



GROWTH STRATEGY IN THE FRENCH MARKET FOR BRAND DEBIC FROM FRIESLANDCAMPINA

Executive Summary

There are a variety of ways for the development of a company. The FrieslandCampina Company has great plans on how they can increase the sales of the DEBIC. The strategies set aside are of great importance as they help the company researchers and the consumers fall into agreement with each other. To increase the sale of the brand the researcher has to create cognizance of their products to the consumers at large. There are various methods used to create awareness among the consumers and the firms. The most efficient method is put under consideration as an effective way of collecting the data from the consumers and the firms. The data collected goes through the coding process whereby the meaningless data is omitted. The researcher does the combination of the various data collection and comes up with a conclusion based on the combination of the gathered data. The product, price, promotion, and place factors are very vital for improving the recognition of the products to the consumers. The researcher has specified ways to ensure that these factors play a role in creating interests of the brand to the consumers and the firms. The four factors are applied in various fields.

The researcher has to find ways on how to lower the limitations that may arise based on the method selected to assemble the data. The methods selected need to answer all the sub-questions put across by the company depending on the ways of creating recognition of their products to the consumers and the firms. The company has to try to its level best to increase the confidence of the consumers in the brand. The FrieslandCampina Company needs to lower the competition rate from their competitors. The target population who are the chefs and the bakers need equalization on the purchase of the DEBIC brand. Therefore, it is the role of the company to ensure that the DEBIC is distributed in equal amounts to the restaurants and e baking industries. There is a need for the company to respect all the views from the consumers and the firms based on their perception of the brand.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Executive Summary | ii |
| CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| 1.1 Background..... | 1 |
| 1.1.1 Company Description..... | 3 |
| 1.1.2 Description of the Brand "DEBIC." | 4 |
| 1.2 Problem Analysis..... | 5 |
| 1.2.1 The current Situation..... | 5 |
| 1.2.2 The Future Desired Situation..... | 5 |
| 1.2.3 The Gap Between the Current Situation and the Desired Situation..... | 5 |
| 1.2.4 The Problem Description..... | 6 |
| 1.2.5 Urgency of the Problem..... | 6 |
| 1.2.6 Consequences of the Problem..... | 6 |
| 1.2.7 Objective of the Research..... | 7 |
| 1.3 Main Research Question..... | 8 |
| 1.4 The Organization of the Report..... | 8 |
| CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK..... | 9 |
| 2.1 Introduction..... | 9 |
| 2.2 Theoretical Perspective and Literature Analysis..... | 9 |
| 2.2.1 Marketing Mix Theory..... | 12 |
| 2.2.2 Marketing Communication Mix Theory..... | 16 |
| 2.2.3 The Expectations Theory..... | 20 |
| 2.3 Justification of the Theories..... | 21 |
| 2.4 Limitations of the Marketing Mix Theory..... | 22 |
| 2.5 Sub-questions..... | 23 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY..... | 24 |
| 3.1 Introduction..... | 24 |
| 3.2 Research Strategy..... | 25 |
| 3.3 Research Design and Approach..... | 26 |
| 3.4 Study variables..... | 27 |
| 3.5 Study Location..... | 27 |
| 3.6 Target population..... | 28 |
| 3.7 Sample Size and Sampling Technique..... | 28 |
| 3.8 Methods of Data Collection..... | 30 |
| 3.8.2 Secondary Data Collections Methods..... | 33 |
| 3.9 Limitations of Data collection methods..... | 34 |
| 3.9.1 Online Surveys (Questionnaires)..... | 34 |
| 3.9.2 Interviews..... | 35 |
| 3.9.3 Company and Product Websites..... | 35 |
| 3.9.4 Online Product Reviews and Blogs..... | 36 |
| 3.10 Data Analysis and Coding..... | 36 |
| 3.11 Validity and Reliability of the Data Collection Methods Used..... | 37 |
| 3.12 Ethical Considerations..... | 37 |
| 3.13 Conclusion..... | 38 |
| CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION..... | 40 |
| 4.1 Findings..... | 40 |
| 4.4.1 Online searches..... | 40 |
| 4.4.2 Interviews..... | 42 |
| 4.4.3 Online Survey (Questionnaire)..... | 42 |
| 4.2 Discussion..... | 47 |
| CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION..... | 50 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| CHAPTER SIX: RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS..... | 52 |
| 6.1 Implementation Plan and Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA)..... | 53 |
| 6.1.1 Implementation plan..... | 53 |
| 6.1.2 Cost-Benefit (CBA) Analysis..... | 53 |
| 6.1.3 Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability (ERS) Issues..... | 53 |
| 6.2 Limitations of the Study..... | 54 |
| 6.3 Recommendation for Future studies..... | 55 |
| References..... | 57 |
| Appendix 1: Questionnaire..... | 61 |
| Appendix 2: Interview..... | 71 |
| Appendix 3: Implementation plan..... | 73 |
| Appendix 4: Data table..... | 74 |

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This research report is written for the Amsterdam School of International Business (AMSIB) and FrieslandCampina, with Jasmeet Singh Samra (JS Samra) as the primary researcher. JS Samra researched as an internal attaché to the organization of FrieslandCampina, performing the role of digital marketing intern while conducting the research. The researcher aims to develop critical thinking, be open-minded, and increase knowledge in the digital marketing area while concluding his last year of bachelor study in International Business Management (IBMS) at AMSIB in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. The thesis needs to have an international aspect, involving at least two countries, where the researcher is obliged to perform a primary data collection and compare to another country.

The research was started to increase the sales of DEBIC products through brand awareness, and also outdo the competitors of DEBIC products in the French market. The main concern of this research is however not only to know the problem affecting the company but also come up with some possible solutions on the dos and do nots in the company for high number sales. The entire thesis is however trying to identify various problems affecting the brand awareness of the company, and their possible solutions.

The topic that will be investigated to achieve the learning goals is the growth strategy in the French market for increasing the brand awareness of brand DEBIC. This topic will be explored by uses of both primary and the secondary factors to collect the raw facts and figures from the consumers and the firms as they create awareness of them. The primary factors are the most considered methods since they are easily accessible. On the other hand, the secondary methods are especially used when the company has plans and settled, before commencing on the use of these methods (Ateke & Nwulu, 2017). Take the scenario where the links are used as one of the secondary methods to access the information about the DEBIC brand; the company will have to ensure that all the firms and the consumers access the link. This may be costly to the FrieslandCampina Company as they try to create more

links. It can also be disadvantageous to the consumers and the firms who cannot get access to the links (Ateke & Nwulu, 2017).

The availability of all the resources to access the consumers and the firms is very important for the researchers to coordinate easily with them. This provides a clearer way for convincing the consumers of the advantages of the DEBIC brand. The market mixing strategy is very important in the fact that it is an easy approach to accessing the respondents (Ayanda & Tunbosun, 2012). It is very crucial for it enables the company researcher to consume less time as they try creating awareness to the consumers and the researchers (Goi, 2009). The researcher has set aside goals for increasing the sales of the DEBIC brand; therefore, that helps ensure that everything concerning the brand is stated clearly to the consumers so that they are aware of what is there for purchase (Arokiasomy, 2012). Positive feedback from the consumers and the firm is one of the ways to boost the confidence of the company researcher. This creates great hopes for the company of increasing the chances of the sale of the brand products.

The thesis has been written and compiled for the promotion of DEBIC product of the FrieslandCampina which has been greatly affected by the competitors in the French market such as Metro, Vegetal Creams, and Passion Froid brands. To increase the sales of the DEBIC brand, FrieslandCampina have however come up with some specific strategy to outdo these competitors in the market. DEBIC product is one of the brands that the FrieslandCampina Company not only wants to increase the sales in the French market but also want to have global consumers and firms being their best customers (FrieslandCampina, 2020). This can only be possible through some of the methods as the whole of this thesis tries to explain.

The main aim for this thesis came up after the need for the realization of the importance of the sales increase in FrieslandCampina where the study has been carried out on the basic and the best need areas for this research to improve the sales of DEBIC brand in FrieslandCampina. The main countries where this research needs to be carried out are in China, Canada, Germany, and India which are among the top countries dealing with food processing industries (FrieslandCampina, 2020).

The research is mainly focused on the factors which have caused some change in the demand for the DEBIC product in the French market. It is critical to understand the consumer's current demand about the cooking patterns, their eating pattern, and as well as their food purchasing pattern for the company to be able to come up with some clear ways depending on the future business plans as viewed by the current demand.

The whole of this thesis focuses on trying to identify all the possible weaknesses in the market where DEBIC can fit and also look for all the possible weaknesses to achieve a high-quality brand. The information extracted from the research can clearly show that food processing industries such as FrieslandCampina, must produce high-quality products, and also move with the consumer's expectations, as well as the consumer's demand (FrieslandCampina, 2020). When the demand for complementary goods for the DEBIC brand however decreases, the demand for the DEBIC brand will have to decrease as well (FrieslandCampina, 2020).

1.1.1 Company Description

FrieslandCampina was founded in 2008, as a result of a merger of two companies, Friesland and Campina. The company is owned by a dairy cooperative, FrieslandCampina U.A., with 11,476-member dairy farms and 17,413-member dairy farmers in the Netherlands, Belgium, and Germany (FrieslandCampina, 2020). The company has 23,816 employees with 36 branches located worldwide (FrieslandCampina, 2020). These locations include Europe, North and South America, Asia and Oceania, Africa, and the Middle East, and their products find their way to one hundred countries. The organization has four business groups: Consumer dairy, Dairy Essentials, Ingredients to add value to existing products, Specialized Nutrition (FrieslandCampina, 2020). The research emphasizes the Dairy Consumers business group, and the brand DEBIC is part of this business group, with products for Business-to-Business (B2B) markets.

FrieslandCampina supplies its products worldwide to consumers (B2C) dairy products, infant nutrition; Ingredients, and semi-finished products for the producer (B2B) of infant, food industry, and the pharmaceutical sector (FrieslandCampina,

2018). The net turnover in 2019 was €11,297 million, with a profit of €278 million, 36.9% more than in 2018 (FrieslandCampina, 2020). FrieslandCampina is well established in the Netherlands, with revenue only in the Netherlands of €4,688 million, and wants to expand in Europe as B2B and Fast-moving consumer goods (FrieslandCampina, 2020). The French market is Europe's third-largest e-commerce market and sixth in the World's most influential e-commerce markets with €82 billion. In contrast, the Netherlands has €24 billion in e-commerce sales (FrieslandCampina, 2020). FrieslandCampina has multiple competitors, such as Yili, Royal DSM, and Nestle. The unique selling proposition of FrieslandCampina is the ability to manage their entire chain, with complete control on all the steps of the supply chain, and deliver high premium quality products to their customers (FrieslandCampina, 2020). The brand into consideration in this research is DEBIC, which provides dairy products to chefs and bakers, and other experts in the foodservice market.

1.1.2 Description of the Brand "DEBIC."

DEBIC is a FrieslandCampina brand, part of the "Dairy Consumers" business group that covers the market of dairy and alternative products instead of dairy for food preparation. The brand is made for professional chefs, pastry chefs, and bakers, who try to solve problems they face daily in their business and inspire them to achieve complicated recipes (FrieslandCampina, 2020). DEBIC focuses on two aspects: usage and possibilities. Usage stands for taking steps away in the preparation phase and creating packaging that allows the products to be used effortlessly. Possibilities help expertise achieve dishes, decoration, and results, which would not be accessible without DEBIC products (FrieslandCampina, 2020). DEBIC portfolio includes Creams, Butters, Desserts, Topping, and Ice & Shakes.

Currently, DEBIC is active in the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Poland, Sweden, and Denmark (FrieslandCampina, 2020). The brand sells Business-to-Business (B2B) and does not trade the products directly to the consumers, but use tactic wholesalers to sell the products in various markets; some examples are METRO, Pomona, Sysco, and Trans Gourmet. The customers are approached online through the official DEBIC website, newsletters, masterclasses, social media channels

(Facebook, Instagram) during the sale. The website offers inspirational ideas for professionals, business ideas and suggestions, and an explanation of particular cooking techniques. However, the sales are carried out from the partners' wholesalers (FrieslandCampina, 2020).

The FrieslandCampina Company tries to identify markets across the whole globe to outdo the case of low sales. Having an awareness of the consumers is the last step of every successful company. For this reason, FrieslandCampina has the fast stage set where through the research it tries to bring its awareness not only to its best consumers but also the whole globe (FrieslandCampina, 2020). DEBIC is a product that is cheaply available to almost eight different countries. DEBIC brand however is one of the most essential required when one wants to get a portion of tasty food (FrieslandCampina, 2020). Therefore, a piece of advice to the chefs and bakery to use DEBIC for a high quality of their final product.

1.2 Problem Analysis

1.2.1 The current Situation

FrieslandCampina is not widespread in the French markets, and therefore the company notices room for growth, particularly for the brand Debic. The sales aimed at the French market are through the DEBIC brand; unfortunately, there is limited knowledge of the French Consumers, their preferences, and cultural barriers (FrieslandCampina, 2020). Currently, the company has a lower number of sales in the French market of their products. The low number of sales is because they have little control over how their products get promoted in the French stores and markets (FrieslandCampina, 2020). The products of the brand DEBIC which are mostly bakery products make considerable sales.

1.2.2 The Future Desired Situation

FrieslandCampina has noticed that there are possible chances for a higher demand in DEBIC brand as compared to the demand over the year of 2020 where the products that hit the market was around 69.7% (FrieslandCampina, 2020). It is therefore possible to hit the remaining part if some serious research is carried out and problems affecting the brand identified as well.

This can be much possible by increasing the sales volume in the low demand countries as of French market which has a market gap. The company's first issue is trying to create all the possible required high-quality brands and focus on this market gap as well.

1.2.3 The Gap Between the Current Situation and the Desired Situation

There are gaps that exist between the current situation of the brand in the French market and what the company desires to be their ideal situation. The sales gaps that exist between the expected sales and the actual sales are enormous, and that is why the company sees room for expanding the market for the products (FrieslandCampina, 2020). The salesforce of FrieslandCampina during the year 2020, calculated for DEBIC in the French market an actual sales volume of quantity 16,485 kilograms, while it was expected to be 23,635 kilograms (FrieslandCampina, 2020). The sales volume is higher in France than in other European countries, but the French market has an enormous sales gap between the expected sales volume and the actual sales volume.

1.2.4 The Problem Description

FrieslandCampina relates the vast gap in sales volume to the insufficient awareness of the brand DEBIC in the French markets. According to Welling (2021), sales and brand awareness are related because most French consumers are likely to purchase bakery products from brands that they know from their markets and not new ones from other regions like the Netherlands. Therefore, brand awareness is a critical component for increasing the volume of sales (Welling, 2021). DEBIC brand is also not well known among consumers in France, considering the wide range of DEBIC products available, and only a few are sold in France. Brand awareness is identified as the problem for reaching the planned sales (Welling, 2021). Customers in the French market prefer to buy well-known brand products for their culinary creation, such as "President" and "Elle & Vire" (Welling, 2021). The desired situation for DEBIC is an increase of brand awareness and reaching a better positioning in the France market by the end of the year 2021 to boost their sales.

1.2.5 Urgency of the Problem

In the French market, sales are currently being conducted through wholesalers like hypermarkets, specialized supermarkets, and department stores. The wholesalers are being used as their primary sales channels, but for them to reach their goal of sales, they have to increase specialized stores for their products in the French markets (FrieslandCampina, 2020). The other competitors in the French markets have diversified and specialized stores for their products and it is therefore critical that Brand DEBIC also increases their specialized stores as a strategy of increasing their brand awareness in the market. For FrieslandCampina to reduce the gaps in the volume sales, they have to increase DEBIC brand awareness by better positioning in consumer mind compared to competitors such as "President." They also have to increase their market share if they want to make their brand more aware.

1.2.6 Consequences of the Problem

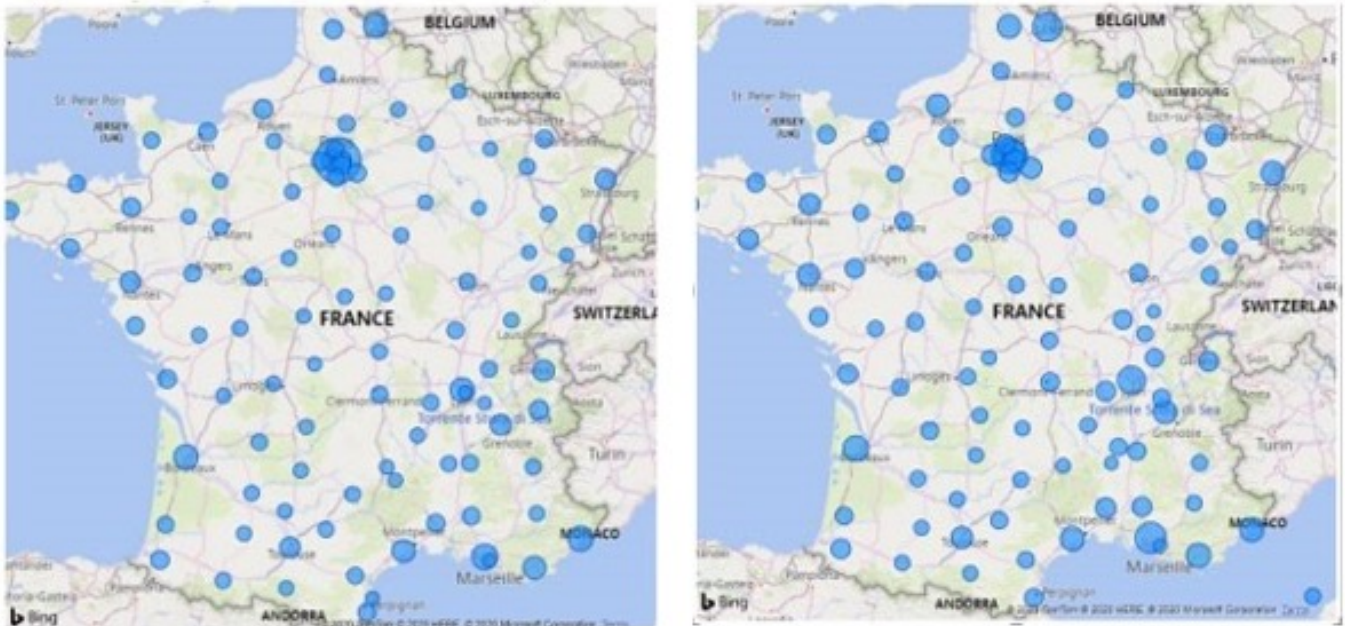
Brand DEBIC having less market share in the French market is contributed to its lack of brand awareness in the region. If the lack of brand awareness is not addressed, then consequences are likely to arise since brand awareness relates with market outcomes. Lack of brand awareness for DEBIC can result in poor market outcomes and can also lead to lack of brand equity (Ateke & Nwulu, 2017). The success of DEBIC will be reflected in its market performance and therefore if its strong brand is not maintained as a key element in their marketing strategy, the brand is likely to poor market performance, poor customer support, and face stiff competition from the competitors.

1.2.7 Objective of the Research

To identify, analyse, and evaluate the brand awareness strategies that FrieslandCampina can implement to improve their annual revenue and market share in the French market.

Figure 1.1

Segments Focus – HORECA & Bakery



Note. The image above illustrates the HORECA and Bakery segments distributions around France.

On the left side, the HORECA distribution, and the Bakery distribution on the right side.

Source: (FrieslandCampina, 2020).

1.3 Main Research Question

What brand awareness strategies should FrieslandCampina implement to obtain a 7% increase in their annual revenue and market share value in the French market within 12 months?

Consumption of DEBIC brand has however been mainly affected by the covid-19 cases being widespread in the globe where most of the companies are updating their operations to online to withstand the market demand. As the aim for DEBIC brand is to increase the demand for DEBIC product mostly in the French market and the whole globe at large, it's the obligation of the company however to bring awareness to the consumers of French market since following the past research, it is visible that French market has a higher demand for the well-known products.

Therefore, the duty of the FrieslandCampina Company is however come up with all possible ways to raise this awareness in mass media, online, and personal communication with the consumers.

1.4 The Organization of the Report

The research is structured in six chapters. Chapter 1 intends to describe the research's reason, and the problem analysis is performed to individualize the company's current situation that this research tends to improve. Chapter 2 describes the theoretical framework used to understand the firm's problem and lists the relevant theories and literature; it will be a developed sub-question required to answer the main research question. Chapter 3 shows the methodology applied to answers to the sub-questions and fellow main research questions. The methods used are explained comprehensively within this chapter. Chapter 4 describes the relevant study findings, discussions of these findings, and the study limitations. Chapter 5 gives the overall conclusion of the research, while chapter 6 gives the study recommendations. The Reference is a list of all the sources used in this thesis. The last section of the research is the Appendix.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This section is pertinent to notice hypotheses that should be applied to addresses the principal research question before beginning the exploration. The hypothetical system is the conviction that specific factors are identified with one another, making a model. This part will show those factors and the relationship by making a hypothesis or speculation to respond to the primary examination question (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Its examinations on the advertising blend systems applied by firms in an industry, the connection between the promoting blend methodologies and firm execution, and the estimations of showcasing blend viability. All this is done to increase brand awareness to the customers and clients in any given business. It helps plan a fruitful item offering. Assists with arranging, creating, and executing compelling showcasing procedures. Assists organizations with utilizing their qualities and stay away from superfluous expenses. Mindfulness promoting is a way to deal

with showcasing in which an organization centres on getting the brand perceived by likely clients. For the company to continue working and perform well in the French food market, it has to strategically formulate methods and strategies to make sure that Debic is well-positioned in the market. According to Seturi (2017), an effective brand in the present-day conditions is not simply very much chosen and unique name or imprint. The dependability of shoppers is associated with the achievement of the brand on the lookout. It is hard for a brand to discover achievement and afterward look after it (Seturi, 2017).

The research requires Debic to have a steady consideration, social occasion of data, investigation and taking off the right choices. The aim of increasing sales and client base will require a lot to be done, and it is not going to be easy. It will require the company to have realistic goals and objectives, which will be the driving force behind the whole marketing campaign. This chapter will contain the major aspect which will be discussed in regards to the research question. It will incorporate an in-depth analysis of the situation and give the various theories that are going to be used by FrieslandCampina as it tries fully enter the French market and at the same time reduce the gap that has been there for years by improving and increase its sales.

2.2 Theoretical Perspective and Literature Analysis

All over the world, organizations and businesses have to develop a working marketing strategy to make the company reform well. The business's success is of great importance and should be considered and by working on the business goals and objectives. Therefore, numerous associations are endeavouring to utilize advertising as their essential methodology as far as the opposition. The plain clarification concerning the showcasing standard has a reason to impact the purchasing conduct of the buyers by influence, giving data, and numerous different procedures for the exceptionally one explanation; to build up its adequacy on the lookout (Kalashnikova, 2011). Hierarchical pioneers accept that showcasing is one of their significant angles towards progress, notwithstanding the fitting promoting system that they can apply to spur or impact the association's presentation. Recognizing and organizing the components of its advertising blend permits a

business to settle on productive showcasing choices at each level. These choices help a business develop its qualities and breaking point its shortcomings. Become more serious and versatile in its market (Athuraliya, 2021). A promoting blend is a fundamental instrument in building and carrying out a compelling showcasing technique. It ought to be utilized to show possibilities why their items or administration is extraordinary and better than your rivals.

The marketing procedure begins with statistical surveying. There has been a great connection to how companies use the Marketing Mix to better position themselves in the market by creating awareness. Marketing Mix has become the talk of every successful organization. According to Arokiasamy (2012), “when introducing new items with clients and increment mindfulness about existing items, organizations need to participate in advertising, which is a cycle pointed toward imparting the worth that an organization accommodates its customers, clients, accomplices a culture on the loose.” Besides imparting, promoting empowers organizations to convey and trade their items and administrations to increase the value of their partners (Arokiasomy, 2012). Through the advertising interaction, organizations can make, fulfill and keep clients. Showcasing is a focal piece of business across the board since it empowers business substances to put clients at the focal point of the business activities. With the end goal for organizations to accomplish ideal execution, they need to have a system to base their advertising exercises. The most well-known model is the showcasing blend. In any business operation, it is only right to conduct an estimate of projection especially when it comes to advertising and creating awareness of a brand's products and services. Zeroing in on various parts of the advertising blend model decides the degree to which organizations are fruitful in acquainting new items with the market and expanding the notoriety of existing items.

For successful research, it is good to understand the mixing tool or the price of the products or services generally in the market. They include the following: the cost of marketers to obtain some profits, breaking of prices, competition-based pricing where the price is decided to be set on the competitors, customer-value-based which we have to understand the price that the consumers want to perceive. Brand

awareness correlates positively with market performance, while brand recognition has a weak relationship with sales and brand value. Effective branding is a vital success aspect that also affects consumer welfare. Fashion brands can build equity, encourage consumer brand loyalty, and increase profitability by employing smart branding methods. Approximately 3% of the fluctuations in sales might be attributed to brand awareness. The literature on the relationship between brand awareness and market outcomes is sparse and lacks external generalizability. The concept of branding is part of the marketing mix, but once a product obtains the brand name, it has its own prospects. According to Fathian, Slambolchi, & Hamidi (2015), keeping the sales and its aim in mind, the management should place attention on the sales elements which leads to the Promotion with long-term effective Promotion and branding. Needs and mentalities and contenders' items are evaluated and proceed through publicizing, Promotion, conveyance, and where relevant, client adjusting, bundling, deals, and dispersion. Showcasing system should zero in on conveying more noteworthy worth to clients and the firm at a lower cost.

In the marketing literature, there has been a lack of agreement on how to define brand equity. The value that a product or service provides to the firm and/or the firm's customers." Companies are responsible for managing a variety of brand assets in order to maximize the value of the product for both the consumer and the company (Ayanda & Tunbosun, 2012). The value of brand equity is reflected in consumer behaviour results; brands with strong equity enjoy lower marketing expenditures as well as increased market share, trade leverage, price premiums, and loyalty. It only becomes possible by making sure that their brand recognition is critical because it is the first stage in the marketing funnel and lays the groundwork for eventually acquiring customers. People's capacity to recall and recognize your company is referred to as brand awareness. To begin, brand awareness keeps the brand at the forefront of your audience's minds. When releasing new products and services, brand recognition is critical since it drives consumer decisions when deciding between rival companies. It increases repeat purchases, resulting in increased market share and incremental revenues.

2.2.1 Marketing Mix Theory

This is an essential concept which needs to be in place when a company wants to make the changes that will lead to long-term success. According to Khan (2014), "having a set of tools which are controllable and work together to achieve the company's desired position in the market is referred to as a Marketing Mix." The Marketing mix comprises four elements referred to as the 4Ps (Product, Promotion, Price, and Place). These elements have been seen to be super helpful in making awareness creation more effective and efficient (Khan, 2014). The marketing mix techniques remember every one of the reactions of a firm for guaranteeing that the objective market emphatically impacts their item interest. Firms that try to meet the client needs regularly need to zero in on understanding the clients and creating suitable procedures to improve their exhibition. To have an effective brand in the present-day conditions, it is not simply a very much chosen and unique name or imprint. The faithfulness of shoppers is associated with the achievement of the brand on the lookout (Isoraite, 2016). It is hard for a brand to discover achievement and afterwards to look after it. It requires steady consideration, the get-together of data, investigation, and taking off the right choices. Assumptions for a brand, item, or administration can be founded on input from loved ones, online audits, showcasing material, sales reps, and past utilization encounters.

Picking the correct blend of components of the advertising blend doesn't occur unintentionally. Advertisers should be educated about the issues and openings that go with each component of the blend into the products and services which Debic makes available to its clients. In the company the theory is beneficial as it helps in the identification of the consumer or comprehend what product would provide your firm high lucrative returns by researching your potential or present market. It also helps in determining what kind of product your target market requires or desires, as well as who your potential clients are. The primary factor to marketing in every business entity is advertising since it is the fundamental channel between any association and clients. Advertising has numerous systems, yet every one of these procedures one objective. This objective is to advance the association items or administrations by expanding clients' satisfaction (Thabit & Raewf, 2018).

Various scholars have been in the forefront, trying to give meaning to the

Marketing mix and how it is instrumental in any business setting. Many scholars have looked into the notion and meaning of brand equity, but the origins of brand equity and the impact of marketing mix factors have been seldom examined or researched. This study investigates certain marketing mix variables such as product quality, perceived value, geographical presence, as well as joint venture and co-branding as antecedents of brand equity building. In the literature, there are numerous definitions of the terms "marketing" and "marketing mix." Marketing is the process through which businesses provide value for their consumers and establish strong client relationships in order to gain value from them in return. According to Goi (2009), marketing mix is an essential conceptual framework that guides managers when it comes to making decisions that are related to all the strategies which are used in meeting the customers' needs and wants. Riaz & Tanveer (2012) believe that its marketing mix acts as a controllable tool used when creating a response in a certain target market by incorporating the 4Ps. The 4Ps of marketing provide a framework for improving the components of marketing mix", the method through which you bring a new product or service to market. It assists you in defining your marketing alternatives in terms of pricing, Product, Promotion, and location to ensure that you are offering fulfils a certain customer need or desire.

The term "marketing mix" refers to the various types of decisions that firms must make through the entire process of bringing a product or service to market. According to Amiri & Maroofi (2016), there is a great connection between the marketing mix and brand awareness. Brand awareness alludes to whether buyers can review or perceive a brand, or essentially whether customers think about a brand. Brand mindfulness influences purchaser dynamic when they know about the brand (Amiri & Maroofi, 2016). For Debic, it is creating awareness and finding a way of improving and raising the sales while building on reducing the gaps that have existed in the French food market. Customers may utilize brand mindfulness as a buy choice heuristic. Hence, brand mindfulness expands brand market execution. The marketing mix elements have been explained below, and understanding each element makes it easy for a company to create awareness in the market.

2.2.1.1 Product

It is one of the elements that the Debic company must consider, which is trying to make a difference in the French food market. According to Isoraite (2016), "the product can be characterized from various perspectives. In advertising, an item implies the actual items and administration offered and the philosophical activities of the organization." The pricing of a product or service has a direct impact on a company's revenue and profits. As a result, it is critical for businesses to connect their marketing strategies with the perceived value of their product or service. You may need to launch new products or services, extend your market, enhance your marketing operations, or improve customer service to grow sales. If you are a manufacturer, you may need to increase your productivity to fulfill demand. A product should ideally meet existing consumer demand. Alternatively, a product may be so attractive that buyers believe they must have it, resulting in new demand.

To be effective, marketers must understand a product's life cycle, and business executives must have a strategy for dealing with products at each point of their life cycle. Such endeavors may involve both strategic and tactical techniques. Packaging and labeling items in an environmentally friendly manner is a tactical difficulty that many businesses encounter. In France, for example, Hewlett-Packard solved this issue by offering its laptops with a preassembled carrying case, reducing the use of disposable packaging for computers by 97 percent (Latif, Islam, & Mdnoor, 2014). According to Thabit & Raewf (2018), the product incorporates a chain of people and associations like merchants, wholesalers, and retailers who shape the disseminating organization of the association (distribution channels). The association should pick whether to sell straightforwardly to the people or through the merchants. It can even arrange to sell it straightforwardly to clients.

2.2.1.2 Promotion

Promotion incorporates the methods to advise the clients regarding the items and administrations, including individual selling, publicizing, deals promotions, and advertising. Promotion incorporates the methods to advise the clients regarding the items and administrations gave, including individual selling, publicizing, deals promotions, and advertising. It is said that an item is finished when clients realize it exists, knows its quality and highlights, responds to it decidedly, and purchase (Khan,

2014). Without information, there cannot be interest. The Promotion empowers item mindfulness, inspirational perspectives, and purchasing choices. When dealing with the promotion element, it can be deals advancement, Promotion, individual selling, advertising, and direct showcasing to make buyers mindful of the brand and item decisions accessible for them (Thabit & Raewf, 2018). It is significant that the advancement has a dependable message and is set in the important channel that the focused-on market is destined to utilize.

2.2.1.3 Price

When creating awareness, the company must determine the price for the products being sold. The price should be in a manner that attracts the customers and make them want to change their mind when it comes to using different products from competitor brands. The price is characterized as the cost of the items and administrations gave. It incorporates the entirety of the evaluating related matters, for example, the retail costs, volume limits, and terms of instalment, occasional limits, and credit terms. Inspecting and assessing costs routinely is a key to progress (Huang & Sarigollu, 2012). Organizations should not be hesitant to update their costs and perceive that the current evaluating design may not be ideal for the current market.

2.2.1.4 Place

When creating brand awareness, one must make sure that there is a clear outline of where the company product will be sold. For Debic, they will operate and pose the products they want to deliver to the customers. The place hence implies the accessibility of the item and administration sold. This incorporates the promoting channels utilized just like the actual dissemination of the merchandise, such as transportation and distribution centres. It is also considered the place where the brand can ease the interaction with the customers and clients (Thabit & Raewf, 2018). It facilitates the distribution of products from the company to the consumers, and by doing this increasing the awareness, they have about the company in question.

Today, accomplishing a stable competitive advantage is quite possibly the main

device in the business world. To this point, with making and utilizing the incredible brand values, the organizations have gone into various serious fields. See significance which lies on the impact of chosen advertising blend components on Brand value in current circumstances inside aggressive business sectors helps the chiefs to get more data on the most proficient method to utilize chosen promoting blend components and pick a blend of these components, which prompts expanding brand value, and in the end prompts productivity, because, from an administrative viewpoint, brand value proposes upper hand for the organization (S, A, & K, 2015). Brand awareness empowers buyers to perceive a brand from various item classifications and helps customers settle on choices to buy. Brand mindfulness is the likelihood that shoppers perceive the presence and accessibility of an organization's item or administrations; making this mindfulness by an organization is critical to advancing the organization's labour and products. For Debic, by having a working and effective Marketing mix, it will fully analyse what it has to do to create the required awareness. Having a good strategy that will be used in the positioning of the company will greatly work in favour of the Debic by worrying about the customer insight when working in the food industry. The marketing mix can help Debic in positioning itself by getting solutions to the customer insight problem.

2.2.2 Marketing Communication Mix Theory

Every business requires to have a communication plan in place. Marketing communications alludes to the utilization of various showcasing directs and devices in the mix. Showcasing correspondence channels center around how a business conveys a message to its ideal market or the market when all is said in done. All parts of advertising correspondences and advancement of the board are laid out well by understanding the connection among showcasing and incorporated showcasing interchanges and conducting establishments of promoting interchanges and special administration. The Marketing communications interchanges through any or the entirety of the promoting blend components. The way(s) the advertising blend components are operationalized and interrelated for correspondence purposes in showcasing plans. According to Kellor (2009), organizations and businesses communicate with their target market and customers through marketing communication. The form of communication that a firm decides to use can be either

direct or indirect. Using any of these two forms of communication, Debic company will be able to completely communicate the intended changes, which aim to make sure there is a rise in the number of sales. The marketing communication mix is to illuminate, convince, and remind about the item and the brand (Keller, 2009).

2.2.2.1 Personal Modes of Marketing Communication

A marketing communication mix would be best if you created solid deals and publicizing messages that will associate with your clients quickly and viably feature the item's quality and brand's separation from others. Effective showcasing correspondence depends on a blend of devices called the limited-time blend. The different apparatuses work hand in hand with the other factors within the business setting. According to Latif, Islam, & Mdnoor (2014), these apparatuses include advertising, public relations, Sales advancement, Direct showcasing, Personal selling and are utilized to depict the arrangement of instruments that a business can use to convey the advantages of your items or administrations adequately to its clients. Ateke & Nwulu (2017) states that brand communication relates decidedly with brand mindfulness through brand acknowledgment, brand review, and brand qualification. For Debic, the company has formulated a different messaging structure to keep the promise they made to the customers. Having a message that shows the company's commitment to making sure the customers always benefit will result in making sure the gap in the market is reduced. The brand promise is, "We help food professionals create without compromise by truly understanding their daily needs and challenges when it comes to dairy." Hence having an effective marketing communication mix will result in making the brand positioning process easier.

Figure 2.1

Image showing the major communication types

-
- (1) *Advertising* – any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services by an identified sponsor.
 - (2) *Sales promotion* – a variety of short-term incentives to encourage trial or purchase of a product or service.
 - (3) *Events and experiences* – company-sponsored activities and programs designed to create daily or special brand-related interactions.
 - (4) *Public relations and publicity* – a variety of programs designed to promote or protect a company's image or its individual products.
 - (5) *Direct marketing* – use of mail, telephone, fax, email or Internet to communicate directly with or solicit response or dialogue from specific customers and prospects.
 - (6) *Interactive marketing* – on-line activities and programs designed to engage customers or prospects and directly or indirectly raise awareness, improve image or elicit sales of products and services.
 - (7) *Word-of-mouth marketing* – people-to-people oral, written or electronic communications which relate to the merits or experiences of purchasing or using products or services.
 - (8) *Personal selling* – face-to-face interaction with one or more prospective purchasers for the purpose of making presentations, answering questions and procuring orders.
-

Note: The image shows the major communication types in marketing

Retrieved from "Building strong brands in a modern marketing communications environment." 2009.

2.2.2.2 Mass Media (Online) Marketing Communication

Web-based marketing communications methods are pushing toward associations between singular beneficiaries and buyers as opposed to being guided from an advertising association to masses of shoppers. It is presently feasible for a person to be similarly effective in communicating data, both positive and antagonistic, about an association for what it's worth for an enormous partnership to advance itself (Todorova, 2015). Both B2B and B2C sales teams must be intimately familiar with their products. They should be aware of their features, design elements, benefits, and drawbacks. Competent knowledge is also required. These days' buyers are more sophisticated. Prospects frequently second-guess their decisions or are worried about missing out on a better vendor if they commit too soon. B2B purchasers are also increasingly looking for strategies to identify and mitigate risk concerns such as loss of professional credibility, job security, and the inability of the software to perform as promised technically, and monetary losses. This could be through promoting, web-based media, item bundling, direct showcasing, sites, occasions,

displays – the rundown goes on (Bhasin, 2021). Fruitful missions consider all components of the interchanges blend.

For B2B markets, it has been argued, must be approached differently than B2C markets. Recently, opinions have shifted, with some claiming that B2B and B2C markets are more similar than previously thought, which could influence the use of marketing tools (Kalashnikova, 2011). This could even influence people's minds about how B2C marketing techniques can't be used effectively in a B2B industry. Brand recognition is critical in B2C businesses, according to theories, especially when it comes to using creating brand awareness and social media. According to Villarejo-Ramos & Sanchez-Franco (2005), applying investigation methods depend on the primary conditions models to affirm the connection between advertising correspondence endeavors and the components of brand value through apparent quality, brand dedication, brand mindfulness, and brand picture.

Figure 2.2

An image showing the Interactive marketing communication options

-
- (1) *Websites* – companies must design websites that embody or express their purpose, history, products and vision. A key challenge is designing a site that is attractive on first viewing and interesting enough to encourage repeat visits.
 - (2) *Microsites* – a microsite is a limited area on the Web managed and paid for by an external advertiser/company. Microsites are individual Web pages or cluster of pages that function as supplements to a primary site.
 - (3) *Search ads* – paid-search or pay-per-click ads, represent 40% of all on-line ads. Thirty-five percent of all searches are reportedly for products or services. The search terms serve as a proxy for the consumer's consumption interests and trigger relevant links to product or service offerings alongside search results from Google, MSN and Yahoo!. Advertisers pay only if people click on the links.
 - (4) *Display ads* – display ads or banner ads are small, rectangular boxes containing text and perhaps a picture that companies pay to place on relevant websites. The larger the audience, the more the placement costs. Some banners are accepted on a barter basis.
 - (5) *Interstitials* – interstitials are advertisements, often with video or animation, that pop up between changes on a website, e.g. ads for Johnson & Johnson's Tylenol headache reliever would pop up on brokers' websites whenever the stock market fell by 100 points or more.
 - (6) *Internet-specific ads and videos* – with user-generated content sites such as YouTube, MySpace Video and Google Video, consumers and advertisers can upload ads and videos to be shared virally by millions of people.
 - (7) *Sponsorships* – many companies get their name on the Internet by sponsoring special content on websites that carry news, financial information and so on.
 - (8) *Alliances* – when one Internet company works with another, they end up advertising each other through alliances and affiliate programs.
 - (9) *On-line communities* – many companies sponsor on-line communities whose members communicate through postings, instant messaging and chat discussions about special interests related to the company's products and brands.
 - (10) *E-mail* – e-mail uses only a fraction of the cost of a 'd-mail', or direct mail campaign.
 - (11) *Mobile marketing* – in developing countries especially, mobile phone marketing will become increasingly important.
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Note: An image showing the interactive marketing communication options Retrieved from "Building strong brands in a modern marketing communications environment." 2009.

Building brand awareness in cutthroat business sectors can assume a functioning part in the advanced promoting climate. It is currently broadly recognized by organizations that solid brand mindfulness will make an upper hand in the commercial centre that will upgrade their general standing and validity. Certainly, the new pattern in current Promotion has been changed hugely, and the investigation of brand mindfulness is progressively getting well known to stay up with this change. Marketing communications permit organizations to interface their brands to others, places, occasions, brands, encounters, sentiments, and things. Besides, showcasing interchanges can make encounters and assemble networks on the web and disconnected, develop brand value, make a solid brand picture and drive deal execution. The notice mode is changed over the long haul, and customers have more authority over the media and distinctive channel accessibility. They can pick how they need to get the business content. To impart viably, firms need to go where the clients go, arriving at their channel, and these days, the main source is on the web. There are eleven various potential associations with the crowd through the online channel.

The benefit is to accomplish more extensive cooperation, and individualization is paramount. On the web, promoters can quantify reaction in a flash by checking perspectives or snaps on a page or advertisement, how long they draw in with it, where they go a short time later (Keller, 2009). The proviso is that clients can choose where to peruse, what data they need, what offers they are keen on, and what value point works for them. To sum up, the organizations can let completely go over the buyers and their activity on the message and action. The benefit is to accomplish more extensive association and individualization. On the web, publicists can quantify reaction right away by checking perspectives or snaps on a page or advertisement, how long they draw in with it, where they go subsequently (Villarejo-Ramos & Sanchez-Franco, 2005). The admonition is that clients can choose where to peruse, what data they need, what offers they are keen on, and what value point works for

them. To sum up, the organizations can let completely go over the purchasers and their activity on the message and movement.

2.2.3 The Expectations Theory

This is another strong theory that is used in business. It involves knowing what the customers will be expecting when they are aware of a certain brand. According to Grimmelikhuijsen & Porumbesu (2017), the expectations disconfirmation model (EDM) states that disconfirmation (the difference between assumptions and saw execution) has an impact on resident satisfaction. Van Ryzin cautiously managed assumptions and execution, tracing an immediate influence of execution but finding no disconfirmation. (Elkhani & Bakri, 2012). This model would be instrumental; in a Debic company, this would better position itself after being aware of the products being offered. The customers must be satisfied by the services, and they are given by the company and the French market at large. The resultant distinction among assumptions and execution the reason for the disconfirmation of assumption (or want) and can be positive or negative. Negative disconfirmation meaning the client is left disappointed. The hypothesis has been applied across various fields to acquire a superior comprehension of client's assumptions and necessities, like promoting and customer conduct, the travel industry, brain research, data innovation, and the aircraft business. This relates to Debic as it can comprehend how they will make the informed decisions necessary for sales improvement and hence more revenue.

According to Ryzin (2013), the expectancy-disconfirmation hypothesis of resident fulfilment with public administrations holds that residents judge public administrations on experienced help quality and a certain examination of administration quality with earlier assumptions. An exact estimation of consumer loyalty is essential for creating viable administration systems. Just with dependable client input, assembled through a sufficient and fitting evaluation system, would managers control realities that will permit them to carry out fulfilment improvement programs (Yuksel, 2001). The Expectancy-Disconfirmation Paradigm (EDP) has become the predominant structure utilized in the appraisal of consumer loyalty. Customers see brands as an assurance of value and dependability—the "discernments about a brand as reflected by the brand affiliations held in shopper

memory. Understanding buyer conduct could prompt an expansion in deals (Riaz & Tanveer, 2012). Yet, brand picture acknowledgment is fundamental for low association items. Assume the items in thought have low contribution items, two out of the four Ps of advertising blend methodology, cost, and advancement. Around there, they have a more considerable impact and increment brand awareness. In correlation with the building blocks theory, the marketing communication mix theory leads to finding the right channel to advertise the content and send the right message to the audience to be received positively (Keller, 2009). It also affects their mind and physiological effect other choice and the brand image and recognition of the brand.

2.3 Justification of the Theories

It is always good to understand why the chosen theories are important. The Marketing Mix can be created once a company has defined its target market and determined its competitive advantage. Helps customers grasp what your product or service has to offer. Aids in the development of a successful product offering. Aids in the development, planning, and execution of effective marketing initiatives. Assists firms in using their capabilities while avoiding unneeded expenditure. Businesses can use marketing plans to deliver their messages with the most impact and the least amount of inefficiency. Business owners and marketers can improve their grasp of price points, market shares, distribution networks, and competitive strategies by using such plans. Sales marketing has a direct effect on sales. Trade exhibits, catalogues, contests, games, premiums, coupons, and special offers are all examples. It's a direct inducement for the buyer to buy the product right away. It comes in a variety of shapes and sizes, and it must abide by tight rules and restrictions. By incorporating the Mass Media (Online) Marketing Communication theory it becomes essential to providing the necessary information and platform which are used in creating awareness about Debic Company and the products and services which they provide.

2.4 Limitations of the Marketing Mix Theory

The limitation of the first theory is the weak proof of the relationship between brand awareness and price. Furthermore, the bakery market is not considered as

low involvement buying decision as for the HORECA. The two different markets have this distinction, and the result of the research can lead to a stronger correlation with the HORECA, but not necessarily with the Bakery market. It will still affect the markets, more HORECA than bakers, but a further action of promotion influence also the bakers' market. Marketing communication mix theory is limited because the brand and marketers do not control the audience on online channels. The audience has the power to reject or skip ads or other commercial content, and they accept only the content they are interested in. The challenge here is to find the right channel and create a compelling message and content that influence the consumers. Moreover, even due to the last limitation, online commercial engagement is still very efficient, and expertise can help reach the right audience for the desired target market.

Marketing Mix models are market research methods that are used to gain a thorough grasp of different sales and profit drivers. These studies are frequently used by brands to aid in certain marketing decisions, such as determining optimal spend, determining trade-offs, and guiding strategic planning. The Marketing Mix is internally oriented and does not include client behaviour. Clients are treated as passive; the interaction is not permitted, and relationships are not captured. The Marketing Mix does not account for the distinct characteristics of service marketing. Although the word "product" is used singularly, most businesses do not sell a single item. Sellers sell products, product lines, or brands that are all linked in the consumer's imagination. Building relationships with customers, which has become a key marketing focus, is not mentioned in the Marketing Mix, nor are the brand experiences that customers purchase. The expectation theory on the other hand it overestimates future short-term rates, making it easier for investors to make an incorrect yield curve projection. Another flaw in the hypothesis is that short- and long-term bond yields are influenced by a variety of circumstances. Hence this would not be a good thing for Debic and would require better estimating.

2.5 Sub-questions

To properly address the MRQ, the researcher deemed it important to answer a few related questions. Creating these additional questions, or, the sub-questions

were found to be very helpful because it helped in breaking the problem down into smaller goals.

Thus, these questions were important, and answering them was critical to the attainment of the overall goal and answering the overall MRQ.

1. What are the major market gaps that lead to the current levels of sales for the Debic products?
2. Based on the 4Ps of marketing, how does the popularity of the Debic products compare with that of related products in the French market?
3. What strategies can help improve the popularity and awareness of the Debic products, boosting the sales?

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The major purpose of this research was to investigate the ways and strategies through which FrieslandCampina can improve the awareness of the Debic products in the market by answering the research question (both the MRQ and the sub-questions). Increasing the customer awareness of the products is often associated with increased sales, which could lead to a raise in market share. For this reason, it was deemed necessary to identify, analyse, and evaluate the current level of brand awareness and the strategies that FrieslandCampina can implement to improve the same, hence bettering their annual revenue and market share in the French market.

To achieve this goal, the researcher delved into various elements and factors surrounding Debic awareness using several selected methods and approaches. To get a clearer view of the situation and enable informed decision and inferencing, the author collected both primary and secondary data regarding the phenomenon under investigation. These data were collected using various application techniques and strategies, which were selected based on several justifications and parameters. From the introduction section, it was revealed that the study intends to compare one set of data to another, for two different countries. To best achieve this goal, the

researcher had to collect primary data of the first country and compare it to the secondary data of the other. This section will discuss these methods, approaches, and strategies together with the justification for choosing each described method.

Since this chapter is concerned with presenting ways of answering the research question, it is crucial to recap said questions:

MRQ;

What brand awareness strategies should FrieslandCampina implement to obtain a 7% increase in their annual revenue and market share value in the French market within 12 months?

Sub-questions;

1. What are the major market gaps that lead to the current levels of sales for the Debic products?
2. Based on the 4Ps of marketing, how does the popularity of the Debic products compare with that of related products in the French market?
3. What strategies can help improve the popularity and awareness of the Debic products, boosting the sales?

To answer these questions, the researcher chose the methods described in this chapter.

3.2 Research Strategy

A study strategy describes the plan and tact used in conducting a study. In other words, a research strategy can be viewed as the major perspective that describes how the researcher intends to answer the research questions (The Open University, 2020; Walia & Chetty, 2020). The strategy informs outlines the step-by-step plan of action, which guides the way the researcher formulates and presents their thought process, thereby enabling them to keep to the research schedule, present research findings in a logical manner among other things (Walia & Chetty, 2020). Popular research strategies range from quantitative, qualitative to mixed-method strategies among others, each of which is chosen for various reasons.

This research employed a mixed-method strategy as chosen by the researcher. Such a strategy involved both qualitative and quantitative methods. This strategy was chosen because it enabled the researcher to conduct a study with generalizable findings which cover both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the topic under investigation. Such a strategy allowed the researcher to get both the numbers (quantitative) and the opinions or feelings of the respondents (qualitative). These two types of data enabled the researcher to make more informed judgments that balanced between the discreet, countable numbers and the subjective information obtained from the surveys and interviews. These pieces of information gave useful insights into the market structure of the target population. They also enabled the researcher to understand the feelings of the said population regarding the brand in question (Debic). These methods also enabled the researcher to estimate the relevant numbers about the customer awareness and market share of the Debic brands within the selected market. Such information is very useful to the researcher for developing relevant strategies that can help increase awareness. As with every other research, the study strategy informed the chosen design, method, and methodologies. Before delving into these aspects, this subsection offers a brief description of the theoretical aspect of the strategy.

As explained in the previous section, this research engaged the use of the Marketing Mix Theory. This theory explores the relationships among different key aspects of the market, collectively known as the 4Ps (product, place, price, promotion). The study thus sought to understand these aspects concerning the Debic brand. As stated, numerous times, the main purpose was to understand the level of awareness and how to increase it. By engaging the Marketing Mix Theory, and through the collection of primary and secondary data, both qualitative and quantitative, the author was able to gain useful insights and draw some statistically significant inferences. The following section will discuss the design selected to fulfil this task.

3.3 Research Design and Approach

A Research design is a specific perspective and direction taken by the researcher in addressing the MRQ and the resulting sub-questions. According to the Open

University (2020), “it refers to the practical choices regarding how the strategy is implemented in practice.” Due to the nature of this study, the researcher an exploratory-descriptive design. This is a blend of two distinct study designs which has grown to become a distinctive design on its own. This design involves the collection and analytics of data that enables the researcher to delve deeper into the problem (explore) and leads to the full description of the issue at hand. By exploring the problem, the researcher was able to answer the first sub-question, that is, he was able to establish the current level of popularity of the Debic brand. Additionally, the researcher was able to assess the market dominance (or the lack thereof) of the brand under investigation, as facilitated by the selected design. Finally, the design allowed the researcher to fully describe the current status as well as relevant solutions basing on the feedback from the respondents and the document review[1].

Overall, the study utilized a comparative study approach, where the data collected were checked against either the company goals or competitor brands to identify and identify relevant and crucial trends. These trends established here helped in illustrating the current level of awareness and also drawing parallels between the awareness and level of sales. Further, these data helped formulate relevant conclusions and valid recommendations. Regarding possible ways forward towards increasing the sales for Debic brands.

3.4 Study variables

The study variables are those parameters considered in the process of the research. The major variables are either dependent or independent. However, there are other types of variables such as control variables among others. This particular study related several market aspects to investigate the market share of the Debic products. This was based on the premise that brand awareness affects the market share, hence the profitability and revenue of the company. In this case, the Debic products were taken as the object of investigation. In this perspective, brand

[1] The data collection methods mentioned or implied here, i.e., interviews and document review will be discussed later in the section, in the sub-section named methods. These and all other methods employed in the study will be discussed in-depth.

awareness was taken as the independent variable while the related sales were viewed as the dependent variable. Recall, the study aimed to establish ways to increase brand awareness, which would subsequently lead to increased sales. This projection presupposes a correlational relationship between awareness and the level of sales, where the former influences the latter, hence the categorization of the two variables as independent and dependent respectively.

3.5 Study Location

This study took place within the continent of origin of the product, that is Europe. Specifically, the study took place in the Amsterdam School of International Business, the institution in which the researcher studies, and FrieslandCampina, the company of interest. The school served several purposes such as hosting the supervisor, offering study books that guided the researcher in the whole process. The company of interest was critical because it offered the researcher an opportunity to put into practice the research skills. However, most of the processes, including the survey and interviews, were carried out online.[2] Due to the usage of online platforms, the study also took place at places chosen by the researcher, where he could access the required gadgets and other requirements like the internet. Therefore, the study was not located in a single place but conducted in several relevant places based on the parameters named herein.

3.6 Target population

The study targeted two groups of people, the manufacturers of Debic products and the targeted customers. The target clientele for these brands includes chefs and bakers, while the manufacturers are the company of interest, i.e., FrieslandCampina. These two groups were essential and central to the success of the study. First, the (representative of) the FrieslandCampina were essential for providing vital information central to the study. This group provided much-needed information such as the company goals for the said product, company expectations, and other important data. The data and information collected from these people were essential

[2] The reasons for choosing online platforms over physical and in-person interviews will be discussed later, in the section titled "limitations (of the study)."

for providing vital information central to the study. This group provided much-needed information such as the company goals for the said product, company expectations, and other important data. The data and information collected from these people were essential for comparisons with the information obtained from the second group. Overall, this comparison helped in establishing important trends and determining critical answers to the MRQ and the sub-questions formulated for this research.

On the other hand, the second group was very crucial for the fulfilment of the study purpose. To establish the level of brand awareness, it is compulsory to engage the (supposed) customers or clientele. The researcher thus had to engage the relevant parties, that is, the consumers of the Debic product, typically bakers and chefs. This was done by selecting samples of the estimated number of bakers and chefs within the selected region. The sample size and sampling technique used will be elaborated on in the next section.

3.7 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

There are several sampling techniques applicable to any study, such as simple random, convenience sampling, cluster, etc. for this study, the researcher employed a convenience sample for various reasons. The major reason for employing convenience sampling was that finding the respondents was never going to be easy, so the researcher had to use the readily available. The interviews and surveys were posted on the relevant online platforms, and the most available respondents were used. The survey targeted the consumers, or, in other words, the customer base. This was mainly from the French market, which was impossible to do physically due to the costs involved. For this reason, the researcher used only the people who responded to the online request for a survey. Using specialized online tools, the researcher reached out to an unknown population, and those who responded were included in the study as soon as they responded. Respondents were allowed to partake in the self-administered online questionnaire as soon as they accepted to participate in the survey.

The staff from the FrieslandCampina were also interviewed, the sample of which

was selected using known methods for calculating sample size. It was however a little more complex than the customers because this sample required higher levels of accuracy and there are numerous branches of the company across the world. Thus, several factors had to be considered when calculating the appropriate sample size. At the end of 2020, FrieslandCampina had a total of about 23,816 employees (FTEs) worldwide across all their 100 branches (FrieslandCampina, 2020). The author did not manage to know the exact number of workers that are in the Netherlands branch. This made it impossible to establish the exact population size, making it hard to calculate a sample size with high accuracy. Nevertheless, the number was estimated by assuming an equal distribution of staff across the 100 branches, giving the population size as 239 members of staff. However, this particular country happens to be the home of the company's headquarters. Thus, simple logic dictates that there are likely to be more workers in the headquarters than in any of the satellite branches. For this reason, and by sheer assumption, an educated guess was made, adjusting the number of workers to 300. This number corresponds to a proportion of $300/23,816$, which equals around 1.26% of the total population. Using these variables, number as the population size, 95% confidence level, and an EBM of 5%, the reasonable sample size was calculated as 19 people, with the help of technology (an online sample size calculator) provided by Select Statistical Consultants (Brooks, 2018). The variables used for this calculation were $p=23,816$, $x=300$, $\hat{p}=1.26\%$, $CL=95\%$ and $EBM=5\%$, where;

P is the population size, i.e., the total number of workers for the larger FrieslandCampina, X is the selected representee, i.e., the workers in the Netherlands branch, \hat{p} is the sample proportion, i.e., x/p or $300/23,816$ (in percentage)

CL is the selected confidence level and

EBM is the expected error (the corresponding alpha level for the selected CL).

Using higher confidence levels (hence lower expected errors) would result in a higher sample size. For instance, using a 99.7% CL and 5% EBM would result in 44 as the sample size. However, due to various limitations such as time, and finances among others, the researcher selected variables that would lead to a lower sample

size while still maintaining statistical relevance and significance. Since 90% CL is one of the commonly used and accepted CLs which ensures statistically significant results. Thus, the selected sample size was acceptable for statistical purposes and also convenient for the researcher. These members of staff were interviewed to establish different institutional aspects such as goals, plans, and targets for Debic Brands in the French market.

The target (French) market (that is, the population of the chefs, bakers, and other food professionals) was unknown, the researcher used 100,000 as of the population size as suggested (Brooks, 2018). It is argued that for bigger populations, there is no big difference in accuracy as estimated using this number. This, given the parameters and CL, adjusted to 95% (hence 5% EBM), a sample of 270 people was required. To investigate the brand awareness level in France, the researcher needed to interview at least 270 French food professionals.

3.8 Methods of Data Collection

3.8.1 Primary Methods

SQ 1: What are the major market gaps that lead to the current levels of sales for the Debic products?

These methods are used to collect data directly from the respondents, without third-party intervention. In many cases, the researcher interacts directly with the respondents, hence getting first-hand information from them. There are various methods for collecting primary data including interviews, surveys, focus groups among others. For this study, the researcher chose to use two well-known methods of data collection, the survey, and interviews. Both methods were conducted online due to various reasons. One of the reasons for such a choice was the financial burden in person data collection would bring. For reliable information, the researcher had to choose a considerable sample size (as explained in the sampling section), which exceeded 100 people. If the researcher were to conduct, say, an in-person interview or administer the questionnaires to all those people, it would prove to be costly. To minimize costs, some researchers use focus groups or group

interviews. However, this method would not work efficiently due to the restrictions following the ongoing covid-19 pandemic. Additionally, some of the respondents were geographically far from the researcher (in France), and it would require finances to travel to them or to have them travel to the researcher. Due to these difficulties, the researcher resorted to the use of online platforms. Online surveys were conducted using an online questionnaire. The interviews were only conducted with the FrieslandCampina staff, also selected using the sampling method described above. Through local arrangements, some of the employees had the interviews sent to them via email, so they took the written version. The other group agreed to take online interviews via teleconferencing using video calls.

3.8.1.1 Use of Online Survey (questionnaire) [see Appendix 1]

This study employed an online survey to gather information from various respondents, notably the consumers of Debic products (chefs, caterers, etc.) in France. This method helped answer the first “sub-question Based on the 4Ps of marketing, how does the popularity of the Debic products compare with that of related products in the French market?” This survey was meant to establish the relationship between Debic products and competing brands, to establish Debic’s popularity. The data collection instrument used for this survey was a questionnaire, administered online. The questions often sought to know how the respondent compared their experience of Debic products with that of competing brands. The researcher used a combined questionnaire, which had both closed-end and open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions were mostly multiple-choice, with answers ranging from only two to about seven. The simplest close-ended questions were in the classic “yes” or “no” format, while others were provided with answers in Likert scales ranging from intensities of one to five. The questionnaire was shared via social media platforms using the inbuilt messaging (“inbox”) capabilities of said platforms to the respondents who accepted to take the survey. The respondents were recruited via popular social media sites, that is Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat, using the platforms’ inbuilt targeting capabilities. Those who accepted to partake in the survey were then sent the questionnaires through their inboxes. They could either send the filled survey through the same mechanism or via emails if they preferred. As stated in the sampling methods, a convenience sample was obtained

by picking the first considerable people to respond to the advertisement.

Unfortunately, the sample turnout was not 100% of the expected sample. Due to time constraints, the researcher was only able to gather 245 respondents, 25 of whom did not send back the filled questionnaire. Thus, the researcher used only 220 of the possible 270, which is about 81% turnout. Given that the set confidence level was high enough (at 95%), this turnout still produced valid results.

3.8.1.2 Interview (See Appendix 2)

The main purpose for conducting interviews in this research was to establish the FrieslandCampina company goals and objectives, especially for the Debic brand in respect to the French market. Comparing these goals with the current trends would help establish the market gap, hence address the second subsection about the same. For this reason, the interviews targeted the employees of the said company, especially those within the lower ranks of leadership, but not the very top management[3]. Of course, the names of these people were never published, to maintain anonymity. The researcher interviewed five members of staff as calculated in the sampling section.

This method was helpful in finding useful data relevant to answering the sub-question: "What are the major market gaps that lead to the current levels of sales for the Debic products?" Answering this question contributed to the overall MRQ by providing insights to the market gaps, hence providing a stepping stone for formulating strategies for addressing the said gaps.

3.8.1.3 Company and Product Websites

Finally, the FrieslandCampina company and the Debic products websites were

[3] This was because the author did not intend to disclose any names of interviewees, or even make it any easy for the readers to discover such names. He wanted to maintain complete anonymity for the interviewees. Interviewing the top management (e.g., the CEO) would render this effort futile because it wouldn't be so hard to get those names online. Thus, using low-level managers made it easier to code their names and maintain anonymity.

used for gathering relevant data. Company websites provide primary data because they provide the company's information about itself. Important data like the number of employees, company prospects, and goals were obtained from the main website. These data were very useful in the research for some purposes such as cross-checking. Also, information such as the number of employees could not be obtained from elsewhere, at least if accuracy is to be considered. Reviewing the information in these websites was useful for establishing the company goals and plans, also useful in establishing any possible market gaps. It was used to complement the information collected from the interviews.

3.8.2 Secondary Data Collections Methods

SQ2: Based on the 4Ps of marketing, how does the popularity of the Debic products compare with that of related products in the French market?

Important information may be accessed from already-published sources such as product or company reviews, articles, and other written sources. Such information is used for gauging the verity and strength of information gathered from interviews and other primary data collection methods by either corroborating or contradicting such information allowing the researcher to get a balanced opinion.

3.8.2.1 Online Product Reviews

The researcher consulted several sites for product reviews and also online stores for reviews. Customers often leave their ratings for products they purchase from online platforms, especially if the platform allows for reviews. Additionally, some customers may visit the company and or product website and leave their reviews there. These are considered as secondary sources of information since it is what other people think about the product. Besides the Debic website (product review section), other secondary sources used include rather Debic Facebook page (and other social media sites), online purchase stores such as Amazon among others. Product reviews also helped to answer the first and second sub-questions regarding the brand popularity and the major market gaps. These sources were used to obtain preliminary opinions regarding the products, hence help gauge the market

penetration, which would give insights regarding product awareness.

3.8.2.2 Blogs (blogging)

Blogs are small-scale individual-owned websites that are regularly updated with relevant and attention-grabbing content. Most bloggers use this platform to draw attention to their services. Some may review certain products available in the market, also as a tact to draw traffic to their website. These sites may be great sources of useful information regarding brand awareness. In this case, the author several blogs that have information on Debic products. This information was very useful in forming opinions and providing insights regarding brand awareness.

3.9 Limitations of Data collection methods

Several issues might affect the quality of the data and information collated, especially due to the specific methods. These issues are usually referred to as the limitations of data collection methods. The primary methods selected for this study, i.e., questionnaires, interviews, and reviews of company and product websites are affected by certain limitations.

3.9.1 Online Surveys (Questionnaires)

Online surveys have a major disadvantage of lacking personal touch because the survey administrator and the respondent were always in different locations with no physical proximity. In such cases, it is hard for the surveyor to gauge the verity of the responses using non-verbal cues. The current research, having employed this method, was also limited by these and other factors.

Another limitation was in the recruitment stage. Convincing strangers online to join a survey is not easy, especially in a world where scammers and online bullies are all over the internet and can easily masquerade as anything or anyone. Sure, there are online platforms designed to reduce the chances of appearing as a potential scammer, hence increasing the chances of easier recruitment. However, most of these platforms require premium subscriptions, and, technically, the researcher is hardly in charge of the survey because the algorithms and AI do almost everything. However, such platforms reduce loads of work and are known to be accurate,

despite the few concerns. Thus, this current study was limited by the issue of having to, technically, persuade strangers to join. It is common knowledge that Facebook is not exactly a saintly place, so the scepticism in most prospective respondents was justified.

Finally, the researcher has no way of telling truthful answers from the ones provided just for the sake of filling the spaces. When it comes to questionnaires, whether online in-person (hardcopy), people don't always answer genuinely especially due to the limited choices of answers. Additionally, due to the same issue of limited choices, some people may find it difficult or impossible to express their actual opinion (s) in exactitude, so they end up providing approximated answers. This means that the researcher has no way of telling exactly what the respondents intended to say, but can only assume that it was almost what they said in the questionnaires. These factors may have affected the level of reliability of the answers in this survey, hence affecting the overall reliability of the study. However, measures were taken to minimize the magnitude of such an effect.

3.9.2 Interviews

The research employed semi-structured interviews which were either administered through online conferencing or via email. Those that were conducted through email involved the researcher sending a copy of the interview questions to the interviewees, who answered the questions in narrative form and then sent them back. Then online interviews involved the use of technology such as Zoom video calls. These methods were again affected by the lack of personal touch, since, in the absence of the interviewer, it is always easier to lie. In this case, the answers purely relied on human honesty, which, as stated, can be highly influenced by physical proximity or the lack thereof. Additionally, the videocalls required specific timing with which the respondents were comfortable, in addition to the requirement for electronic devices with particular specifications for optimal performance. Also, video calls required a steady, fast, and strong internet connection. The researcher and the interviewees thus had to make sure they met these bare minimums, which somehow limits both parties in several ways. This meant that for the interviews to take place, the researcher and the prospective interviewees had to ensure that they met those

requirements, otherwise the interview was never going to happen.

3.9.3 Company and Product Websites

While information extracted from Friesland and Debic websites offers useful insights regarding Debic products, it is one-sided, or, almost so. This is because it is human to seldom say bad or negative things about oneself. No reasonable human can fault the company for publishing only the positive information about their product: it could be an honest oversight of certain weaknesses, or it could be a case of deliberate omission. Either way, it's called business. Typically, the seller will say all the good things about a product (unless in the case of legal requirements like possible adverse effects regarding tolerances or intolerances for certain products) and leave the buyer to decide the rest. The endgame is always to influence prospective buyers, which means saying negative things about the product is not going to cut. Additionally, a manufacturer, seller, or even a distributor may not always know the specific tastes of the customers, which means they can't offer negative opinions regarding tastes and preferences. All these parameters lead to the conclusion that though the information from the company (FrieslandCampina) and the brand (Debic) offered useful information it lacked the full-picture aspect. Thus, more information was required, which is the foundation for using several methods. It is, therefore, reasonable to assert that this limitation did not affect the quality of the research because the apparent deficiencies were covered by other methods.

3.9.4 Online Product Reviews and Blogs

These two ways represented the views of only a few individuals and did not necessarily represent the views of all the people who purchased that product. For example, on a certain online purchasing platform, a Debic cream had been bought 57 times in the past 60 days. However, only 30 people had returned to leave a review. Of these five had given either "average" or "less than average" reviews while the rest had given positive reviews. While this information can be used to assess a generalized opinion, this opinion is not necessarily represented seeing as almost half of those who had purchased did not leave any review.

Additionally, some bloggers may be paid by brands to advertise on their behalf,

which is not wrong in itself. Such blogs will generally publish information that seeks to foster the good image of the brand or the hiring company. In such cases, such information is likely to be biased towards shaping an opinion. This is so because, even when it highlights the possible negativities of the products, the focus is always on the positives, generally to show that the latter outweigh the former, hence making the brand appear all good, which is not always the case. Thus, the author has no way of telling whether the blogs reviewed for this study were actually by independent bloggers or biased ones. It should also be remembered that blogs are individuals' opinions, which cannot be representative of large masses. Thus, these methods were limited by their susceptibility to bias, lack of representative opinions (hence generalizability), and low accuracy levels.

3.10 Data Analysis and Coding

This is the process where the raw facts of figures are gathered together and then processed into meaningful information. This meaningful information is used to draw relevant conclusions relating to the MRQ and the research objective. By applying textual and thematic analysis, the researcher was able to establish a few factors from the qualitative data. The results of these data were interpreted by choosing from deductive and inductive inferencing or coding. Deductive coding involves moving from generic speculations to specified inferences from observation. Inductive moves from specific to general, that is, making generic inferences from specific observations. The survey questionnaires were analysed using simple (not so simple though) technology, namely Microsoft Excel. Relevant graphs were generated which showed different trends and make relevant inferences.

3.11 Validity and Reliability of the Data Collection Methods Used

Validity is the element of the data collection method that enables it to answer or address the research question, what it is supposed to address. In other words, it is the accuracy of a method. On the other hand, reliability refers to the consistency of a method, that is its ability to facilitate duplication of results under the same conditions. In this research, some methods had lower reliability than others. However, overall, the external validity of the study was upheld due to the reasons given herein.

The interviews were both valid and reliable. To ensure these two concepts, the interviewed the staff of the company. The purpose of these interviews was to collect information regarding the goals, plans, and market projections for Debic products. In this case, the best people to deliver such information were those in the leadership of the company because they are involved in daily leadership activities such as strategizing. No matter which person one asks, those in the leadership are highly probable to have accurate and correct information. Thus, the data collected via the interviews were both valid and reliable.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

The Institutional Research Board (IRB) was contacted for ethical clearance to ensure that the study's ethical requirements are met. The approaches used in this study attempted to use ethical methods for recruiting participants, sampling, and data analysis. Participants were recruited willingly after the researcher obtained prior informed consent (Kaiser, 2019). The research team must ensure that the information provided by the participants is anonymized and that the data is safely preserved and only available for access to the appropriate individuals. The respondents' information was safely stored and then deleted after the study had been completed.

The researcher ensured that study participants' identities are kept private. When the study report is completed, the information provided by the participants will be kept confidential, and their identities will be coded (Kaiser, 2019). Participants were granted the right to ask questions about the study's intent, and the researcher committed to answering them by providing contact information such as an email address and a phone number (s). Finally, all the respondents were informed that they should never have to feel compelled to continue taking the survey if they wished not to continue. However, this aspect (participant dropout) was discouraged since it affects the quality of the results.

3.13 Conclusion

This chapter was divided into several sections and sub-sections to describe the flow and the strategy followed throughout the research. The sections explained

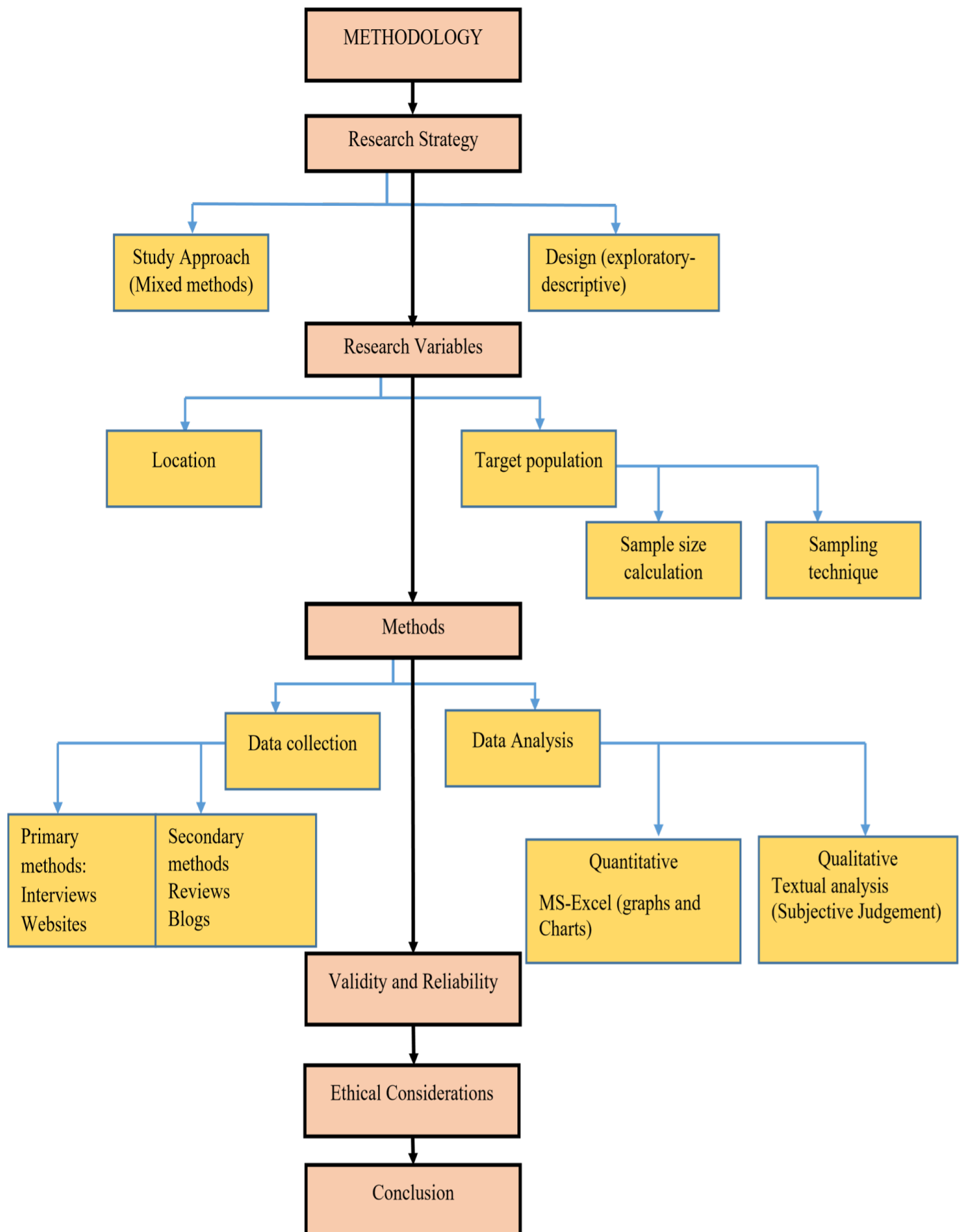
various reasons for the selection of the methods, and their limitations. It also explained how the data collected here is deemed valid and reliable.

Overall, the methods selected here helped in answering the research questions, both the MRQ and the sub-questions. The sub-questions (SQ) were a way of spitting the task into small goals, thus, they can be seen as 'components of the MRQ. Answering the sub-questions answered the main research question. Thus, the methods described here generally addressed each SQ, and in the process answered the MRQ. As discussed in the validity and reliability subsection, these methods were not all fool-proof or without error. Every research has a few limitations, which affect the level of accuracy. However, several criteria are applied to minimize the errors and thus improve the overall quality of the collected data and the reliability thereof. Several mechanisms of ensuring accuracy of the collected data were discussed in this chapter, specifically in section 3.11.

Below is a visual representation of the flow of the research and the chapter (PTO)

Figure 3.1

A visual reresentation of methodology



CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the results of the data collected from all the selected methods, as discussed in chapter three. It will also offer in-depth analysis and synthesis of the data, both textual and numeric. This synthesis aims to try to arrive at some relevant conclusion, through interpretations and extracting meanings from the said data. These will enable the author to make relevant recommendations, based on the aims of the study. The chapter is divided into two sections, one of which presents the results as they are (findings section), and the other is dedicated to the in-depth analysis and synthesis of the data (discussion section).

4.1 Findings for Sub questions

This section presents the major and most significant revelations from the data collected. The main subsections handled include data gathered from the interviews, the questionnaire, and the online searches.

4.2.1 Online searches: SQ 1; What are the major market gaps that lead to the current levels of sales for the Debic products?

This subcategory includes results from websites, blogs, and online market or brand reviews. The websites used in this study were only Debic and FrieslandCampina. The information here corroborated the information from the interviews that the brand is committed to offering high quality products in the dairy sections. It also confirms that at FrieslandCampina, innovation is given priority. On the website (Debic, 2021), there are some product reviews from customers. As expected, all these reviews are positive. Some examples include:

“The quality of Debic cream is super and I can rely on it being consistent” (Paul, a baker),

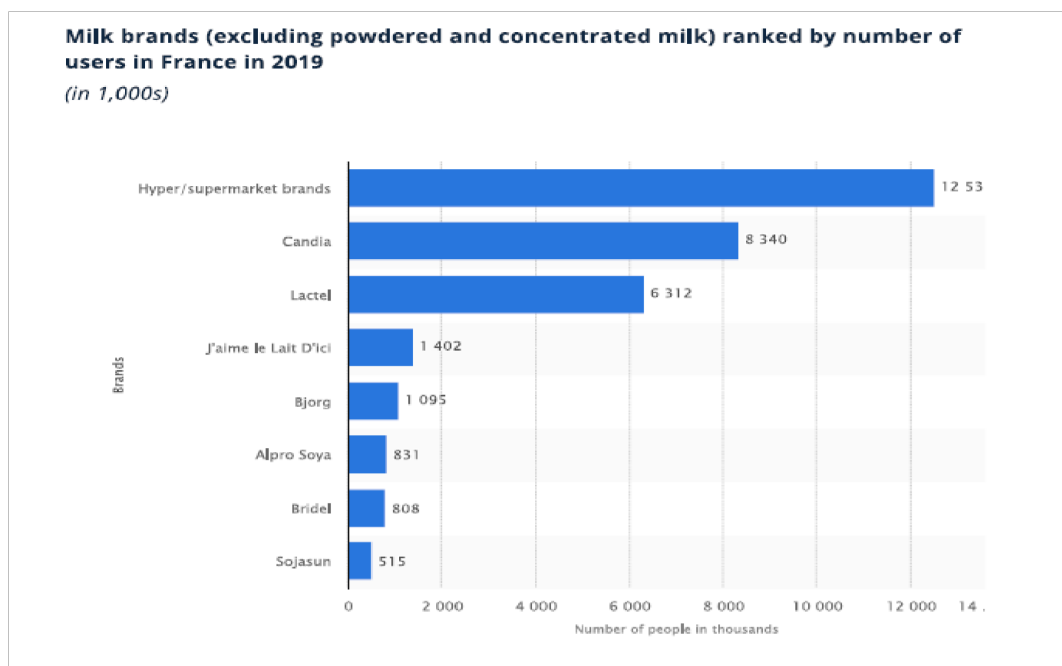
“Debic cream is easy to process and use for different decoration techniques” (Rene, a baker), and “Debic Culinaire is a perfect match with our artisanal cuisine” (Jorran, a chef). These comments reflect customer satisfaction, which reflects well on the

brand's image and customer awareness of the same. However, both comments are only positive, and it is almost impossible to find any negative comments about a company on the company website.

The other category of the online searches was the online product reviews and ratings, especially on online shopping places. Results show that Debic products are purchased online but, either the purchases are too unsatisfactory or many buyers prefer not to review the product. For instance, the Debic professional whipped cream with sugar (700ml) has only been reviewed on Amazon 55 times since its launch in 2013. Finally, two blogposts (Rai, 2015; BizvibeBlog, 2020) ranked FrieslandCampina 6th and 5th in their respective ranking of "the best dairy producers globally." This shows a slight improvement in said ranking, though conducted by different people. An article (Statista, 2020) placed Candia in the second rank for the "leading milk brands in France 2019", by consumption, but did not mention either FrieslandCampina or Debic products. This indicates low penetration levels of the said brand and places Candia at a competitive advantage above Debic. The following image shows the famous milk (dairy) brands ranked by number of users in France as of 2019.

Figure 4.1

Market share for milk products in France, 2019



Source: Statista, 2020

Interestingly, neither Debic nor FrieslandCampina was mentioned in this analysis. This shows either ignorance (highly likely for Statista staff) or low penetration for Debic products in the French market as of 2019.

4.2.1 Interviews: SQ 2; Based on the 4Ps of marketing, how does the popularity of the Debic products compare with that of related products in the French market?

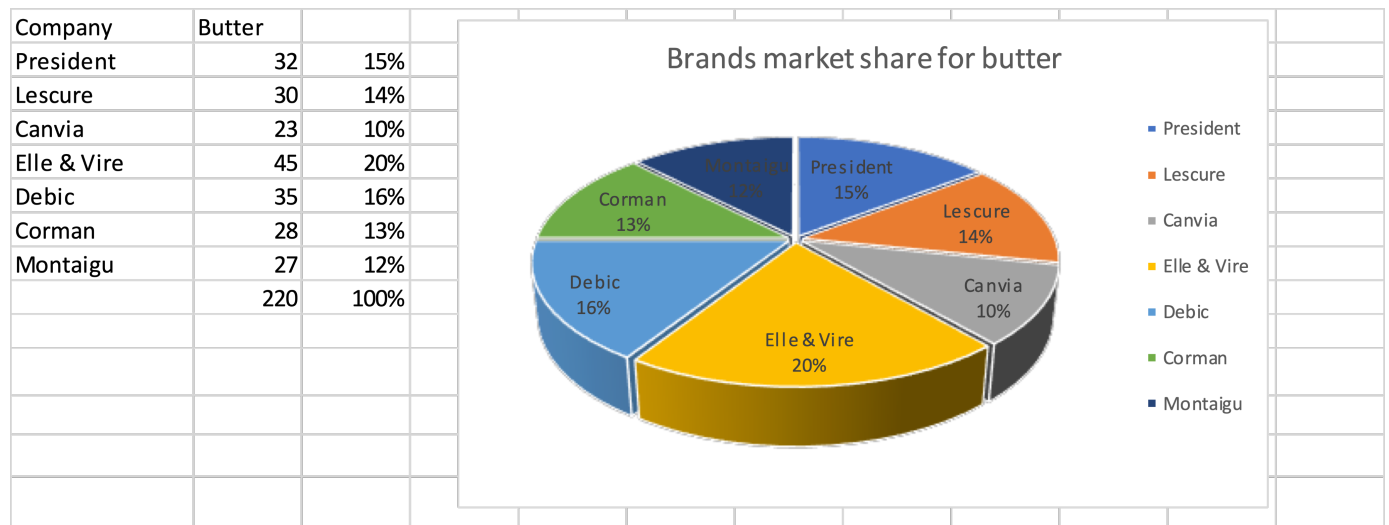
The interviews revealed that the staff members were well acquainted with the company goals and plans for the Debic products. The members provided almost identical descriptions, showing that the company has a clear plan for increasing its market share. The answers show that the company is aware of their market position and have definitive plans to improve it continually. As seen from the two blogs, FrieslandCampina experienced a slight increase in the market share of dairy products between 2015 and 2019. While that is a good indication of its performance on the global scale, it doesn't say much about the brand's performance in France specifically. However, the fact that the company has strategies to increase its market share in France is good news.

4.2.1 Online Survey (Questionnaire): SQ 2; Based on the 4Ps of marketing, how does the popularity of the Debic products compare with that of related products in the French market? SQ 3; What strategies can help improve the popularity and awareness of the Debic products, boosting the sales?

The questionnaire response rate was 81%, which was 220 participants of the expected 270. These participants had different opinions and rankings for Debic and or FrieslandCampina compared to other dairy brands in France. Different people showed different tastes for various brands, with Debic taking a considerable market size. However, its market penetration still seems relatively low compared to other brands. The figures below were plotted using excel from the data gathered from the questionnaires. They show different perspectives of the respondents regarding different brands.

Figure 4.2

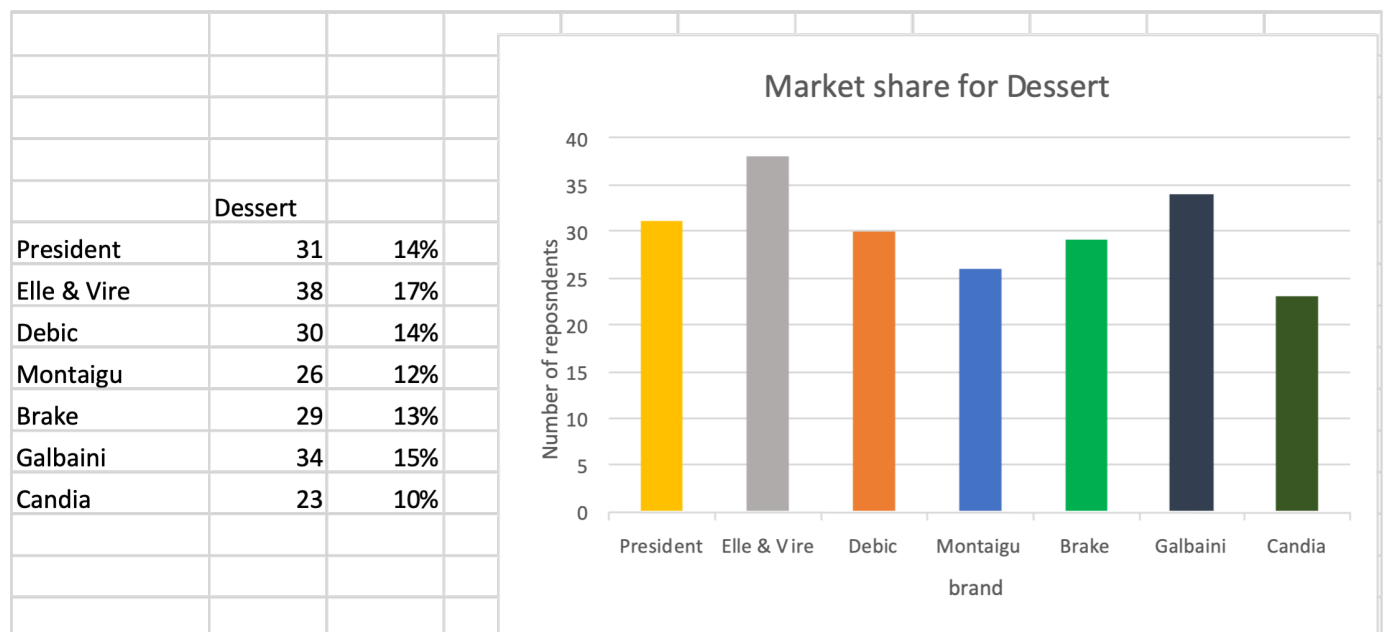
A figure showing the perceived market share for different brands.



Note: Debic Butter is in second place behind Elle & Vire, but faces stiff competition from other brands like Corman, President, and Lescure Source: the author.

Figure 4.3

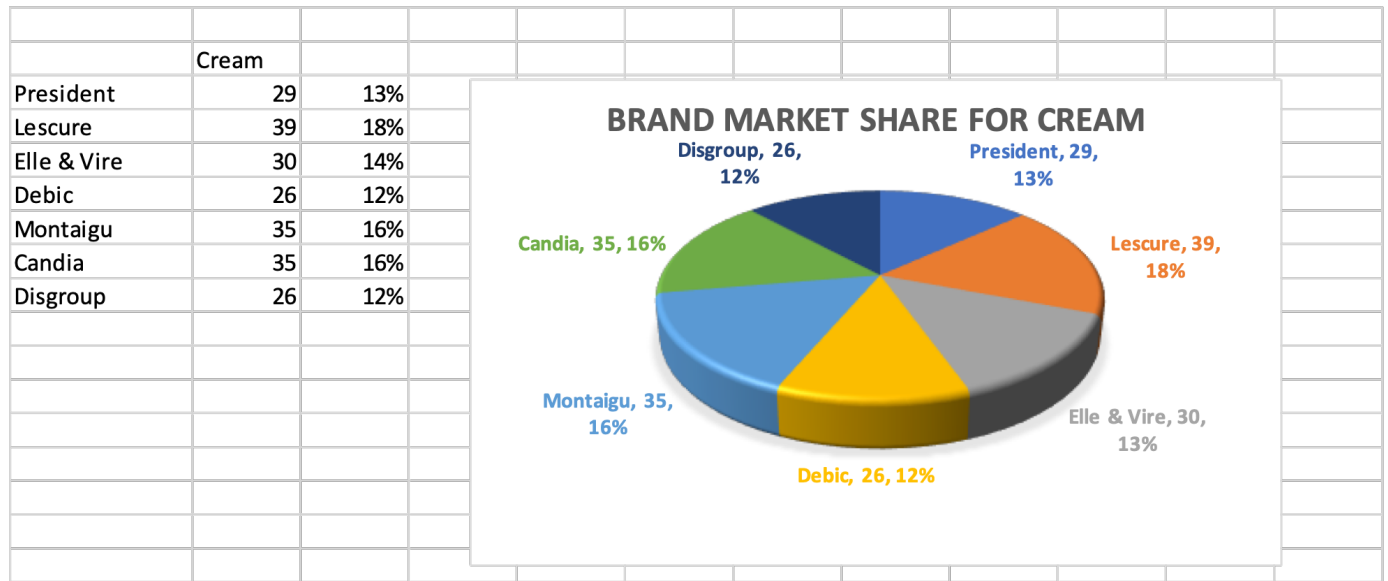
Market share for Debic Desserts



Note: Debic creams seem to lag behind other famous brands like Elle & Vire Source: the author

Figure 4.4

Perceived market share for Debic creams



Note: Market share for creams for Debic compared to other brands

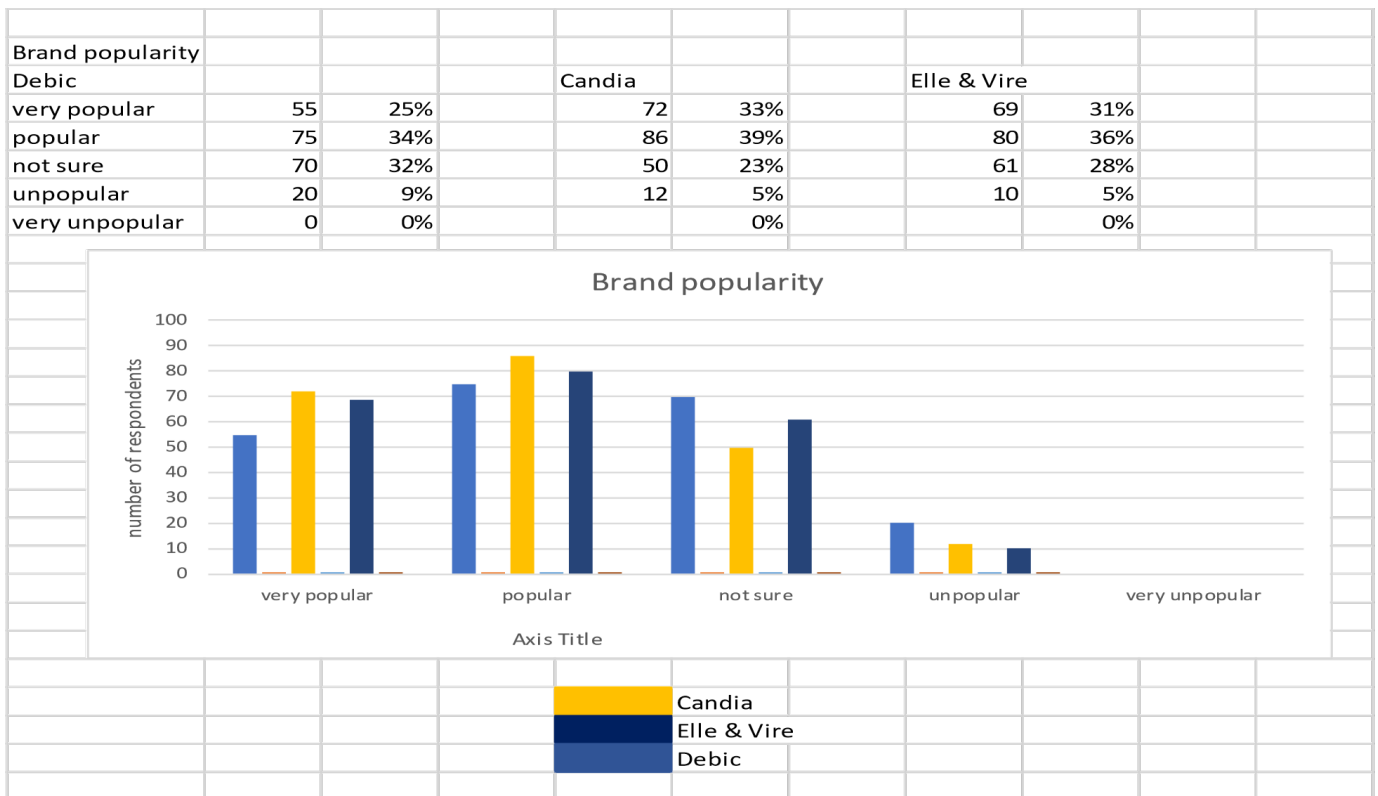
Source: The author

These values are the perceived market share of each brand based on the feedback from the respondents. Many variables in this study do not allow for generalized conclusions.

The following figures reflect the feelings of the respondents regarding the popularity of Debic and a few competing brands.

Figure 4.5

Brand popularity by name

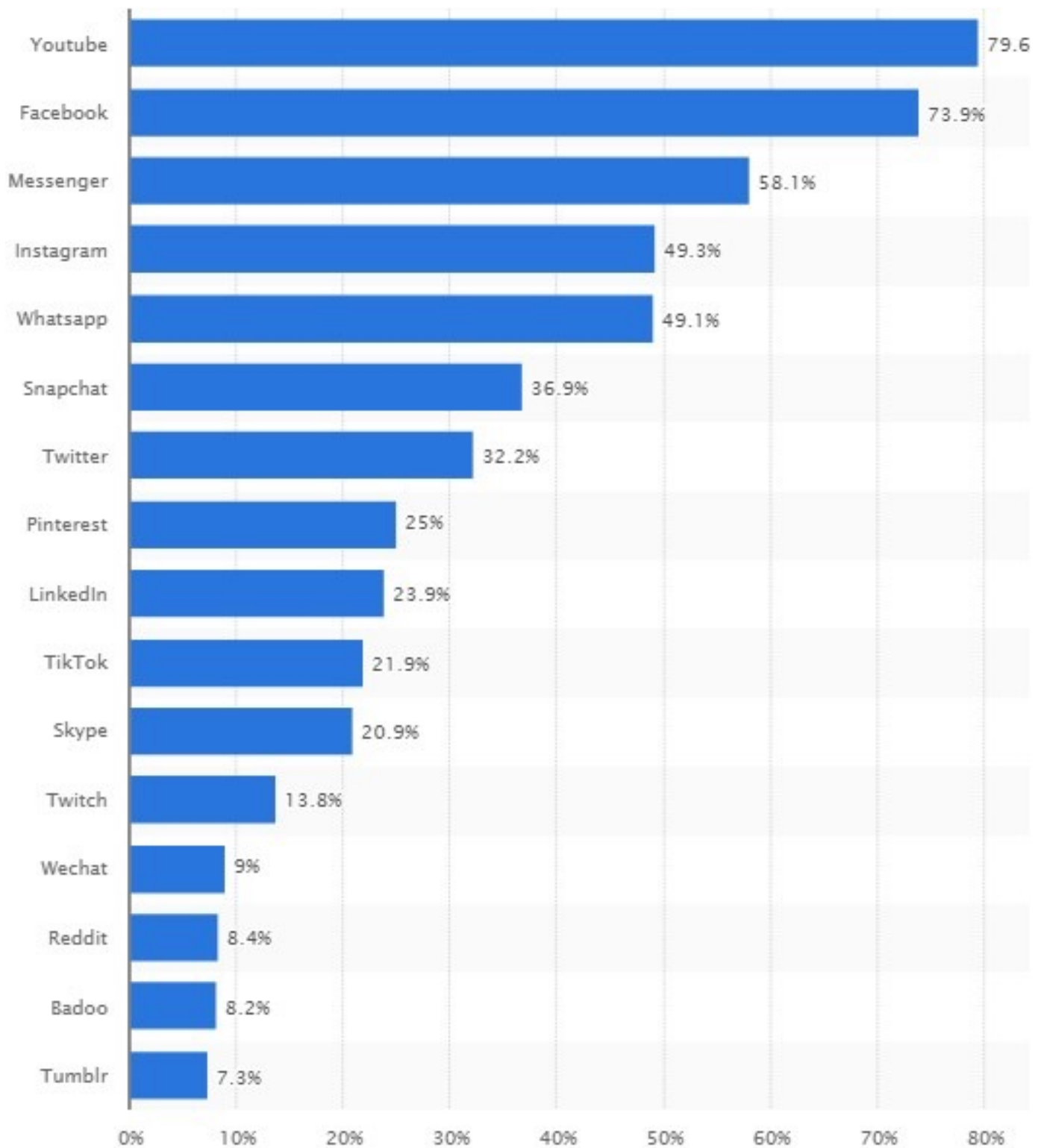


Note: It can be seen that though some respondents thought Debic was a popular brand, it still lags behind other brands. Thus, the market penetration is still below satisfactory.

These results show that though Debic products have a considerable market share, they are still not very popular, thus, brand awareness needs to be improved. A source (Dux, 2021) revealed that YouTube, Facebook, and Facebook Messenger are the most commonly used social networks in France. They are closely followed by Instagram, WhatsApp among others. This shows that there is a potential for advertising using these platforms if FrieslandCampina management is ready to do what it takes.

Figure 4.6

Social network penetration rate France 2020



Note: The figure above shows the social media usage in France as of 2020

Source: Dux 2021

4.1 Discussion

Online search: This study reveals that there are still some voids that FrieslandCampina needs to fill to increase the awareness of Debic products. Online purchasing platforms show low to moderate reviews. In this study, Amazon was considered, which revealed that the Debic - professional whipped cream with sugar (700ml) had a 4 out of 5* rating, based on 55 reviews. This rating reflected all reviews since the product was launched. The sister product, Debic professional whipped cream unsweetened, 700 ml has received a similar rating (4/5) based on 89 reviews (Amazon, Debic professional whipped cream unsweetened, 700 ml customer reviews, 2020a). Unfortunately, these ratings were based on “global reviews” and, the researcher noted, all the reviewers were based in Germany. Changing the country setting to “France” and maintaining all the other search criteria did not bring any reasonable or relevant results. Most of the results found using these criteria had nothing to do with “grocery” or dairy products. Elle & Vire had a slightly higher rating based on more reviews, that is 4.6*/5 stars based on 111 reviews (Amazon, Carré Frais - Elle & Vire - 200g, 2020b). The ratings for “President Imported Salted Butter, 7oz (199g)” were also slightly higher than that of Debic products, though based on fewer reviews. The product had 4.2/5* based on 36 reviews. This indicates that though there’s stiff competition, it is not all bleak and Debic has a fighting chance.

While Debic has some online presence, it is deemed below average. For instance, there is a YouTube channel named “Debic Global” which should be a platform for worldwide marketing for Debic products. Other related channels include “Debic Nederland,” “Debic España,” “Debic Nordic” and “Debic Middle East” all with 301, 134, 8, and 7 subscribers respectively. This author also noted that the “Debic Global” channel has only 281 subscribers. Additionally, there was no single channel dedicated to the French market. Moreover, the last activity in the global YouTube channel was recorded two years before the day this author visited the channel. From the feedback from the questionnaire and the results from Dux (2021), it is clear that there is a potential for increasing market penetration through social networks.

It is clear that though Debic and FrieslandCampina have not utilized social media fully. Their various social media platforms are overwhelmingly underutilized, with

some (like the YouTube channel) being dormant for more than a year. Though the brand Debic updates their Facebook and Instagram platforms occasionally, the level of activity barely suffices to generate any kind of traffic. A complete recommitment and rejuvenation of these platforms and the use therefore can prove very useful in increasing brand awareness to enhance penetration and growth in the French market.

The interviews also provided very useful insights to the researcher. The staff members provided almost identical descriptions, showing that the company has a clear plan for increasing its market share. A closer look at the Debic website also confirms this, with comments such as "... Debic is in good hands with you, and you are in good hands with us." This shows that the company plans to reach more customers, so that "...You (customers)...with us (Debic/FrieslandCampina). Thus, from the observation and subjective judgment of the author, it is seen that the company intends to continue penetrating the market and increase its share. However, the researcher thinks that these efforts are not sufficient, which is why some helpful suggestions are offered in the Recommendations section.

The few reviews on Amazon might indicate few purchases or unwillingness by buyers to review. However, applying some assumptions may show that the former is more likely. It is assumed that though not all buyers will return to review a product, some will. The more a product has been bought, the more the reviews because, presumably, the likelihood of reviews increasing with every purchase. While it is true that "likelihood" does not always translate to "reality," it is possible to use one as an indication of the other. Thus, few reviews indicate low sales, which can indicate low brand awareness. To demonstrate this, a similar product (Debic professional whipped cream unsweetened, 700 ml) has received more than 89 reviews on the same platform (Amazon). This should indicate that the latter product has more purchases than the former. This assertion is supported by findings from other comparisons in which that many consumers have been switching to sugarless alternatives (FrieslandCampina, 2020; Kalashnikova, 2011). The lack of any relevant results for searches with the words "Debic" and France selected as the region is also very telling. When the search with these criteria was conducted, it returned no

relevant results, indicating little activity on the French market, vis-à-vis Debic. However, searching Amazon on a global scale with “Debic” as the keyword returned many relevant results. Besides, there many reviews from Germany, showing that somehow, Debic brands are known and consumed more in Germany than in France. This indicates that the company needs to up its game regarding brand awareness in the target market (France).

The online survey showed that a considerable number of the respondents were aware of at least one Debic product, but the popularity of “Debic” brands on average was still low. Some of the factors influencing this low turnout the existence of more established and competing brands in France (place), such as Candia and Elle & Vire. Also, this author notes promotion efforts, especially via online platforms are still low. It was stated Debic’s social media platforms are unpopular at best, with a low subscription or following levels, low level of content sharing and resharing, and also low levels of content reactions. Such findings indicate that Debic’s online marketing is very far behind. In this generation, and especially after the advent of the coronavirus pandemic, low online marketing and presence are almost like committing business suicide (author’s opinion). Thus, increasing online presence is crucial for FrieslandCampina and Debic brand.

4.1 Reliability and Validity

These two elements are crucial for determining the usability of data and the consequential results. Broadly speaking, validity measures the integrity, applicability and relevance of the selected methods in regards to answering the research questions while reliability refers to the consistency and precision with which the data are analyzed (Noble & Smith, 2015). These elements are used to establish the rigor of research findings. In qualitative research, the rigor is usually affected by things like personal bias, research bias, sampling issues among others. To ensure validity and reliability, these issues must be accounted for.

In this study, the researcher used methods that were deemed most suitable and relevant for the task at hand. The interviews targeted the FrieslandCampina management, which are the people best placed to know the goals and targets of the

company. The suitability of this method comes from the fact that to formulate a growth strategy one has to understand the company goals. The management combined with the information available on the websites were best suited to answer the question on company goals compared to third parties.

On the other hand, the target market must be considered while formulating a growth strategy, which is why a survey on the French market was considered necessary. Due to some constraints discussed in the limitations section, the author preferred to use online platforms to reach the market, which justifies and validates the use of online surveys.

The reliability of these results hinges on the fact that some of the information was obtained from primary sources. However, it is crucial to acknowledge the fact that personal biases cannot be fully eliminated, especially since the research largely relied on subjective, qualitative data. To minimize the errors associated with qualitative data (opinions, feelings etc.), the researcher employed several mechanisms. The major strategy used for reducing this error was by using several sources of data then comparing the results. For example, instead of using the Company and product websites only for obtaining product reviews, the author used several other platforms, including other websites and blogs. This meant that some of the biases likely to exist in the company's website were accounted for. Expectedly, a company may never post self-criticizing comments on its products, which is why third-party reviews were necessary. This helped in generating a balanced overall opinion.

Finally, recommendations have to be based on empirical data and information, not forgetting a clear analysis of the situation at hand. That is why the researcher included a regression cost-benefit analysis to establish the usability of the suggestions herein. Therefore, considering these factors alongside the justification offered for the research (in chapter one, problem analysis section), the results of this research are both valid and reliable, though relatively so.

4.1 Summary

The findings herein offer some answers to the sub questions, ultimately leading

to the answering the MRQ. In this section, the results provide important answers to the SQs. Data has shown that FrieslandCampina is likely to be underutilizing online platforms for its market penetration efforts, which is a major market gap (SQ1). The results also show that though FrieslandCampina is considered a dairy products giant globally, Debic products face stiff competition in France are seem to be having small difficulties penetrating the French market. This is because there are more established brands in the region which seem to be giving the Debic lots of competition (SQ 2). To counter this competition, the author suggests (in the recommendation section) that FrieslandCampina should consider increasing their online presence and take online seriously by engaging a social media influencer, increasing their online presence and also improving their websites' discoverability by engaging Search Engine Optimization services (SQ 3). The next chapter will report the major inferences and conclusions that can be drawn from these findings.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Researcher uncovered some answers to the research questions s presented herein. First, there was the question regarding the market gaps identifiable in relation to Debic and its market share in the French market. The major gap uncovered was insufficient efforts of online product promotion. This aspect was investigated by followed the 4Ps, focusing on Debic creams, butter, and desserts (product), their relative penetration in France (place), the company's efforts of making the product known using online platforms (promotion)and their prices relative to similar products. The researcher uncovered little activity in the company's social media pages. That shows some dormancy and laxity, which calls for more activity. This shows some wide gaps in online product promotion, which is very essential for market penetration especially in this age.

In this era and especially following the ongoing pandemic, online presence is one of the most crucial things to do regarding brand awareness. Even without the pandemic, times are fast changing and the internet is the next big thing in the world of marketing and brand promotion. Product promotion helps in keeping the product mentioned thus increasing and maintain its awareness.

The creation of brand awareness is very crucial for increasing the sales for FrieslandCampina. That is why the researcher engaged in this study to establish ways through which FrieslandCampina can increase the awareness of Debic products. One of the loopholes established is the apparent laxity in social media use. There is very little activity in the related pages on the different social networks. However, the respective websites seem optimally utilized as there is some level of activity. Still, both websites, at least by the assessment of this researcher, lack some crucial elements. The level of product promotion on those websites is a little low. Yes, there are some catchy phrases and picturesque demonstrations of what or who FrieslandCampina and Debic are, what they do, and how they do it, there is still much to be said and done about regarding product promotion. Their descriptions of the products are also a little brief but suffice in describing the particular products. Thus, as far as brand identity is concerned, it is the opinion of this author that the company has done a commendable job. The problem lies only in the promotion efforts, which this author thinks can be improved. More about this will be provided in the recommendation section. Overall, the research was a very eye-opening experience and this author finds it a milestone. Additionally, it will benefit the company for which it was prepared with the insights provided herein.

CHAPTER 6: RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

From the findings of this study, the researcher recommends a few things that can help increase Debic brand awareness and the consequential market penetration in France. There is a window of possibility in the area of social media marketing since many young chefs and bakers confessed to being very present in social networks, especially Facebook and YouTube. Other networks like Instagram and Twitter are also relevant and widely used. This author recommends that FrieslandCampina should increase its online presence on some if not all of the platforms and capitalize on this potential. The company can hire a full-time online marketer whose work will be making small video clips detailing certain recipes for promotional purposes. These recipes can be posted on any relevant platform (one that supports videos such as YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram).

However, the related Facebook page, Debic, seems to have more activity, with the latest post being made only 3 days before the writing of this particular part of this report. The page has 27,067 followers and 26,772. For a Facebook page that targets the global market, these numbers are relatively low. This is because there are individual pages for personalities with a way higher number of likes and followers. The Instagram page (Debic_global) also has some activity, with the latest activity being a video posted two days ago. However, like Facebook, the numbers are still a little low since the page has only 2,738. The page follows only 489 people. The recommendation here is that the company should consider reviving the YouTube channel and increase its presence on Facebook and Instagram by following more people and sharing and resharing its posts. It should consider hiring someone to run these platforms. The fact that the recent Facebook and Instagram posts attracted only 11 and 27 reactions respectively, each with zero comments indicates a very low audience. Thus, online marketers should be considered.

This author recommends hiring a social media influencer to help promote Debic products via social media. Additionally, the company should consider starting targeted pages and channel, that is, Facebook and Instagram pages and YouTube Channel that target the French market. Most importantly, increase content and activity on these platforms. For example, the marketing team can request other members of staff to share and react to the posts. If all the FrieslandCampina workers in the Netherlands reacted to a single Facebook post, that would be more than 250 comments and reactions. If only 50 of these people reshared the post, there is a very high likelihood that it would increase traffic and increase the chances of Debic products being noticed, hence achieving the goal of increasing awareness.

6.1 Implementation Plan and Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA)

This section will present the plan for the implementation of the proposed strategy and the associated Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA).

6.1.1 Implementation plan

To increase its online presence in France (and maybe elsewhere in the world), the company should increase their activity in their existing social network platforms

(such as the YouTube channels, the Facebook page and the Instagram page). Additionally, it can also create new platforms targeted for the French market. Besides the company's in-house marketing team, this author recommends hiring an online marketing/social media influencer. Additionally, the company must also improve the FrieslandCampina and Debic websites' visibility by engaging more powerful Search Engine Optimization (SEO) services. The given table (see Appendix 3) shows the implementation plan for the proposed strategy.

6.1.2 Cost-Benefit (CBA) Analysis

The suggested plan involves increasing Debic's social media presence to increase brand awareness by generating traffic to said social media platforms. Some of the people who visit these pages will translate into customers, hence increasing the revenue. It is assumed that increased traffic and awareness will translate into actual sales and hence revenue. A table (Appendix 4) was developed and used as the basis for the CBA for this plan, and it will result in increased awareness and increased profits. FrieslandCampina should thus consider implementing this plan because can prove beneficial.

6.1.3 Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability (ERS) Issues

However, this plan may face several Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability issues. By targeting to use the employees for the social media activities, the management may appear like they are misusing their employees. Nevertheless, a proper compensation plan may ward off this ethical issue. This could be proper stipends and gifts for the employees with the most activity for a given period. Secondly, using free (or almost free labour) may make it difficult for the company to achieve its goals because there is no sense of duty given the employees are not getting paid for the online promotion campaign, which may challenge the plan's sustainability.

Additionally, the social media influencers are costly to hire which may and will increase the operational costs. It is also difficult to determine or accurately predict the revenue associated with the presence of the social media influencer since sometimes brands grow even without such, making it hard to estimate the actual

contribution of the influencer to the company. However, if the hired person drives enough traffic to the social networks translating to enough sales, there will be enough revenue to pay the influencer and retain enough profit, hence making it worth the cost. On the other hand, if the revenue generated from these activities does not help the company achieve profits, then it won't be worth it. Thus, regular evaluations will be necessary to determine if the influencer is worth retaining.

Finally, it is important to establish a SEO services provider because not doing so can result in penalties and sometimes loss of visibility from Google. There are many scams posing as "cheap" SEO providers, and they should be avoided. Legitimate SEO services are not cheap which affects sustainability, so regular evaluations and CBAs will be necessary.

6.2 Limitations of the Study

Like any other study, this current one had a few limitations. These can be seen as parameters or possibilities that could hinder or negatively affect the overall reliability, authority, and validity of the study. For instance, in scientific studies, the sample size dictates (or "limits") the applicability of the results. It is not logical to conclude that, because a given researcher witnessed three female thieves in a given city within the same day, then "most women in that city are thieves" or "most thieves in that city are women." Three is too small a number to make generalized conclusions for a city with hundreds of thousands of people. Also, just because the first three buses that passed a passenger at the stage were carrying full capacity does not warrant the conclusion that "most buses passing through this stage are always carrying at full capacity." Sampling methods, data analysis tools and techniques among other variables affect the generalizability, validity and reliability of research findings.

In this particular study, several factors limit the applicability of the results by altering the accuracy thereof. First, the data collection methods faced several issues. The use of company websites is good because they provide informative information that can be useful in the research, especially for comparison purposes. However, such information is largely one-sided since the company usually publishes only

positive information on their websites. Thus, such information may not provide any basis for conclusions, only for further study. The interviews also focused on employees of the company in question and, they are likely to be biased even unconsciously. For instance, they may have given some information based on pure optimism rather than the facts on the ground, which might affect the authenticity of some inferences herein. The sampling method was also problematic seeing as the interviewees' sample size was calculated based on certain assumptions. Finally, the samples were not big enough to allow for conclusions that can apply to whole populations. This is because they were based on formulas for calculating just the minimum sample, and, given they were sampled using convenient method, there is likely to be high levels of biasness. Nevertheless, the reliability and validity of the findings still remains, as explained earlier.

Another limitation was that this researcher did not employ advanced methods of quantitative analysis, which usually leads to more conclusive inferences. Thus, the findings herein are educated guesses at worst and opinion-based subjective judgments at best. That is not to say they are useless, but it means they lack conclusiveness. Thus, more research in this area is required to expound on this current one.

6.3 Recommendation for Future studies

Researchers should consider widening this study by conducting further studies to help in the growth of FrieslandCampina and its market penetration in the French market. As seen in previous sections, the company is a global giant in dairy production, severally ranked in the top ten companies of the like. Penetrating the French market will increase its market share, given it has not yet become the top company. To increase its presence in the country, the company should consider more researches on the subject to find out better ways of increasing their presence. They can consider hiring a professional researcher or may utilize interning students.

Also, the company should sponsor further studies and ensure they utilize bigger samples to increase the validity and reliability thereof. Such will help in providing more generalizable conclusions. Future studies should also focus on quantitative

investigations, using figures and numerical data (that is, using financial details and arithmetic computations) to make more solid and conclusive inferences. The studies should also focus on other types of marketing and associated gaps, unlike this study which focused mainly on the online promotion using marketing mix theory. Finally, the company can also consider carrying pilot studies in other countries to ensure its continued growth on a global scale.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Brand (Debic) Awareness Survey



Hello. You are invited to take this survey which seeks to establish the market penetration of Debic products through establishing customer awareness of the same. Debic is a dairy brand by FrieslandCampina, and this researcher seeks to find ways of promoting the brand sales by creating strategies to improve its awareness. These improvements will be based on your honest answers to the questions in this survey. You are encouraged to answer all the questions to the end, but you can opt out anytime. However, to safeguard the quality of the survey, you are kindly requested not to leave midway: once you start, please continue to the end.

Do you wish to continue?

Yes (please proceed to the next window)

No (thanks for your time)

Welcome to the survey. We will ask you a few personal questions before proceeding to the main survey

What is your Gender?

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

Other

How old are you?

Below 18

Between 19 and 30

Between 31 and 40

Between 41 and 50

Between 61 and 60

Between 61 and 70

Above 70

Prefer not to say

Do you consume Dairy products?

Yes No

What are your favorite Dairy products?

Creams

Butter

Fillings Ice & Shakes Desserts

All of the above

NB: you can select multiple answers from this category

Have you heard about any Debic Dairy product (s)

Yes No

Please select the products you know

Debic creams

Debic fillings

Debic desserts

Debic butter

Debic ice & Shakes

All of the above

How did you learn of Debic products?

From a friend or family member (recommendation)

From social media platform

From a TV commercial

From a poster advertisement

Other (please specify)_____

Can you recognize FrieslandCampina logo?

Yes

Not sure

No

What is the first brand that comes in your mind when thinking of Dairy Products?

On average, when deciding on purchasing the following Dairy Products, which comes to mind as your top choice? Tick as appropriate

1. Butter

President

Lescure

Canvia

Elle & Vire

Debic

Corman

Montaigu

2. Dessert

President

Brake

Galbani

Elle & Vire

Debic

Metro

Montaigu

3. Cream
President
Lescure
Candia
Elle & Vire
Debic
Disgroup
Montaigu

Which of these aspects led you to this choice?

Quality
Price
Personal experience
Availability
Recommendation

When it comes to buying Dairy Products, are you the main decision maker?

I am the main buyer I share the decision.
I am not the decider

**When it comes to Dairy products, how favorably do you think of
FrieslandCampina (Debic)?**

Very Favorably
Favorably
So-so Unfavorably
Least Favorably

Please describe your answer briefly

Have you seen an advertisement for Debic products in the last one month?

Yes No

When buying Dairy products, what is the most important consideration?

Price

Recommendations

Discounts

Convenience

All of the above

(NB: You can select more than one answer for this question)

This section will ask question specifically relating to Debic only

I know Debic products to be trustworthy

Strongly agree

Agree

Not sure

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

I am confident about the purchasing Debic Products anytime

Strongly agree

Agree

Not sure

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

When I have to choose between Debic and any other brand of Dairy products, I always choose

Debic

Strongly agree

Agree

Not sure

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

I would recommend Debic to my other chefs and bakers, friends and family

Strongly agree
Agree
Not sure
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

When looking for dairy products, I first look for Debic before looking for other brands

Strongly agree
Agree Not sure
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

If Debic products are not available when shopping, I try to find them elsewhere

Strongly agree
Agree
Not sure
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

How often how you used Debic brands in the past?

Never
Seldom
Sometimes
Frequently
I only use Debic always

Is there any improvement you would suggest regarding Debic brands?

Yes
No
If yes, kindly specify

Based on your knowledge of and experience Dairy products, how would you rank them by company? (Use ranks 1 to 7 for each product as necessary). For example, if you think

“Montaigu” tops the list of desserts, you will write 1 on the cell that corresponds to both “Montaigu” and “desserts”

| Brand | Product | | | | |
|-------------|---------|----------|--------------|--------|----------|
| | Creams | Desserts | Ice & Shakes | Butter | Fillings |
| Montaigu | | | | | |
| Debic | | | | | |
| President | | | | | |
| Disgroup | | | | | |
| Elle & Vire | | | | | |
| Lescure | | | | | |
| Corman | | | | | |
| Canvia | | | | | |
| Candia | | | | | |

Would you recognize the logo of Friesland Campina and Debic?

Yes

No

How would you gauge the popularity of Debic products (Debic butter, Debic cream etc.) in your circles?

Very popular
Popular
Not sure
Unpopular
Very unpopular
Other questions

Do you use social media platforms?

Yes No

If yes, which platforms do you use regularly

Facebook
Twitter
WhatsApp
Instagram
Pinterest
YouTube
Tumblr
Other (please specify)

How often do you use social media platforms? (Please tick accordingly)

| Social Network | Frequency of use | | | | |
|----------------|------------------|-----------|------------|--------|-------|
| | Constantly | Sometimes | Don't know | Rarely | Never |
| WhatsApp | | | | | |
| Facebook | | | | | |
| YouTube | | | | | |
| Tumblr | | | | | |
| Pinterest | | | | | |
| Instagram | | | | | |
| Twitter | | | | | |
| Other | | | | | |

Please provide any final general remarks

Thank you very much for your participation. Your feedback is highly appreciated

Appendix 2: Interview

The researcher asked the following questions to the staff of FrieslandCampina. There author randomly selected five members of staff following the sample size calculation in chapter three.

Question 1: Hello, my name is XX and I'd love to ask you a few questions about your company FrieslandCampina, specifically about the brand Debic.

Question 2: Would you mind telling me your name and position please?

How much do you understand the company goals and objectives?

What would you say the company is doing right or wrong regarding French market penetration for the Debic brand?

How would you rank the current popularity and market penetration of the brand in France?

Are there any plans to increase the market share?

What are the metrics you use to decide the market share of the brand?

What is your opinion on social media marketing?

Does the company currently use any social media platform for advertisement? If yes, what are they and what is the impact?

What are the current plans for increasing social media and online presence of Debic products, if any?

If you were the head of this company, what you do differently to improve the Debic brand awareness, especially in France?

Appendix 3: Implementation plan

Implementation plan for the proposed strategy

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Priority Area | Improving Debic brand awareness in the French market |
| Goal | Increase the brand awareness by the end of 2022 using online marketing so as to increase sales. |
| Performance Metrics | <p>Use the selected social networks activity to track progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New subscribers • New website visits • New Likers and followers • Number of reactions to posted content (Facebook posts, YouTube video etc.) • New France-based enquiries about Debic products resulting from social media activity <p>Ultimately, new customers from these platforms for the first six months of the plan</p> |
| Objectives | The objective of the plan is to use online (social media) marketing to penetrate the French market with Debic products by the end of 2022 |
| Background | Social media is a powerful marketing tool. However, FrieslandCampina has not been utilizing the potential fully, as seen from the activity on its social media platforms. |
| Activity | <p>The researcher proposes increasing the online presence for Debic by"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create Facebook page and group specifically for the French market and increase activity for the existing page • Revive the Debic global YouTube channel by adding interesting content daily • Create another YouTube channel specifically for the French market and Target 50,000 million subscribers by the end of 2022 |

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an Instagram page specifically for the French market and increase activity on the existing page. Increase page subscribers to 500,000 by end 2022 • Charity begins at home: use the existing employees to increase activity on the existing pages. Group administrators should be compensated by way of monthly stipends based on group activity and traffic drawn by the group activity. |
| Timeline | The initial project should run for 12 months starting January 2020. However, it should be reviewed after the first six months to evaluate the outcomes |
| Lead person (s) | The marketing team manager assisted by: The social media influencer |
| | The current administrators for the Debic Facebook page, Instagram page and YouTube channel will be retained. They can also be in charge of the new groups and pages. |
| Resources | This project will require relevant devices such as computers and smartphones, and professional quality cameras for shooting photos and videos for the Instagram and YouTube. Also, finances for hiring the required programming skills for improving website visibility |
| Anticipated result | Increased social media activity for the Debic brand, which will lead to more purchases. |

Note: An implementation plan for the proposed strategy. Driving more traffic to the various online platforms will increase awareness, hence revenue.

Appendix 4: Data table

Elements considered for the cost-benefit Analysis for one year

| Item | Associated costs (in £) | Projected Benefits (profits in £) |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Social Media Influencer | 33600 | 59120 |
| Improved Website Visibility (SEO) | 33600 | 59120 |
| Photography and Videography | 38400 | 39200 |
| Internal Marketing stipends | 26400 | 30570 |
| Website Content | 13200 | 15000 |
| Social Media content | 3960 | 8900 |
| Maintaining social media platforms | 6240 | 0 |
| Other costs | 3240 | 0 |