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Marketing Mix Adaptation and Productivity in International Market: A Study Of Nestle Food Nigeria

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Abstract: *The researchers examined the effect of marketing mix adaptation on productivity in international markets: a study of nestle food Nigeria. The study was born out of the fact that offering standard products in all territories can lead to failure if the product does not meet local market standards, requirement or regulations. The main objective was to ascertain the interplay of marketing mix adaptation and productivity in international markets. The researcher adopted survey design. Primary source of data was the main source of data collection. The sample was 180 employees. Structured questionnaire was used to get data from the field. Simple linear regression was used to analyse the data gotten from the field. The result revealed a significant relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The researchers concluded that marketing mix adaptation proxies leads to a good productivity in Nestle food Nigeria and further recommended that Nestle food Nigeria should perfectly embrace the proxies of marketing mix adaption in order to boost productivity also that Pricing adaption should be paid a special attention as many consumers are sensitive to price.*

Keywords: Marketing Mix, Adaptation, Productivity, International Markets.

INTRODUCTION

International marketing involves recognizing that people all over the world have different needs and just as the marketing environment has to be assessed at home, the overseas potential markets has to be carefully scrutinised. This reassessment calls for adaptation of firms in foreign markets. International marketing is becoming a foremost trend in modern trade. To this effect, numerous studies concerning the customer demand and purchase behaviour for different products across national boundaries have been and are still undertaken. Doole and Lowe (2008) defined International Marketing as the process of management responsibility in recognizing, anticipating and satisfying customer requirement across international borders. They go on by mentioning that within international marketing, firms are involved in making global decisions in one or more element of the marketing mix. Consequently, companies wishing to enter international markets are faced with the challenge of adapting the elements of their marketing mix. Before deciding to go global, a precise decision making process are usually undertaken, this is because there are many factors that influences an internationalisation process. One of the most important decisions concerns marketing mix. By developing an adequate marketing mix, organisations can satisfy the needs of their target market and reach their organisational objectives, thereby improving productivity.

The differences surrounding the domestic marketing and international marketing is that in international marketing, marketing activities take place in more than one country. This apparently minor differences account for the complexity and diversity found in international marketing operations. The goal of a business is to make profit by promoting, pricing and distributing products for which there is a market. However, competition, legal restraints, government controls, weather, fickle consumers and any number of other uncontrollable elements in the international marketing environment can, and frequently do, affect the profitable outcome of good, and sound marketing plans. However, the marketer cannot influence these uncontrollable components, but instead must adapt to them in a manner consistent with a successful result. What makes marketing interesting is the challenge of shaping the controllable elements of marketing decisions (product, price, promotion and distribution) within the context of uncontrollable elements of the market place (competition, politics, and laws, consumer behaviour, level of technology) in a way that marketing objectives are attained (Cateora *et al*, 2008).

Nestle Food Company is the largest Food and Beverage Company operating in 194 countries with more than 447 factories and employs around 339,000 people. The company began in 1940 and was founded by Henri Nestle. Nestle with headquarters in Switzerland has its core head office in Lagos Nigeria. As a leader in Nigeria's Food and Beverage industry Nestle serves the Nigerian market through food products that include the popular Maggi food seasoning product. Nestle Nigeria PLC products include Infant Cereals, Family Cereals, Beverage Drinks, and Confectionery Seasoning, Sauces, Table Water, Coffee and Milk products. Apart from the hugely popular Maggi seasoning other products consumed by Nigerians in large include Nestle Golden Morn, Nestle Milo, Nestle Chocomilo, Cerelac, Nestle Pure Life and Nescafe.

In international marketing, adaptation is an essential consideration when marketing to multiple countries or cultures where there are likely to be significant differences in consumer wants and needs relative to a particular product offering. For the purpose of this study, adaptation can be defined as the degree to which the elements (brand, design, label, product line and quality) of a product are adapted to the external markets in order to adjust to the differences in the environment, consumer behaviour, standards of use and competitiveness. Thus, adaptation involves the use of specific strategies in each market, where the organisation adapts its marketing mix to each environment (Zou, Andrus, & Norvell, 2009). It involves the adaptation of strategies for different regions, based upon assorted factors. Sands (2007) defined adaptation as the use of marketing strategies with no mutual elements. That is, the firm should always observe national identity, tastes, language and preferences. Defenders of adaptation believe that markets are subject to dynamic macro-environmental issues, such as language, climate, race, occupations, topography, education, tastes, legal and political barriers and socio-economic matters (Baalbaki & Malhatra, 2009). The basis role that adaptation plays in international marketing is that it respects local specifications and expectations. In addition, adaptation allows customer keep their landmark and feels noticed. Also, Stuart & Prahald (2012) believe that adapting to products can be a basis of profitability even if they are designed to an emerging country, as demonstrated in this case of Nestle Food Nigeria, who strengthens its Golden Morn instant breakfast cereal with Vitamin A and Iron to address recognized deficiencies of these micronutrients, particularly among children and pregnant women in developing countries by understanding the specific nutritional and health requirements of each market and adapt or develop products to address those needs.

Consumer non-durables, including food products, are the most profound to differences in national tastes and habits, making them more likely to need changes for several markets. For example, Nestlé Food saw an opportunity among low-income consumers in Nigeria who wanted to buy the company's high-end baby nutrients and personal care products, but couldn't afford them. In response, the company developed a low-cost packaging product and other options that allowed it to offer dramatically less expensive options. This flexibility not only opened a new market for the company, but also allowed it to develop brand loyalty that consumer could take with them when their income increased and they could afford higher-end goods from the same manufacturer.

Firms often adapt their marketing strategies when entering international markets, even in global era where many brands and products are nearly universally prevalent Valdez, (2011). These adaptation decisions combine into an adaptation strategy that can influence the competitive position of the firm and, in turn productivity in international markets. Adaptation strategies may be simple as tweaking the logo and the colours of the packaging, or may involve developing new flavours better suited to the local palate or new financing models more fitting for the local economy. It may involve changing the price, promotion and packaging of a product or even the product itself, in order to fit the needs and preferences of a particular country. Adaptation happens when any element of the marketing strategy is amended to achieve a competitive advantage when entering an international market. There have been researchers that have proposed that adaptation strategies are actually more effective as consumer needs vary across cultures. For instance, Calantone, Kim & Schmidt (2002) talk about three factors that can have an influence on the international adaptation strategy. Their study was based on the three countries USA, Japan and Korea and their findings were centred on the issues concerning these three cultures in business dealing. The three factors they mention are; the impact of market similarity, the influence the organisational structure and the impact of industry adaptation. It is stated that market similarity between the home market and the foreign market are an important factor in the choice of export market variables.

Ignoring the significant of adapting to the international marketing environment spell doom to the company, this is because the importance of adaptation in any international business firm can never be over emphasized. It acts as the life wire which guarantees the success of any business. But despite the obvious advantages of adaptation so stressed, so many international business firm still operate blindly without any form of adaptation strategy which could help them extrapolate future business trends. (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 2004). To them, finding relevant information takes longer time because of the unfamiliarity of some locations (Stuart & Prahald 2012). In line with this, this study was undertaken to examine the impact of adaptation of marketing mix elements on productivity in international markets taking into consideration an international brand of Nestle food Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine the effect of adaptation on productivity in international markets. Specifically the study is designed;

1. To determine the effect of adaptation of the company's product on productivity in Nestle Food Nigeria.
2. To determine the effect of adaptation of the company's promotion on productivity in Nestle Food Nigeria.
3. To determine the effect of adaptation of the company's distribution on productivity in Nestle Food Nigeria.
4. To determine the effect of adaptation of the company's price on productivity in Nestle Food Nigeria.

Research Questions

In pursuance of the below objectives of the study, the following questions were designed to translate the objectives of this study into a working format for the study.

1. To what extent does adaptation of the company's product in international markets affect productivity in Nestle Food Nigeria?
2. To what extent does adaptation of the company's promotion in international markets affect productivity in Nestle Food Nigeria?
3. To what extent does adaptation of the company's distribution in international markets affect productivity in Nestle Food Nigeria?

4. To what extent does adaptation of the company's price in international markets affect productivity in Nestle Food Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated for the study;

1. **H_{01}:** Adaptation of the company's product in international markets has no significant effect on productivity in Nestle Food Nigeria.
2. **H_{02}:** Adaptation of company's promotion in international market has no significant effect on productivity in Nestle Food Nigeria.
3. **H_{03}:** Adaptation of company's distribution in international markets has no significant effect on productivity in Nestle Food Nigeria.
4. **H_{04}:** Adaptation of company's price in international markets has no significant effect on productivity in Nestle Food Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

CONCEPT OF MARKET

According to Adam Smith, "The division of labour is limited by the extent of the market". The market is the key to specialisation. Firms cannot specialise in particular product lines, or particular stages of production, if they cannot sell a sufficient quantity of their output. It is the growth of the market that facilitates both the emergences of new production methods and the growth of the firms and industries that exploit these methods. The market does not just assign resources, it encourages innovation too.

Philip & Armstrong (2013), define a market as a set of actual and potential buyers of a product or service. These buyers share a specific need or want that can be satisfied through exchange process. To them, the concepts of exchange and relationships lead to the concept of a market. A more detail definition is given by the Management and Business Administration as contained in Nanda (2007). They defined Market as a group of consumers or organisations that is interested in the product, has the resources to purchase the product and is permitted by law and other regulations to acquire the product. The market definition begins with the total population and ends with the penetrated market. According to them, defining the market is likely to be composed of consumers whose needs differ; market segmentation is useful in order to better understand those needs and to select the groups within the market that the business will serve.

The process of managing markets to bring about profitable customer relationships is referred to as Marketing. Marketing refers to the process by which firms create value for customers and build strong customer relationship in order to attract value from customers in return (Philip, *et al;* 2013). Marketing according to the American Marketing Association (APA) is defined as an organisational function and set of processes for creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that profit the organisation and its stakeholders. However, marketing has come a long ways in its modern form; it is a twentieth century phenomenon. The history of marketing extends back in the time to the most primitive societies. The evolutionary process of modern marketing can be separated into 4 periods.

1. The Pre-Industrial Era: Since the focus of selling which in a part of marketing is exchange, trade and selling may be said to have simultaneous origins. In the days when man engaged in subsistence jobs such as hunting and farming solely to nourish himself and his immediate family, neither trade nor marketing was essential. However, as man's needs became more diverse, he could no longer produce all that he needed and this resulted to specialisation, and man specialised in producing what he could, and then exchanged those which he did not need with what others person's produce but which they also did not need, thus, exchange was birth. Goods and services were exchanged for other goods or services as there were no money initially to serve as a medium of exchange, this was trade by barter. Therefore, the first noticeable traces of marketing manifested under the barter system of exchange.

2. **The Industrial Era**: By the second half of the nineteenth century, the industrial evolution had spread to the United States of America. Two inevitable consequences of the revolutionisation of production were mass production of a wide variety of goods and 1750 AD-1900 AD the emergence of a merchant class which shouldered the Cyrus H. McCormick founder, international Harvester, market analysis, the concept of market standing, pricing policies, the services salesman, parts and services supply to the customer, and instalment credits. Peter F. Drucker was responsible for distributing and selling the output of the industries.

In spite of all these, selling was still fundamental in comparison to its present day status. Marketing did not receive much weight as the major concern was how to achieve mass production at reduced costs. Selling, however, received bigger attention. Nevertheless, the marketing seed that was sown in the pre-industrial period had germinated and was beginning to grow. All these sustained into the early part of the twentieth century.

3. The Mass Communication Era: This period covers 1900-1950; this period was called the era of mass communication for two reasons. First, not only did the number of newspapers reach an impressive figure during this period but also the radios, televisions were invested. Secondly, marketers during this period, especially at the letter part, relied heavily on mass communication as a means of selling. This was also a period of increased mass production.

The first ten years of this period witnessed the inauguration of marketing course first at the University of Pennsylvania, USA in 1905 and at the University of Wisconsin also in USA in 1910. By 1950, many business schools offered a variety of marketing courses.

The important of this period 1900-1950 in terms of developments in marketing lies not merely in the intensification of, and improvements on, earlier marketing practices and the emergence of marketing research and electronic mass media advertising but mainly in the appearance of marketing courses in the curricula of institutions of higher learning. This development assured the definition, development, formalisation and articulation of a body of marketing knowledge and literature. This became more refined in subsequent years.

4. The Modern Marketing Era: This period (1950 to present day), growing competition among firms and the consequent difficulty of finding markets for the variety of competing products stimulated conceited interest in marketing both as an academic discipline and as a profession. This rising interest yielded positive results in terms of development in marketing literature and in terms of marketing exercise being increasingly based on solid theoretical foundations. These and other developments in marketing occurred during this period. These are consumer-oriented marketing, societal orientation, Non-Business Marketing, Consumer Behaviour and increased professionalization.

Today, marketing plays a lot of role to the society and to the firm. To the society, marketing helps in: delivering the standard of living, providing employment, decreasing distribution cost, increasing in national income, and protection against business slump. And to the firm, marketing helps in: business planning and decision making, increasing profits and communication between the firm and the society. The whole essence of marketing is the need to assess and identify consumer needs and thereafter satisfying them through an exchange process which requires that there must be two or more parties with unsatisfied needs, a desire and the capability to satisfy the need, a medium for the parties to communicate and deliver, something of value to offer and the freedom to accept or reject the offer. Marketing could either be domestic or international. However, the difference between the two does not lies with different thoughts of marketing but with the environment within which marketing plans must be realized.

Concept of Marketing Mix Adaptation in International Marketing

International marketing is the performance of business activities that direct the flow of a company goods and services to consumers or users in more than one nation for a profit (Yoram *et al;* 2007). It is the performance of firm activities that direct the flow of a company goods and services to consumers in more than one nation for revenue (Yoram *et al*; 2007). The only difference in the definitions of domestic marketing and international marketing is that the marketing events take place in more than one country. This apparently minor differences account for the complexity and diversity found in international marketing operations. The goal of a business is to make profit by promoting, pricing and distributing products for which there is a market. Companies that go into international marketing must take into account local differences in language, culture, legal and regulatory requirements and distribution channels. Offering standard products in all territories can lead to failure if the product does not meet local market standards, requirement or regulations. Adaptation enables your company to succeed in individual markets by developing a thorough understanding of local requirements and modifying different aspects of your marketing strategy. In international marketing, adaptation is an essential consideration when marketing to multiple countries or cultures where there are likely to be significant differences in consumer wants and needs relative to a particular product offering.

According to Sands (2007), adaptation is the use of marketing strategies with no common elements. That is, the company should always observe national identity, language, tastes, and preferences". Firms often adapt their marketing strategies when entering international markets, even in global era where many brands and products are nearly universally prevalent (Valdez, 2011). These adaptation decisions combine into an adaptation strategy that can influence the competitive position of the firm and, in turn productivity in international markets. Adaptation strategies may be simple as tweaking the logo and the colours of the packaging, or may involve developing new flavours better suited to the local palate or new financing models more fitting for the local economy.

Adaptation strategies involve changing promotion, price and the distribution of a product in order to fit the needs and preferences of a specific country. It involves changes not only in the visual identity of the organisation' product but it also leads to change within the organisation (Udonde, Ibok and Eke, 2022) Adaptation occurs when any element of the marketing strategy is modified to achieve a competitive advantage when entering an international market. According to Meyer and Bernier (2010), the core motives behind an adaptation strategy is when a business wants to be the frontrunner of a market or reach out new segments of the market. Other findings emphasized that cultural differences on international markets affect the adaptation of the product, price, distribution and promotion. However, it can be suggested that adaptation strategies are inevitable if a multinational company (MNC) is to succeed in the international market. For instance, in many situations a company will have to adjust their adaptation strategy across national boundaries to meet local needs and wants that cannot be altered.

Marketing mix adaptation in international marketing is an essential consideration especially when marketing to a multiple countries or cultures where there are likely to be significant differences in consumer wants and needs relative to a specific product offering. However, according to Cavusgil, Zou & Naidu, (1993) the major problems hindering these international business firms against proper and effective adaptation include:

1. Their inability to determine the effect of marketing communications on international consumers.
2. Problem of adjustment of product slightly to suit different cultures.
3. Pricing on an international scale is a complex task so that adaptation for price levels seems to be largely a guess work.
4. The distribution strategy for each country in a business operation increases its probabilities nature.

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However, companies operating in international markets must take into consideration altering of the four marketing mix (product, promotion, distribution and price) as offering standard products in all territories can lead to failure if the product does not meet local market standards, requirements or regulations (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 2004). The marketing mix element according to Doole & Lowe (2008:667) consists of the 4P's; Product, Price, Place and Promotion as marketing strategies. McCarthy (2005) formulated the concept of the 4P's- Product, Price, Promotion and Place marketing mix. For many years these have been the principle foundations on which a marketing plan is based (Vignali, 2011). The expansion of a company into foreign markets demands tweaking of this marketing mix in order to fit into the demands and needs of the foreign markets. By developing an adequate marketing mix, organisations can satisfy the needs of their target market and reach their organisational objectives, thus improving productivity. The four international marketing mix element adopted for this study includes;

Product: Product is anything that can be offered to the market for attention, acquisition, use or consumption that may satisfy a want or need (Kotler, Harker & Brennan, 2009). Product refers to the goods and services that are offered to a company's customers. Distant from the physical product itself, other elements associated with a product include what the customers may be attracted to, such as the way it is packaged or in the case of food, how it tastes. According to Kotler *et al;* (2009), a product's appearance, function and support make up what the customer will actually buy. By suggesting that the product is the soul of whole marketing mix, Doole & Lowe (2008) opined that the product may be the most powerful competing element of the marketing mix in the hands of marketers. Consumers respond to products from other countries differently and this response can either be positive or negative and can influence consumer's perception and lead to their purchase behaviour (Etuk and Udonde, 2022). Thus, if the product is not eye-catching and appealing to the customers, then no degree of sales promotion, appropriate channel of distribution or reduction in price will help to achieve the marketing target. It is important to note that two consumers can never have the same perception about a particular product and this is because their needs, wants and preferences are not the same (Udonde and Eke, 2023). In international markets, the basic marketing concept tells us that we will sell more of a product if we aim to meet the needs of our target market, and this will involve taking into consideration a number of different factors including consumers' cultural backgrounds, religion, buying habits and levels of personal disposable income.

Price: This is just a number on a tag. Price comes in numerous forms and performs several functions. Price can be seen as the monetary value of anything. According to Sampson, Udonde and Udoh (2023), price appears to be one of the most bendable essentials of the marketing mix that interfere directly and in short term over the profitability and cost effectiveness of any company. Traditionally, price has operated as the main determinant of buyer choice. Pricing in an international scale is a composite task. As well as taking into account traditional price considerations such as fixed and variable costs, competition and target groups, an international organisation needs to consider additional factor such as; tariffs, import duties, the cost of transport, personal disposal incomes of the target market, exchange rate fluctuations, the currency they want to be paid in and the general economic situation of the country and how this will affect pricing. According to Etuk and Udonde, before the post-independence era (1960s), prices were used extensively by consumers as extrinsic cues to evaluate product quality. However, the internet has created further challenges as customers can view global prices and purchase items from around the world. This has increased the level of competition and with it pricing pressures, as global competitors may have lower operating cost.

Promotion: According to Eno and Udonde (2022), promotional communication is based on a short term period (advertisement, events, public relation and sales promotion). Promotion content is basically culturally driven which is often essential in international markets, for instance, promotional strategy in one's culture could cause offense in another. Promotion is a vital element of marketing mix. It is an exercise aimed at informing persuading and influencing (Etuk and Udonde, 2023). It popularly involves the sharing of information as well as the dissemination of information about a company's products, services, ideas, experience etc. (Etuk and Udonde, 2023). Every aspect of promotional detail in international market will require research and planning. Promotion strategies must suit local markets as cultural backgrounds and practises affect what appeals to consumers. Also, the level of media development and availability will also need to be taken into consideration. Is commercial television well recognized in your host country? What is the level of television penetration? How much control does the government have over advertising on TV, radio and internet? Is print media more popular than TV? Before designing promotional activity for a foreign market it would be expedient to complete a PEST (Political, Economic, Social and Technological) analysis so that one can have a complete understanding of the factors operating in the foreign market that one would like to enter.

Place: The place element of the marketing mix is about distributing a product to the customer, at the right place and at the right time. Distribution in domestic markets such as Nigeria will probably involve goods being moved in chain from the manufacturer to wholesalers and onto retailers for consumers to buy from. In a foreign market there will be more parties involved because the goods need to be moved around a foreign market where business practices will be different to domestic markets. For example, in Japan there are approximately five diverse types of wholesaler involved in the distribution chain. International businesses will need to investigate who they would like to sell their products and services to either to businesses, retailers, wholesalers or directly to consumers.

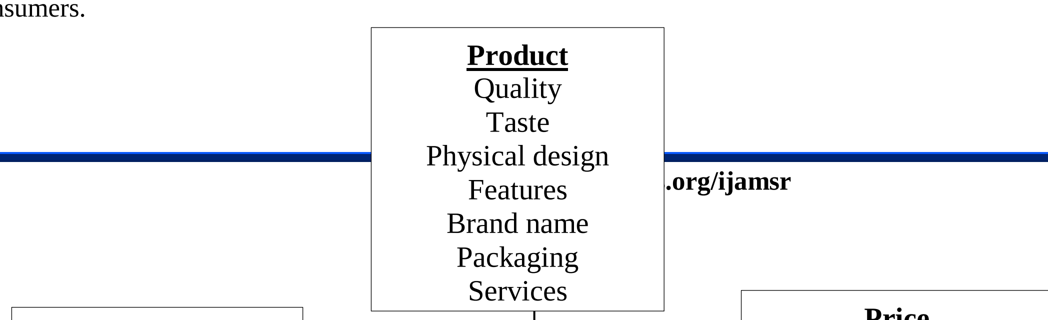

Figure 2.1: The Four (4) "P"S of Marketing Mix Adaptation
Source: Doole & Lowe (2008)

Adaptation and Marketing Mix Element

Each of the individual marketing mix elements has unique characteristics that can make it differ in its needed level of adaptation in the international market place. Altering and adjusting the marketing mix determines that marketing strategy is essential and vital to suit local tastes, meet special market needs and consumers non-identical requirement. However, in the process of internationalisation, one of the most complicated issues that marketers have to manage is to explore the answer for the question on how marketing strategies should be designed to suit each individual market by adjusting each of the marketing mix element to different country/market because there are insurmountable differences between countries and even between regions in the same country (Papavassiliou & Stathakopoulos, 1997).

Accordingly, multinational companies should identify how to adjust marketing tactics and strategies and the accompanying marketing mix in terms of how they sell and distribute in order to satisfy market requirement (Vrontis, Thrassou & Lamprianou, 2009). Hence, the international marketers should decide to which they should adapt each component of the international marketing mix. In fact, some elements of the marketing mix such as place, promotion and price are more adaptable than others are. In this regard, product is the hardest element to adapt (Onkvisit & Shaw, 1993).

Product Adaptation in International Markets

According to Calantone *et al*; (2002), product adaptation refers to the degree to which the physical characteristics or attributes of a product and its packaging differs across national markets. Though modifying products for different market increases cost, the adapted products may fit the needs and desire of consumers in different countries better, may command higher margins, and may generate much greater revenues. Satisfying customer needs with broad product lines and tailored product offerings requires careful consideration of local market differences such as physical environment, the stage of economic development, cultural characteristics, the stage of the product life cycle, competition, distribution systems, advertising media, legal restrictions, and balance between local autonomy and central coordination (Kotabe, 2003). Often a company cannot sell the same product in all international markets due to the need to adapt the product to the standards and regulations of a specific country, as well as to the special tastes and preferences of its consumers (Ayal & Ziff, 1979). Changes in products across international markets usually fall into two groups; mandatory changes and optional changes (Hill & Still, 1984). Mandatory changes involve legal, economic, climatic, and other uncontrollable matters. Optional changes include adaptation that improves the company's position in the market place such as competition, consumer preferences, and local distribution systems.

The composition and character of home markets usually have a misappropriate effect on the importance of home demand and how companies perceive, interpret, and respond to buyer needs (Porter, 2010). According to Cavusgil, Shaoming, & Naidu (2009), Lower levels of product adaptation can result when a product is exported simultaneously to multiple export markets and where return on investment and economies of scale in production and marketing are the focus. Although the evidence suggest that product adaptation is limited relative to the other areas of the marketing mix, companies still must be cognizant of the differences in markets and to local and national differences and ways of doing things differently or better in return for sustained competitive advantage. Also, the degree of adaptation tends to differ in accordance with the specific product component. Specifically, the product area receiving most changes in overseas markets was that relating to product characteristics, namely design, quality and features. Packaging was the second area most frequently subject to alterations, followed by labelling.

Price Adaptation in International Markets

Success in international markets and revenue maximization can be attained through pricing adaptation including premium pricing when market circumstances are favourable (i.e. demand is strong and competition is weak) or competitive pricing when market conditions are unfavourable (i.e. demand is weak and competition is intense). Firms often use uniform pricing across markets as s defensive measure against gray market imports and unauthorised intermediaries that are out of their control (Theodosiou & Katsikeas, 2011). When a product with the same brand name is sold in different countries, it can be difficult and sometimes impossible to sell them at same prices. Levitt (1982) indicates that price is probably the marketing mix element that most requires adaptation because the firm's long term need to recover full costs. While mandatory adaptation may be needed to comply with local market place realities such as government regulations and legislation, international pricing strategy should involve a thorough analysis of these and other differences between home and host markets (Hill & Still, 1984).

In contrast to product decisions, pricing decisions may be more dissimilar from country to country. Manufacturing cost, competitors' prices, and taxes can vary from country to country, making local market conditions a critical factor in pricing decisions (Sorenson & Wiechman, 2005). Other factors can impact pricing decisions as well. Firms are often persuaded to make greater use of indigenous materials and tools, use similar labour-intensive technology, as sell at government-approved prices (Kacker, 2009). Pricing adaptation is also used in technology- intensive industries by firms trying to recover their investments in technology by broadening the customer base in export markets via competitive pricing (Cavusgil & Zou, 1993). Local regulations and competitive situations can be such that business units have little control over product pricing in foreign markets (Zou & Cavusgil, 2012). The area of pricing policy is one in which government interference can be pronounced. Pricing adaptation may be necessary to transition products from markets where information saturation is high to markets where consumerism is just beginning.

Promotion Adaptation in International Markets

Promotion adaptation including adaptation of product positioning, brand names, packaging messages, and sales promotions can be prompted by competitive pressures in export markets. Methods of communication, audiences, product lines, company goals, legal restrictions and infrastructure availability are frequently cited as drivers of local adaptation in advertising messages, formats and promotional approaches (Buzzell, 1968). Aspects of advertising and promotion, including the nature of customers' consumption process and language and market segments, also play a role in the extent to which adaptation are needed (Powers & Loyka, 2007).

A primary difference in this regard is the absence of commercials in local television and radio stations in several countries and restrictions on television and radio advertising in others. Market conditions direct a strategy of adaptation of both product and communication when variance exists in environmental situations of use and in the function that a product serves (Keegan 2009). Basic human needs, wants and expectations today exceed national, geographical and cultural boundaries. Also, different culture create different needs, this means that people may not be satisfied with similar communication appeals and approaches. Each person is a cultural preceptor. (Albuaum *et al;* 2005). According to Melevar & Vemmervik (2004), the purpose of adaptation is to advance differential advantage by adapting the advertisement to gain maximum success in terms of response and sales. Adaptation of advertising is usually linked with a decentralised advertising function. The advantage with a decentralised advertising function is that it allows responsiveness and adaptation to culture, infrastructure and competition.

Place Adaptation in International Market

A number of adaptations may be necessary to make across distribution, inventory and transportation aspects of the place element of the marketing mix. According to Theodosiou & Leonidou (2003) the greatest degree of adaptation is a result of differences in; (a) the special documentation and ordering procedure required in international product shipments; (b) the availability of transportation facilities to carry goods to and within foreign markets; (c) the number, type and technology of the warehouses abroad; and (d) the level of inventories needed to be maintained in overseas markets, usually determined by territorial size, infrastructural facilities and purchasing/consumption habits. Notably, designing a physical distribution system for international markets entails continuous adjustments because market, competitive and transportation conditions are persistently changing.

Kale & Mclntyre (2009) claim cultural difference would have considerable impact on marketing channels as they exist and operate in various countries. They opined that distribution channels have to be adapted to the country's culture and to already existing channels on it.

However, it has been reported that there is less strategy differentiation in the area of distribution than in other areas such as product or promotion (Kacker, 2009), although distribution methods remain related to firm productivity (Chung, 2006). Numerous additional aspects of distribution may require adaptation for different global markets. These include methods of inventory management, promotion, credit, wholesale and retail operations, consumer income, customer purchasing habits, the strength of competition, the need to use importer distributors, licensees or joint ventures, the availability and affordability of distribution channel alternatives, product types, sales volume and service requirements (Theodosious & Katsikeas, 2011).

Problems of Adaptation in International Market

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It is argued that an essential factor required for the success of international marketing project is that relevant firm must be committed to its adaptation. The firm has the organisational capacity (e.g. personal, resources and analytical and management skills) to implement the international marketing program but its implementation requires appropriate marketing research which could help in developing global vision. This research can be conducted by employing the assistance of an outside agency. Higher cost are always incurred in the process of carrying out this marketing research and as such adaptation does not encourage economies of scale because selling large quantities of the same adapted product and buying components in bulk can increase the cost-per unit.

Also adaptations tend to be time consuming and poor speed of execution among the firm. The agency employed may not be professional in their field thereby producing wrong and unusual result. Generally, it is difficult to know what consumers really want since consumers preferences and needs changes on daily bases. (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 2004).

Conceptual Model

The underpinning conceptual model was drawn from the research: marketing mix adaptation and productivity model

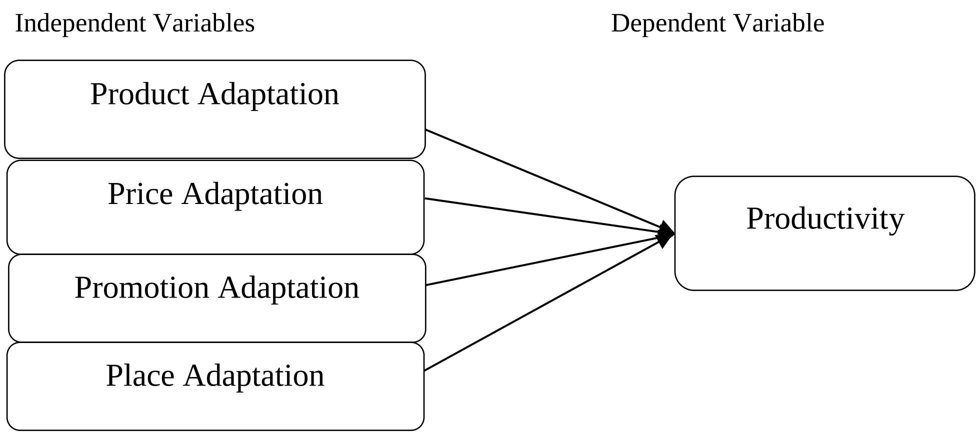

Figure 2.2: Researcher Model: Marketing Mix Adaptation and Productivity Model
Source: Researcher's Conceptualization, (2023)

Based on the research objectives, the conceptual model was constructed. This model was developed showing the elements of Marketing Mix Adaptation to include Product Adaptation, Price Adaptation, Promotion Adaptation and Place Adaptation as key underpinning towards productivity in international markets. This model is important because it consists of variables that can be controlled by international companies to influence their productivity in the market.

Theoretical Review

Theory of Absolute Advantage (Adam Smith, 1776)

The theory of Absolute Advantage was propounded by Adam Smith in 1776. In his book, An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations by Adam Smith in 1776, he emphasized productivity and advocated free trade as a means of increasing global efficiency. The country's standard of living can be enhanced by international trade with other countries by buying goods not produced by them or by producing large quantities of goods through specializations. Absolute advantage is the ability of a nation to produce a good more efficiently and cost-effectively than any other country. Thus, instead of producing all the products, each country would like to concentrate in manufacturing products which can be produced with competitive advantage. Such effectiveness is gained through the following ways:

1. Repetitive production of a product increases the skills of the labour force.
2. Labour time is saved in switching production from one produce to another.
3. Long product runs provide incentives to develop more effective work methods over a period of time.

Therefore, a country should use the increased production to export and acquire more goods by way of imports, which would in turn improve the living standards of its people. A country's advantage may either be natural or acquired. Natural factors such as country's geographical and agro-climate conditions, mineral or other natural resources or specialized manpower contribute to a country's natural advantage in certain products while acquired advantages can either be in a product or its processed technology that plays an important role in creating such advantage. The ability to produce a different product is labelled as an advantage in product technology while the capability to produce a homogenous product more efficiently is called an advantage in processed technology.

Empirical Review

International marketing is becoming a key trend in modern business. To this effect, numerous studies for different products across national boundaries have been and are still being undertaken. Interestingly, the concepts of product adaptation are not new in regards to international marketing strategies. Product adaptation empirical investigations were performed since the 1970s (Leonidous 2006), where according to Doole & Lowe (2008), product adaptation is when changes and special modifications are made in order to adjust to each market in question. Recent studies were done by Thomas L. Powers & Jeffrey J. Loyka (2007); Walters, P.G (2009) and Whitelock, J. & Pimblet, C. (2007:67). The resulting findings are equally mixed. Thomas L. Powers & Jeffrey J. Loyka (2007) shows that in terms of the level of adaptation by marketing mix area, distribution was subject to greater adaptation followed by price, promotion and product. Their results therefore show that the product portion of the marketing represents the most "global" of the marketing mix elements, and distribution, the most "local". The empirical result of Walters, P.G (2009) disagreed in principle with the result of Thomas L. Powers & Jeffrey J. Loyka (2007). He confirmed that adaptation of product is the most "local" and not "global" because of the product features such as colour, packaging, labelling, size that must be adapted to meet local requirements. The findings of Whitelock, J. & Pimblet, C. (2007), also confirmed the positive relationship between adaptation and marketing mix element as well as the productivity of the organisation.

Birnik & Bowman (2007) conducted an exploratory research on adaptation of marketing mix elements where the study was based only on a survey of 154 executive level managers in U.S-based companies that market products internationally. The result of their research can be used to both understand and manage the extent of adaptation necessary for products in international markets. Although their study did not give an investigation into the relative extent of adaptation by the individual areas of product, pricing, promotion and distribution as well as their influences on adaptation and their study focused primarily on overall product issues, as opposed to examining the level of adaptation made by individual marketing mix elements.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study was conducted to assess The Effect of Marketing Mix Adaptation on Productivity in International Markets: A Study of Nestlé Food Nigeria. The study was domiciled in international marketing and the units of analysis were of employees of Nestlé Food Nigeria PLC covering both headquarter, manufacturing plants and depot. A descriptive survey research design was adapted as a useful guide for data collection because in this survey design, the researchers were interested in observing what happens to sample subjects or variable without any attempt to manipulate or control them.

Population of the Study

Akpakpan (2003) sees population as an entire target of the people, places, events and things relating to a particular phenomenon of interest to the researchers. It is therefore, the totality of all elements (human and material) being studied. The population of this study comprises of employees of Nestlé Food Nigeria PLC covering both headquarter, manufacturing plants and depot.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Given the largeness of the population, it would be practically impossible to carry out a complete and comprehensive study of the whole population. Therefore, the sample size of 205 Management, Senior and Middle level staff of the company will be selected for the study through purposive sampling method. According to Kilby (1971) as cited in Idemobi (2012), purposive type of non-probability sampling is suitable for obtaining ideas, good insights into a situation as well as experienced and critical appraisals of issues. For this study, the choice of purposive sampling design is informed by that fact, the researcher wants to include only those who can answer critical questions concerning the study in the sample.

Sources of Data

Data for this research were collected basically, from two (2) sources- primary and secondary. Primary sources of data mainly consist of data generated for the study of the research, which come from questionnaires, interviews, telephone/oral discussion, personal observation and E-questionnaires.

The secondary source of data, which was a compendium of the review of relevant literature, includes data generated externally. It comprises textbooks, articles, Nestlé Food Annual report/accounts and international coffee organisation. Others include marketing bulletin, magazines/Newspapers and other marketing document.

Method of Data Collection

Basically, the instruments, otherwise statistical tools used during the data collection for this study is questionnaires and interview. Other supportive instruments are telephone/oral discussions, observations and E—questionnaires. Questionnaire for this study is carefully designed and adapted by the researcher in such a way as to elicit information that would aid researcher in carrying

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out a successful research. Also, questions for the interview were framed to collect a wider range of information that touched the theme of the study generally. The data collection instruments served as parameters for collecting data and measuring variables, which is used for answering research questions and testing research hypotheses.

The questionnaire is divided into sections. One section measured the demographic profile of the respondents with respect to gender, age, Educational qualification, working experience, etc. A 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) instrument was adopted.

Method of Data Analysis

There are several statistical method used in the analysis of data. In this study, the data collected were properly edited so that irrelevant responses could be deleted. They were presented using simple tables and percentages to facilitate comprehension by the readers and statistical computation while the simple linear regression model was used in testing the hypothesis at 95% level of confidence.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Table 4.1: Number of Questionnaires Distributed and Returned

Departments	Questionnaires Administered	%	Questionnaires Returned	%	Questionnaires Not Returned	%
Finance	48	23.4	43	23.9	5	20
Personnel and administration	38	18.5	30	16.6	8	32
Marketing	50	24.4	48	26.7	2	8
Technical	25	12.2	20	11.1	5	20
Production/ Research	44	21.5	39	21.7	5	20
Total	205	100%	180	100%	25	100%

Source: *Field Research Study, (2023).*

In table 4.1 above, out of 205 questionnaires distributed, 180 were completed and returned. Accordingly, this number represents 88%; this means that 25 questionnaires representing 12% was not returned. The number of questionnaires returned shows a significant response by respondents. Analysis shows that 43 questionnaires out of 48 were returned by staff of Finance Department of the company and the figure represent 23.9%, Personnel and Administration Department returned 30 questionnaires out of 38 representing 16.6%, while Marketing Department returned 48 questionnaires out of 50 representing 26.7%, Technical Department returned 20 questionnaires out of 25 representing 11.1% and Production/Research Department returned 39 questionnaires out of 44 representing 21.7%.

TEST OF HYPOTHESES

Test of Hypothesis One

H_{01}: Adaptation of the company's product in international markets has no significant effect on productivity in Nestle Food Nigeria.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.881[a]	.776	.775	1.48172

a. Predictors: (Constant), Product adaptation

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2806.592	1	2806.592	1278.335	.000[b]
	Residual	810.141	178	2.196		
	Total	3616.733	179			

a. Dependent Variable: Productivity
b. Predictors: (Constant), Product adaptation

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	29.425	.381		77.201	.000
	Product adaptation	.687	.019	-.881	-35.754	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Productivity

The table above with R value of 0.881 indicates that there is a significant relationship between the dependent and the independent variables. The R-Square value of 0.776 implies that about 77.6% of the variation in Productivity was explained by Product adaptation. The F-calculated value of 1278.335 and P-value of 0.000 implies that the model was adequate. That is, the independent variable was able to explain the dependent variable. The constant value of 29.425 indicates that keeping independent variable (Product adaptation) constant, Productivity will remain at 29.425. The coefficient of Product adaptation was 0.687 which means that a unit change in Product adaptation will lead to 0.687 unit change in Productivity. The P-value of 0.000 means that the effect of product adaptation on productivity was statistically significant.

Test of hypotheses two

H_{02}: Adaptation of company's promotion in international market has no significant effect on productivity in Nestle Food Nigeria.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.864[a]	.747	.747	1.57393

a. Predictors: (Constant), Promotion adaptation

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2702.623	1	2702.623	1090.972	.000[b]
	Residual	914.110	178	2.477		
	Total	3616.733	179			

a. Dependent Variable: Productivity
b. Predictors: (Constant), Promotion adaptation

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	29.491	.414		71.196	.000
	Promotion adaptation	.688	.021	-.864	-33.030	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Productivity

The table above with R value of 0.864 indicates that there is a significant effect between the dependent and the independent variables. The R-Square value of 0.747 implies that about 74.7% of the variation in Productivity was explained by promotion adaptation. The F-calculated value of 1090.972 and P-value of 0.000 implies that the model was adequate. That is, the independent variable was able to explain the dependent variable. The constant value of 29.491 indicates that keeping independent variable constant, the will remain at 29.491. The coefficient of promotion adaptation was 0.688 which means that a unit change in promotion adaptation will lead to 0.688 unit change in productivity. The P-value of 0.000 means that the effect of promotion adaptation on productivity was statistically significant.

Test of hypotheses three

H_{03}: Adaptation of company's distribution in international markets has no significant effect on productivity in Nestle Food Nigeria.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.847[a]	.718	.716	2.14541

a. Predictors: (Constant), distribution adaptation

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1689.225	1	1689.225	367.000	.000[b]
	Residual	662.802	178	4.603		
	Total	2352.027	179			

a. Dependent Variable: Productivity
b. Predictors: (Constant), distribution adaptation

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.897	.725		8.129	.000
	Distribution adaptation	.735	.038	.847	19.157	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Productivity

The table above with R value of 0.847 indicates that there is a significant influence between the dependent and the independent variables. The R-Square value of 0.718 implies that about 71.8% of the variation in productivity was explained by distribution adaptation. The F-calculated value of 367.000 and P-value of 0.000 indicates that the model was satisfactory. That is, the independent variable was able to describe the dependent variable. The constant value of 5.897 indicates that keeping independent variable constant, productivity will remain at 5.897. The coefficient of distribution adaptation was 0.735 which means that a unit change in distribution adaptation will lead to 0.735 unit change in marketing performance. The P-value of 0.000 means that the effect of distribution adaptation on productivity was statistically significant.

Test of hypotheses four

H_{04}: Adaptation of company's price in international markets has no significant effect on productivity in Nestle Food Nigeria.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.832[a]	.769	.769	.32961

a. Predictors: (Constant), Price adaptation

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	276.654	1	276.654	2546.448	.000[b]

	Residual	41.719	178	.109		
	Total	318.373	179			

a. Dependent Variable: Productivity

b. Predictors: (Constant), Price adaptation

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	9.678	.077		125.328	.000
	Price adaptation	.275	.005	.932	50.462	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Productivity

The table above with R value of 0.832 indicates that there is a significant effect between the dependent and the independent proxies. The R-Square value of 0.769 implies that about 76.9% of the variation in productivity was explained by price adaptation. The F-calculated value of 2546.446 and P-value of 0.000 implies that the model was adequate. That is, the independent variable was able to clarify the dependent variable. The constant value of 9.678 indicates that keeping independent variable (price adaptation) constant, productivity will remain at 9.678. The coefficient of price adaptation was 0.275 which means that a unit change in price adaptation will lead to 0.275 unit change in productivity. The P-value of 0.000 means that the effect of price adaptation on productivity was statistically significant.

Discussion of Findings

The study showed a significant relationship between each of the four dimensions of marketing mix adaptation and productivity in Nestle food Nigeria. The result of first hypothesis testing shows that there is a significant relationship between product adaptation and productivity with a regression coefficient, $\beta = 0.687$. The result of the second hypothesis demonstrate that perceived risk significantly influences customer patronage with a regression coefficient, $\beta = 0.688$. The result is in tandem with the previous studies done by Kacker, (2009). The result of the third hypothesis posits a significant relationship between distribution adaptation and productivity with a regression coefficient, $\beta = 0.735$. The result of the fourth hypothesis posits a significant relationship between price adaptation and productivity with a regression coefficient of $\beta = 0.275$.

CONCLUSIONS

From the data analysis, there is an indication that significant relationship exist between marketing mix adaptation and productivity in Nestle food Nigeria. In line with the findings of the study, the following conclusions were reached; the study has established that marketing mix adaptation proxies leads to a good productivity in Nestle food Nigeria. This implies that, an increase in all the dimensions of marketing mix adaptions will result in an increasing productivity in Nestle food Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the researchers made the following recommendations;

i. Nestle food Nigeria should perfectly embrace the proxies of marketing mix adaption in order to boost productivity
ii. Pricing adaption should be paid a special attention as many consumers are sensitive to price
iii. Promotion adaptation should not be played down on because the market is becoming more competitive because of emerging technologies.
iv. In embracing the aforementioned dimensions, the company should clinch modern technologies for easy execution

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