

## **Study on international marketing strategies for MNCs in emerging markets in disrupted times**

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### ***Extended abstract***

#### **Introduction**

Multinational corporations (MNC)s and their operations across the globe have been the hot topic for researchers since 1990s (Sageder & Feldbauer-Durstmüller, 2019). Globalization has a positive influence on creating global consumer base for global brands (Munir & Bukhari, 2020). This criterion has allowed MNCs to expand their global market position through effective international marketing (Fregidou-Malama et al., 2019; Zahoor & Lew, 2023). Emerging market (EM) holds an important position among global markets because of its growth and expansion capacity (Fregidou-Malama et al., 2022). Thus, MNCs are motivated to expand their business in EMs. EMs often have distinctive features in comparison to developed markets (Fregidou-Malama et al., 2019; Chatterjee et al., 2022; Zahoor & Lew, 2023). Therefore, MNCs are required to understand the contexts that influence the consumers of EMs to plan effective international marketing strategies (Fregidou-Malama et al., 2019; Chatterjee et al., 2022).

The global Covid-19 pandemic have had an overwhelming influence on people lives and the international business environment (Jeong et al., 2022). More specifically, Covid-19 had an adverse effect on the global supply chain which has influenced the international marketing strategies of MNCs (Jeong et al., 2022). The whole world specially EMs have witnessed the

greatest economic and social disaster since the great depression (Ke & Hsiao, 2022; Zahoor & Lew, 2023).

The governments in EMs have taken strict precautions like lockdowns to contain Covid-19 (Ke & Hsiao, 2022). The lock downs had serious impact on the people of EMs like unemployment, reduction of purchasing power, and food shortage (Ke & Hsiao, 2022). The adverse effect of Covid-19 made the people of EMs to think differently on the priorities of life. Therefore, the behavior of consumers was altered which influenced the market scenario of EMs (Zahoor & Lew, 2023). The decrease of number of potential consumers due to decrease in purchasing power as well as alteration of behavior of consumers in EMs have influence on MNCs and their international marketing strategies in EMs.

As the global businesses was in the phase of recovery, the Ukraine-Russia conflict has had a significant impact on the economy of Europe and the whole world since February 2022 (Ratten, 2022). The Ukraine-Russia conflict also adversely influenced global businesses and the world economy through energy shortage and supply chain disruption (Ratten, 2022; Khudaykulova et al., 2022). This conflict also created more adverse effect on EMs that were already in crisis due to Covid-19. The supply chain disruption and energy shortage caused by this conflict, further deteriorated the economies of EMs causing inflation and food security. Inflation have influenced the prices of commodities to go up in EMs which created even more problems for the people of EMs. So, it is becoming very much difficult for MNCs to maintain their profitability in EMs because of these ongoing disruptions in the business environment. Therefore, it is important for us to know what actions MNCs are taking as part of their international business marketing to survive and grow during this disrupted period since 2019.

## **Purpose**

This study aims to explore the actions related to international marketing strategies taken by MNCs during the last three years to adapt and adjust in EMs in response to the disrupted business environment because of the global pandemic Covid-19 and the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict.

## **Methodology**

To address the aim of the study the researchers will be following a qualitative approach. It is assumed that a qualitative lens will enable the researchers to obtain detailed insights, perceptions, and experiences of the respondents related to actions taken by MNCs as part of their international marketing strategies EMs in disrupted times (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2018; Yin, 2009). It is planned that semi structured interviews will be conducted. Respondents will be selected based on their positions in the MNCs. Three MNCs will be selected operating in India and three MNCs will be selected in Bangladesh. The MNCs that will be chosen will have to have their head quarter in developed nations. One MNC will be chosen from service industry and two MNCs will be chosen from fast moving consumer goods industry in each of the two countries. Respondents will be selected based on their positions in the marketing department of the six MNCs.

## **Initial knowledge gathered and expected results**

A pilot study was conducted by interviewing a respondent who is the Brand Manager of a popular brand marketed by a well-known British MNC in the fast-moving consumer goods industry of Bangladesh. The respondent has confirmed that the disrupted time have brought is

crisis and new initiatives as part of marketing strategy have been launched to comply with the market situation. For instance, before the Covid-19 pandemic the company only used traditional wholesale and retailing channels to reach the target consumers but since the pandemic, the company is using traditional and local online stores to reach their target consumers for their nine brands that they market in Bangladesh. In response to the impact of inflation on consumers in current times, the company is following sales promotion strategies to motivate consumers. These sales promotion strategies are not similar for all consumers rather the sales promotion strategies are conceived keeping in mind the behavior of consumers of each of the six regions of Bangladesh. The pilot study provides us the relevance of the aim of the study and ensures us that full bloom study will provide us effective knowledge related to international marketing strategies implemented by MNCs in EMS in disrupted times.

It is expected that the study will provide knowledge on adaptation and adjustment strategies taken by MNCs to survive and grow in EMS under the influence of the global pandemic Covid-19 and Ukraine-Russia conflict.

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