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**Strategies used in the food industry to improve
profitability: a case study of M&S in the UK**

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1.0 Introduction

The research proposal is based on strategies utilized in the UK food industry. The UK's food market is broad, and the food industry employs several strategies to increase revenue and sales. The enhancement in revenue and sales in the food industry in the UK is often achieved by effective means of promotion and marketing strategies employment (Bagwell, 2023). The proposal provides a brief insight into the research and provides a description of the research aim and objectives, an introduction of the literature review based on the three significant parts, which are a competitive advantage, discounting sales prices, and marketing strategies, and lastly, it provides a brief overview of the research methods, strategies, and the research approach being used in the research.

2.0 Methodology

The research philosophy being utilized in the research is **interpretivism** which contributes towards understanding the individual behavior and patterns, prioritizing the social consideration. It helps in accessing insights and fostering the understanding of the researcher through in-depth understanding. This interpretivism research philosophy will allow the researcher to identify, understand, and evaluate individual behavior and individual perspectives on this specific topic (Al Harahsheh, and Pius, 2020), whereby it will help to understand the influence of discounting prices, and marketing strategies in the food industry in the UK upon the customer and the consumers. The research approach being utilized in this research is the **inductive** research approach that will help the researcher to form and adopt an assumption based on the data collected (O'Kane, Smith, and Lerman, 2021). Further, it will help gather wide information already available relating to the food industry in the UK. The research strategy is based on a **qualitative** research strategy that involves the consideration of behavior and identification of individual patterns to collect and evaluate the data already available. The qualitative strategy serves the purpose of being able to present the differentiated perceptions, incorporated feelings and opinions along with an elaborated analogy of the subject topic (Groenland, and Dana, 2020).

The researcher intends to mix a **descriptive** methodology with the study design to investigate in great detail what strategies food companies, especially Marks and Spencer (M&S) in the UK, apply

to have a modest or better income (profitability). The former types of approach are consistent with the research objectives, help to capture the essential impacts of different strategies, and allow us to measure the variable modification between different terms accurately.

The researcher will gather the data with the help of **primary and secondary** sources such as scholarly articles and interviews and by the principles of data collection ethical issues allowing for the acquisition and analysis of data is rigorous and elaborated (Dawadi, Shrestha, and Giri, 2021). For collection of the primary data the interview process will be utilized as a method of asking questions to the selected set of sample participants. The selection of the sample participants will be achieved through the use of **convenience sampling**. The convenience sampling strategy will be selected as it will help in ensuring that the number of participants required for the interview can be easily accessible and does not require large time consumption for accessing information from them through the interview (Stratton, 2021). The interview will be conducted with **six managers from M&S UK** from different departments. The managers will be selected based on their experience, ensuring that they have **at least 2 years of experience** within their individual roles. The purpose of conducting the interview will be to ensure that a detailed and elaborate response can be collected from participants who have experienced and contributed towards the growing profitability of the company. For the secondary data sources **literary evidence** as well as **organizational reports will** be considered. Further potential secondary sources also include **news reports which** are accessed from authentic news websites. **Google Scholar, Taylor and Francis, Emerald** and **Elsevier** will be the primary selected electronic databases from which literary evidence will be collected. The key search terms while searching for the secondary evidence will include:

- Marketing
- Strategies
- Food industry
- Improve profitability
- M&S
- UK

The target of ***thematic data*** analysis will be implementing this technique to analyze the data by categorizing it into themes according to the patterns. The thematic data analysis serves the purpose of being able to provide similarities and differences within similar points of discussion or themes. The thematic data analysis is as it will allow the research questions to be the primary themes which will be discussed in the current study.

Consideration of ethics will come first, making an objective, transparent, honest, and openly noted protocol to be followed and if possible, displaying the biases, while surveys will be conducted amongst experienced employees in the food industry especially in marketing. Disclosure of outcomes will be differentiated through the media that is most suitable, primarily, emphasising simplicity. Authenticity will be proved using quantitative analysis of financial results (Nunes, Ordanini, and Giambastiani, 2021) as well as the popularity of the company's choices, which will be made as a result of polling consumers, industry experts, managers, and marketers of M&S.

3.0 Aims, objectives and research questions

The research aims to evaluate the impact of the marketing strategies employed in the UK food industry and the significant influence of the marketing strategies on the profitability of companies operating in the UK food industry.

The objectives

- To determine the various strategies which are used by M&S in the UK for improving their profitability within the food industry.
- To evaluate the impact that the selected strategies have had in successful profitability of M&S in the UK
- To understand the challenges faced by M&S UK when adopting new strategies to improve profitability and how they overcame the challenges.

The research questions for the study will include:

- What are the various strategies which are used by M&S in the UK for improving their profitability within the food industry?
- How successful were the selected strategies in improving profitability of M&S in the UK?
- What were the challenges faced by M&S UK when adopting new strategies to improve profitability and how they overcame the challenges?

The research questions as developed show a direct revelation which will be achieved through this study directing towards being able to identify the various different types of strategies which are utilized and adopted by M&S in the UK and further help in determining which of the selected strategies have been able to produce the most profitability for the company. Similarly the research questions will also help in directing towards the challenges faced by the company while adopting the selected strategies to overview the conceptual problems that changing strategies may likely affect companies within the food industry and specifically M&S. Allowing the study to discover probable successful strategies that can be adopted by a company when adopting a similar strategy. Clearly, it becomes evident that the developed objectives and questions will help in indulging in an in-depth analysis of the historical progress that M&S has had in the UK in terms of profitability with the ultimate expected outcome being able to study and quantify the most successful strategies that they have adopted and can potentially allow for recommending future strategic opportunities.

4.0 Literature review

4.1 Competitive advantages

In the UK's food industry, innovation in the food, its packaging, expansion strategies, and others provide a competitive advantage for the sector as stated in the study by Distanont, (2020). Besides, according to the findings of the same study, innovation enhances the competitive advantage by considering external factors influencing the food industry, which are micro and macro factors. Moreover, the efficiency and effectiveness of supply chain management in the food industry serve as another significant competitive advantage. It enhances the competitive advantages of the companies operating in the food industry in the UK. Moreover, implementing digital and

automated devices further improves accuracy and enhances decision-making, leading the company in risk management and prevention.

4.2 Discounting sales prices

The discounting sales price strategies in the UK's food industry contribute towards the growth of revenue and sales of the company operating within the food industry. The food industry in the UK utilizes discounting prices to reduce food waste and promote or demote the sale of healthy and unhealthy foods, respectively, as mentioned by (Mullick *et al.*,2021). It has been stated that discounting sales prices promotes the sale of perishable food products with expiration dates near. Moreover, companies in the food industry often levy taxes and subsidies to reduce or enhance food product intake and consumption.

4.3 Marketing Strategies

Marketing strategies involve effective marketing and promotion strategies that will help companies in the UK food industry enhance their revenue through maximization of sales. The companies operating in the food industry in the UK can implement digital marketing technologies to improve the marketing and promotion of its products, as stated by Peter and Dalla Vecchia, (2021). Moreover, the companies can also unify innovations in their products manufacturing, packaging, selling, or promoting phase that will attract customers towards the company's products.

5.0 Limitations

This research, which might have some limitations, should be acknowledged. First, the qualitative nature of the study, which relies on external data sources, can hinder the amount and extent of the insights obtained compared to the primary data sources such as interviews or observations. Furthermore, the concentration on the UK food industry might limit the application of the results to other industries or geographic areas (Theofanidis, and Fountouki, 2018). In addition to that, the interpretive philosophical approach and the inductive method, useful for the analysis of subjective experiences, may, at times, lead to researcher bias and the objectivity of the conclusions may thus be limited (Junjie, and Yingxin, 2022). Moreover, the patent access of proprietary company data or the lack of support by the decision makers may be the obstacles for thorough data. Besides that,

the data obtained from cross-sectional research may not portray the dynamic and changing characteristics of marketing strategies with time. For the last dimension, the focus is on profitability concerns ignoring other aspects such as sustainability, moral issues, or brand equity development. The recognition of these potential restrictions from the outset will enable the implementation of considered research design and execution.

6.0 Ethical Considerations

Ethics shall play a key role in all the stages of this study. Getting ethical approval from the appropriate research body will first be secured before starting the data collection. This study will be approved by a local ethics committee for any primary data collection involving human subjects (Fleming, and Zegwaard, 2018). Participants will be anonymized by using pseudonyms and the data will be stored in a secure way to ensure confidentiality. Participants are warned of any potential safety concerns or benefits of participating. The research does not involve any deception techniques, and participants are free to skip participating at any time. Objectivity and absence of bias will be ensured following the employed systematic and rigorous data collection and analysis activities. All conflicts of interest will be divulged in a transparent manner. To avoid intellectual property rights and plagiarism, all the sources will be taught to be used and referenced accordingly. Evaluating data and representation cross-culturally, due to their differences, will be sensitive. Ethical principles of doing good, not causing harm, fairness and respect for persons will be main guidelines of all activities related to research (Pietilä *et al.* 2020).

7.0 Time Frame - Gantt Chart

Particulars	Month 1				Month 2				Month 3				Month 4			
	W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4
Background of the topic and preparing the proposal and amend as per feedback if any																
Draft literature review																
Draft research methodology chapter																
Data collection from primary and secondary sources																
Draft data analysis and discussion chapter																
Draft conclusion chapter																
Draft submission																
Receive feedback and revise																
Submit final dissertation.																

8.0 Conclusion

The research will help the future reader and researcher to successfully analyze and evaluate the present food industry market in the UK, the significant strategies currently being employed, and the major strategies that can be reinforced to influence the profitability of the food industry. The current research will further allow future researchers to analyze the impact of present strategies and digital innovation in the supply chain in the food industry in the UK since digital innovation impacts the effectiveness and efficiency that leads to influence the profitability of the industry, as mentioned.

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