Chapter 9
Research and Managerial Implications

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ABSTRACT

The chapter summarizes the project’s contribution to knowledge in the field of consumer behaviour and consumer culture, the applied, partially innovative, research methodology, and the major research implications. Furthermore, the key research findings are portrayed with respect to European consumers’ preference and motives for different beverage categories, the drivers and places for alcoholic consumption, further aspects of general buying behaviour, and the influence of branding and identity on alcoholic consumption. Concluding from the research findings, it provides practical managerial implications with respect to decisions on market intelligence, segmentation, positioning, and marketing communication with a special emphasis on the influence of health and to what extent these decisions can be standardized or should be culturally adapted. Moreover, innovative market clusters are described based on a variety of criteria to support managers’ decisions on market selection and market entry. The chapter finishes with a final note.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reflects, in addition to the new contribution to knowledge on consumer behaviour and consumer culture, the applied character of the project. The chapter’s main aim is to transfer the comprehensive market research data into pragmatic managerial implications. In the current marketing era, it is generally accepted that
the consumer is at the very centre of all managerial activities. Appealing to the values and identities of local consumers and being responsibly compliant with idiosyncratic macro environmental conditions are the cornerstones of success in the international business arena.

A synthesis of the qualitative and quantitative research data is an excellent basis for market intelligence on pan-European consumer behaviour to emerge, which companies, manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers alike can use to develop truly consumer- and culture-orientated marketing strategies and tactics. It cannot be overemphasized that the pan-European dataset is a unique basis from which companies can plan their internationalization or market entry strategies. This planning process can be done in several ways: on a meta-level, pan-European level, or differentiated by country clusters, or even differentiated by individual countries. This chapter supports both approaches. Besides investigating the scope for standardization, this chapter also calls for country—or regional—level adaptation of international product or communication strategies due to the very high level of cultural diversity in Europe, which is mirrored by different consumption patterns.

This differentiated information will be used to provide innovative practical implications on internationalization strategies, such as, for example, market segmentation, positioning, branding, standardization and/or adaptation, market entry strategies or marketing mix tactics (i.e. promotion).

9.1. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

The present work provides theoretical contributions with a relevant impact on a variety of contiguous fields. It encompasses the elaboration of innovative research methods and tools (see Chapter 4), research implications aiming to update well-established theories (i.e. Hofstede: see Chapter 6), and the proposal of new theoretical perspectives on consumer behaviour (see Chapter 5 and Chapter 8). It is focused on drinking as a consumption habit that naturally and necessarily characterizes human behaviour. As such, it concerns the whole population investigated and is thus capable of shedding light on its relative consumer behaviour.

On the methodological side, a wide range of data analysis techniques have been employed to elaborate on the results proposed, spanning qualitative methods, such as textual data analysis and pictorial image evaluation, and quantitative methods such as factor analysis, cluster analysis, multiple regression analysis and ANOVA. In particular, we stress the usefulness of the triangulation method (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003), which mixes textual data analysis with pictorial selection (Scott & Vargas, 2007) to provide credibility and validity to the research findings, which can be potentially extended to other fields of research. At the same time, we propose
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