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**MARKETING INTERVENTIONS IN THE POSITIONING STRATEGIES
OF GLOBAL RETAILERS**

RESUME

of a dissertation for the award of an educational and scientific doctoral degree
in Ph.D. program "Marketing"

SUPERVISOR:

Prof. Dr. Bistra Vasileva

The dissertation consists of 411 pages, of which:

Title page - 1 page

Introduction - 7 pages

Three chapters - 189 pages

Conclusion - 9 pages

List of references - 497 sources

Tables - 44

Figures - 57

Appendixes - 43

The dissertation work was discussed in the "Marketing" department at the University of Economics - Varna. The author is a full-time PhD student at the Department of Marketing at the University of Economics - Varna. Research and development were carried out at the same university.

The defense of the dissertation will take place on XX.XX.201X at XX:XX hours, in hall XXX of the University of Economics - Varna at a meeting of the Scientific Jury, appointed by order No. RD XX/XX of XX.XX.201X of the Rector of the University of Economics - Varna.

The defense materials are available to those interested on the website of the University of Economics - Varna, www.ue-varna.bg.

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Title: Marketing Interventions in the Positioning Strategies of Global Retailers

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I. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISSERTATION

1. Relevance of research on marketing interventions in positioning strategies of global retailers

The topicality of the issues of the present study is determined by the active transformation processes in the global retail industry over the past few decades. Analysis of global retail trends reveals two key directions of development. First of all, the retail industry is one of the industries most affected by globalization, with large retail companies realizing an increasing share of their sales on global markets (Bozhinova, 2012 p.7; Shetty et al., 2020). Intense competition in the global retail industry (GRI) forces companies to implement more technology and innovation in order to maintain their competitive advantage, market share and customers, while looking for opportunities to enter new markets and serve new market segments. Secondly, over the past decade, online commerce has been developing faster and faster. Smart devices and mobile online commerce are coming in, exponentially increasing online ordering and purchasing (Har et al., 2022). The Covid-19 pandemic is a catalyst for changes that have already begun. Online trade occupies an increasing share of sales in the global retail market, and the trend is that it will continue to increase in the future. According to Statista, global online commerce amounted to 1.3 trillion USD in 2014, increasing 4 times by 2021 and reaching 5.2 trillion USD. It is projected to exceed USD 8 trillion in 2026 (Statista.com, 2023). One of the leading trends in online commerce worldwide is the increasing use of smart phones. By the end of 2022, over 70% of retail website traffic will be generated from smartphones. This leads to a higher share of online orders compared to desktops, laptops and tablets. Smartphone penetration is advancing at a rapid pace, especially in regions where other digital infrastructure is lacking, which is a prerequisite for increasing its share in online commerce. Mobile online commerce is particularly popular in Asia, with China and South Korea generating over two-thirds of total online sales (Pasquali, 2023).

2. Object and subject of the study

The object of the study is the positioning strategies of global retailers.

The subject of the research is intra-entra marketing interventions in the positioning strategies of global retail companies.

3. Research thesis

Marketing interventions in global retailers' positioning strategies are an essential part of firms' strategic marketing decisions. Understanding their essence and their adequate application creates prerequisites for companies to be more sustainable and adaptable to the dynamics of the global market and enables them to protect their market positions against competitors.

4. Aim and objectives of the study

497 literary sources have been studied and cited for the set aim and objectives of the dissertation. The examined trends in global markets and industries and the theoretical statements of positioning strategies and marketing interventions direct the author to determine the following objective of the dissertation work:

To design intra-entra marketing interventions in the positioning strategies of global retailers on the Bulgarian market and to propose a configuration for their implementation.

The following tasks are defined to fulfill the set aim:

Firstly, to define the concept of intra-entra MIPS from of marketing systems point of view;

Secondly, to systematize and classify the theoretical statements in the field of intra-entra MIPS;

Thirdly, to develop and test a methodology for research and analysis of intra-entra MIPS of global retailers;

Fourthly, to analyze the development of the global retail industry, the market positioning of market regions, market countries and global retailers, and to evaluate the applied intra-entra MIPS by a selected leading global retailer;

Fifthly, to assess the positioning of global online retailers on the Bulgarian market;

Sixthly, to design configuration of intra-entra MIPS of global retailers and bring out its application aspects.

5. Research methodology

The research methodology uses various methods of marketing analysis and marketing management, specific methods and techniques of marketing engineering (positional analysis), tools for marketing research and statistical methods, incl. factor analysis and application of the Zipf-Pareto power law in the analysis of the dynamics of the positions of market countries and global retailers. Primary data were processed with SPSS, Enginius and Excel software.

6. Limitations

This research is conducted under the following limitations:

First of all, the author considers only consumers as the object of marketing interventions. The research part of the dissertation covers only individuals who shop online from national/local and global retailers to satisfy their personal needs. The research does not include SMEs who are also customers of the online retailers.

Secondly, the survey was implemented with a sample of 328 respondents, formed on the principle of accessibility. Given the type of sample used, the results, which give a picture of the positioning of global retailers on the Bulgarian market, are only representative of the studied population.

7. Primary and secondary data sources

The necessary information for the purpose of the study was collected through:

- primary data from the author's own research - online survey

and

- secondary data from a study of publications by Bulgarian and foreign authors in the fields of the global retail industry, marketing interventions and positioning strategies.

II. STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION

The structure of the dissertation consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion and appendices with a total volume of 411 pages, of which 1 title page, 2 pages - table of contents, 7 pages - introduction, 189 pages – three chapters, 9 pages - conclusion, 41 pages – references and 163 pages – appendix. The work includes 44 tables and 57 figures.

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III. MAIN CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION

1. Introduction

The practical and scientific value of intra-entra marketing interventions in the positioning strategies of global retailers is argued in the introduction of the dissertation. The object, the subject, the purpose of the research, the research tasks, the research thesis and the limitations set are presented in the introduction.

2. Chapter One

Chapter One examines the theoretical and methodological positions of marketing interventions in global industries and contains three paragraphs. They are presenting and analyzing: 1/ globalization and changes in global markets and industries, 2/ strategies for positioning in global markets and 3/ the concept of marketing interventions in positioning strategies.

The first paragraph reviews the theoretical bases of globalization and the development of global markets and industries, concluding that retail is one of the most affected industries by globalization changes in recent years. This determines its choice for a research object in the present study and more specifically the positioning strategies of global retailers.

In point one of the first paragraph, the theoretical bases of globalization are examined. The author examines a period of 60 years (1961-2020), where many definitions of globalization can be found. They are given by various authors, scholars and institutions, which form the basis of the nowadays understanding of globalization. According to the review of the definitions, it is clear that globalization can hardly be summed up in a single concept that would be limited in a certain time period, as well as be applicable in all situations and be unambiguous for every single person. Globalization should be seen as a process that goes through different stages of development rather than as a theory (Mladenova, 2015).

Modelski (1998) believes that economic globalization has a greater impact and causes changes in other aspects of globalization as well. This view is also supported by Oman (1996),

who defines globalization as the accelerated growth of economic activity across national and regional boundaries. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF, 2016), globalization has four main aspects: trade and sales of products and services, free movement of capital and investment flows, migration and free movement of people, diffusion of knowledge and technology, and all four aspects have its economic influence.

Most authors (Oman, 1996; Ritchie, 1996; Modelski, 1998; Henderson, 1999; Gaburro and O'Boyle, 2003) agree that globalization is a process of free movement of goods, services, people, capital, news and data flows, in search of ever cheaper raw materials and labor, aided by technological development and the reduction of market restrictions by governments. That way the global market is created.

The second point of the first paragraph examines the development of global markets and industries. The extremely rapid technological development and digitalization (Schilirò, 2020; Song et al., 2020), the rapid growth of emerging market economies (Matyushok et al., 2021), the aging population worldwide and the transformation of the global labor market (Manyika et al., 2013; Bughin, Seong, et al., 2018) have a major economic impact and determine the development of the global market in the 21st century.

The different waves of globalization (Globalization 1.0, 2.0, 3.0, 4.0) take place thanks to leaps in technological development. Globalization 4.0 requires the creation of a new model of education and programs for training employees in new work skills and managing new technologies. Cooperation between the public and private sectors is increasing, which aims to stimulate the economic growth of society. This leads to a new approach in economics, to create a society that has common interests and goals that do not relate only to a specific country, industry or problem, such as environmental awareness or reducing inequality and uncertainty worldwide (Jindal, 2019).

New technologies are at the bases of globalization and making industries global. They have their influence on all four types of factors - market, cost, political and competitive factor. The latest wave of globalization (Globalization 4.0), a consequence of the fourth industrial revolution (Industry 4.0), shifts production from analog and mechanical technologies to digital. Next-generation technology developments have the potential to significantly impact global

productivity. Digitization, automation, big data, artificial intelligence and analytics are increasingly penetrating global industries, enabling the development of innovation and new forms of competition (J. Manyika, Chui, Lund, et al., 2017).

Globalization has been the driver of the growing economic, political, social, technical and cultural interconnections and relationships between states, institutions and individuals over the past few decades. The global spread of ideas, capital, technology and culture transforms the world's population into a global society. In terms of markets, globalization helps to open up national markets and integrate them into a common global market in which firms from all over the world compete.

It is clear from the literature review that all waves of globalization so far facilitate the trade of products and services. This gives the author reason to turn his attention to retailing and analyze the development and trends in retailing, which is one of the industries most affected by globalization. Globalization 4.0 also boosts the retail industry through the development of new technologies and digital capabilities. This helps improve processes related to online sales, collecting and processing customer data, analyzing the market and competitors. Firms in the industry identify, study, and implement proven competitive practices in various company activities such as order processing, customer service, and human resource management. Those operating in global markets must exhibit marketing agility by being more adaptable to rapidly changing market conditions in order to survive in the face of global competition.

The second paragraph clarifies the relationship between marketing concepts "segmentation - targeting - positioning", presenting the main methods and models in the development and implementation of positioning strategies (PS) in global markets and in particular in the global retail industry . In this dissertation, the term "positioning" is considered not only from the point of view of the cognitive understanding of the place that the brand occupies in the minds of consumers, but also as the market positions that the company seeks to occupy in the global market.

In point one of the second paragraph, the essence and typology of positioning strategies in global markets are considered. The market development process is presented in the relationship

"segmentation - determination of target market - positioning". The author examines various theoretical formulations of positioning strategies and types of market positioning.

In point two of the second paragraph, the author reviews various models and methods in developing and implementing positioning strategies in global markets. Portfolio matrices are used by marketers to make strategic marketing decisions about product-market (portfolio) combinations or for different business units within a corporation. A characteristic of most portfolio matrices is that they consider two indicators and based on a combination of their values, offer specific strategic solutions for the company. Regardless of the name of the specific indicator, when considering two indicators, one is always internal (intra) and refers to the specific company for which a strategic marketing decision is made, and the other is external (extra), related to the marketing environment (market).

One of the modern indices in the global retail industry, which is based on the concept of the product life cycle, is Kearney's Global Retail Development Index (GRDI). The indicator looks at markets that are growing and are attractive for investment by retail companies. Countries surveyed by the index and ranked are seen as leading investment destinations for global retailers in the coming years. Market countries are selected from over 200 countries based on five criteria: sovereign risk, population, retail area, retail sales and GDP.

Global segments in global markets are formed that are defined based on market variables other than national boundaries. In the so-called "hybrid model" both macro factor and micro factor analysis is performed (Hassan, Craft and Kortam, 2003). There is a strong relationship between the choice of positioning strategy and the choice of factors on which to form market segments.

The chosen retail positioning strategy requires that it be refracted through the prism of the specifics of the retail industry. Firms in the global retail industry adopt a variety of new market entry and positioning strategies – own company, merger and acquisition of local company, franchise and joint venture.

Hybrid segmentation as a global market positioning strategy looks for similarities between countries in the global market, while traditional segmentation, which emphasizes differentiation, seeks to minimize similarities and emphasize differences. The ultimate goal of the

hybrid approach is not uniform global positioning. The strategic marketing objective is to develop as standardized a positioning strategy as possible, while allowing, and in certain cases considered necessary and desirable, small changes to it if local market conditions warrant it (Schlegelmilch, Keegan and Stoettinger, 2001 ; Hollensen, 2008; Kvint, 2016; Kotabe and Helsen, 2022).

The author tries to present two perspectives of marketing theory and practice to positioning strategies. First of all, positioning strategies are considered by chap. of marketing systems and macromarketing (Chapter Two). Secondly, positioning strategies are considered by chap. of marketing management (Chapter Three).

Paragraph 3 reviews the theoretical foundations of marketing interventions (MI). In terms of theoretical propositions, there is a lack of consensus in the literature regarding marketing interventions. The term "intervention" and in particular "marketing intervention" are found in Bulgarian and foreign scientific publications and official documents, but there are few authors who examine and clarify the concept of marketing interventions, such as the scientific publications on marketing interventions in positioning strategies (MIPS) for scarce. According to Vasileva (2019), "marketing interventions are defined as targeted marketing activity to overcome identified inconsistencies in the marketing environment and/or the functioning of the marketing ecosystem, including in critical situations by changing parameters in the system, business models and/or business processes to reach of planned benchmark targets in order to maintain the competitiveness of the positions of the market entities".

In point one of the third paragraph, the theoretical statements of marketing interventions are considered. Chaos theory, nonlinear dynamics of complex systems, and nonlinear time series analysis have experienced rapid development and have been widely advocated in modern economic theory over the past few decades. This development also brings success in economic research related to economic activity (Batuleva, Bushev, Velchev, Vitanov and Ganchev, 2014).

The first author to use terminology related to systems in the field of marketing was Wroe Alderson (Alderson, 1957). The concept of the marketing system can be seen as a link between modern marketing theory and practice and the field of macromarketing. Shelby Hunt (1977) defined macromarketing as the study of 1/ marketing systems, 2/ the impact and consequences of marketing systems on society, and 3/ the impact and consequences of society on marketing

systems. Marketing systems can be seen as complex adaptive systems that grow, adapt, emerge and evolve in an environment that is driven by institutional and knowledge-related changes. Such a definition of marketing systems supports the understanding of the dynamic role of marketing systems in the processes of economic growth (in international, national and local aspects) (Layton, 2011). In addition to this, nonlinear dynamics is suitable to be applied in cases where the researched object is a complex system, it is in a critical state and it is necessary to be kept in its equilibrium state (Vasileva, 2019).

From a marketing point of view, interventions are seen as strategic marketing initiatives related to three main areas – 1/ the organizational structure, processes and employees, part of the internal (intra) environment, 2/ the market and 3/ users and customers, part of the external (entra) environment. The implementation of interventions is usually associated with crisis processes arising from different levels in the global economy (Uzunova, 2004; Vladimirov, 2011). Changes in the marketing environment that accelerate the implementation of a marketing intervention policy are most often associated with the globalization of markets, increased competition, increased expectations from customers, the implementation of new technologies and the increasing unpredictability of market conditions (Vasileva, 2019). The following characteristics are typical of marketing interventions. First, they are applied when problems or opportunities are identified in the external (entra) environment. Second, they have a clear goal and direction of action. Third, marketing interventions seek to adapt market entities (intra environment) to the new market conditions in order to fulfill the planned benchmark objectives and to maintain their competitive positions.

The author presents a classification of intra-entra MIPS in table 1.

Table 1

Classification of intra-entra marketing interventions in positioning strategies in global retailing

Criterion	Entra MIPS		Intra MIPS
Source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government • Regulator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retailer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retailer
Direction of action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From the marketing environment to the retailer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From the retailer to the marketing environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The internal environment of the retailer
Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market • Industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers/Users • Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management • Employees

	• Community	• Competitors	• Processes
Result	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control • Regulations • Limits • Special privileges • Subsidies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positioning in a new market/market segment • • New product/service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in organizational structure • Change in processes • Implementation of new technologies

On the basis of the examined theoretical propositions, a definition of intra-enta MIPS of global retailers is proposed - **a targeted marketing activity to overcome the identified inconsistencies or to exploit the opportunities that have arisen in the market regions (marketing environment) and/or the functioning of the global retail industry (marketing ecosystem) in order to successfully fulfill the initially set marketing goals and competitive positioning of the retailer.**

In point two of the third paragraph, a methodology for designing marketing interventions in the positioning strategies of global retailers is presented. The methodology was developed for the purposes of the dissertation and the implementation of the defined tasks. It presents in a structured form the set of logically connected stages, processes, activities and tools that are applied in the course of designing marketing interventions in positioning strategies. The main task of the methodology is to support the realization of the purpose of the dissertation by ensuring the fulfillment of the key tasks set out in it.

A conceptual model is developed based on the concept of marketing interventions, the examined theoretical positions on globalization, the changes in global markets and industries, the studied positioning strategies and the specifics of the global retail industry. Several main highlights can be pointed out in the conceptual model. First of all, it is the marketing ecosystem, which in this thesis is the global retail industry. The reviewed trends and current state of global retail trade are a starting point in the development of the conducted online survey and the proposed configuration of the internal (intra) environment of global retailers implementing MIPS. Secondly, the author analyzes the marketing environment, considering the positioning of market regions and market countries in the GRI. The marketing environment influences the global retail industry (marketing ecosystem) through its regulations, constraints and controls (entra MI). Thirdly, the market positions of the leading global retailers and intra-enta MIPS, which are applied in GRI, are analyzed. Fourthly, a study is conducted to assess and analyze the market

positions of global online retailers on the Bulgarian market.

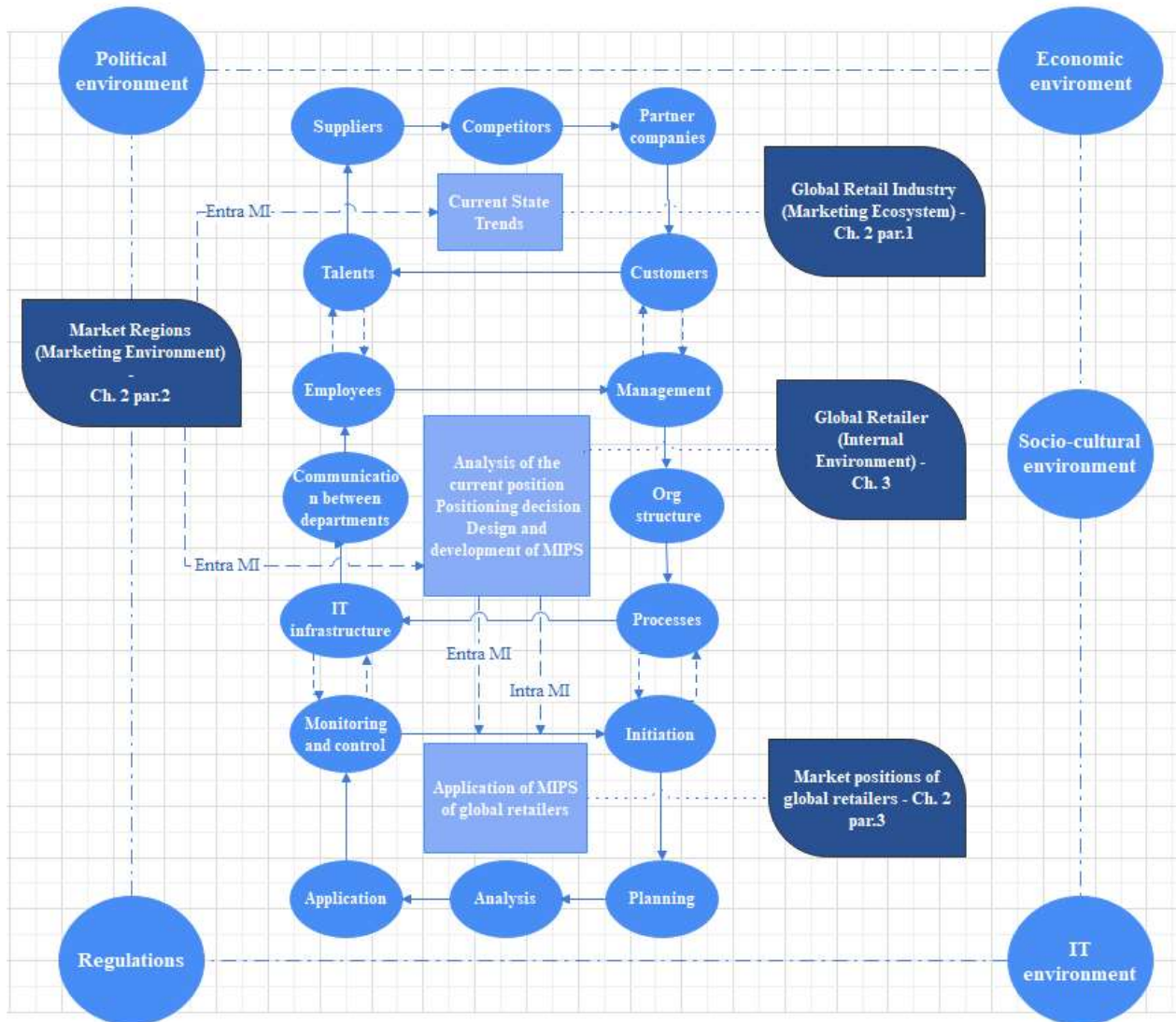


Figure 1. Conceptual model of marketing positioning interventions in the global retail industry

The final result, from the above-described highlights of the conceptual model, is an author's configuration proposal for the design of intra-entra MIPS of global retailers and logically related stages for their application in GRI.

3. Chapter Two

The second chapter is divided into three paragraphs, which respectively consider: 1/ the status and trends of the global retail industry, 2/ the positioning of market regions in the global retail industry and 3/ the market positions of the leading global retailers

The first paragraph examines the state and trends of the global retail industry. Retailing has been a key sector for the economy for the past few decades. Retail trade is the subject of research by a number of international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization and others. According to the definition of the National Retail Federation (Gaul, 2020), to be defined as global, any retail firm must meet several criteria. Primarily, be a retailer or caterer that resells products and services to the end user. Secondly, to carry out direct sales in at least three countries, one of which must not be a neighboring territory of the country in which the central management (headquarters) of the trader is located. Thirdly, in cases where the company uses a franchise model as a strategy for global expansion, to own the global franchise license of the brand in most countries where the franchise operates.

The examined trends in the global retail industry can be systematized in several directions, summarized in table 2.

Table 2

Trends in the retail industry

Trend	Details
1. Delivering consumer value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fast and professional consultation from the service staff through the use of new technologies that can be used to check real-time stock availability, varieties of the requested product and related products (Cheng, 2017) (Garcia, 2018b) - Provision of services such as "buy online, collect in store" (Koch, 2019c), deferred payment ("pay it late, get it now") (Mitev, 2021), super express deliveries within 10-15 min (Rilska, 2021)
2. Development of marketing technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The use of innovative digital marketing strategies such as location-based advertising, interactive maps and local social media accounts (Jen King, 2018a) - Developing relationships between the company and the customer through AI-based chatbots that are used to recognize specific needs and inquiries from customers (Garcia, 2018f; Nikolov, 2021c)
3. Data collection and analysis tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, augmented and virtual reality and other modern technologies are used to analyze marketing activities, capabilities and consumer attitudes, to maintain the necessary level of inventory in relation to demand, to forecast sales of a given product and to analyze competitive prices, distribution and advertising costs, for hiring decisions (Chui, Kamalnath and McCarthy, 2018)
4. Development of Omnichannel promotion and distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Omnichannel shoppers are more valuable to businesses than shoppers who only visit physical locations (Garcia, 2018h) - People who use different channels when buying spend twice as much as those who shop only in physical stores (Deloitte and eBay, 2014) - Tendency to close physical locations and shift spending to online commerce (Ng, 2020; Loeb, 2020)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advantages of online shopping – finding low-cost products (Jen King, 2018b); customers do not have to go to the store and wait in line (Kats, 2017) - Advantages of shopping in physical stores – customers can see the product in person, receive it immediately (Kats, 2017); they don't risk being delivered the wrong product (Jen King, 2018d)
5. Organizing Marketing Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Managers must become increasingly adaptive, providing quick and adequate solutions tailored to the rapidly changing desires of their customers (eMarketer retail, 2017). - Acquisitions, mergers and strategic partnerships (Deloitte, 2021)
6. Innovations and new products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Automated retail stores without service personnel (Amazon, Suning, Coop Danmark, Auchan) (Cheung, 2017) - Artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, augmented and virtual reality, with the aim of improving the shopping experience (Chheda, Duncan and Roggenhofer, 2017; Deloitte, 2018). - Robots that operate in warehouses and stores (Walmart, Ahold Delhaize, Best Buy) (Grosman, 2017)
7. Promoting inclusion and diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Businesses and brands are paying more and more attention to inclusion and diversity in both their employees and customers, thus becoming more adaptive and increasing their potential of possible solutions to their business problems (Quinine, 2021; Brittain, 2022)

The second paragraph examines the positioning of market regions in the global retail industry. The value of retail sales worldwide increased by more than 75% for the period considered 2004-2019.

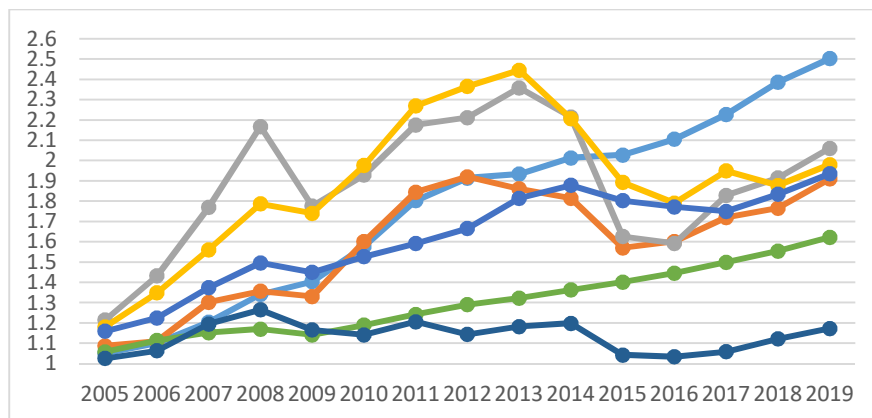


Figure 2. Growth rate of retail sales, 2004-2019

Source: Euromonitor.com (2019) Retail Global Industry.

The Asia Pacific market region has the highest growth rate in terms of all three investigated indicators: retail sales volume, retail sites and retail area during the considered period 2004-2019.

The dynamics of retail trade development by sales volume indicator for the period 2004-2019 for the ten country-markets with the largest retail sales volume is presented in Figure 3.

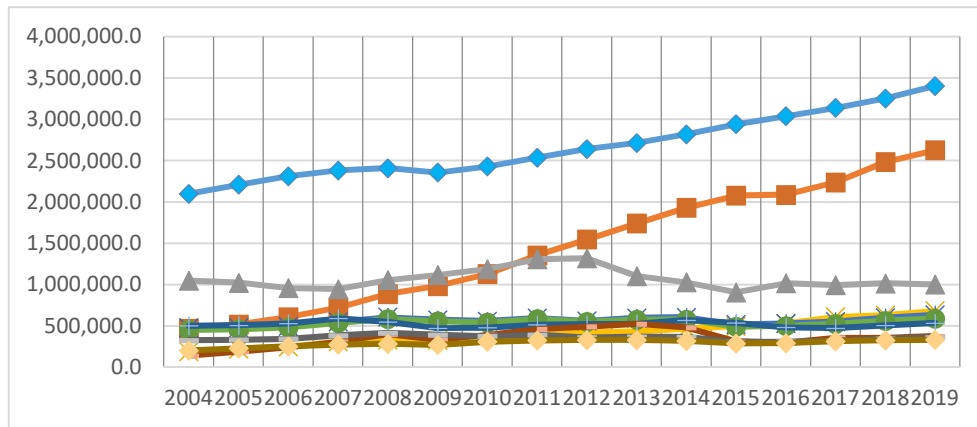


Figure 3. Retail development dynamics by sales volume indicator for the top 10 market countries (2004-2019)

Source: Euromonitor.com (2019) Retail Global Industry.

From the dynamic series analysis by linear and exponential function, strong statistically significant relationships are available for 5 of the top 10 countries by retail sales volume. This gives the author reason to move to the next stage of the analysis, conducted on the basis of the theoretical statements of the rank approach (Zipf-Pareto law).

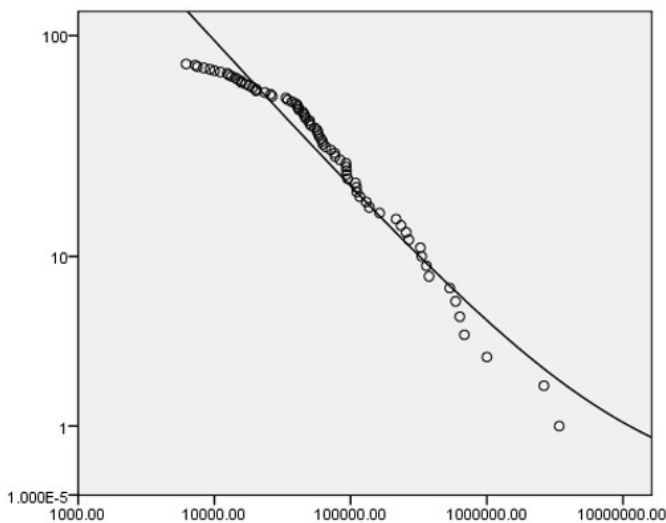


Figure 4. Rank dependence of the rescaled values of the annual retail volume of the leading 75 market countries (2019)

Source: Euromonitor.com (2019) Retail Global Industry.

Based on the obtained results, it can be concluded that the five largest retail country-markets deviate from the line of the power law and their distribution differs significantly compared to the remaining 70 retail country-markets. Based on the presented results, the state of the system of 75 country-markets can be defined as close to equilibrium. The parameters of the power law change little with time because the system oscillates around its equilibrium state.

The first research hypothesis, formulated at the beginning of the chapter, states that the distribution of the values of the annual volume of retail sales in the market countries satisfies the Zipf-Pareto law. Based on the presented results, the author concludes that the distribution of the values of the annual volume of retail sales in the market countries satisfies the Zipf-Pareto law, i.e. the first research hypothesis is confirmed.

Kearney's Global Retail Development Index (GRDI) looks at the top country markets in which global retailers are positioned. The GRDI looks at the top 35 top-performing country markets. It is notable that the leading market regions are the Middle East and Africa - 12 countries, Asia Pacific - 11 countries, Latin America - 6 countries and Eastern Europe - 5 countries, including Bulgaria.

Using the indicators "market potential" and "country risk" in figure 5, the market countries that are most attractive from the point of view of global retailers are positioned. The countries that stand out and achieve the ten highest scores are representatives from all four market regions with Asia Pacific and Africa and the Middle East again having the most representatives.

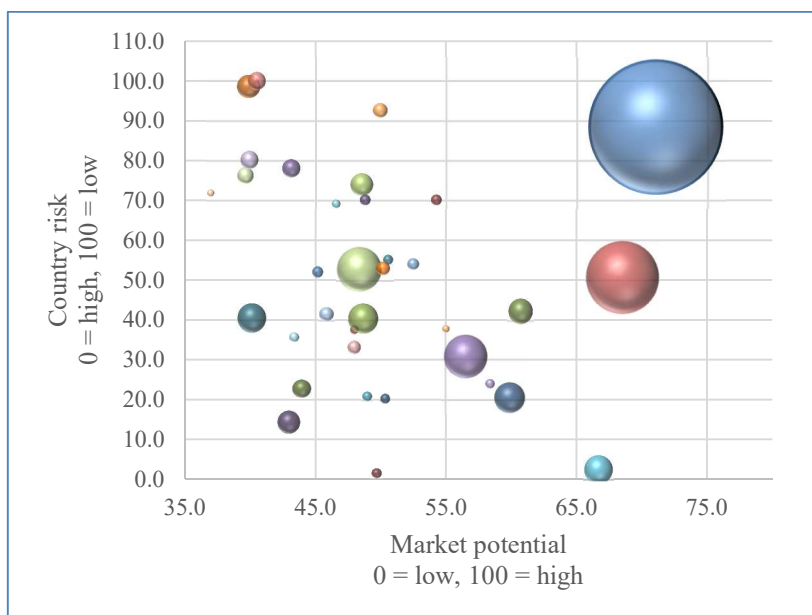


Figure 5. Market attractiveness (according to the GRDI methodology)

Note: Bubble size indicates retail sales in 2020. Market potential is a weighted average of market attractiveness, market saturation and time pressure

Source:Portell et al., (2021) Leapfrogging into the future of retail

The main conclusions that can be drawn based on the analysis are several. First of all, global retail trade has seen higher growth in emerging and developing markets, while growth has remained lower in developed markets. Second, the Pacific market region is emerging as the fastest growing. Led by countries such as China, India, South Korea, Indonesia, Thailand and Taiwan, the region saw the highest growth both in retail sales and in terms of the number of retail outlets and total retail area. In third place, the US remains the largest retail market, but the leading countries of the Pacific region show very high growth rates during the period under review, and it is expected that within 10 years, China will be able to displace the US from the first place, and India will establish itself in the third place place by volume of retail sales. Fourthly, despite the tendencies to close physical sites in developed economies such as the USA, Canada, Australia, the majority of sales are still made in them - about 85%, but their share is progressively decreasing.

The second paragraph analyzes the market positions of the leading global retailers. Global retailers are engaging in strategic partnerships and acquisitions, implementing the latest technologies, offering more products and services through various sales channels, and striving to provide personalized customer service in order to maintain their competitive positions and continue their market expansion. The retail indicators in the market positioning methodology are - Retail revenue, Retail revenue growth, Compound annual growth rate, Net profit margin, Country of origin, Countries of operation, Retail revenue from foreign operations, Dominant operational format

An analysis of the market positions of the leading retailers was conducted based on the theoretical statements of the rank approach (Zipf-Pareto law).

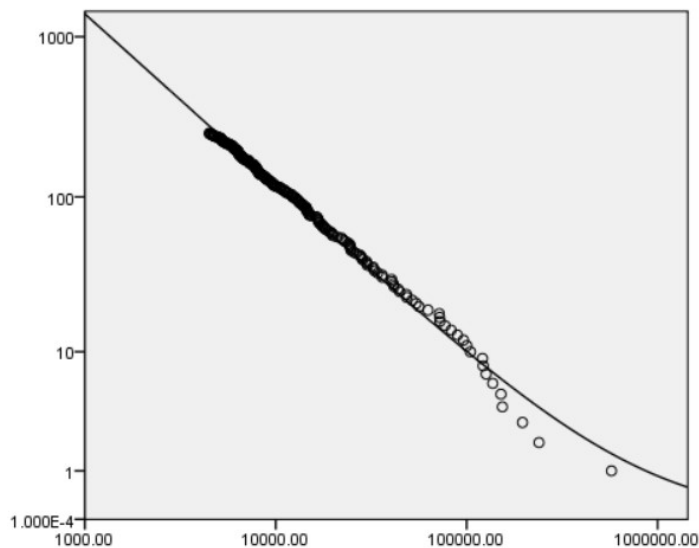


Figure 6. Rank dependence of the rescaled values of the annual retail sales volume of the leading 250 global retailers (2021)

Based on the obtained results, it can be concluded that the four largest retail companies significantly deviate from the power law line and their distribution differs significantly compared to the remaining 246 retail companies. Based on the presented results, the state of the system of 250 retail companies can be defined as close to equilibrium. The parameters of the power law change little with time because the system oscillates around the equilibrium state.

The second research hypothesis, formulated at the beginning of the chapter, states that the distribution of annual retail revenue values of global retail firms satisfies the Zipf-Pareto law. Based on the results presented above, the author concludes that the distribution of the values of annual retail revenues of global retail firms satisfies the Zipf-Pareto law, i.e. the second research hypothesis is confirmed.

The retail industry has evolved extremely rapidly in the new century. Companies engage in strategic partnerships and acquisitions, implement the latest technologies, offer more products and services through different sales channels, and strive to provide personalized service to their most demanding customers, in order to beat the competition and maintain their market share. Despite the strong competition, one company stands out from all the rest with its extremely rapid development from its founding in 1994 until now. Amazon has seen steady

growth thanks to the continuous development of the products and services it offers and the innovations it implements in its business. The online retailer was one of the firms that deviated from the power law line during the period under review. She ranked 4th in 2017, 3rd in 2018, 2nd in 2019, 2020 and 2021.

The company has seen steady growth thanks to intra-enterprise SME initiatives that lead to market expansion and widen its global presence, making it one of the most well-known and recognizable brands in recent years. Amazon owns a total of 22 e-commerce websites registered in 22 major retail markets. The company is positioned in a large part of the global retail market, delivering to 135 country markets located in all market regions and able to deliver an online order to over 80% of the world's population (Goel and Loke, 2018).

Chapter Three

The third chapter is divided into three paragraphs, respectively: 1/ assessment of the digital performance of global retailers in Bulgaria, 2/ Factor interrelationships in global retailers' online shopping in Bulgaria and 3/ configuration of intra-entra marketing interventions in the positioning strategies (MIPS) of global retailers.

The first paragraph assesses the digital performance of global retailers in Bulgaria. For this purpose, an author's online survey is conducted. The author justified his choice to conduct a survey of the market positions of online retailers among consumers in Bulgaria on the following two trends. On the one hand, from all the trends in global retailing discussed in Chapter Two, it is clear that customers and consumers are the key target of marketing interventions by global retailers. On the other hand, Bulgaria is among the leading retail destinations in which global retailers can invest according to A.T.Kerney's Global Retail Development Index (GRDI).

In point one of the first paragraph, consumer perceptions and attitudes towards online shopping in Bulgaria are examined. The general population includes consumers of retail goods and services over the age of 18. The sample size is 328 people, with a confidence level of 95.0% and a confidence interval of ± 4.9 . 193 women (58.8%) and 135 men (41.2%) participated in the study. Over 80% of respondents are between 25-39 years old, and over 90% have a university degree. Regarding the place of residence, almost all participants live in large regional cities, the largest part of them - 65% are from the city of Varna, followed by the city of Sofia - 21%, the rest

of the respondents are distributed in other cities in Bulgaria such as Plovdiv, Burgas , Stara Zagora, Dobrich, etc.

In point two of the first paragraph, a user evaluation of the digital presentation of global retailers in Bulgaria is considered.

It is characterized by a wide variety of online retailers, both global and local (82 in total), which respondents indicate as the online retailer they shop most often (Share of wallet (SOW)). EMag is the online retailer from which the Bulgarian consumers participating in the survey shop most often (44 respondents in total), followed by AliExpress (26) and Ozone.bg (22). Amazon, which is top of mind (TOM) , was named fourth out of 20 respondents.

In the second paragraph, factor interrelationships in global retailers' online shopping in Bulgaria are examined.

Point one of the second paragraph examines the factor interrelationships in global retailers' online shopping via websites. From the analysis, four factors are formed - 1. Shopping process, 2. Quality of information about the product and additional services during purchase, 3. Risks related to shopping process, 4. Size and reputation of the retailer. After the formation of the four factors, an analysis is made of the reliability (internal consistency) of the items (statements) in each factor, as in factor 1, 2 and 4 Cronbach's Alpha > 0.8 and the results can be considered sufficiently reliable. Subsequent analysis continues with these 3 factors.

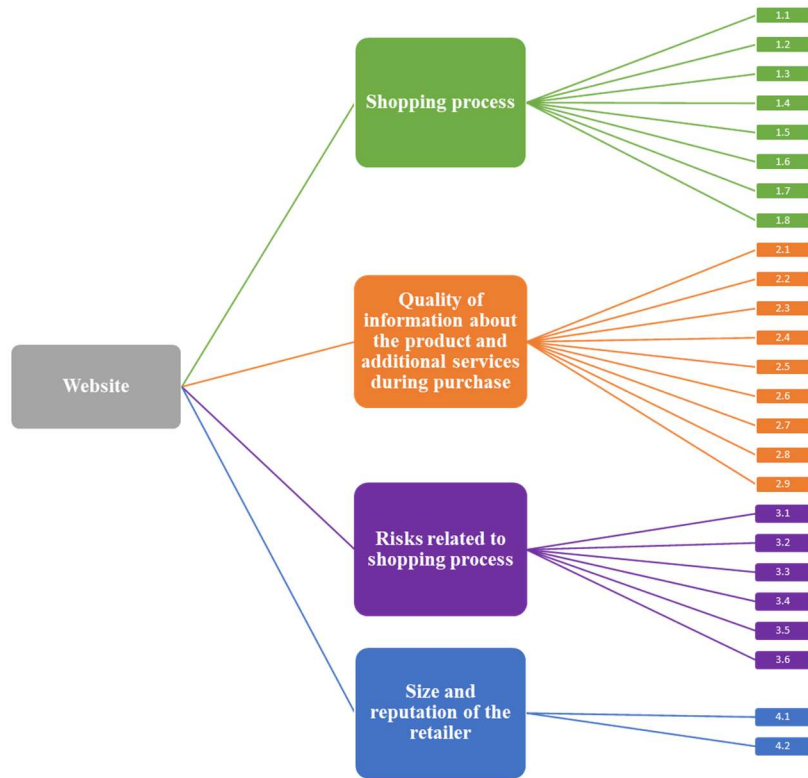


Figure 7. Factor structure in respondents who use the website for shopping (N = 205)

Factor 1 (Shopping Process) defines the first dimension (on the abscissa), which accounts for 72.8% of the variance of the data. It is noteworthy that factor 1 is extremely important for consumers who shop online through the retailer's website. Factors 2 (Quality of information about the product and additional services at purchase) and 4 (Size and reputation of the retailer) determine the second dimension (Retailer representation), which accounts for 25.3% of the variance of the data. Factor 2 and Factor 4 are almost perpendicular to each other, indicating that there is no correlation between them. Factor 1 correlated positively with both Factor 2 and Factor 4 (see Figure 8).

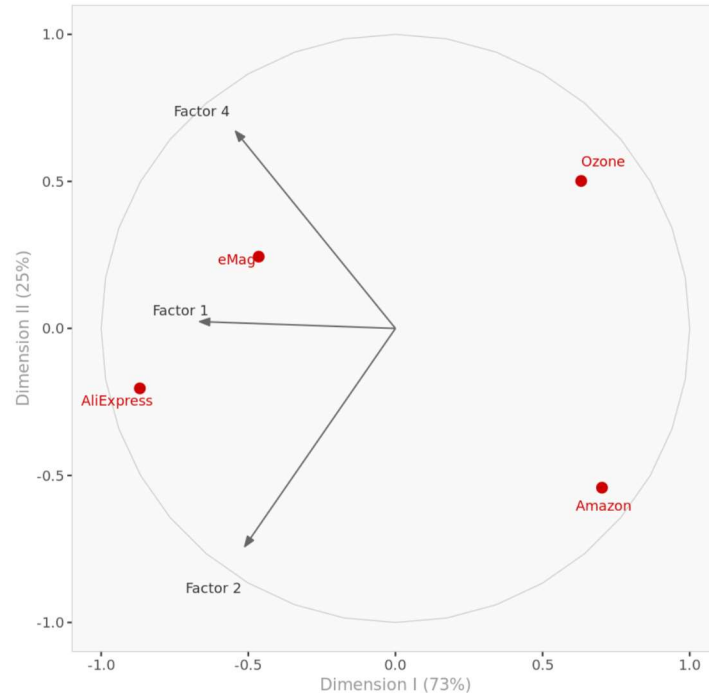


Figure 8. Consumer perception map of online shopping factors of retailer’s website

Source: Prepared by the author with data from an online survey processed with the marketing engineering software Enginius (2023)

Point two of the second paragraph examines the factor interrelationships in online shopping by global retailers through mobile applications. From the analysis, five factors are formed - 1. Quality of information about the product, 2. Shopping process, 3. Additional services during the shopping process, 4. Risks related to the shopping process, 5. Size and reputation of the retailer. After forming the five factors, an analysis is made of the reliability (internal consistency) of the items (statements) in each factor, such as in factor 1, 2 and 3 Cronbach's Alpha > 0.8 and the results can be considered reliable. Subsequent analysis will continue with these 3 factors.

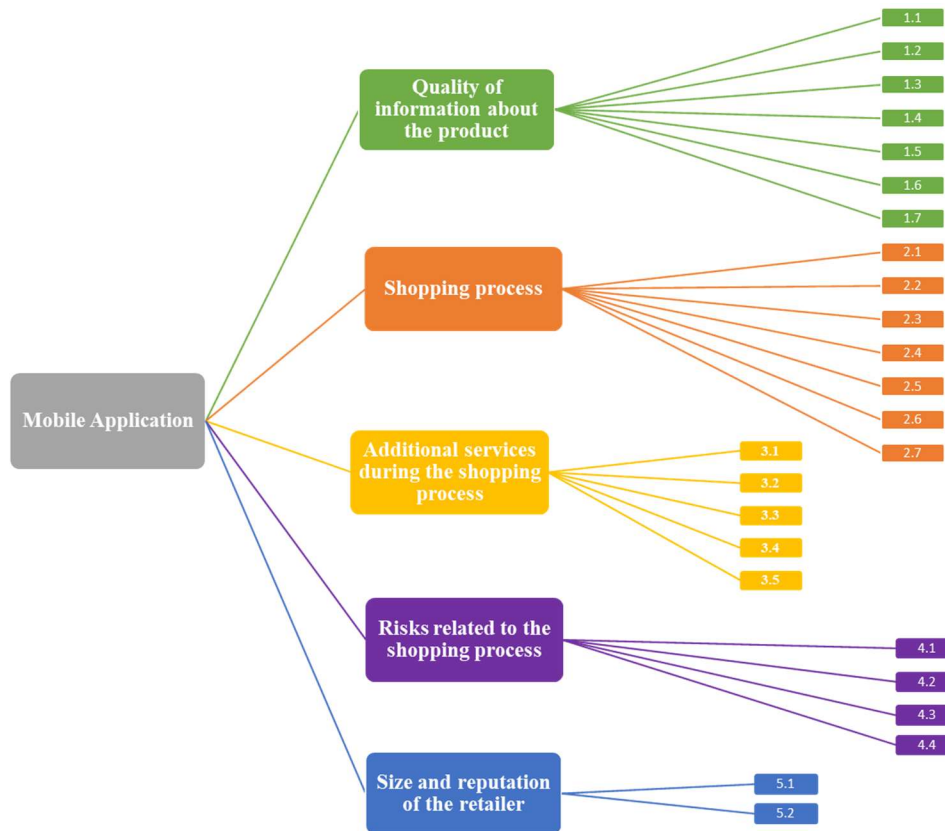


Figure 9. Factor structure of respondents who use the mobile application for shopping (N = 108)

Factors 1 (Quality of Product Information) and 3 (Additional Shopping Services) determine the first dimension on the abscissa (Product Presentation), which accounts for 63.7% of the data variance. Factor 1 and Factor 3 move in the same direction, forming an acute angle with each other, indicating that there is a positive correlation between them. Factor 2 (Shopping Process) defines the second dimension, which accounts for 35.5% of the variance of the data. Factor 2 is almost perpendicular to both Factor 1 and Factor 3, indicating no correlation between them (see Figure 10).

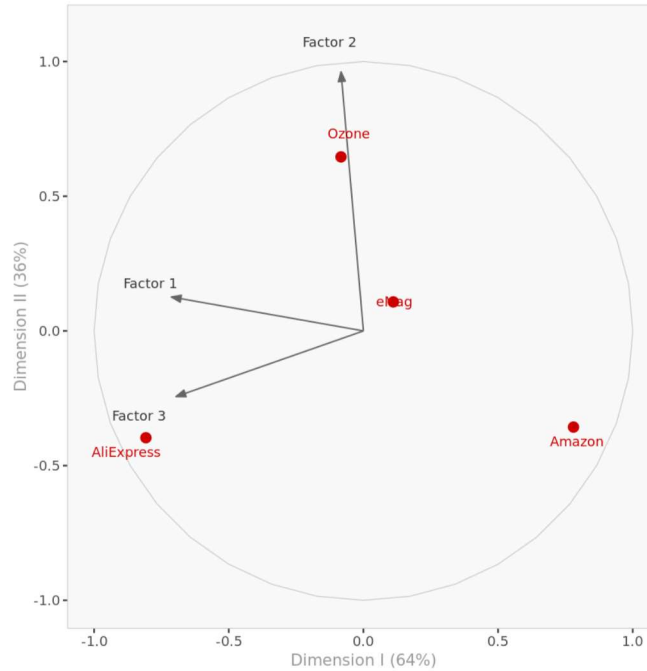


Figure 10. Consumer perception map of online shopping factors of the retailer's mobile application

Source: Prepared by the author with data from an online survey processed with the marketing engineering software Enginius (2023)

In paragraph three, the configuration of intra-entra marketing interventions in the positioning strategies of global retailers is presented based on the methodology for the design of the MIPS, the conducted online survey and the analysis of the obtained results. From the factor analysis conducted with the survey data, the factors most significant in choosing an online retailer are shopping process, quality of product information, additional shopping services, and size and reputation of the retailer. They are included in the presented configuration as targets of marketing interventions.

As a result of using the configuration, global retailers seek to increase - retail sales volume, retail sales revenue, market share, number of new customers and loyalty of current customers. Various metrics related to the presented factors can be used to measure consumer perceptions of the retailer, such as brand awareness, brand image, brand mental positions (TOM/SOM), consumer satisfaction, Net propoter score (NPS), number of website visits , number of orders and others.

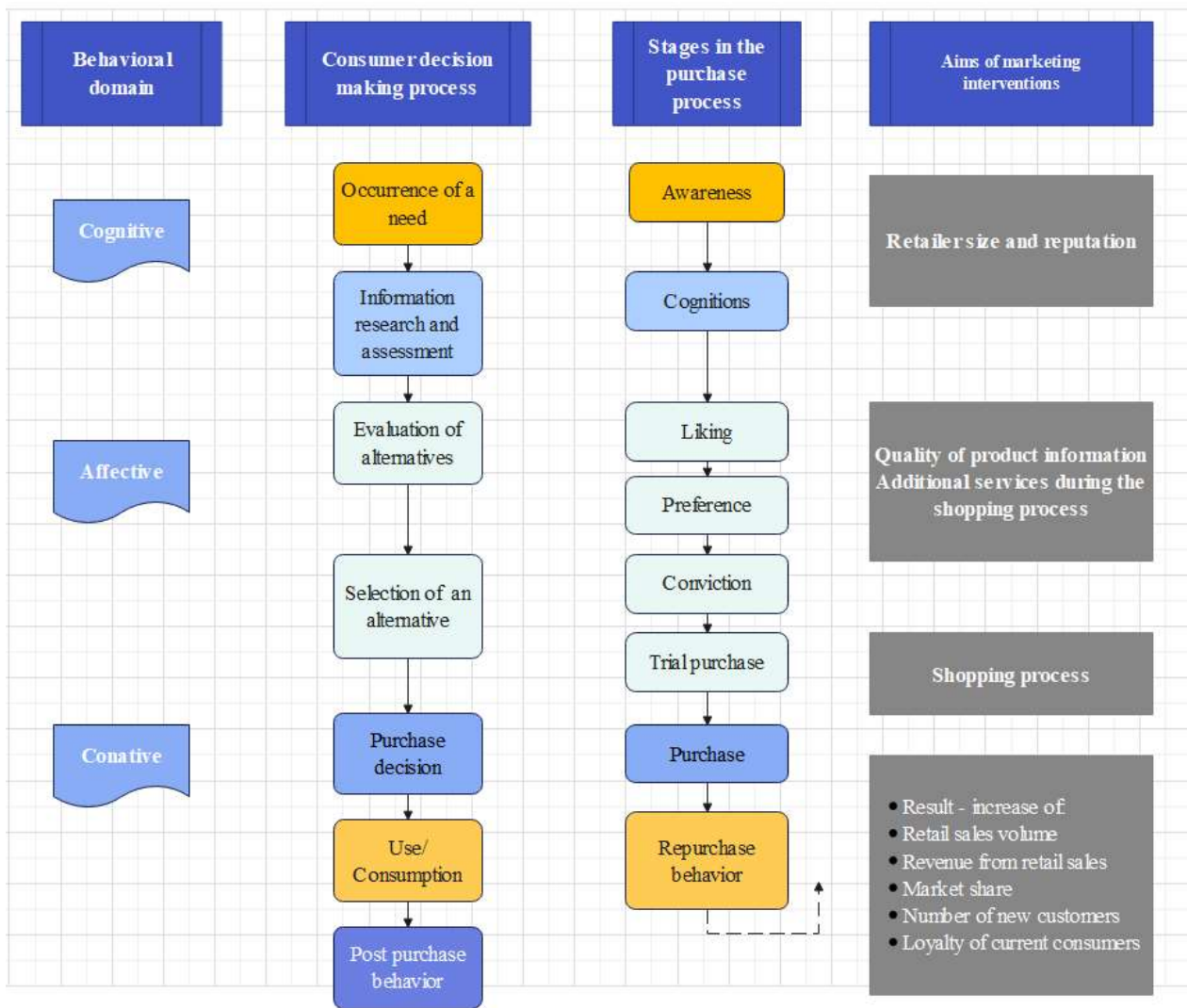


Figure 11. Configuration of intra-entra MIPS of global retailers

Point one of the third paragraph presents the aim of MIPS: consumer perceptions of global retailers' online shopping via websites. A comparative analysis of consumer perceptions of each of the consumer-relevant factors defined in the factor analysis was conducted with one-way analysis of variance.

Point two of the third paragraph presents the the aim of MIPS: consumer perceptions of global retailers' online shopping via mobile applications. A comparative analysis of consumer perceptions of each of the consumer-relevant factors defined in the factor analysis was conducted with one-way analysis of variance.

Point three of the third paragraph presents a configuration application for intra-entra MIPS of global retailers. The analysis and interpretation of the results obtained from the conducted online survey make it possible to argue the following conclusions presented below:

- Over 95% of survey participants shop online, and the results of statistical hypothesis testing show that there is a relationship between online shopping and demographic indicators - age, occupation, monthly household income;
- Customers of online retailers in Bulgaria buy some goods online, but others prefer to buy from a physical store;
- The smartphone is the most preferred device for online shopping;
- Over 80% of consumers visit an online retailer's website at least once a week;
- Nearly 50% of the respondents make online purchases 2-3 times a month, and the results of the statistical hypothesis testing show that there is a relationship between the frequency of online purchases and demographic indicators - education, marital status, financial status, monthly household income, population place;
- Over 80% of respondents found out about the online retailer they shop at most often from a friend/colleague recommendation, online advertisement or social media.

About 2/3 of survey participants prefer to shop on the retailer's website, and the rest on the mobile app. The respondents rated the following characteristics the highest:

- The website/mobile application has a wide range of products;
- Shopping on the website/mobile app is easy;
- The website/mobile application provides full information about the costs associated with a purchase;
- Finding information on the website/mobile app is easy;
- The website/mobile application offers goods at attractive prices.

From the factor analysis, the following factors can be deduced, which are most significant when choosing an online retailer - 1/ shopping process, 2/ quality of product information, 3/ additional services during shopping process and 4/ size and reputation of the retailer . Consumer perception maps show that the shopping process has the greatest weight for customers who use the website for online shopping, while for consumers who shop through the mobile application, the quality of product information and additional services when shopping are more influential . Amazon scores the highest in terms of the factors studied, both for users who shop through the

website and among those who shop through the mobile app. The results confirm the company's leadership in the Bulgarian market when we talk about a simplified shopping process, quality information about products and services and additional opportunities it provides to its customers. All this is embedded in the retailer's positioning strategies and helps it reach the level of a global leader in the retail industry in its relatively short history.

The examined theoretical statements of positioning strategies and marketing interventions, the analysis of global market regions (marketing environment), the analysis of the global retail industry (marketing ecosystem), the evaluation of applied intra-entra marketing interventions in the positioning strategies of leading retailers and the interpretation of the obtained results of the conducted online survey, give the author a reason to proceed to formulating applied aspects of the MIPS of global retailers.

To adapt to rapidly changing consumer behavior and fluctuations in demand, companies must build flexible organizational structure and processes that can quickly adapt to new market conditions as unforeseen events occur and the entry of new global competitors.

Creating an appropriate internal (intra) environment of retailers through a flexible organizational structure and effectively organized processes and activities favors the successful implementation, monitoring and control of marketing interventions in the positioning strategies of global retailers. The use of integrated technologies and automations, combined with the necessary knowledge and skills of employees, help global retailers to make quick, adequate and successful marketing decisions in cases where it is necessary to undertake positioning or repositioning of the retailer.

Based on the above-mentioned specifics of managing global retailers, it can be concluded that the application of MIPS to global retailers and taking advantage of their full marketing potential is a complex process that requires a lot of time, effort and in-depth analysis. To support this process, the paper proposes a four-step process for implementing the MIPS of global retailers, presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Design stages of global retailers' intra-entra MIPS

STAGE	STEPS
PREPARATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the role of positioning strategies for the global retailer; • Determining the company's current position and competitive

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> advantages; • Segmenting the global market and defining the target market; • Analysis and assessment of the state of the marketing environment of the target market; • Analysis and evaluation of the marketing ecosystem and the performance of the leading retailers; • Choosing an approach for positioning on the global retail market; • Determination of the final strategic marketing goal;
DISIGN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of intra-entra MIPS; • Planning of intra-entra MIPS and selection of benchmark criteria and metrics; • Synchronization of the global marketing strategy of the retailer with the planned intra-entra MIPS; • Preparation of a flexible organizational structure; • Preparation of the technological and analytical infrastructure for the implementation of intra-entra MIPS; • Selection and preparation of a project team to implement an intra-entra MIPS;
IMPLEMENTATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of intra-entra MIPS; • Synchronization and integration of all retail processes related to the planned intra-entra MIPS; • Training of the project team and management of additional knowledge and skills (if necessary); • Changing the organizational structure and/or changing company processes and activities (if necessary);
MONITORING AND CONTROL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measurement and analysis of customer perceptions of the strategic position of the global retailer, after the introduction of intra-entra MIPS; • Evaluation of the strategic position based on the initially determined benchmark metrics and criteria; • Subsequent positioning/repositioning decision based on analysis of the current strategic position and current opportunities and risks in the marketing environment and marketing ecosystem;

The overall effect of applying intra-entra MIPS to global retailers is manifested in the improvement of the firm's market performance as measured by appropriate benchmark metrics and success criteria. Also, long-term intra-entra MIPS use leads to greater user satisfaction and increases customer loyalty. The new operating model and changes in the global marketing strategy inevitably lead to new risks that must be anticipated and taken into account. Firms can take a proactive stance to reduce risks by building in appropriate controls to monitor market performance. Risk management is key to retailers' adaptation to rapidly changing conditions in the marketing environment and marketing ecosystem.

5. Conclusion

The conclusion summarizes and discusses the implementation of the aim and tasks set and resolved in the dissertation. They cover and systematize all questions and problems that have been investigated in the course of work.

The main objective of the modern operating model of global retailers is to provide simplicity, speed and convenience to all stakeholders. Global retailers face the uncertainty and rapidly changing modern marketing environment and marketing ecosystem. In order to effectively respond to changes in market conditions, companies are increasingly implementing new technologies and automations, improving their data analysis tools and digitizing their processes. Comprehensive understanding, preparation and implementation of intra-entra marketing interventions in positioning strategies is very important for the success of retailers in the modern conditions of global competition. Building an appropriate internal (intra) retailer environment that facilitates the successful implementation, monitoring and control of global retailers' intra-entra MIPS is key.

The research conducted can be useful to marketers, experts and researchers who work in the field of marketing interventions and positioning strategies. The conclusions drawn can serve in making strategic marketing decisions for global and/or national retail markets.

This work is an initial stage in the exploration of possibilities for the implementation of intra-entra MIPS by global retailers. Future research related to the current issue can be directed to the analysis and evaluation of the positioning of global retailers in the context of different markets and the analysis and evaluation of the market performance of global retailers as a result of specific undertaken intra-entra MIPS.

IV. DISSERTATION CONTRIBUTIONS REFERENCE

A scientific-practical utility of the dissertation is related to helping to understand intra-entra MIPS of global retailers. In this sense, the contributions of the dissertation are in two directions: theoretical and methodical and practical.

The theoretical and methodological benefits of the dissertation include the development of a toolkit for designing intra-entra marketing interventions in the positioning strategies of global retailers.

The practical benefits of the development include:

Firstly, a proposal of an author's four-step process for implementing intra-entra marketing interventions in positioning strategies in the global retail industry.

Secondly, an analysis and assessment of the positioning strategies of global online retailers in Bulgaria based on an empirical survey conducted among their users.

V. DISSERTATION PUBLICATIONS

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Ivanov, Y., 2016. Offshoring and Outsourcing in Central and Eastern Europe: Opportunities and Perspectives. *Knowledge International Journal*, 15(1), pp. 175-181, Institute of Knowledge Management, Skopje, 2016.

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Vassileva, B., & Ivanov, Y. (2017). "3G" Business Model for Marketing 4.0: Implications for Circular Economy. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Marketing and Management*, 1(1), 124-134.

Scientific articles

Ivanov, Y. (2022). Analysis of the Positioning of the Market Regions in the Global Retail Market. *KNOWLEDGE-International Journal*, 50(1), 21-30, Institute of Knowledge Management, Skopje, 2022.

VI. DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I declare that this dissertation is a completely author's product and in its development no other authors' publications and developments have been used in violation of their copyrights.