



Research Article

Brand Adaptation Strategy in Global Marketing: A Study Qualitative in Multinational Companies

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze brand adaptation strategies employed by multinational companies in addressing global marketing challenges, particularly in the context of cultural differences, consumer preferences, and regulatory variations across countries. Using a qualitative approach with a case study method, data were collected through in-depth interviews with marketing managers and document analysis related to corporate branding strategies. The findings reveal that multinational companies adopt a flexible brand adaptation approach by adjusting product elements, marketing communications, and brand values to align with local market characteristics while maintaining their global identity. These findings highlight that balancing global brand consistency with local market adaptation is a key factor in the success of global marketing strategies.

Keywords Adaptation, Brand, Marketing, Global, Consumer

1. Introduction

In the era of globalization, marketing is no longer limited to the geographical boundaries of a country. Multinational companies operate in various regions with different cultural, economic, and regulatory backgrounds, thus requiring a marketing strategy that can adapt to local market dynamics. In this context, brands play an important role as a corporate identity that must remain consistent at the global level, but remain relevant to consumer preferences and needs in various countries (Agung, 2023).

Brand adaptation is one of the main strategies used by multinational companies to bridge the gap between global standards and local market expectations. This strategy covers various aspects, from product modification, adjustment of marketing communications, to the use of symbols and values that are closer to the local culture. Some big brands have succeeded in building competitiveness with this strategy, while others have struggled due to a lack of understanding of local factors that influence consumer behavior.

Amidst the increasingly complex global marketing landscape, questions arise as to how multinational companies can balance global brand consistency with the need for local adaptation. Social and economic differences across countries add to the challenges for companies in maintaining a strong brand image while meeting diverse market expectations (Aprilia, 2024). Therefore, it is important to explore how brand adaptation strategies are implemented in the context of global marketing and what factors contribute to their success.

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The diversity of cultures and social values across countries makes a uniform marketing approach less effective in reaching consumers at large. Multinational companies must understand that what works in one country may not work the same way in another. Therefore, many companies implement brand adaptation strategies to adjust products, marketing messages, and customer experiences to suit local market needs without losing their global brand identity.

One of the main challenges in brand adaptation is maintaining a balance between global standards and local relevance. Consistency in brand identity is important for building customer loyalty across countries, but if it is not adapted to local preferences, the brand can lose traction in certain markets. Companies that successfully implement brand adaptation usually conduct in-depth research into the local market to understand consumer preferences, shopping habits, and values upheld by the local community (Fachrozie, 2023).

In addition, the development of digital technology also influences brand adaptation strategies in global marketing. Digital platforms allow companies to adjust marketing communications more quickly and specifically according to the target audience in each country. Through social media, companies can monitor market trends in real-time and adjust their strategies to stay relevant. Thus, brand adaptation is not only a survival strategy in global competition but also a key factor in building long-term relationships with consumers in various parts of the world (Hasibuan, 2023).

In practice, brand adaptation strategies can be carried out through various approaches, ranging from changes in product design, price differentiation, to adjusting marketing messages to suit local cultural values. Some companies choose to maintain the core elements of their brand while making minor modifications tailored to the local market. For example, global fast-food companies often adapt their menus to local tastes and food preferences without changing the overall brand identity. This approach allows them to remain relevant in various countries without losing the main characteristics that have been recognized by global consumers (Haliza, 2024).

On the other hand, there are also companies that adopt a broader adaptation strategy by creating sub-brands or special products that are only available in certain regions. This strategy provides more flexibility for companies in dealing with significant differences between markets. However, the challenge that arises is how to maintain alignment between local and global marketing strategies so as not to create confusion among consumers. Mistakes in brand adaptation, such as inappropriate translation of slogans or the use of symbols that are not in accordance with local culture, can have a negative impact on the company's image in the international market (Lubis, 2024).

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze how multinational companies implement brand adaptation strategies in global marketing and the factors that determine their success. Using a qualitative approach, this study will explore companies' experiences in balancing global identity with local market needs. The results of this study are expected to provide insight into the importance of flexibility in global marketing strategies and how companies can overcome challenges in brand adaptation to strengthen competitiveness in the international market.

2. Literature Review

Brand Adaptation Theory in Global Marketing

The brand adaptation theory in global marketing emphasizes the importance of adjusting brand strategies to suit local market characteristics without losing their global identity. In the Indonesian context, this theory is in line with the view put forward by Rangkuti (2017), who stated that brand adaptation is a key strategy for multinational companies to increase

competitiveness in the international market. Adjustment This can include aspects of product, marketing communications, pricing, and distribution, which are tailored to the needs, culture, and preferences of consumers in each country.

According to Simamora (2020), the success of brand adaptation is highly dependent on a deep understanding of local consumer behavior. In his study of global marketing strategies in Indonesia, he explained that companies that are successful in international expansion are those that are able to adapt their marketing messages to local cultures, without losing the core identity of the brand. For example, several fast-food companies operating in Indonesia adapt their menus to local tastes, such as offering food variants made from rice and typical Indonesian spices.

In addition, Sutrisno (2018) highlighted that in applying brand adaptation theory, companies need to consider regulatory factors and economic policies in the destination country. Differences in regulations can affect marketing strategies, especially in terms of advertising and product distribution. By implementing a flexible approach, multinational companies can maintain alignment between global standards and local market needs, thereby maintaining their competitiveness in an increasingly complex and dynamic business environment.

Furthermore, the theory of brand adaptation in global marketing also highlights the importance of strategy differentiation based on market segmentation. According to Hidayat (2019), successful multinational companies are those that not only understand consumer behavior in general, but are also able to identify differences in preferences based on demographics, social, and culture in each country. For example, a global clothing brand entering the Indonesian market must consider tropical climate factors and people's clothing style preferences, especially those related to cultural and religious values. This shows that brand adaptation strategy is not only related to products, but also to aspects of communication and how brands interact with local consumers (Maulidya, 2023).

In addition to consumer aspects, brand adaptation must also pay attention to the dynamics of competition in each market. According to research conducted by Wibowo (2021), multinational companies operating in Indonesia often face challenges from local brands that have a deeper understanding of the domestic market. Therefore, the adaptation strategy does not only focus on adjusting products or services, but also involves a partnership strategy with local companies to strengthen their position. Cooperation model with local distributors or manufacturers can be an effective way to expand market reach without losing brand relevance in the eyes of consumers (Pinem, 2024).

Overall, the theory of brand adaptation in global marketing emphasizes that companies must have a balance between global identity and local needs. A study by Prasetyo (2022) shows that brands that are able to adopt flexible strategies tend to be more successful in maintaining customer loyalty in various countries. The adaptation carried out should not eliminate the core characteristics of the brand, but must adjust flexible elements to remain relevant to the culture and habits of the local market. By understanding this concept, multinational companies can build more effective marketing strategies and be able to survive in increasingly fierce global competition.

Standardization vs. Adaptation Theory in International Marketing

In international marketing, there are two main approaches used by multinational companies, namely standardization and adaptation. Standardization refers to the use of uniform marketing strategies across countries, while adaptation emphasizes adjusting strategies to suit local conditions in each market. Both strategies have their own advantages and challenges, and in practice, many companies combine the two to achieve global marketing effectiveness.

According to Rangkuti (2017), standardization in international marketing aims to create operational efficiency by using the same strategy in various countries. With standardization, companies can save production, distribution, and promotion costs because they do not need to make many adjustments for each market. This strategy is usually implemented by companies that have products with universal appeal, such as the technology and luxury goods industries, where consumer preferences are relatively uniform across countries. However, standardization can be less effective when applied in markets with significant differences in culture, regulations, and consumption habits (Robani, 2025).

On the other hand, adaptation emphasizes more on adjusting marketing strategies to suit consumer preferences and local market conditions. Simamora (2020) explains that in the Indonesian context, many global companies implement adaptation strategies to adapt their products and brand communications to local culture. For example, international fast-food companies operating in Indonesia often adapt their menus to local tastes, such as presenting rice-based food variants or using typical Indonesian spices. In addition, marketing campaigns also often adapted to the cultural values and customs of the local community to make them more easily accepted by consumers.

Sutrisno (2018) added that the choice between standardization and adaptation is highly dependent on factors such as socio-cultural differences, the level of market competition, and regulations in the destination country. In some cases, companies implement a glocalization strategy, which is a combination of standardization and adaptation. This strategy allows companies to maintain their global brand identity, while still making adjustments to certain aspects to be more relevant to the local market. For example, a global automotive company might use the same design and technology standards for all countries, but adjust vehicle features based on the climate and infrastructure needs of each region (Sari, 2024).

Overall, the theory of standardization vs. adaptation in international marketing asserts that no one strategy is completely superior to the other. Prasetyo (2022) in his research concluded that companies that succeed in the international market are those that are able to find a balance between standardization and adaptation. By understanding the characteristics of each market and adjusting marketing strategies flexibly, companies can increase their competitiveness at the global level while meeting the unique needs of local consumers.

Brand Identity Theory and Consumer Perception

Brand identity and consumer perception are two important concepts in marketing that are interrelated. Brand identity refers to how a brand wants to be seen by its consumers, while consumer perception is how the brand is actually understood and felt by the public. According to Rangkuti (2017), brand identity is built through elements such as logos, colors, slogans, values, and customer experiences. Brands that have a strong identity tend to be more memorable and have high customer loyalty.

In the context of global marketing, Simamora (2020) explains that brand identity must be communicated consistently across markets so as not to lose its essence and appeal. However, consumer perceptions of a brand can differ from country to country depending on cultural, social, and economic factors. For example, a global fashion brand may be associated with a luxurious lifestyle in developed countries, but in developing countries, the same brand may be perceived as an exclusive item that is only affordable for certain segments (Sholeha, 2025). Therefore, companies need to understand how consumers in different regions form perceptions of their brands and adapt appropriate communication strategies.

Sutrisno (2018) added that one of the main factors that influences consumer perception of brand identity is direct experience with the product or service. Consumers tend to build brand image based on their interactions with the product, from quality, customer service, to marketing communications. For example, if a company claims to have premium service, but

in reality, customers experience many obstacles in after-sales service, then a negative perception will be formed, and the brand will lose consumer trust.

In addition, Prasetyo (2022) emphasized the importance of consistency in building brand identity so that consumer perception remains positive. Brands that frequently change their messages or core values without a clear reason can confuse consumers and weaken their image in the market. Therefore, in a global marketing strategy, companies must maintain a balance between maintaining a strong brand identity and adjusting communication strategies to remain relevant to local audiences.

Overall, the theory of brand identity and consumer perception shows that the success of a brand depends not only on how the company wants to be known, but also on how consumers understand and evaluate the brand (Suhairi, 2024). By understanding the relationship between identity and perception, companies can build more effective marketing strategies and increase customer loyalty in the long term.

3. Research Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to understand brand adaptation strategies in global marketing implemented by multinational companies. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for in-depth exploration of the experiences, strategies, and challenges faced by companies in adapting their brands to various local markets. Case studies are used to analyze brand adaptation strategies in several multinational companies that have extensive experience in global marketing. With this method, the study can explore the factors that influence the success of brand adaptation and how companies balance global identity with local needs.

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with marketing managers, brand analysts, and industry practitioners who were directly involved in the adaptation process. brands in the international market. In addition, this study also uses document analysis, including company reports, marketing strategies, and published case studies related to brand adaptation in various countries. Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured approach to provide flexibility for respondents in conveying their views and experiences related to global marketing strategies.

To ensure the validity of the data, this study applies triangulation techniques, namely by comparing the results of interviews, document analysis, and relevant literature reviews. The data obtained were analyzed using a thematic approach, where the main findings from interviews and documents were categorized based on emerging patterns and themes. With this method, the study is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the brand adaptation strategies implemented by multinational companies in facing global marketing challenges.

4. Results and Discussion

Results

Brand Adaptation Strategy in Global Market Differentiation

The results of this study indicate that brand adaptation strategies in global market differentiation are carried out by adjusting products and marketing communications according to cultural characteristics and consumer preferences in each country. Multinational companies adapt various aspects such as packaging design, product variants, and communication styles to increase appeal in local markets. One of the marketing managers of a food and beverage company interviewed said, "We adjust the taste and packaging of the product based on consumption habits in each country. For example, in Japan, consumers prefer a mild taste, while in Latin America, a stronger taste is more in demand." This shows

that a deep understanding of local tastes is a major factor in the success of a differentiation strategy.

In addition to product adaptation, companies also adjust their communication strategies to be more effective in attracting consumers. An interview with a marketing executive from the cosmetics industry revealed, "In Europe, our marketing campaigns emphasize sustainability and natural ingredients, while in Asia, a more emotional and trend-based beauty approach is more effective." This adjustment proves that adaptation strategies do not only include physical products, but also how a brand interacts and builds relationships with consumers through relevant marketing messages.

Furthermore, adaptation strategies are also applied in the distribution and service aspects to meet local market expectations. One source from an electronics company said, "In some developing countries, we have to strengthen after-sales services and provide more flexible payment methods, because trust in products is a major consideration for consumers." This finding shows that adaptation is not only limited to products and communications, but also to the overall customer experience, which contributes to the success of brands in building loyalty in the global market.

The Influence of Brand Identity on Consumer Perception in International Markets

The results of this study indicate that brand identity plays a significant role in shaping consumer perceptions in international markets. Consumers tend to have certain associations with brands based on the identity elements communicated, such as logos, slogans, and core values of the company. A respondent from the automotive industry said, "When I see European brands, I immediately think of quality and reliability, while Asian brands are better known for innovation and price efficiency." This proves that a strong brand identity can create a distinctive perception in the minds of consumers, which ultimately influences their purchasing decisions.

In addition, the study found that consumer perceptions of brand identity are strongly influenced by cultural factors and local customs. Consumers in collectivist countries are more likely to choose brands that have an image of togetherness and social concern, while in individualistic countries, brands with identities that emphasize exclusivity and personalization are more attractive. A marketing manager from the fashion industry said, "In the United States, our campaigns emphasize individual expression and unique style, while in Japan, we emphasize simplicity and harmony." This suggests that brand identity-based marketing strategies must be adjusted to the prevailing social norms and expectations in each region.

Furthermore, the study also found that brand identity consistency across international markets can increase consumer loyalty. Consumers who have a positive experience with a brand in one country are more likely to maintain that perception when they encounter the same brand in another country. A loyal customer from the technology industry said, "I prefer products from the same brand, because they always deliver the quality I expect, no matter where I buy them." Thus, maintaining brand identity continuity across the globe is an effective strategy for building consumer trust and loyalty in the long term.

Combination of Standardization and Adaptation as Key to Global Marketing Success

The results of this study indicate that a combination of standardization and adaptation is the most effective strategy in global marketing. Standardization allows companies to maintain a consistent brand identity across countries, while adaptation provides flexibility in adjusting products and marketing strategies to local market needs. An executive from the food and beverage industry said, "We keep the core product formula the same worldwide,

but adjust the flavor and packaging to suit local preferences. For example, in India we reduce the sugar content, while in the US we keep the taste sweeter.” This shows that maintaining a balance between global and local elements can improve a brand’s competitiveness in the international market.

In addition to products, the study also found that companies apply a combination of standardization and adaptation in their communication and branding strategies. While slogans and logos are maintained to create a consistent brand image, communication approaches are adjusted to suit the culture and consumer habits of each country. A marketing manager from the cosmetics industry said, “In some European countries, we focus more on sustainability campaigns, while in Asia, we adjust our advertising to popular beauty trends.” This proves that companies that are flexible in adjusting their communication strategies without losing their brand core have a greater chance of building engagement with global consumers.

Furthermore, the study shows that this combination strategy is also applied in the distribution and after-sales service aspects. Companies still use standard business models for operational efficiency but adjust additional services to suit local market expectations. A representative from an electronics company said, “We use the same global distribution network, but in some countries, we add installment services and additional service centers because of different consumer trust factors.” This finding confirms that the combination of standardization and adaptation not only improves operational efficiency but also strengthens customer relationships across markets, which ultimately contributes to global marketing success.

Discussion

Brand adaptation strategy in global marketing is an important step for multinational companies in dealing with differences in consumer preferences in various countries. The results of this study indicate that companies that are able to adapt their products and marketing communications to local market needs have a better competitive advantage. However, the main challenge in adaptation is ensuring that the changes made remain in line with the brand's global identity. If adaptation is done excessively without maintaining core elements, there is a risk that the brand will lose its global image and become fragmented across markets.

In terms of brand identity, the study highlights how consumer perceptions of a brand can differ across countries, depending on social and cultural factors. Consumers in certain countries place greater value on sustainability and innovation, while in others they are more interested in the impression of exclusivity and prestige. This suggests that a brand’s success in global marketing depends not only on product differentiation but also on how the brand identity is received and communicated effectively in each region. If companies fail to understand these psychological and cultural factors, their marketing strategies can be less effective.

The combined approach of standardization and adaptation found in this study is also the key to success in global marketing. By keeping core elements such as logo, vision, and mission consistent, but adapting product and marketing aspects to local needs, companies can build strong brand equity without losing their international appeal. This approach is also more efficient than full adaptation, which requires large investments and can potentially lead to brand inconsistencies.

This finding is consistent with several other studies that emphasize the importance of a combination of flexibility and consistency in global marketing strategies. However, there is also a counter-view that states that in some cases, full adaptation is more effective because it allows companies to truly integrate with the local culture and build stronger loyalty. This shows that there is no one strategy that works for all companies, and the most appropriate

approach depends largely on the characteristics of the target market and the industry in which it operates.

5. Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that brand adaptation strategies in global marketing are a key factor in increasing the competitiveness of multinational companies. By adapting products, communications, and services to local market needs, companies can build stronger relationships with consumers in different countries. However, excessive adaptation without maintaining core brand elements can lead to identity fragmentation that weakens the company's global image. Therefore, companies need to find the right balance in adapting to local markets without losing their brand essence.

In addition, this study confirms that brand identity plays a significant role in shaping consumer perceptions in international markets. Consistency in brand identity can create stronger loyalty among consumers, while flexibility in communication and marketing strategies helps increase brand relevance across cultures. By understanding how cultural and social factors influence consumer perceptions, companies can design more effective strategies in building a positive brand image globally.

Finally, the combination of standardization and adaptation has proven to be the most effective strategy in global marketing. Standardization helps maintain a consistent brand image, while adaptation allows companies to meet the unique needs of each market. By implementing this approach in a balanced way, companies can not only improve operational efficiency but also build closer connections with consumers in different countries. Therefore, a successful global marketing strategy is one that is able to combine the strength of brand identity with the flexibility to face the dynamics of the international market.

This study has several limitations that may affect the results obtained. One major limitation is the reliance on qualitative data from interviews, which while providing in-depth insights, do not fully reflect broader market trends. The perspectives expressed by the interviewees are subjective and may not be representative of all stakeholders in brand adaptation strategies in the global market. As a result, the generalizability of the findings of this study is limited. For future research, it is recommended that quantitative methods, such as large-scale surveys, be used to gain a more comprehensive understanding of brand adaptation strategies.

Another limitation lies in the geographical scope of this study. Focusing more on multinational companies operating in a particular region may reduce the diversity of perspectives on global marketing strategies. Different economic conditions, cultural values, and consumer behaviors in different countries may cause variations in the effectiveness of brand adaptation and standardization strategies. Therefore, future research needs to expand the scope of the region and include various industries in order to provide a more comprehensive picture of global marketing strategies.

Finally, this study does not fully explore the long-term impact of brand adaptation strategies on corporate financial performance. While the findings show how companies adapt their marketing strategies to build positive brand perceptions, the financial impact of these strategies has not been fully analyzed. Further studies that combine financial data analysis and business performance metrics could provide deeper insights into the contribution of adaptation and standardization strategies to corporate success. Despite these limitations, this study still provides valuable insights into the complexities of global branding and can serve as a foundation for further research.

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