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Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

MBA Dissertation

Exploring the effects of strategic orientation of MNEs on customer purchasing behaviour – A cross-cultural comparison in the global apparel industry

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This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of UWTSD for the degree of Master of Business Administrative (MBA).

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Master's Degrees by Examination and Dissertation

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Abstract

The link between multinational enterprises' (MNEs) strategic directions and consumer purchasing behaviour has not been theorised or empirically tested. MNEs that do business internationally face a complex, competitive, uncertain and dynamic environment. International business and operating across borders differ from domestic business and require an international business to vary its strategies and practices country by country. Two main forces that influence MNEs' strategic analysis and strategic orientation are pressures for global integration efficiency and local responsiveness effectiveness. International business literature suggests four strategies that can be applied by MNEs to deal with these two opposing pressures in international business.

Based on the data collected from 260 respondents in the UK and 260 respondents in Romania, this cross-cultural study examined eight hypotheses concerning the effects of strategic orientation of MNEs on customer purchasing behaviour. This research shows that an MNE's adoption of a global, international, multi-domestic, or transnational strategy influences the consumer purchasing behaviour in target markets. Findings show product characteristics such as design, quality, and price are the main influential factors affecting consumers' decisions to buy global brands. There is a positive relationship between brands' name, reputation, uniqueness, and globalness and consumers' purchasing behaviour in the global apparel and fashion market. Consumers prefer in-store shopping mode rather than online shopping mode for buying international apparel and fashion products and brands and want to see a higher degree of local responsiveness by global brands. The global brands' advertising and marketing activities such as sport sponsoring, fashion shows, and social media campaigns have not significant impact on consumers' decision to buy apparel and fashion products from international brands/companies.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

This cross-cultural study explores the effects of the strategic orientation of MNEs in the global apparel industry on customers' satisfaction and purchasing behaviour in the UK and Romania. Scholars and practitioners have studied firms' internationalisation (Runfola & Guercini, 2013; Chiva, et al., 2014) and their international businesses strategies (Gulbro & Herbig, 2008; Roncha & Montecchi, 2017; Alexander, et al., 2018) over the last decades. This study focuses on consumer purchasing behaviour and observes how global fashion brands' strategic orientation for meeting pressures for local responsiveness and cost reductions influences consumers' purchasing decision and behaviour in two different cultures in Europe.

1.1.1. Strategic Orientations of MNEs

As the world moves toward a truly integrated global economy, internationalisation is not a choice for all companies, large and small, but a survival necessity. Therefore, more firms are becoming international businesses. Multinational enterprises (MNEs) are those businesses that have productive activities in two or more countries (Hill, 2013). MNEs are businesses conducting value-adding activities in two or more nation-states (Eden, et al., 2010). MNEs that do business internationally face a complex, competitive, uncertain and dynamic environment (Brooks, et al., 2011; Kano & Verbeke, 2019). International business and operating across borders differ from domestic business as countries have different laws, cultures, and economic conditions (Bhattacharyya, 2020). These differences require that an international business vary its strategies and practices country by country. There are currently many academic studies in the international business and strategic management fields, which have

explored different international strategies applied by MNEs in the global markets from different perspectives.

MNEs face asymmetric forces: pressures for the cost reduction and efficiency of global integration versus those for the effectiveness of local responsiveness (Breunig, et al., 2014; Daniels, et al., 2015; Meyer & Su, 2015). It means it may not be possible for an MNE to realise the full benefits from learning effects, economies of scale, and location economies. It may also not be possible to serve all customers in the global marketplace from a single low-cost location, producing a globally standardised product, and marketing it worldwide to achieve the cost reductions associated with experience effects (Hill, 2013). Four basic corporate-level international strategies, including global standardisation strategy, international strategy, multi-domestic strategy, and transnational strategy to meet both pressures for global integration and local responsiveness, have been discussed in many business and management books (Angwin, et al., 2011; Rugman & Collinson, 2012; Daniels, et al., 2015; Hill, et al., 2017) and academic journals (Connelly, et al., 2007; Breunig, et al., 2014; Collings, et al., 2019; Parameswar & Dhir, 2019). For example, Connelly et al., (2007) examined these strategic directions by MNEs to find the extent of agency problems under each strategy or Kasper et al., (2009) investigated varying cross-site knowledge sharing patterns of eight MNEs pursuing these strategic directions.

1.1.2. Consumer Purchasing Behaviour

There is a direct relationship between the type of goods and services demanded by customers and their social conditioning, attitudes, and beliefs (Lancaster & Reynolds, 2005). Understanding customers' preferences, purchasing behaviour, and decision-making process are crucial for all businesses to formulate the most effective marketing strategies in the marketplace (Hollensen, 2012). Over the past years, many aspects of

consumer behaviour (e.g. social and cultural aspects) have dramatically changed, and understanding consumer behaviour is the key to all businesses' growth and success (Schiffman, et al., 2012; Ellis & Thompson, 2018). The importance of understanding consumer behaviour for MNEs is more crucial as cross-cultural empirical studies have indicated substantial differences in consumers' decision-making styles, priorities, characteristics, and buying patterns in different countries (Ha, et al., 2010; Bian & Forsythe, 2012; Shukla & Purani, 2012; Galina, et al., 2018).

The concept of consumer behaviour is very broad and complex. Schiffman et al., (2012) state that it is rooted in the marketing concept. It is a complex and dynamic pattern for market researchers and practitioners (Solomon, 2018). Therefore, during the last few decades, various researchers in the marketing field have researched consumer purchasing behaviour from different points of view. More importantly, firms' marketing strategies and tactics have been significantly linked to consumers' behaviour and preference in target markets (D'Alessandro, et al., 2012). Research has shown that consumers' preferences, attitudes, concerns, and shopping habits change and influence their motivations and decision-making processes (Jayawardhena, 2004; Godey, et al., 2012; Maniatis, 2016). Anilkumar and Joseph (2012) state that consumer choice results from a complex interplay of personal, social, cultural, and psychological factors. The socio-cultural aspects are the critical macro-environmental determinants affecting consumer behaviour and the market. A better understanding of consumers' motivational drivers, attitudes, and preferences regarding products, brands, and marketing messages helps businesses developing more effective marketing strategies to increase consumer purchase intention and the possibility to repeat purchase (Wang & Song, 2013).

1.2. Purpose of the Study

According to Katsioloudes and Hadjidakis (2007), international business is associated with all commercial transactions between two or more countries. An international business is any company that engages in such transactions, which includes sales, transportation, and investments. Private companies engage in international trade for making a profit and spread risks across different investments and countries. Increasing international trade activities with the major importers and exporters is strong evidence of intense international business transactions among nations over the last decades. However, environmental differences across countries (e.g., variations in cultures, social norms, national institutions, and trade policies) affect the business enterprise (Eden, et al., 2010). Differences in all these key dimensions result in variations in the strategic direction and strategic planning process among MNEs.

The global apparel market and fashion brands have been influenced by a wide range of key macro trends such as transformation in the final consumers' lifestyles, economic instability, the growing digitalisation, and global covid-19 pandemic (Gazzola, et al., 2020; Mckinsey, 2020). According to Market Line (2020), the global apparel retail market had total revenues of US\$1,467.7bn in 2018, with moderate growth over the past five years. The global apparel and fashion market have historically dominated by famous brands such as Zara, H&M, Polo Ralph Lauren, Gap, and Superdry from developed countries in the U.S. and the European countries. International customers and market are associated with specific demographic characteristics.

Eden et al., (2010) argue the impact of the international environment on business and the MNE's activities, structures, strategies, and decision-making processes are two main domains of international business studies. Therefore, MNEs have to carefully

target their offerings to the local and regional customers' preferences and needs. These require an appropriate balance between being “local or global” through strategic planning and strategic orientation of MNEs. It also requires marketers to understand diverse consumers' characteristics and behaviours in different countries to formulate their marketing plans and strategies based on regional needs and priorities. This research adopts the typology of MNE strategies presented by Bartlett and Ghoshal (1989). Their typology is built on two dimensions of MNE strategies related to the autonomy to the need for global coordination versus adapt to local needs (Collings, et al., 2019). The main purpose of this research study is to explore how strategic planning and strategic orientation of MNEs for balancing between being “local or global” and their various approaches to dealing with cost reduction pressures affecting customer purchasing behaviour.

Consumers' purchasing behaviour and characteristics from different parts of the world have been the focus of many researchers in the field of marketing (Solomon, 2018). Although there is a wide range of studies that have attempted to investigate different aspects of consumer buying behaviour over recent decades (Chio & Lee, 2003; Herve & Mullet, 2009; Lee, et al., 2015; Tan & Goh, 2018; Foros, et al., 2021), there are still significant gaps in the literature and our understanding of consumer decision making and consumption patterns (Prashar, et al., 2015; Galina, et al., 2018; Swoboda & Sinning, 2020). The review of existing literature shows that different dimensions of MNEs operation in the international markets, such as their supply chain strategies (Christopher, et al., 2006), internationalisation strategies (Bhardwaj, et al., 2011), and the impact of their global brands on consumer behaviour (Swoboda & Sinning, 2020) have been studied by scholars with less attention to the effects of their international strategy on consumer purchasing behaviour. In other words, it shows that scholars

have paid less attention to the relationship between MNEs' international strategies and consumer purchasing behaviour. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, there is no prior study to analyse the effects of strategic orientation of MNEs on customer purchasing behaviour in the global apparel and fashion market. To fill this gap, this research, by conducting a cross-cultural empirical study, attempts to explore the effects of strategic orientation of global apparel and fashion MNEs on customer purchasing behaviour in two different cultures in Europe.

1.3. Research Aim and Objectives

As mentioned, this research's primary objective is to explore how the strategic orientation of MNEs for balancing between being "local or global" and reducing costs are affecting customer purchasing behaviour in two culturally diverse countries, the UK and Romania. Previous research provided empirical evidence that consumer buying behaviour and shopping intention result from a combination of different factors. This makes this context more complex and impossible to cover all broad aspects of consumer buying behaviour in a single study. Hence, this cross-cultural study investigates how the strategic orientation of MNEs (their international strategies) affecting consumer purchasing behaviour. The focus will be on four international strategies that can be pursued by MNEs and the impact of applying these strategies on consumer purchasing behaviour. This research does not aim to investigate all factors influencing consumer purchasing behaviour. The focus will be on specific key factors in terms of MNEs strategic orientation. A critical review of the international strategy and consumer purchasing behaviour literature will be conducted to determine these factors, and the research hypotheses will be conceptualised.

As mentioned, this research study's main purpose is to explore how the strategic orientation of MNEs for balancing between being “local or global” and their various approaches to dealing with cost reduction pressures affecting customer purchasing behaviour. Therefore, this exploratory research has been designed and conducted to achieve this aim by canalising the collected data. To attain the main objective of this cross-cultural research, the focus of the study at hand will be threefold:

- 1) To conduct a critical literature review on MNEs' strategic orientations in the global market and consumer purchasing behaviour.
- 2) To critically explore the effects of strategic orientation of MNEs in the global apparel industry on customer purchasing behaviour based on a cross-cultural comparison in two culturally diverse countries, the UK and Romania.
- 3) To propose recommendations to the apparel and fashion MNEs and international marketers to better formulate their international strategies in target markets based on this cross-cultural study's empirical findings.

1.4. The Rationale for Undertaking Research

The global highly competitive, complex, dynamic, connected, and fast-moving business environment has witnessed a fast growth of internationalisation of firms and emerging of MNEs. Many factors, such as globalisation, technological development, and integrating economies, have facilitated firms' internationalisation process. According to Katsioloudes and Hadjidakis (2007), companies do not have to become MNEs, making direct investments in operations in other countries. All they have to do is import or export products from other countries. MNEs are perceived as global market brands and players with advantages in influencing consumer behaviour (Swoboda & Sinning, 2020). They play a critical role in today's global economy. MNEs and their

foreign affiliates are responsible for 23% of global employment, 33% of global output, and 28% of world GDP (OECD, 2018). At the same time, there are many challenges and risks faced by MNEs that force them to develop the strategic resources and complex capabilities to compete globally and increase their market shares in the global marketplace.

Although international strategic management has been increasingly studied in recent years and extensive knowledge about MNEs has been accumulating in the international business literature. We do not know much about the formulation of international strategies or how MNEs should define their strategic directions in a complex, dynamic, and rapidly evolving globalised environment (Eden, et al., 2010; Dabic, et al., 2014). This research aims to explore MNEs' challenges to understand and formulate business operation and corporate strategy in international business while trying to seek an appropriate answer to this question, "what are the effects of strategic orientation of MNEs on customer purchasing behaviour in the global apparel industry in two culturally diverse countries (the UK and Romania)?" To date, no extensive empirical or theoretical study of the content of the MNEs' international strategy literature has ever been conducted to identify the effects of strategic orientation of MNEs on the customer purchasing behaviour of this field. Therefore, this empirical research study aims at filling this gap.

In so doing, this cross-cultural study contributes to international business and marketing management literature by an in-depth empirical investigation of the effects of strategic orientation of MNEs on customer purchasing behaviour in two culturally diverse countries (the UK and Romania). Therefore this research has three main contributions. First, the global apparel and fashion market are witnessing incredible changes and expansion over the recent decades (Kim, et al., 2013; Gazzola, et al.,

2020), representing an increasing number of MNEs seeking to build a global brand to attract customers across the world. As mentioned, operating in the international business environment needs to respond effectively to globalisation's challenges and the localisation of business operations (Rugman & Collinson, 2012). This research emphasises the linkages of strategic orientations of MNEs and customer purchasing behaviour to build competitive advantages in target markets. By carefully formulating strategic plans and international strategies, MNEs can better cope with the ever-changing challenge of worldwide competition. So, this study's first contribution is the identification of the more effective international strategy to be adopted when MNEs operate in the global apparel and fashion industry.

Second, understanding consumer purchasing behaviours in different countries and identifying their diverse values, needs, and motivations is essential for global marketing. It helps marketing managers to build effective relationship and improve their decision-making process in international markets. This cross-cultural study contributes to the existing knowledge related to consumer purchasing behaviour in the UK and Romania. It sheds new light on understanding consumers' preferences and motivations for shopping global apparel brands in these countries. The outcome of this cross-cultural research will also provide a timely and beneficial view to global apparel marketers to understand their customer purchasing behaviour for relationship-building and better brand interaction in these markets. Finally, this cross-cultural empirical research studies will be one of the first attempts to critically examine the balance between being "local or global" through the strategic orientation of MNEs in terms of consumer purchasing behaviour in target markets.

1.5. Outline of the Dissertation

This section is a detailed outline of this dissertation. The organisation of this MBA dissertation is under the guidelines issued by the **University of UWTSD**. It is divided into five chapters and organised as follows:

Chapter 1 - Introduction: This chapter provides an overview of this dissertation project. It contains a brief overview of academic research studies in the context of MNEs' international business strategies and consumer purchasing behaviour. It represents the purpose and rationales for undertaking this dissertation and underlines the academic literature gap regarding the impact of the choice of MNEs' international business strategies on consumer purchasing behaviour in target markets. It also highlights the motives, research contributions, and objectives of this cross-cultural study to explore the effects of the strategic orientation of MNEs on customer purchasing behaviour in the UK and Romania. The last section of this chapter outlines the dissertation's structure.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review: This chapter provides a detailed critical analysis, review, and discussion on the existing academic literature contributing to this research study. This chapter reviews prior empirical and theoretical studies relevant to MNEs' international business strategies and their impacts on consumer purchasing behaviour. It also represents the research hypotheses designed to study the effects of strategic orientation of MNEs on customer purchasing behaviour.

Chapter 3 - Research Methodology: This chapter describes the approaches, methods, and strategies implemented by the researcher throughout this empirical study, justifying selecting specific research methods concerned with data collection and analysis as well as research boundaries, limitations, and ethical consideration.

Chapter 4 - Results and Discussion: This chapter summarises the collected primary data and represents a detailed analysis of the collected primary data based on an online survey. It highlights the main findings in terms of the objectives defined in the study at hand. It discusses the interpretation and synchronisation of collected online survey data and the main findings.

Chapter 5 - Conclusions and Recommendations: This chapter summarises this research project's main findings and indicates the extent to which the outlined research aims and objectives have been met. It suggests some recommendations on how the strategic orientation of MNEs can be amended to influence customer purchasing behaviour in the global apparel industry positively and what strategies MNEs can apply for motivating people to purchase their products in two different cultures in Europe. It also discusses the limitations of this empirical study and indicates opportunities for further research in this field.

References: This section represents all used sources, including academic books, high-quality journal articles, and other secondary data, which have been appropriately referenced based on the Harvard Referencing style in the process of this research.

Appendices: This section provides some additional and supporting evidence related to this research project. In particular, it represents the designed online questionnaire survey to examine the hypothesis.

2.1. Introduction

The topic of consumer behaviour and its association with the successful development of marketing strategies have been the focus of many researchers over the past few decades (Park & Kim, 2003; Khalifa & Limayem, 2004; Obal & Kunz, 2013; Galina, et al., 2018; Foros, et al., 2021). This chapter provides a critical review of MNEs' international strategies and consumer purchasing behaviour. This critical review of the literature on the research focus helps to understand prior research findings and discover the existing knowledge gap. This chapter consists of two main sections. The first section focus on international marketing management. Specifically, it discusses the context of consumer purchasing behaviour and it's main drivers. The second section focus on international strategic management and MNEs strategic orientations in particular. It discusses four main international strategies' characteristics and conceptualises the research hypotheses to examine the impact of these strategies on consumer buying intention and behaviour.

2.2. International Business

International business is about all commercial transactions between countries, and private firms undertake commercial transactions, including investments, sales, and transportation for making a profit (Daniels, et al., 2015). An international business is any organisation that involves international trade or investment (Hill, 2013). However, Rugman and Collinson (2012) argue that today the international business is much more than these transactions as it is studying the international aspects of the business itself. It is not just the study of cross-cultural management, international organisations, international trade, foreign direct investment (FDI), international joint ventures, etc.

International business studies is a broad field of social science and have different branches. International strategic management and international marketing management are two key areas of international business that are the main focuses of this study.

2.3. International Marketing Management

According to Terpstra et al., (2012), international marketing is applying marketing orientation and capabilities to international business. It is coordinating marketing activities and marketing capabilities within the constraints of the global environment. It consists of identifying and satisfying international customers' needs better than other domestic and international competitors. International marketing is very challenging, as clienteles in any market vary in their resources, desires, locations, and purchasing preferences, attitudes, and practices. Market segmentation is unavoidable for many MNEs operating in a global market. Market segmentation is the process of dividing the marketplace into categories of customer types, and understanding different influences on consumer behaviour is vital in identifying market segments (Ebert & Griffin, 2015). Therefore, segmentation is a critical part of MNEs' marketing strategy to serve each market segment based on their unique needs effectively. MNEs in the segmentation process break their large marketplace down into distinct segments displaying common characteristics and behaviours to understand better consumers' needs and analyse demand and trend (Drummond & Ensor, 2001). Each segment represents a different value proposition. The value proposition can be defined as the relationship between what a seller offers and what a buyer purchases by recognising how the supplier satisfies the consumers' expectations and needs across diverse shopping activities such as searching, obtaining, using, and disposing of a product (Payne & Frow, 2013).

Therefore, international business management suggests country analysis for understanding certain national behavioural patterns.

2.4. Consumer Purchasing Behaviour

The term “consumer behaviour” covers the choice of brands, goods and services customers purchase, where, when, and why they buy them, how frequently, how after buying they evaluate them, how much use they make, and whether they are repeat buyers (Wood, 2013). A business’s successfully developing and applying strategic marketing and planning strategies depend on developing a comprehension of consumer behaviour (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016). It follows that for marketers to develop a clear idea of consumers' perceptions of a product is vital. This can help them recognise the qualities and the attractions of a product for customers, illuminate their buying decisions and help pursue a more effective marketing mix. For example, in the case of “discretionary shopping”, a term that embraces areas such as luxury goods, vacation packages, and various forms of entertainment, marketers must fully comprehend consumer purchasing behaviour if they are to respond with marketing strategies that expand consumer motivation and work to fire up the potential buyer’s interest (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Clear proof has emerged from past research that many different factors determine consumer purchasing behaviour. Some of these factors are related to the characteristics of the product, such as quality, desirability, innovativeness, and price (Winit, et al., 2014; Kim & Kim, 2017). Other factors relate to the broader consumer environment, such as social context and cultural and family influences (Monsuwe, et al., 2004; Nedra, et al., 2015). Some are specific to the particular purchaser, where personality, lifestyle and individual attitudes come into play (Wang & Heitmeyer, 2006;

Anaza, 2014). Considerations such as these will be more fully explored in the sections that follow. Primarily, buying intention is an inclination to shopping, which dictates consumer purchasing behaviour (Nedra, et al., 2015).

Such buying intention is also significantly influenced by the buyer's opinions and values. Whether an individual does or does not purchase specific products such as green products is also dependent on personal attitudes (Maniatis, 2016; Kong, et al., 2016). Nedra et al., (2015) ran an investigatory analysis to study the factors controlling consumer buying behaviour in the area of organic products. The key factors on which they focused were those aspects of consumer buying behaviour such as shopping intention, personal attitudes and perceptions and broader motivations such as environmental and health concerns. Their findings showed that organic products' buying was primarily affected by the buyers' outlook, reflecting their health and environmental concerns.

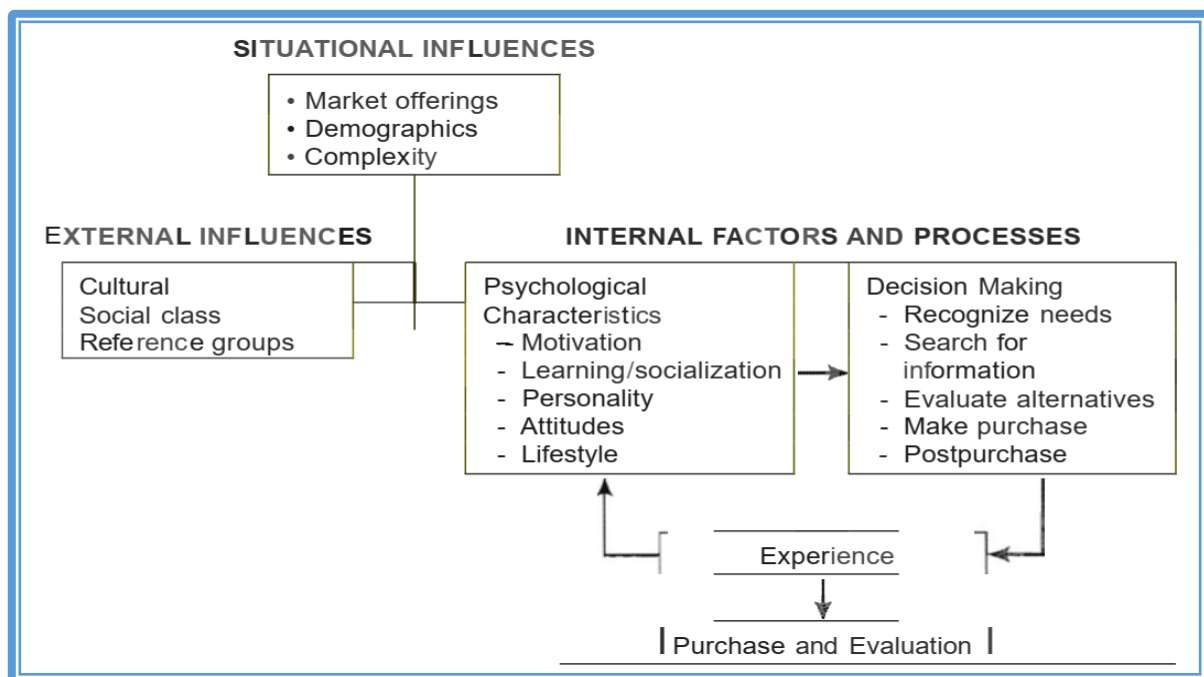
2.5. Influences on Consumer Purchasing Behaviour

Purchase motivations and choosing processes are accepted to be influenced primarily by consumer behaviour, concerns and preferences (Godey, et al., 2012; Eberhart & Naderer, 2017). There is a subtle and dynamic pattern underlying consumer buying behaviour (Solomon, 2018). The basic concept of marketing is fundamental to consumer behaviour's extensive field (Schiffman, et al., 2012). The concept of consumer purchasing behaviour has been studied by various researchers over the last few decades from a range of different viewpoints. In particular, varying factors influencing consumer purchasing behaviour have been illuminated in studies researching the management of marketing and the field of consumer-oriented research. They have explored a wide range of relevant factors, such as shopping orientation

(Chen & Hung, 2015), shopping motivation (Rahman, et al., 2018), psychological characteristics (Tan & Goh, 2018), demographics (Workman & Cho, 2013), and risk perceptions (Chio & Lee, 2003; D'Alessandro, et al., 2012).

There are various ways in which people make a decision. Many behavioural characteristics have been acquired by each individual: some outside our control, some not. Solomon (2018) contested that two general types of factor influence consumer behaviour. These two types are internal factors such as personality, lifestyle, values, perception and motivation, and external factors such as social media, social and cultural changes, and technology development. Some forces that can be foreseen to affect most purchasers can be identified, although marketers cannot fully appreciate all factors. Burnett (2009) suggested a model that describe key factors influencing consumer behaviour. As shown in figure 2.1, he categorised these factors into three broad categories: external influences, situational influences, and internal and processes factors. These criteria will be discussed in the following.

Figure 2.1: A Model of Consumer Behaviour



Source: (Burnett, 2009)

2.5.1. External Influences

Varying external factors such as socio-cultural influences work powerfully on consumer purchasing behaviour (Dharmesti, et al., 2019). Cultural and social influences play an important role in the people decision-making process. For example, research shows the social context and interaction significantly influence online shopping decisions as important motivators (Rohm & Swaminathan, 2004; Dennis, et al., 2009; Balasudarsun, et al., 2018). It has been shown that customers' attitudes to any given product will vary significantly across the world (Bian & Forsythe, 2012; Shukla & Purani, 2012). For example, consumer knowledge about a specific product might be very different in two countries (Moslehpour, et al., 2014). Bian and Forsythe (2012) findings support this idea and show a correlation between purchase intention and social or cultural attitudes. They further indicate that consumers in the U.S. and China who feel their favourite luxury brands match their intrinsic beliefs and social image will manifest a greater intention to buy.

"Culture" refers to society's specific adopted or learned norms based on beliefs, values, attitudes, and frameworks for processing information and tasks (Katsioloudes & Hadjidakis, 2007). These norms differ from one nation to another, and they are reflected in attitudes toward certain goods and services, advertising, work and relationships among the individuals of a given society. According to Hollensen (2012), culture contributes to orchestrating behaviour and defines what is desirable and what is not acceptable. The development of what we may call consumer behaviour is modulated by beliefs, values and cultural and social attitudes. Those things that members of a society variously regard as a luxury, or value, or treat as a necessity are a part of what establishes that society's shared culture. A cross-cultural study of seven countries provided evidence of how cultural differences impact consumers' perception

and purchasing behaviour about luxury brands (Godey, et al., 2012). Thus a purchaser's conception of the purchased item's value is influenced by attitudinal and cultural differences. So, an iPhone or an iPod may be viewed as either a luxury or a necessity by members of different cultures.

2.5.2. Situational Influences

Consumer-oriented studies have confirmed the influence of situational factors such as physical surrounding, convenience, time, and social surrounding on consumer purchasing behaviour (Dennis, et al., 2009; Tong, et al., 2012). Monsuwe et al., (2004) conducted a critical review to understand what drives consumers to buy in virtual online markets. Their critical review indicated that enjoyment, usefulness, and ease of use are not the only factors affecting online shopping attitudes and intention to shop online. While other exogenous factors like product characteristics and situational factors affecting consumer online shopping behaviour. Husnain et al., (2019) explored the influence of situational variables on generation Y impulse buying behaviour. They examined situational variables by considering both the seller's situation (store environment, employees quality, and sales promotions) and the buyer's situation (money and time availability and family influence). Results revealed that both the seller's situation and the buyer's situation significantly impact impulse purchasing behaviour.

2.5.3. Internal and Processes Factors

Burnett (2009), in his suggested model, highlighted the important role of internal factors such as personality, motivation, attitude, and lifestyle as well as shopping process factors in pre-purchasing, purchasing, and post-purchasing stages in consumer purchasing behaviour. The literature shows that these factors affect consumer shopping behaviour in different ways and cannot be ignored (Dharmesti, et al., 2019).

However, understanding and assessing consumers' personal and psychological characteristics are very difficult and impossible in some situations. Such personal descriptors influence people's consumption patterns and buying behaviour as income, education, gender and age (Moslehpour, et al., 2014; Uddin & Khan, 2018). The purchase decision is also influenced by the buyer's personality and individual consumption pattern (Lancaster & Reynolds, 2005). The correlation between people's buying behaviour and decision-making process and their personal characteristics and lifestyles has been demonstrated by past research (Monsuwe, et al., 2004; Nedra, et al., 2015; Ramirez-Correa, et al., 2019).

Moslehpour et al., (2014) investigated organic rice consumers' purchasing pattern and behaviour in Taiwan and Indonesia. Their quantitative research method employed data collected from consumers of organic rice in those two countries. The study showed notable differences in the knowledge and buying behaviour of the two sets of consumers. Their empirical study considered six demographic variables: income, country of origin, gender, age, status and education level. This examination of the sample showed that the six variables had different ways of affecting consumer purchasing behaviour. For instance, female participants were less willing to buy organic rice as they were more concerned about its higher price, whereas organic rice was more likely to be purchased by those on high incomes. Marketers and policymakers desiring to influence a particular market sector have long used personal characteristics in this way in order to conceptualise customers in defined subsets (Dharmesti, et al., 2019).

Consumer-oriented research has also explored the shopping process influence on buying attitude and behaviour. Consumers behave differently in multiple shopping channels and platforms (online or offline), and the shopping process can influence their

buying decisions. Chatterjee (2010) examined the impact of the multi-channel strategy of a seller on behavioural outcomes of a buyer's shopping process. The finding shows different variables associated with the shopping process, such as waiting time, convenience, availability of information, and greater confidence influence consumer satisfaction and purchasing behaviour. Berbegal-Mirabent et al., (2016) conducted empirical research using a survey approach to investigate antecedents of online shopping behaviour. They collected data from more than 1200 customers of online travel agencies. Their analysis considered different key factors, such as service quality, loyalty, and perceived value. Their findings show that both functional quality and hedonic value are antecedents for perceived buying value, impacting loyalty and purchase repeat. Hedonic value is associated with the individual value focusing on entertainment and interesting aspects of shopping. People looking for hedonic values may consider shopping from online stores as a source of enjoyment as it is connected with fun, happiness, pleasure, and leisure (Wu, et al., 2020).

2.6. International Strategic Management

According to Eden et al., (2010), international strategic management is a comprehensive set of decisions, actions, and commitments by MNEs to gain competitiveness internationally. This field is relatively new in the business and management field and deserves much scholarly attention. Although strategic management principles and fundamental practices can be applied in an international setting, it introduces some important and specific considerations such as differing beliefs, cultures, and management styles around the world or international economies and their effect on trading between countries. It makes strategic management more complicated in international environments than in national or regional markets (Lynch, 2012). An MNE's competitiveness depends largely on efficient distribution of value

activities and effective linking of them so that the diverse parts become a single whole. The process of distributing value activities in the global marketplace involves configuration and coordination (Daniels, et al., 2015). Therefore, MNEs use different strategies to configure and coordinate value chains and fulfil three requirements: national responsiveness to local needs, global efficiency, and developing and spreading innovation internationally (Dabic, et al., 2014; Swoboda, et al., 2014).

2.7. Strategies for International Business

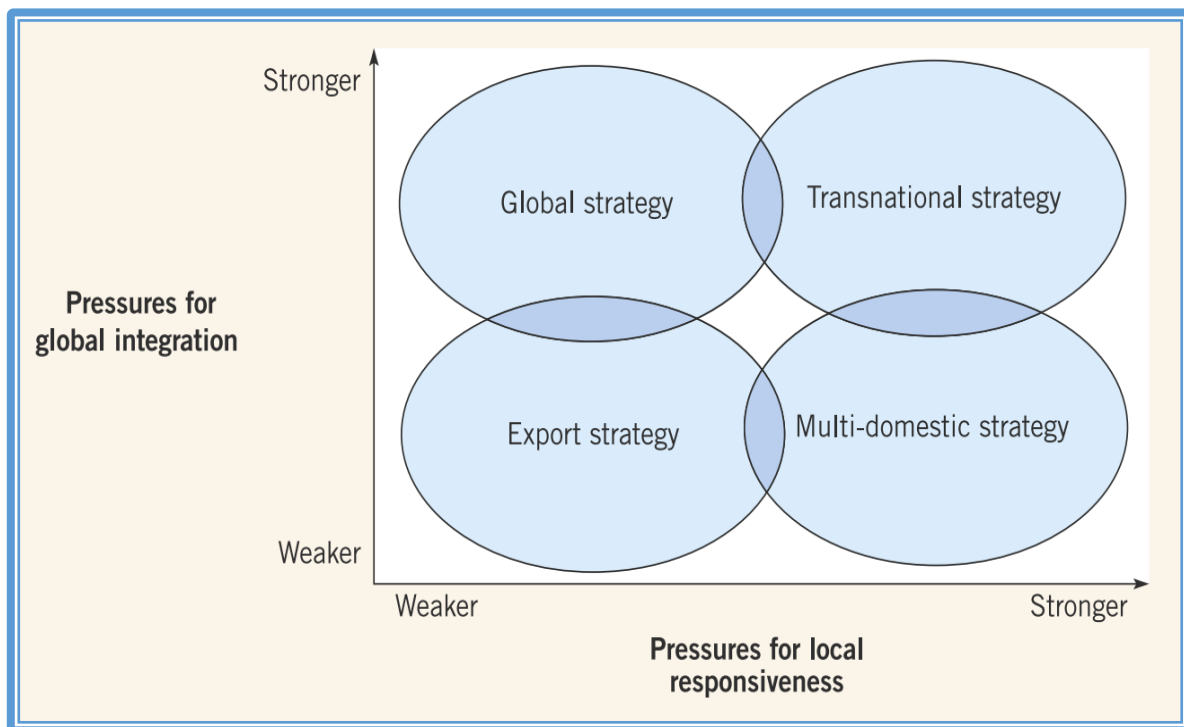
As explained, MNEs operate in changing and challenging environments shaped by legal, political, governmental, cultural, economic, ethical, trade, capital, monetary, and institutional forces. These forces influence MNE managers' strategic decisions and operating actions (Daniels, et al., 2015; Hermans & Reyes, 2020). They devise various strategies to engage clients in multiple markets and create and sustain competitive advantage and long-term growth. A "strategy" is the organisation's long-term direction (Johnson, et al., 2017). It is a set of actions that managers take to improve their organisation's performance (Hill, et al., 2017). It helps managers evaluate the organisation's present situation, identify the direction it should go, and specify how it will get there (Daniels, et al., 2015). An MNE needs to develop effective strategies in target markets to improve its performance and gain a competitive advantage.

MNEs' choice of strategy shapes how they configure their value chains. Bartlett and Ghoshal (1989) suggested a typology of MNE strategies that almost all textbooks in the fields of international business, strategic management, and marketing management have discussed their insightful analysis of the problems of managing an MNE in today's changing and changing global economy (Cateora, et al., 2011; Daniels, et al., 2015; Johnson, et al., 2017). Their typology is built on two dimensions of MNE

strategies related to the autonomy to the need for global coordination versus adapt to local needs (Collings, et al., 2019). Several empirical studies also support this typology by using it to understand the association between MNEs' competitive strategies and international business activities, practices, and performance outcomes (Kasper, et al., 2009; Swoboda, et al., 2014; Romelaer & Beddi, 2015).

Two main forces that influence MNEs' strategic analysis and strategic orientation are pressures for global integration efficiency and local responsiveness effectiveness (Rudberg & West, 2008; Breunig, et al., 2014; Collings, et al., 2019). Rugman and Collinson (2012) state that these two trends or pressures have significantly affected the thinking of corporate MNE strategists. They define national or local responsiveness as "the ability of MNEs to understand different consumer tastes in segmented regional markets and to respond to the different national standards and regulations imposed by autonomous governments and agencies" (p. 315). The international business strategy of an MNE should balance pressures for local responsiveness versus those for global integration. Developing this balance poses a significant challenge for MNEs in formulating and implementing international strategies to achieve a competitive advantage and superior performance in target markets. This critical challenge is sometimes referred to MNEs' global-local dilemma: the extent to which goods and services may be standardised across national boundaries or require to be adapted to respond to specific national markets' requirements (Johnson, et al., 2017). Academic literature suggests the Integration-Responsiveness (I-R) framework explain available strategies to cope with global-local dilemma. Figure 2.2 shows four international strategies that can be applied by MNEs to deal with these two opposing pressures in international business. These four strategies have prevailed for several years in international business theory (Daniels, et al., 2015).

Figure 2.2: Four International Strategies



Source: (Johnson, et al., 2017)

As shown in figure 2.2, this dilemma between local responsiveness and cost reduction/global integration suggests various possible international strategic directions, ranging from emphasising a simple strategy to complex strategic orientations that try to combine both. MNEs need to evaluate the degree to which there are potential advantages of quality and cost of global integration and offset those forces against the need to adapt goods and/or services to local conditions (Johnson, et al., 2017). In other words, MNEs should address competition issues and create value by reconciling the competing imperatives of standardisation and adaptation. The application of each of these strategies is very dependent on the type and nature of products and industries. Each strategy has diverse characteristics, representing a different level of investments and value chain coordination and configuration. Table 2.1 illustrates different aspects of each international strategy. These strategy types used by MNEs will be discussed

in the following. Two hypotheses will also be proposed related to each strategy to evaluate the effects of the strategy on apparel customer purchasing behaviour in the UK and Romania.

Table 2.1: Characteristics of Four Basic Strategies used by MNEs

	International Strategy	Multidomestic Strategy	Global Strategy	Transnational Strategy
Orientation	Leverage core competencies and home country innovations into competitive positions abroad.	Differentiate products to respond to national differences in customer preferences, industry characteristics, or government regulation.	Target universal needs or wants that support selling standardized products worldwide. Emphasize volume, cost minimization, and efficiency.	Simultaneously manage the tensions of global integration and local differentiation in ways that leverage specialized knowledge and promote worldwide learning.
Value Chain Configuration	Concentrated; value activities are set and directed by the home office.	Dispersed; subsidiaries command discretion to adapt value activities to local conditions.	Concentrated; value chain configuration exploits location economics.	Concentrated to tap location economies. Dispersed, subject to minimum efficiency standards, to meet local preferences.
Value Chain Coordination	Centralized coordination processes as parent retains control of value activities to apply, regulate, and protect core competencies.	Subsidiaries operate quasi-independently. Autonomy lets them adapt activity to local marketplace circumstances.	Industry pressures to maximize standardization and contain costs require coordinating value activities operations from a global perspective.	Simultaneous goal of integration and responsiveness calls for sharing coordination between headquarters or subsidiaries.
Key Advantage	Facilitates the transfer of skills and expertise from the parent company to international units.	Reduced need for central support to manage local activities. Greater sensitivity to local preferences.	Make low-cost, high-quality products that differ little, but appeal to consumers worldwide.	Supports efficiency, compels effectiveness, and leverages learning that drives innovations through units worldwide.
Key Disadvantage	Centralizing the value chain in the home country often weakens configuration efficiency and coordination flexibility.	Encourages “mini-me” phenomenon that replicates value activities across subsidiaries.	Reduced learning opportunities given the dominance of global standard. Requires rigorous coordination to regulate global matrix of inputs and outputs.	Requires elaborate mechanisms to integrate dispersed operations. Difficult to configure, tough to coordinate, and prone to performance shortfalls.
IR Grid Positioning	Pressure for global integration: low. Pressure for national responsiveness: low.	Pressure for global integration: low. Pressure for national responsiveness: high.	Pressure for global integration: high. Pressure for national responsiveness: low.	Pressure for global integration: high. Pressure for national responsiveness: high.

Source: (Daniels, et al., 2015)

2.7.1. Global Strategy

MNEs that pursue a global standardisation strategy focus on profit growth by gaining cost reductions through economies of scale, location economies, and learning effects. Therefore, the global strategy focuses on economies of scale and competitive strategies based on price competition, pursuing a low-cost strategy on a global scale (Hill, 2013). This strategy will be applied where the need for global integration is high

and the need for national responsiveness is low. MNEs pursuing this strategy coordinate their worldwide activities from headquarters and seek to improve global performance by pooling and sharing resources and integrating activities (Collings, et al., 2019). Their R&D, production, and marketing activities are concentrated in a few favourable locations and try not to customise their product offering and marketing strategies to regional conditions because it tends to raise operational expenses. Instead, they prefer to market standardised products worldwide to obtain the maximum benefits from learning effects and economies of scale (Hill, 2013).

Adopting a global strategy by foreign apparel MNEs means they do not need to be concerned with national responsiveness. They want to achieve price competitiveness in the market, which is driven by high integration. Therefore, they usually have a centralised structure and pursue a single strategy on a global scale (Connelly, et al., 2007). Hill (2013) argues these conditions are not very popular in many consumer goods markets (e.g. apparel and fashion market), where demands for local responsiveness remain high. But there are some brands that are targeting universal wants or needs that support marketing and selling standardised products worldwide. For example, British-based footwear brand Clarks is almost selling its standardised products around the world. They have some stores and distribution centres in different markets that help them to offer faster and more flexible customer service (Oberschür, 2018). The strategic orientation of MNEs using a global strategy is cost minimisation and efficiency (Daniels, et al., 2015). Applying this strategy, foreign apparel MNEs need to provide competitive price and build a strong brand to improve their marketing efficiency.

Prior research in consumer purchasing behaviour has provided empirical support that consumer buying behaviour is influenced by the product characteristics, such as type,

quality, popularity, and price (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004; Xu, et al., 2010; Winit, et al., 2014). Lee et al., (2015) conducted empirical research by collecting data from coffee consumers in seven South Korean metropolitan cities to examine motives for buying organic coffee. They found both ethical and price considerations greatly influenced the buying of organic coffee. Herve and Mullet (2009) used a sample of 160 adult participants to study the impact of buyers' ages on the perceived importance. They considered three factors, including price, suitability and durability, influencing customers when purchasing clothes. Their findings suggest that all these there factors influence consumer buying decision. For example, a low price was a sufficient reason to purchase the item of clothing. The following hypothesis is, therefore proposed:

H1: Price motives significantly influence consumers' buying behaviour for purchasing global apparel and fashion brands.

Schiffmat et al., (2012) state that price is not the only benchmark for consumers to evaluate the quality in most consumption situations. Consumers also consider other variables, such as the store's quality and brand popularity, when purchasing their products. When customers have experience with a store or a product and are familiar with brand names, the price becomes a less determining factor in their product evaluation and buying decision. Prior studies have shown that brand image, prestige, popularity, experience, loyalty, and country-of-origin affecting consumer buying decision and behaviour (Pecotich & Ward, 2007; Kim, 2012; Akturan & Bozbay, 2018; Chen, 2021). The effects of price, brand name, and store name on consumer perceived quality are significant in luxury products (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004; Zhan & He, 2012). Customers' online brand familiarity and experience also influence consumer shopping behaviour in virtual marketplaces. Rahman and Mannan (2018) empirical study

indicated a positive relationship between consumers' online brand experience and their online purchase behaviour of local fashion clothing brands.

Godey et al., (2012) conducted a cross-cultural empirical study to find the combined effect of country of origin and brand name on consumers' buying decision. By collecting data from 1102 respondents from seven countries (India, China, France, Russia, Italy, Japan, and the USA), they found the consumer decision-making process has a positive relationship with product brands (luxury and non-luxury goods) and country of origin. The findings of other research, such as Liu et al., (2016) and Chen (2021), have supported the impact of the brand's country of origin on consumers purchasing intention and decision making. Winit et al., (2014) examined consumers' perceptions towards global and local brands in Thailand. They found that consumers evaluated global brands more positively than non-global brands, regardless of brand ownership (local vs foreign). The following hypothesis is, therefore proposed:

H2: Brand's name and country-of-origin significantly influence consumers' decisions for buying global apparel and fashion brands in the UK and Romania.

2.7.2. International/Export Strategy

This strategic orientation aims to leverage the home country innovations and core competencies into competitive positions abroad (Daniels, et al., 2015). An international strategy, also known as an export strategy or home-replication strategy, will be applied where the need for both integration and national responsiveness is low (Peng, 2014; Meyer & Su, 2015). Typical international/export strategies are characterised by improved international standardisation of goods and services. This can lead to lower needs for centralised strategic decision making and centralised quality control while simultaneously removing requirements to adapt different activities to individual

countries (Rugman & Collinson, 2012). MNEs are pursuing an international strategy to sell produced products in their home markets internationally with only minor local customisation. They are basically selling products that serve universal needs in the global market without significant competitors (Hill, 2013).

Many MNEs in the apparel and fashion industry have applied this strategic orientation in specific markets as they don't have any physical stores in some countries. For example, M&S has no retail store in Australia, Japan, South Korea or Austria. They have launched specific websites for their business in some countries, such as the Republic of Ireland (M&S, 2021). In this case, MNEs usually selling undifferentiated products in various markets, and there is no advantage in economies of scale or centralised quality control. Therefore, many customers may buy their products online or in other retail shops. For example, they might buy their brands in big retailers such as House of Fraser or Debenhams. Research shows there are many differences between traditional shopping and virtual online shopping in terms of motivational drivers, antecedents, and purchasing behaviour (Ahn, et al., 2007; Anilkumar & Joseph, 2012; Liu, et al., 2013; Ariffin, et al., 2018).

Boardman and McCormick (2018) found e-commerce or online shopping is the most popular shopping channel in Spain due to time-saving, convenience, and adventure/exploration. The selection of shopping channels has a direct relationship with consumers' ages. For example, older adults prefer to shop in physical stores due to convenience and enjoyment. Kim and Park (2005) explored consumers' attitude shift from offline to online store. They found search intention for product information via the virtual online shop was the strongest predictor of customers' buying intention via the online store. Liu et al., (2013) conducted empirical research to examine the in-store and online shopping behaviour towards luxury products. They found different

motivational factors affecting online and in-store luxury buyers' behaviour. In-store luxury shoppers valued shopping experience and interactions. They were more averse to online risks and preferred to see the product personally before buying. Online luxury shoppers were more price-conscious and had a higher level of trust towards online customer reviews. They considered online product availability as an important factor for shopping online. The following hypotheses are, therefore proposed:

H3: Consumers prefer online shopping of international apparel and fashion products and brands more than in-store shopping.

H4: Consumers' past in-store shopping experience has no impact on their purchasing decisions towards buying international apparel and fashion products and brands.

2.7.3. Transnational Strategy

This strategy is based on a geocentric orientation. The assumption of this strategic orientation is “that the markets around the world consist of similarities and differences and that it is possible to create a transnational strategy which takes advantage of the similarities between the markets by using synergy effects to leverage learning on a worldwide basis” (Hollensen, 2014, p. 400). A transnational strategy is a combination of global-local strategy (Gamble, et al., 2015). Therefore, this strategy will be applied where the need for both integration and national responsiveness is high. This strategy is the most challenging strategy for MNEs as there is a higher need for local adaptations in marketing, along with a strong requirement for integration in production (Rugman & Collinson, 2012). MNEs applying this strategic orientation usually have a complex organisational structure. They need a sophisticated value chain system that simultaneously implements learning, integration, and responsiveness (Daniels, et al.,

2015). Geographical and cultural factors might force global apparel and fashion brands to customise their products based on local conditions. For example, the international fashion brand Zara applies this strategic orientation by offering localisation services as an integral part of taking their business overseas. They consider cultural aspects of a foreign market and adapting culturally relevant slogans or images on their websites to make them appropriate for the target culture (Ellen, 2019). This means there are pressures for local responsiveness. It may not be possible for global clothing brands to leverage products associated with their core competencies from one nation to another.

DeLong et al., (2002) conducted a cross-cultural study to explain how products selected by females aged 18 and 24 for their basic similarities are discerned in use by cultural context. They chose four brands of jeans similar in appearance made in South Korea (GV2 and Bang Bang brands) and the United States (Levi's and Gap brands) as the research stimuli. Based on gathering data from two groups of young females from the United States (32 people) and South Korea (34 people), they found that country of manufacture mattered less than appearance, country of origin, and other variables related to use in a cultural context. Also, fit, colour, tactile qualities, and price were important criteria for both groups in wearing and purchasing jeans. Ozsomer and Altaras (2008) studied consumers' attitudes toward and the likelihood of buying global brands. Their findings show global brand quality, prestige, relative price, and social responsibility directly and indirectly affect consumers' attitude and global brand purchase likelihood. The following hypothesis is, therefore proposed:

H5: Product quality, attractiveness, and design are positively associated with consumers' satisfaction and loyalty in purchasing international apparel and fashion products and brands.

Differentiating goods and services to respond to regional demands in different geographic markets is not an easy strategy and raises costs, which runs counter to reducing costs (Hill, 2013). MNEs using a transnational strategy take advantage of the similarities between the markets by employing synergy effects to leverage learning internationally (Hollensen, 2012). Therefore, acquiring synergy in their R&D, production, and marketing activities across borders will be critical for MNEs using a transnational strategy. Research has shown consumer buying behaviour can significantly be affected by firms' marketing communications and strategies (Liu, et al., 2016; Razi, et al., 2017; Arce-Urriza, et al., 2017; Uddin & Khan, 2018). The following hypothesis is, therefore proposed:

H6: Global advertising and communication impact consumers' attitudes toward international apparel and fashion products and buying foreign brands instead of local brands.

2.7.4. Multidomestic Strategy

A multidomestic strategy (also known as localisation strategy) focuses on profit maximisation by customising the organisation's products to provide a product match to preferences and tastes in different national markets (Hill, 2013; Meyer & Su, 2015). This strategy that is most appropriate when there are significant differences across countries will be applied where the need for global integration is low and the need for national responsiveness is high. Rugman and Collinson (2012) argue that in this strategy, MNEs ignore economies of scale as integration is not very vital and adopt goods or services to satisfy the high demands of sovereignty. By customising the product offering to regional demands, MNEs increase that product's value in the national market. However, it will be appropriate where cost pressures are not too intense as customisation requires extensive coordination and limits an MNE's ability to

capture the cost reductions along with mass-producing a standardised product for worldwide consumption (Hill, 2013; Meyer & Su, 2015).

MNEs in the apparel and fashion industry must address national government regulations and local tastes, which may result in a geographic dispersion of activities or decentralisation of control and coordination for individual business units. In the case of applying multidomestic strategies, MNEs must concentrate on adapting products to address the specific demands of each market as national responsiveness is more important than economic integration. Rugman and Collinson (2012) argue designer clothes use this strategic orientation. Cultural differences in the international markets are reflected in the acceptance of certain goods and services (Katsioloudes & Hadjidakis, 2007). Social and cultural factors play an important role in consumers' decision-making and buying behaviour (Dennis, et al., 2009; Christodoulides & Michaelidou, 2011). A cross-cultural study of seven countries provided evidence of how cultural differences impact consumers' perception and purchasing behaviour about luxury brands (Godey, et al., 2012). Swoboda and Sinning (2020) studied the impact of national culture and country development on perceived brand globalness on consumer behaviour across countries. Based on an evaluation of 22,055 consumer data of an MNE in 31 countries, they found that the degree of consumers' perceived brand globalness is different in terms of national culture and country development. The following hypothesis is, therefore proposed:

H7: Buyers of apparel and fashion products tend to see a higher degree of local responsiveness by global brands and are more likely to buy products that meet their cultural values.

A multidomestic strategy supports higher pricing due to the added value associated with local customisation of products (Hill, 2013). This enables the MNE to recoup its higher costs. A higher price compared to local brands can be related to the higher prestige of global brands (Steenkamp, 2014). Akturan and Bozbay (2018) explored consumer behaviours and perceptions toward global brands in emerging markets using a sample of 458 university students. They found that social and conspicuous values (e.g., obtain social conformity, social prestige, social status, and express wealth) positively impact purchase intention, brand attractiveness, and willingness to pay more for global brands.

H8: Perceived international apparel and fashion brands' name and prestige are positively associated with purchase intention and willingness to pay more for international brands.

2.8. Conclusion

This chapter critically reviewed the existing literature regarding international strategies and consumer purchasing behaviour. These two domains are respectively related to international strategic management and international marketing management. The literature review shows a wide range of articles that have discussed different dimensions of these two domains of international business. It shows that they have been analysed and conceptualised from different perspectives in multiple industries and countries. Multiple theoretical standpoints, such as situational, internal, and external influences, have been used to explore the factors affecting consumer buying behaviour. Also, the strategic orientation of MNEs has been examined and analysed by many researchers over the past decades. The prior studies have paid less attention to investigate the effects of strategic orientation of MNEs on customer purchasing

behaviour. To fill this gap and achieve this study's objectives, each domain has been discussed separately, and their relationships have been identified. To study the relationship between the strategic orientation of MNEs and consumer purchasing behaviour, eight hypotheses have been developed that seek to explain the effects of strategic orientation of global apparel and fashion MNEs on customer purchasing behaviour in two different cultures in Europe.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

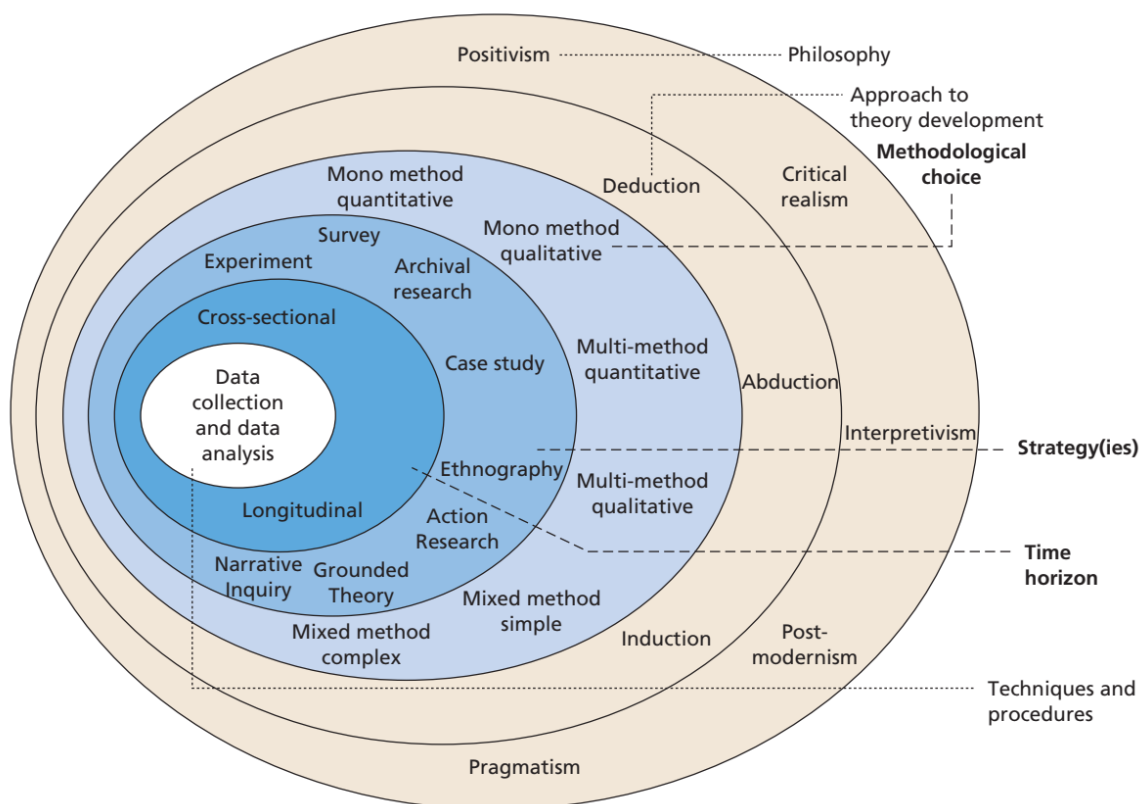
In this chapter, the methodology of this research project is considered. It sets out research methods, approaches, and project-designs used throughout the study, explaining the choice by the researcher of one research strategy rather than another along with relevant boundaries, limitations, and ethical considerations. This research uses a quantitative approach to explore the effects of the strategic orientation of MNEs on customer purchasing behaviour in two culturally diverse countries (the UK and Romania). This chapter's structure principally examines the 'onion' model of research (Saunders, et al., 2016), which represents as layers the different key actions required in deciding on a methodology for an academic research project in the field of business and management.

3.2. Research Approach

Before designing or planning a research study, a researcher must think about the purpose underlying the research methodology (Creswell, 2014). Figure 3.1 shows the research onion as proposed by Saunders et al., (2016). As has been shown, there are three possible approaches to theory development and research project design to be applied, namely deduction, induction, and abduction. These main approaches to theory development represent different intellectual approaches to the use of data. In any research process, any aspect (such as reviewing the literature and collecting data) depends on the researcher's approach. According to Crowther and Lancaster (2008), deductive research tests out a hypothesis against empirical observation. Based on a critical review of literature in the last chapter, eight research hypotheses have been

conceptualised to evaluate the effects of strategic orientation of MNEs on customer purchasing behaviour. These conceptualised hypotheses are tested, according to Jackson (2009) in order to reach an organised system of assumptions and principles which will illuminate particular phenomena and the relations between them. For that reason, this study employs a deductive approach, which Saunders et al., (2016) argue that it is faster to complete and suits quantitative research.

Figure 3.1: An Academic Research Project Procedures – Research 'Onion'



Source: (Saunders, et al., 2016)

The deductive theory demonstrates the most common view of the relationship between theory and research. It is the one most often found in quantitative research. The quantitative research method can be described as requiring data collection and showing a clear link between research and resultant hypothesis (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In this quantitative research, a deductive approach was used to test the eight

hypotheses themselves garnered by deduction from existing literature. Using a deductive approach, developing hypotheses, testing them out against empirical observation, and examining causality more explicitly than can be done with an interpretive approach (Hammond & Wellington, 2013) to be appropriate for this study.

3.3. Methodological Choice and Research Strategy

The most significant elements of any research study are project design and strategy. Selecting an appropriate methodology is a key strategic decision. (Crowther & Lancaster, 2008). Researchers' primary choices for conducting academic research are between quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods (Saunders, et al., 2016). They must take various factors into account, including the purpose of the research and the type of data involved, in deciding between these three general approaches (Matthews & Ross, 2010). A **quantitative online survey** methodology is employed in the present study. This method is associated with research projects involving surveys and experimental research (Saunders, et al., 2016). This particular survey method is frequently used for the collection of data in business and management studies research. The online survey method, particularly in recent years, has been widely used by scholars such as Zhan and He (2012), Park and Huang (2017), and Rees et al., (2019) to explore different dimensions of consumer buying behaviour.

The so-called quantitative research methodology is based on a statistical or mathematical approach to research project design. However, a qualitative research methodology concentrates on the way behaviour and experience is conditioned by thought systems. Finally, the methodology known as the mixed methods research combines both quantitative and qualitative elements. Mixed methods researchers collect data, both numerical and non-numerical, in cases where a combination of both

methods can contribute to fulfilling the potential of a more complex research project and accelerate to achieving its objectives (Newby, 2014).

The deductive approach, which involves testing hypotheses against data or literature, is more commonly found in quantitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The merit of the quantitative method is its capacity for appropriate generalisation, making it a reliable and valid measurement tool in certain circumstances (Salkind, 2017). The use of the quantitative method is an appropriate strategy for this empirical cross-cultural study. The researcher can acquire more structured and sufficient data from a wide range of consumers in both countries based on an online survey. Due to the recent Covid-19 pandemic, travel restrictions, and distance between the UK and Romania, this technique can significantly improve data collection performance as it is very cost and time-effective. Also, it allows the researcher to gather potentially useful, original extensive data from diverse participants easier and faster.

A quantitative online survey methodology is used in this study, as mentioned above. According to Salkind (2017), a survey research study seeks to understand the frequency and relationships between psychological and sociological variables. It considers different variables, such as people opinions, beliefs, attitudes, and preferences. This research aims to analyse the effects of the strategic orientation of MNEs on customer purchasing behaviour in the global apparel and fashion market. It attempts to explore the consumers' perceptions of the global apparel and fashion brands and understands their preferences and attitudes, contributing to purchasing or avoiding purchasing these brands. This empirical study tests various earlier anticipated hypotheses and attempts to shed light on the effects of strategic orientation of MNEs on customer purchasing behaviour. If the questions are those such as 'Where?', 'When?', 'How?' or 'What?', the survey is an appropriate strategy. Data can be

assembled for survey research from self-completed questionnaires. This may entail an online survey process such as Survey Monkey or Google Form. Well-structured and relatively cheap information can be speedily obtained through such online surveys (Bell & Waters, 2014). Due to its being a free online tool with an interface that is very easy to use, the web-based survey tool Google Form was used in this research.

3.4. Data Source and Collection

A crucial aspect of research project design is the strategy by which high-quality, original data that is suitable, relevant and valid may be assembled for the study. For this reason, the technique used for collecting data is crucial in enabling the objectives of the research to be met (Adams, et al., 2007). The study's various fundamental requirements have important effects on the choice of the appropriate method for collecting data and the best format for data analysis. By way of example, the details or variables required of the information can significantly affect this decision (Saunders, et al., 2016). The current research project employs a quantitative approach to data collection and analysis, as this is an appropriate method to achieve this study's objectives. In order to collect all necessary primary data, a web-based survey was used to explore the effects of the strategic orientation of MNEs on customer purchasing behaviour.

As mentioned, this cross-cultural study explores the effects of the strategic orientation of MNEs on customer purchasing behaviour in two culturally diverse countries (the UK and Romania). It focuses on consumers' behaviour dynamics in two culturally diverse countries related to global apparel and fashion brands' international strategies. The researcher has collected the necessary primary data during two weeks from volunteer participants in both countries to test the anticipated research hypotheses. The Internet-

mediated access, Google forms have been used to collect the primary data as the current global Covid-19 pandemic situation made other data collection methods almost impossible. Therefore, based on this web-based survey tool, an online questionnaire consisting of several questions (Appendix A) has been designed to collect required high-quality data to achieve the research objectives. To make the online survey easier for volunteer participants in these countries, the online questionnaire has been available in both English and Romanian languages (Appendix B). In this online survey, all respondents in these countries are asked the same questions with the same multiple choice answers. However, some of them may not answer all questions based on the nature of their answers. For example, they might not purchase global apparel and fashion brands that reduce the number of questions to answer. Using this web-based survey tool in this research project increased people participation and significantly improved data collection efficiency.

3.4.1. Sampling

The choosing of an appropriate sample so as to indicate the parameters or characteristics that distinguish the wider population is called sampling (Adams, et al., 2007). As the researcher's adopted appropriateness sampling strategy dictates the project's merit and usefulness, it is arguably the most critical element of a research project strategy's (Cohen, et al., 2011). Different key dimensions of sampling, such as sampling method and sample size, should be considered to conduct academic research. The researcher should ensure that the sample size is statistically justified and sufficient to achieve reliability requirements. In this research, all buyers of international apparel and fashion brands above 18 years old in the UK and Romania were considered as the target population of this research project for questioning and analysing. Various alternative approaches to sampling are shown in figure 3.2.

representing the relevant population. As the appropriate sample size depends on different variables such as the research's function, there is no predefined indicator of the correct size (Cohen, et al., 2011). Other relevant factors include the methodology of the research (whether it is qualitative or quantitative), the population under examination, the anticipated response rate, the required accuracy-level and the number of variables the research covers.

Quantitative researchers in the field of customers behaviour have used different sample sizes for their studies. For example, Ariffin et al., (2018) used a sample population of 350 respondents to examine the relationship between consumers' perceived risk and their online shopping intention. Rees et al., (2019) examined the UK consumers' recognition levels, purchasing intention and behaviour associated with sustainability cues on packaging using a sample population of 254 responses from an online survey. The sample size of this study, being quantitative, is limited by participant numbers. Overall in order to test the hypothesis, an online questionnaire survey of 520 people was carried out. Since this quantitative study's purpose is not to generalise to the whole population of buyers, this size of the sample was judged to be suitable. This is because the researcher's aim was rather to provide a considered, well-judged, detailed exploration of the effects of strategic orientation of MNEs on customer purchasing behaviour. Additionally, other researchers with a similar research subject matter have used approximately a similar sample populations to examine buyers' purchasing behaviour in various products, markets, and parts of the world.

3.4.2. Online Questionnaire Survey Data collection

Following this research project's specific requirements and hypothesis testing, an **online questionnaire survey** has been used, and a total of 520 completed responses were collected from the male and female participants aged 18 and above living in the

UK and Romania. As mentioned, in order to conduct the survey, an online Google form was designed. The questionnaire was live for two weeks in February 2021 and received 260 responses in the UK and 260 responses in Romania. The link to this web-based questionnaire survey was sent to people to participate in this research using email, WhatsApp, and other social media such as LinkedIn and Facebook. The participants were all unpaid volunteers, and they took part by completing the survey forms online. The Google online form used for this cross-cultural survey study consisted of 32 questions (excluding the consent to participate questions). Close consideration of the aims of this research dictated the design of the questions, and the proposed hypothesis of this research project was a paramount consideration. All questions were multiple-choice so as to make the online survey process more straightforward for those taking part. It was a simple survey and took those taking part less than four minutes to finish. Also, designing survey questions in both English and Romanian languages increased data validity as participants needed a good understanding of these languages to answer the questions, making the cross-cultural comparison more accurate and feasible. Hence, it can be argued that half of all participants have been strictly Romanian people. The summary of responses (Table 4.1) indicates the diversity of participants in this online survey in relation to gender, age, educational background, earning, and countries participated.

3.5. Data Analysis

After collecting data using a web-based questionnaire survey, all responses have imported from Google form in Microsoft Excel spreadsheets to analyse further and proceed post-acquisition data elaboration process. As a powerful data processing tool, Microsoft Excel software enabled the researcher to organise, analyse, and effectively present the collected primary data. As the researcher had no knowledge about

quantitative data analysis software such as SPSS software and it wasn't possible to learn such data analysis software in a limited time, a person who was an expert in these quantitative data analysis software has been selected to test the research hypotheses. This process has been consulted and monitored by the supervisor. For this purpose, the researcher organised all primary data from the online survey in an Excel file, and the expert conducted all hypotheses tests. The applied hypothesis test methods and results have been explained in details in the next chapter.

4.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to organise and analyse the primary data collected from the online questionnaire survey. It presents the findings of examining the research hypotheses and discusses the outcome of this cross-cultural study. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, a quantitative research design is used in the study at hand. The collected data is subjected to statistical analysis, as quantitative research has numerical values and outcomes. The focus of this chapter is on eight derived hypotheses discussed in the literature review chapter. It analyses and discusses the findings based on the prior scholars' reviews and empirical work.

4.2. The Specificities of the Global Apparel and Fashion Industry

The apparel and fashion retail market include a wide range of clothing and footwear and fashion accessories (excluding sports-specific clothing) for babies, boys, girls, men and women. The global industry is competitive, and its landscape has changed dramatically in recent years due to the pressure from the growing number of online fast fashion companies and changes in consumers shopping habits. These pressures have caused the decline of market share for department stores and apparel specialists such as H&M and Zara in the global market. Overall, the market experienced a compound annual growth rate of around 4% between 2014 and 2018 (MarketLine, 2020). However, like many other industries, this industry has been significantly influenced by the global Covid-19 pandemic. This global pandemic shifted consumer behaviour and caused many supply chains disruptions within the industry. Consumer behaviour has undoubtedly shifted toward digital consumption due to national and international travel restrictions. A recent survey by McKinsey (2021) shows that fashion executives believe

changing consumer behaviour and demand is one of the biggest challenges for the players within the global industry.

Buyer power is enhanced by the low switching cost, the low level of product differentiation, and the high level of choice within the industry. Brand consciousness in the industry is substantial as consumers are experiencing high exposure to social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook, making them more aware of popular brands and global trends. Also, entry barriers are not high within the apparel and fashion industry, which is typically composed of large numbers of similar apparel and fashion retailers. Large companies such as Zara, Gap, and H&M are able to exploit scale economies and invest huge amounts in advertising and branding, increasing their competitive edge (MarketLine, 2020).

4.3. Cross-Cultural Differences in the UK and Romania - Hofstede Insights

For country comparison purposes, the Hofstede model of national culture has been used to better understand cultural differences across two countries, the UK and Romania. This model can help us analyse the effects of society's culture in these countries on their members' values and how these values relate to behaviour. Many researchers such as Williams and Zinkin (2008) and Razi et al., (2017) have applied Hofstede's typology in their studies to assess different dimensions of consumer behaviour from a cross-cultural perspective. As the focus of this research is on people living in two different countries, using Hofstede insights can help us to better understand the dimensions of national cultures in the UK and Romania. Figure 4.1 is a cultural comparison between the UK and Romania. Analysing and understanding these cultural dimensions are useful to international marketers as they can assess how

members of specific cultures with the same situations may respond quite differently even though they encounter the same marketing messages (Solomon, 2018).

Figure 4.1: Country Comparison - The Hofstede Insights



Source: (Hofstede Insights, 2021)

Power Distance – This dimension refers to the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions (like the family) and organisations expect and accept that power is distributed unequally (Solomon, 2018). It deals with the fact that all people in societies are not equal (Hofstede Insights, 2021). As we can see from figure 4.1, Romania scores significantly higher than the UK on this dimension, which means that Romanian people accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place that needs no further justification. Generally, hierarchy in a company is seen as reflecting inherent inequalities and subordinates expect to be told what to do. In contrast, a low score in the UK means people believe that inequalities should be minimised in society.

Individualism - This dimension refers to the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups (Solomon, 2018). It describes the extent to which individuals are supposed to be emotionally independent of others and take care of themselves (Rugman & Collinson, 2012). The cultural comparison shows the British are highly private and

Individualist people. In contrast, Romania, with a low score of 30, is considered a collectivistic society. A collectivist culture fosters strong relationships, and loyalty is paramount and over-rides most other societal regulations and rules.

Masculinity - This dimension refers to the distribution of roles between the genders (Solomon, 2018). Masculine cultures value independence, task orientation, assertiveness, and self-achievement (Hollensen, 2012). Based on estimated data, in comparison to Romania's feminine culture, people in the UK live to work and have a clear performance ambition.

Uncertainty Avoidance - This dimension refers to society's tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty (Solomon, 2018). It describes the way that a society deals with uncertainty and the fact that the future can never be known (Hofstede Insights, 2021). Figure 4.1 illustrates that Romania, with a very high score of 90, has a higher preference for avoiding uncertainty than the UK. It means that planning horizons are shorter between the British people as a nation, and they are relatively happy to wake up not knowing what the day brings.

Long-Term Orientation - This dimension refers to values associated with a long-term orientation, which are perseverance and thrift. Solomon (2018) states that values associated with short-term orientation are fulfilling social obligations and respect for tradition. It describes how societies prioritise the challenges of the present and future goals differently (Hofstede Insights, 2021). Figure 4.1 also illustrates that both countries represent an intermediate score in this dimension that a dominant preference cannot be determined in their cultures.

Indulgence versus Restraint - This dimension refers to the extent to which a society tolerates relatively free gratification of natural and basic human drives related to having

fun and enjoying life (Solomon, 2018). It describes the extent to which individuals try to control their impulses and desires (Hofstede Insights, 2021). The cultural comparison shows a high score of 69 for the British culture (classified as Indulgent) and a very low score of 20 for Romanian culture (classified as Restraint). It means Romania's restrained society, in contrast to the UK's Indulgent society, do not put much emphasis on fun, leisure time, enjoyment and control of the gratification of their desires. Hofstede's dimensions of national culture for the UK and Romania show that these countries have many differences in their cultures and societies that can influence the customers' behaviour and decision-making processes.

4.4. Sample Structure

After reading the consent form and being agreed to participate in the online survey (Appendix B), participants answered several questions related to their demographic characteristics. As mentioned, in total, the data collected from 260 respondents in the UK and 260 respondents in Romania. Table 4.1 demonstrates the demographic profile of the online survey participants in this research project.

Among a total of 520 responses, the respondents comprised 68 per cent females and 32 per cent males. This shows most respondents have been female, with more percentage in Romania, accounting for three-fourths of the total sample population in this country. The age classification indicates that the accumulation of the first three age groups associates the majority of the total sample population (around 81%). The education level classification shows that people with a bachelor degree account for the highest proportion of the total sample population. However, the distribution of education levels is almost similar in both countries.

Table 4.1: Online Survey Participants' Demographic Profiles

Variable	Category	Frequency - UK		Frequency - RO		Total Frequency	
Gender	Female	158	61%	194	75%	352	68%
	Male	102	39%	66	25%	168	32%
Place of Birth	Born in the UK / Romania	80	31%	257	99%	337	65%
	Not born in the UK / Romania	180	69%	3	1%	183	35%
Age Group	18-29	57	22%	61	23%	118	23%
	30-39	105	40%	63	24%	168	32%
	40-49	60	23%	75	29%	135	26%
	50-59	24	9%	36	14%	60	12%
	Above 60	14	5%	25	10%	39	8%
Education Level	Less than high school degree	5	2%	6	2%	11	2%
	High school degree or equivalent	61	23%	67	26%	128	25%
	Some college but no degree	27	10%	34	13%	61	12%
	Associate degree	12	5%	14	5%	26	5%
	Bachelor degree	95	37%	84	32%	179	34%
	Postgraduate degree	60	23%	55	21%	115	22%
Income Level	Under £20,000 / Under €10,000	106	41%	110	42%	216	42%
	£20,000-£30,000 / €10,000-€20,000	67	26%	74	28%	141	27%
	£30,000-£40,000 / €20,000-€30,000	32	12%	40	15%	72	14%
	£40,000-£50,000 / €30,000-€40,000	31	12%	16	6%	47	9%
	Above £50,000 / Above €40,000	24	9%	20	8%	44	8%

As mentioned, the focus of this cross-cultural research is on consumer purchasing behaviour in the UK and Romania. To measure the sample population's diversity, we asked respondents' birthplace, and data confirms the UK's multicultural society as 69% of respondents living in the UK were born outside the country. Finally, the income classification shows people with diverse incomes have participated in this survey; however, low-income participants account for the highest proportion of the total sample population (41% in the UK and 42% in Romania).

4.5. Buyers of National Apparel and Fashion Products and Brands

After some questions to understand the demographic of participants participating in this online survey, participants were asked to respond that they buy international apparel and fashion products and brands such as Zara, H&M, Gucci, Gap, Chanel, Boss, UGG, Clarks, Levi's, Lacoste, Superday, Michael Kors, Uniqlo, Primark, Mango,

Guess, Timberland, etc., or not. As shown in table 4.2, from 260 completed online survey forms in the UK, 93% of participants (242 responses) declared that they buy international apparel and fashion products and brands, and 7% of participants (18 responses) buy only local or national apparel and fashion products and brands. Also, from 260 completed online survey forms in Romania, 85% of participants (220 responses) declared that they buy international apparel and fashion products and brands, and 15% of participants (40 responses) buy only local or national apparel and fashion products and brands. This shows people living in Romania more prefer to buy their apparel and fashion products from local or national apparel and fashion products and brands (15%) than people living in the UK (7%).

Table 4.2: Reasons for Not Buying International Apparel and Fashion Brands

Factors	Answer	UK Responders	Top two factors for not buying international brands for UK responders	Romania Responders	Top two factors for not buying international brands for Romania responders
Local or International Products: Do you buy international apparel and fashion products and brands such as Zara, H&M, Gucci, Gap, Chanel, Boss, UGG, Clarks, Levi's, Lacoste, Superdry, Michael Kors, Uniqlo, Primark, Mango, Guess, Timberland, etc.,?	Yes	242 93%		220 85%	
	No	18 7%	1. They are expensive 27%	40 15%	1. They are expensive 36%
			2. I prefer to buy other national and local brands 20%		2. They don't have physical stores around my place 14%
			Other Reasons 53%		Other Reasons 50%

When participants declared that they do not buy international apparel and fashion products and brands, they were asked to identify the main reasons for this purchase decision. As shown in table 4.2, both respondents in the two countries believe that international apparel and fashion products and brands are expensive. The second reason for people living in the UK is different from people living in Romania. In the UK, people prefer to buy other national and local brands, while accessibility to physical stores is the second main reason for people living in Romania, not buying international apparel and fashion products and brands.

4.6. Buyers of International Apparel and Fashion Products and Brands

Table 4.3 shows that most respondents in both countries buy international apparel and fashion products and brands. The data shows that international apparel and fashion products and brands are a part of people lifestyle in both countries. However, people living in the UK are more interested in global brands than people living in Romania. The participants were asked to identify the main influential factors affecting their purchase decision for buying global brands. Table 4.3 illustrates the top six influential factors for buying international brands in both countries. Interestingly, the first three influential factors, including quality and design, price motives, and fashion trends, are similar in both countries. Brand's identity and reputation, and accessibility to physical stores are other influential factors affecting consumer's purchasing behaviour for buying international brands in both countries.

Table 4.3: Reasons for Buying International Apparel and Fashion Brands

Question	Answer	UK Responders	The top six influential factors for buying international brands for the UK responders	Romania Responders	The top six influential factors for buying international brands for Romania responders
Local or International Products: Do you buy international apparel and fashion products and brands such as Zara, H&M, Gucci, Gap, Chanel, Boss, UGG, Clarks, Levi's, Lacoste, Superdry, Michael Kors, Uniqlo, Primark, Mango, Guess, Timberland, etc.,?	No	18 7%		40 15%	
	Yes	242 93%	1. Quality and Design 200 27.55%	220 85%	1. Quality and Design 197 29.85%
			2. Price Motives 135 18.60%		2. Price Motives 138 20.91%
			3. Fashion Trends 64 8.82%		3. Fashion Trends 62 9.39%
			4. Brand's Identity and Reputation 45 6.20%		4. Accessibility to Physical Stores 55 8.33%
			5. Accessibility to Physical Stores 31 4.27%		5. Brand's Identity and Reputation 37 5.61%
			6. Brand Online Store 28 3.86%		6. Brand's Product Variety 35 5.30%
			Other factors 223 30.72%		Other factors 136 20.61%

4.7. Hypothesis Testing and Discussion

In this section, based on the conducted online survey findings, all eight conceptualised research hypotheses will be examined and discussed in more details. Also, the

outcome of testing these hypotheses will be compared with other related research findings in consumer purchasing behaviour fields, which provide insight into the effects of strategic orientation of MNEs on customer purchasing behaviour. For testing the means and comparing them independent one and two sample *t*-Test was used, and for testing the proportion and comparing the proportions in two countries, an independent proportion test has been used in this study. Also, to have a more robust means test, the Wilcoxon test (is also known as 'Mann-Whitney' test), an equivalent nonparametric *t*-Test, was used. The p-value approach was also used to test the eight conceptualised research hypotheses and make a decision to reject or support the hypotheses. If a p-value is less than alpha (0.05) in each test, then the related hypothesis will be supported; otherwise, there is no evidence to support the hypothesis, or in other words, the hypothesis will be rejected.

4.7.1. Global Strategy

The first two hypotheses were related to the MNE's global strategy and its impacts on customer purchasing behaviour. Therefore, the H1 proposes that price motives significantly influence consumers' purchasing behaviour for buying global apparel and fashion brands. Based on the results presented in table 4.3 in section 4.6, the H1 failed to get rejected as participants in both countries declared price motives are one of the main influential factors affecting their decisions to buy global brands. This finding is consistent with prior studies such as Herve and Mullet (2009) and Lee et al., (2015) confirmed that price factors influence consumer buying decisions. Also, according to the means scores of the question "I prefer to buy my apparel and fashion products from famous global brands because their price is lower or provide a better discount." shown in table 4.4, participants in both countries have not significantly (P-values were much greater than 0.05) preferred to buy apparel and fashion products from famous global

brands because their price is lower or provide a better discount. In other words, they don't believe global brands have better prices or more discounts on apparel and fashion products.

Table 4.4: Lower Price and Better Discount in Global Apparel and Fashion Brands

Factors	Country	N	Mean of score	SD	P-value (t-Test)	P-value (Wilcoxon test)
Price & Discount: I prefer to buy my apparel and fashion products from famous global brands because their price is lower or provide a better discount.	UK	242	2.95	1.16	0.77	0.77
	RO	220	2.76	1.06	0.95	0.97

The H2 proposes that the brand's name and country-of-origin significantly influence consumers' decisions for buying global apparel and fashion brands. The results of the brand's name and country-of-origin on consumer purchasing behaviour are shown in table 4.5. The results indicate that the brand's name and uniqueness have significantly affected consumers' decisions in the UK (p-value = 0.02 and was less than 0.05) and Romania (p-value = 0.04 and was less than 0.05) to buy apparel and fashion products from international brands/companies. These findings support that the consumer decision-making process has a positive relationship with product brands (Godey, et al., 2012; Winit, et al., 2014).

The findings of other research, such as Liu et al., (2016) and Chen (2021), have supported the impact of the brand's country-of-origin on consumers purchasing intention and decision making. In contrast to their findings, our findings show that the brand's country-of-origin has not significantly affected the consumers' decision in both countries (the p-values of the t-Test in both countries were very high more than 0.05).

As a result, our findings have shown that the brand's name is more significantly important than its country-of-origin in both countries.

Table 4.5: The Impact of Brands' Name, Uniqueness, and Country-of-origin

Factors	Country	N	Mean of score	SD	P-value (t-Test)	P-value (Wilcoxon test)
Brands Names: The brand's name and uniqueness affect my decision to buy apparel and fashion products from international brands/companies.	UK	242	3.16	1.23	0.02	0.04
	RO	220	3.15	1.10	0.02	0.02
Country-of-origin: The brand's country-of-origin affect my decision to buy apparel and fashion products from international brands/companies.	UK	242	2.73	1.15	0.9999	0.9999
	RO	220	2.75	1.10	0.9999	0.9999

4.7.2. International/Export Strategy

The third and fourth hypotheses were related to the MNE's international/export strategy and its impacts on customer purchasing behaviour. The H3 proposes that consumers prefer online shopping of international apparel and fashion products and brands more than in-store shopping. Based on the results presented in table 4.6, the H1 is rejected as participants in both countries declared significantly that they do not prefer online shopping of these brands and products. Just 33% of participants in the UK and 26% of participants in Romania would prefer online shopping rather than in-store shopping for buying their apparel and fashion products from international brands/companies. For doing this, the two-sample proportion test was used, and as shown in table 4.6, the p-values of these tests for both countries were very high (p-value = 0.9999) and much more than alpha (0.05). Therefore, this result did not support the H3 hypothesis that consumers prefer online shopping mode for buying international apparel and fashion products and brands more than in-store shopping mode. This finding is

inconsistent with Boardman and McCormick (2018) findings who found e-commerce or online shopping advantages such as time-saving, convenience, flexibility, and adventure/exploration motivate people to use virtual shopping mode instead of traditional shopping mode.

Table 4.6: Online Shopping of Global Apparel and Fashion Brands

Factors	Country	N	Proportions	P-value
Shopping Mode: In general, where do you usually prefer to purchase your apparel and fashion products from international brands/companies?	UK	242	online-shop = 0.33 In-store = 0.67	0.9999
	RO	220	Online-shop = 0.26 In-store = 0.74	0.9999

Furthermore, as shown in table 4.7, results indicate that consumers significantly prefer to buy apparel and fashion products in physical stores because they can see and feel the products. The *t*-Test for mean was used, and the p-values (0.0001) in both countries are pretty much less than alpha (0.05). Consequently, we can conclude that the participants have significantly preferred buy in-store since they can see and feel the products, and they would not rather online shopping significantly. In sum, our findings have not supported the hypothesis that consumers in the UK and Romania prefer more online shopping for international apparel and fashion products and brands than in-store shopping.

Table 4.7: Shopping Modes of Global Apparel and Fashion Brands

Factors	Country	N	Mean of score	SD	P-value (t-Test)	P-value (Wilcoxon test)
Traditional Shopping: I prefer to buy apparel and fashion products in physical stores because I can see and feel the products.	UK	242	3.65	1.37	0.0001	0.0001
	RO	220	3.92	1.07	0.0001	0.0001

The H4 proposes that consumers' past in-store shopping experience has no impact on their purchasing decisions towards buying international apparel and fashion products and brands. Based on the results presented in table 4.8, the H4 is rejected as findings indicate that consumers' past in-store shopping experience has had a significant impact on their decisions towards buying international apparel and fashion products and brands in the UK and Romania. For testing the H4 hypothesis, the *t*-Test of mean was used, and p-values (0.9999) for both countries are much greater than alpha (0.05). Consequently, these results do not support the hypothesis that consumers' past in-store shopping experience has no impact on their purchasing decisions towards buying international apparel and fashion products and brands in both countries.

Table 4.8: The Impact of Consumers' Past In-store Shopping Experience

Factors	Country	N	Mean of score	SD	P-value (t-Test)	P-value (Wilcoxon test)
In-store Experience: I buy my apparel and fashion products online from those brands/companies that I previously purchased in their physical stores.	UK	242	3.35	1.21	0.9999	0.9999
	RO	220	3.43	1.09	0.9999	0.9999

These findings are consistent with Liu et al., (2013) empirical research that in-store shoppers value shopping experience and interactions. They were more averse to online risks and preferred to see the product personally before buying.

4.7.3. Transnational Strategy

The fifth and sixth hypotheses were related to the MNE's transnational strategy and its impacts on customer purchasing behaviour. The H5 proposes that product characteristics such as quality, attractiveness, and design are positively associated with consumers' satisfaction and loyalty in purchasing international apparel and

fashion products and brands. Consistent with expectations and based on the results presented in table 4.3 in section 4.6, this hypothesis also failed to get rejected as participants in both countries declared product characteristics such as quality and design are the most influential factors affecting their decisions to buy global brands. Also, as shown in table 4.9, results indicate that many people buy their apparel and fashion products from famous global brands because they believe they are well-designed and attractive.

Table 4.9: The Impact of Product Quality, Attractiveness, and Design

Factors	Country	N	Mean of score	SD	P-value (t-Test)	P-value (Wilcoxon test)
Design & Attractiveness: I prefer to buy my apparel and fashion products from famous global brands because they are well-designed and attractive.	UK	187	3.42	1.23	0.0001	0.0001
	RO	169	3.45	1.09	0.0001	0.0001

In this study, 187 (77%) of participants in the UK and 196 (76%) participants in Romania believed that product quality, attractiveness, and design are the main reasons to buy global/international apparel and fashion brands. Therefore, according to our findings, we can conclude that product quality, attractiveness, and design have been more significant impacts on consumers' satisfaction and loyalty in purchasing international apparel and fashion products and brands in both countries. Consequently, the results have supported the H5. Moreover, according to our results in table 8, British and Romanian consumers significantly prefer to buy apparel and fashion products that are well-designed and attractive. For testing H5, the *t*-Test of mean was used, and *p*-value = 0.0001 for both countries and is less than alpha (0.05). Consequently, consistent with prior research (Ozsomer & Altaras, 2008; Akturan & Bozbay, 2018), the quality and design of products from famous global brands significantly impact

consumers' satisfaction and loyalty in purchasing international apparel and fashion products and brands in both countries and so this result strongly supported our hypothesis that product quality, attractiveness, and design are positively associated with consumers' satisfaction and loyalty in purchasing international apparel and fashion products and brands.

The H6 proposes that global advertising and communication impact consumers' attitudes toward international apparel and fashion products and buying foreign brands instead of local brands. Based on the results presented in table 4.10, the H6 is rejected as findings indicate that the global brands' advertising and marketing activities such as sport sponsoring, fashion shows, and social media campaigns have not significant impact on consumers' decision to buy apparel and fashion products from international brands/companies.

Table 4.10: The Impact of Global Brands' Advertising and Marketing Activities

Factors	Country	N	Mean of score	SD	P-value (t-Test)	P-value (Wilcoxon test)
Marketing: The global brands' advertising and marketing activities such as sport sponsoring, fashion shows, and social media campaigns affect my decision to buy apparel and fashion products from international brands/companies.	UK	242	2.90	1.14	0.91	0.93
	RO	220	2.75	1.06	0.9999	0.9999

We used the mean *t*-Test and *p*-value = 0.93 for the UK and *p*-value = 0.9999 for Romania, which was much more significant than alpha (0.05). As a result, global advertising and marketing have not significantly affected consumers' attitudes toward international apparel and fashion products and buy foreign brands instead of local brands. These results did not support the H6 and are inconsistent with other research indicating consumer buying behaviour can significantly be affected by firms' marketing

communications and strategies (Liu, et al., 2016; Razi, et al., 2017; Arce-Urriza, et al., 2017; Uddin & Khan, 2018). This might be related to this particular industry as customers have many choices and no switching cost of buying their apparel and fashion products from any brand.

4.7.4. Multidomestic Strategy

The last two hypotheses were related to the MNE's multidomestic strategy and its impacts on customer purchasing behaviour. The H7 proposes that buyers of apparel and fashion products tend to see a higher degree of local responsiveness by global brands and are more likely to buy products that meet their cultural values. As shown in table 4.11, respondents were asked to answer three questions related to cultural values. Results indicate that both countries did not significantly realise a strong lack of cultural representation within global apparel and fashion products. However, people in the UK see more lack of cultural representation within global apparel and fashion products than people in Romania.

Additionally, consumers in the UK and Romania did not significantly prefer to buy global apparel and fashion products that fit their cultural standards and norms. However, consumers in Romania more prefer to buy global apparel and fashion products that fit their cultural standards and norms compared to consumers in the UK. According to presented data, consumers in both countries significantly want to see more cultural diversity within the global apparel and fashion industry, which can affect the consumers' decisions on buying apparel and fashion products from international brands/companies.

Table 4.11: Cultural Values in Global Apparel and Fashion Brands

Factors	Country	N	Mean of score	SD	P-value (t-Test)	P-value (Wilcoxon test)
Cultural Representation: I think there is a strong lack of cultural representation within global apparel and fashion products.	UK	242	3.07	1.08	0.14	0.22
	RO	220	2.96	0.92	0.72	0.74
Cultural Fit: I prefer to buy global apparel and fashion products that fit our cultural standards and norms.	UK	242	2.98	1.12	0.64	0.72
	RO	220	3.05	0.99	0.25	0.33
Cultural Diversity: As a consumer of global apparel and fashion products, I want to see more cultural diversity within the global apparel and fashion industry.	UK	242	3.35	1.18	0.0001	0.0001
	RO	220	3.35	0.97	0.0001	0.0001

To test the H7, we summarised all questions about cultural attitude in one variable, and we called it cultural value and the summary statistics of this variable are presented in Table 4.12. For testing this hypothesis, we used the *t*-Test and Wilcoxon test. According to the p-values of these tests, which all were less than alpha (0.05), we can conclude that the cultural value has had a significant effect on consumer's attitude. Therefore, these result strongly supported the H7 that buyers of apparel and fashion products tend to see a higher degree of local responsiveness by global brands and are more likely to buy products that meet their cultural values. Consist of prior studies, social and cultural factors play an important role in consumers' decision-making and buying behaviour (Dennis, et al., 2009; Christodoulides & Michaelidou, 2011).

Table 4.12: The Impact of Cultural Values - Accumulative Results

Factors	Country	N	Mean of score	SD	P-value (t-Test)	P-value (Wilcoxon test)
Cultural Value	UK	242	3.14	0.93	0.012	0.006128
	RO	220	3.12	0.74	0.008	0.004225

The last hypothesis, H8, proposes that perceived international apparel and fashion brands' name and prestige are positively associated with purchase intention and willingness to pay more for international brands. Based on the results presented in table 4.13, the H8 is rejected as participants in both countries declared not keen to pay more for international apparel and fashion brands because of their globalness and prestige, so perceived international apparel, and fashion brands' name and prestige significantly don't impact on purchase intention and willingness to pay more for international brands. We used the mean *t*-Test and p-value = 0.87 for the UK and p-value = 0.96 for Romania; they also were much greater than alpha (0.05). As a result, our finding did not support the H8. These findings are inconsistent with Akturan and Bozbay (2018), who explored consumer behaviours and perceptions toward global brands in emerging markets and found social and conspicuous values (e.g., obtain social conformity, social prestige, social status, and express wealth) positively impact purchase intention, brand attractiveness, and willingness to pay more for global brands.

Table 4.13: Willingness to Pay More for International Brands

Factors	Country	N	Mean of score	SD	P-value (t-Test)	P-value (Wilcoxon test)
Premium Price: I am willing to pay more for international apparel and fashion brands because of their globalness and prestige.	UK	242	2.92	1.16	0.87	0.87
	RO	220	2.87	1.09	0.96	0.96

4.8. Conclusion

The global apparel and fashion industry is very competitive. Its landscape has changed dramatically in recent years due to the pressure from the growing number of online fast fashion companies and changes in consumers shopping habits. This industry, like many other industries, has been significantly influenced by the global Covid-19

pandemic. This global pandemic shifted consumer behaviour and caused many supply chains disruptions within the industry. Consumer behaviour has undoubtedly shifted toward digital consumption due to national and international travel restrictions. In this chapter, the eight research hypotheses examined to understand better the effects of strategic orientation of MNEs on customer purchasing behaviour in the global competitive apparel and fashion market. The focus of this cross-cultural research is on consumer purchasing behaviour in the UK and Romania. The results of Hofstede's study on these two countries indicated many differences in their cultures and societies that can influence the customers' behaviour and decision-making processes.

The results of testing proposed research hypotheses show price motives and products quality and design are two main influential factors affecting consumers' decisions to buy global brands in both countries. People in these countries prefer the traditional mode of shopping rather than online shopping. They prefer to buy their apparel products in-store as they can see and feel the products. The results of the hypotheses tests also indicated that global brands' advertising and marketing activities such as sport sponsoring, fashion shows, and social media campaigns and the brand's country-of-origin have no significant impact on consumers' decision to buy apparel and fashion products from international brands/companies. Consumers in the UK and Romania are also not keen to pay more for international brands because of their globalness and prestige. They declared that past in-store shopping experience has had a significant impact on their decisions towards buying international apparel and fashion products and brands. Finally, people in both countries don't see cultural representation or cultural fit as significant determinants in the global apparel and fashion products; however, they significantly declare that they would prefer to see more cultural diversity within the global apparel and fashion industry.

Chapter 5: Conclusion & Recommendation

5.1. Introduction

This chapter summarises this cross-cultural study's main findings based on the primary data collected from the online questionnaire survey and indicates the extent to which the research objectives have been met. It explains the contributions and limitations of this study. It suggests further research areas to the identification of factors influencing consumer purchasing behaviour. Finally, it provides some recommendations and practical guidance on the effects of strategic orientation of MNEs on customer purchasing behaviour and what strategies international marketers can apply for motivating people to purchase international apparel and fashion products and brands.

5.2. Summary of Key Findings

This cross-cultural study has explored how the strategic orientation of MNEs for balancing between being “local or global” and reducing costs are affecting customer purchasing behaviour in two culturally diverse countries, the UK and Romania. Previous research provided empirical evidence that consumer buying behaviour and shopping intention result from a combination of different factors. Adding an international business to this context, it is more complex and impossible to cover all broad aspects of consumer buying behaviour in a single study. The researcher has tried to examine the effects of the strategic orientation of MNEs on customer purchasing behaviour by conducting an online survey of 260 respondents in the UK and 260 respondents in Romania. Based on a critical review of the literature, eight hypotheses linked to MNEs’ four international strategies were proposed to explore their effects on customer purchasing behaviour in two culturally diverse countries. Therefore,

this cross-cultural study has attempted to explore the following issues and attain these research objectives:

- 1) To conduct a critical literature review on MNEs' strategic orientations in the global market and consumer purchasing behaviour.
- 2) To critically explore the effects of strategic orientation of MNEs in the global apparel industry on customer purchasing behaviour based on a cross-cultural comparison in two culturally diverse countries, the UK and Romania.
- 3) To propose recommendations to the apparel and fashion MNEs and international marketers to better formulate their international strategies in target markets based on this cross-cultural study's empirical findings.

As mentioned, this research does not aim to investigate all factors influencing consumer purchasing behaviour. The focus was on four international strategies that can be pursued by MNEs and the impact of applying these strategies on consumer purchasing behaviour. The main findings of this cross-cultural study are discussed below.

5.2.1. Global Strategy

This strategy will be applied where the need for global integration is high and the need for national responsiveness is low. MNEs that pursue a global standardisation strategy focus on profit growth by gaining cost reductions through economies of scale, location economies, and learning effects (Hill, 2013). Hence, the cost of production and price of product are determinants of this strategy. The H1 examined the impact of price motives on consumers' buying behaviour for purchasing global apparel and fashion brands. Consist with other researchers' findings (Herve & Mullet, 2009; Lee, et al., 2015), participants in both countries declared price motives are one of the main

influential factors affecting their decisions to buy global brands. They also don't believe global brands have better prices or more discounts on apparel and fashion products.

MNEs pursuing a global strategy coordinate their worldwide activities from headquarters and seek to improve global performance by pooling and sharing resources and integrating activities (Collings, et al., 2019). Therefore, the brand's name and country-of-origin might significantly influence customers around the world. The H2 examined the impact of the brand's name and country-of-origin on consumer purchasing behaviour. The findings show that the brand's country-of-origin has not significantly affected the consumers' decision in both countries. In contrast, the brand's name and uniqueness have significantly affected consumers' decisions in these countries. The findings supported that the consumer decision-making process has a positive relationship with product brands (Godey, et al., 2012; Winit, et al., 2014) and do not support the findings of other researchers that the brand's country-of-origin has an impact on consumers purchasing intention and decision making (Liu, et al., 2016; Chen, 2021).

5.2.2. International/Export Strategy

This strategy will be applied where the need for both integration and national responsiveness is low. This strategic orientation aims to leverage the home country innovations and core competencies into competitive positions abroad (Daniels, et al., 2015). MNEs are pursuing an international strategy selling produced products in their home markets internationally with only minor local customisation. They are basically selling products that serve universal needs in the global market without significant competitors (Hill, 2013). Hence, many brands provide online shopping opportunities to their customers in foreign markets. The H3 examined the customers' shopping mode preference in purchasing international apparel and fashion products and brands.

Inconsistent with Boardman and McCormick (2018) findings who found e-commerce or online shopping advantages such as time-saving, convenience, flexibility, and adventure/exploration motivate people to use virtual shopping mode instead of traditional shopping mode, consumers in both countries prefer in-store shopping mode rather than online shopping mode for buying international apparel and fashion products and brands.

Following the H3, the H4 proposed to explore the impact of consumers' past in-store shopping experience on their purchasing decisions towards buying international apparel and fashion products and brands. The findings revealed that consumers' past in-store shopping experience has had a significant impact on their decisions towards buying international apparel and fashion products and brands in the UK and Romania. The findings of H3 and H4 indicated that export strategy might be a less effective strategic orientation that can be pursued by MNEs' in the global apparel and fashion market.

5.2.3. Transnational Strategy

This strategy is a combination of global-local strategy. Therefore, it will be applied where the need for both integration and national responsiveness is high (Gamble, et al., 2015). This strategy is the most challenging strategy for MNEs as there is a higher need for local adaptations in marketing and a strong requirement for integration in production. MNEs applying this strategic orientation usually have a complex organisational structure. They need a sophisticated value chain system that simultaneously implements learning, integration, and responsiveness. Hence, product characteristics such as quality, attractiveness, and design are significant for this strategy. The H5 examined the relationship of product characteristics with consumers' satisfaction and loyalty in purchasing international apparel and fashion products and

brands. The findings revealed a strong link between product characteristics and consumers' satisfaction and loyalty in purchasing international apparel and fashion products and brands (Ozsomer & Altaras, 2008; Akturan & Bozbay, 2018), as participants in both countries declared product characteristics such as quality and design are the most influential factors affecting their decisions to buy global brands.

According to Hollensen (2014), the transnational strategy assumes that the cross-border markets consist of differences and similarities, which can create some advantages for MNEs pursuing a transnational strategy by executing synergy and leveraging learning on a worldwide scope. Global advertising and communication can be a source of synergy. The H6 examined the impact of global advertising and communication on consumers' attitudes toward international apparel and fashion products and buying foreign brands instead of local brands. The findings indicate that the global brands' advertising and marketing activities such as sport sponsoring, fashion shows, and social media campaigns have not significant impact on consumers' decision to buy apparel and fashion products from international brands/companies. This finding is inconsistent with other research indicating that consumer buying behaviour can be significantly influenced by firms' marketing activities and communication strategies (Liu, et al., 2016; Razi, et al., 2017; Arce-Urriza, et al., 2017; Uddin & Khan, 2018). This might be related to this particular industry as customers have many choices and no switching cost of buying their apparel and fashion products from any brand.

5.2.4. Multidomestic Strategy

This strategy that is most appropriate when there are significant differences across countries will be applied where the need for global integration is low and the need for national responsiveness is high. A multidomestic strategy (also known as localisation

strategy) focuses on profit maximisation by customising the organisation's products to provide a product match to preferences and tastes in different national markets (Hill, 2013; Meyer & Su, 2015). Therefore, cultural values across nations play an important role in formulating and implementing a multidomestic strategy. The H7 examined the relationship between local responsiveness by global brands and meeting cultural values in particular and the consumers' behaviour in the global apparel and fashion retailing. Results indicate that both countries did not significantly realise a strong lack of cultural representation within global apparel and fashion products. However, people in the UK see more lack of cultural representation within global apparel and fashion products than people in Romania. Additionally, consumers in the UK and Romania did not significantly prefer to buy global apparel and fashion products that fit their cultural standards and norms. However, consumers in Romania more prefer to buy global apparel and fashion products that fit their cultural standards and norms compared to consumers in the UK. However, buyers of apparel and fashion products in both countries significantly tend to see a higher degree of local responsiveness by global brands and are more likely to buy those products that represent cultural values (Dennis, et al., 2009; Christodoulides & Michaelidou, 2011).

Rugman and Collinson (2012) argue that in this strategy, MNEs ignore economies of scale as integration is not very vital and adopt goods or services to satisfy the high demands of sovereignty. By customising the product offering to regional demands, MNEs increase that product's value in the national market. MNEs probably increase prices due to product customisation. The H8 examined the relationship of perceived international apparel and fashion brands' name and prestige and consumers' purchase intention and willingness to pay more for international brands. Inconsistent with Akturan and Bozbay (2018), results show participants in both countries are not keen

to pay more for international apparel and fashion brands because of their globalness and prestige, so perceived international apparel and fashion brands' name and prestige have no significant impact on purchase intention and willingness to pay more for international brands.

5.3. Contribution of the Study

This cross-cultural research on the effects of strategic orientation of MNEs on customer purchasing behaviour has three main contributions. First, the global apparel and fashion market are witnessing incredible changes and expansion over the recent decades (Kim, et al., 2013; Gazzola, et al., 2020), representing an increasing number of MNEs seeking to build a global brand to attract customers across the world. Also, operating in the international business environment has its own challenges and difficulties. By focusing on the linkages of strategic orientations of MNEs and customer purchasing behaviour, this research provided insight into how MNEs can better cope with the ever-changing challenge and change of worldwide competition and build competitive advantages in cross-border markets by carefully formulating strategic plans and international strategies. Second, understanding consumer purchasing behaviours in different countries and identifying their diverse values, needs, and motivations is essential for global marketing. It helps marketing managers to build effective relationship and improve their decision-making process in international markets. This research contributes to the existing knowledge related to British and Romanian consumer purchasing behaviour. It sheds new light on understanding consumers' preferences and motivations for shopping global apparel brands in these countries. Finally, this cross-cultural empirical research study is one of the first attempts to critically examine the balance between being "local or global" through the

strategic orientation of MNEs in terms of consumer purchasing behaviour in target markets.

5.4. Further Research Areas

The literature review confirmed that there are different avenues for further research into both international business and consumer purchasing behaviour contexts. The extent of existing literature confirms that these concepts have been the focus of many scholars. They are relatively broad concepts representing diverse unexplored areas in contextual international marketing management and international strategic management. In specific, numerous unexplored areas derived from this cross-cultural study's outcomes and limitations require further studies to improve our understanding of the effects of strategic orientation of MNEs on customer purchasing behaviour. Therefore, the research at hand proposes two recommendations for future studies. First, as mentioned, these concepts are relatively broad, and exploration of multiple effects of international strategies on consumers' purchasing behaviour and motivation was beyond the purpose and scope of the current research project. Therefore, further studies can be conducted to shed light on unexplored dimensions of consumers purchasing behaviour and MNEs' strategic orientations in foreign markets. Second, some outcomes of this research were inconsistent with prior research in various markets and industries. Further examination of the effects of strategic orientation of MNEs on customer purchasing behaviour can be conducted on analysing other dimensions of this topic in diverse geographical markets and industry sectors.

5.5. Research Limitations

As with any research project, this cross-cultural empirical study has been associated with some limitations, which can be seen as opportunities for international business

and marketing scholars to investigate the field study further and make more improvement. This quantitative research used numerical data covering certain/limited variables and issues related to consumer purchasing behaviour in the international business context. Generally, scholars in business and management fields using quantitative numerical data might face a constraint of addressing limited aspects of the research topic as they cannot explore all dimensions of these kinds of broad topics in a single research project. These limitations affected the researcher's ability to explore all effects of the strategic orientation of MNEs on customer purchasing behaviour in the global apparel and fashion industry. Also, this study has been processed during the global Covid-19 pandemic. The related restrictions, such as travel bans and time limitation, made the data collection process time consuming and difficult. In total, the data collected from 260 respondents in the UK and 260 respondents in Romania, which could be more, reducing generalisability of findings and improving research validity.

5.6. Recommendation

This cross-cultural quantitative research project discovered the significant impact of the strategic orientation of MNEs in the global apparel industry on customer purchasing behaviour, attitude, satisfaction, and decision making. Therefore, the study at hand provides the following recommendations for MNEs operating in the global apparel and fashion industry:

- International apparel and fashion brands and marketers should consider product characteristics such as quality and design and price sensitivity in their marketing mix in both the UK and Romanian markets. They have significant moderating roles in international apparel and fashion products buying decisions.

- International brands and marketers should combine their core apparel and fashion products with consumers' preferences in target markets to increase their satisfaction and loyalty. For example, representative of cultural values on apparel and fashion products as buyers of apparel and fashion products in both countries significantly prefer to see a higher degree of local responsiveness by global brands and are more likely to buy those products representing their cultural values.
- Customers' accessibility to physical stores is crucial in the global apparel and fashion market. Consumers in both countries prefer in-store shopping instead of online shopping to buy international apparel and fashion products and brands. Therefore, the export strategy might be a less effective strategic orientation pursued by MNEs' in the global apparel and fashion market.
- As brands' uniqueness and globalness significantly influence customers' purchasing decisions and buying intentions, these determinants should be taken into account when MNEs define their strategic orientations in cross-border markets. Brands' uniqueness and globalness can attract more customers and possibly improve their visibility worldwide.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Online Survey Questionnaire

Online Survey Questionnaire
1. What is your gender? Male / Female
2. What is your age group? 17 – 20 / 21 – 30 / 31 – 40 / 41 – 50 / 51 – 60 / + 60
3. What is your education level? Less than high school degree / High school degree or equivalent / Some college but no degree / Associate degree / Bachelor degree / Postgraduate degree
4. Are you born in the UK? Yes / No
5. What is your annual income level? Under £20,000 / £20,000 - £30,000 / £30,000 - £40,000 / £40,000 - £50,000 / Above 50,000
6. Do you buy international apparel and fashion products and brands such as Zara, H&M, Gucci, Gap, Chanel, Boss, UGG, Clarks, Levi's, Lacoste, Superdry, Michael Kors, Uniqlo, Primark, Mango, Guess, Timberland, etc.,? Yes / No

7. Why don't you buy your apparel and fashion products from international brands?

They are expensive / Their quality is not good / They don't have physical stores around my place / I prefer to buy other national and local brands / They don't fit with my culture / They don't fit with my taste / I prefer to support national and local businesses / Other reasons

8. How often do you purchase your apparel and fashion products from international brands?

Weekly / Monthly / Every Six months / Once a Year / Whenever I Need To

9. In general, where do you usually prefer to purchase your apparel and fashion products from international brands/companies?

In-store / Online

10. In general, what are 3 main factors that influence your apparel and fashion products and brands purchase choice?

Price Motives / Social Media / Celebrities Choice / Friends or Family Opinion / Fashion Trends / Advertising / Brand Identity and Reputation / Country of Origin / Quality and Design / Accessibility to Physical Stores / Brand Product Variety / Brand Online Stores / Availability of Products' Information / Cultural and Social Norms / Product Sustainability (e.g. green and environmentally friendly products) / Brand Globalness / Product Innovativeness / Other Customer Feedback and Reviews / Other Factors

11. Please indicate your degree of agreement with the following statements.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I prefer to buy my apparel and fashion products from famous global brands because I always do my shopping from recognised international brands/companies.					
2. I prefer to buy my apparel and fashion products from famous global brands because I trust the brand and quality.					

3. I prefer to buy my apparel and fashion products from famous global brands because their price is lower or provide a better discount.					
4. I prefer to buy my apparel and fashion products from famous global brands because they are well-designed and attractive.					
5. I prefer to buy my apparel and fashion products from famous global brands because they have better customer service and return policy.					
6. I prefer to buy my apparel and fashion products from famous global brands because all my friends and family purchase those brands.					
7. I usually buy my apparel and fashion products from those international brands/companies that have a branch near me.					
8. The brand's name and uniqueness affect my decision to buy apparel and fashion products from international brands/companies.					
9. I am willing to pay more for international apparel and fashion brands because of their globalness and prestige.					
10. The brand's country-of-origin affect my decision to buy apparel and fashion products from international brands/companies.					
11. I usually buy apparel and fashion products from international brands/companies to show my social class and make good impressions on others.					
12. The global brands' advertising and marketing activities such as sport sponsoring, fashion shows, and social media campaigns affect my decision to buy apparel and fashion products from international brands/companies.					
13. Seeing physical stores of international brands/companies keeps them top of mind for me.					
14. I think there is a strong lack of cultural representation within global apparel and fashion products.					
15. I prefer to buy global apparel and fashion products that fit our cultural standards and norms.					

16. As a consumer of global apparel and fashion products, I want to see more cultural diversity within the global apparel and fashion industry.					
17. I usually keep up with global fashion trends and style changes by watching what others buy.					
18. I prefer to buy apparel and fashion products in physical stores because I can see and feel the products.					
19. I prefer to buy apparel and fashion products online because it is convenient, relaxed shopping, time and money-saving.					
20. I prefer to buy apparel and fashion products from famous brands (either online or in stores) because it is entertainment and fun.					
21. I buy my apparel and fashion products online from those brands/companies that I previously purchased in their physical stores.					
22. I consider sustainable clothing (environmental and ethical impacts) when I buy my apparel and fashion products.					

Appendix B: Online Survey Questionnaire – Romanian and English Versions



Comportamentul de cumpărare al clientului în industria globală de îmbrăcăminte și de moda

Cercetare pentru gradul de Master of Business Administrative (MBA) la UWTSO

*Required

Formular de consimțământ pentru sondaj opinie online

Sunteți invitat să participați la un sondaj de opinie online bazat pe web pentru a explora efectele orientării strategice a unei companii multinationale asupra comportamentului de cumpărare al clienților în industria globală a confecțiilor și a modei. Acesta este un studiu intercultural pentru compararea datelor din două țări diverse din punct de vedere cultural, Marea Britanie și România. Aceasta este o cercetare master disertație efectuată de Nicoleta Mirela Iliescu, studenta la Universitatea din Țara Galilor Trinity Saint David. Ar trebui să dureze aproximativ cinci minute.

PARTICIPARE

Participarea dumneavoastră la acest sondaj de opinie este voluntară. Puteți refuza să participați la cercetare sau să ieșiți din sondaj în orice moment, fără penalități. Sunteți liber să refuzați orice întrebare la care nu doriți să răspundeți pentru orice motiv.

BENEFICII

Nu veți primi beneficii directe de la participarea la acest studiu de cercetare. Cu toate acestea, răspunsurile dumneavoastră mă vor ajuta să adun date valide pentru cercetarea mea și ne pot ajuta să aflăm mai multe despre comportamentul de cumpărare al consumatorilor în Marea Britanie și România.

RISCURI

Nu există riscuri previzibile implicate în participarea la acest studiu, altele decât cele întâlnite în viața de zi cu zi.

CONFIDENȚIALITATE

Răspunsurile la sondaj vor fi trimise la un link din formularul Google, unde datele vor fi stocate într-un format electronic protejat prin parolă. Formularul Google nu colectează informații de identificare, cum ar fi numele dvs., adresa de e-mail sau adresa IP. Prin urmare, răspunsurile dumneavoastră vor rămâne anonime. Nimeni nu va putea să vă identifice pe dumneavoastră sau răspunsurile dumneavoastră și nimeni nu va ști dacă ați participat sau nu la studiu.

CONTACT

Dacă aveți întrebări în orice moment despre studiu sau proceduri, mă puteți contacta prin e-mail la 1910351@student.uwtsd.ac.uk.

CONSIMȚĂMÂNTUL ELECTRONIC:

Vă rugăm să selectați alegerea de mai jos. Aveți posibilitatea să imprimați o copie a acestui formular de consimțământ pentru înregistrările dvs. Făcând clic pe butonul "De acord" indică faptul că

- Ați citit informațiile de mai sus
- Sunteți de acord în mod voluntar să participați
- Aveți vârsta de 18 ani sau mai mult

Confirm că am citit și am înțeles informațiile și sunt de acord să iau parte la acest sondaj online. *

☐ De acord

☐ Nu sunt de acord



Customer Purchasing Behaviour in the Global Apparel and Fashion Industry

A research for the degree of Master of Business Administrative (MBA) at UWTSD

*Required

Consent Form for Online Survey

You are invited to participate in a web-based online survey for exploring the effects of strategic orientation of MNEs on customer purchasing behaviour in the global apparel and fashion industry. This is a cross-cultural study to compare data from two culturally diverse countries, the UK and Romania. This is a master dissertation research being conducted by Nicoleta Mirela Iliescu, a student at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. It should take approximately five minutes to complete.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. You may refuse to take part in the research or exit the survey at any time without penalty. You are free to decline to answer any particular question you do not wish to answer for any reason.

BENEFITS

You will receive no direct benefits from participating in this research study. However, your responses will help me gather valid data for my research and may help us learn more about consumers' purchasing behaviour in the UK and Romania.

RISKS

There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your survey answers will be sent to a link at Google form where data will be stored in a password protected electronic format. Google form does not collect identifying information such as your name, email address, or IP address. Therefore, your responses will remain anonymous. No one will be able to identify you or your answers, and no one will know whether or not you participated in the study.

CONTACT

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact me via email at 1910351@student.uwtsd.ac.uk.

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please select your choice below. You may print a copy of this consent form for your records. Clicking on the "Agree" button indicates that

- You have read the above information
- You voluntarily agree to participate
- You are 18 years of age or older

I confirm that I have read and understood the information and I agree to take part in this online survey. *

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree