

International product adaptation and performance: A systematic analysis of the literature and agenda for future research

WEB APPENDIX

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Web Appendix A: Overview of past systematic reviews and meta-analyses examining international product adaptation (IPA)

Authors	Articles reviewed	Study focus	Objectives	Aspects analyzed	Definition of IPA ^A	Product-specific ^B aspects examined
Systematic Literature Reviews						
Mandler et al. (2021)	68 /53 IPA articles ^C	Papers that examine the relationship between process and/or marketing mix a/s ^D and performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Systematic review of the a/s – performance literature - Development of a future research agenda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Theories adopted - Context - Characteristics pertaining to the constructs (which a/s aspects are studied) and the relationships (including, independent, mediating, and dependent variables modelled in a/s models) - Methodology 	Implied definition: Changes in the marketing mix (with product being a part of it) to address foreign market needs and preferences or to comply with market regulations.	Studies that cover the product separately or alongside other elements of the marketing mix
Schmid and Kotulla (2011)	32 /17 IPA articles	Fit-based international marketing a/s studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Systematic review of fit-based a/s studies - Development of a theoretical model with product-specific propositions to be tested 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fit concepts studied and relevant contingencies reported - Situational factors - Strategy elements examined - Performance outcomes (financial and non-financial) - Theories adopted 	Implied definition: Product adaptation pertains to changes of a product's name, features, design, quality and packaging across markets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The product adaptation elements studied within the sample are identified - Product a/s performance contingencies and contingencies related to the whole marketing mix (including product)
Birnik & Bowman (2007)	84 /26 IPA articles	Multinational corporations' marketing mix a/s studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Systematic literature review of marketing mix a/s practice - Creation of actionable managerial best-practice implications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Managerial marketing mix design factors (e.g., which aspects to adapt) - Marketing mix a/s (what is standardized across the program or process) - Contextual influences - Mechanisms generating performance - Factors supporting strategic choices regarding marketing mix standardization - Factors supporting standardization choices and performance implications 	Implied definition: changes in the marketing mix across countries, among which some pertain to brand and product characteristics. Measured on a continuum.	Product elements mostly adapted within the marketing mix
Meta-analyses						
Tan and Souza (2013)	108 /Unknown no of IPA articles	Drivers and consequences of international marketing program a/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a literature-based environment-strategy-performance framework to guide the metanalysis - Quantitatively analyze the drivers and outcomes of international marketing standardization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Antecedents effects on marketing program standardization - Strategy (and correlations between the marketing mix elements) - Effects of the standardization of the marketing mix on performance - Study characteristic as moderating variables 	Implied definition: Changes or standardization of the marketing mix, including the product element, in relation to the foreign market.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Drivers of product standardization - Relationships of product standardization with other mix elements - Effects of product standardization on overall, international, financial, and strategic, performance and mediating effect of price adaptation^E

Appendix A continued

Shoham (2003)	17 /Unknown no of IPA articles	A/s of the marketing mix and export planning - performance studies	- Create a conceptual framework linking a/s with objective and subjective export performance - Test the framework on the basis of a meta-analysis	- Marketing mix a/s elements links with subjective and objective export performance - Export planning links with subjective and objective export performance	Implied definition: Degree of change (standardization) of the components of the marketing mix for export markets, with the product element being one of them.	Impact of product standardization on objective and subjective performance ^F
Theodosiou and Leonidou (2003)	36 /Unknown no of IPA articles	Empirical works on marketing mix a/s of manufacturing firms	- Review and synthesize the literature of a/s of the marketing mix in a conceptual model comprising antecedents and consequences. - Analyze this model through a meta-analysis.	- Antecedent factors - Degree of marketing strategy adaptation - Link between marketing strategy adaptation and performance outcomes	Implied definition: Standardized or adjusted marketing mix elements, including the product, as part of the marketing strategy.	- Drivers of product a/s - Product elements mostly adapted/standardized within the marketing mix - Effects of product a/s on different performance outcomes ^G
Leonidou et al. (2002)	17 /Unknown no of IPA articles	Studies on marketing strategy (including marketing mix a/s) – export performance relationship (for export manufacturing firms)	- Produce a synthesis of the literature on aspects influencing export performance in a conceptual model - Analysis of this model by means of meta-analysis	- Fieldwork characteristics (e.g., geographical focus) - Sampling and data collection information - Relationship of marketing strategy with different performance measures - Relationship of marketing strategy with different performance measures by study characteristics	"Degree to which the firm's actual and augmented product elements are adapted for export markets to accommodate differences in environmental forces, consumer behavior, usage patterns, and competitive situations"	- Links of product adaptation with overall and different export performance variables ^H - Product adaptation effects on export performance for different study characteristics, namely, time of study, geographic focus, and product type

A: IPA = International Product Adaptation.

B: We report on insights that are related to IPA, in that they relate to the overall marketing mix or product adaptation/standardization.

C: The IPA article count incorporates articles that cover IPA either separately or as part of the overall marketing mix.

D: a/s = adaptation/standardization.

E: Tan & Souza (2013) find that product adaptation is positively related to overall international performance and financial performance, but indirectly related to strategic performance.

F: Shoham (1993) finds that the degree of product adaptation is positively related to objective export performance outcomes, but not related to subjective performance.

G: Theodosiou and Leonidou (2003) indicate that performance depends on the circumstances firms face in foreign markets.

H: Leonidou et al. (2002) find that greater levels of product adaptation are positively related to export sales performance outcome, but not to export profitability outcome.

Web Appendix B: Literature search process and parameters

The literature is replete with work that uses terms overlapping with many of the keywords relevant to this study. For instance, a search of WoS for papers that contain the words such as *international* AND *product* AND *adapt** or *international* AND *product* AND *standardi*¹* or variations of these (e.g., replacing *international* with the terms *global*, *export**, *foreign*, and *regional* respectively; replacing the word *product* with the term *market**; and replacing the terms *adapt** and *standardi** with the term *strateg**) returns 175,723 hits. Often, researchers use variations of terms such as *global marketing strategy* to refer to product adaptation or standardization decisions. However, many of these papers are not relevant to the current study. Accordingly, to identify relevant papers and filter out non-relevant studies, we employed the following series of search criteria to identify papers to be included in the study. First, we instructed WoS to select papers that contain the following unique terms in the title, abstract, keywords, or main text: *product adapt**, *product standardi**, *service adapt**, *service standardi**, *market* program* adapt**, *market* program* standardi**, *locali* strateg**. We further specified a series of potentially overlapping searches using the 11 word groups:

Group (1): *export**, *global*, *regional*, *international*, *multinational*, *foreign*, *product*.

Group (2): *market* adapt**, *market* standardi**.

Group (3): *adapt**, *standardi**.

Group (4): *export**, *global*, *regional*, *international*, *multinational*, *foreign*.

Group (5): *product strateg**, *market* strateg**.

¹ The asterisks [*] wildcard ensures that different spellings of the same word are picked up, as well as different word endings: e.g., adapt, adapts, adapting, adapted, adaptations.

Group (6): *market* decision**.

Group (7): *strateg**.

Group (8): *market* mix adapt**, *market* mix standardi**, *market* adapt**, *market* standardi**, *product adapt**, *product standardi**, *brand* adapt**, *brand* standardi**, *brand-name adapt**, *brand-name standardi**.

Group (9): *translat**, *brand name*.

Group (10): *market* mix strateg**.

Group (11): *strateg* adapt**, *strateg* standardi**, *standardi* strateg**, *adapt* strateg**.

The purpose of our search strategy was to identify papers that contained at least one term from:

- group 1, immediately followed by any term from group 2 (e.g., *international market* adapt**),
- group 3 and any term constructed using a term from group 4 immediately followed by a term from group 5 (e.g., *adapt* AND global market* strateg**),
- group 3 and any term constructed using a term from group 4 immediately followed by the term from group 6 (e.g., *adapt* AND export* market* decision**),
- group 3 and any term constructed using a term from group 1 immediately followed by the term from group 7 (e.g., *adapt* AND product strateg**),
- group 8 and at least one term from group 4, or both terms from group 9 (e.g., *global AND market* mix adapt**),

- group 4, immediately followed by any term in group 10 (e.g., *foreign market* mix strateg**), and
- group 4 and any term from group 11 (e.g., *regional AND standardi* strateg**).

Following Speldekamp et al. (2020), the keywords and terms emerged in an iterative fashion, based on our reading of the literature and the differing terminologies used to denote adaptation or standardization of products in firms' international operations.

Third, to narrow down the search, we focused on high quality articles published in reputable academic journals listed on the Chartered Association of Business Schools academic journal quality guide and excluded articles published in other ways (e.g., conference proceedings, books, book chapters, monographs, and other outlets). The approach adopted in this study is consistent with earlier systematic reviews in the International Business (IB) domain that limited their search to studies that appear in a restricted set of IB journals to ensure inclusion of only high quality and relevant studies. For instance, Christofi et al. (2021), Gaur & Kumar (2018) and Guercini & Milanesi (2020) limited their search of papers to a set of nine IB-related journal outlets. However, given the interdisciplinary nature of the performance implications of international product adaptation, some relevant studies were published in other business-focused journals. Accordingly, we conducted a comprehensive search across Business and Management journals. Besides, to ensure inclusion of both early and contemporary research studies in our search, which occurred on November 28, 2022, we did not impose a cut-off date. As a result, we identified a total of 466 articles.

Web Appendix C: Product adaptation studies: chronological breakdown

Journal N	Journal (number of papers)	Authors	
1980s	2	Journal of International Business Studies (2)	Cooper & Kleinschmidt (1985) Kotabe & Omura (1989)
		International Business Review (2)	
1990s	13	International Marketing Review (3)	Koh (1991) Samiee & Roth (1992)
		Journal of Business Research (1)	Kaynak & Kuan (1993)
		Journal of Global Marketing (1)	Carpano et al. (1994); Cavusgil & Zou (1994); Shipchandler et al. (1994); Shoham & Albaum (1994)
		Journal of International Business Studies (1)	Carpano & Chrisman (1995); Johnson & Arunthanes (1995) Shoham (1996b)
		Journal of International Marketing (2)	Zou et al. (1997) Kotabe & Wheeler (1998)
		Journal of International Management (1)	Shoham (1999)
		Journal of Marketing (2)	
		Academy of Management Journal (1)	
		European Journal of Marketing (4)	Aulakh et al. (2000); O'Donell & Jeong (2000); Stewart & McAuley (2000)
		International Journal of Research in Marketing (1)	Albaum & Tse (2001); Knight (2001); Subramaniam & Venkatraman (2001)
2000s	34	International Marketing Review (5)	Alashban et al. (2002); Zou & Cavusgil (2002)
		Journal of Business Research (1)	Chung (2003); Han & Kim (2003); O'Cass & Julian (2003); Waheeduzzaman & Dube (2003)
		Journal of Global Marketing (1)	Calantone et al. (2004); Lado et al. (2004); Lee & Griffith (2004); Özsomer & Simonin (2004); Subramaniam & Hewett (2004); Townsend et al. (2004)
		Journal of International Business Studies (2)	Brouthers & Nakos (2005); Chung (2005)
		Journal of International Management (1)	Calantone et al. (2006); Dow (2006); Katsikeas et al. (2006); Xu et al. (2006)
		Journal of International Marketing (9)	Myers et al. (2007) Aulakh & Gencturk (2008); Evans et al. (2008); Lages et al. (2008); Solberg & Durrieu (2008)
		Journal of Management Studies (1)	Chung (2009); Hultman et al. (2009); Schilke et al. (2009); Sousa & Bradley (2009); Sousa & Lengler (2009)
		Journal of Marketing (1)	
		Journal of Marketing Management (1)	

	Journal of Product Innovation Management (1)	
	Journal of Small Business Management (1)	
	Journal of World Business (1)	
	Management International Review (1)	
	Strategic Management Journal (2)	
	European Journal of International Management (2)	
	European Journal of Marketing (3)	
	Industrial Marketing Management (1)	
	International Business Review (6)	Chung (2010); Erdogmus et al. (2010); Li (2010); Kustin (2010); Navarro et al. (2010a); Navarro et al. (2010b); Shi et al. (2010); Tantong et al. (2010)
	International Marketing Review (5)	Wu (2011)
	Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing (1)	Chung, Wang, & Huang (2012); Chung, Rose & Huang (2012); Gabrielsson et al. (2012); Olejnik & Swoboda (2012)
	Journal of Business Research (3)	Brouthers et al. (2013); Magnusson et al. (2013); Navarro-García et al. (2013); Swoboda & Elsner (2013)
2010s 42	Journal of Global Marketing (1)	Gilbert & Heinecke (2014); Gnizy et al. (2014); Navarro-García et al. (2014); Slangen & Dikova (2014); Zeriti et al. (2014)
	Journal of International Business Studies (1)	Busnaina & Woodall (2015); Khan et al. (2015); Fuchs & Köstner (2015)
	Journal of International Marketing (10)	Fuchs & Köstner (2016); Giachetti (2016); Navarro-García et al. (2016a); Navarro-García et al. (2016b)
	Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice (1)	Efrat et al. (2017); Hollender et al. (2017); Khan et al. (2017); Trąpczyński & Gorynia (2017); Westjohn & Magnusson (2017)
	Journal of Product & Brand Management (2)	Swoboda et al. (2018)
	Journal of Retailing (1)	Assadinia et al. (2019); Asseraf et al. (2019); Asseraf and Shoham (2019); Lee and Griffith (2019); Nath et al. (2019); Samiee & Chirapanda (2019); Venaik & Midgley (2019)
	Journal of World Business (1)	
	Management International Review (3)	
	Management Research Review (1)	
2020s 9	Global Strategy Journal (1)	Baker et al. (2020); Bauer et al. (2020); Gao et al. (2020); Khan (2020)
	International Business Review (1)	Nath et al. (2021)

International Journal of Innovation Management (1)	Khoirunnisa & Almahendra (2022); Song (2022); Wang et al. (2022); Zahoor & Lew (2022)
Journal of Business Research (1)	
Journal of International Entrepreneurship (1)	
Journal of International Marketing (1)	
International Small Business Journal (1)	
Journal of Knowledge Management (1)	
Journal of Marketing (1)	
Total	100

Web Appendix D: Detailed coding procedures

To generate coding categories, we drew from two contrasting, but complementary, approaches as described by Gaur & Kumar (2018). First, we leveraged the knowledge of field experts (i.e., the author team that holds deep collective knowledge base of the subjects under review). Expert knowledge, a fundamental element in coding scheme development (Gaur & Kumar, 2018), was additionally extracted from the extensive body of literature that explores international product adaptation and performance, offering an existing theoretical and empirical base to draw insights from. Applying these insights and tacit knowledge and keeping the objective of the review clearly in the foreground, the author team created a set of initial categories. In consultation with fellow field experts, the initial coding scheme was based on certain known theoretical, operational and empirical modeling considerations, such as dimensionality and variations in the treatment of international product adaptation, level of analysis, outcomes, and moderating effects. We used Katsikeas et al.'s (2016, p. 2) “marketing-performance outcome chain” as a framework to organize performance outcomes. The authors of this work identify a set of core building blocks for their performance framework, comprising operational and organizational performance elements, which are in turn supported by performance-adjacent firm-level factors. We also employed Venkatraman's (1989) classification of fit-based relationships (i.e., fit as moderation, mediation; matching, gestalt, profile deviation and covariance) to classify the effects moderating the link between international product adaptation and performance. These aspects formed an initial set of categories for examining the literature. Second, through an iterative process involving both deductive and inductive methods, as described by Gaur & Kumar (2018), the initial codes were refined and re-refined until the final coding scheme was confirmed.

While coding, members of the author team were in regular communication to ensure that all coders understood the coding rules. Other best practices suggested by Sinkovics &

Reuber (2021) were followed and included: giving each article equal attention; following a thorough, inclusive, and comprehensive process; checking categories for coherence, consistency, and distinctiveness; and finally, acknowledging the active and reflective role of the researchers. The coding approach adopted presents the “sample articles in a manageable, meaningful, and structured manner” enabling an evaluation of the “state and knowledge structure of the field more accurately” (Gaur & Kumar, 2018, p. 282).

Web Appendix E: International product adaptation elements examined

Element Label	Count*	Category				
		Product	Service	Brand	Retail	Other
Product design	40	x				
Product packaging	33	x				
Product / brand name	32	x		x		
Product positioning	21	x				
Product quality	21	x				
Product label / labeling	18	x				
Product features	17	x				
Product warranties	12	x				
Product (general)	10	x				
Product characteristics	10	x				
Product line	8	x				
Product style / styling	7	x				
Number of items in product line	6	x				
Product / service mix	6	x	x			
Number of product lines	4	x				
Product performance	4	x				
Product attributes	3	x				
Product components	3	x				
Core design	2	x				
Life-cycle of products / services	2	x	x			
Marketing Processes	2	x				
Product color	2	x				
Product constituent ingredients	2	x				
Product guarantees	2	x				
Product specifications	2	x				
Product strategy	2	x				
Design	1	x				
Diversity of products / services	1	x	x			
Durability	1	x				
Manufacturing	1	x				
Newness of products / services	1	x	x			
Number of products / services	1	x	x			
Product appearance	1	x				
Product container	1	x				
Product contents	1	x				
Product description	1	x				
Product formulation	1	x				
Product function	1	x				
Product measurement units	1	x				
Product peripherals	1	x				
Product range	1	x				
Product size	1	x				
Product texture	1	x				
Raw materials	1	x				
Sustainability elements	1	x				
Service / core service	10		x			
After-sales services	8		x			
Pre-sales services	3		x			
Product related services	1		x			



Quality of auxiliary services	1	x		
Service advice	1	x		
Service design	1	x		
Service infrastructure	1	x		
Service training	1	x		
Service trouble-shooting	1	x		
Branding	6		x	
Brand	5		x	
Brand development	1		x	
Brand image	1		x	
Retail assortment	2			x
Customer facilities	1			x
Retail banner	1			x
Retail image	1			x
Retail store design	1			x
Retail store type	1			x
Store atmosphere	1			x
Store layout	1			x
Adaptation costs	1			x

*Count represents number of studies that include the element in their assessment of product adaptation

Web Appendix F: International product adaptation quantity: an example of differences in quantity

When a firm adapts products, it does so across parts of its product portfolio. It produces a product (or more than one product) and when it adapts the product for a foreign market, it creates one or more new versions of the product. At the level of the entire firm, then, adaptation quantity refers to the total number of product versions created and marketed across the firm's entire product portfolio. The following scenario shows how two contrasting but near identical international businesses might have different amounts of quantity of adaptation. Figure F1 presents Firm 1 which sells five products (products A through to E) and sells each of them in three international markets. However, the firm has a low quantity of product adaptation because it sells only one adapted version of each of its products to its international product-markets. For example, for Product A, the firm produces and sells version A0 in its domestic market (say), and sells A1, a modified version, in all three of its international markets. The same happens for each of its five products, and so in total, Firm 1 is producing and marketing five adapted products across its three international markets.

Figure F1. Firm 1: Low quantity of product adaptation: one adaptation per product

	Domestic Market	Inter-national Market 1	Inter-national Market 2	Inter-national Market 3
Product A – Version:	A0	A1		
Product B – Version:	B0	B1		
Product C – Version:	C0	C1		
Product D – Version:	D0	D1		
Product E – Version:	E0	E1		
	 5 original products	 5 adapted versions		

Similarly, Figure F2 presents Firm 2 which also sells five products (products F through to J), and also sells them in three international markets. However, Firm 2 has a higher quantity of adaptation because it not only sells product F0 in its domestic market, it also sells F1 (an adapted version of F0) in international market 1, and sells F2 (a differently adapted version of F0) in international market 2. Furthermore, the firm segments market 3, and consequently sells two adapted versions (F3a and F3b) of F0 in market 3. Thus, versions F1, F2, F3a and F3b are all adapted versions of F0, but are different from each other. Following a similar approach for each of the firms' five products, Firm 2 produces twenty adapted product versions across its three international markets.

Of course, in addition to calculating adaptation quantity at the firm level, adaptation quantity can be calculated for any relevant sub-elements of the firm. For instance, one could calculate the total number

of product versions of products in a product line, the total number of product versions across a subsidiary's entire product portfolio, or the total number of product versions across an SBU's entire product range.

Figure F2. Firm 2: High quantity of product adaptation: multiple adaptations per product

	Domestic Market	Inter-national Market 1	Inter-national Market 2	Inter-national Market 3
Product F – Version:	F0	F1	F2	F3a, F3b
Product G – Version:	G0	G1	G2	G3a, G3b
Product H – Version:	H0	H1	H2	H3a, H3a
Product I – Version:	I0	I1	I2	I3a, I3b
Product J – Version:	J0	J1	J2	J3a, J3b

5 original products
20 adapted versions

Web Appendix G: Direct relationships only by decade and by performance outcome*

	Description	Total	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s	2020s	Examples
By decade	Negative	37	1	4	16	16	0	Kotabe & Omura (1989); Zou et al. (1997); Swoboda et al. (2018)
	Not significant	92	0	23	37	29	3	Samice & Roth (1992); O’Cass & Julian (2003); Xu et al. (2006)
	Positive	87	0	37	28	19	3	Kaynak & Kuan (1993); Calantone et al. (2004); Bauer et al. (2020)
	Total	216	1	64	81	64	6	
		Total	Customer	Product Market	Accounting	Company	Financial Market	Other
By performance outcome	Negative	37	10	12	6	5	0	4
	Not significant	92	10	25	36	12	0	9
	Positive	87	0	47	14	11	0	15
	Total	216	20	84	56	28	0	28

* Numbers do not match Table 4’s totals since results for multiple kinds of product adaptation and for multiple samples are sometimes reported in the same study.

Web Appendix H: Fit as moderation studies: separating direct effects and moderator effects

Direct effects within fit as moderation models	Total	Customer	Product Market	Accounting	Company	Financial Market	Other
Negative	7	0	0	4	0	0	3
Not significant	33	0	6	20	3	0	4
Positive	14	0	8	0	2	0	4
Total	54	0	14	24	5	0	11
Moderation effects							
Moderator not significant	32	0	11	13	6	0	2
Total number of significant moderator effects	59	0	21	19	10	0	9
<i>Moderator significantly decreases direct effect *</i>	30	0	7	12	7	0	4
<i>Moderator significantly increases direct effect **</i>	29	0	14	7	3	0	5
Total	91	0	32	32	16	0	11

* Or turns a non-significant direct effect negative.

** Or turns a non-significant direct effect positive.

Web Appendix I: Other fit studies[#]

Count of variables used in other fit studies (excluding fit as moderation)

	Mediation* ^A	Matching* ^{A B}	Gestalt ^C	Profile deviation	Covariance
External: Macroenvironment					
Transportation costs		1			
Tarif barriers		1			
GNP per capita		1			
Transportation time		1			
Economic environment		3 ^{NS}		1	
Regulatory environment		3 ^{NS}		1	
Technological intensity/velocity		3		1	
Customs and traditions		1			
Sociocultural factors		2 ^{NS}		1	
External global pressures		1			
External: Microenvironment					
Market homogeneity		1 ^D			
Competitive intensity		4 ^{NS}		1	
Psychic distance		1			
Global size of competition		1			
Local size of competition		1			
Customer characteristics		3 ^{NS}			
Marketing infrastructure		2 ^{NS}			
Stage of product life cycle		2		1	
Market characteristics		1		1	
Market munificence		1 ^{NS}			
Customer characteristics				1	
Marketing intermediaries				1	
Internal: Strategy					
Adaptation (including product)			6		1 ^{NS}
Promotion adaptation			3		
Price adaptation			1		
Positioning adaptation			1		
Place adaptation			1		
Policy adaptation			1		
People adaptation			1		
Export commitment		1			
Export scope		1 ^{NS}			
Segmentation			1		
World focus			1		
Geographic scope			1		
Export scope			1		
Domestic scope			1		
Value offered			1		
Domestic product strategy			1		
Product support			1		
Product differentiation			1		
Price			1		
Product quality			1		
Promotion importance			1		
Distribution importance			1		
Price importance			1		
Product importance			1		
Cost plus pricing			1		
Internal: Structure					
Product development capability	1				
Subsidiary legitimacy	1				
Subsidiary synergy	1				
Global organizational structure	1			1	1 ^{NS}

Global management processes	1		1	1 ^{NS}
Marketing integration		1 ^D		
Country of operation		1 ^{NS}		
Support for foreign channels			1	
Local production			1	
HQ-Local decision making			1	
Internal: Firm characteristics				
Foreign business experience		1 ^{NS}		
B2B firm		1 ^{NS}		
Manufacturing firm		1 ^{NS}		
Internal: Product characteristics				
Duration of export venture		1		
Product experience			1	

#: numbers represent the number of instances the fit variable has been used across these remaining fit studies.

*: significant (mediator or matching variable) in all instances unless specified otherwise.

A: number of times variable is used as a mediator.

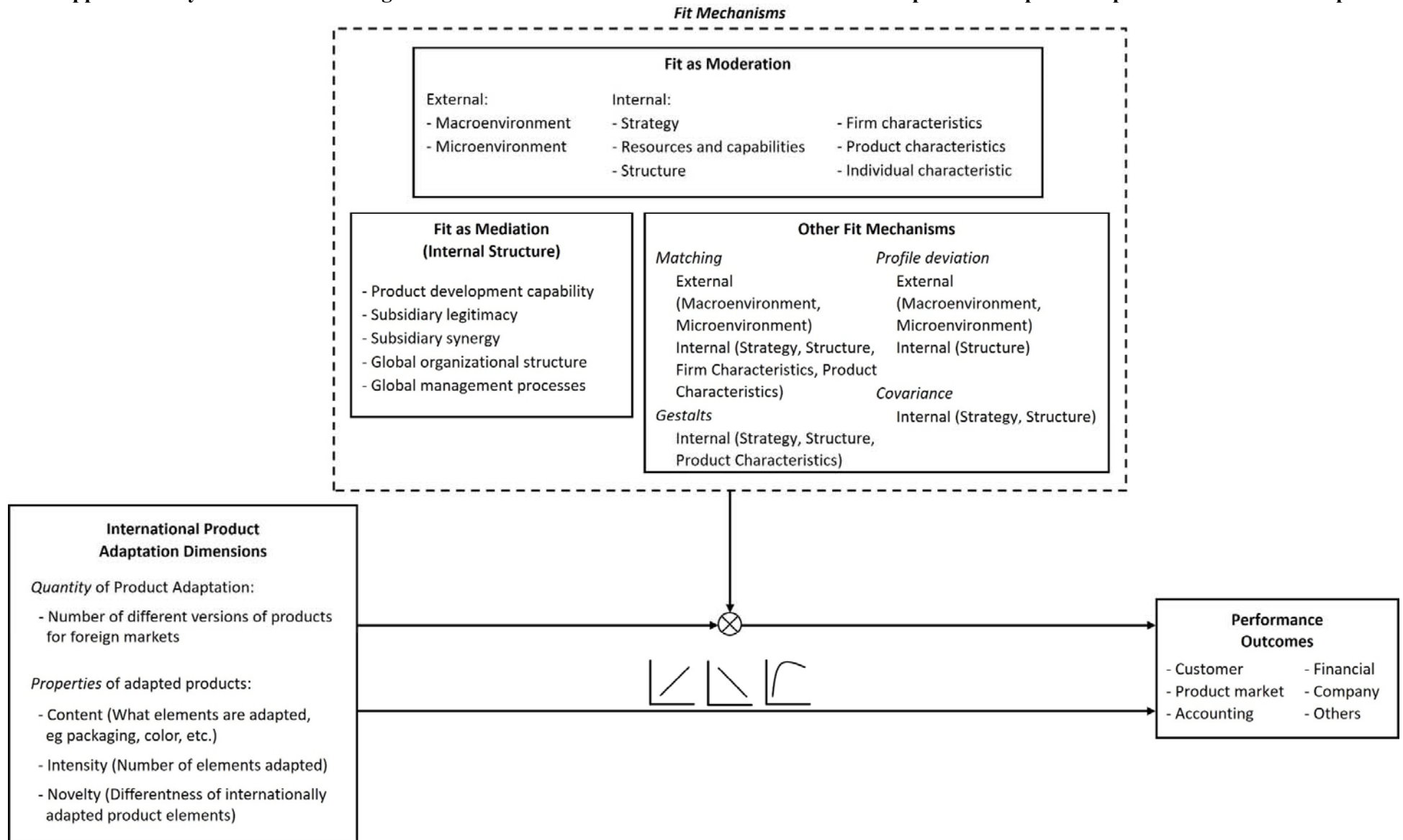
B: number of times variable is used in the creation of residuals unless specified as D.

C: clusters / groups / archetypes are formed using product adaptation as a defining variable and a selection from these variables.

D: matching as deviation score.

NS: not significant in at least one study.

Web Appendix J: Synthesis of the findings in a multi-dimensional framework of the international product adaptation – performance relationship



WEB APPENDIX K. Additional future research directions

Theme 1: Multidimensional nature of product adaptation

Develop operational definitions of the different dimensions of international product adaptation, making them objective where possible.

Develop theory about the consequences of each of the different dimensions of international product adaptation.

Develop separate measuring instruments that capture each of the different dimensions of international product adaptation.

Empirically model the dimensions of international product adaptation as independent variables, each with their own potential networks of causation.

How are the dimensions of international product adaptation inter-related?

How does novelty emerge: what kinds of combination of elements and intensity result in high levels of novelty?

How are the dimensions of international product adaptation related to performance?

(How) do the dimensions interact with each other to shape success?

Which product and service elements can benefit most (in terms of performance) from careful adaptation or standardization?

Theme 2: Other kinds of adaptation

In pursuing Theme 1, develop theories and measures that recognize that international product adaptation may have causal forces that are separate and different from the causal forces attributable to other kinds of marketing adaptation (i.e., price, promotion, distribution).

When empirically assessing the performance consequences of product adaptation, control for the causal consequences of other kinds of marketing adaptation.

Explain the causal relationships between different facets of marketing adaptation. For instance, do different kinds of product adaptation strategy cause adaptations to other marketing mix elements?

Theme 3: Multi-level relationships and frames of reference

When developing operational definitions of the different dimensions of international product adaptation, explicitly build into each definition a unique and single level of analysis. For example, one kind of firm-level quantity of adaptation might be defined as the number of different markets in which adaptations are undertaken. Another might be the total number of products that are adapted across the firm's international operations. The two measures are conceptually distinct absolute quantities, and differences in their causal forces need to be explored.

In developing theories of the interactions between the dimensions of product adaptation, incorporate multi-level thinking, recognizing that some aspects of adaptation (e.g., within a specific product-market) have consequences at the firm-level, and that firm-level actions have product market implications.

Develop and test theory using different frames of reference to develop a wide lens picture of how product adaptation, viewed from different perspectives, shapes firm outcomes. For instance, do the consequences of adapting products depend on what the competition is doing in terms of adapting their products? Frames of reference that include competitors may be helpful here.

Theme 4: Performance

Answer Ryans et al.'s (2003) call for research that explains the different ways that international product adaptation enhances value delivery capability: to the customer, the firm, other stakeholders.

Accordingly, explore more deeply the customer-related outcomes of adapting products. Do the current direct effects findings, which fail to show any positive relationship between international product adaptation and customer performance, hold more generally?

What are the implications of the relationship between international product adaptation and customer performance for the organizational performance chain and ultimately for organizational success? For many international businesses, accounting-related performance outcomes will be critical, yet their relationships with international product adaptation do not appear to be consistently significant. Is this observation generalizable to the multiple facets of product adaptation? For instance, does it hold for quantity of adaptation and accounting-related performance? Intensity and accounting-related performance? And so on.

In exploring performance outcomes, core questions need to be explored, including identifying the broad costs of adaptation to the firm, and the broad sets of benefits.

Value delivery to external stakeholders needs to be explored, potentially using measures such as Tobin's q, stock returns, or shareholder returns figures.

Theme 5: Mechanisms and boundary conditions

International product adaptation's performance outcomes are most likely situation specific: but what are the most critical contexts and situations, and how do they come together to determine necessary levels of international product adaptation?

Theory development and the revealing of potential causal structures can be supported by greater use of configurational thinking tools (e.g., fsQCA: Fainshmidt et al. 2020) together with methods that can handle higher-dimensional interactions (e.g., LRMs: Baumgartner & Falk, 2023).

Configurational models that incorporate more than strategy variables are needed, especially those that model firm-level resources and capabilities and the external environment.

Fit as moderation and fit as matching approaches are powerful tools for theory testing, and so may be most usefully applied to dig deeper into findings emerging from exploratory approaches (e.g., fsQCA and LRMs) to the causal nature of international product adaptation.

Fit as covariation has barely been used, and efforts are needed to leverage this approach to determine its utility. The latter may require rethinking the application of higher-order common factor modelling (the method used by Xu et al. 2006) since the latter does not model differences in covariation in contingency factors across firms (the loadings produced are a constant across the sample), and so may not be best placed to provide the covariation information needed.

The core adaptation logics are that (a) benefits to adaptation (e.g., customer value) may be most salient over a limited range of heterogeneous markets, implying diminishing returns beyond a point, and (b) costs to adaptation (e.g., coordination, R&D) may escalate as adaptation increases. These provide the typical conditions to expect an invert U-shaped relationship (Haans et al., 2015) between adaptation and performance in many settings, and research is needed to explore this notion further.

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