THE ROLE OF SUSTAINABILITY IN INTERNATIONALIZATION: A STUDY ON GREEK MNEs

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RESEARCH AIM

Investigate the integration of sustainability into the operations and strategies of Multinational Enterprises (MNEs) and to explore its relationship with their internationalization strategies. Additionally, examine how customers' perceptions of sustainability impact the decision-making process of internationalisation for MNEs.

DEFINITIONS

Corporate Social Responsibility is a strategy for improving organizations' social, economic, and environmental aspects through actions beyond profit maximization (Park et al., 2015).
Internationalization is a strategy to facilitate global expansion and competitiveness (Godos-Díez et al., 2018).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ1: Why and how do MNEs integrate sustainability into their operations and strategies?
RQ2: Can sustainability affect the decision and the process of internationalization?
RQ3: Do customers' perceptions of sustainability affect internationalization decision-making?

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Research: Semi-structured interviews with managers from three Greek dairy MNEs

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RESULTS

ASPECT	KEY FINDINGS
Integration of Sustainability	MNEs view sustainability as strategic and market-driven, investing in renewable energy, sustainable packaging, and stakeholder engagement.
Impact on Internationalization	Sustainability influences entry modes but not market selection, aligning with customer demands and regulatory standards.
Customer Perceptions	Growing awareness among customers, but misconceptions about sustainability persist. B2B customers have stricter sustainability requirements than end consumers.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS:

1. Treat sustainability as a strategic priority.
2. Foster collaborative efforts with stakeholders.
3. View sustainability costs as long-term investments.
4. Balance standardization and adaptability to meet customer demands.
5.Proactively increase consumer awareness about sustainability.

LIMITATIONS

Limited sample size, focusing on the Greek dairy industry, may not generalize to other sectors.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Include more MNEs from various sectors, focus on B2B customers, and expand the literature review.

REFERENCES

Godos-Díez, J., García, L. C., & Fernández-González, C. (2018). Relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Internationalisation Strategies: A Descriptive Study in the Spanish Context. Administrative Sciences, 8(4), 57. https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci8040057
Park, Y. R., Song, S., Choe, S., & Baik, Y. (2015). Corporate Social Responsibility in International Business: Illustrations from Korean and Japanese Electronics MNEs in Indonesia. Journal of Business Ethics, 129(3), 747–761. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-014-2212-x