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Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on International Marketing (on the basis of Apple Inc.)

Although change has always been a familiar term and phenomenon, the changes in the marketplace during COVID-19 pandemic time have never been so complex or rapidly evolved. Companies that operated or intended to operate in the international market strive to adapt to changes by carefully analyzing, taking an integrated approach, and monitoring business performance. The international marketing environment was always fraught with uncertainty and challenges and during COVID-19 time became more difficult. That's why it became the main aim of this article.

The changes that occurred on the international market, whether cultural, demographic, or technological, affected and still are continued to influence on the way customers and consumers react and make competition in the international marketplace more ardent.

When competing in the international market, businesses need to be faster than their rivals in predicting the market needs. They must focus on providing their products and services with added value to make them as attractive as possible to potential customers and capable of meeting and exceeding expectations. These confirmations were analyzed using an Apple Inc. activity as an example. The SWOT analysis were made for analyzing advantages, disadvantages, opportunities and threats. The PESTLE analysis shown political, social, economic, legal and environmental factors and Apple Inc. there.

Though the world is progressing in terms of information technology, innovative and superior methods of organizing marketing efforts (such as horizontal organization, network organization, virtual organization), global efforts for smooth international trades, and so on, international marketing is not easy to pursue and has become a challenge to accept.

Keywords: international marketing, international expansion, marketing activity, business development, problems and challenges.

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Problem statement

The economic depression caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected the performance and marketing activities of various companies as well as consumer shopping and media habits [1].

The accelerated spread of COVID-19 and the measures adopted by governments to contain it had severe consequences for the world's major economies. Numerous productive activities were disrupted, first in Asia [2], then Europe, North America, and the rest of the world, and there were expansive border closures.

This article discusses the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on international marketing and of the ways multinational corporations adapt to these changes.

Task statement

The main tasks for this article were: to make an analysis of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on international marketing and of the ways of multinational corporations' adaptation to these changes; examination of the strategic planning processes pertaining to international marketing as well as the different entry strategies into the foreign market; analysis of Apple's strategic international marketing process, which involves the use of SWOT and PESTLE analytical framework; analysis of challenges encountered by multinational corporations (MNCs) in international or global marketing.

Literature review

International marketing and influence of COVID-19 has been studied by Ukrainian scientists and foreign scientists. So, the last paper of such Ukrainian researchers as V. Bilyk, O. Sergienko, I. Krupenna described digital marketing tools in the conditions of transformation of communications of the modern organization [3]. Also papers prepared by M. Miroshnick, V. Barabanova, G. Bohaturiova, S. Malovichko, N. Tkachova, P. Pererva were interesting for studying and analyzing.

At the same time foreign researcher also studies international marketing. The most interesting and modern are Michael R. Czinkota, Ilkka A. Ronkainen, Annie Peng Cui [4]. They developed international marketing strategies and guidelines using the latest examples. Also, they explored the range of international marketing topics, from start-up operations and new market entry considerations to key international issues confronting today's giant global marketers. Song, Z., Liu, D. & Deng, Z. [8] worked with marketing in China during the pandemic time. A.E. DiResta, T. Kwamina Williford, Da'Morus A. Cohen, B. A. Genn [12] analyzed the Impact of COVID-19 on advertising and marketing campaigns. Studying of COVID-19 and its influence on different

spheres became very popular nowadays. But in our decision, we described not just annual ideas about development of international marketing during COVID-19 time, but additional study of Apple Inc. as an example and we will develop offers specifically for this company.

Results

The COVID-19 pandemic affected every aspect of our lives as the society and the economy were greatly brought to a standstill, with nearly every country in the grip of a recession. The economic shocks stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic and the different measures aimed at containing its spread led to a compression of the global economy (Figure 1).

In June 2020, the World Bank prognosticated a global compression of roughly 5.2% [6], and that the effects of the pandemic would be felt more profoundly by countries whose economies depended heavily on international trade, commodity exports, tourism, and external financing. Even before the pandemic was announced, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on international trade were already being felt worldwide [7], especially in sectors like automotive and electronics, whose global value chains are complex and depend largely on the manufacturing of parts and raw materials from China and Southeast Asian countries, which were the first to be affected by the virus. In January 2020, China took on social isolation measures that obstructed the global supply of some goods, with investment in manufactures falling 31.5% in the first two months of the year and a 17.2% drop in exports in the same period [8]. In total Central Asia Growth is forecast to rebound in 2021, to 3.6 percent, as global commodity prices gradually recover, trade strengthens, and domestic demand improves [9].

In an unparalleled global health crisis, trade is imperative in order to save lives and livelihoods; and international cooperation is necessary to keep trade flowing. In the midst of significant ambivalence, there are a number of things that can be done to increase confidence in trade and global markets for instance; improving transparency about trade-related policy actions and intentions; ensuring the flow of supply chains especially for essentials like food and health supplies; avoid worsening or aggravating the already existing crisis, through unnecessary restrictions and other trade barriers; and even in the midst of the crisis, it is essential to think beyond the immediate. Government support presently needs to be provided in such a way that ensures it serves the public interest and avoids becoming tomorrow's market distortions (Figure 2).

The COVID-19 global pandemic caused various changes in marketing, advertising, and media spending, forcing businesses and brands to reevaluate their current and future advertising and marketing campaigns to maintain a steady flow of income [12]. While brands are presently seeking to strike the right tone during a global health

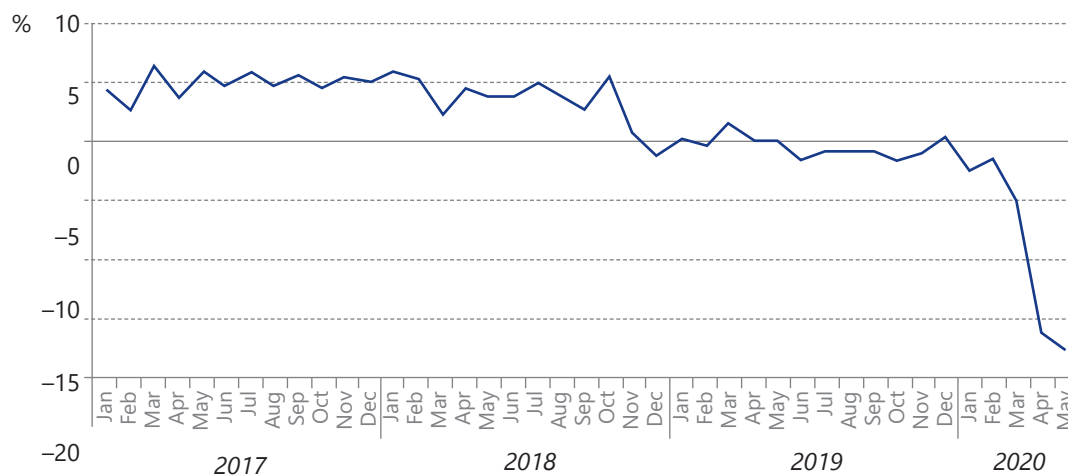


Fig. 1. Year-on-year change in the volume of trade in goods globally, January 2017–May 2020 [5]

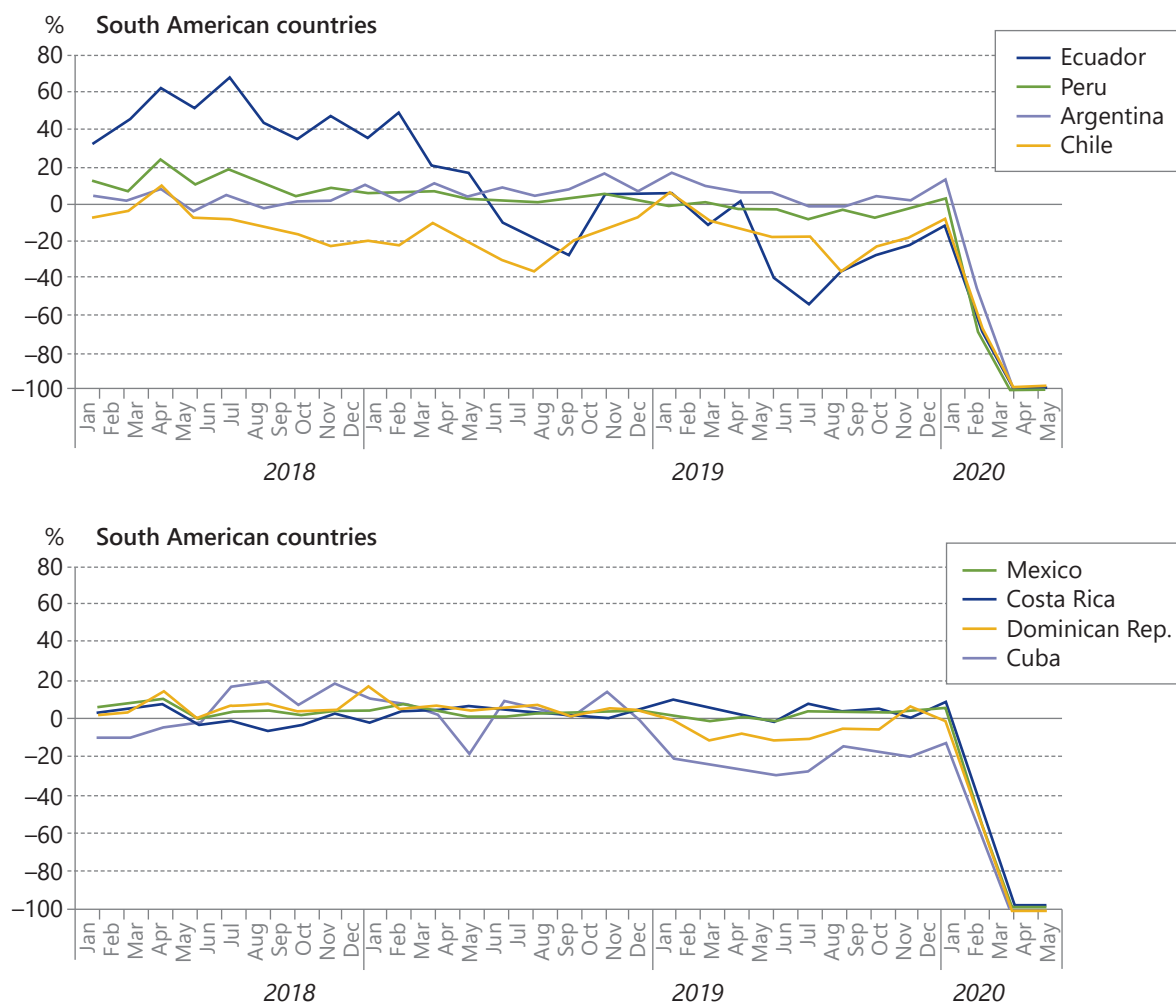


Fig. 2. Latin America and the Caribbean (selected countries): year-on-year change in international tourist arrivals, January 2018–May 2020 [10, 11]

Advertising spend is falling in key markets and across most channels

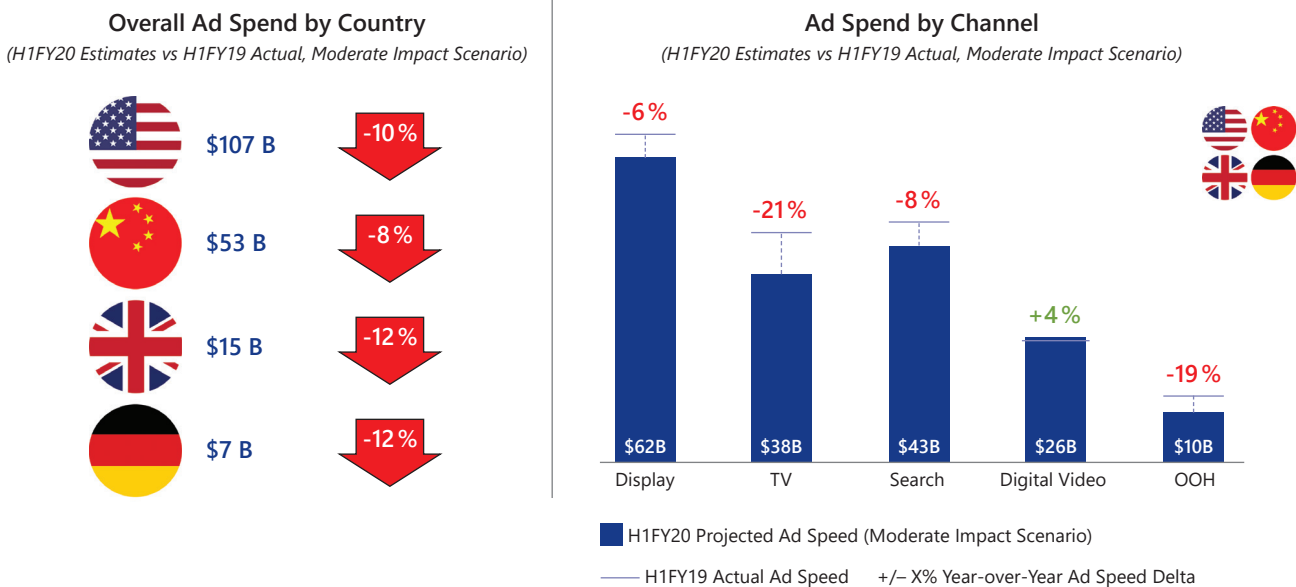


Fig. 3. Fall in advertising spend by country [13]

emergency, the future indicates market changes, increased competition, and demand for innovative and competitive marketing practices. As a result of COVID-19, many companies had to cut down advertising spending as stores closed and revenue decreased (Figure 3). For example, an online home rental home company suspended all marketing activities in 2020 in order to save hundreds of millions of dollars.

Other businesses directed their expenditures to purpose-driven marketing, mission-based marketing, and cause-related marketing to better satisfy consumers' increased media consumption while working from home. For instance, 45 percent of global consumers allocated more time to social media, online video streaming increased by 26 percent, the online gaming business increased exponentially on one telecommunication company's servers, and the number of consumers using online food delivery and essential goods delivery rose dramatically [14].

Before the pandemic rendered thousands of businesses bankrupt, the US restaurant industry was experiencing a yearly growth of 3 to 4 percent [15] and food delivery sales were increasing at 7 to 8 percent. Global food delivery had grown by 23 percent over a 4-year period [16]. However, with the outbreak of the pandemic, sending many countries into major lockdown, the demand for food delivery experienced a significant spike (Figure 4), building on what already had been a strong demand for the \$27 billion industry, according to NPD Group, and has maintained this trajectory throughout 2020 and into 2021.

As a result of the impact of the pandemic, many businesses are looking to optimize their marketing practices in

order to better reflect the increase in online transactions, communications, and face time with consumers.

Many marketing and advertising departments will be up to the challenge: thinking through creative and innovative marketing strategies and practices that will navigate the business through this new normal. For brands, this means dealing with market alteration because of the economic impact on all industry sectors and also facing increased competition given consumers' and social "new normal". They are also tasked with addressing sustainability, evaluating operational options and challenges presented by strategic planning in an environment of uncertainty. The marketing team would also have to deal with analyzing brand reputation issues, identifying potential new products and services needed to meet consumers' needs and expectations, also focusing on creative and strategic marketing campaigns and targeted advertising and using social media effectively.

Navigating international marketing during a pandemic can be challenging, especially when every country and the individual region has been impacted differently. From travel restrictions to social and working restrictions. A message that works in one market may be irrelevant in another. The role of international marketing as the link between companies and the international marketplace has never been so crucial as these companies try to make sense of the new order in global trade so that they can take advantage of new international opportunities and extenuate the threats of Covid-19 in the international business landscape [18].

The pandemic has changed the international marketing of organizations and industries. The existing presumptions

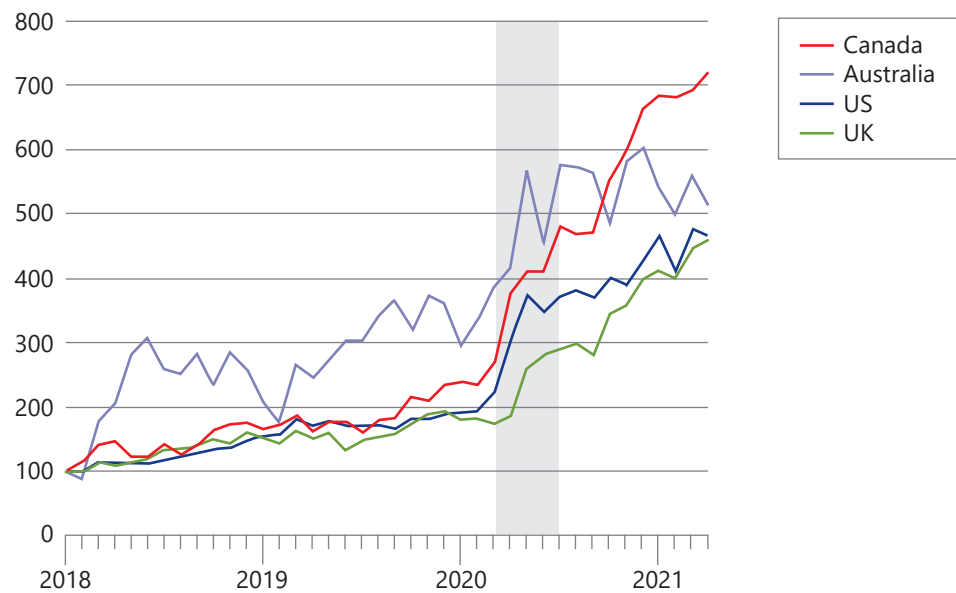


Fig. 4. Delivery Sales growth from 2018 to 2021 [17]

surrounding the response of individuals in particular markets have been inherently challenged. Every country has reacted to the COVID-19 pandemic quite differently. For example, some have recovered reasonably well, some have been significantly damaged, some were in regional lockdowns, some weren't [19]. This has influenced audiences in each market, even in markets that would have generally responded to marketing messages in similar ways. A global study in Marketing Week showed that 51% of B2B marketers and 62% of B2C marketers say that COVID-19 has caused significant or drastic changes to the customer journey [20, 21]. This change typically implies that new needs may arise, and similarities, as well as differences between markets, that weren't there before, may emerge. All of this indicates the increased importance of in-market research

to truly understand customer needs now, which may have changed significantly over the course of the pandemic.

It is no news that Apple Inc is one of the most successful companies in the world. From its founding in April 1976 until date, the company experienced exponential revenue growth, making it the first to reach a \$2-trillion market capitalization. According to reports, Apple had a revenue of \$58.3 billion in the first fiscal quarter of 2020. As of March 2020, the iPhone was Apple's best-selling product (Figure 5), with a revenue of \$28.96 billion. According to Forbes, the firm is the world's sixth-largest public company. It's the only tech company ranked in the top 10 of this list [22].

The App Store's Games category had 3 billion downloads in January 2020, making it the most popular category on the App Store. Apple has increased its investment in re-

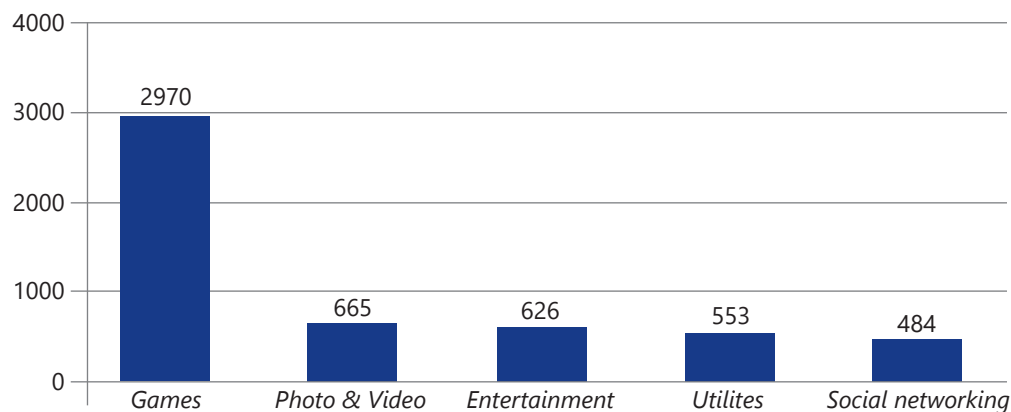


Fig. 5. 2020 Leading Apple App store categories (by download volume, in millions) [22]

search and development and now devotes the lion's share of its sales to R&D.

Despite the market dominance of competing PC makers such as Lenovo, HP Inc., Dell, and Asus, Apple's Mac division has maintained solid sales over the years. For the first quarter of 2020, Apple's global revenue from Mac computer sales was \$5.4 billion. Their wearables and other accessories have also gained popularity, like the Air Pods, Apple TV, Beats, Apple watches, etc. For the first quarter of 2020, Apple's wearables, Home, and Accessories division had a revenue of \$10 billion, a significant increase from the previous year. When Apple announced its financial results for the fourth quarter of fiscal 2020, it reported revenue of around \$64.7 billion for the September quarter and quarterly earnings per diluted share of \$0.73. International sales accounted for 59% of total revenue in the quarter.

Apple prides itself on its informal work culture, similar to start-ups, then multinational corporations. The company is known for encouraging individuality and its culture of intense secrecy, particularly around new products. Therefore, its users are people of different ages (Figure 6).

As we can see on the figure 6 the most popular iPad in category 30–44 years old, the less one — 55–64. But what is interesting that category of people 65+ is on the third level in demand of iPad.

The iPad can be traced to Apple's Message Pad PDAs line, which discontinued in 1998. The iPad has evolved to include so many different functions, and it comes in different sizes and capabilities. Apple iPads accounted for the biggest market share — 36.5% of tablets shipped worldwide for the same period. As of March 2020, iPad revenue makes up 7.5% of Apple's total global income-generating about \$5.98 billion in revenue.

A situation analysis is the foundation of the strategic planning process for the international marketing plan. It involves examining and evaluating internal and external factors that affect the business and market. The analysis

will illuminate the company's strengths and the challenges they face, whether with internal resources or with external competition in the marketplace, as well as provide a clear, objective view of the health of the company, its current and prospective customers, industry trends, and the company's position in the marketplace.

A typical analysis would be the SWOT analysis, which examines an organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (Figure 7).

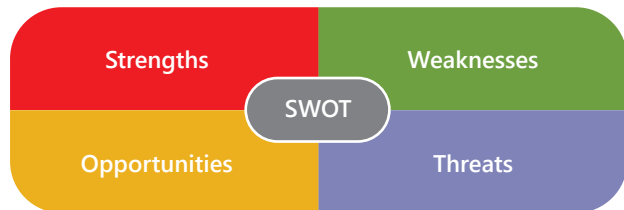


Fig. 7. SWOT Analysis [23]

Strengths: Apple's strengths include its business strategies and competitive advantage. It is currently one of the most valued companies globally and is widely recognized. Apple is considered one of the most reliable companies when it comes to personalizing modern computers and innovative technology products, with millions of loyal consumers attesting to this. It is a brand of choice as most companies prefer to use Apple products in the offices. Apple devoted time and effort to product design and was the first to debut some of the most revolutionary devices that have revolutionized the world, such as iPhones and iPads. Apple also has sustainable innovations as most of its products are made from recycled materials.

Weaknesses: Some of Apple's weaknesses include the high-priced products. Because of its high pricing, it is considered a luxury; low-income individuals cannot purchase it.

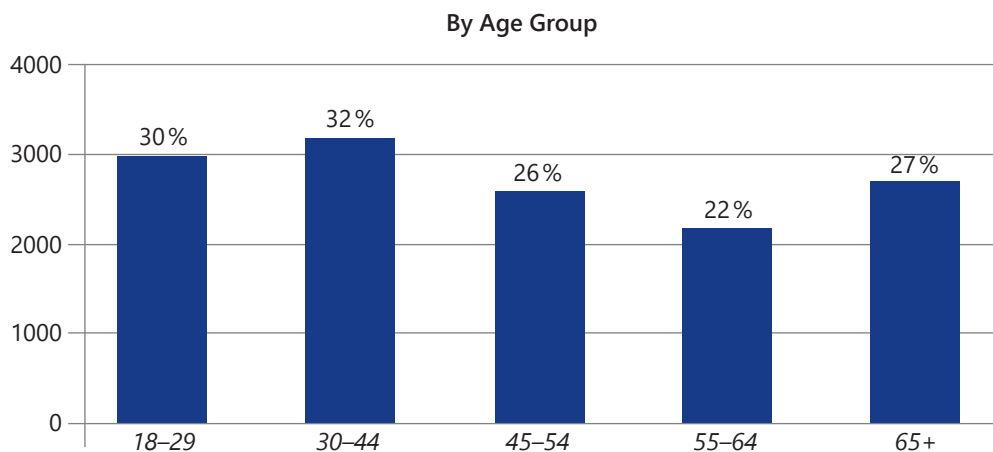


Fig. 6. iPad penetration rate in the US (by age group) [22]

Because of its success, Apple does not need to overspend on advertising and promotions, as do other large corporations. Their incompatibility with other software makes it difficult for other users to connect with Apple products. Some versions of Apple's iPod and iPhone had apparent defects, which hurt product sales and the company's reputation for excellent product performance.

Opportunities: Due to its high market share and brand recognition, Apple is experiencing increased demands for its various devices. Apple Inc. may be able to expand its distribution network. There is an increasing need for cloud-based services as data connectivity, and speeds improve, and Apple can expand its iCloud services and applications portfolio. There is a steady growth in the advertisement market, and the development of the digital advertising market is a possibility for Apple to further capitalize on this.

Threats: Some of Apple's threats include the growth of the Android OS, competitors in the online music market, now there are other online music subscription platforms like Spotify, Deezer, Youtube, Tidal, Amazon, and Audiomack that are also competing with Apple and are potentially a threat as these can reduce the number of subscribers the Apple music has. Although Apple as a brand has solidified itself, it still faces threats from competitors; big companies like Samsung, Lenovo, Google, Huawei are giving Apple a tough time both in the creation of Smartphones and Computers. The COVID-19 pandemic also affected up to 20% of Apple's yearly revenue. The dollar rate is also a threat since Apple earns more than half of its revenue outside the US. So, the changes in the exchange rate of currencies of other countries could affect Apple's profits.

Also, a PESTLE (or PESTEL) analysis can be conducted; this comprises the political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environment, similar to the climate section of a 5C analysis. The PESTLE analysis method provides a comprehensive analysis of external factors affecting the organization (Figure 8).

Except for Antarctica, Apple operates on practically every continent. Its offices, design studios, manufacturing centers, development centers, sales and marketing offices are located in countries such as the United States, China, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Brazil, India, Singapore,

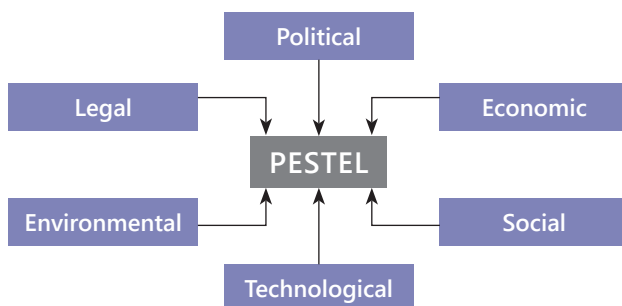


Fig. 8. PESTLE analysis [24]

Australia, Sweden, and many more, and the countries in which Apple operates have significant differences in their level of economic advancement and future economic growth trajectory due to diverse political, economic, and legal systems. This detailed PESTLE analysis of Apple examines how these important environmental factors impact the operations of Apple Inc.

Political Factors: Apple's products are primarily sold in developed countries with stable political settings. At the same time, the corporation is looking to expand its market share in emerging economies. However, some of these economies, especially the Middle East, have experienced turbulent political situations, which have affected Apple product sales.

Economic Factors: The economic stability of developed countries and the rapid growth of developing countries creates opportunities for Apple's expansion. For example, the high economic development rates of Asian countries present the potential for Apple to expand its income through sales in these international regions. In correspondence, higher disposable incomes create more opportunities to sell the company's relatively high-priced technology products.

However, while exploring all these economic opportunities, it is crucial to keep in mind all the competitive forces of the international markets. Multinational companies like Samsung and Huawei have introduced a much more affordable cost for their tech products, creating a challenge for Apple when penetrating the Asian market, which has higher growth rates and great opportunities due to its premium pricing policy.

A strong US currency may cause exchange rates to rise, making it more expensive for Apple to trade in most principal markets like Europe and China. Also, due to the Covid-19 pandemic across the world, economies have suffered, job losses have occurred, and considering the high price point of Apple products, this would always be an important factor.

Social factors: The changes in social circumstances, particularly the lifestyles of consumers, is a great opportunity to increase Apple's revenue and sales, and as the needs of consumers change, Apple has become highly innovative to support modern lifestyle. The company has recorded its ubiquity all over the international markets.

Despite so many opportunities, Apple faces the social threat of opposition against its business operations. Anti-Apple sentiments arise because of the rising challenges in business disciplines, like some external repair services. Moral concerns about Apple's assembling in China could restrain its items' appeal among socially-cognizant buyers. And to improve its service, Apple has been rediscovering strategies and always adopts a customer-centric approach. The company's internal cultural approach must align with the socio-cultural trends influencing the global market.

Technological Factors: Technology changes have greater influences on Apple Inc's operations. Changes in tech-

nology are both rapid and highly unforeseeable. The increasing technological integration on business presents a growth opportunity for Apple Inc. by extending its technology services to more customers and institutions.

Apple faces major competition from Samsung, Microsoft, Intel, Dell, and some other companies because these companies have developed innovative products at relatively lower prices. Consequently, Apple has reacted to the competition by introducing advanced versions of its existing products. Because technology has a short lifespan, Apple needs to constantly update its products to beat its competitors easily. So far, the company has been able to sustain innovation in products to differentiate it from other products in the market.

Legal Factors: Laws and regulations greatly influence the company, and they can pose a threat to the company if not properly complied with. In the digital age, governments' pressure on privacy has raised privacy rules on firms such as Apple Inc. If there is a likelihood of a data breach, then Apple may face lawsuits and lose its position; however, it could present an opportunity for Apple to boost its business through enhanced privacy measures. Apple recently entered the highly regulated financial services area with the launch of Apple Pay, which may raise the level of regulation and government monitoring it faces. By providing these financial services, Apple could potentially face increased levels of litigation. Apple derives the most of its revenue from a variety of products protected by intellectual property regulations, such as software and music, making the company particularly vulnerable to both piracy and prosecution.

Environmental Factors: Environmental trends have various consequences on the business. The business sustainability trend is an environmental element related to increasing preference among firms to embrace sustainable practices, based on concerns about the negative environmental impact of corporate operations.

The biggest environmental challenge facing Apple is the disposal of discarded or nonworking electronic products. The cost of disposing of these devices, particularly those with lithium batteries, could be prohibitively expensive, and Apple may be obliged to bear that cost due to environmental concerns about such devices in landfills.

Pollution and other environmental side effects from Chinese manufacturing facilities are becoming a growing worry, which could lead to higher regulation and excessive production costs in the future. Climate change caused by global warming could affect transoceanic shipping and Apple's supply chain. Apprehension about energy use and other side effects from data centers could cause increased regulation and costs.

Rapid and unpredictable changes in social lives, technology, and economic and political conditions have produced business environments that have compelled Apple to maintain its innovative trends in order to suit customers' wants and differentiate itself from the competition. The

company should thrive despite these challenges because it has demonstrated an impressive ability to adapt to a changing environment.

Conclusions

Marketing is dynamic because customers are dynamic (change is constant). Only a few markets remain unchanged over time, and companies that do not find new ways and develop newer ideas of doing things, simply become eroded over time by fresher ways of doing things or new trending cycles. The more understanding of customer and consumer behavior, the better companies can keep in touch with their markets; hence, the number of research companies invest into gathering data about customers in their market region. However, although technology alters the way in which market research is conducted, the vital role performed by people in assessing the nuances and cultural influences will still be vital, even if the skills have changed. Market research can be costly and expensive, but it does not have to be that for the smaller company. Informal methods of data collection, simply by keeping close to the key players in any channel, can pay dividends for the smaller company. The best market research is ongoing, continuous, and open-ended. Selecting international markets in which to operate is a crucial element of international activity.

Business is constantly changing. New products and new technologies are constantly innovated at all times. Market trends change quicker than most can keep up with, businesses that can keep up have an extra opportunity. By remaining open to new ideas and new points of view, businesses will be able to connect with partners and customers in their target nation. A careful approach to new ideas, implementing those that fit with business goals and discarding those that do not can help the business expansion plans run smoothly and it could also improve the business in its original market also.

COVID-19 had a huge influence on international marketing. The pandemic has changed the international marketing of organizations and industries. The existing presumptions surrounding the response of individuals in particular markets have been inherently challenged. Some sphere received additional profit (food delivery, taxi) some were bankrupted. International marketing should develop new approaches to the old customers. Navigating international marketing during a pandemic should be challenged, especially when every country and the individual region has been impacted differently. From travel restrictions to social and working restrictions.

Within this new international environment, multinational corporations and global brands must discover how to manage unique and unpredictable challenges, and international marketing research and practice has a very important role to play from various perspectives.

So, among multinational corporation Apple was the most interesting for is. We compare it also with others company and can say that despite the market dominance of competing PC makers such as Lenovo, HP Inc., Dell, and Asus, Apple's Mac division has maintained solid sales over the years. We also mad SWOT and PESTLE analysis which show that Apple has a numerous advantage, but at the same time it should solve some problems. Some of Apple's weaknesses include the high-priced products. Also, some products mentioned in the article makes them difficult for other users to connect with Apple products. Some versions of Apple's iPod and iPhone had apparent defects, which hurt product sales and the company's reputation for excellent product performance.

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Теофілус С. Ч., Чаплинська Н. М.

Вплив пандемії КОВІД-19 на формування міжнародного маркетингу (на прикладі компанії "Apple Inc.")

Хоча зміни завжди були звичним терміном і явищем, зміни на ринку під час пандемії COVID-19 ніколи не були такими складними чи такими швидкими. Компанії, які працювали або мали намір працювати на міжнародному ринку, прагнуть адаптуватися до змін шляхом ретельного аналізу, комплексного підходу та моніторингу ефективності бізнесу. Міжнародне маркетингове середовище завжди було сповнене невизначеності та викликів, а під час COVID-19 час став складнішим. Тому ця тема стала основною метою даного дослідження.

Зміни, що відбулися на міжнародному ринку, будь то культурні, демографічні чи технологічні, вплинули та продовжують впливати на реакцію клієнтів і споживачів і роблять конкуренцію на міжнародному ринку більш гострою.

Конкуруючи на міжнародному ринку, компанії повинні бути швидшими за своїх конкурентів у прогнозуванні потреб ринку. Вони повинні зосередитися на забезпеченні своїх продуктів і послуг доданою вартістю, щоб зробити їх максимально привабливими для потенційних клієнтів і здатними відповідати та перевищувати очікування. Ці підходи були проаналізовані на прикладі діяльності компанії Apple Inc. Для аналізу переваг, недоліків, можливостей і загроз був проведений SWOT аналіз. PESTLE аналіз показав як політичні, соціальні, економічні, правові та екологічні фактори впливають на компанію Apple Inc.

Незважаючи на те, що світ постійно розвивається з точки зору інформаційних технологій, інноваційних та передових методів організації маркетингових підходів (таких як горизонтальна організація, мережева організація, віртуальна організація), для проведення безперебійної міжнародної торгівлі міжнародному маркетингу не можна бути інертним. Він повинен постійно удосконалюватись.

Ключові слова: міжнародний маркетинг, міжнародна експансія, маркетингова діяльність, розвиток бізнесу, проблеми та виклики.