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International Restaurants Chains' Strategies in Tanzania: Exploring the Dynamics of 7Ps.

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Abstract

This paper explores the customisation dynamics of 7Ps in marketing of IRCs in Tanzania for strategic marketing adjustments to perpetually satisfy consumers and reinforce dedication to their vision and mission. Without orthodoxy marketing strategies, companies may crumble due to internal and external organizational pressures. In today's competitive restaurant business, where customers have more dining choices than before, as a result, customer expectations are ever increasing and demanding. In view of the growing phenomenon toward eating-out, knowledge of the criteria used by customers in the selection of a restaurant is strategic in understanding food consumption trends. Qualitatively determining factors influencing the selection of restaurants were tracked, utilizing cross-sectional descriptive and exploratory surveys for discovery of study related ideas and insights through content analysis. The population of all 12 IRCs was used. Primary data was collected using interview method. The results show that all the IRCs have customized their 7Ps invariably depending on their target market. The reluctance to customise has led some of them to exit the market. It is recommended that (i) IRCs should collect and mine data for deeper customized strategies to improve customer loyalty and retention; (ii) appropriate classification of restaurants based on acceptable parameters; and (iii) inclusion of local products, tribal-cooking techniques and display in menu and franchising proposition. The implications are grounded to the fact that with customized 7Ps, IRCs can introduce limited time offerings to attract repeat customers and use pure bundling to increase average order value. The rise in vegetarianism and veganism due to health or ethical reasons would be beneficial for the restaurants to communicate with their customers. Through deeper customization of 7Ps, restaurants can introduce value meals to enhance affordability, reach a wider target audience and enable sustainable performance.

Introduction

This paper explores the dynamics of international restaurant chains (IRCs) marketing strategies in Tanzania. The background information, problem statement, study objectives and questions are covered in this introductory face piece. Resourceful organizations need to constantly adjust operations and marketing strategies to perpetually satisfy consumers and reinforce dedication to their vision and mission. The adjustments are made over time, according to situational influences as well as internal and external trends affecting consumer behavior (Alumasa & Maina, 2021; Ferrell & Hartline, 2002). Without effective marketing strategies, companies may collapse due to internal and external pressures. It is a commonly known fact that every competitive company must have a marketing strategy for creating and reinforcing a competitive advantage. (Chen, Li, & Liu, 2013; Ngugi, 2022). In today's competitive restaurant industry, customers have more choices than ever, ranging from fast food to fine dining options. As a result, customer expectations of restaurant offerings are ever increasing, and more demanding (Hwang, Cho, & Kim, 2019). In view of the growing phenomenon toward eating-out, knowledge of the criteria used by customers in the selection of a restaurant is strategic in understanding food consumption trends (Ha & Jang, 2013; Chua *et.al.*, 2020). In Tanzania, especially from 2005, the commercial capital of Dar es Salaam observed new international restaurants entrants in the scene (Maritz, 2011). The rate at which new restaurants are entering the market in Tanzania is not matching the rate at which the restaurant-users is growing and the rate at which the market size is growing, which means that customers may shift their consumption from one restaurant to another leading to reduced customer lifetime values (CLF) and ultimately closure of business (Shcherbakova, 2020). There is a massive IRCs market exit which can be verified by some brands that entered and have already exited the Tanzanian market (.Christopher, 2020).

Marketing is about providing products to the customer that they desire, and with the increasing use of the internet, the customer is more aware of diverse types of food, beverages available and what they desire most (Fields, 2014; Kotler, 1967). IRCs need to be more selective with their marketing strategies as they have the added responsibility of higher overheads, maintenance of cross-boundary brand image, franchise fee, and thus their break-even points may be higher than that of domestic restaurants. The right marketing strategies are important to acquire the diners, satisfy the diners and build brand loyalty especially as consumers are illuminated by choice from market entrants. Domestic restaurants can adopt the marketing strategies utilized by IRCs and modify them to suit their businesses expansion expectations (Noor & Yasir, 2022). As the number of new entrants in the market increases, the existing restaurants need to put more emphasis on their marketing strategies to maintain or increase their market share, customer lifetime value, customer retention, brand awareness and reduce the churn rate of customers, which in turn will lead to their survival and growth in the market. This paper intends to explore and analyze the customisation dynamics of 7Ps based marketing strategies of IRCs in Tanzania to enable strategic marketing adjustments in the business landscape.

The paper is structured as follows: the next section provides a detailed review of relevant literature on international marketing strategies and the 7Ps framework followed by the methodology. The findings section presents the results of the analysis, and the discussion interprets the implications of these results. Finally, the conclusion and recommendations for IRCs operating in Tanzania are given and suggests directions for future research. Despite the growing interest in global food franchises in Africa, there remains limited research on how IRCs adapt their marketing strategies specifically within emerging East African markets. Existing literature often generalizes marketing strategies across regions, overlooking the unique cultural, economic, and consumer behavior dynamics. This paper addresses that gap by focusing on the strategic customization of marketing practices tailored to local market conditions.

Literature Review

Definition of Concepts

Marketing - It evolved to be "the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large."(Kotler & Keller, 2006). Therefore, Marketing involves (i) Identification, creation, anticipation, and distribution products; (ii) Analysis, planning, and control; (iii) Profitability or impact; and (iv) Establishing, building and maintaining lasting relationships which will result in profit for the parties involved.

A Marketing Strategy - is a business's game plan for reaching prospective consumers and turning them into customers of their products or services (Barone, 2021). It is using entity's strengths and capabilities to match the needs and wants of the market (Hooley, Piercy, & Nicoulaud, 2008). It develops effective responses to changing market environments by defining market segments, developing and positioning product offerings (Nistorescu & Puiu, 2009).

Table Service and Counter Service Restaurant - Table service (a la carte), is restaurant service where staff take customer orders, give them to the kitchen (food is prepared and plated), and then deliver food to the table within a locality (Fields, 2014), whereas, counter service is known as fast food with no table service with quick preparation and quick counter service. At a typical counter service restaurant, customers line up to place their orders with counter workers, deliver the orders to kitchen workers who assemble food, and then give the completed orders to the customers (*ibid.*).

Customer Lifetime Values (CLV) - is the total revenue or profit generated by a customer over the entire course of business relationship with the brand or product. There are two ways of looking at customer lifetime value: historic CLV (how much each existing customer has already spent with your brand) and predictive CLV (how much customers could spend with your brand). Both measurements of customer lifetime value are useful for tracking business success.

Pure Bundling and Mixed Bundling - Pure bundling Simplifies purchasing decisions can increase total sales by extracting more consumer surplus and can be useful when marginal costs are low. However, it may frustrate customers who only want part of the bundle. The customization can help the restaurant to build commpetitive bundles for persoanalize services (Schmalensee, 1984). On the other side, Mixed bundling is a strategy where a firm offers products both individually and as part of a bundle. Consumers can choose to buy either the bundle or separate products. Fast food combo meals are often available as bundles (burger + fries + drink) but each item can also be bought separately. The benefits of mix bundling allow price discrimination and better market segmentation, provide flexibility to consumers, and can increase profits compared to pure bundling (Venkatesh & Mahajan, 2009).

7Ps of Marketing (Marketing Mix) **-** The 7Ps of marketing is also known as the marketing mix: which is the set of controllable variables that the firm can use to influence the buyer's response (Kotler, 1967). The 7Ps of marketing are Product, Price, Place, Promotion, , and Physical Evidence (Bitner & Booms, 1981; Kotler, 1967). These Ps are applicable in both goods and services. (i) Product, (ii) Price, (iii) Place, (iv) Promotion, (v) Physical Evidence, (vi) Process (vii) People.

Marketing Mix Customization **-** refers to the process of adapting the elements of the marketing mix also known as the 7Ps: Product, Price, Place, Promotion, physical evidence, process, and people**.** This is meant to suit the preferences, culture, behavior, and market conditions of a specific target audience or geographic region (Barone, 2021; Chua *et.al.*, 2020).

Development of IRCs

The growing popularity of fast food, coupled with the growing trends for convenience and value for money, have opened up opportunities in the African fast-food industry (Wood, 2019). The African fast-food market is still in the initial stages of development in many countries excluding South Africa and Egypt (AFFMR, 2019). Within this decade, the growing target audience has seen an increase in international brands setting up shops on the continent to tap into the growing middle-income segment. According to Africa Fast Food Market Report (AFFMR) 2019-2029 (Businesswire, 2019), increased international interest through direct investment by players such as Yum Brands have also played a key role in shaping supply chains and opening up the markets to new entrants (AFFMR, 2019). As incomes rise and all of the usual emerging market dynamics are in play, such as urbanization, more hectic lifestyles, many people in Africa are also gaining access to chained/branded restaurants (ResearchAndMarkets.com, 2019). The African food service market is projected to register a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.99% during the forecast period of 2020-2025 (*ibid).* In 2018, consumer food service through leisure-tourism was growing rapidly, especially in destinations such as Morocco and Nigeria, where tourism is a rapidly growing industry. According to *Africa Foodservice Market 2022-2027: Industry Share, Size, Growth (Mordor Intelligence, n.d.)*, the demand for IRCs and full-service restaurants is also projected to grow over the forecast period.

Tanzania got its first international restaurant in the year 1999 when Magic Kingdom Company Limited, a locally registered entity, acquired the franchise license for Steers and Debonairs from South Africa's Famous Brands (Maritz, 2011). Many IRCs brands like Cape Town Fish Market, Rhapsodys, Marrybrown, Pizza Hut, and Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) have entered the Tanzanian market in the last two decades. Some brands have already entered and exited the Tanzanian market and include brands like Steers, Debonairs, Mainland China, Barbeque Nation, Nandos, Southern Fried Chicken, Smokin Joes, and Nawabi Khana. Considering that the Tanzanian economy has declared to be a lower-middle-income (World Bank, 2020). This implies improved standards of living by ways of higher quantity and international quality standards and choices of goods and services, better quantity and quality of social services such as health, education, and water, lower mortality and morbidity rates, higher literacy rates, lower poverty levels and more quantity and quality of economic infrastructure (Ngowi, 2020); ii) the trend of growing urban population makes it an attractive destination for IRCs and homegrown chains are becoming increasingly common. Table 1 shows the list of IRCs in Tanzania.

Table 1: International Restaurant Chains in Tanzania

#	Name	Restaurant Type	Country of Origin
1	Baskin-Robbins (Dr.Sweets)	Ice cream shop	USA
2	Cape Town Fish Market	Seafood Restaurant	South Africa
3	PappaRoti	Café	Malaysia
4	Marrybrown	Fast Food	Malaysia
5	Pizza Hut	Fast Food	USA
6	Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC)	Fast Food	USA
7	Moka & More	Café	Lebanon
8	Hoppipola	Bar	India
9	Subway	Fast Food	USA
10	Rhapsody's	Continental	South Africa
11	Spur Steak Ranch	Steakhouse	South Africa
12	Grano Coffee	Café	Türkiye

Source: Dyuthi (2022)

Marketing Mix (7Ps) and Strategies

Marketing mix or 7Ps of Marketing is a combination of the factors at the command of a marketing organization to satisfy the target market (McCarthy, 1964). It is a set of levers which an organization can manipulate to achieve set objectives such as profitability, market share, customer satisfaction and survival (Pour, Nazari, & Emani, 2013; Amofah, Gyamfi, & Tutu, 2016). According to (Lin, 2011) they include: (1) Product - it must provide value to a customer but does not have to be tangible at the same time. It involves introducing new products or improving the existing products; (2) Price - pricing must be competitive and must entail profit. The pricing strategy can comprise discounts, offers, and the like; (3) Place - it refers to the place where the customers can buy the product and how the product reaches out to that place. This is done through different channels, like internet, wholesalers, and retailers; (4) Promotion – it includes the many ways of communicating to the customers of what the company has to offer. It is about communicating about the benefits of using a particular product or service rather than just talking about its features; (5) People - this refers to the customers, employees, management, and everybody else involved in it. It is essential for everyone to realize that the reputation of the brand that you are involved with is in the people's hands; (6) Process - this refers to the methods and process of providing a service and is hence essential to have a thorough knowledge on whether the services are helpful to the customers, if they are provided in time, if the customers are informed in hand about the services and many such things; and (7) Physical evidence - the environmental manifestations and experience of using a product or service.

Marketing strategies commonly used for global expansion are standardization and adaptation (Barone, 2021). Global expansion with standardization and adaptation strategies faces a series of challenges, such as local responsiveness, cost reduction, and some recipes are easily replicated by the competition particularly in the fast-food sector (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2004; Ciszewska-Mlinari & Trapczynski, 2019).). A well-crafted and executed marketing will attract and retain visitors to the restaurant. Marketing plays a satisfaction delivery role and enabling profit for the owners. It is not enough just to be good nowadays. It is necessary to show superiority and excellence. If the customer who visits the restaurant thinks that it was "good," he will never come back. The reason is that there are many other good restaurants. But if a customer after a visit describes it as "excellent" it is highly likely that he will not only return himself but also tell other people about how good his visit was (Shock, Bowen, & Stefanelli, 2003). According (Barone, 2021)Chua *et.al.,* (2020), factors that influence customers when choosing a restaurant are price, food, variety, reputation, promotion, location, and information source. In this regard, the key factors in restaurant selection have relevance only if they are being perceived as significantly important from the viewpoints of customers. Restaurateurs often make costly expenditures on marketing activities to attract customers by utilizing various marketing techniques from menu development to sales promotion. However, any change in marketing activities meant to expand the customer base and increase sales requires concrete and sound evidence to evaluate whether such efforts pay off (Chua *et.al.*, 2020).

Theoretical Review

Game Theory - Game theory is a theoretical framework to conceive social situations among competing players and produce optimal decision-making of independent and competing actors in a strategic setting (Herbg, 1991; Hayes, 2022). The theory includes some of the assumptions of neoclassic economic theory such as complete information, perfect information, rationality of decision process, intelligence, competitive and non-cooperative behavior, dynamism, interdependence, time, and interactivity. Dominici (2011) explained that game theory can be used for pricing, advertising, product and distribution decisions. This means that game theory can be used in determining the original four P's of the marketing mix namely Product, Price, Place and Promotion not addressing additional 3 Ps.

The *Hofstede's Cultural Dimension Theory* – addresses how different people in other cultures behave. We tend to have a human instinct that deep inside "all people are the same," but they are not. Therefore, when a businessperson works in another country and makes decisions based on how (s)he operates in her/his own country, the chances are (s)he will make some incompatible decisions (Hofstede, 1980). Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory provides a framework used to understand the differences in culture across countries and to discern the ways that business is done across diverse cultures. Hofstede identified six categories that define culture namely Power Distance Index, Individualism versus Collectivism, Uncertainty Avoidance Index, Femininity versus Masculinity, Short-Term versus Long-Term Orientation, and Restraint versus Indulgence (Hofstede, 2022). De Mooij & Hofstede (2010) postulate that Hofstede's cultural dimension model is especially useful in international marketing as it identifies national values both in the business context and in general. Organizations try to adapt their product and service offerings to local habits and preferences, they need to understand the specific cultures of their target market and this is determined by their culture which influences their dress, food, cars, music and dance, the cultural artifacts they use, and so on (Makambe & Pellissier, 2014)

The *Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory* or expectation theory, Swamidas (2000), is the most widely accepted theory concerning customer satisfaction processes. The theory holds that satisfaction or dissatisfaction results from a customer's comparison of performance of a product/service with predetermined standards of performance. According to the view, the predetermined standards are the customer's predictive expectations. Three outcomes of the comparison are possible. Positive disconfirmation occurs when performance is perceived to be better than the predetermined expectations. In this scenario, customer is delighted. Zero disconfirmation occurs when performance is perceived to be exactly equal to expectations-customers are likely to be satisfied. Finally, negative disconfirmation occurs when performance is lower than expectations. Of course, negative disconfirmation leads to dissatisfied or unhappy customers.

Empirical Review

An empirical account register Cheserem (2013) who conducted a descriptive survey on the influence of marketing mix strategies on customer loyalty in fast food restaurants in Nairobi, Kenya; the study was guided by the theory of cognitive dissonance and buyer's remorse. The study stratified the fast-food restaurants into the three constituencies. The result reveals that, fast food businesses in Nairobi are booming with both local and international brands. As a result, marketing strategies are vital in any management practice as they help determine the output of sales in organizations. The study sought to find out the marketing mix strategies adopted by fast food restaurants in Nairobi and establish the relationship between marketing mix strategies and customer loyalty. The findings confirmed that, branding, product marketing, price considerations and location all form part of the customer proposition. The study ascertained that the role of the marketing channels is not only focus on the demand satisfaction by offering goods, but also need to stimulate demand through information, creating proximity and promotion by customer. The study concluded that customer loyalty is one of the indicators of business performance metrics.

Shcherbakova (2020) studied the importance of diversified marketing strategies for fast food restaurant chains, found that, in the light of the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, many major fast food chains reported an increase in sales. During the pandemic McDonald's reported that 95% of its restaurants are open and provide a safe environment for serving customers and that comparable sales improved from March to June 2020. However the study recommend that, more research needs to be done on how campaigns implemented through various marketing channels compliment and amplify each other, leading to desired outcomes. Also, with the emergence of different channels of online marketing, such as the internet and social media: fast food chains need to diversify marketing efforts to combine online and offline marketing. A study by Bujisic, Hutchinson & Parsa (2014) on the effects of restaurant quality attributes on customer behavioral intentions revealed that food quality, besides service and ambiance, is one of the most common attributes of restaurant quality. These variables were found to have a positive influence on aspects of customer behavioral intention, such as return intention and word-of-mouth recommendation. Al-Tit (2015) in his study on "The Effect of Service and Food Quality on Customer Satisfaction and Hence Customer Retention" found that service quality dimensions (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy) have a positive influence on customer satisfaction, and food quality will have a positive influence on customer satisfaction.

Patra and Panwar (2017) study findings showed how the 7Ps of marketing of McDonald's were adapted for the Indian market. For the product, McDonald's replaced its core product Big Mac with Maharaja Mac. The Big Mac's burger patty that is beef was replaced with mutton to avoid offending the religious belief as in India about 80 percent of the population is Hindu were cow killing is sacrilegious and pork products are not sold to not hurt the religious sentiments of Muslims. The products are also displayed using assorted colors on the menu where the vegetarian food product menu was displayed under green colour and the non-vegetarian food product menu was displayed under Purple colour. For the price, McDonald's when it entered the Indian market; India had the largest middle class. They introduced themselves as the brand serving product with the lowest price where every middle-class family could afford the brand at minimum cost. For place, McDonald's has been keeping in mind the changing needs of consumers and is using models that drive convenience and is even setting up stores near highways. For promotion, McDonald's in India has focused on collectivism and positioned itself as a family restaurant as family plays a key role for Indians. The company also gave exclusive discounts or attractive schemes during festive seasons and it has created happy meals to attract children. For process, respecting the cultural values and beliefs of every religion McDonald's kitchen had a separate preparation area for vegetarian and non-vegetarian products, and even packaging is conducted separately. For people, the kitchen crews have different uniforms to distinguish their role and do not work at the vegetarian and non-vegetarian stations on the same day ensuring clear separation. For physical evidence, McDonald's focuses on clean and hygienic interiors of its outlets and at the same time the interiors are attractive and the fast-food joint maintains a proper decorum at its joints.

Conceptual Framework

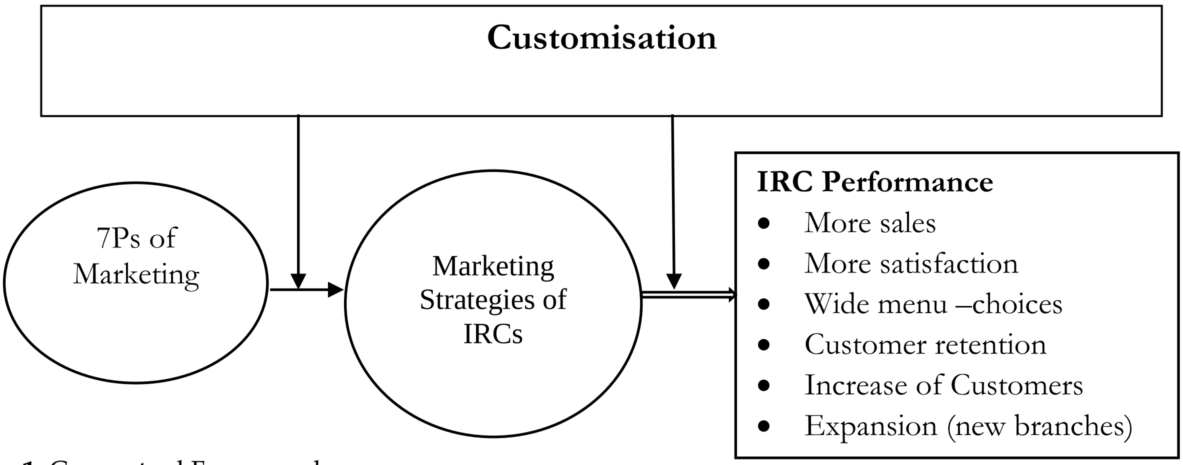

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author, 2024

Research Methods

The study was designed to qualitatively determine the factors influencing the selection of restaurants by customers in Tanzania based on the 7Ps of marketing. A cross-sectional descriptive and exploration survey design for describing the characteristics of a particular individual and the present state of affairs was utilized (Kothari, 2004; Mack, Woodsong, Macqueen, Guest & Namey, 2005). Exploratory survey is used for discovery of study related ideas and insights. The population for this study was international restaurant chains located in Dar es Salaam because most of them had branches in other Tanzania's cities. In this study, the entire population of 12 IRCs was covered, the sample equaled the population: 3 being counter service and 7 table service IRCs. Ravikiran (2022) noted that the population can be used when it is easy to collect data, the population is small and willing to provide data and can be contacted thus the data collected will be complete and dependable. The population consists of a variety of restaurants from fast-food restaurants, cafes, family dining, seafood restaurants, ice cream shops, and bars. Primary data was collected through observation methods, interview methods, and schedules. The primary data in this study was collected using interview method with interview guide. Further probing was done to seek clarification on issues that needed clarity. Secondary data from various sources such as journal articles, books, websites, conference proceedings, and dissertations. Reference to Hsieh & Shannon (2005), data was analyses using content analysis basing on each of 7Ps sub-themes.

Results and Discussion

General Demography

Seven (7) out of 12 IRCs operating in Dar es Salaam responded to this study being 58.33% response rate. In terms of gender and age, 57.14% of the respondents were female. The marketing personnel for two of the biggest multi-unit fast-food chains targeting youngsters and families were female only. The other 5 IRCs, female personnel manage the marketing activities where women make up a larger portion of the customer base. One of the female respondents is the director who manages marketing for a fast-food chain targeted towards health-conscious customers. One can determine that gender and type of restaurant chain will influence the marketing strategies adopted by IRCs. It was established that 42.86% of the respondents were in the 31- 40 years' age group and 28.57% are in 21-31 years' group and the remaining 28.57% are in 41-50 age group. There was no respondent aged above 50 years. The individuals who manage the marketing in the restaurants are young and possess knowledge and in-depth understanding of the restaurant industry. On experience, position and education, it was revealed that 42.86% of the respondents possess work experience of 11-19 years, 28.5% had 6 to 10 years of experience and 14.29% had 0 to 5 years of experience, respectively. Figure 4.1 indicates the summary of gender, age group and work experience distribution in IRCs.

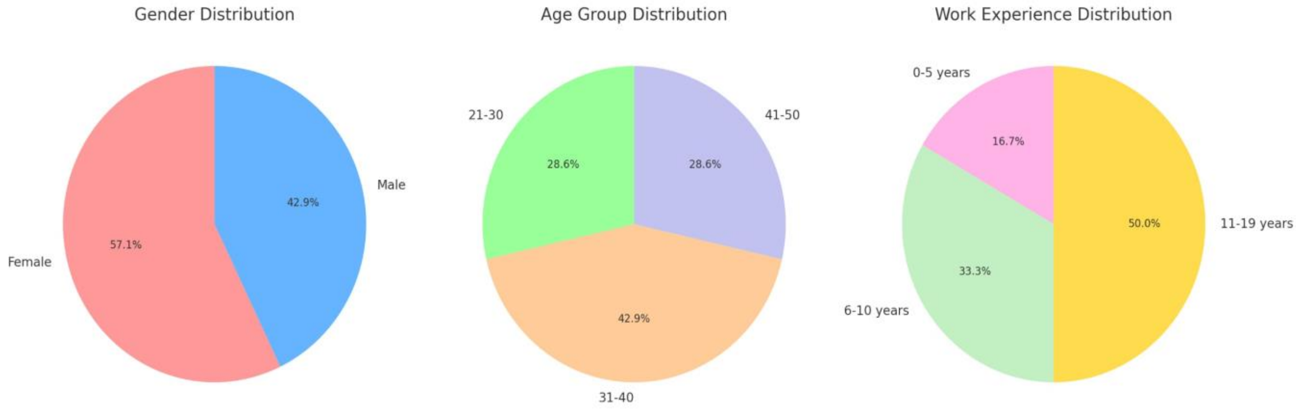

Figure 2: Gender, Age Group and Work Experience Distribution
Source: Field Data, 2022

This indicates that individuals managing marketing activities in restaurants possess extensive work experience in the industry. This implies that all the owners of the IRCs understand the impact of marketing on business success. All of the respondents have different educational qualifications but 3 out of the 7 respondents have a degree related to the management of restaurants. None of the individuals who manage marketing for the restaurants had a degree in marketing. The franchisee who owns the IRC with the greatest number of branches in Tanzania has created marketing manager/executive positions but does not require the individuals to possess a marketing major educational qualification.

The 7Ps of Marketing of the IRCs

Product Strategies

Food and Beverages**,** various food and beverage products have been sold by the IRCs in Tanzania. One can deduce that the products are mostly non-vegetarian with poultry (chicken) being the most common product in comparison to beef and seafood. Fried chicken is present in every menu except that of Subway. Chips or French fries are sold in every restaurant chain except Subway due to the chain's products being healthy but they sell packaged crisps. All the table service and quick restaurants have salads on their menu as salads or as a part of the sides except at Spur Steak Ranch. Chicken wings are also an item included in every menu except that of Subway. Sandwiches and wraps are sold by every IRC operating in Tanzania. Pizzas and burgers are sold by both table service and counter service restaurants. Schnitzels and fish and chips are other items sold in every table service restaurant that responded and fish and chips are sold in one of the counter service restaurant chains. Ice cream seems to be the most common item for dessert. Four out of the seven restaurants have special menus for kids. The table service restaurant chains have an extensive menu with food products being served from various cuisines. Although variety is important a complex menu can lead to customers having decision paralysis as the choices confuse the customers and this is not profitable on the side of the restaurants as well due to higher wastage and inventory costs. The table service restaurant chains should simplify their menu offerings by focusing on the best-sellers and this will communicate to the customers the must-order dishes when one visits that particular restaurant. The counter-service restaurant chains have a limited menu which makes it easy to control the quality of their food offerings and to expand to newer locations and the customers have to spend less time to decide regarding what to order. It was found that all IRCs sell Halal products but not all chains have Halal certificates because they either sell alcohol or pork products or both. 4 out of the 7 restaurant chains have Halal Certification from the Halal Board. The restaurant chains with Halal certification are all fast-food chains with multiple branches and serve hundreds of customers' every day. One of the restaurants chain whose main product is Pizza has replaced all its pork toppings such as ham and bacon with beef, turkey or chicken alternatives to respect the religious sentiments of its diverse customers and to obtain a Halal certificate. The 3 IRCs have halal food but not in their product assortment. The findings are consistent with Patra and Panwar (2017) about restaurant chains customizing their product offerings to respect the religious sentiments of its target customers. In India the Big Mac's burger "beef" was replaced with mutton to avoid offending the religious belief of Indians and Muslims.

Beverage products sold were soft drinks in terms of sodas, packaged and fresh juices, bottled water, coffee, tea, and espresso-based drinks were sold in all restaurants; mocktails and milkshakes were sold in 2 ICRs; smoothies and alcoholic beverages were sold in 2 ICRs and drinking yoghurt is sold in one ICR. Alcoholic beverages are sold in two of the three table service restaurants. Coffee is sold in one counter service restaurant and in all the table service restaurants. Milkshakes are sold in one counter service restaurant and all the table service restaurants. The restaurant chains that have Halal certificates and are targeting families do not serve alcoholic beverages. One of the table service restaurants targets young people and the party crowd, for them alcohol and music are an important part of the service they offer. Another table service restaurant's core product is steak and they reported that some of their patrons prefer to consume alcoholic beverages with meals.

It was found that various products have been developed considering the tastes and, in some cases, the local cuisine food has been introduced into the menu for those customers who like familiar food or are less adventurous. In counter service restaurants, while the core product is still the same, such as sandwiches or pizza the ingredients or toppings have been localized. Some of the counter service restaurants have replaced their pork products such as ham, bacon, and pepperoni with beef, chicken, and turkey meats in order to cater to their Muslim customers as Tanzania has a large Muslim population. Some of the restaurant chains are serving Changu fish which is caught in the Indian Ocean. The restaurant chains should study Tanzania's diverse food culture that varies from region to region and introduce limited time offerings so that customers can revisit the restaurant to try added items. As of now, the localized product offerings are limited and ordinary. Table 2 shows the best-selling food products.

Table 2: Bestselling Food Products

IRC	Bestseller in food	Bestseller in beverages
1	Chicken Tikka Sub in 6 inches	Soft drinks (sodas)
2	Mixed grill platter & seafood platter	Plain Mojito (cold) & Cappuccino (hot)
3	All the chicken products & meal deals	Soft drinks
4	T-bone steak	Milkshakes
5	All the bundles/combo	Soft drinks
6	The crispy chicken combos	Soft drinks
7	Meat-based main course dishes (denied names)	Alcoholic beverages

Source: Field data (2022)

Pricing Strategies

All the IRCs use both cost-based pricing and price bundling strategies. This means that every restaurant determines its prices based on its direct and indirect costs and its desired profit percentage. It can also be inferred that competition in the market is not considered when a restaurant fixes prices. One of the respondents informed us that as part of the guidelines from the franchisor, the food costs are supposed to be within 40% of the price charged for that item on the menu. All respondents use price bundling strategies in the form of combo offerings. The findings concur with the findings of Cheserem (2013) stating that price consideration form part of customer proposition. Price bundling is used to increase average order value and thus turnover and profitability. The counter-service restaurant chains have more types of mixed bundles or combo packages and all their main products are offered as part of combos or meal deals. While the table service restaurants offer combos, the majority of their products are not sold as combos or even if they offer combos it is for limited periods or during special occasions such as festivals (Correa, et. al., 2019). The findings contradict Patra and Panwar (2017) for pricing strategies utilized by McDonald's in India. Patra and Panwar (2017) stated that when McDonald's which is one of the largest counter-service restaurant chain in the world entered India McDonald's introduced themselves as the brand serving product with the lowest price where every middle-class family could afford the brand at minimum cost but the pricing in Tanzania makes the product accessible and affordable to a very small percentage of the population as Tanzania is still a lower-middle income economy. The table service restaurant chains should leverage bundling during lunch and happy hours to attract price conscious customers. The average order value in all the restaurant chains exceeds TZS 10,000. In the counter service restaurants, the average order value is in the range of TZS 11,000-20,000 while in the table service restaurants the average order value is between TZS 20,000-40,000. The average order value for table service restaurants exceeds that of counter service restaurants. The average order value of one meal in these restaurant chains is above what majority of the Tanzanians spend on food per day and this can hamper the frequency at which majority of its customers will visit the restaurant chains.

Promotion Strategies

Sales Promotion and social media advertising are commonly used strategies by IRCs as shown in table revealing that all the restaurants use social media, percentage discounts, complimentary items with purchase of certain products as per the terms and conditions as advocated by Shcherbakova (2020). Percentage discounts have mostly been in the form of "buy one get one free," a certain product for a certain price for a limited period, lunch promotions, bundles or combo meals, lifestyle discounts, coupons, and happy hours. Some of the IRCs have percentage discounts on one particular menu item on the weekdays for lunch only. Some of the counter service restaurant chains have percentage discounts for the entire day on certain weekdays for one type of menu item. The table service restaurant chains are the only ones that offer happy hours. Two restaurant chains offer lifestyle discounts for students such as showing their identification card and getting 20% off on combo meals and Monday to Friday specials when student card is shown. Only one of the table service restaurants offers coupons to customers which can be redeemed on the customer's birthday. Six out of the seven restaurant chains offer combos or price bundles every day. The other sales promotion is complimentary items such as free desserts, free drinks, free starters, free sides etc., which are used for limited durations. The restaurant chains have daily promotions, weekly promotions, seasonal promotions on festivals, and other events such as Valentine 's Day and graduations. Patra and Panwar (2017) stated that for promotion, McDonald's in India has focused on collectivism and positioned itself as a family restaurant as family plays an important role for Indians, and the company also gave special discounts or attractive schemes during festive seasons and it has created happy meals to attract children, this is in line with Harris, Schwartz & Brownell (2010). The sales promotion strategies implemented by the restaurant chains in Tanzania are similar and basic strategies that are implemented around the world. None of the restaurant chains have put much effort into creating unique sales promotion strategies to differentiate themselves from other restaurants. Table 3 indicates the Sales Promotion Strategies Used by the Restaurant Chains in Tanzania.

Table 3: Sales Promotion Strategies Used by the Restaurant Chains

Promo-tools	Promo Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
	Percentage discounts	7	100.00%
Sales promotions	Complimentary	7	100.00%
	Billboards	6	85.71%
	Magazines	2	28.57%
	Theaters &Radio	1	14.29%
Advertising	Facebook & Instagram	7	100.00%

One counter service restaurant chain advertises in theaters; advertisements are screened before the movie commences. Currently social media is the biggest advertising medium, used by the restaurant chains. The counter-service restaurant chains with the greatest number of branches are the most active on social media where they post multiple times per week, engage with customers by liking or responding to comments. The table service restaurants post less frequently on social media in comparison to counter-service restaurants and their engagement and follower count is also lower than that of counter-service restaurants. Smartphone usage is on the rise in Tanzania and social media is one of the cheapest and most effective media to advertise but the restaurant chains are not using social media very effectively. Currently none of the restaurant chains are utilizing influencer marketing where the restaurant chains collaborate with social media influencers to increase brand exposure, attract new target audience, and create unique content.

Place or Distribution Strategies

All the restaurant chains have locations in Dar es Salaam and only one of the restaurant chains has expanded to Arusha. Mlimani City Mall is the most popular location and every counter-service chain has a branch. All the restaurant chains have locations in the Masaki, Msasani and Oysterbay areas of Dar es Salaam and this includes locations in shopping complexes such as Sea Cliff Village, standalone locations on Haile Selassie Road, and commercial and office mixed purpose buildings such as Oyster Pearl Galleria. All counter service restaurants have branches in the City Center and Kariakoo to attract the business crowds and office goers. Mikocheni is another preferred destination for the counter service restaurants with 3 of the 4 counter service restaurants having branches in Mikocheni and all are located in shopping centers. Two of the restaurant chains both counter service restaurant chains have branches in the Julius Nyerere International Airport Terminal 3. From the data, it can be analyzed that majority of the restaurants are located in areas with high foot traffic such as malls and city centers. The majority of the locations are also located near residential areas. The restaurants chose appropriate locations especially the counter-service restaurants where location is one of the major determinants of success. Reasons for not expanding into new towns and cities are outlined in table 4 below:

Table 4: Reasons for not Expanding into New Towns and Cities

IRC	Reasons for not expanding into new towns and cities
1	Capital constraints as the franchisee opened 3 new locations in Dar es Salaam in 2021
2	The owner has time constraints
3	Financial constraints, finding the appropriate locations, and the feasibility studies results
4	The restaurant shut down 2 locations in the period of 2015 to 2021 due to poor sales
5	Feasibility studies have been conducted and the restaurant chain is working on opening new locations outside of Dar es Salaam. These locations may open this year or next year.
6	Financial limitations
7	Limited capital availability & two of the previous branches in Dar es Salaam were closed due to po sales (could not break even)

Source: Field data (2022)

It shows that financial constraints are the top reasons for not expanding into new towns and cities as 4 out of 7 restaurants indicated. Poor sales, which led to the closure of existing restaurants, is another reason and one of the restaurants that were closed down were located in Arusha for respondent number 4. Two of the restaurant chains have conducted feasibility studies and for those cities/towns where the feasibility study results are positive, they are expanding in those new towns and cities. The respondents that have plans for expansion have stated that *"Dodoma will be the next city as the market has the next best potential after Dar es Salaam."* The restaurant chains are all franchises with high start up costs and require approval of the parent company before opening in markets with limited opportunities thus expansion may be slow and unpredictable. Only two new restaurants were opened by two counter-service restaurants out of the seven restaurant chains in 2022. Two restaurant chains (KFC & Pizza Hut) plan to open branches in Mbezi Beach while one restaurant chain will open in Victoria (KFC).

Physical Evidence Strategies

There was separate and visibility of cooking areas for vegetarian and non-vegetarian food: the majority of the restaurant chains 71.43% have separate cooking areas for vegetarian and non-vegetarian food. In other restaurants, open ovens are used but separate pizza cutters and handling equipment are used for vegetarian and meat pizzas. Only one restaurant chain where the assembly counter is visible communicates to customers regarding separate cooking areas for vegetarian and non-vegetarian food. There has been a rise in vegetarianism and veganism around the world due to health, or ethical reasons and it would be beneficial for the restaurants to communicate to their customers that there is no cross contamination during preparation of the food. Visibility of the food preparation process to customers is 28.6% of IRCs, 71.4% is not visible. In the case of partially visible in the restaurant chain, the preparation process is not visible but the assembly process is visible as products are assembled as per the customer's preferences. In the case of visibility in some locations, the restaurant chain's food preparation process was visible to customers in all locations but during the COVID-19 period there were complaints from customers about the food safety & handling and in some locations, the kitchen had to be covered up. The restaurant chains can create small openings where the customers can see the food preparation and gain confidence that the restaurant is complying with food safety and hygiene standards and assurance.

Process Strategies

The nature of the business and the prevalence of COVID-19 necessitated the devising of a friendly process that serve time and indicate sense of responsibility to customers based on company core values. This refers to the methods and process of providing a service and is hence essential to have a thorough knowledge of whether the services are helpful to the customers, if they are provided in time, if the customers are informed in hand about the services and many such things. Self-ordering Kiosks in the Restaurants - none of the restaurant chains have self-ordering kiosks in their restaurants. Two of the respondents gave more insights related to the self-ordering kiosks. One of the respondents said that "*they have noticed that their customers are not very comfortable with technology and prefer if someone from the restaurant takes the order*." The other respondent informed that "*they have plans to conduct trials in some locations using the self-ordering kiosks.*" Delivery and online ordering were among of the main strategies for handling COVID-19 and creating convenience to customers. Mariangela (2019), states that negative impacts of using food delivery apps include high commission rates and this will impact on the restaurants that do not offer restaurant-to-customer delivery as commissions will be charged on all delivery orders. Shcherbakova (2020) credits delivery mechanisms during COVID-19 pandemic.

People Strategies

Service quality and food quality related strategies are used by all the restaurant chains to retain customers while other strategies that are used include maintaining the prices despite rising costs, introducing new products frequently, offers and loyalty programs. These services are people centred. People centredness amounts to the ability and determination of staff to connect with customers sustainably (Shock, et al., 2003). The restaurant chains are using both relationship management and customer relationship management strategies. The findings of this research are consistent with the findings of Al-Tit (2015) who found that service quality dimensions (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy), and food quality will have a positive influence on customer satisfaction. The findings are consistent with the findings of Bujisic, Hutchinson, & Parsa (2014) study on the effects of restaurant quality attributes on customer behavioral intentions revealed that food quality, besides service and ambiance, is one of the most common attributes of restaurant quality.

In enabling people centredness three IRCs were collecting information on repeat customers and collection of customer's personal details, participation in customer loyalty programs and customer retention strategies and entertainment provided. Those engaged with customers got more repeat customers than those did not. All the restaurant chains have more than 50% of repeat customers being higher with counter service restaurants than table service restaurants. Customer data is collected in four of the seven restaurant chains under review. The ones that do not collect customers' personal details are two counter service restaurants and one-table service restaurant. All IRCs collect names, three of the restaurant chains collect phone numbers, only two collect birthdays, and just one restaurant chain collects gender and email information. Some of the restaurants are collecting customer personal details but do not seem to be utilizing that data in a constructive manner to encourage the customer to visit the restaurant more frequently. For example, the restaurants can utilize the customers' phone numbers to send details about offers. It was revealed that entertainment is provided in two of the three table service restaurants and is seasonally provided in two of the four counter service restaurants. Music is the most common entertainment provided in both table service and counter service restaurants. Kids' activities are another generic form of entertainment used to attract the family crowds. The restaurant chains have tailored their entertainment as per the target customers. The counter-service restaurants can include inexpensive activities for kids on the weekends to attract families, as young children can influence their parents' decision on which restaurant to visit. Table 5 shows repeat customers and collection of customer's personal details.

Table 5: **Repeat Customers and Collection of Customer's Personal Details**

IRC No.	%Repeat Customers	Collection of Customer's Details	Entertainment Provided by restaurants
1	50%	No	No entertainment is provided
2	50%	Yes (Name, Phone No. & birthday)	No entertainment is provided
3	60-70%	Yes (Name & Phone number)	Seasonal (Music, Performances, Kids activities)
4	70%	Yes (Name, Phone number, birthday, gender, and email address	Screening of sports matches, kids play area, coloring sheets for kids, doing the coloring & win a tab
5	80%	YES (Collect Name)	Seasonal (Music, Performances, Kids activity)
6	50-70%	No	No entertainment is provided
7	60%	No	Disc Jockey during the weekends, live bands during the weekends, and festive seasons

Source: Field data (2022)

On the Customer Loyalty Programs, one of the restaurant chains has an active customer loyalty program that is being implemented in Tanzania. Three of the restaurants had customer loyalty programs in the past, which were discontinued for assorted reasons such as the COVID-19 pandemic, technology-related issues, and other issues that were not specified. There are chances of some loyalty programs to be revived in the near future and some restaurants that do not have loyalty programs can implement the programs in the future. It can be gathered that customer loyalty programs were used in the past in both counter service and table service restaurants. One of the respondents stated that as per the experience of that restaurant chain, customers did not redeem the loyalty points and they decided to offer complimentary items to retain customers. Table 6 indicates customer retention strategies used by IRCs.

Table 6: Customer Retention Strategies iimplemented by the Restaurant Chains

IRC	Strategies to retain customers	Freq.	IRC	Strategies to retain customers	Freq.
1	Quick service	3	7	Providing offers to customers	2
2	Product consistency	2	8	Consistent food quality	4
3	Unchanging pricing	1	9	service/experience to customers	4
4	Complimentary desserts	1	10	Loyalty program	1
5	Maintain & improve food quality	3	11	Proper complaint handling	1
6	Constantly introducing products	1	12	Updating the menu	1

Source: Field data (2022)

Majorly, the 7Ps findings in this study mostly concur with the findings of Patra and Panwar (2017) where they stated that respecting the cultural values and beliefs of every religion is crucial for market penetration and development. An example is McDonald's kitchen had a separate preparation area for vegetarian and non-vegetarian products, and even packaging is conducted separately (Witkowski, 2007).

This study covered the IRCs only within the spectrum of internationalization arrangements and it was done in Dar es Salaam where all IRCs were operating. Information about IRCs' branches was acquired from the head office. Issues such as food quality, nutritional aspects and diversity and inflation were not covered in this study. The implications of the study findings are contributing to theory by highlighting that the factual dynamics of people, physical evidence and process can directly proportionate other 4Ps: so, revolutionizes the game theory. As a result, IRCs can introduce limited time offerings to attract repeat customers and use pure bundling to increase average order value. For practice, the rise in vegetarianism and veganism due to health or ethical reasons would be beneficial for the restaurants to communicate with their customers and introduce new products. Through deeper customization of 7Ps, restaurants can introduce value meals to enhance the affordability and reach a wider target audience and enable customer lifetime value. For policy, the study emphasizes the significance of putting in place official classification of restaurants in Tanzania for predictable outcomes.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study explores the customisation dynamics of 7Ps in marketing of IRCs in Tanzania for strategic marketing adjustments to perpetually satisfy consumers and reinforce dedication to their vision and mission. The findings indicate that businesses operating in Tanzania must adapt each element of the 7Ps to align with local consumer behaviors, economic conditions, and cultural values. It is concluded that all the IRCs have customized their 7Ps. Further, the contemporary 3Ps namely, people, process and physical evidence can influence decisions on the traditional 4Ps. For example, pricing strategies used are cost-based pricing and price bundling (mixed bundling) are dictated by the 3Ps. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) has revolved and adjusted every element of the marketing mix especially place and promotion. The study highlights the importance of customizing marketing strategies rather than relying on generic, global models. Customization not only enhances customer satisfaction but also contributes to long-term brand loyalty in emerging markets like Tanzania.

The product offerings of the table-service restaurant chains are too vast and diverse and this can cause confusion for many clients when placing an order, it is recommended that restaurants should reduce the number of items and specify their specialty and bestsellers on their menu. Additionally, introduce budget items, special lunch items, limited time offerings, and festive specialties to give customers more reasons to increase visit frequencies. The online advertising medium is exhaustive and not limited to social media. Email marketing and internet search engine optimization may be more effective as customers today follow hundreds of accounts on social media and it may be difficult for the restaurant chains to stand out on social media. The restaurant chains to open ghost kitchens to improve the speed of delivery and increase the delivery radius and in turn serve more customers and generate higher revenues and profit. With the use of digital marketing and platforms, restaurant chains to collect detailed data and mine the collected data to create customized promotion strategies which can in turn be used to improve customer loyalty and retention. The restaurant chains to negotiate on the local content for including localized product ideas to the franchisor team for considering inclusion. The restaurant chains can also draw inspiration from tribal cooking ingredients, techniques, display, and styles. Provided there is not official classification of restaurants in Tanzania, appropriate classification based on acceptable multiple parameters are recommended to be established. Alternatively, the counter-service restaurant chains can introduce limited time offerings to attract repeat customers and use pure bundling to increase average order value. The rise in vegetarianism and veganism due to health, or ethical reasons would be beneficial for the restaurants to communicate to their customers that there is no cross-contamination during preparation of the food preparation. Through critical exploration and deeper customization of 7Ps, restaurant chains should introduce value meals to enhance the affordability of their food and drinks and hence reach a wider target audience. In conclusion, the strategic and culturally customisation of the 7Ps is essential for enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty, as well as for reinforcing the competitive positioning of IRCs operating within the evolving Tanzanian market landscape.

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The authors declared that they have no conflict of interest in the investigations that produced this paper

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