

National College of Ireland

*Exploring the Factors Constraining the Adoption of Multi-
domestic Strategy Among the Fast-Food Chains: A Case Study
of Fast-Food Chains in Europe*

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Submission Date: 08/05/2023

Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

National College of Ireland
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Degree for which thesis is submitted: MSc. International Business

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I convey my appreciation to my mentor, family, friends, and all those who have supported and directed me throughout the research journey. Their invaluable counsel and motivation have been pivotal in the triumphant culmination of this thesis.

Date: 08/05/2023

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Acknowledgement

All students must complete their own dissertation papers in accordance with the university syllabus. After consulting with my mentor Prof., I decided to conduct the research on "Exploring the factors constraining the adoption of Multi-domestic strategy among the fast-food chains: A Case Study of fast-food chains in Europe". This study aims to unveil the factors that stopped the fast food chains from adopting a multi-domestic approach. An interview was conducted as a part of the data collection. Also, multiple secondary data sources were used to conduct the research, specifically the literature review on this topic. I created this dissertation after reading several earlier research papers, conducting research on relevant subjects, and consulting with my mentor. I will always be grateful and indebted to my mentor Prof. for his ongoing oversight and collaboration, as well as for sharing insightful suggestions and crucial information that helped me enhance my work in every manner. The advice, encouragement, and guidance of the professor will be beneficial to this task, and careful evaluations will confirm that it is remarkable and faultless.

Thank you.

Abstract

Aim: The aim of this research paper is to explore the factors constraining the adoption of multi-domestic strategies among fast-food chains in Europe.

Research Method: The method used in this research paper is a qualitative interview. The primary data was collected from five participants through a semi-structured interview. The findings were then analysed using a thematic analysis.

Findings: There were several facets to the research issue discovered. It was shown that the majority of fast-food establishments prefer to employ a basic menu and tailor some elements of their operations. Another discovery was the impact of regional culinary references on local cultures. Standardisation and customization techniques are essential when foreign companies participate in the fast-food industry to meet the demands of diverse regions while upholding international norms. Additionally, service products and their design and delivery can be standardised by achieving a global economy of scale and the lowest unit cost, which is a key tenet of economics considering product and production orientation.

Conclusion: A number of recommendations and the study's limitations were presented in the conclusion. All of the research's goals were achieved. The researcher also discussed the study's potential future direction and offered further suggestions. The researchers also underlined market research and sustainability as components of fast food corporations' global strategies.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Background

Fast food chains are eateries that serve food either through the self-serve counter or the drive-through window. These restaurants are known to serve food on order and have the shortest processing time, which is why they are considered fast food by name. While these forms of food are not alien to any of the countries, in recent times, there has been a rise in global food chains, which have been expanding at a rapid rate to grab the increasing number of customers in each of the countries (Panwar & Patra, 2017). While this phenomenon is observed globally, European countries are also not an exception to it. Most European countries have been observing a spike in demand, but it is not as much as what has been observed in America. In America, it has been noticed that fast food makes up about 44% of restaurant sales (Aaron Allen, 2018). The demand is less in some of the European countries, among which Germany is the dominant player with a huge market for fast-food chains during 2020, and furthermore, it has been estimated to continue to dominate the markets till 2027, when it is estimated to achieve a total market value of \$28,883 million by the end of 2027. On the other hand, the other European markets, including the UK and France, are estimated to increase at an annual growth rate of approximately 6.2% and 11.1%, respectively, during the estimated period of 2021 and 2027. Overall, the whole of Europe is estimated to observe an annual growth rate of about 7.5% between 2021 and 2027 (KBV Research, 2021). Among the various markets, it has been suggested that some of the European markets, especially Spain and Portugal, are considered to observe a rapid growth rate as they have a huge potential for growth (Aaron Allen, 2018). This shows that there is a significant scope and growth rate observed within these markets, which offers an opportunity for most of the global fast-food chains, which is why they are focusing on expanding and exploring the opportunities within Europe. As the multinational companies are moving into new markets, they will enter partnerships with some of the local companies that have helped them expand into the new markets.

Though the expansion has been associated with providing opportunities, it is also considered to have several challenges associated with it as they are expanding into new markets. Some of the major challenges that have been discussed by Mylonakis and Evripiotis (2016) include ethical and health-related challenges and socio-cultural challenges. Research conducted has observed that

perceptions related to fast-food chains depend on and differ from nation to nation. For example, it has been suggested that some western countries, such as America, have obesity-related problems. Because of these problems, the government and countries are moving towards healthy food consumption values, because of which there is a negative impression on the fast-food chains, and this may impact the prospects for the global fast-food chains within the country and the sales and opportunities for these chains.

However, to adapt to the new markets and to successfully perform in the new markets, the fast-food chains in recent times have been focusing on the multidomestic strategy. Multidomestic strategy, more commonly known as localisation, has been discussed by several studies that have established that cultural issues and differences at the national level would impact the ability of global companies to adopt and localise their products and services. There are several challenges that are considered to impact the localisation efforts of the companies. Some of the major challenges have been established in several research studies that have been conducted in this area. Shumba & Zindiye (2018) discuss how localisation would disrupt the workflow and impact the flow of processes. On the other hand, many others agree that localisation efforts involve huge costs, which would be very expensive for fast-food chains (Mylonakis & Evripiotis, 2016). In addition, it has also been suggested that these costs and efforts may even be unsuccessful, and in this case, it would be highly fatal for the business (Zhang, 2018). This is because as companies resort to adopting localisation strategies, there are chances that they may end up adopting such strategies, which may impact and affect the brand's reputation in the new markets (Zhang, 2018). These are some of the challenges that make it very difficult and risky for the brand to engage in the localisation/multidomestic strategy. These aspects also keep changing from country to country, and hence, in this study, the focus is on understanding the challenges in the context of the European countries.

1.2 Research Aim & Research Objectives

The overarching research aim of the study is to "explore the challenges that limit the localisation efforts of the global fast-food chain in European markets."

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- to understand the internationalisation strategies usually adopted by fast-food chains.
- To critically analyse the standardisation vs. localisation debate in the context of fast-food chains.
- To collect data to understand the challenges of localising fast-food chains in the European context.
- to offer recommendations on how the challenges could be dealt with.

1.3 Research Significance

The fast-food chain industry globally has been observing several challenges. Most western nations have observed obesity as a major health problem. There is increasing government intervention, and the customers are more conscious in these countries, because of which they are increasingly focusing on healthier options. Taking this in view, most of the global fast-food chains, including McDonald's, Taco Bell, and Burger King, are also serving healthy meal options in some of the countries (Sutton, 2021). Thus, based on the health, ethical, legal, social, and cultural aspects, food priorities are increasingly being influenced in each of the countries. As a result of these varying focuses and interests, foods that could be served in one context may be of no value in another context (Soo et al., 2018). Hence, it is important that these fast-food chains focus on localisation strategies to adjust and adapt to these new environments. While it is evident that localisation is one of the most effective strategies, especially in the case of fast-food chains, adoption of this strategy is not very easy and is associated with several challenges, which is why understanding these challenges in the context of Europe would be of interest owing to the strong growth rates portrayed by the fast-food chains in Europe, which offer huge opportunities for these restaurants.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

The study on the fast-food industry that has been conducted in the past has discussed the importance and role of international business strategy and its impact on the success of European fast-food businesses. This has been an area of attention for several years. Globalisation has resulted in the movement of individuals across geographical boundaries, and this has necessitated their adaptation to the new culture and the food habits of the new locations (Helsen & Kotabe, 2008). However, in this process, European fast-food chains have started expanding, but it is not really up

to these companies to understand which strategy they have to focus on. The expanding markets globally have been presenting several opportunities for European fast-food chains, and to take advantage of these opportunities, most of the established ones from the West have been growing and increasing their presence across the markets. McDonald's, KFC, Subway, Pert-a-Manager, Burger King, Pizza Hut, and Domino's are some of the most well-known fast-food businesses that are growing across Europe. The figure demonstrates how these companies' brand values are rising daily. According to the graph below, McDonald's has the highest market value. Its brand is worth an estimated 154.9 billion dollars (Statista Research Department, 2023). These networks have been expanding both domestically (in Europe especially) and internationally (Benett, 2008). However, it can be said that the fast food chain industry faces difficulties and some significant obstacles. However, the majority of companies have to choose between standardising their products and catering to the local tastes and cultural preferences of their new international consumers.

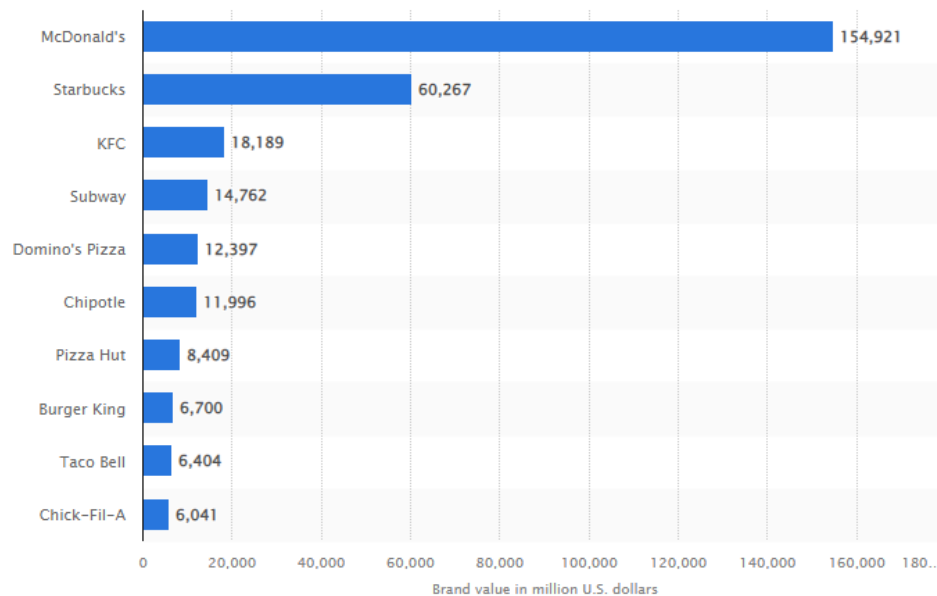


Figure 1: Brand value of some famous fast food chains (2021)

Source: (Statista Research Department, 2023)

Most of the chains in Europe have adopted the localisation strategy; however, some of the chains, such as Pert-a-Manager, adopt standardised menus across all their markets. Localisation vs. standardisation in the context of fast-food chains has been a topic that has been studied widely by several authors in the past. One of the most important worldwide business techniques that is

employed by several companies in a variety of industries is localization. Localization is used by fast food chains in Europe as well. Localising their goods, services, and marketing is crucial for European fast food restaurants to succeed in global markets. There are numerous approaches to doing this. One way they do this is by customising their menu to suit regional tastes and preferences. For instance, McDonald's entered the Chinese and Indian markets by catering to local preferences. During the Chinese New Year, McDonald's served Prosperity burgers in China and McSpicy chicken sandwiches in India. Even Panwar & Patra (2017) noted in this context that McDonald's achievement in keeping its competitive position in the Indian market plays a key role in product localization. McDonald's has also had remarkable success with adaption throughout Europe. Localised marketing tactics used by McDonald's are quite successful. It uses the attractive and perfectly appropriate term Makudonarudo to modify its name for the Japanese market. Other fast food chains in Europe, like Burger King, collaborated with Valencia CF to offer a special edition burger known as the Valencia Whopper. This is a component of the localization plan as well. The strategy enables the fast-food chain to increase its worldwide footprint.

However, this aspect has not been studied in the context of European markets, which is why this is an area that presents a research gap and hence would be the focus of this study. To study this, a literature review would be undertaken in this chapter. For convenience, this literature review would be discussed under the following headings: international strategies adopted by fast-food chains; the localisation vs. standardisation debate, which has been critically analysed and debated in this chapter.

2.1 International Strategies Adopted by Fast-food Chains.

There are different types of international strategies that are adopted by international companies, and these include global strategies, transnational strategies, and international and multi-domestic strategies. These many tactics have undergone much development. These techniques have been thoroughly described by Bartlett & Ghoshal (2017). Additionally, they offered a breakdown of these techniques based on the two widely used criteria of global integration and local responsiveness. The first parameter, global integration, is the one that discusses to what extent the company adapts to global standards, and the second, local responsiveness, discusses the extent to which it would locally adapt to the host country in which it enters. Thus, based on the two parameters, four types of international strategies have been developed.

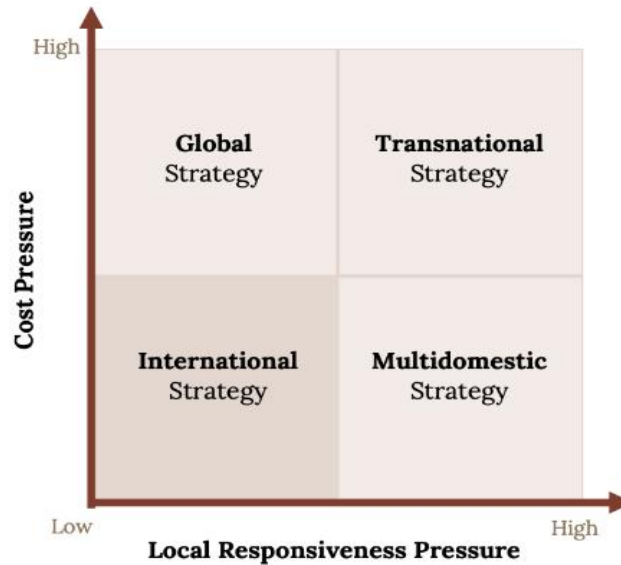


Figure 2: Four international strategies by multinational firms

(Source: Kennedy et al., 2020)

The first strategy is the global strategy, which states that the company will be high in terms of global integration and low in terms of local responsiveness. Typically, this strategy is adopted by many manufacturing companies. These businesses create standardised products for all of their markets, and this strategy provides economies of scale, which encourages cost-effectiveness on a global scale. Secondly, the transnational strategy is where the company is locally responsive while also ensuring standardisation at the global level. This is adopted mainly by the FMCG giants such as Unilever and P&G, which develop standard products, but they are also locally responsive through their marketing campaigns. This form of strategy, however, is not applicable in the case of restaurants (Verbeke, 2013). This is due to the possibility that product or service standardisation will make European restaurants rigid. This can also prevent them from adjusting to regional or local tastes and preferences. Additionally, staff from many different nations must coordinate and work together to implement a multinational plan. Due to the cultural, linguistic, and time differences, this task can be particularly troublesome. For many years, food preferences in Europe have been regarded as being impacted by regional culture and tastes. Now standardisation might limit their viability in emerging countries due to their rigidity (Theodosiou & Leonidou, 2003).

The third strategy is the international strategy, which is very high on global integration and low on local responsiveness. Finally, the multi-domestic strategy is one that is high on local responsiveness but low on global integration. The strategy focuses more on the company's transformation into a localised company offering products and services as per the local choices and preferences of customers. This form of strategy is considered most suitable in the case of fast-food chains (Gooderham, 2012). This is because food habits and preferences are to a large extent influenced by local culture, and hence the focus on localisation is quite well recognised. Indeed, the advocates of localisation argue that despite globalisation, differences between countries exist in terms of customer needs, preferences, culture, traditions, purchasing power, legal aspects, and technological advancements, which necessitate firms to adapt to the local circumstances of the foreign markets (Theodosiou & Leonidou, 2003).

While this is one side of the debate, it has been discussed that with the changing times and global movement of individuals, most of them are used to certain inter-cultural fast-food preferences and hence prefer standardised food menus (Sharma et al., 2020). Although standardisation adoption mostly protects, there is a significant drawback to this. It limits a food chain's ability to accommodate local preferences and standards. The goal of the fast-food business is to provide a varied selection of foods and cater to a diverse customer base. However, it is impossible to standardise. This ultimately indicates that a small portion of the customers are served by the business. As a result, the buyers will wind up buying something that doesn't completely satisfy their needs.

These are the two sides of the debate, and both sides have been widely discussed by several studies, which is why each side of the debate will be elaborated on and critically analysed in this study while also arriving at the research questions that the study would focus on exploring and arriving at.

2.2 Standardization Vs Localization Debate

Understanding the correct harmony between standardisation and localisation has been one of the major challenges for most multinational companies. When businesses expand internationally, they often struggle to determine the best worldwide strategy. At this time, businesses must decide whether to use standardisation or localisation. While standardisation could offer low cost through

a large-scale manufacturing process, this strategy disregards the customers' inclinations (Czinkota, Khan, & Knight, 2021). The success of European fast food companies in global markets depends on localization, but they also understand the value of standardising. Standardisation enables fast food chains to preserve uniformity in terms of branding, pricing, and quality across all markets. European fast food corporations pursue standardisation in a variety of methods. Using a worldwide supply chain to guarantee constant quality of components and goods is one of these methods. To guarantee uniformity in taste and quality, Subway, for instance, buys its bread from the same supplier worldwide. However, there is a chance that the company's chosen strategy may clash with the values and cross-cultural elements in these host or foreign markets if it is implemented across a variety of international markets as well (Czinkota, Khan, & Knight, 2021). As a result, it's crucial to adjust the standardisation strategy for various markets. Even, the fast food businesses in Europe standardise their procedures and practises to guarantee uniformity in the dining experience for patrons. For instance, Greggs Plc and McDonald's have SOPs that govern every aspect of their restaurants, from the design of the kitchen to the manner in which staff members greet customers.

It has been suggested by Khan, Hussain, and Yaqoob (2013) that the preachers of standardisation are of the view that they consider the whole world as a single homogenous market. As given by Levitt (1983), an effective global marketing strategy would adopt the same brand value, image, and communication across its markets throughout the world. However, food businesses are dependent on the dietary patterns of society, which are deeply engraved in the early lives and cultural values of society. Wesslen, Sepp, and Fjellstrom (2013) pointed out that the early food habits formed by people in Europe as children are mostly unalterable and that they draw these preferences from their families and civilizations. In addition, Tien (2019) also seconded this opinion and argued that society and culture are inseparable and go hand in hand, and any change in one of them will inescapably influence the other. Thus, when a new food joint expands into a new market, it is important that they become aware of the culture of the new market and how it influences societal food preferences, which is why it is important that the European fast-food joint adopt localised practises where they adapt and develop new products as per the local preferences. Thus, this view considers that the adoption of localisation strategies is of utmost value, and localisation or multi-domestic strategies should be adopted by companies as they enter new markets and focus on product development.

While this is one side of the coin, Inglis & Gimlin (2009) concurred with the above view and argued that European food societies are not static and undergo dynamic changes, advancing by adopting the new trends that have been gained from the external environment. Most emerging nations, such as China, India, and other Asian countries, have been moving towards western societies for prospects in education and employment. They have begun adjusting to the new food culture in western countries as a result of these changes, particularly the various meals and food cultures of Europe. The development of communication and technology has resulted in the homogenization of world markets, and cultures are becoming more converged. Given this, it would be more feasible for fast-food chains to adopt a standardisation strategy as the choices and preferences of customers across the globe are similar (Ozsomer & Simonin, 2004).

Indeed, Chun & Nyam-Ochir (2020) explained that human versatility, which incorporates developments related to movement, migration, and the travel industry, would critically impact the globalisation of food. Therefore, because the entire world is adapting to Western societies, their foods have become rather standardised. Burgers and pizza, for instance, are already fairly popular in most of Europe, and other nations are gradually adjusting to this type of European cuisine. Hence, standardisation would be suitable for European fast-food chains to adopt. Also, it has been observed that adopting the standardisation, it would require minimal efforts by the fast-food chains, as they are already professionals and have expertise in developing these products and have succeeded already in their domestic markets; hence, there are chances that this strategy is likely to succeed in the new markets (Zou & Cavusgil, 2002). In addition, developing standardised products and services involves low expenses as compared to customising them for local European markets. In addition, another aspect that needs to be understood in the globalised world is that people get used to different cuisines across the world. For example, dishes such as noodles, plates of pasta, pizza, and burgers have become global foods, and most people prefer these different items on their menu cards (Zou & Cavusgil, 2002). More precisely, pizza is no longer a localised food in Italy and is preferred by individuals from across the world. Hence, rather than a heterogeneous menu, a homogenised menu incorporating foods from various cuisines should be developed and used.

While this is a standardised menu, as it includes items from various cuisines, it is considered to offer greater acceptance as compared to the localised menus while also offering economies of scale across the markets (Mehta & Sood, 2020). This form of standardisation is therefore considered

quite effective and is expected to offer greater outcomes. But this view has encountered criticism, stating that standardisation focuses on minimal efforts with greater returns but dismisses the client's acceptance. They explain that adopting too many cuisines on the menu without completely understanding the market may be expensive for the company. Also, when the company fails to acknowledge what the client needs, it is inevitable that the European fast-food chain will fail in the market. For example, McDonald's serves Mc Krokiet in the Netherlands and Mc Kebab in India (Mehta & Sood, 2020). If it includes both items across the markets and adopts a standardised menu, it is more likely to fail because people in the Netherlands do not even understand or know what Mc Krokiet is, and also because including all these items across markets will make the menu too extensive, which makes it very expensive for the company, and hence it is not a feasible option in certain circumstances.

The above discussion offered an overview of the standardisation vs. localisation debate, which has been discussed since the process of globalisation and the inception of multinational companies (MNCs). MNCs, especially in the fast-food sphere in Europe, are either of US origin or from Europe. As discussed, European cultural preferences would let them incline towards European dishes such as Pizzas and pasta, but with the changing times, sociocultural changes have been taking place, as a result of which some academicians claim that the world is transforming into a homogenised entity that includes people with similar likes and tastes, which makes standardisation rather effective.

2.3 Barriers to Localisation Strategy (Multidomestic Strategy)

The first barrier preventing fast food businesses from adopting a multi-domestic approach is economies of scale, according to Grafström & Aasma (2021). Although adopting a multi-domestic or localisation strategy is very alluring and is linked to significant profits for fast-food businesses in Europe, it is always important to remember that adopting localisation in fast-food chains is quite difficult for fast-food firms (Kumar, Tsolakis, Agarwal, & Srari, 2020). The expenses involved with localisation are one of the most crucial factors for the organisation. When it begins to be customised for specific markets, cost-effectiveness and economies of scale cannot be taken advantage of, making it exceedingly expensive for European businesses and forcing them to make concessions on margins. The economies of scale are a key component of fast food businesses'

ability to maintain low costs and high profitability. The European food chains must give up these economies of scale while pursuing a multi-domestic approach and instead concentrate on regionalized manufacturing, marketing, and distribution (Leigland & Eberhard, 2018). The fast food chains are not ready to tolerate higher expenses and reduced profitability as a result of this. This is seen as the initial difficulty in localising items in fast-food chains.

The primary goal of localisation is to customise products and services to satisfy the specific requirements of each national market. But among other issues, language is also one of the most disturbing aspects. If a business wants to use the multi-domestic strategy, it must deal with this issue. According to Sanden (2020), the use of the local language may develop a closer link with the local market. This can not only boost customer satisfaction but also managerial effectiveness. But for this, the firm must work with a multi-domestic strategy that promotes responsiveness to local demand and competition within each nation. Nevertheless, it would still be challenging to adopt a single worldwide language. This is because there many are different languages spoken in Europe. Not only that when an European fast-food chain wants to go to other international markets, it also must know that place's local languages.

The brand image of the majority of European fast-food chains is another intriguing aspect. Now, this identification is derived from their distinctive menu card. Most businesses steer clear of a multi-domestic plan when implementing an international strategy since the majority of fast food clients worldwide like a diverse menu. In terms of cuisine, European restaurants frequently wish to maintain a consistent menu across international borders. Globally renowned European fast-food chains have a strong brand identity (Zhong & Moon, 2020). Because each market would have its own distinct brand image, implementing a multi-domestic approach might erode this brand identity. And only a separate menu will provide this distinctive brand image. Additionally, customers could become perplexed as a result of this and be unable to connect the brand with a particular good or service.

Different cultures throughout the world are a fascinating element that may be considered a hurdle for most fast-food restaurants. To put it more specifically, it is a very difficult task to accept new cultures, habits, traditions, and cuisines associated with a particular country (Tien, 2019). The European fast-food chains would have to modify their food and services to fit the regional culture

as part of a multi-domestic strategy. Additionally, it may be said that cultural variations would affect the customers' brand preferences, purchasing patterns, and consumption habits. Therefore, being aware of cultural variances would enable businesses to create marketing plans that would increase the local responsiveness of their brands (Tien, Dana, Jose, Van Dat, & Duc, 2020). Additionally, the impact of culture on consumer purchasing behaviour has been covered in several studies. Food chains must alter their menu items, pricing policy, and marketing initiatives to better cater to local tastes and preferences and adapt to local culture. This might be a complex undertaking, especially if they are venturing into uncharted territory.

If further analysing the concept of culture is necessary, then the fast food industries of Europe must consider that there are various nations globally, and each nation has a different culture. So, naturally, expanding to these various nations will require a vast amount of research and adaptation power. For example, the people of Japan and most Eastern countries consume rice and other rice-based food items. Whereas most Western countries prefer wheat-based foods like bread and pizza (Janssen, Davies, Richardson, & Stevenson, 2018). As mentioned in the discussion above, it is clear that local cultural value systems have an impact on people's food preferences. This in turn affects how often they buy food from fast food chains (Nguyen, Nisar, Knox, & Prabhakar, 2018). The fast food companies will be able to successfully compete in the local markets once they can comprehend this and locally apply it.

2.4 Fast-food Chains in Europe

The modern lifestyle is becoming busier day by day. Thus, the popularity of fast food is also growing. However, this industry has grown larger in Western and European countries. This fast food industry is making a significant contribution to the GDP. The United Kingdom and France are two of the largest markets in the food and beverage service sector (Monteiro et al., 2018). In these two countries, the business made 87.8 billion euros and 63.2 billion euros in sales in 2015, respectively (Statista, 2022). Furthermore, France had the most businesses in the European Union's (EU-28) restaurant and mobile food service activities sector in 2018 (Figure 2).

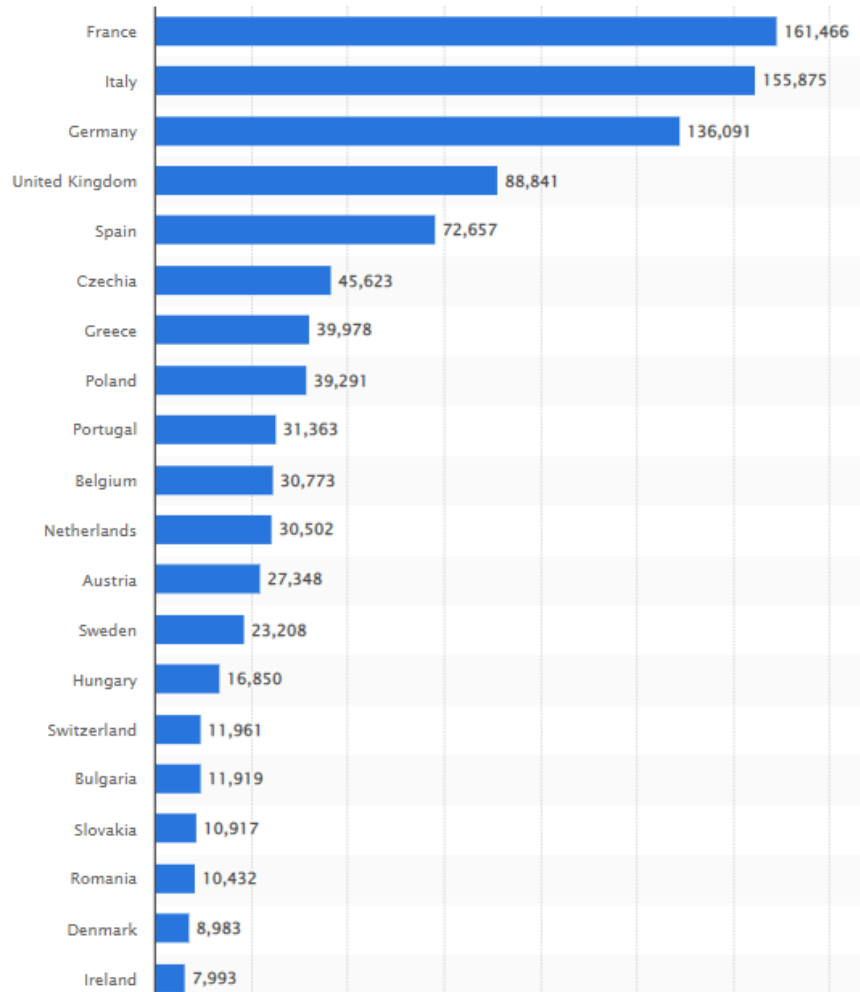


Figure 3: In the European Union (EU-28), the number of businesses engaged in the restaurant and mobile food service activities sector in 2018

Source: Statista Research Department (2022)

The European fast-food industry is expected to generate US\$44.16 billion in sales by 2023. Also, it is anticipated to increase at a pace of 17.78% per year. The predicted market size will be US\$84.99 billion by 2027 (SRD, 2022). The cause of this expansion is that global brands rule the fast food chain business in Europe. McDonald's, Burger King, KFC, Subway, and Pizza Hut are some of the significant fast-food brands. These chains use different international strategies. And these international strategies are responsible for this extraordinary growth. However, strategies other than localisation are quite popular. However, local fast-food restaurants are also becoming

more popular in Europe. These neighbourhood food services are beginning to provide more regional cuisine and a distinctive eating experience.

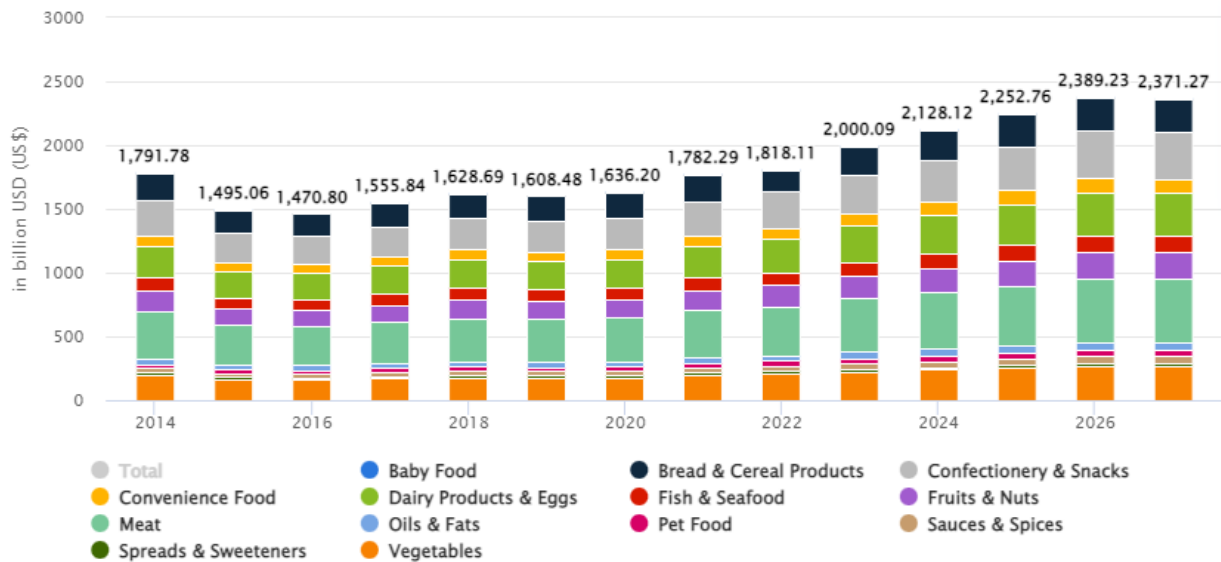


Figure 4: Revenue of the European Food Industry (category-wise)

Source: SRD (2022)

Previously, it was stated that a connection existed between local cuisine and culture and client happiness. Customer loyalty and satisfaction are favourably influenced by meal choice, service standards, and cultural preference, according to Liu, Lee, and Hung (2017). However, the fast food sector altered the food service sector in Europe. It has altered how people eat out and given rise to a new eating category. Most individuals are interested in fast food due to their hectic lifestyles. These fast-food sectors have boosted the economy and produced new jobs throughout Europe. However, several of the biggest fast-food chains in Europe have recently embraced more technology and a self-service strategy. According to Cross (2017), to re-engage the more technologically astute millennial population, McDonald's is already experimenting with the integration of SST in the European fast food sector. The article also mentioned that since adopting the technology, leaders of companies that created SST with kiosks have grown by 5.7% in Europe.

One of the crucial elements of the European fast food sector that was covered in earlier paragraphs is the standardisation of both the product and the service. Regardless of the nation or culture, these chains offer the same menu and service at every location. There are, however, differences in dietary

tastes and cultures. According to Nguyen, Nisar, Knox, and Prabhakar (2018), there are several problems with the food services in Europe, which are very different from those in other Western nations. The expansion of chains like Wetherspoons and the higher-end gastro-pub industry are indicators of the popularity of eating out in pubs. Regarding the fast food business in particular, Europe has experienced significant growth. However, fast food services have changed and made it easier for customers to access these fast food chains regardless of where they are.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework can be defined as the framework that explains the relationship between different variables of the research topic and provides an explanation of the purpose of the study. This is generally developed after the literature review, i.e., with the knowledge gained from the literature review. This also reveals gaps among the known facts and lays the groundwork for determining the appropriate research method and approach. There are several variables in this conceptual framework, namely, the independent variable, dependent variable, mediator, and moderator. As the name suggests, an independent variable is the one variable that does not depend on other variables in this research process. In this context, the multi-domestic strategy is the independent variable. The dependent variable is the one that depends on other variables. The European fast-food industry is the dependent variable. There are mainly two reasons: one is that it depends on the independent variable to expand in other countries, and the second is that it is also affected by the mediators. Mediators are the variables that establish the relationship between dependent and independent variables. In this case, the different languages, cultures, food preferences, etc. are the mediators, as they influence the relationship between fast food companies and international strategies (multi-domestic strategy). Lastly, the different market orientations of various nations are the moderators. The moderator determines the strength, direction, or presence of a correlation between the two variables.

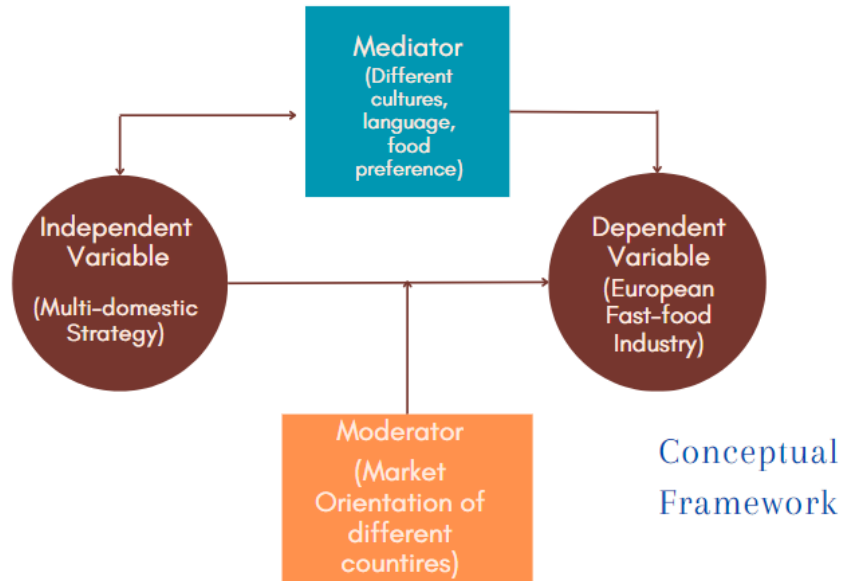


Figure 5: Conceptual Framework

Source: (self-made)

2.6 Literature Gap

In this section of the literature review, several research publications were examined, and their points of view on related subjects were studied. The reasons why the majority of European fast food firms do not employ the multi-domestic model, however, have yet to be thoroughly investigated by researchers. It was also highlighted that few studies have undertaken primary research, particularly interviews with chosen people to get valuable data. The foundation of the research methodology and approach for this dissertation may thus be established by this literature gap. The many components of the research process will be thoroughly explained in the next chapter. Additionally, it will explain why the chosen research methodology and methodologies were chosen.

2.7 Chapter Summary

Based on some prior work, this literature review chapter explored many features of the European fast food sector as well as some obstacles to localisation strategies. There was also a solid comparison between standardisation and localisation. Even though various literary works present

various sides from various angles, taking a look at all of them was very beneficial. This literature review section lays the foundation for this research by briefly discussing the literature gap.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

The research methodology is an explanation of how the researcher wants to conduct the research. Precisely, it can be considered a systematic and logical way of collecting and organising data for problem-solving. It helps the researcher arrive at reliable and valid results. The current study focuses on exploring the factors that constrain the adoption of localisation within fast-food chains in the context of Europe, and to understand this, the study broadly adopts qualitative research. To discuss this in more detail, the chapter would be organised into the research philosophy, research approach, research methods, data collection, and data analysis, along with the ethical considerations. Each step in the research methodology is directly aligned with and interrelated with each other. To discuss this, Saunders et al. (2009) have discussed the research onion, which includes several layers, and this could be observed in Fig. 2, which has been given below.

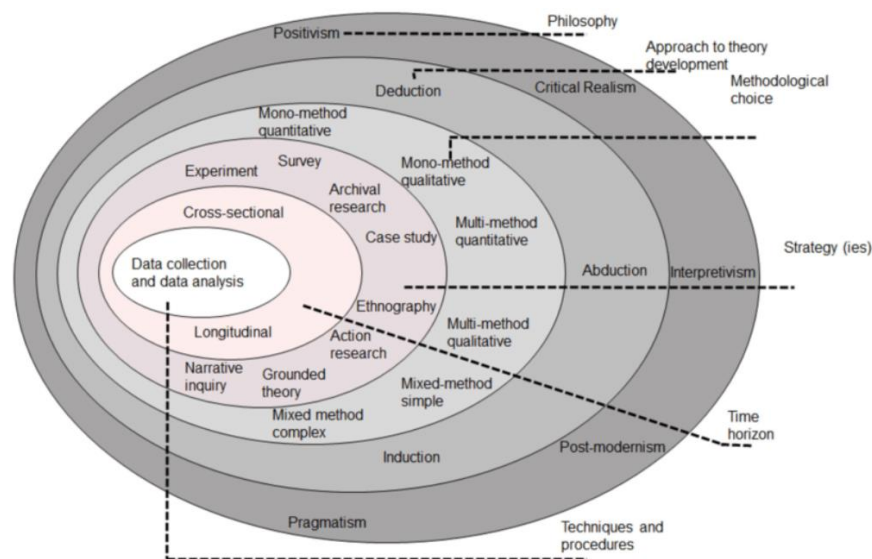


Fig 6: Saunders Research Onion

(Source: Seuring, Stella & Stella, 2021)

3.1 Research Philosophy

The research philosophy is the outermost layer of the research onion. It has been suggested that there are three different types of research philosophies: positivism, critical realism, interpretivism, post-modernism, and pragmatism. Among the different types, the **interpretivism philosophy** was

adopted. Interpretivism discusses the fact that reality and knowledge depend on the subjective interpretations of individuals. Also, in this study, it can be observed that the focus is on understanding the factors that constrain the localisation efforts of multinational fast-food chains in Europe. These factors could vary, be understood based on the context, and even differ with each of the restaurants. Hence, exploring the factors is a subjective aspect and requires the researcher to dig deep, understand, and get insights into these factors, which is why the interpretivism philosophy is chosen over the other philosophies, which are more focused on objective reasoning and understanding the phenomenon (Mkansi & Acheampong, 2012).

3.2 Research Approach

The second layer of the research onion discusses the research approach. It has been shown in the following figure (Fig. 6). There are three different research approaches that are usually adopted according to the research onion, and they include the inductive, deductive, and abductive approaches. Among the various approaches, the inductive approach is quite suitable in the given context. The difference between inductive and deductive reasoning and how they are adopted can be observed in Figure 3, which has been given below.

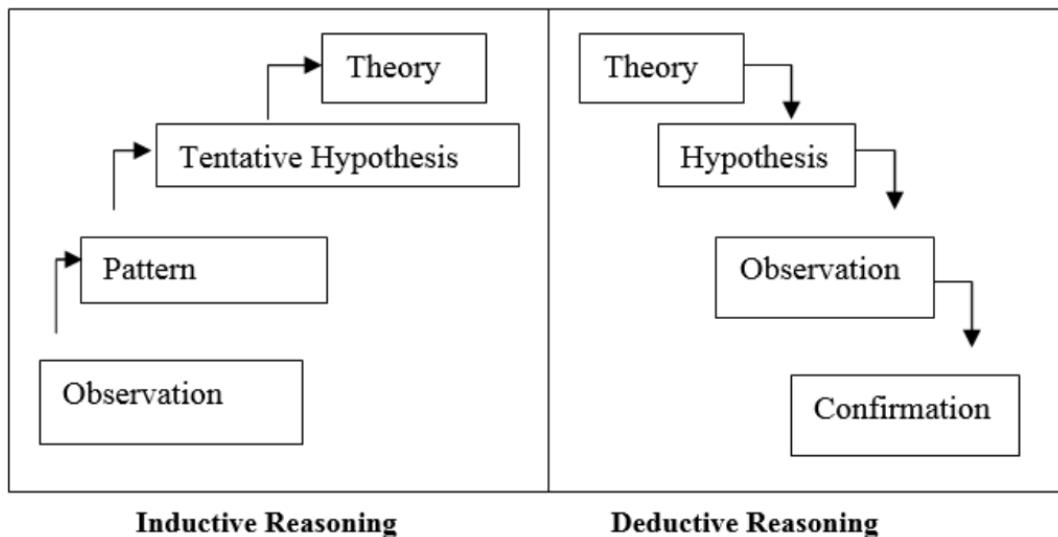


Fig 7: Inductive and deductive approaches

(Source: Aliyu et al., 2015)

The inductive approach is more suitable for studies where there is no pre-existing theory that can be adopted for the study. It can be observed that in this study, there are no previous studies or theories to explain the factors that influence or constrain the adoption of localisation within fast-food chains within Europe, and hence this study has started as a mere observation, which then would pattern into tentative hypotheses, and then finally could arrive at the theory (Aliyu et al., 2015). In addition, it has been discussed that the interpretivism philosophy is linked to the inductive research approach (Matua, 2015). Thus, considering all these aspects, the inductive approach was chosen for the study. This method is also called the bottom-up approach," as it is considered with the theory's development.

3.3 Method Choice

Thirdly, the choice of research method is the next topic to be discussed. In this research, the chosen research method was the **qualitative method**. This is because, in the study, the focus is to subjectively understand the factors that would constrain the global fast-food chains within Europe to localise their offerings, which requires the researcher to dig deep and understand the reasons. This is only possible through a qualitative method, which allows researchers to dig deep and explore, unlike quantitative methods, which are fact-based and are only adopted to establish the cause-and-effect relationship between the variables (Hughes & Sharrock, 2016). Hence, in the study, the qualitative method is the method of choice, and hence it would be adopted.

3.4 Research Strategy

The research strategy is the way in which the researcher proposes to conduct the research. In this study, **the case study** is the research strategy that was chosen. This is because this study is conducted in the context of Europe, which means the factors that will be understood are only applicable in the context of Europe, which makes the study case study research. Case study research is where a particular scenario or issue is studied by the researcher in a given context. However, its applicability for the larger population is further prone to examination or further studies, which will be conducted in various contexts (Saunders et al., 2009). It could be generalised sometime when the context is similar and it has all the features that are like the given context.

3.5 Time Horizon

The time horizon over which this study was conducted was cross-sectional. Cross-sectional research is conducted in a specific context over a specific time period. In this research, the phenomenon is valid and would be appropriate for a particular time (Seuring, Stella, & Stella, 2021). This is the most commonly used form of time horizon. Also, in this study, the factors that limit global fast-food chains in contemporary times are being explored; they are rather segregated under the cross-sectional.

3.6 Data Collection & Analysis

As for the study, it has been discussed that the qualitative method is adopted, and it is important to select the qualitative method. Interviews are the most commonly used data collection method, and this was also adopted in the current study. This is because to explore the reasons that limit fast-food companies' ability to localise, it is important that the researcher discuss, question, and dig into the topic, which would be possible through face-to-face interviews. There are different types of interviews, among which semi-structured interviews would be adopted in this context. The semi-structured are quite effective as they help in offering questions that help the researcher take the conversation in the right direction without much distraction, which is very much possible during a conversation (Hughes & Sharrock, 2016).

While conducting the interviews, the sample population was initially selected. The sampling process for the study is a **non-random method** where the sample included those who have the necessary knowledge in terms of localisation patterns, customer preferences, and how companies would strategize, which is why **the managers associated with fast-food chains** in Europe will be selected for the study (Sharma, 2017). They were approached and asked if they had time to participate in the interviews while being assured that it was only for academic purposes. Some of them volunteered, and the interview was conducted. A total of **five participants** were selected for the study.

The data analysis method that was adopted in the study is **thematic analysis**. This is the most suitable and well-adopted method for qualitative studies. The interview data is initially gone through, and based on the answers, the common aspects are segregated as basic themes. Later, these basic themes are organised based on the literature and another aspect that helps arrive at sub-

themes, and finally, based on the research questions, the global themes are to be arrived at (Terry et al., 2017). This is the most widely adopted and reliable form of data analysis, especially in the case of interviews, and hence it would be adopted in the study.

Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis

4.1 Overview of Chapter

The results of the semi-structured interview will be examined in this chapter. This chapter will thoroughly overview the participants' ideologies and the ideals of each participant's company. This will also make it easier to comprehend how they feel about localisation and standardisation. But this chapter will also discuss those responses and attempt to analyse them. In doing so, various facets of this research issue will be better understood. These participants have undoubtedly offered helpful insights into the fast-food industry because they are all managers and have extensive expertise in the sector. These insightful observations may serve as the focus of our study.

4.2 Key Findings

The following crucial elements may be developed from the replies: However, the following subsection will analyse these critical factors in greater detail.

The first key aspect is that most fast-food chains use a standard menu of their own. There are multiple reasons behind this. However, some chains preferred standardising their goods and services across all their locations. On the other hand, some fast-food chains are thought to cater to the diverse local tastes. This shows that there is no perfect strategy that is fit for all companies. So, it can be stated that businesses must consider local cultural foods and preferences when deciding the food menu or international strategy.

Secondly, it was also discovered that many firms support the use of customization. However, they encounter several difficulties when utilising localisation. For instance, challenges including cultural differences, rivalry from local companies, and legal barriers are encountered when entering new areas. For the brand's beliefs and offers to be in line with local expectations, some participants noted that entering new markets requires substantial study and planning. While others claimed that localisation could aid a business in forging relationships with clients in new markets. But the majority favoured localisation as a tactic for breaking into a market. Even though many companies' localisation strategies might require refinement, most are prepared to adopt them.

Another thing is that regional cultures also play a big part in this situation. While a global strategy establishes the direction and focus, elaborate plans, and formal environment for employees to

comprehend the organisation's goals, culture aids in goal accomplishment by entangling it in the organisation's shared values and beliefs. Thus, making culturally relevant food items is very essential. However, there are many countries with many different types of food cultures. So, it can be difficult to adapt to every other food culture. However, this allows new entrants to deliver something unique.

Finally, it can be said that one of the main recommendations that the majority of respondents concentrated on was technology. Additionally, they emphasised the use of mobile ordering and delivery platforms as a strategy for improving customer satisfaction and maintaining competitiveness. It was also discovered that providing digital payment choices and loyalty programmes is crucial for drawing in and keeping clients. This suggests that for fast-food companies to remain relevant, they must embrace technology and use it to their advantage.

4.3 Data Analysis

Specific Observation

Believe in brand products and services

Throughout this semi-structured interview process, some essential topics came up. Two participants thought that their company's best worldwide strategy and idea was to stick with the things they manufacture. They, therefore, favour standardisation. It's necessary to comprehend the benefits of standardisation to comprehend why these two participants claimed that their company employs it. Finally, these benefits will make it easier to see why these businesses don't adopt localisation, a crucial component of a multi-domestic strategy (Tien, 2019). But businesses like McDonald's and Starbucks provide the same food and services in various cities and nations. When participant two was asked about what fast-food firms should do in terms of customization, the participant replied the following:

"I think that since restaurants are renowned for their distinctive dishes, they shouldn't alter them. The majority of people visit this fast-food restaurant chain to try our meals. Thus, it's crucial to stay true to your principles."

There could be multiple reasons for this statement. For example, cost-effectiveness and efficiency are two possible reasons. High profit is the result. However, when foreign businesses operate in

the fast-food sector, standardisation and customization strategies play a crucial role in satisfying the needs of various markets while maintaining international standards. Additionally, by achieving a global economy of scale and the lowest unit cost, which is a crucial tenet of economics considering product and production orientation, service products and their design and delivery can be standardised. There are three primary causes or elements. According to Alaali & Pitsaki (2019), globalisation and the advancement of technology are to blame for the ease of communication and travel, which in turn promotes international trade.

Second, standardisation (globalisation) creates uniform products that are promoted across the globe using a uniform marketing strategy—the core of mass marketing. Standardisation and customization now represent the localisation combination that minimises expenses while maximising satisfaction. The fact that they can maintain the quality of their meals thanks to this regular menu of fast-food items is another thing the participants mentioned. They can guarantee that their goods satisfy the same standards of flavour and quality by employing the same recipes, ingredients, and cooking methods throughout all of their locations. For instance, Starbucks' locations are all uniform, and the menu is virtually the same everywhere. Starbucks is still opening some new uniform stores, so it is pretty simple to determine the strategy at play (Fischer, Imgrund, Janiesch, & Winkelmann, 2020). Furthermore, it is crucial for chains that operate in various nations with various cultural norms and standards for food safety. Last but not least, several powerful Western global food chain companies rule the world market with their usual goods or services. The reason behind their fast service is technology. In recent times, the use of AI and automation in such fast-food shops has increased significantly (Huang & Rust, 2021). The technology used helps the company reduce manpower and save money.

After these subsections, it can be stated that the justifications offer a logical explanation for the participants' responses. The two main arguments for not localising are their confidence in their service and product. Additionally, standardisation facilitates and expedites the entry of fast food chains into new markets. This faith in the name, products, and reputation, however, reveals a mental flaw. This can be cited as one of the obstacles preventing fast food chains in Europe from adopting a multi-domestic approach.

Importance of local culture

The effect of local cultures on regional food references was another facet or topic that emerged during the thematic analysis of the replies. The majority of participants agreed that it was crucial to take the target market's local culture into account when creating an international strategy for fast food restaurants. They know that regional cultures greatly influence customer choices, attitudes, and behaviours. Any food chain business must thus comprehend and adapt to local culture. In this context, participant three responded to the third question by saying:

"I think fast-food outlets should choose to modify their menu items to suit regional preferences. This helps the business adapt to the local market and draw in clients who like regionally appropriate cuisines."

Therefore, it is evident from the response that maintaining cultural relevance in terms of food is very important. The respondents have determined that fast food restaurants may build a strong brand identity by integrating into local culture. Customers are more inclined to visit a firm when they notice that they are changing their culture. Fast food restaurants may arouse a sense of familiarity in their patrons by mixing regional tastes, ingredients, and traditions into their menus (Kim, Choe, King, Oh, & Otoo, 2022). In a similar vein, participant four offered the following response:

"...services across its branches based on local preferences of taste. This helps address local preferences and increase profitability. It helps to create a bond with the customers and develop a loyal foreign customer base."

The majority of fast-food restaurants have anticipated the current cultural shift in food tastes across Europe. In line with Janssen, Davies, Richardson, and Stevenson (2018), the trend of eating outside the house and an uptick in sedentary activity are to blame for the obesity pandemic of the twenty-first century. Numerous customers have been compelled to try new foods as a result of this cultural shift. Outside of Europe, however, most individuals like consuming familiar meals. Thus, adjusting to the regional culinary tradition can boost client loyalty. Also, learning the local language can be beneficial. Customers from the area are more inclined to visit fast-food restaurants that are aware of their local language and respectful of the local cultural customs.

McDonald's and the other Western fast-food outlets (Burger King, KFC, Pizza Hut, and Wendy's) usher in diversity and variety, giving rise to and reflecting new, diverse social formations. This is similar to what Pieterse (2019) said in this context. The formulae are correspondingly adjusted to local conditions, the author said, and they serve different social, cultural, and economic roles there than they do in their country of origin. Fast food may have started with street vendors in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa rather than in Western restaurants. Therefore, using an intercultural hybrid model for food services makes sense for the majority of businesses. This shape has elements of both its historical origins and the current, worldwide, localising diversity of forms. In this same context, participant five responded to question number 2 with the following answer:

"The corporation offers specialised goods and services in several regions. This helps not only boost sales, but the rate of repurchase increases."

As a result, most businesses attempt to localise. But there are some issues with this situation. The literature review chapter of this dissertation discusses these issues extensively. Offering locally adapted goods and services might be challenging due to logistical and supply chain difficulties. Thus, investing in developing a suitable supply chain and logistics might be difficult. Thus, many companies make food items that are familiar to them. In this way, fast-food chains ensure quality and deliver good-standard food. Participant 2 gave the following response in this situation:

"We provide the same food items at all of our locations. Despite the need for customization, our company wants to produce the fast-food items for which we are best known. The main reason is that maintaining quality and keeping profit at the same time while using localisation is difficult."

From the above findings, it may be concluded that a multi-domestic approach requires cultural adaptation. Additionally, many businesses neglect to conduct the necessary research to create a viable multi-domestic strategy. Some of the difficulties companies have in adjusting to the culture include the necessity for major expenditures, supply chain concerns, and regulatory compliance. This is a key factor in why the majority of fast-food chains in Europe don't wish to employ the multi-domestic approach. They only use localisation in part as they work to attract more customers.

Customisation as a new market entry strategy

When asked how a fast-food business should operate, the majority of respondents said that to balance standardisation and customization, fast-food restaurants need to somewhat personalise their menus and services. Customization is also a viable method for breaking into a new market. The rationale is that it entails modifying goods or services to satisfy the particular requirements of a target market (Sousa & da Silveira, 2019). Additionally, this strategy enables various businesses to provide distinctive and alluring goods and services to regional customers. Participants made the following statements in this context:

"I think fast-food outlets should choose to modify their menu items to suit regional preferences. This helps the business adapt to the local market and draw in clients who like regionally appropriate cuisine. Customising some standardised components can undoubtedly benefit a company. Additionally, customization enables us to stand out from competing chains and foster brand loyalty."

One member, however, disagreed with the localisation ideology. According to the participant, most consumers come for their specialty foods, which are almost always not local fare. The participant was likewise adamant that a fast-food restaurant company builds its reputation through the quality of its meals. So, following the instructions exactly is crucial. The participant's response is as follows:

*"I think that since restaurants are renowned for their distinctive dishes, they shouldn't alter them."
"The majority of people visit this fast food restaurant chain to try our meals."*

Customization is used by their fast-food business, according to other participants. However, none of them mentioned employing this strategy internationally or employing a multi-domestic strategy. Due to difficulties with maintaining brand identity consistency, the expense and complexity of customising products, etc., many people might not want to use a multi-domestic strategy. However, the managers of the majority of businesses concurred that customization helps them differentiate themselves from rival chains and increase brand loyalty. This was Participant 4's answer to Question 3 in this situation.

"This will help to attract local people and reduce the risk of failure. Yes, customization allows it to adapt well when it enters new foreign markets."

Even though the majority of participants complimented customization and said it was a smart strategy for new markets, But they omitted the term "multi-domestic strategy." A multi-domestic approach, according to Chew, Shen, and Ansell (2020), seeks to create a semi-autonomous entity in each operating nation. It is able to modify a product to meet the demands of the local market. Although businesses customise their products, they do not do so extensively. To meet the needs of the clients, partial alterations are made. Chandra, Verma, Lim, Kumar, and Donthu (2022) even stated that companies can also use customised marketing techniques to draw more customers. Companies may show that they comprehend customer preferences by tailoring their foods to satisfy those needs. Finally, it can be concluded that customization may prove to be a successful new market entry strategy for many European fast-food chains. However, as was evident from the interview, the majority only use it partially. They do not forecast it for international or global markets. One explanation might be the costly and difficult procedure. For many fast food enterprises, the expenses and possible advantages might not be worth it.

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As a result, most businesses attempt to localise. But there are some issues with this situation. The literature review chapter of this dissertation discusses these issues extensively. Offering locally adapted goods and services might be challenging due to logistical and supply chain difficulties. Thus, investing in developing a suitable supply chain and logistics might be difficult. Thus, many companies make food items that are familiar to them. In this way, fast-food chains ensure quality and deliver good-standard food. Participant 2 gave the following response in this situation:

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From the above findings, it may be concluded that a multi-domestic approach requires cultural adaptation. Additionally, many businesses neglect to conduct the necessary research to create a viable multi-domestic strategy. Some of the difficulties companies have in adjusting to the culture include the necessity for major expenditures, supply chain concerns, and regulatory compliance.

This is a key factor in why the majority of fast-food chains in Europe don't wish to employ the multi-domestic approach. They only use localisation in part as they work to attract more customers.

Areas for improvement

After discussing customization, the participants were questioned about how they would improve their firms. Most of them acknowledged that their approach is successful and that they are using the proper approach, but they also identified areas for improvement. One is spending money on market research to gain a deeper comprehension of the local way of life. By doing this, businesses will become familiar with the regional cuisine and assist in creating personalised menus. Asani, Vahdat-Nejad & Sadri (2021) researched a personalised food recommendation system. Fast food chains can also use technologies to provide customised menus based on the local culture. The majority of the menu should be adapted to the local market, even though there may be some things that are the same throughout nations. Participant Three made the following comment in this regard:

“...Making some cuisine that is inspired by different cultures is a great tactical choice that our business makes to entice more clients. The layout of the food chain is the only thing that can be altered...”

Two participants brought up another intriguing topic. They made two distinct points. Working with regional partners is one. The second is local sourcing. Fast food franchises can benefit from developing partnerships with regional partners in various ways. One benefit is that it can aid in comprehending regional culinary tastes. Another is that the local partner may assist with local suppliers, which can then assist the business in locating premium, regional ingredients. Participant 5 stated the following in this context:

“...They may, however, do better by carrying out more market analysis to better grasp regional interests and preferences. To cater to a more extensive clientele, they can also consider collaborating with local partners.”

It is from this viewpoint that the idea of buying locally originates. However, Luo (2022) pointed out that working together carries several risks. The ability of a company to foster cross-unit, international cooperation is crucial for success because it reduces structural inertia and administrative barriers that could undermine risk management and strengthen network-based or ecosystem-specific advantages generated from international collaborations. In this analysis stage,

it can be stated that most participants agreed that analysing and understanding local market culture and food type is very essential. But to do so, there is a serious need for investments or funding. Most businesses don't want to invest a huge amount in only market research. Therefore, it can be concluded that there are several areas for improvement in addition to funding.

Customisation efforts to appeal to the local market

The participants were asked to submit some key points after the interview regarding how fast-food companies in Europe may successfully utilise localisation initiatives to appeal to local markets. Everyone offered some quite insightful responses. One is that businesses may optimise pricing, and the other is that they can optimise their marketing strategies. Price the food and service competitively and in a way that will attract nearby customers. According to Reshi, Dar, and Ansar (2023), price and service quality do affect customer behaviour. By examining the locals' per capita income or the proportion of upper- or middle-class residents, the fast food chain can develop a customised menu. Participant 3 commented on the need for surveying the local market and developing appropriate marketing techniques.

"...then develop an appropriate marketing campaign. Also, the fast food service must understand the demographics and the number of upper- and middle-class people in that locality. This will help to decide the pricing of the food items.

Moreover, creating marketing materials that are specific to the neighbourhood market is essential. To do this, it may be necessary to modify the language, messaging, or branding to appeal to local customers. Respondent 4 made the following statement about the need for customised marketing:

"A firm can also put significant focus on its marketing techniques. Marketing in the local language can certainly attract more customers."

The suggestions for tailoring marketing campaigns to local markets may be effective. A few of the approaches include product customization, marketing, pricing, sourcing, etc., but that doesn't mean there aren't any other options. It is up to the fast food service company to adjust to local needs and adhere to local laws. Sales of that particular food will undoubtedly rise when it is commercially viable and enticing to nearby consumers.

General conclusion

The data obtained during the interview was quite beneficial. The findings mentioned above can be expressed in broad terms, and then the analysis and comprehension of the literature review part can be explored. This will make it easier to comprehend the difficulties and some other relevant factors surrounding this research issue, which may be quite beneficial.

- The first general finding is that restaurant owners, managers, and other employees firmly believe in the quality of their own meals and brand-name goods. They want to establish a name for themselves by serving only tried-and-true cuisine. They prefer to stick with a set menu. However, there are several previously mentioned reasons for that.
- The second overarching finding is that there is a sizable profit margin with the basic menu. Additionally, it aids in mass marketing. However, marketing is useless without good food. It's crucial to maintain food quality. As a result, to maintain a high level of quality, the majority of restaurants stick to one set menu.
- The cultural component is another essential factor that may be generalised. Since it can be costly, many fast-food chains are reluctant to adopt new local customs. They adhere to their own culture and culinary preferences as a result. However, many fast-food chains employ an intercultural hybrid model for the provision of food services, which is reasonable for most businesses. Both the historical roots of this shape and the current, global localising diversity of forms are present in this shape.
- The use of customization as a new market entry approach was the subject of the second key finding. Customization is a practical strategy for entering a new market. It is justified by the fact that it requires changing products or services to meet the specific needs of a target market. The majority of participants, however, did not bring up the localisation approach or the multi-domestic strategy. They emphasised customization the most. There is a small distinction between localisation and customization right now that may be important for debate. The subsequent chapter will cover this.
- Finally, there are some areas where the fast-food industry in Europe can be improved. The panellists provided some insightful advice, including the need to invest in market research, find regional partners, and work with other global businesses. The next section will compare the participant replies to the conclusions of the literature review section,

notwithstanding the fact that these points are generalised and summarised from the participant responses. A thorough justification, conflicting elements, and other factors will all be taken into consideration.

4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter mostly summarised the results of the semi-structured interview and provided the likely explanations for those responses. All of these replies will be assessed in light of the literature evaluation in the chapter that follows. And based on the conversations, the conclusions from the next chapter will be useful. However, it was evident from the participants' responses that they had some belief in localization and a multi-domestic strategy. The rationale is that a multi-domestic strategy might provide advantages like improved client satisfaction and increased profitability. However, they appeared to steer clear of it, making adjustments in response to local demand to draw in more customers.

Chapter 5: Results and Discussion

5.1 Overview of Chapter

The outcomes of the literature review portion and the participant responses will be assessed in this results and discussion phase. This dissertation's primary goal was to investigate the barriers preventing fast-food chains from implementing multi-domestic tactics. Aspects will be articulated and addressed in detail in this part. Fast food chains must, however, carefully weigh the possible advantages and disadvantages of a multidomestic strategy. It is crucial to create effective strategies for various local and international markets. A business cannot rely on a single set menu. It must bring a selection of foods.

5.2 Discussion

Constraints of Multi-domestic Strategy

Several limitations of the multi-domestic strategy were found in the literature review, but some significant problems were also learned from the interviews. Despite its long-term advantages, these factors may limit its adoption by fast food chains. A few issues that prevent fast food businesses from using a multi-domestic approach are culture and language, a lack of market research, brand identification, etc. Other facts include standardisation, supply chain management, brand identification, marketing, etc. These are evaluated in the following section.

Cultural and Language Barriers

It was evident from the literature review that many authors addressed the value of becoming familiar with the local language and culture. The usage of the regional tongue may foster a closer connection with the regional market, claims Sanden (2020). The author also mentioned that it can increase managerial effectiveness in addition to increasing consumer happiness. Similar findings came from the semi-structured interviews as well. The majority of participants believed that while developing an international strategy for fast food restaurants, it was essential to include the local culture of the target market. They are aware of the significant impact that regional cultures have on consumer decisions, attitudes, and actions. Any chain restaurant must therefore be aware of and sensitive to local culture.

Several participants also emphasised the significance of including learning the native tongue in their plan. Similar statements were made by Kim, Choe, King, Oh, and Otoo (2022), who

suggested that fast-food restaurants might evoke a sense of familiarity in their customers by including local flavours, ingredients, and customs in their menus. However, it was discovered in the literature review section that logistical and supply chain issues could make it difficult to offer locally tailored goods and services. Even one of the participants (Participant 4) acknowledged that learning a new language, a new culture, and these other factors can be extremely difficult. In Europe, many languages exist. For example, German, French, Italian, English, etc. Without proper training, employees may not effectively communicate with customers. However, it can be expensive to train the chefs or other staff members and teach them new languages. As a result, many firms are reluctant to employ a multi-domestic strategy. To maintain uniformity, fast-food franchises have always relied on standardised menus, procedures, and operations.

But to prioritise the local culture, these chains must use customization to alter specific aspects of their operations. Tang, Chen, and Deng (2020) claim that there are still not enough talents to satisfy the need. Marketing and advertising patterns and contents change with different cultures. Additionally, cross-cultural training is necessary for the chefs so they can prepare the food according to local tastes and customer preferences. These items need extensive investment and research, which many firms lack. Additionally, many talented chefs, according to the same author, want to remain in the US or the UK to build successful lives for themselves. They stay away from visiting developing nations and other countries. Thus, businesses must increase training.

Pieterse (2019) further claimed that the requirement for significant expenditures, supply chain issues, and regulatory compliance are some of the challenges businesses face when transitioning to the new culture. This is a big reason why most European fast-food restaurants don't want to use the multi-domestic strategy. The same thing was stated by Participant 5 when he or she responded that fast-food restaurants should decide to partially adapt their menu items to suit local preferences and tastes. However, they should also maintain a core menu of standard items to ensure uniformity across all sites.

Nine aspects make up culture, according to Zhang, Chen, and Hu (2019). Each aspect has the potential to influence people's needs and preferences while also shaping their cultural values. The author also mentioned the link between cultural norms and consumer behaviour. Additionally, fast-food restaurants adjust their service standards to accommodate regional variations in customer

behaviour. The writers Reshi, Dar, and Ansar (2023) concurred that consumer behaviour is influenced by pricing and service quality. Training the personnel to deal with various consumer behaviours is therefore crucial. But investment is also necessary. Individuals have unique characteristic values that are impacted by geographical culture, social culture, and familial culture, but cultural value systems are developed by the specific group to which they belong. As a result, it is crucial to value local culture. However, many businesses do not employ a multi-domestic strategy due to limitations like supply chain management, customised marketing and advertising campaigns for various cultures, and customer service based on the customer's weight. So, from this discussion and the facts taken from the literature review and the interview, it can be stated that culture and language do play a big role in developing international strategies. And this can be one of the major factors constraining the adaptation of a multi-domestic strategy.

Less Importance to Market Research

The necessity of market research for comprehending the numerous facets of regional culture was discussed in the literature study. An important part of creating a multi-domestic strategy is investing and conducting market research. Brand names don't just appear. Promotional campaigns require large investments. Transaction costs can be a significant barrier to international trade and are a crucial component of developing a market entry strategy. Search and haggling expenses are included in costs (Food and Agriculture Organisation, 2023). But most fast-food restaurants do not want to spend a lot of money on market research. Even Participant 3 acknowledged the value of market research. Businesses will gain knowledge of the local food and aid in the creation of customised menus by doing this. Therefore, it is clear that the results of the literature review and the interview are comparable.

The majority of firms don't want to spend a lot of money on market research alone. However, the literature review also mentioned several advantages of market research, including demographics, consumer behaviour, and cultural preferences (George, 2018). This was also briefly discussed by the participant. The necessary evidence for stating this was provided by Participant 5 by saying something similar. The participant asserted that fast-food businesses in Europe might successfully implement customization initiatives by doing market research and modifying the menu selections to local tastes and preferences. The responder further stated that customization options, such as

different sauces or toppings, may be offered to accommodate a variety of tastes. Fast food chains can find opportunities for expansion and customise their products by performing market research.

Another crucial element of market research is investment. Companies using a multi-domestic approach will mostly rely on investment and the resources of regional businesses, according to Tulung (2017). Their main goal is to meet local market demands, which can best be done by well-integrated local subsidiaries. The author also noted that several frameworks are necessary for this research's goals. Some participants concurred that investment is necessary in this situation. Even Masawe & Sanga (2022) performed a study, and the author suggested that instead of focusing on global strategies, investment groups should investigate local economic situations that are most conducive to domestic and multi-domestic strategies. However, investment in different areas like supply chain, resourcing, marketing, employee training, etc. is also very essential. Thus, it can be stated that market research and investment are critical for implementing a multi-domestic strategy in fast-food chains. But most fast food firms in Europe don't want to invest much in such things. Although, with investment, fast-food chains can deliver a high-quality customer experience. So, it can be stated clearly from the research findings and the literature review that most fast food firms don't invest much in market research, and it is one of the constraints for not adopting a multi-domestic strategy.

Brand Identity

Another important study area that is of significance is brand identity. In the literature, it has been extensively explored how various businesses in Europe distinguish themselves by the foods they sell. Therefore, they do not want to change their cuisine or identity outside of Europe. Globally recognised fast-food chains have strong brand identities since each market has its own unique brand image, according to Zhong & Moon (2020). However, adopting a multi-domestic approach might weaken this brand identity. This unique brand graphic can only be seen on a different menu. However, changing the brand's identity too frequently risks losing customer loyalty and brand recognition. Customers could also become confused due to this and be unable to associate the brand with a certain product or service. The participants themselves also made similar remarks. Participant One claimed that they serve the same cuisine to preserve consistency and brand familiarity. This demonstrates how the literature review and the conclusions are comparable.

This is a limiting element, though. To expand the company in other areas, the food products must be customised. When the fast food chain enters new foreign markets, participants 3, 4, and 5 all said the same thing: they allow customization to adapt well. This is because individuals will choose to test a flavour that they are already familiar with. According to Singh & Sehwat (2019), the kind of product and food quality help to construct a company's brand image. But it also contributes to the financial stability and strength of the company. This aspect makes it more lucrative. These two facts may be at odds with one another, but they both make sense in a certain way. However, the perfect multi-domestic strategy can be developed by balancing these two sides. Major businesses may find it challenging to achieve the ideal balance between preserving their brand identity and modifying their food offerings to reflect regional culinary traditions. According to a report in the Harvard Business Review (2023), many businesses have turned to creating brand-new policies and processes to become more customer-driven. Such a strategy, however, has become a certain method to increase unneeded expense and complexity in operations as consumers and their wants become more and more diversified.

On the other hand, big European fast-food brands, like Telepizza or the most well-known restaurant chain, McDonald's, are known for their signature dishes. The "I'm lovin' it" catchphrase and McDonald's famous golden arches are well known. Additionally, the variety of pizzas at Telepizza defines it. As a result, they must maintain their unique style while creating the menu or multi-domestic approach. Even Kusi, Gabrielsson, and Kontkanen (2021) think that a business should take into account factors that contribute to competitive advantage and brand identity when building an international strategy. Participant 5 disagrees, though. In response, it was suggested that fast-food restaurants decide whether to partially tailor their products. However, it appears that no one uses the multi-domestic strategy fully. Therefore, even though most businesses prefer to use localisation and customization, the majority cannot afford it. The key justification is that they want to maintain the brand image while not causing too much customer confusion regarding their meal selections. So, the conclusion can be drawn that brand image is a barrier preventing European fast-food firms from implementing a multi-domestic strategy.

The subtle difference between customisation and localisation

The literature study demonstrates the significance of striking a balance between standardisation and localisation. Standardisation may result in reduced costs due to mass production, but this approach ignores the preferences of the client (Czinkota, Khan, & Knight, 2021). Conversely, localisation can draw in more local consumers, but the business must completely transform and adapt to the local culinary scene. However, Khan, Hussain, and Yaqoob (2013) make the argument that proponents of standardisation view the entire world as a single, homogeneous market. In support of this viewpoint, Tien (2019) claimed that society and culture are intertwined and mutually dependent, and any change in either will inevitably affect the other. Therefore, a new restaurant must understand the culture of the new market and how it affects societal food preferences when they expand into a new market. Most of the participants gave similar responses. Even Participant 3 claimed that preparing food that is influenced by other cultures is a smart tactical move made by our company to draw in more customers. The participant continued by saying that the solution does not only include altering a few dietary items. To attract more local customers, a fast food business must improve the food on the inside and the outside.

According to the literature review, most businesses aim to tailor certain aspects of their operations to the local market. According to the results section, the majority of participants merely mentioned that they just changed a few things and tried to fit in with the local cultures. The majority of participants merely mentioned that they just changed a few things and tried to fit in with the local cultures. But there's a tiny distinction between localisation and customization. Customization is the practise of modifying goods and services to suit the particular requirements and preferences of certain clients. This applies to fast food chains where consumers can add or remove components to make their orders more unique (Simon, Trojanova, Zbihlej, & Sarosi, 2018). Localisation, on the other hand, refers to the process of tailoring goods and services to the unique requirements and preferences of a given market or location. This implies that the entire company needs to alter its business strategy (Panwar & Patra, 2017). To cater to regional tastes and preferences, businesses in the fast-food chain sector in Europe must adapt to new menu items, advertising strategies, and branding. And the various locales will affect these various elements. Therefore, it is clear that localisation is a more comprehensive strategy than customization. Although both of these strategies involve customising goods and services, their applications differ. The majority of participants just customise, not localise. They could advocate for localisation and a multi-domestic approach, but their businesses merely make minor adjustments. Participant 3 also said that while

they don't employ localisation, they do use customization. Participants 4 and 5 said that their respective companies also use customization, and it is the right strategy. This helps to attract customers, and the fast food chain also does not have to make any major changes to the business. Which implies that they don't employ a multi-domestic strategy. They aim to preserve a basic standard menu while also adding a few helpful extras. Therefore, standardisation can be a significant obstacle to fast food chains implementing a multi-domestic strategy. Additionally, fast food chains need to create a plan that balances standardisation and customization.

The overall situation of European Fast food chains

The literary analysis accentuates the burgeoning fast-food sector within Europe, particularly emphasising its substantial impact on the GDP of nations such as the United Kingdom and France. Renowned multinational chains, including McDonald's, Burger King, KFC, Subway, and Pizza Hut, have harnessed diverse international tactics such as standardisation and localisation to attain remarkable expansion within the European domain (Monteiro et al., 2018). Concurrently, indigenous fast-food establishments are gaining traction, offering regionally influenced cuisine and a unique dining experience (Liu, Lee, & Hung, 2017). Monteiro et al. (2018) scrutinise this growth, elucidating the considerable contributions of these entities to the GDP of the United Kingdom and France. Furthermore, interview findings reveal that these corporations employ standardisation as a principal global strategy, underscoring the advantages of cost-effectiveness, efficiency, and heightened profitability. Nevertheless, Gulzira & Han (2019) counter this assertion, positing that consumer loyalty and satisfaction are swayed by factors such as meal variety, service quality, and cultural predilections. Consequently, the fast-food industry's reliance on standardisation may limit its capacity to accommodate diverse consumer preferences and cultural palates. In contrast, the results of the semi-structured interviews divulge that although some participants prioritise standardisation as their organisation's foremost international strategy, others stress the significance of comprehending and adapting to local customs and tailoring products and services for new market penetration.

Standardisation constitutes an economical and efficient methodology, permitting fast-food chains to preserve uniformity in taste and quality throughout their global locations (Fischer, Imgrund, Janiesch, & Winkelmann, 2020). This concurs with the interview outcomes, where respondents

cited cost-effectiveness, efficiency, and the conservation of product and service excellence as rationales for their organisations' predilection for standardisation. Conversely, Vitters et al. (2019) contest this perspective, arguing that the food services in Europe encounter distinct challenges compared to those in other Western countries. They accentuate the necessity for equilibrium between standardisation and customization to satisfy market demands while upholding international norms.

The literature review also implies that consumer allegiance and gratification are positively affected by meal options, service criteria, and cultural inclinations (Liu, Lee, & Hung, 2017). This supposition is endorsed by the interview findings, where respondents conceded that fast-food enterprises must appreciate and adapt to local cultures to flourish within the European market. Integrating regional flavours, commodities, and customs can confer patrons with a semblance of familiarity and enhance their loyalty to fast-food venues (Kim, Choe, King, Oh, & Otoo, 2022). Tailoring can also facilitate fast-food chains' ingress into new markets and distinguish them from rival entities (Sousa & da Silveira, 2019).

Nonetheless, customization engenders a unique set of obstacles, such as escalating expenses, supply chain complications, and regulatory adherence (Chandra, Verma, Lim, Kumar, & Donthu, 2022). The interview findings divulge that the majority of European fast-food chains adopt localisation to a limited extent, eschewing a fully-fledged multi-domestic approach due to these impediments. This insinuates that striking a balance between standardisation and customization is vital for triumph in the European fast-food arena.

Opportunities for enhancement identified by participants encompass investing in market research to better apprehend local culture and culinary predilections, utilising technology to devise menus rooted in local traditions, and cultivating regional collaborations and local sourcing. Cooperation with local counterparts can enable fast-food chains to fathom regional gastronomy and secure superior, localised ingredients through domestic vendors (Luo, 2022). Nevertheless, international collaboration is not without its perils, such as structural inertia and bureaucratic obstacles.

Customisation as a part of a Multi-domestic Strategy

The literature study and interview outcomes spotlight numerous impediments and hurdles confronting fast-food enterprises when implementing a multi-domestic approach. Notwithstanding

the potential merits of customisation, including heightened local adaptability, cultural acclimatisation, and customer gratification, organisations must prudently assess the costs and risks concomitant with localisation.

Customisation has emerged as an essential facet of multi-domestic tactics, enabling fast-food chains to accommodate regional predilections, appeal to local clientele, and augment brand loyalty (Participant 1, Participant 3, Participant 4). Areiza-Padilla (2021), corroborates this perspective, contending that appreciating and adjusting to local cultures and values can assist fast-food chains in devising more efficacious marketing strategies and attracting an extensive customer demographic. The study also underscores the significance of adapting to local dietary proclivities, such as inclinations for rice-centric dishes in Eastern nations and wheat-based fare in Western countries.

On the contrary, customisation is accompanied by substantial challenges, encompassing escalating costs, the forfeiture of economies of scale, and the potential attenuation of brand identity. A study by Shahid & Hittinger (2021), stresses that localisation can be costly for enterprises, as they relinquish the cost-effectiveness and economies of scale intrinsic to standardisation. The study also asserts that adopting a multi-domestic strategy could undermine the robust brand identity cultivated by global fast-food chains, as each market would possess its distinct brand image.

Despite these obstacles, some interview participants proposed that fast-food chains should partially customise their products, maintaining a core menu of standardised items to ensure consistency across all venues (Participant 5). This approach satisfies the study by MANINGO, SUMAYO, & AGUSTIN (2023), who assert that synchronising standardisation and customisation could enable fast-food chains to preserve their international benchmarks while catering to local tastes and preferences.

Conversely, other participants opined that fast-food chains should refrain from modifying their signature dishes, as customers frequent these establishments for their unique offerings (Participant 2). This viewpoint is challenged by Tzeng et al. (2021), who contend that incorporating local language and elements in marketing and product offerings can not only elevate customer satisfaction but also bolster managerial efficacy. Fast-food chains may need to embrace a multi-domestic strategy that fosters responsiveness to local demand and rivalry within each nation.

Comparing the information by the literature review and interview findings, posits that customisation as an element of a multi-domestic strategy can confer considerable advantages to fast-food chains in terms of local responsiveness, cultural assimilation, and customer contentment. However, organisations must contemplate the potential costs and risks tied to localisation, such as surging expenses, the relinquishment of economies of scale, and possible dilution of brand identity. Striking an equilibrium between standardisation and customisation could be the linchpin for the successful execution of a multi-domestic strategy within the fast-food sector, facilitating businesses to accommodate diverse customer inclinations whilst sustaining their international standards and brand persona.

5.3 Chapter Summary

In conclusion, it can be said that fast food chains face several challenges when implementing a multi-domestic approach. Some of these were covered in the section on the literature review, while others are marginally new. The data from the literature review and the results of the interview have a lot of similarities. Fast food businesses may find it challenging to cater to local tastes and preferences due to a variety of reasons, including linguistic and cultural obstacles, problems with brand identification, difficulties with standardisation, and the need for market research and investment. However, rather than employing a localisation strategy, the majority of them customise their businesses. Additionally, the literature review suggests that meal choices, service standards, and cultural preferences all positively influence consumer loyalty and satisfaction. The results of the interviews support this hypothesis. The participants also offered suggestions and several areas for business improvement. Fast-food restaurants need to strike a balance between standardisation and personalisation to get around these restrictions. If adopting a multi-domestic strategy appears to be a challenging step, they must create localised marketing initiatives and menus and use technology and centralised management systems to run their business. In the last chapter, a few constraints are introduced along with a discussion of the potential future scope.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Overview of Chapter

In this last part of the research process, the important elements and findings will be highlighted, as will the limits. This chapter will also outline the main conclusions, suggestions, and issues. Any topic's research requires a lot of time and effort, as well as the researcher's careful attention and diligent effort. A crucial stage in this research was the interviewing procedure and data collection. The results, however, accomplished the dissertation project's goals. The goal of this dissertation paper was to find evidence for and support the aforementioned goals. However, the chapter's conclusion explains how the study's goals and the actual findings relate to one another. The researchers also highlighted potential study fields. However, it was quite difficult to analyse the European fast food chain. There were many things to take into account. Even after the interview, there are still certain topics that deserve more investigation. For the fast food chains, a few suggestions and potential methods are also provided. These suggestions may be useful in assisting them in developing appropriate international strategies.

6.2 Linking with Objectives

Four objectives were established for this dissertation before any research had begun. These goals are to examine the global techniques employed by the European fast food chains, comprehend standardisation and localisation, examine the difficulties associated with localisation, and finally offer some advice. In the following bullet points, how these objectives were met are discussed briefly.

- The initial objective was to understand the international strategies of different fast-food chains in Europe. According to the interviews, some participants do employ localisation, but the majority prefer customization. One person, however, mentioned that standardisation is used in their organisation. It was found that various businesses employ various techniques. Nevertheless, they employ modified and unique strategies. Some fast food restaurants tailor some aspects of their menu and service. To increase their profits, they do their best to develop these global tactics.
- The discussion of standardisation vs. localisation in the context of fast-food businesses in Europe was the next objective. The majority of fast food chains don't give serious thought

to the controversy surrounding these two strategies. They combine the two in a way that works for their particular business profile. For example, participant one even mentioned that although they offer the same menu and food products, they modify other parts of their company to match the local culture. They make an effort to change the level of spiciness in the dishes on the menu or provide regional specialities. The majority of fast-food companies employ this tactic. Even though this is not a severe or significant change, it greatly benefits the fast-food industry. It was found that fast-food restaurants should decide to change their menu items to accommodate local preferences. This aids in local market adaptation and attracts customers who enjoy cuisine that is suited for the area. Therefore, it can be said that the second objective was also accomplished.

- The third objective was to identify the difficulties in adapting localisation for fast-food businesses in the European market. In the interview, the managers of the various fast food chains shared their perspectives on the industry as a whole, as well as their experience, international strategy, and localisation-related ideas. These viewpoints assisted in evaluating the study topic's many diverse facets. The current state of affairs and the expansion of fast food chains in Europe were also learned through the literature research. In Europe, small fast food outlets are also gaining popularity. These local eateries are starting to provide more regional cuisine and a unique dining experience. But there was also a discussion of the difficulties with fast food chains. Barriers, including culture, language, consumer behaviour, brand image, sustaining food quality, etc., were known through the literature review. The participants approved of these obstacles. Additionally, they included some intriguing details, like less market research and the partial application of localisation. Therefore, the dissertation's third objective was also accomplished.
- The final objective was to make suggestions on the difficulties. Additionally, the participants offered some insightful advice based on their experiences. The participants listed a few things they could do better. Based on it, the researcher has also offered some recommendations. The recommendations are listed in the section that follows.

6.3 Recommendations

The suggestions that are made below are based on the feedback from the participants. Finally, additional suggestions are offered from the viewpoint of the researcher.

1. The first suggestion is that before creating any global strategies, fast food companies must perform market research (International Trade Administration, 2023). Understanding the local population, gender biases, prevailing trends, and culinary culture is essential. This market research may be carried out using a variety of methods, including focus groups, quick interviews, and public surveys. The outcomes of this study should then be used for the creation of locally appealing goods. The data will make the most of the company's efforts while maintaining the cost and time effectiveness of the global strategy.
2. Participant Three said they adapt to the local cuisine's tastes and preferences. You may achieve this by creating a suitable menu card. Only after completing market research may this recommendation be taken into consideration. The fast-food company should modify its menu once it gets a grasp of regional preferences (Pitt, Gallegos, Comans, Cameron, & Thornton, 2017). They can, however, maintain a regular menu, which consists of their food items, and then serve popular local dishes to better fit local tastes.
3. The next suggestion would be to provide the chefs and other employees with training on interacting with clients from various locations. To develop identical culinary products, the chefs must also be aware of local cuisine preferences. Additional staff training is also necessary, for example, to establish standards for service levels. To be able to engage with consumers and offer the information they need, staff would need to have adequate training (Namin, 2017). Details on the cuisine being served, the ingredients, payment options, specials, the kinds of beverages being sold, coupons, discounts, etc. are all included in this material. Therefore, increasing staff knowledge would increase the fast food restaurant's dependability.
4. Last but not least, restaurants that serve quick food may get their ingredients nearby and cook with them. This can lower the cost of outsourcing work and promote local food production.

The two following suggestions are from the viewpoint of the researcher.

1. ***Forming collaboration with local businesses:*** fast food chains and neighbourhood companies ought to work together. It can be a business that sells genuine culinary materials or another well-known company in the area. Additionally, food chains must

uphold their social obligations and forge close ties with the community (Schmutz, Kneafsey, Kay, Doernberg, & Zasada, 2018). This will not only assist the fast food restaurant chain in increasing the number of its patrons, but it will also help the company better understand the local market because the partner may offer useful insights.

2. ***Emphasising sustainability:*** Another suggestion is to prioritise sustainability more. The participant did not address this subject, but there is now an increasing focus on sustainability in Europe, and fast-food companies may attract local customers by highlighting their dedication to sustainability. The five pillars of sustainability—environmental, economic, social, health, and ethics—can be addressed by fast food restaurants (Schmitt et al., 2017).

6.4 Limitations

Despite the meticulous execution of this dissertation, there are a few restrictions, which are described below.

- The research methodology is discussed in the first paragraph. Semi-structured interviews were used to gain some insight into the fast food franchises' opinions. On the other hand, a survey would have been far more beneficial for obtaining a substantial number of data sets. This would have made the situation easier to comprehend and give a rough understanding of.
- Another drawback of this study was the fact that the managers' point of view was documented. On the other hand, it's equally crucial to consider the clients' point of view. It is critical to understand whether clients prefer essential or personalised food items. In the end, the fast food industry will only expand with consumer backing. Thus, understanding the viewpoint of the customer may also aid businesses in developing strategies that are appropriate.

6.5 Future Scope

The breadth of the research issue is provided in detail in this dissertation. There is a thorough discussion of all the pros and cons of not employing localisation, as well as the restrictions that limit fast food restaurants from using a multi-domestic strategy. However, as the second restriction

stated, On top of that, future researchers can do research. To learn how consumers feel about various fast food items, a survey can be done. Future academics can potentially perform comparable research on the fast food sector in various nations. For instance, the US has a relatively diverse fast-food culture. Numerous fast food chains from around the world conduct business in the US. Researchers can generate evidence-based research using these fast food chains' perspectives on the international strategies they employ.

6.6 Chapter Summary

This study discovered several explanations for why many fast-food restaurants don't use a multi-domestic strategy. Additionally, the researcher made a variety of recommendations based on the information from the interviews that can be used by various fast-food chains to create an international strategy. To cater to the local market, fast food businesses in Europe can effectively incorporate customization initiatives. Some of the main recommendations include modifying the menu, utilising local ingredients, providing customization options, taking cultural factors into account, promoting sustainability, and performing market research. These can assist fast-food restaurants in giving their customers a distinctive and genuine experience while fostering brand loyalty.

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Appendix

Part 1 - Interview Questions

Structure of the interview questions for the semi-structured interviews.

1. What is your experience with this fast-food restaurant? Do you have any prior experience? How long have you been working in fast-food restaurants alone? What is your firm's international strategy?
2. Does the company offer the same products and services across all its branches across the countries, or will it customise it in countries as per local tastes? Why do you think so? Does it customise/standardise only the products or the services as well? Is this strategy working for it? What do you personally feel?
3. What in your opinion should fast-food restaurants opt for customising products or stick to the same products across markets? What makes you say so? According to you will customisation allow it to adapt well when it enters new foreign markets? Why/Why not?
4. Do you feel your company is adopting the right strategy (In terms of standardization vs customization)? What can be changed? How can they be changed?
5. Give some inputs on how fast-food chains in Europe may effectively incorporate customization efforts to appeal to the local markets?

Part 2 - Interview Transcript

Participant 1

1. Hello, I have been working in this industry for 8 years. In these 8 years, I have spent 3 Years with my current company. Despite the fact that I have worked in this field for a sizable amount of time, very few businesses were able to adjust and balance localization and standardisation. However, to preserve consistency and brand awareness, our company's worldwide strategy calls for offering the same goods and services at all of its locations.

2. Yes, we provide the same food and service at all of our locations. The reason is to provide and maintain brand recognition and consistency. However, it is also true that serving a variety of customers is crucial for growing your clientele. As a result, we do make a few minor adjustments to suit regional preferences. We may, for instance, adjust the amount of spice in our menu items or provide regional specialities. This is not a significant shift, but in my perspective, our current tactic is effective.
3. I think fast-food outlets should choose to modify their menu items to suit regional preferences. This helps the business adapt to the local market and draw in clients who like regionally appropriate cuisines. Customising some standardised components can undoubtedly benefit a company. Additionally, customization enables us to stand out from competing chains and foster brand loyalty. But adapting to the local language is difficult. Thus, I believe many companies don't use localisation.
4. Yes, I believe our business is on the proper course by providing both basic and somewhat customised items. However, we could do better if we put more money into research and development to better understand regional preferences.
5. By performing market research and examining regional tastes and preferences, fast food companies in Europe may successfully include customisation initiatives. Additionally, they could work with nearby vendors to find the ingredients for regional specialities, and they could advertise their customised goods on social media to draw in local clients.

Participant 2

1. I have over 15 years of experience working in fast-food restaurants, and I have 8 years with this particular business. To retain the reputation that our company has built over the years, we offer the same goods and services at all of our locations. But according to our business, people want to eat the food we make best.
2. Yes, we provide the same food items at all of our locations. Despite the need for customization, our company wants to produce the fast food items for which we are best known. The main reason is maintaining quality and keeping profit at the same time using localisation is difficult. However, while we may have more meat-based options in some

countries, there may also be vegetarian options in others. This approach, in my opinion, is profitable for us.

3. I think that since restaurants are renowned for their distinctive dishes, they shouldn't alter them. The majority of people visit this fast food restaurant chain to try our meals. Thus, it's crucial to stay true to your principles.

4. I believe that our business is using the appropriate strategy this year. Our brand is one of not following the crowd and giving something extraordinary.

5. My present company doesn't like customization too much, thus we deliver our own menu. Consequently, I think customization strategies are optional. When visiting various markets, the only food that is distinctive will draw in more customers. And we actually carry out that.

Participant 3

1. I have been employed by this fast-food company for the last two years and have worked in fast-food restaurants for the past seven years. As part of our company's global strategy, we adapt our goods and services to suit local preferences and tastes.

2. Our business firmly believes in tailoring its goods and services to suit regional tastes and preferences. This approach, in our opinion, enables us to interact with the community and build a significant market presence. We personalise both our goods and our services, and I believe this is a successful strategy for us given that we have been able to grow our market share internationally.

3. I think fast-food outlets should choose to modify their menu items to suit regional preferences. This helps the business adapt to the local market and draw in clients who like regionally appropriate cuisines. Additionally, customization enables us to stand out from competing chains and foster brand loyalty.

4. Yes, I believe that my business is using the best approach. Making some cuisine that is inspired by different cultures is a great tactical choice that our business makes to entice more clients. The layout of the food chain is also one of the things that can be altered. Even

if the food may taste local, the environment is as important. But, for any food chain, it is an extremely expensive move.

5. It is very important to comprehend the marketing technique. Before creating a customised menu, it is essential to analyse the food items and determine the preferred level of spice or the proportion of meat lovers, and then develop an appropriate marketing campaign. Also, the fast food service must understand the demographic and the number of upper-class and middle-class people in that locality. This will help to decide the pricing of the food items. However, localising the entire business with respect to local preference might be a big and difficult step.

Participant 4

1. I have a pleasing experience with this fast-food restaurant. No, I'm not having any prior experience. I have been working for 1 year in a fast-food restaurant. The firm's international strategy is to provide cost-effective yet delicious and healthy food options.

2. The company offers customized products and services across its branches based on local preferences of taste. This helps to address local preferences and increase profitability. It helps to create a binding with the customers and develop a loyal foreign customer base. The company also provides customized services too. Yes, the strategy is working.

3. Fast-food restaurants opt for customising products across markets. This will help to attract local people and reduce the risk of failure. Yes, customisation allows it to adapt well when it enters new foreign markets because people will prefer to try the taste that they are well known to them. Also, the local culture plays a significant role in this aspect. But my opinion is that learning a foreign language is very difficult for any organisation. Though they can recruit from that locality but it is not that easy.

4. Yes, the company is adopting the right strategy in terms of customization and need to do more research and survey to understand the local preferences. It also needs to source local ingredients whenever possible. This reduces transportation costs and reduces carbon footprint.

5. They can use local ingredients that are freshly and readily available as well as affordable. This will help to attract local customers who prefer locally sourced food. A firm can also put significant focus on its marketing techniques. Marketing in the local language can certainly attract more customers.

Participant 5

1. On the other hand, some of the firms thought that local tastes could be catered to by tailoring their offerings. This shows that there is no one-size-fits-all strategy for the fast food industry's global development. So, it can be stated that businesses must consider local cultural food and preferences when deciding the food menu or international strategy.

2. According to regional interests and preferences, the corporation offers specialised goods and services in several regions. This helps not only boost sales but the rate of repurchase increases. The company's use of this strategy is successful since it enables them to meet the unique requirements of each market.

3. I believe that to accommodate regional tastes and preferences, fast-food establishments should choose to partially customise their goods. To ensure uniformity across all sites, they should also keep a core menu of items that are standardised.

4. I believe the business has chosen the best approach to balance standardisation with customization. They may, however, do better by carrying out more market analysis to better grasp regional interests and preferences. To cater to a more extensive clientele, they can also consider collaborating with local partners.

5. By doing market research and adjusting the menu offerings to regional tastes and preferences, fast-food companies in Europe may successfully include customization initiatives. In the UK, they would serve chips and fish in the style of the UK, while in Italy, they might serve pizza topped with regional toppings. To cater to differing tastes, they could also provide customization choices like various sauces or toppings.