ABSTRACT

Information and Marketing Strategy: The Case of the Pharmaceutical Industry in Trinidad and Tobago

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This dissertation contends that knowledge of the local marketing environment of a Less Developed Country (LDC) is strategic for a global firm's success in this environment. However, local environmental information of marketing strategy value is generally unavailable to a global firm entering a LDC market. The firm will therefore adopt a globally standardized marketing strategy upon entry into the market. The firm's strategy is predicted to undergo transformation, from global standardization to local custom-tailoring occurs as the firm acquires knowledge of the local environment. Local custom-tailoring is proposed as the preferred strategy for satisfying customer's requirements and enhancing firm profits. Hence the firms that have been in the LDC market the longest are expected to display a local custom-tailored strategy while the relatively new entrants to the market are expected to exhibit a globally standardized strategy. Firms with an intermediate experience in the LDC are expected to exhibit a variable mixture of local custom-tailoring and standardization. Their strategy is thought to be in the process of transformation.

This hypothesis is tested with global pharmaceutical firms operating in Trinidad and Tobago. Because of the lack of prior resea4rch on this topic, an exploratory approach is used to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the

relationship between information and firm strategy in a LDC. Hierarchical Cluster Analysis is used to develop a marketing strategy typology of the branches of global pharmaceutical firms in Trinidad and Tobago. Strategy types of firms were then examined for evidence of transformation and specifically, "age in the market" related transformation.

The findings did not generally support strategy transformation. A firm's strategy was not related to its age and experience in the market as proposed. The findings noted firms' concern with the lack of information of marketing strategy value in the local environment. In a high middle-income LDC such as Trinidad and Tobago, the unavailability of marketing information in the environment was due to the underdevelopment of the local database rather than that of the unavailability of computer-based information technology.

Recommendation is made for collation of all primary data sources and the establishment of a Marketing Information System. Furthermore, a Pharmaceutical Marketing Information System using local databases is proposed and outlined. The findings are expected to have implications for the training of management and for public policy. Directions for future research are also outlined.

Keywords: Keven M. Antoine; less developed countries (LDC); marketing strategy typology; marketing strategy decentering; marketing strategy transformation; pharmaceutical marketing information systems.