a mix, so they put the right amount of coffee with the right amount of cream, and the right amount of sugar. So the coffee would taste reasonable. Previously, people had been getting the mixing of the coffee all wrong. Nestlé understood the cultural issue there, and they now dominate the coffee category in China. That opened the door for Starbucks to come in.

7) For an issue related to Economies and Standardization, John A. Quelch and Edward J. Hoff points out that Manufacturing and R&D scale economies can result in a price spread between the global and the local product that is too great for even the most culture bound consumer to resist. In addition, the management often has neither the time, nor the R&D resources to adapt products to each country. The markets for high-tech products like computers are not only very competitive, but are also affected by the rapid technological changes.

Coca-Cola's global policy and Nestlé's interest in tighter marketing coordination results in desire of capitalizing the ideas that their marketing managers generate around the world, rather than by potential scale economies. Nestlé, for example, manufactures its packaged soups in dozens of locally managed plants around the world, with some transference of engineering know-how through a headquarters staff. Products and marketing programs are also locally managed, but new ideas are aggressively transferred, with local managers encouraged or even prodded- to adapt and use them in their own markets. For Nestlé, global marketing does not so much yield high manufacturing economies as high efficiency in using scarce new ideas.

8) Harvard Business School professors, John A. Quelch and Edward J. Hoff, point out certain interesting issues pertaining to Business functions. According to them, a company's approach to global marketing depends, first, on its overall business strategy. They also opine that in many multinationals, some functional areas have greater program Standardization than others. Headquarters often control manufacturing, finance, and R&D, while the local managers

make the marketing decisions. Marketing is usually one of the last functions to be centrally directed. Partly, because product quality and accounting data are easier to measure than marketing effectiveness, Standardization can be greater in production and finance. In fact, it is debatable that whether all Business functions do follow Standardization or Adaptation.

BRAND NAME AND CULTURAL ISSUES

The following are specific issues related to brand naming of products and subsequent cultural consequences.

1) Reebok had to backpedal after it blundered with the launch of a running shoe for women named the INCUBUS. The dictionary says an incubus is *“a male demon believed to descend upon and have sex with women while they sleep”*.

2) British shoemaker Umbro was denounced in August 2002 as *“appallingly insensitive”* for using the name ZYKLON for a running shoe. That's the same name as the lethal gas used in Nazi extermination camps during the Second World War.

3) A food company named its giant burrito a BURRADA. The big mistake is that the colloquial meaning of that word is *“big mistake”*.

4) General Motors named a new Chevrolet the BERETTA without getting permission from the Italian arms manufacturer. It cost GM \$500,000 to settle the lawsuit.

5) Ford had a problem in Brazil when the PINTO flopped. The company found out that Pinto was Brazilian slang for *“tiny male genitals”*. Ford pried all the nameplates off and substituted the name Corcel, which means *“horse”*.

Here are more examples of botched international slogans, names and campaign when marketers got into trouble when they introduced their products to new countries and don't pay close attention to cultural differences.

✿ Brand: Parker Pen

Slogan: 'It won't leak in your pocket and embarrass you'

Slogan in Spanish: 'It won't leak in your pocket and make you pregnant'

✿ Brand: Electrolux (Vacuum Cleaners)

Slogan for their American campaign: 'Nothing Sucks like an Electrolux'

✿ Brand: Clairol

Name: Mist Stick (Curling Iron).

Name's translation in German: 'Manure Stick'

✿ Brand: Pepsi

Slogan: 'Come Alive With the Pepsi Generation'

Slogan in Chinese: 'Pepsi Brings Your Ancestors Back From the Grave'

✿ Brand: Colgate (Toothpaste)

Name: Cue

Name's notoriety in France: A notorious porn magazine

✿ Brand: American Airlines

Slogan: 'Fly in Leather'

Slogan in Spanish: 'Fly Naked'

✿ Brand: American Dairy Association

Slogan: 'Got Milk'

Slogan in Spanish: 'Are You Lactating?'

✿ Brand: Coca-Cola

Name: Coca-Cola

Name's translation in Chinese: 'Bite the Wax Tadpole' or 'Female Horse Stuffed with Wax' depending on the

dialect. The examples are clear indications that while choosing brand names, care needs to be taken with respect to the cultural vignettes of the countries where the product is getting launched.

PACKAGING AND CULTURAL ISSUE

Packaging accomplishes the following functions:

- ✿ Containing and holding the product;
- ✿ Protecting the product from damage;
- ✿ Making sure small parts are not lost;
- ✿ Informing the customer about the product;
- ✿ Creating brand identity to promote and help sell the product;
- ✿ Making it convenient to carry, use and store the product.

Successful localization of packaging involves cultural research as some graphics, such as pictures, icons, and other non-verbal elements, may look different in different cultures. What looks familiar to one person may be unrecognizable to someone else. Certain images may evoke unexpected reactions in another culture. They may be thought to bring bad luck, or be considered vulgar, or symbolize unrelated ideas. Colors and even the number of objects in a group may have meanings that obscure or contradict the message the packaging is trying to convey.

Designers should be sensitive to the fact that certain sorts of images and text on graphic products can cause offence to certain groups of people, e.g. those from minority religious traditions or cultures. Special care needs to be taken in the case of images/text that are on public view, such as advertisements. Global media and mass travel means that other cultures' rich and diverse heritage of graphic images and styles is increasingly available to designers everywhere, and often are the inspirations for new design ideas.

STANDARDIZED ADVERTISING AND CULTURAL VALUES

When advertising abroad, the cultural values underpinning the society must be analyzed carefully. Is there a religion that is practiced by the majority of the people? Is the society collectivist or individualist? Is it family orientated? Is it hierarchical? Is there a dominant political or economic ideology? All of these will impact an advertising campaign if left unexamined.

For example, advertising that focuses on individual success, independence and stressing the word "I" would be received negatively in countries where teamwork is considered a positive quality. Rebelliousness or lack of respect for authority should always be avoided in family orientated or hierarchical societies. Cross cultural advertising is simply about using common sense and analyzing how the different elements of an advertising campaign are impacted by culture and modifying them to best speak to the target audience.

STANDARDIZATION AND COST LEADERSHIP

The characteristics of cost leadership strategy are reflected as, **firstly**, businesses must stick to its cost-competitiveness in the industry price war, and even the entire market can play the leading role, to obtain the expected benefits. At the same time, through the stick cost advantage, blocking the entry of new entrants to prevent the impact of alternatives is important for businesses. **Second**, low-cost, low-price products, the value of orientation is not a low-performance, low-quality, on the contrary, to have a high market share, the implementation of cost leadership strategy should be the corporate face of the many consumers. Consumers recognize product performance, quality and service should be the cost leadership strategy and the implementation of its business strategy, which also includes enhancement of product quality and grade requirements. Hence, in order to ensure the scale of the implementation of cost leadership strategy, products are mostly standardized, but with the application of technology and caution.

STANDARDIZATION AND BUSINESS FUNCTIONS

According to John A. Quelch and Edward J. Hoff, a company's approach to global marketing depends, first, on its overall business strategy. In many multinationals, some functional areas have greater program standardization than others. Headquarters often control manufacturing, finance, and R&D, while the local managers make the marketing decisions. Marketing is usually one of the last functions to be centrally directed. Partly, because product quality and

accounting data are easier to measure than marketing effectiveness, standardization can be greater in production and finance.

STANDARDIZATION STRATEGY AND STANDARDIZATION DECISION

Stanley J. Paliwoda and John K. Ryans in their paper "*International Marketing*" writes that Marketing is a polycentric function that is deeply affected by local factors. By referring to D'Antin 1971 and Doz 1980, they indicate that the final Organizational Factor that influences the Standardization of Marketing Strategy is the extent by which the decision making authority is delegated to foreign contributories. A study conducted by Aymler in 1970 indicates that local Managers were responsible for 86% of the Advertisement decisions, 74% of the pricing decisions, 61% of the channel decisions. This study was substantiated by another study done by Brandt and Hulbert in 1977. The decision on Standardization should also be examined for its impact on competition, measured in terms of competitive advantage that it may provide (Hamel & Prahalad, 1985; Porter 1986, Robinson 1984). In addition to the financial performance and competitive advantage, Walters (1986) recommends Standardization for coherent international image, rapid diffusion of products and ideas internationally and greater central coordination and control.

Researchers have developed a Model (description of the model is beyond the scope of this paper) for making Standardization decisions by synthesizing both theoretical and empirical works in Marketing, and strategic planning. A distribution is made between process and program Standardization. Program Standardization is proposed to be a function of several factors and can be reviewed with reference to product, price, promotion and distribution decisions.

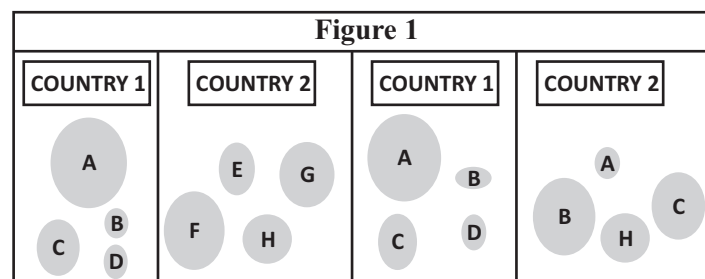
SEGMENTATION, TARGETING, AND POSITIONING (STP)

According to standard literatures, Segmentation, in marketing, is usually done at the customer level. However, in the Global marketing structure, it may sometimes be useful to see countries as segments. This allows the decision-makers to focus on common aspects of countries and avoid information overload. It should be noted that variations within some countries (e.g., Brazil) are very large and ,therefore, averages may not be meaningful. Country level segmentation may be done on levels such as geography - based on the belief that neighboring countries and countries with a particular type of climate or terrain tend to share similarities, demographics (e.g., population growth, educational attainment, population age distribution), or income. Segmenting on income is tricky since the relative prices between countries may differ significantly (based, in part, on purchasing power parity measures that greatly affect the relative cost of imported and domestically produced products).

✿**The Importance of STP :** Segmentation is the cornerstone of marketing - almost all marketing efforts in some way relate to decisions on who to serve, or how to implement positioning through the different parts of the marketing mix. For example, one's distribution strategy should consider where one's target market is most likely to buy the product, and a promotional strategy should consider the target's media habits and which kinds of messages will be the most persuasive. Although it is often tempting, when observing large markets, to try to be "*all things to all people*", this is a dangerous strategy because the firm may lose its distinctive appeal to its chosen segments.

STANDARDIZATION AND SEGMENTATION

There are two main approaches to global segmentation. At the macro level, countries are seen as segments, given that country aggregate characteristics and statistics tend to differ significantly. For example, there will only be a large market for expensive pharmaceuticals in countries with certain income levels, and entry opportunities into infant



clothing will be significantly greater in countries with large and growing birthrates (in countries with smaller birthrates, or stable to declining birthrates, entrenched competitors will fight hard to keep the market share).

There are, however, significant differences within countries. For example, although it was thought that the Italian market would demand "*no frills*" inexpensive washing machines, while German consumers would insist on high quality, very reliable ones, it was found that more units of the inexpensive kind were sold in Germany than in Italy - although many German consumers fit the predicted profile, there were large segment differences within that country. At the micro level, where one looks at segments within countries, two approaches exist, and their use often parallels the firm's stage of international involvement. Intra-market segmentation involves segmenting each country's markets from scratch - i.e., an American firm going into the Brazilian market would do research to segment Brazilian consumers without incorporating knowledge of U.S. buyers. In contrast, inter-market segmentation involves the detection of segments that exist across borders. It has to be noted that not all segments that exist in one country will exist in another, and that the sizes of the segments may differ significantly. For example, there is a huge small car segment in Europe, while it is considerably smaller in the U.S.

Inter-market segmentation entails several benefits. The fact that products and promotional campaigns may be used across markets introduces economies of scale, and learning that has been acquired in one market may be used in another- e.g., a firm that has been serving a segment of premium quality cellular phone buyers in one country, can put its experience to use in another country that features that same segment (Even though segments may be similar across the cultures, it should be noted that it is still necessary to learn about the local market. For example, although a segment common across two countries may seek the same benefits, the cultures of each country may cause people to respond differently to the "*hard sell*" advertising that has been successful in one).

The Global product life cycle suggests that product adoption and spread in some markets may lag significantly behind those of others. Often, then, a segment that has existed for some time in an "*early adopter*" country such as the U.S. or Japan will emerge after several years (or even decades) in a "*late adopter*" country such as Britain or most developing countries.

STANDARDIZATION AND POSITIONING

Firms often have to make a tradeoff between adapting their products to the unique demands of a country market or gaining benefits of Standardization, such as cost savings and the maintenance of a consistent global brand image. There are no easy answers here. On the one hand, McDonalds has spent a great deal of resources to promote its global image; on the other hand, significant accommodations are made to local tastes and preferences - for example, while serving alcohol in U.S. restaurants would go against the family image of the restaurant carefully nurtured over several decades, McDonalds has accommodated this demand of European patrons.

ARGUMENTS, ASSUMPTIONS & HYPOTHESES

As a part of the qualitative research, a brainstorming among a set of students and faculty members was undertaken on the various issues that were discussed in the preceding paragraphs. This resulted in the formation of many issues pertaining to the Standardization concept and led to the exploration of new questions. Exploratory qualitative research such as focus groups, in depth, dyad, etc., were also carried out in order to determine the impressions of the market and the level of satisfaction with the strategy, advertisement campaign, packaging, etc. The following assumptions in reference to the questions defined in the beginning of this paper and the other arguments came as the fallout of this qualitative approach. The primary intention of discussion was to establish the necessary assumptions and hypotheses on the concept of Standardization in line with the future scope and to better define the market parameters to include all the needs of future research orientation.

ASSUMPTIONS

(a) The Standardization of Marketing Strategy is workable, irrespective of the country of origin. However, it was revealed that the strategy surely depends on the cultural bound of the product such as FMCG products are culturally bounded, and Consumer Durables are culturally unbounded.

(b) The Brand name and packaging, especially the packaging aspect, certainly plays a significant role with regard to the cultural issues of a country.

(c) As regards to the issue of usage of the same Advertisement globally, there were mixed reactions, with the indication of applicability of Standardization in the advertisement as far as the brand identities of the product is concerned, and non- applicability of Standardization in the concept of the advertisements.

(d) There exists a relation between Standardization of Products and Overall Cost Leadership.

(e) The effectiveness of Standardization strategy has got a reference to the basis of Identifying Customers.

(f) The Efficiency and effectiveness of Standardization of Marketing Mix has an impact on the Standardization Decision.

(g) The various business functions such as Manufacturing, Research & Development, Finance & Accounting, Procurement and Marketing are subject to Standardization.

(h) The Standardization process for the STP strategy insulates the Organization from huge losses in their business operation.

The above arguments have all the reasons to get extrapolated and tested through the specific hypotheses, which could be performed in the future.

HYPOTHESES

a) The identified hypotheses to be tested for the argument (a) are :

✿ **Null Hypothesis : The Standardization of Marketing Strategy is not workable, irrespective of the country of origin.**

✿ **Alternate Hypothesis: The Standardization of Marketing Strategy is workable, irrespective of the country of origin.**

b) The identified hypotheses to be tested for the argument (b) are:

✿ **Null Hypothesis: The Brand name and packaging do not have any significant role with regard to the cultural issues of a country.**

✿ **Alternate Hypothesis: The Brand name and packaging do have any significant role with regard to the cultural issues of a country.**

c) The identified hypotheses to be tested for the argument (c) are:

✿ **Null Hypothesis: The usage of Advertisement cannot be standardized globally, irrespective of its product application or concept application.**

✿ **Alternate Hypothesis: The usage of Advertisement can be standardized globally, irrespective of its product application or concept application.**

d) The identified hypotheses to be tested for the argument (d) are:

✿ **Null Hypothesis : Standardization of Products will not achieve Overall Cost Leadership i.e reducing production and distribution cost.**

✿ **Alternate Hypothesis : Standardization of Products will achieve Overall Cost Leadership i.e reducing production and distribution cost.**

e) The identified hypotheses to be tested for the argument (e) are:

✿ **Null Hypothesis: Standardization strategy is not more effective if worldwide, customers, not countries, are the basis of identifying the segment(s) to serve.**

✿ **Alternate Hypothesis: Standardization strategy is more effective if worldwide customers, not countries, are the basis of identifying the segment(s) to serve.**

f) The identified hypotheses to be tested for the argument (f) are:

✿ **Null Hypothesis: The Efficiency and effectiveness of Standardization of Marketing Mix has no impact on the Standardization Decision.**

✿ **Alternate Hypothesis : The Efficiency and effectiveness of Standardization of Marketing Mix has an impact on**

the Standardization Decision.

g) The identified hypotheses to be tested for the argument (g) are:

✱ **Null Hypothesis:** The various business functions such as Manufacturing, Research & Development, Finance & Accounting, Procurement and Marketing are subject to Standardization.

✱ **Alternate Hypothesis:** The various business functions such as Manufacturing, Research & Development, Finance & Accounting, Procurement and Marketing are subject to Adaptation.

h) The identified hypotheses to be tested for the argument (h) are:

✱ **Null Hypothesis :** The Standardization process for the STP strategy does not insulate the Organization from huge losses in their business operation.

✱ **Alternate Hypothesis:** The Standardization process for the STP strategy insulates the Organization from huge losses in their business operation.

As suggested by Marios Theodosiou, Leonidas C. Leonidou in their paper, “*Standardization Versus Adaptation Of International Marketing Strategy: An Integrative Assessment Of The Empirical Research*”, a more constructive solution would always be visible only through an empirical research. Taking the above stated hypotheses into confidence, a well structured empirical study (which would be done in the near future) could be carried out in order to derive more constructive conclusions.

CONCLUSION

Although it is true that Standardization offers benefits, too much attachment to this aspect can be counterproductive. At the same time, adaptation is not the permanent solution from the strategic view point. In the present paper, we have attempted to identify a relationship between certain specific issues such as Standardization Vs. Cost Leadership, Efficiency & Effectiveness of Marketing Mix Vs. Standardization Decision, Standardization strategy Vs. Basis of Identifying Customers where it is feasible to work out the Standardization strategy based on specific propositions as suggested by some eminent personalities in the field of Marketing. The study has brought to foray, a balanced situation between Standardization issue and Adaptation issue. However, it requires future research using quantitative methods to frame more conclusive standing on the subject in question.

Now, finally, the solution to the Big Question identified in the beginning of the paper is appended below.

A Solution that figures out from the qualitative research carried out in this paper is that the decision, whether to standardize or to adapt the marketing strategy in order to achieve better business performance, will largely depend on the set of marketing environments such as Cultural, Economical, and Technological that a company is confronted by, within a particular alien market, at a specific period of time.

More sophisticated solutions could be derived when the researchers undertake the testing of the various hypotheses that were framed based upon arguments and discussions.

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