

MARKETING MANAGEMENT: MONITORING THE INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT FACTORS USING GLOBAL MAPS

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Abstract

KALA ŠTĚPÁN, KURALOVÁ KATEŘINA, MARGARISOVÁ KLÁRA, VOKÁČOVÁ LUCIE. 2015. Marketing Management: Monitoring the International Environment Factors Using Global Maps. *Acta Universitatis Agriculturae et Silviculturae Mendelianae Brunensis*, 63(6): 1929–1936.

The article discusses the issue of the global marketing environment in line with the factors determining its external conditions. The aim is to specify the marketing-environment indicators in the international context and interpret the use of geographical maps illustratively documenting the differences of particular parameters in various parts of the global market. The research-results help update the theoretical framework of global environment factors. These data are also important for practice. Many enterprises consider the question of optimising their sources and directing their goals towards the opportunities available thanks to global markets. The global environment mapping is thereby an important basis for the marketing activities whose implementation across national boundaries is going to be mainly influenced by peculiarities of the environment involving foreign markets and their changes.

Keywords: marketing management, marketing environment, international environment, international marketing, marketing planning, marketing strategy, global maps

INTRODUCTION

The involvement in international activities can be an interesting challenge for an enterprise since it offers the opportunity to diversify the demand in geographic terms and balance seasonal oscillations in the international market. In addition, the foreign market allows for prolonging the product lifecycle to make the investment in that product's development more efficient; improving their competitive position in the domestic market. We can also mention the use of financial stimuli not often existing in comparable domestic markets (exportation loans, tax reliefs, taking over the risks connected with foreign activities). In addition, the foreign market helps achieve higher economic effects thanks to larger production volumes, strengthening one's position thanks to cooperating with a capital-strong foreign company, getting an easier access to new technologies, etc. (Boučková *et al.*, 2003).

The monitoring of the conditions impacting businesses' strategies while entering a target foreign

market belongs to current business practice, being able to use relatively easily the tool of global maps. The international competitiveness of companies is influenced by varied factors that are classified in 4 basic areas for analysing different issues for the marketing planning. Those areas are: the political and legislative environment, the economic environment, the social and cultural environment and the technological environment. A survey of particular indicators relating to those areas, being used to make the mapping at the level of the whole world, gives a basic idea what's the situation in all the territories.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA

The international marketing can be understood like the philosophy of doing business, with enterprises directing their attention to foreign clients, trying to satisfy their needs and wishes better than the competition and to aim at building long-term relationships strengthening their cus-

tomers' loyalty. Considering a particular strategy in international markets – such as enterprise surveys markets, makes its marketing plan and chooses the forms of entering the foreign markets, segmenting them, selecting a target foreign market, choosing a suitable positioning and doing an international marketing mix (Machková, 2009). The international marketing is the process of planning and doing transactions across national boundaries involving the exchange. Its forms range from exporting to licensing, making joint ventures, wholly-owned acquisitions or managerial contracts. Because of the transaction taking place across national boundaries, the marketer is subject to a different set of macro-environmental factors and constraints deriving from different political systems, legal frameworks, cultural norms and economic circumstances (De Búrca *et al.*, 2004).

The up-to-date character of this topic is well demonstrated by the published articles in foreign scientific journals like, for example, *International Marketing Review* (e.g. Terpstra, 1987; Nielsen, 2003; Venaik and Brewer, 2013; and Efrat, 2013). Also domestic authors pay attention to this area (e.g. Kubíčková and Toulouá, 2013).

There are many reasons for monitoring the global marketing environment. For instance, Federica Bressan and Paola Signori noticed that there was a growing importance of emerging markets naturally requiring a good knowledge of the environment to make a good strategy (Bressan and Signori, 2014). Qun Tan and Carlos M. P. Sousa (2013) deal with international marketing standardization. It is not only a very specific part of marketing, but also a topical issue. This method is based on a good knowledge of the marketing environment. Henry F. L. Chung, Cheng Lu Wang and Pei-how Huang (2012) focused their research on marketing strategies and decision-making structures of exporting companies. The environment is just one of the main factors affecting that. Jonida Kellezi (2014) points out that today's markets and business relationships have become global, i.e. the industry of trade expositions and exhibitions has experienced a rapid growth. Nevertheless, it is also necessary to adapt them to the global environment.

This paper aims to suggest an integrated framework for the principal factors influencing the international marketing environment and to demonstrate how they are applied using the instrument of global maps.

The main methods used for that purpose involved a review of theoretical approaches and frameworks of international marketing factors conceived by selected authors, including a synthesis thereof. The examination involved the factors of the international marketing environment discussed and suggested by seven authors: Hollensen, 2001; Kotler and Armstrong, 2006; De Búrca *et al.*, 2004; Hoffstede, 2007; Berndt *et al.*, 2007; Machková, 2009; and Boučková *et al.*, 2003. The selected professional publications presenting secondary

sources particularly involved searching for the subcategories and factors of the international marketing environment that those authors dealt with. The main output framework was suggested using a summarising method.

One of the ways how to learn of specific aspects of the international environment introduces global maps. Simply said, the maps represent a geographical area enabling people to find places and/or to better understand features of any destination. They visually express the global environment status.

RESULTS

While examining the sources stated in the methodology of work, the framework of political & legislative environment involved establishing three main categories: political environment, trade regulation and legislation. The political environment comprises five subcategories: i.e. safety and risks; the government's economic system; the government and its stability; membership in multinational institutions; approach to the information and lobbying and/or corruption. The trade-regulation sphere set aside two categories with the support to trade and exportations on one side and business barriers on the other side. Legislation is represented by one summary group of indicators (legislative framework).

The analysis of the world's economy (global economic environment) is generally done with evaluating basic trends in evolution of physical volumes of exchanged goods and services, evolution and movement in world prices of the most important commodities (oil) and the internationalisation/globalisation process. Regarding the fact of more and more accelerating structural movements in the world economy, the attention has to be paid to the economic policy of certain countries being covered with the policy of multinational communities (created based on free-trade agreements, customs unions, economic unions, common markets, etc.). In fact, companies are influenced not only by the tools of business policies of governments in different countries, but also by the activities of multinational institutions involving, for example, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), etc.

The second area under examination is the economic sphere in the countries, including the evaluation of their markets and their classification. The basic feature of any country's economy can be delimited by its economic system and economic structure. The most important economic criteria being generally evaluated are macroeconomic indicators and their evolution. The analysis also focuses on other factors making marginal conditions for a country's economic development, like the features of its population's demographic

I: Political & legal environment

POLITICAL & LEGAL ENVIROMENT			
Environment type	Category	Factors	Authors
POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT	Safety and risks	Threat of any third parties/countries; risk of ownership; risk of conducting business; transaction risk; expropriation risk; confiscation; domestication; frequency and tendency to doing strikes; political conflicts; efforts for sovereignty; the army's role.	Boučková <i>et al.</i> (2003) Berndt <i>et al.</i> (2007) De Búrca <i>et al.</i> (2004) Hollensen (2001)
	Political system, the government and its stability	Political pressure in a country; government policy; government's stability; quality of managing the host country's economic system; the host country's attitude to foreign investments; the host country's relationship to the rest of the world; proximity between the government and people; framework political conditions (state as a regulator X directive interventions); political system.	Boučková <i>et al.</i> (2003) De Búrca <i>et al.</i> (2004) Hollensen (2001) Machková (2009)
	Membership in multinational institutions	Membership in regional integration associations and political relationships to other countries; membership in international financial organisations; liberalisation tendencies (customs unions and trade agreements – EU, NAFTA, MERCOSUR, ASEAN).	Berndt <i>et al.</i> (2007) Hollensen (2001) Machková (2009)
	Access to the information	Government-provided information services; information about policy; information about global marketing transactions; individual reports on foreign companies.	Hollensen (2001)
	Lobbing a corruption	Bribery; corruption; lobbying; fairness and honesty of administrative procedures; government agencies promoting changes to laws; relationship to hobby groups and pressure groups; position of trade unions in the society.	De Búrca <i>et al.</i> (2004) Hollensen (2001) Kotler and Armstrong (2006) Machková (2009)
TRADE REGULATION	Support to trade and export	Promotional activities; providing subsidies; government export-supporting programmes; programmes on global-marketing activities; credit-granting policy; not-repaying risk; insurance of export loans; specific export opportunities; list of prospective buyers/distributors/agents; foreign credit-granting information; information on exporting procedures and methods; foreign business-development offices; government-sponsored trade fairs or exhibitions; sponsoring business people's trips; trade centres permanently working abroad; support to trade by private organisations; industrial, commercial, regional and professional associations; other institutions; economic chambers and business-supporting organisations; exporting organisation (banks, traders, etc.); government's trading; international commercial habits; framework agreements; clauses (delivery conditions).	Boučková <i>et al.</i> (2003) De Búrca <i>et al.</i> (2004) Hollensen (2001)
	Trade barriers	Relevant government's regulations; import restrictions; foreign-exchange control; market control; boycott; price control; fiscal control; restrictions in the labour market; tariff barriers (specific, ad valorem, discrimination barriers); non-tariff barriers (import quotas; export quotas; embargo; administrative delays (regulation controls; bureaucratic rules); local requirements; barriers historical barriers); approach to transferring foreign workers; permissions to enter the market with a product; relationship to foreign companies.	Boučková <i>et al.</i> (2003) De Búrca <i>et al.</i> (2004) Hollensen (2001)
LEGISLATION	Legislation framework	Legal system of a country – general legal standards; significant legislative measures impacting the trade; the level of protection of the society's interests; limiting promotion; number of legal cases; foreign & economic laws, regulations and rules; administration law; financial law; private legal norms (business law, civil law); standards and norms contained in international agreements; legislation for doing business of foreign entities; tax issues; type of law.	Boučková <i>et al.</i> (2003) Berndt <i>et al.</i> (2007) De Búrca <i>et al.</i> (2004) Hollensen (2001) Kotler and Armstrong (2006) Machková (2009)

structure (including the indicators of its living standard and consumption) and the environment.

The table below shows a list of the main areas of the economic environment and their indicators (see Tab. II).

II: *Economic environment*

ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT			
Environment type	Category	Factors	Authors
THE GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC POLICY	Membership in integration associations	CEFTA (Central European Free Trade Agreement) NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) EU (European Union) CACM (Central American Common Market) etc.	Boučková <i>et al.</i> (2003) De Búrca <i>et al.</i> (2004) Hollensen (2001)
	Foreign business policy	Contractual tools of the business policy – tariff tools – customs duties; non-tariff tools – e.g. import surcharge; export-supporting tools.	Boučková <i>et al.</i> (2003) De Búrca <i>et al.</i> (2004) Machková (2009)
	Exchange-rate policy	The systems of fixed exchange rates and floating exchange rates, so-called floating.	Boučková <i>et al.</i> (2003) De Búrca <i>et al.</i> (2004) Machková (2009)
	Government's policy towards foreign investors	Investment incentives – e.g. reduced levies of corporate income tax; subsidies to newly created jobs and requalification; zero import rates on importations of foreign technologies.	Boučková <i>et al.</i> (2003) De Búrca <i>et al.</i> (2004) Machková (2009)
ECONOMIC SPHERE	Economic system	Market economic system; centrally controlled (planned) economic system; mixed (combined) system.	Boučková (2003) De Búrca <i>et al.</i> (2004)
	Economic structure	Shares of the industry, agriculture and services; industrially developed countries; industrialising countries; countries exporting raw materials; developing counties.	Boučková <i>et al.</i> (2003) De Búrca <i>et al.</i> (2004) Hollensen (2001)
	Economic development level	<i>Macroeconomic indicators</i> (evolution of GDP per capita; inflation rate; unemployment rate; rate of GDP growth; real exchange relations; investments evolution; payment balance evolution; rate of indebtedness); <i>Basic demographic indicators</i> (number of inhabitants; average length of life; birth rate and its evolution; professional and education structure); <i>Indicators of the living standard and consumption</i> (family size; purchase power – structure and amount of revenues, savings, loans) etc.	Berndt <i>et al.</i> (2007) Boučková <i>et al.</i> (2003) De Búrca <i>et al.</i> (2004) Hollensen (2001) Kotler and Armstrong (2006) Machková (2009)

Tab. III summarizes the categories and factors coming under the social and cultural environment. The categories and factors are divided according to the environment type where they belong to. In particular, they are the social environment, the cultural environment and the social & cultural environment. The social environment framework was identified with altogether four summarising categories (religion and taboos; language; aesthetics; individualism and collectivism). The cultural environment comprised five categories in total (family; gender; education; population; ethnic and racial structure). Two categories have pervaded both the social and cultural environments. That is why they were put in the summary category of the social & cultural environment, i.e. lifestyle and ethics. Each category introduces the factors and/or indicators that can be examined in detail for the strategic marketing planning. The last column of the table shows the authors dealing with those categories and factors in their works. The above-mentioned partial integrated framework model of the social & cultural environment identifies altogether 11 categories listing the factors that have to be considered while making decisions within the strategic marketing planning.

The technological environment provides data on technical maturity of a country and features of using its research and development potential. The status

of the indicators under examination determines the options and rate of globalisation. A research helped set aside three principal areas: information & communication technologies (ICT infrastructure, information systems and communication systems); research and development (expenditures on R&D, R&D level) and technological evolution (infrastructure; innovation; regulation of technological changes; production procedures).

The use of global maps to get to know the international marketing environment can be illustrated on the example of the map (Fig. 1) showing the population's distribution in different parts of the world, aiming at the latest technologies. The darkest areas in the map are the regions with the population being technologically disconnected. On the contrary, the lighter areas show the regions with arising innovations; and the lightest areas comprises the regions with the latest technologies being just adopted at present.

DISCUSSION

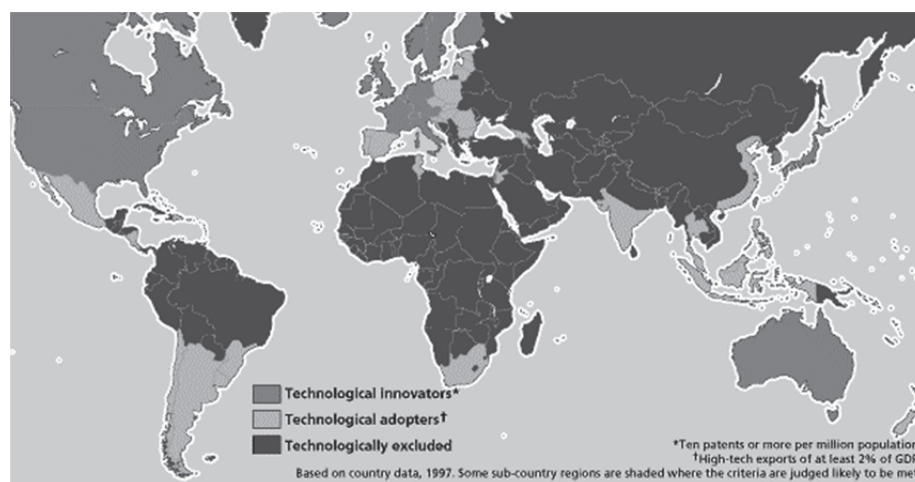
The above-mentioned text shows that all the sources under examination are concerned with the political & legislative environment, economic environment and social & cultural environment even if there may be differences in details in some authors' works. E.g. De Búrca *et al.* (2004) emphasise

III: Social & cultural environment

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT			
Environment type	Category	Factors	Authors
SOCIAL	Religion, taboos	Religion; religious observance; religious holidays; religion and taboos; relationship to the universe (the belief in the existence of God, church attendance – the number of churches, the number of religious movements, Eastern religions, mysticism, occultism); faith and values; religious institutions; religious practices (some religious practices limiting properties product – alcoholic, animal fats); sorrows; pray facing; forbidden topics (nudity, sexual conduct, hygienic habits, allusions to church); taboos (fish on Fridays for Catholics, Hindus for beef, pork for Muslims and Jews) etc.	Berndt <i>et al.</i> (2007) Boučková <i>et al.</i> (2003) De Búrca <i>et al.</i> (2004) Hollensen (2001) Kotler and Armstrong (2006) Machková (2009)
	Language	Body language; verbal language; explicit-language cultures; implicit-language cultures; non-verbal language; speech; methods of communication; the use of communication etc.	Berndt <i>et al.</i> (2007) Boučková <i>et al.</i> (2003) De Búrca <i>et al.</i> (2004) Hollensen (2001) Machková (2009)
	Aesthetics	Aesthetic; attitudes to beauty; attitudes to good taste in the art; music; folklore; drama and culture of aesthetic feeling; perception of ideal beauty; aesthetics and art (style and taste of people – symbolism of colours; sense of form – industrial design must take account of a relevant national taste); aesthetics (perception of individual words, symbols and objects (pictures of living objects – Muslim states, some animals are sacred, dirtiness, the symbolism of colours) etc.	Berndt <i>et al.</i> (2007) Boučková <i>et al.</i> (2003) De Búrca <i>et al.</i> (2004) Hollensen (2001) Machková (2009)
	Individualism and collectivism	Low-context cultures/individualism; high-context cultures/collectivism; tendency to individualism or collectivism etc.	De Búrca <i>et al.</i> (2004) Hofstede (2001) Hollensen (2001) Machková (2009)
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL	Lifestyle	Habits (the way how products are used, conduct business); eating habits; relationship to personal hygiene; dressing; clothing; dress and appearance etc.	Berndt <i>et al.</i> (2007) De Búrca <i>et al.</i> (2004) Hollensen (2001) Machková (2009)
	Ethics	Ethical decision-making; fees; commissions; ethics code; business ethics and morality; ethical citizenship; ethical consideration etc.	Berndt <i>et al.</i> (2007) Boučková <i>et al.</i> (2003) De Búrca <i>et al.</i> (2004) Hollensen (2001)
CULTURAL	Family	Family values; family and friends; strength of family ties; family size; ideal family; family composition; social institutions; family ties; the number of childless households etc.	Berndt <i>et al.</i> (2007) De Búrca <i>et al.</i> (2004) Hollensen (2001) Kotler and Armstrong (2006) Machková (2009)
	Gender	Masculinity; femininity; economic role of women; being-single trend etc.	Boučková <i>et al.</i> (2003) De Búrca <i>et al.</i> (2004) Hollensen (2001) Kotler and Armstrong (2006) Machková (2009)
	Education	Educational system; education; educational levels; educational providers etc.	Berndt <i>et al.</i> (2007) Hollensen (2001) Kotler and Armstrong (2006) Machková (2009)
	Population	World's population size; population; population density; mobility; age distribution of the population; birth rate; marriage; mortality rate; quality of life; poverty rate etc.	Berndt <i>et al.</i> (2007) Kotler and Armstrong (2006)
	Ethnic and racial structure	Ethnic structure; racial structure; ethnic culture.	Hollensen (2001) Kotler and Armstrong (2006)

IV: *Technological environment*

TECHNOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT			
Environment type	Category	Factors	Authors
INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES	ICT Infrastructure	Internet coverage; high-speed networks; Wi-Fi networks; number of Internet users; volumes of electronic deals; telecommunication networks; number of mobile phones and phone connections; computer technology equipment; option of work from home; TV, radio.	De Búrca <i>et al.</i> (2004) Kotler and Armstrong (2006) Machková (2009)
	Information systems	CRM, ERP, MIS.	Kotler and Armstrong (2006) Machková (2009)
	Communication systems	Email; social networks; chat; text messages SMS, multi-media messages MMS.	De Búrca <i>et al.</i> (2004)
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (R & D)	Expenditures on R & D	Gross domestic expenditures on research and development; total expenditures on own research in the business sector; level of expenditures on research and development in the sectors; rate of co-financing (government / private sectors).	Kotler and Armstrong (2006) Machková (2009)
	R & D level	Number of research institutions; proportion between the basic and applied research; number of scientists; ways of managing scientific activities.	Kotler and Armstrong (2006) Machková (2009)
TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPEMENT	Infrastructure	Road network; railway network; air transport; shipping transport; engineering networks.	Kotler and Armstrong (2006)
	Innovations	Technologic progress; quantities of innovations; rate of technological changes; number of international patents; efficiency of new technologies.	Kotler and Armstrong (2006) Machková (2009)
	Regulation of technological changes	Safety of products (standards, certification, etc.); time between a new idea and its commercialisation; protection of intellectual property (copying competitive products and technologies).	Kotler and Armstrong (2006) Machková (2009)
	Manufacture procedures	Robotic automation; automation.	Kotler and Armstrong (2006)



1: *Technologically excluded regions*
Sachs, 2000

the financial market, including it in the framework of the economic environment. The Kotler's conception (2006) presents the social & cultural environment with two independent categories, i.e. the demographic environment and the cultural one. Boučková *et al.* (2003) works, however, with the same categories, but she comprises them into social factors. Both the aforesaid authors broaden the scale of external impacts with the term of the natural

environment that is not stated in other authors' works like an independent category. At the same time, Boučková *et al.* (2003) accents the ecological aspects within that area.

It's surprising in the context of fast-changing technologies and their development, being part of current marketing activities that the authors pay the least attention to them. These issues are not solved at all in some publications (Hollensen,

classified by the authors into the political and legislative environment, entwine with economic indicators, e.g. membership in multinational institutions being classified by Berndt *et al.* (2007) and Machková (2009) into the political and legislative environment, but on the contrary into the economic environment by Boučková *et al.* (2003) and De Búrca *et al.* (2004). In addition, Hollensen (2011) mentions them in both the categories. There is also a close relation to the political stability which is, according to De Búrca *et al.* (2004), directly conditioned by social and cultural indicators, e.g. the degree of social unrest; cultural, ethnic religious and language unity of a country.

CONCLUSION

Global maps, being a good tool, may be used to provide a basic orientation and learn differences or contrarily conformities of different geographical regions. When using them, the evaluation shall take into consideration complexity and interconnection of the elements in the international marketing environment. Any single map cannot give sufficient data to make decisions about international activities. Other circumstances have always to be looked for; for example the before-mentioned map (see above) puts forward investigating the population's literacy (social & cultural environment), access freedom to the information (political and legislative environment), a country's level of economic advancement (economic environment) etc. When comparing the maps showing the access to modern technologies and the level the population's literacy, there are some areas being technologically excluded, having simultaneously a high rate of illiteracy. Those findings consequently imply modifying marketing tools. For example, the technological level is decisive for marketing communication in view of selecting communication channels; and the literacy level will consequently impact the form of communication.

Acknowledgement

GA PEF, CZU in Prague: 20141030 – Mapping the Global Marketing Environment.

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