Cultural Heterogeneity towards Standardization and Adaptation of Marketing Mix: A study on Multinational Companies in Ghana

Martin Owusu Ansah
University of the Witwatersrand
School of Economic and Business Sciences
Department of Marketing
Johannesburg - South Africa.
Email: owusumartin97@yahoo.co.uk

Abstract

This paper examines the strategic application of standardisation and adaptation of Multinational companies' (MNCs) marketing mix (4P's) on a diverse cultural environment. Business Strategy Approach was employed as a theoretical foundation for the study .Eighty - two managers of the multinational companies operating in Accra and Kumasi, Ghana were conveniently and purposively sampled for the study. Cochran Q Test statistic was used to analyse the data - on a linear continuum across a three time point.The study identified that, multinational manufacturing companies employ a combination of both adaptation and standardisation strategies on their marketing mixes. Price was observed to be the most adapted element of the marketing mix. The study recommended for managers of multinational companies to utilize more of adaptation strategies rather than standardisation due to changes in cultural dynamics, consumer characteristics, market economy as well as government's business laws and regulations - which are different within the African continent.

Keywords: Culture, Standardization, Adaptation, Marketing Mix, International.

Introduction

Multinational companies face the challenge of designing programs capable of working effectively in meeting their target markets in different countries. Hofstede (1980) observed that, business was a different game with different rules in each country (p.163).That was to suggest that, cultural activities that characterize a particular business in a developed country cannot be replicated to business strategy in a developing country.Culture is one phase that is not tangible, nevertheless, it has a very imperative function towards the influence of any business enterprise. According to Ozsomer & Simonin (2004), the failure of organizations in recognizing and captivating advantages of an emerging global culture had possibly led to business difficulties. Researchers like: Röse (2004); Moalosi et al. (2010) also revealed that, adapting to meet up with local business markets is usually linked with the public culture.Robbins et al. (2006) revealed that, the stability and development of an organization depends largely on its suitable culture observation in order to react satisfactorily to external environmental forces. According to Schein (1999), culture is a mould of shared fundamental suppositions that, a group learned in solving problems of external alteration and internal incorporation; which is taught to employees - as the correct way to observe, consider and sense in relation to solving problems in different business setting.

The goals of tumbling costs and market intricacies compel companies to consider standardization and at the same time employing product adaptation (Vrontis & Kitchen, 2005; Vrontis & Papasolomou, 2005).Vivenne & Tobias (1999) opined that, debate on international marketing has been a question of whether it is more suitable to purse a marketing strategy on standardization or adaptation. The methodical debate on whether multinational companies must adapt or standardize their marketing mix elements in the global markets is one of immense significance towards the study of the two concepts. Researchers like: Ryans et al. (2003); Virvilaite, Seinauskiene, &Sestokiene (2011) ; Brei et al. (2011) as well as Schmid & Kotulla (2012) all opined that, debate on standardization versus adaptation has been there for many years and still continues.

Souiden (2002); Ghemawat & Thomas (2008) posited that, local conditions demand adaptation but it which was seen differently by Cateora & Graham (2005) ; De Mooij & Hofstede, (2002) who also argued that, some measure of alteration may be inevitable. Kustin (2004) also posited that, standardization and adaptation could be both viable when operating on the international market. According to Siraliova & Angelis (2006), the question of achievability must always be at the centre stage – even though standardization may be chosen as an option but practicalities may possibly demand otherwise. Navarro et al. (2010) revealed that, the more an organization decides to be at a particular market; the more it must be willing to become accustomed. The key to triumph in international markets is to ‘being global but acting local’ (Svensson, 2002; Cateora & Graham, 2005). Therefore, a suitable international marketing tactic is crucial and indispensable for multinational companies and for the most part of a international strategy is Adaptation or Standardization (Roger, 1995). Heterogeneity among diverse countries does not consent to complete standardization while the huge costs associated with adaptation may not allow adaptation to be employed extensively (Vrontis, 2005).

Multinational companies across the globe are employing a moderately incorporating of standardization and adaptation of their marketing strategies. Companies like: Coca-Cola and McDonald’s even though understood to offer a standardized products across the entire globe, do a little adaption to their products. McDonald’s use chili sauce on hamburgers in Mexico as a substitute to Ketchup; it uses corn soup and green tea milkshakes in Japan; beef burgers in German and wine in France. Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) also uses "pabs" in South Africa. Nokia as part of their adaptation activity modifies its cell phones for every major market (Armstrong & Kotler, 2008).Backhaus van Doorn (2007) observed that standardization was a trade - off between the probable economic profit of a standardized approach as well as the performance achieved by adapting to the desires of home markets. According to Vrontis &Vronti (2004), the decision to standardize or adapt is not measured as a dichotomous one. A section of academicians put forward that, standardizing certain strategies and adapting others to diverse market conditions is essential - especially in an unknown business environment.

2. Problem statement

The issue of costs and market ins and outs coerce companies to employ standardization and adaptation (Vomits and Papasolomou, 2005). According to Kustin (2004) standardization and adaptation must be seriously analyzed and used carefully - especially when applying them on international market. Hise & Young-Tao (2011) observed that, though there has been an enormous pact of interest paid by academicians on standardization and adaptation over the past decades. However, an examination of the extant literature results in their conclusions are incomplete. Kotler & Armstrong (1996) observed that, many studies on standardisation and adaptation research has only a restricted standpoint in the sense that, they are mostly on a single, non-global market. It is also clear from the literature that, many articles have been focused on China or the United States, with limited studies in the Middle East, South America as well as in Africa (Kururaranga et al, 2012). Researchers like : O’Donnell & Jeong (2000); Leonidou, Katsikeas, &Samiee, (2002) ; Shoham (2002); Zou & Cavusgil (2002); Theodosiou & Leonidou, (2003); Julian & O’Cass (2004) ; Özsomer & Simonin (2004); Schilke, Reimann, & Thomas (2009) as well as Wua & Cheng (2009) have all done extensive studies on marketing mix but not on the African continent. While there is inadequate research on how and why multinational companies standardize or adapt their offering to diverse markets like Ghana - whose area has not be explored has necessitated this study. The aim of this study is to fill the gap by identifying how Multinational companies operating in Ghana adapt drivers of standardization and adaptation of different marketing mix elements into the Ghanaian business environment.

3. Research objectives

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Analyze how multinational manufacturing companies in Ghana make use of adaptation as a strategy towards their marketing mix.
2 examine the application of Standardization as a strategy by multinational companies in Ghana towards their marketing mix.
3 analyze the application of adaptation and standardization of the 4 P's on a three time point - before their operating year, in the middle of their operating year as well as years after their operating in Ghana.
4. Present managerial implications of the multinational companies in Ghana regarding standardization and adaptation of their marketing mix.

4. Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study:

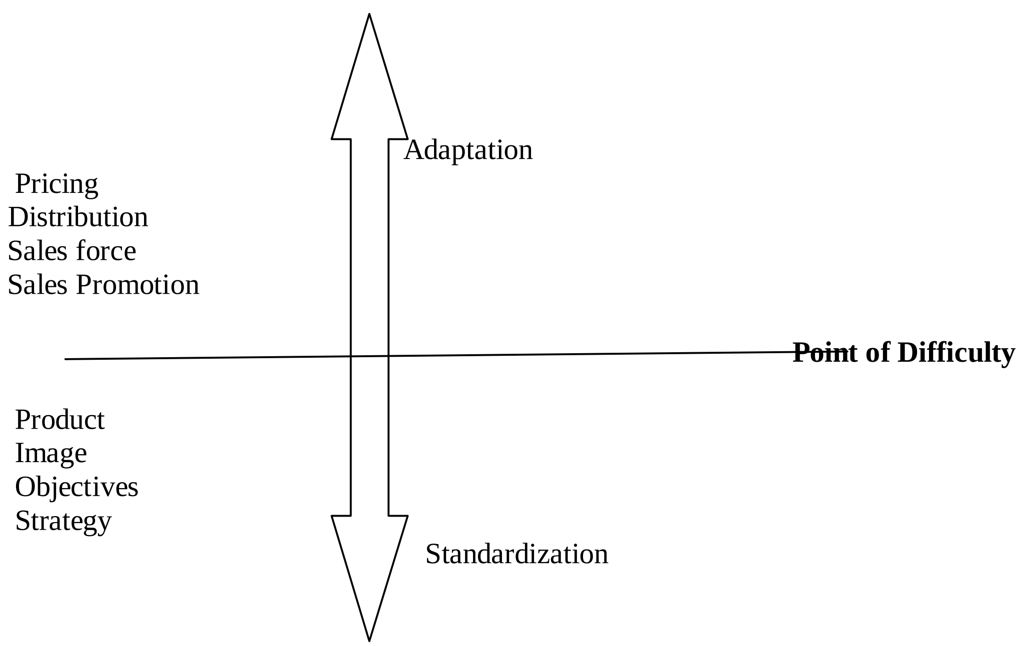
1. To what extent do Multinational manufacturing companies adapt their marketing mix within the Ghanaian business environment?
2. To what degree do Multinational companies standardize marketing mix program into the Ghanaian business environment?
3. What are the factors that have influenced corporate decisions concerning standardization/adaptation into the Ghanaian business environment?

5. Literature Review

5.1 Business Strategy Approach

The business strategy approach was introduced by Reid (1983) & Root (1987).It explains how multinational companies prefer to make trade - off between variables as part of their decision to internalize as well as the methods they adopt towards their survival in an unknown environment. According to Reid (1983) foreign expansion is a contingency based and results from a choice among competition, expansion strategies as guided by the nature of the market opportunity, firm resources and managerial philosophy. Root (1987) on the other hand also observed that, market selection should include market attractiveness, accessibility and informal barriers. According to Welford & Prescott (1994),the business strategy approach towards international business must base on the idea of pragmatism. In relating the business strategy approach to the current study, it could be said that, multinational companies operating in Ghana will be very tactical in their approach towards either to fully standardize or to fully adapt. That may perhaps be associated to the new business environment they have found themselves. Companies will initially be trading -off the various marketing mix for a given period of time before a final strategy is employed - while considering the managerial philosophy, market opportunities as well as the resource based of the firm.

Continuum frame work for Standardization and Adaptation
Fig. 1



Source: Adapted from Doole & Lowe (2004, p.190)

According to Doole & Lowe (2004), pricing, distribution, promotions as well as the use of sales force are mostly adapted. Adaptation of marketing mix is an option to use by companies to overcome difficulties in an unknown business environment.

Multinational companies, whose aim is to be leaders of markets or reach out to new fragments of the market, tend to employ adaptation strategy. On the other hand, strategies to use, the product offering, and the image of organizations as well as the objectives to be achieved are mostly standardized. According to Keegan & Schlegelmilch (2001) companies make use of standardization due to greater sales volume, lower production cost, greater profitability and integrated image around the world. In the current study, the focus will be mainly on the 4P's that is price, product, place (distribution) as well as promotion.

5.2. Standardization and Adaptation of marketing mix

Firms have no option than to adapt or standardize their marketing mix, when entering international markets. The question of what strategy to choose: standardization or adaptation has been an issue of debate. According to Keegan & Green (1999) "the essence of global marketing is to find a balance between a standardized (extension) approach to the marketing mix and a localized (adaption) approach; that is responsive to country or regional differences." (p.28). According to Onkvisit & Shaw (2004) some of the marketing mix is adaptable than others: place, promotion and price are easily adapted while product is normally seen to be the hardest element to adapt. The essential assessment of managers towards a successive global marketing strategy is the extent at which they should standardize or adapt their international marketing mix.

5.3. Standardizations and Adaptation of Price

Price is the sum of money charged for a product or on a service. Kotler, Harker & Brennan (2009) revealed that, price was the most elastic elements of the marketing mix. According to Hollensen (2008), two common price-setting strategies in international marketing are price standardization and price adaptation. Standardization pricing is where a firm applies the same pricing mix for all target markets. Adaptation pricing permits each local partner to set a price which is measured to meet the local conditions without making any attempt to synchronize prices from one country to the other. According to Woods (1995) adapting prices allows for the use of diverse prices in both domestic and foreign markets by international marketers.

5.4. Standardization and Adaptation of Place (Distribution)

Distribution or place as one of the marketing mixes includes an activity that makes products accessible to customers - regarding when and where they want to buy them. Selecting a particular type of distribution channels -whether to adapt or standardize is one of the difficult decisions of marketing strategies. It is difficult to standardize the distribution because distribution channels differ from one country to another. On the other hand, adaptation of the distribution channels can aid the firm decrease cost and to increase profitability (Doole& Lowe (2001). Standardizing or adapting distribution channel relies on various factors such as the nature of market, customer characteristics, nature of product, culture as well as legislation. Onkvisit & Shaw (2009) observed that, distribution is commonly seen as a component of marketing mix that is more adapted than to standardize.

5.5. Standardization and Adaptation of Promotion

A firm's promotional mix or marketing communications mix – comprised: advertising, public relations, personal selling as well as sales promotion. A decision to standardize or adapt a promotional mix needs a careful consideration. According to Doole & Lowe (2001) environmental factors within particular local situations such as political and legal restraints make it essential for communication strategies to be adapted other than to be standardized. Standardization of the promotion mix implies applying the same basic communication strategies in foreign markets. Adaptation of the promotion mix differs from country to another country. Adaptation of the promotion mix is appropriate while standardization relies on organizations' strategies and goals. According to Chung (2007) the main effect on promotional mix is a country's culture, which makes it imperative for firms to adapt promotional approach when entering a diverse cultural environment.

5.6. Standardization and Adaptation of Product

Businesses across the globe demand that products are marketed to meet the target markets. According to Hofstede (1984), culture is the collective programming of the mind, which differentiates members of one category from the other. In adapting a product unto international markets. Zaaiem & Zghidi (2011) posited that, adaptation of products was the key strategy that influences the idea of doing business abroad.

Horska et al. (2007) also revealed that products ought to differ from its innovative stage to other areas - since culture differs from one country to the other. Lundeteg (2012) also explained standardized approach as a “one size fits all” approach" to the mixes - irrespective of where it will be employed. Studies on standardization on marketing mix – product, promotion, price and distribution have been well researched (Özsomer & Simonin, 2004; Vrontis & Kitchen, 2005) but in all, promotion and product standardisation have received a lot of interest Laroche et al (2001).

5.7. Cultural differences on standardization and adaptation of the marketing mix

The impact of culture on customer’s and consumer's purchase assessment contrast from one country to the other. Onkvisit & Shaw (2009) opined that, culture was one of the most important features which become pertinent for companies on pricing related issues within the global markets. According to Stock & Lambert (2001) culture has a greater influence on marketing mix. A thoughtful consumer’s culture will aid the firms to bring out products or render services towards an increase in sales volume. Price, which is paid by consumers from different cultural environment, is a significant constituent in the communication between buyers and sellers -with which culture has a position in price setting and appeasement. The other element of the marketing mix is place or distribution which also needs to consider cultural diversity in terms of the origin of a company to its new destination of doing business. Culture influences what people like and dislike and how people want things to be interpreted - in signals, symbols as well as their attitudes towards or against products or services. According to De Búrca (2004) issues on culture needs to be taken into consideration when organizations' want to advance its promotional mix. Hollensen (2008) also observed that, culture has a substantial control towards the development of marketing strategies on international marketplaces. Based on the above literature, it could be said that, each part of the marketing mix is extensively affected by countries' national culture.

6. Research Methodology

6.1. Research approach and philosophy

The study adopted a quantitative research approach which emphasized on statistics in collecting and analyzing the data (Bryman et al, 2014).The study employed the epistemological and ontological stance of positivist. According to Saunders et al. (2007), there is one common assumption that exist regarding that approach, such that, the researcher with a positivistic standpoint is not affected by or affects a particular subject, but advocates independency.

6.2. Population and Sampling technique

The target population of the study comprised managers of the multinational companies operating in Ghana. Eighty - two of the Managers across four multinational sectors were sampled conveniently and purposively from both Accra and Kumasi for the study. They were taken from the manufacturing sector, transportation and communication sector, construction sector as well as retail and wholesale sectors. The difficulty associated with getting a figure of the readily available Managers from the two cities compelled the researcher to use a non - probability sampling technique to guarantee satisfactory representation of the respondents.

6.3. Measurement Instrument and Questionnaire Design

Research scales were adjusted on the basis of earlier studies done in comparable manner. Proper adaptations were made in order to fit the current research context and purpose. “Marketing Mix elements on product, price, promotion and place” were all adopted from Tseltsova and Bohnert (2015) .The questionnaires were developed into all categorical due to the method (Cochran Q Test statistics) that was used for the analysis.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the Respondents

Gender	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Male	50	61.0 %
Female	32	39.0%
	82	**100%**
Age		
18 - 29 years	2	2.4%
30 - 39 years	46	56.1%
40 - 49 years	19	23.2%
50 plus	15	18.3%
	82	**100%**
Educational Background		
O /A - Level	2	2.4%
HND (Diploma)	6	7.3%
Undergraduate	34	41.5%
Masters (Postgraduate)	40	48.8%
	82	**100%**

Table 1.explains the demographic characteristics of the respondents. It was revealed that, Male constituted the majority with 61.0% while female constituted the minority with 39.0%.On the respondents' ages; those between the ages of 18 - 29 years recorded 2.4%, 30 - 39 years recorded 56.1 %, 40 - 49 years recorded 23.2 % while respondents above 50 years of age recorded 18.3 %.It shows that a greater number of the managers who took part in the survey were between the ages of 30 - 39 years. On respondents educational background. It was observed that, people with Ordinary or Advanced Level certificate recorded 2.4 %, managers with Higher National Diploma certificates recorded 7.3 %, managers with first degree certificates recorded 41.5%, while managers with Postgraduate degrees or masters degree recorded 48.8 %. It demonstrates that a greater number of the managers who took part in the study had masters degrees as their highest qualification.

Table 2: Statistics on Standardization towards Price as a Mix

Price	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	Value	
				Applicable	Non - Applicable
Time P1	82	1.54	.502	46%	54%
Time P2	82	1.79	.408	21%	79%
Time P3	82	1.50	.503	50%	50%

Time P1 = Prior to standardisation strategy; Time P2 = following the strategy and Time P3 = One year post standardisation strategy. Table 2. presents statistics on standardisation towards price as a mix. It was recorded that prior to the (Time P1) application of the standardisation strategy,46% of the companies attested to the application of the standardisation strategy while 54% of the companies did not consider the strategy. Following the strategy (Time P2), 21% of the managers recorded to have attested to the application of the strategy while 79% recorded otherwise. A year after the program (Time P3), companies recorded 50% for and against. It is clear from the table that, multinational companies in Ghana were very cautious towards standardisation as a strategy on their prices of goods and service. Again, the variation of the standard deviation figures also points to the fact that, companies were very cautious in the implementation of standardisation on their products' prices.

Table 3 : Cochran's Q Test Statistics on Price Standardisation

N	82
Cochran's Q	3.098[a]
Df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.212

a. 2 is treated as a success.

Table 11.provides an explanation on whether there was a change in the proportion of strategies across the three time points. In determining the significant level of the change on price standardisation. The value that corresponds to the Asymp .Sig (which is the probability value) was used. Therefore because the value was 0.212 which was greater than the cut point of p < .05; then it would be concluded that, the results are not statistically significant - meaning there was no change in the three times period towards the application of standardisation among companies on price as a marketing mix.

Table 4: Statistics on Standardization towards Product as a Mix

Product	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	Value	
				Applicable	Non - Applicable
Time PT1	82	1.57	.498	43%	57%
Time PT2	82	1.65	.481	35%	65%
Time PT3	82	1.55	.501	45%	55%

Time PT1 = Prior to standardisation strategy; Time PT2 = following the strategy and Time PT3 = One year post standardisation strategy. Table 4.showst statistics on standardisation towards product as a mix. It was recorded prior to the application (Time PT1) of the standardisation strategy that, 43% of the companies attested to the application of the standardisation strategy while 57% of the companies did not consider the strategy. Following the strategy (Time P2),35 % of the companies recorded to have attested to the application of the strategy while 65% recorded otherwise. A year after the program (Time P3), companies recorded 45% for and 55% against its application on their products. It is clear from the table that, multinational companies in Ghana were very restrained towards the application of standardisation as a strategy on their products. Again, the variation of the standard deviation figures from .498 decreased to .481 and finally increased to .501 also points to the fact that, companies were not certain in the implementation of standardisation on their products.

Table 5 : Cochran's Q Test Statistics on Product Standardisation

N	82
Cochran's Q	1.486[a]
Df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.476

a. 1 is treated as a success.

Table 5.explains whether there was a change in the proportion of strategies across the three time points. In determining the significant level of the change on products. The value that corresponds to the Asymp .Sig (which is the probability value) was used. Therefore because the value was .476 which was greater than the cut point of p < .05; then it would be concluded that the results is not statistically significant - meaning there was no change in the three times period towards the application of standardisation among companies on product as a marketing mix. Companies were not willing to standardise their products in the Ghanaian business environment.

Table 6: Statistics on Standardization towards Distribution as a Mix

Distribution	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	Value	
				Applicable	Non - Applicable
Time D1	82	1.52	.502	48%	52%
Time D2	82	1.79	.491	39%	61%
Time D3	82	1.50	.493	40%	60%

Time D1 = Prior to standardisation strategy; Time D2 = following the strategy and Time D3 = One year post standardisation strategy.

Table 6.demonstrates statistics on standardisation towards distribution as a mix. It was recorded prior to the application (Time D1) of the standardisation strategy that, 48% of the companies attested to the application of the standardisation strategy while 52% of the companies did not consider the strategy. Following the strategy (Time D2), 39 % of the companies recorded to have attested to the application of the strategy while 61% recorded otherwise. A year after the program (Time D3), companies recorded 40% for and 60 % against its application on their distribution channels. It is clear from the table that, multinational companies in Ghana were very cautious towards standardisation as a strategy on their distribution. Again, the variation of the standard deviation figures from .502 decreased to .491 and finally increased to .493 also points to the fact that, companies were not stable in the implementation of standardisation on their channel of distribution as one of the mix.

Table 7 : Cochran's Q Test Statistics on Distribution Standardisation

N	82
Cochran's Q	1.344[a]
Df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.511

a. 2 is treated as a success.

Table 7 .gives an explanation on whether there was a change in the proportion of strategies across the three time points. In determining the significant level of the change on distribution. The value that corresponds to the Asymp .Sig (which is the probability value) was used. Therefore because the value was .511 which was greater than the cut point of $p < .05$; then it would be concluded that the results is not statistically significant - meaning there was no change in the three times period towards the application of standardisation among companies on distribution as a marketing mix. Companies were not willing to standardise their distribution in the Ghanaian business environment.

Table 8: Statistics on Standardization towards Promotion as a Mix

Promotion	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	Value	
				Applicable	Non - Applicable
Time PM1	82	1.54	.502	46%	54%
Time PM2	82	1.63	.485	37%	63%
Time PM3	82	1.63	.485	37%	63%

Time PM1 = Prior to standardisation strategy; Time PM2 = following the strategy and Time PM3 = One year post standardisation strategy.

Table 8 .presents statistics on standardisation towards promotion as a mix. It was recorded prior to the application (Time PM1) of the standardisation strategy that, 46% of the companies attested to the application of the standardisation strategy while 54% of the companies did not consider the strategy.

Following the strategy (Time PM2), 37% of the companies recorded to have attested to the application of the strategy while 63% recorded otherwise. A year after the program (Time PM3), companies recorded 37% for and 63 % against its application on their promotions. It is clear from the table that, multinational companies in Ghana were very cautious towards standardisation as a strategy on their promotional activities.

Table 9 : Cochran's Q Test Statistics on Promotion Standardisation

N	82
Cochran's Q	2.246[a]
Df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.325

a. 2 is treated as a success.

Table 9 .gives an explanation on whether there was a change in the proportion of strategies across the three time points. In determining the significant level of the change on promotions. The value that corresponds to the Asymp .Sig (which is the probability value) was used. Therefore because the value was .325 which was greater than the cut point of $p < .05$; then it would be concluded that the results is not statistically significant - meaning there was no change in the three times period towards the application of standardisation among companies on promotion as a marketing mix. Companies were not willing to standardise their promotional mix in the Ghanaian business environment

Adaptation

Table 10: Statistics on Adaption towards Price as a Mix

Price	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	Value	
				Applicable	Non - Applicable
Time P1	82	1.34	.477	66%	34%
Time P2	82	1.38	.488	62%	38%
Time P3	82	1.26	.439	74%	26%

Time P1 = Prior to adaptation strategy; Time P2 = following the strategy and Time P3 = One year post adaptation strategy.

Table 10.demonstrates statistics on adaptation towards price as a mix. It was recorded prior to the application (Time P1) of the adaptation strategy that, 66% of the companies attested to the application of the adaptation strategy while 34% of the companies did not consider the strategy. Following the strategy (Time P2), 62% of the companies recorded to have attested to the application of the strategy while 34% recorded otherwise. A year after the program (Time D3), companies recorded 74% for and 26 % against its application on their price adaptation. It is clear from the table that, multinational companies in Ghana were applying adaptation policies on their pricing policies. Woodruff (2004) observed price adaptation as one of the strategies towards profitability in international business.The findings connotes to Salimäki & Gabrielsson, (2005) who opined that adaptation in general was authorized feature in the global business

Table 11 : Cochran's Q Test Statistics on Price Adaptation

N	82
Cochran's Q	19.358[a]
Df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. 2 is treated as a success.

Table 11.explains whether there was a change in the proportion of strategies across the three time points. In determining the significant level of the change. The value that corresponds to the Asymp .Sig (which is the probability value) was used. Therefore because the value was .000 which was less than the cut point of $p < .05$;then it would be concluded that the result is statistically significant - meaning there was a change the three times period towards the application of adaptation among companies on price as a marketing mix.

Table 12: Statistics on Adaption towards Product as a Mix

Product	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	Value	
				Applicable	Non - Applicable
Time PT1	82	1.30	.463	70%	30%
Time PT2	82	1.26	.439	74%	26%
Time PT3	82	1.33	.473	67%	23%

Time PT1 = Prior to adaptation strategy; Time PT2 = following the strategy and Time PT3 = One year post adaptation strategy.

Table 12.gives an explanation on product adaptation among the selected companies. It was recorded that, prior to the application (Time PT1) of the adaptation strategy, 70% of the companies attested to the application of the adaptation strategy while 30% of the companies did not consider the strategy. Following the strategy (Time PT2), 74% of the companies recorded to have attested to the application of the strategy while 26% recorded otherwise. A year after the program (Time PT3), companies recorded 67% for and 23 % against its application on their price adaptation. It is clear from the table that, multinational companies in Ghana were applying adaptation policies on their products as one of the marketing mixes.The results of the study are in consonance with Horksa et al, (2007)who opined that, cultural distance between home market and foreign market has a positive impact on the degree of product adaptation.

Table 13 : Cochran's Q Test Statistics on Product Adaptation

N	82
Cochran's Q	1.018[a]
Df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.601

a. 1 is treated as a success.

Table 13.depicts the determination of a relationship between the three time periods of product adaption. The probability value of 0.601 was greater than the accepted threshold of $p < 0.05$ which means that there was no significant relationship between the three time periods of product adaptation of multinational companies in Ghana.

Table 14: Statistics on Adaption towards Distribution as a Mix

Distribution	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	Value	
				Applicable	Non - Applicable
Time D1	82	1.32	.468	68%	32%
Time D2	82	1.44	.499	56%	44%
Time D3	82	1.39	.491	60%	40%

Time D1 = Prior to adaptation strategy; Time D2 = following the strategy and Time D3 = One year post adaptation strategy.

Table 14. proviedes statistics on adaptation towards distribution as a mix. It was recorded prior to the application (Time D1) of the adaptation strategy that, 68% of the companies indicated to have applied adaptation strategy while 32% of the companies did not consider the strategy. Following the strategy (Time D2), 56% of the companies recorded to have confirmed to the application of the strategy while 44% recorded otherwise. A year after the program (Time D3), companies recorded 60% for and 40 % against its application on their distribution channels. It is clear from the table that, multinational companies in Ghana were making use of adaptation as a strategy on their distribution. The findings are in consistent with Powers & Loyka (2010) who observed adaptation of marketing mix elements among US companies found distribution to be one of the most adapted.

Table 15 : Cochran's Q Test Statistics on Distribution Adaptation

N	82
Cochran's Q	2.338[a]
Df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.311

a. 1 is treated as a success.

In assessing whether there was a significant relationship between the three time periods of companies' application of adaptation strategy towards their distribution. It was observed that, there was no relationship between the three time periods - since 0.311 was greater than the probability value of 0.05.

Table 16: Statistics on Adaption towards Promotion as a Mix

Promotion	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	Value	
				Applicable	Non - Applicable
Time PM1	82	1.26	.439	74%	26%
Time PM2	82	1.29	.458	70%	30%
Time PM3	82	1.30	.463	69%	31%

Time PM1 = Prior to adaptation strategy; Time PM2 = following the adaptation and Time PM3 = One year post adaptation strategy.

Table 16. Presents statistics on adaptation towards promotion as a mix. It was observed prior to the application (Time PM1) of the adaption strategy that, 74% of the companies attested to the application of the standardisation strategy while 26% of the companies did not consider the strategy. Following the strategy (Time PM2), 70% of the companies recorded to have attested to the application of the strategy while 30 % recorded otherwise. A year after the program (Time PM3), companies recorded 69 % for and 31% against its application on their promotions. It is evident from the table 18 that, multinational companies in Ghana were mostly adapting as a strategy on their promotional mix.

Table 18 : Cochran's Q Test Statistics on Promotion Adaptation

N	82
Cochran's Q	.500[a]
Df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.779

a. 1 is treated as a success.

In analysing the level of significance among the three time period from table 18, shows that, there was no significant relationship among the times towards promotion as an adapted strategy employed by the multinational companies operating in Ghana. The probability value of 0.779 was not less than 0.05 which violates the assumption on its significant level.

7. Conclusion

The aim of the study was to investigate how multinational companies apply standardisation and adaptation strategies on their marketing mix - within Ghana's heterogeneous cultural environment with different ethnic groups. The author compared the two strategies in determining which of them was common among the companies. The study revealed that adaptations of the marketing mix in accordance with customers and consumers characteristics ought to be considered - especially when firms plan to go international. The study also concludes that, application of both standardization and Adaptation strategies could be employed as a trade - off strategy before the appropriate strategy could be adopted and used.According to Alimiene & Kuvykaite (2008), companies that intend to operate in foreign markets should seek to amalgamate the diverse strategies of both standardization or adaptation of the marketing strategy. Nevertheless, the findings of the study must be considered with caution–since some selected sectors of the multinational companies were used for the study and for that matter, the study cannot be used for generalization.

8. Implications for theory and management

First, numerous studies have been carried out in the area of standardization and adaptation on marketing mix strategies in global marketing in the Western countries but little in Africa - who are partners to many of the multinational companies. The current study is expected to add to the existing academic literature on standardisation and adaptation from the African perspective.

Secondly, the systematic approach to consider culture has become an important scheme for companies competing in global markets**.** Managers are expected to make decisions concerning standardization and adaptation elements of their marketing mix. The findings of the current study will compel managers thinking of going global - especially to the sub-Saharan African continent to better realize the subject of adaptation and make use of them on the continent. A combination of the two strategies could also be useful when making decisions associated with the degree of standardization and adaptation in heterogeneous cultures in Africa.

Although the study makes contributions to the understanding of standardisation and adaptation of marketing mix, it has some limitations. First, the limitation points to the fact that, the study was centred on a sample of managers from Kumasi and Accra - geographical areas constituting two out of ten regions in Ghana. Secondly, the sample was taken through the use of non-probability sampling techniques. This means that, the findings may not be used for generalisation to represent a wider population of multinational mangers in Ghana. Additional studies are needed for the sample size to be increased while including multinational managers from the ten regions in Ghana.

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