“Sustainable marketing strategies in the context of a globalized clothing and textile (C&T) sector in Zimbabwe”

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SUSTAINABLE MARKETING STRATEGIES IN THE CONTEXT OF A GLOBALIZED CLOTHING AND TEXTILE (C&T) SECTOR IN ZIMBABWE

Abstract

This article provides a new perspective on sustainable marketing strategies in the context of a globalized clothing and textile (C&T) sector in Zimbabwe by linking two diverse streams of literature, namely, globalization and marketing strategy. A quantitative approach was adopted to obtain data from 127 respondents using a two-stage cluster sample. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) confirmed three of four hypothesized relationships, namely that integrated co-alliances, modern technology and national policy impact the sustainability of clothing and textile sector in Zimbabwe. The adoption of a standardized marketing strategy characterized by uniform application of the marketing mix elements with minor modifications will have a significant impact on the capacity of the C&T sector to withstand the adverse effects of globalization. The research extends the body of existing knowledge on marketing strategy in the context of globalization of Zimbabwe's C&T sector, and argues empirically for a new approach to developing and implementing competitive marketing strategies. The research findings will enable companies in the C&T sector of a developing economy to craft competitive marketing strategies, which incorporate internal company capabilities and technology, and also recognize the role of national policy in the globalization discourse.

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INTRODUCTION

Although the literature indicates that openness plays a prominent role in explaining the economic growth and productivity of firms (Krugman, Obsfeld, & Melitz, 2012, p. 37), little is known on how organizations should react to changes in market competition generated by trade liberalization (Frésard & Valta, 2013, p. 6). Due to economic globalization, business leaders are expected to monitor changes in the market place, while also aligning their strategy to the realities of the context in which their businesses operate (Chinomona & Sibanda, 2012, p. 46). Some researchers (Frésard & Valta, 2013, p. 7) argue that changes in corporate strategies and consideration of the broad effects of globalization on business strategy are required. Marketing strategy development, which has for long been defined in a rather restrictive way by solely demanding the effective management of the traditional marketing mix elements, should now take a new approach, which incorporates the effect of external factors on business strategy (Menon, Bharadwaj, Adidam, & Edison, 2015, p. 224). Due to globalization, the marketing landscape has become more complex, thereby creating huge knock-on effects on emerging and developing

economies (Boström & Micheletti, 2016, p. 370; Manzungu, 2012, p. 45). For example, the lack of effective policy instruments to absorb both the domestic and external shocks has also condemned many companies to oblivion (Manzungu, 2012, p. 45). Kaplinsky (2013, p. 55) argues that many clothing and textile companies in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) did not adjust well to the new globalized environment. In Zimbabwe, for example, the once thriving clothing and textile industry withered under the combined impact of domestic and international factors (Manzungu, 2012, p. 46). The aforementioned researcher argued that "the negative impact of this transformation was manifested in a declining relative contribution to total manufacturing output, falling productivity levels, lack of capital investment, a large and significant contraction in sector employment, and stagnant export performance, all of which occurred in the context of rapidly expanding domestic demand for clothing, which was increasingly fed by imports" (Manzungu, 2012, p. 45).

This paper builds on the global marketing strategy model proposed by Zou and Cavusgil (2002, p. 43), which identifies standardization, integration and coordination as the principal factors, which determine success or failure of a marketing strategy in the contemporary market place. In light of the above, our current research sought to critique marketing strategy making in the context of globalization of Zimbabwe's clothing and textile sector, and argue empirically for a new approach to developing and implementing competitive marketing strategies. More specifically, the study focused on the need to identify possible sustainable competitive strategies, which could be used by Zimbabwean clothing and textile companies to mitigate the impact of globalization on the sector. The literature will now focus on the importance of key variables, namely standardization, integration, information technology and government policies and their relationship with the sustainability of clothing and textile companies through competitive marketing strategy development, and explain how these are conceptualized into a theoretical model which is empirically evaluated.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Gaining competitive advantage

The theory of competitive advantage has received extensive coverage in the management literature (Besanko, Dranove, Shanley, & Schaefer, 2010, p. 58). Sirmon, Hitt, Ireland, and Gilbert (2011) argue that "a vibrant corporate strategy is an essential management tool and is important to a firm's overall performance and achievement of competitive advantage" (p. 1400). Porter (1985) argues that superior performance can be achieved in a competitive industry through the pursuit of a generic strategy, which he defines as "the development of overall cost leadership, differentiation, or a focused approach to industry competition" (p. 55). The aforementioned author further argues that a company has to be explicit in terms of the strategy chosen, or else it will be 'stuck in the middle' and not perform effectively, compared to companies, which choose a specific generic competitive strategy (Porter & Kramer, 2011, p. 65). Although there are many models for analyzing the competitive environment, Porter's 'Fives Forces Model' remains one of the most dominant and popular models used by academics and practitioners (Indiatsy, Mwangi, Mandere, Bichang, & George, 2014, p. 76; Cao, Scudder, & Dickson, 2017). Despite this popularity, the model faces criticism from many researchers (Jarzabkowski & Kaplan, 2015, p. 539; Mohapatra, 2012, p. 268) who believe that while the validity of Porter's Model cannot be overemphasized, its revision is also urgent. Some researchers (Palmer, Wright, & Powers, 2015, p. 39; Chirisa & Dumba, 2012, p. 9) assert that aligning the strategy to market requirements is the only sustainable marketing strategy, which will help guarantee the future of clothing and textile companies in Africa and other developing nations.

1.2. Standardization

Keegan and Green (2000) argue that "through adopting the strategy of standardization, global marketing solutions, which assist in creating company sustainability on the global stage can be achieved" (p. 35). Besides, "there also exists the possibility to adapt the activities that have been carried out in one country successfully to other countries, thus, reducing operating costs as a company pursues its global marketing activities"

(Johansson, 2000, p. 57). Research has also indicated that when a standardized product is offered, it generates confidence in the consumer (Madar & Neacsu, 2010, p. 55; Vivas-Lypez, 2016, p. 950). Cunningham and Ferrell (2015, p. 233) support the use of standardized marketing strategies, as companies expand their market bases through the process of market development. In order for a standardized marketing strategy to be effective, changes to the marketing strategy must be instituted, as the company moves from one global market to the other, and Svensson (2001) suggests that "the most viable standardization option is achieved through the use of an approach that combines elements of standardization and adaptation to create a glocal marketing strategy" (p. 10). In light of the above, it is hypothesized that:

H1: the use of a standardized marketing strategy positively influences the sustainability of a company in the face of globalization.

1.3. Integration of marketing activities

When the internal elements of an organization are closely linked to one another, it enables the organization to coordinate its strategies with much ease and success (Dangelico, Pontrandolfo, & Pujari, 2013, p. 645; Burgelman & Doz, 2013, p. 47). It is also argued that "since coordination is an information processing activity and closely related to communication and shared meaning, companies with closely coordinated systems of operation are better poised to enjoy the benefits of globalization" (Hong, Marvel, & Modi, 2015, p. 140). The aforementioned researchers also suggest that "lack of congruence and unity of purpose results in discord and subsequent failure to capture existing opportunities or deal with the current challenges of globalization". Chimhanzi (2004) suggests that "cross-unit working relationships have a key role to play in the successful implementation of marketing decision, as implementation effectiveness is affected negatively by conflict and positively by communication and specifically, interpersonal, and not written" (p. 77). This general interconnectedness is made possible through the direct involvement and commitment of top management, as the entire organization works towards achieving a common objective of sustaining operations in the face of globalization (Luo, Wang, Zheng, & Jayaraman, 2012, p. 499; Gardetti, 2017, p. 49). When marketing strategies are aligned to existing company resources, the major benefit realized is synergy, a critical attribute for challenging the effects of globalization (Narayanan et al., 2011, p. 5). Some researchers have also argued that clothing and textile companies in Sub-Saharan Africa need to consider integration of business processes as an option to mitigate the debilitating effects of globalization (Goriwondo, Zimwara, Mutopa, Nkomo, Gutu, & Ngwena, 2012, p. 2285). This is factored into the conceptual model of this study, and it is hypothesized that:

H2: the sustainability of an enterprise is positively influenced by the degree of integration of marketing strategy activities in view of global competition.

1.4. Government policies

While many company executives would like to see the state assuming a minimum role (often restricted to regulatory) in trade and commerce, the new reality demands that the state actively participates in creating an enabling business environment particularly so for companies in developing economies (Weller, 2014, p. 728). Brown and Ainley (2009) state that "the state simply connects various stakeholders from different backgrounds while regulating the industry for the benefit of its corporate citizens" (p. 17). Since globalization is a permanent feature in the business discourse, Giddens (2000) argues that "our run away world does not need less, but more government" (p. 25). In support of the aforementioned, Stiglitz (2002) argues that "an important task of a government is to protect jobs and vulnerable sectors of the economy such as the clothing and textile industry" (p. 57). Within the globalization discourse, policy-makers should be highly critical of market conditions in order to save the industry from total collapse (Florescu & Ivanov, 2016, p. 346; Truett & Truett, 2017, p. 3; Moyo, 2014). The negative global economic outlook continues to create 'knock-on effects' on emerging and developing economies, and the impact of these turbulences on global markets is currently being transmitted to developing countries such as Zimbabwe, amplified by increased globalization and regionalism (Mpofu, 2013, p. 76).

Over the past ten years, Zimbabwe has opened itself considerably to the influences of the global economy through a process of liberalization (Zindiye, Chiliya, & Masocha, 2012, p. 656). The country embarked on this course so as to raise its growth rate by stimulating investment (Zindiye et al., 2012, p. 656). Ndlovu and Heath (2013, p. 949) note that liberalization was introduced in Zimbabwe before macroeconomic stability, hence, its failure to realize any meaningful benefits. While some of this could be traced to the lack of capacity of companies in the industry, a good measure of it can be ascribed to political and legislation policies, which run at cross purposes with business strategy (Moyo, 2014). Thus, the hypothesis is postulated as follows:

H3: the existence of enabling national policies positively influences the sustainability of the clothing and textile industry in a globalized industry.

1.5. Information technology

Technology is the engine that drives the globalization wave and should, therefore, be an integral component of company's current and future plans (Knight, 2000, p. 16). Levitt (1983) long predicted that "technological advances and technical standardization are expected to drive globalization" (p. 95), therefore, "globalization is changing the way in which knowledge is produced, converted to technology and the technology is transformed into goods and services" (Knight, 2000, p. 16). It is quite evident that the current processes of globalization are made possible because of technology (Blázquez, 2014, p. 99). Thus, Nayak, Singh, Padhye, & Wang (2015) assert that "the survival of companies is firmly attached to how well they embrace modern technology to improve the efficiency of their operations and, thus, gain a competitive advantage" (p. 4). Lui (2015) further argues that "it is not only the availability of technology that matters for the success of a company, but also the amount and quality of internal skills adapted to apply available technology for competitive advantage" (p. 23). Ali and Habib (2012, p. 38) propose that the technological and marketing capabilities of a company must be evaluated simultaneously, as the firm seeks to build new dynamic capabilities, which create future value. Plieth, Bullinger, & Hansen (2012) suggest that since "companies domiciled in developing economies often lack the resources and procedures to successfully compete at a global level" (p. 125), a radical shift in thinking by the companies is, therefore, needed through "adopting a more entrepreneurial thinking which demands the creation and use of innovative strategies which help drive the company into the future amidst the challenges of globalization" (Plieth et al., 2012, p. 126). Even though there is an overwhelming evidence about the relationship between the use of modern technology and the ability of a company to build future value, this has not been empirically evaluated in developing countries. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H4: an association exists between the extent to which modern technologies are used by a company (as part of its overall marketing strategy), and its sustainability in view of global market competition.

2. RESEARCH CONTEXT

The unpreceded closure of many clothing and textile (C&T) companies in Africa in the 1990s was largely due to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) driven policies, which favored economic liberalization (Kanyenze, 2006, p. 57). In order to rescue the clothing and textile companies, successive preferential agreements were signed (Majtenyi, 2010); most notable among them was the Africa Growth Opportunity Act (AGOA), which unfortunately benefitted some larger African clothing manufacturers, while at the same time fueling the entry of cheap clothing and textile items into domestic market spaces of many African countries (Majtenyi, 2010). The reality, however, is that these agreements did not often yield the intended benefits, other than fueling the importation of cheap clothing from developed nations, thus, affecting the viability of business in developing countries (Majtenyi, 2010). To this end, the aforementioned author, thus, attributes the decline in C&T manufacturing in Africa to the effects of globalization rather than poor governance. Zimbabwe's C&T industry is represented by two associations, namely The Zimbabwe Clothing Manufacturers' Association (ZCMA) and The Zimbabwe Textiles

Manufacturers' Association (ZTMA), which represent the interests of the few remaining companies through government lobbying and advocacy (Moyo, 2014). The industry is facing serious operational challenges and it is operating at well below 10% capacity (Moyo, 2014, p. 45). The peak of Zimbabwe's clothing and textile sector was when it used to employ over 20,000, but has since been revised downwards to current levels of well below 4,000 (Moyo, 2014, p. 45). Currently, the local C&T companies only contribute a mere 15% to Zimbabwe's consumption, while the balance is all taken up by imported clothes (Moyo, 2014, p. 46). The industry suffers from a myriad of challenges ranging from an unstable political situation, which makes business planning difficult, to high utility costs, which makes local products uncompetitive on the global market (Manzungu, 2012, p. 47). The current policy pursued by the Zimbabwean government was aptly called "The Look East Policy", which is deliberately structured to promote investments from Asian markets (particularly China), coupled with an unstable socio-political environment has made already desperate situation even more challenging (Moyo, 2014, p. 48). From the early 1990s onwards, the Zimbabwean C&T sector has increasingly been exposed to international competition, primarily due to the adoption of the Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) at the behest of the IMF (Kanyenze, 2006). This resulted in massive unemployment due to retrenchment in a sector assigned with a social function to absorb relatively low-skilled labor (Chirisa & Dumba, 2012, p. 3). In light of the research context, this paper reports the results of a survey conducted in the C&T sector in Zimbabwe using the methodology below to address the hypothesized relationships and identify possible sustainable competitive strategies, which could be used by Zimbabwean C&T to mitigate the impact of globalization on the sector.

3. METHODOLOGY

Using a two-stage cluster (probability) sampling technique (Thompson, 2012, p. 254), the data were collected from 127 respondents in the C&T sector (Lei, Shi, & Zhao, 2012). The C&T sector was divided into various divisions ranging from clothing retailers to manufacturers, and the second stage involved a selection of company representatives from the identified clusters. A specifically designed questionnaire was used to measure the different variables, namely government policies, information technology, integration, and standardization, and their impact on the sustainability of the C&T sector in a globalized developing economy. Considering that these instruments were specifically designed for the study, it was necessary to ensure that they are valid and reliable, prior to fitting the data to the conceptual model using structural equation modelling. All questions were developed on a 5-point Likert scale. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to determine the reliability of the research instrument, and all the measures had acceptable reliability (alpha coefficients exceeded 0.7) (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011, p. 54). With respect to validity, Principal Component Analysis and varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalization were used, and only components with eigenvalues above the Kaiser's default of 1 were extracted. While the above provided insightful information, further analysis was needed in order to explain the nature of relationships between the predictor variables and measured variable in line with the research model and the hypotheses formulated. Structural equation modelling was conducted as detailed below.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

Data entry and initial analysis were done using SPSS (version 16). Further analysis was conducted using the Stata 12 statistical software, specifically for the structural equation modelling (SEM), since it (SEM) is gaining popularity especially in cases where one is studying causal models involving multiple constructs with multiple indicators (Chinomona & Surujal, 2012, p. 887). SEM is a comprehensive statistical approach to testing hypotheses about relations among observed and latent variables (Markus, 2012, p. 511). Following a two-step model building (Markus, 2012, p. 511) process, the model was assessed prior to testing the structural model. In this study, five constructs and their effect on the outcome variable are analyzed. Considering the relatively small sample size of the study, SEM was more appropriate in measuring the effect of the various marketing strate-

gies in order to ensure sustainability of companies in the global business environment. There was a need to confirm each construct's relationship with its measurements through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).

Modification Indices (MI), which show some important information about omitted paths in the fitted model, were used to modify the critical path diagram. The suggested covariances were added until the accepted models exhibited perfect fits. The decision criteria for accepting a model as "being fit" is when the Root Mean Square Residual (RMR) is low, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) > 0.9 and the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) > 0.9. A model which perfectly fits the sample data is said to have a good fit CFI, which ranges from 0 to 1 with a larger value indicating better model fit. Acceptable model fit is indicated by a CFI value of 0.90 or greater (Hu & Bentler, 1999, p. 6). The RMR is the square root of the difference between the residuals of the sample covariance matrix and the hypothesized covariance model. Values for the RMR range from zero to 1.0 with well-fitting models obtaining values less than 0.05 (Kline, 2005, p. 13). In a well-fitting model, the lower limit is close to 0, while the upper limit should be less than 0.08. The above criteria were followed in making the final decision on the goodness of fit of each generated model. Each of the four predictor constructs were analyzed to confirm their relationships with their measurements before a collective analysis was done in order to produce the final model whose results are this given in paper.

5. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Figure 1 reflects the relevant paths and p-values. Support or lack thereof for the hypotheses could be ascertained by examining the directionality (positive or negative) of the path coefficients, and the significance of the p-values. The standardized path coefficients are expected to be at least 0.2 and preferably greater than 0.3 (Chin, 1998, p. 296).

Table 1, which reflects data on the 'goodness of fit' of the model (Figure 1), confirms a positive fit between the measurements and the constructs which is evident by the CFI and TLI indices of 1.000 and 1.000, respectively.

Table 1. Goodness of fit for final structural equation model

Source: primary data.

Fit statistic	Value description
Likelihood Ratio	9.788 Model vs saturated
Chi 2_ms (10)	0.459
P > Chi 2	1161.476 Baseline vs saturated
Chi 2_bs(21)	0.000
Population error	
RMSEA	0.000 Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
90% CI, lower bound	0.0000
Upper bound	0.095
pclose	0.693 Probability RMSEA ≤ 0.05
Information criteria	
AIC	1829.479 Akaike's Information Criterion
BIC	1900.584 Bayesian Information Criterion
Baseline comparison	
CFI	1.000 Comparative Fit Index
TLI	1.000 Tucker-Lewis Index
Size of residual	
SRMR	0.017 Standard Root Mean Squared Residual
CD	0.952 Coefficient of Determination

From the path coefficients and p-values reflected in Figure 1 above, it is concluded that only hypotheses H2, H3 and H4 are supported, since they have positive path coefficients of 0.12., 0.840 and 0.210, respectively. However, with respect to H3, although the results point to a significant association between integrated co-alliances and sustainability, the standardized path coefficient of 0.120 implies that the path adds minimal value to the understanding of the relationship between marketing strategies through integrated co-alliances and their ability to sustain a company in the global environment, since Chin (1998) proposes that standardized paths should be at least 0.20 and ideally above 0.30 in order to be considered meaningful. The summary of these findings is shown in Table 2 below.

Source: primary data.

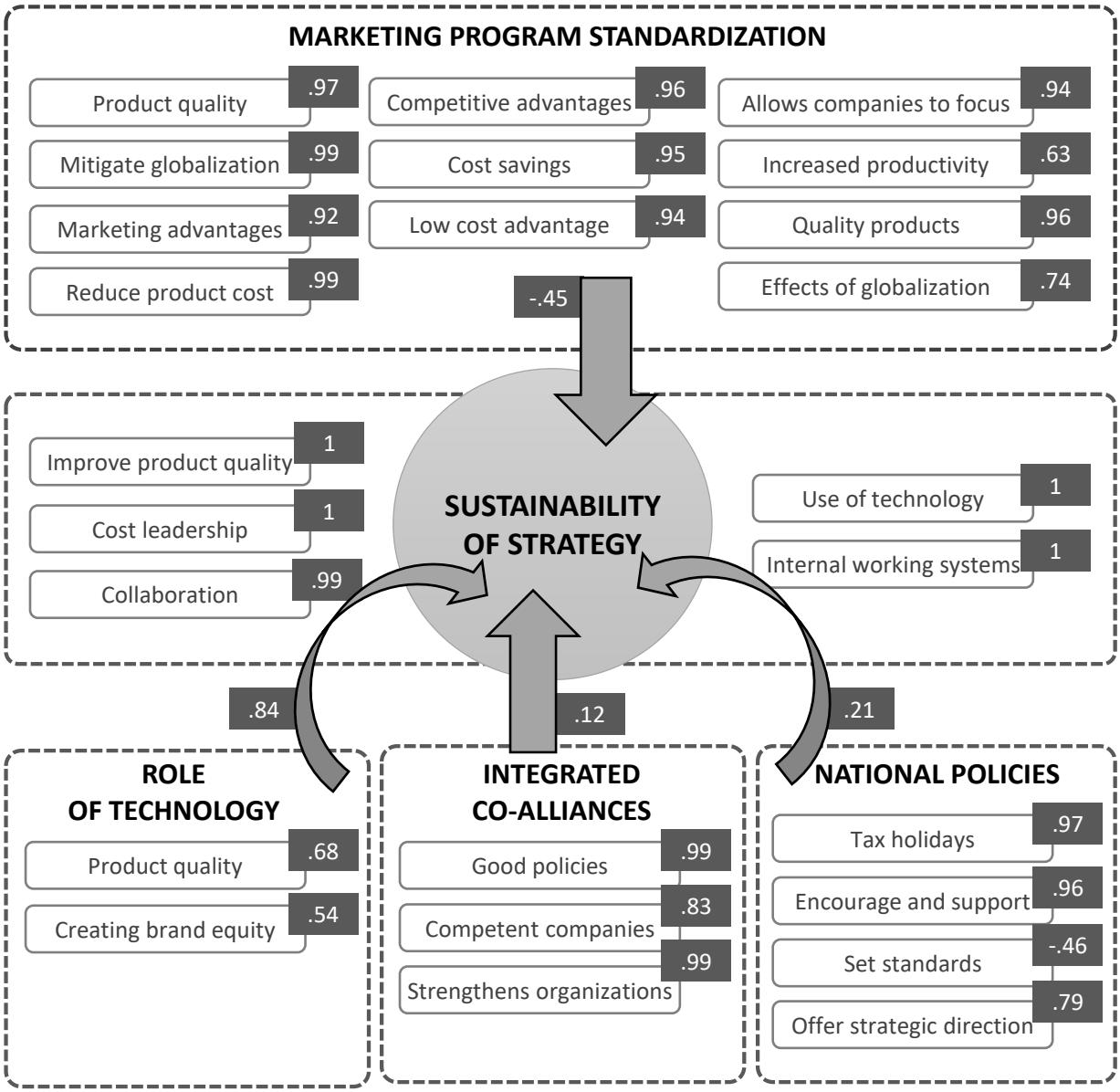

Figure 1. Structural equation model

Table 2. Summary of hypothesized relationships

Source: primary data.

Proposed hypothesis relation	Hypothesis	Path coefficient	p-value	Rejected/Supported
Sustainability ≤				
Marketing program standardization	H1	–.450	0.000	Not supported
Integrated co-alliances	H2	0.120	0.267	Supported
Effect of modern technology	H4	0.840	0.000	Supported
Effect of national policy	H3	0.210	0.230	Supported

6. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

6.1. Standardized marketing strategies and globalization

Cunningham and Ferrell (2015, p. 235) support the use of standardized marketing strategies, as companies expand their market bases through the process of market development. Although the hypothesis (H1) is not fully supported by the results of this study, the moderate success (sustainability) of certain companies is attributed to standardization, as the companies are not differentiating product characteristics for the domestic market from those for international markets. This study supports the views of Roberts and Thoburn (2002) who note that "companies are competing and constantly confront the competitive challenge from firms in low-wage industrialized economies that are able to produce more cheaply" (p. 7). In the case of developing countries, in order to mitigate these challenges, effective marketing strategies which focus on cost reduction, quality and efficiency must be adopted. The increased productivity through standardization is consistent with previous studies (Keegan & Green, 2000, p. 35). Svensson (2001) suggests that "the most viable standardization option is achieved through the use of an approach that combines elements of standardization and adaptation to create a glocal marketing strategy" (p. 8). Since standardization of products and international marketing strategy facilitates the realization of economies of scale in production and marketing, firms must pursue a standardized product and international marketing strategy to be successful in the global market. Through following a standardized marketing strategy, huge cost reductions will be achieved and this should stand as a major benefit for companies in developing countries if they are to remain relevant (Ghantous, 2008).

6.2. Integration and collaboration of marketing activities

The need for companies in the sector to 'integrate and coordinate' was highlighted in this study, which confirms what the theory espouses (Mentzer & Zacharia, 2000, p. 551). Previous studies also consider strategic alliances as "long-term collaborative arrangements between two or more firms to execute specific transactions for mutual gain and to maximize performance through cost reduction, knowledge acquisition, and/or market expansion" (Peng, 2009, p. 15). While guided by the results and the support from the reviewed literature, it is quite evident that this information is useful in the context of Zimbabwe's clothing and textile sector where co-marketing alliances may indeed provide the answer to the current challenges faced. It is, therefore, concluded that while companies need to compete with others, they also need to cooperate through alliances and integrative strategies so as to remain sustainable. Distinct from traditional value chain analysis which focuses on a single company and serve as a unit of analysis, our proposition encompasses multiple firms and their resources and capabilities (Schweizer, 2005, p. 39). Consequently, the unit of analysis has changed from focusing on a single company to focusing on a value network of suppliers, partners and customers (Holweg & Helo, 2014, p. 232). Clothing and textile companies can, thus, enter into strategic alliances to create collaborative networks which help increase both the scope and reach, as resources are pooled together.

6.3.The role of technology

It is evident that the survival of companies is firmly associated with how well they embrace modern technology for efficient adaptation, while they also seek to improve the efficiency of their operations and, thus, gain competitive advantage. This view is also shared by Karlicek et al. (2013, p. 140) who assert that the extent of technological adoption and usage by a company directly links with its success and chances to capture existing opportunities in the global marketplace and be able to adapt its strategy at low costs. The decrease in operating costs creates huge savings, which should be translated into customer value, thus, improving the company's competitive position in the global market place (Madar & Neacsu, 2010, p. 56; Nayak et al., 2015, p. 3; Ngai, Chau & Chan, 2013, p. 233). As the goal of competitiveness through technology is pursued, it must be noted that technology is not the only variable which matters, but also the quality of entrepreneurial posture (Ali & Habib, 2012, p. 37). Therefore, technological and marketing capabilities of a company must be evaluated simultaneously, as the firm seeks to build new dynamic capabilities, which create future value.

6.4. Government policy

The findings show that policy-makers should enact stringent regulations to prevent the entry of cheap commodities into the C&T market; however, the role of the state in this instance is not to stifle competition, but to allow fair competition while protecting the interests of the consumer. These results also point to the strategic role played by the state in infrastructure development or direct support to corporate bodies in support of their internal marketing strategies. Cling et al. (2007, p. 68) noted that one of the key reasons for the success of the clothing and textile sector in Madagascar was the strong push for outward orientation led by the government, generous tax breaks, combined with low wages and trade preferences while riding on its Export Processing Zones (EPZs). Stiglitz (2002, p. 57) asserts that "an important task of a government is to protect jobs and vulnerable sectors of the economy such as the clothing and textile industry". Governments are expected to provide the vision, strategy and an enabling environment by establishing a framework and mechanism that ensures the participation of all sectors of the economy (Moyo, 2014). Within the globalization discourse, policy-makers should be highly critical of the market conditions in order to save industry from total collapse (Chirisa & Dumba, 2012, p. 5). In essence, the lack of effective policy instruments to absorb both the domestic and external shocks relegates Zimbabwean policy-makers to mere observers who pray that global developments remain favorable (Mpofu, 2013, p. 78), since, over the past ten years, Zimbabwe has opened itself up considerably to the influences of the global economy through a process of liberalization (Zindiye et al., 2012, p. 655). However, due to the poor performance of its economy, it did not reap the anticipated benefits (Ndlovu & Heath, 2013, p. 948).

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The implications of the findings are that the adoption of a standardized marketing strategy characterized by uniform application of the marketing mix elements with minor modifications to suit the variations from place to place will have a significant impact on the capacity of the C&T sector companies to withstand the adverse effects of globalization. This is because the development of cost advantages by ailing C&T sector companies could enable them to compete effectively with cheaper imports that continues to flood the market in Zimbabwe. Differentiation benefits on quality arising from a standardized marketing strategy could also assist the clothing sector companies to service the higher end sections of the market. It is also common knowledge that the development of a strategy is the cornerstone of the success of a company.

8. LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The greatest limitation was the sample size used in the research, as many companies either refused to participate in the research or were in the process of shutting down, and, hence, saw no benefit in participating in the study. The result was that only 75 companies out of over 89 initially targeted participated in the study. Many companies in Zimbabwe are finding it extremely difficult to operate owing to a number of challenges, which exist outside the domain of marketing. Some of the challenges relate to the prevailing political-economic landscape, which many perceive as being unfriendly and, therefore, unfavorable to business survival. The respondents were mainly located in the metropolitan areas of the three biggest cities of Zimbabwe, thus, this may have some influence on their behavior and values. However, a balanced sample selection was achieved through the use of a two stage cluster sampling technique.

9. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The present study focused on marketing strategies in the context of globalization through an analysis of companies in the C&T sector of one developing country in Africa, namely, Zimbabwe. Future studies may take the form of cross sectional studies across the region in order to assess how marketing strategies in other regional countries such as Madagascar and South Africa seem to be working in preventing the total to near collapse of their clothing and textile sectors. Such a wider study may help to provide answers beyond the ones provided by the current research. Future studies could also be conducted using a longitudinal case study to provide a holistic picture of the effects of marketing strategies on the clothing and textile sector.

CONCLUSION

The article concludes that in the contemporary business landscape, companies need to extend Porter's (1985) model, as they seek to achieve competitiveness. In particular, while it is the prerogative of companies in the clothing and textile sector to identify sustainable marketing strategies in order to survive in the global marketplace, government's role is to create an environment, which promote and protect the interests of industry. A critical marketing strategy which should be used by companies is the accelerated use of modern technologies supported by conducive national policies. These results are in conformity with arguments in the current literature, which advocate for the existence of supporting national policies and modern technology for the survival of C&T companies in the face of globalization. Considering the reviewed literature coupled with the results obtained in this research, it can be concluded that the rigid dichotomy between total product standardization and total adaptation of the international marketing strategies of companies in the clothing and textile sector is considered not feasible. Both must be applied depending on circumstances. Therefore, for companies in the clothing and textile sector, the challenge is employ marketing strategies, which recognize the central role of both standardization and adaptation.

Furthermore, the presence of a marketing strategy alone without a robust coordination of the marketing effort does not assist a company in the face of globalization. These sentiments are well supported by results from the quantitative analysis conducted where coordination of marketing was associated with high productivity and staff morale. The recognized need for firms in relatively unstable environments (and globalization is one such environment) to gain, release, integrate and reconfigure their resources in response to the threats and opportunities of change in the marketplace is paramount for the survival of companies in the clothing and textile sector.

Both literature and research results affirm that technology and marketing-related capabilities are complementary and their interaction has been shown to have a significant impact on the competiveness of an organization. Results from the previous chapter showed that modern technology enhances brand equity and also helps in the improvement of product quality; a key product attribute for success in the global marketplace. The current dynamic business environment driven by forces of globalization challenges how managers conceptualize their businesses and realign marketing strategy. Thus, the competitive challenge is to devise a competitive strategy, which takes a global stance, and to recognize threats and opportunities on that level. To recognize and implement such opportunities, firms need new organizational structures and capabilities that make interaction across borders a way of life for individuals in many functional departments, not only in the top management.

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