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ADOPTION OF GLOBAL MARKETING STRATEGY DIMENSIONS AND MARKETING PERFORMANCE IN EMERGING SUB-SAHARAN MULTINATIONALS: EVIDENCE FROM ZIMBABWE

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Abstract

This study examined the adoption of global marketing strategy dimensions and their association with marketing performance among emerging Sub-Saharan multinationals from Zimbabwe. The study addressed a contextual gap in international marketing literature by assessing whether established global marketing strategy constructs retain explanatory relevance in resource-constrained African settings. A quantitative, explanatory, cross-sectional survey design was adopted. Data were collected from 274 respondents from four Zimbabwean multinationals with cross-border operations. The analysis combined descriptive statistics, reliability testing, exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equation modelling. The results show that global marketing strategy adoption was selective rather than comprehensive. Product, promotion, standardised channel structure, and price standardisation recorded the strongest levels of adoption, whereas concentration of marketing activities, coordination of marketing activities, and global market participation were weakly implemented. The reliability and validity assessment confirmed that the retained measurement model was acceptable. The structural model further shows that validated dimensions of global marketing strategy had positive and statistically significant effects on marketing performance, with benefits of global marketing strategy emerging the strongest predictor. The study concludes that established global marketing strategy constructs remain relevant in emerging Sub-Saharan multinationals, but though operating in a contextually adjusted form. Thus, the most performance-relevant dimensions were those that generated immediate strategic benefits and actionable market-facing outcomes than those requiring deeper global integration. The study contributes to global *marketing strategy literature in Zimbabwean context and by showing that selective adoption of global marketing strategy dimensions can still produce meaningful marketing performance gains under constrained internationalisation conditions.*

Keywords: Global marketing strategy, marketing performance, emerging multinationals, Sub-Saharan Africa, Zimbabwe, strategy adoption, international marketing

INTRODUCTION

Global marketing strategy remains a central concern in international marketing because firms operating across borders must determine how to configure product, pricing, promotion, distribution, and coordination decisions in ways that strengthen market outcomes across heterogeneous environments. Contemporary studies show that this debate has evolved beyond a simple standardisation versus adaptation. Samiee *et al.* (2021) argue that international marketing occupies a foundational position in international business because market entry, customer acquisition, and relationship development are inherently marketing mediated. Oliveira *et al.* (2023) further observe that international marketing decision-making is becoming more complex and multi-level, and Tsougkou *et al.* (2025) confirmed that even a single strategic dimension such as product adaptation can exert differentiated effects across performance outcomes. Collectively, this literature indicates that global marketing strategy continues to matter because superior international performance depends not merely on foreign market presence, but on how marketing activities are strategically configured and executed across borders.

Despite this continued relevance, the empirical foundations of global marketing strategy research remain heavily shaped by evidence from developed economies and a narrower set of non-African emerging markets. Ipek (2021) observed that international marketing strategy research on emerging-market firms remains fragmented and insufficiently contextualised, even as scholarly interest in such firms has expanded. Mandler *et al.* (2021) similarly noted that much of the extant evidence has focused on firms from high-income environments, especially manufacturing multinationals and exporters, thereby limiting confidence in the universal applicability of established strategy-performance assumptions. Recent studies have reinforced this concern by showing that performance outcomes are contingent on contextual conditions rather than guaranteed by any single strategic formula. Chang *et al.* (2024) demonstrate that international marketing capabilities and strategy jointly shape performance among international SMEs, while Wang *et al.* (2022) show that adaptation strategy may generate both positive and negative performance pathways depending on intervening mechanisms and environmental conditions. In related fashion, Christofi *et al.* (2024) found that international performance in emerging-market firms is conditioned by business model innovation, and Hultman *et al.* (2024) questioned any simplistic assumption that either standardised or adapted promotion strategies are inherently superior. This pattern suggests that established global marketing strategy constructs require contextual testing rather than uncritical transfer across markets.

The need for such testing is particularly acute in Sub-Saharan Africa, where firms internationalise under institutional volatility, fragmented regional markets, infrastructural weaknesses, and uneven capability development, yet remain underrepresented in mainstream international marketing research. Debrah *et al.* (2018) argue that the international marketing strategies of emerging-market firms should be understood through their specific antecedents, boundary conditions, and outcomes rather than through assumptions derived from advanced-economy multinationals. Amankwah-Amoah *et al.* (2018) likewise positioned Sub-Saharan Africa as an increasingly important but still underexplored domain of international marketing inquiry. More recently, Barnard *et al.* (2023) contend that Africa requires theory development rather than simple theory importation, while Eticha *et al.* (2024) confirmed that strategy research in Africa remains comparatively limited and unevenly distributed across countries. Fasanya *et al.* (2022) further show that the internationalisation of Sub-Saharan African firms is shaped by distinctive drivers that do not always align neatly with dominant models. Within this broader African setting, Zimbabwe represents a relevant empirical context because firms from the country have pursued cross-border operations under prolonged macroeconomic and institutional constraints, yet marketing research in Zimbabwe has largely concentrated on narrower domains such as digital capabilities, mobile marketing, and social media effects rather than the full architecture of global marketing strategy (Chinakidzwa & Phiri, 2020; Manyanga *et al.*, 2024; Nyatsambo *et al.*, 2022).

Problem Statement

A major weakness in the existing literature is that empirical evidence on global marketing strategy has been shaped largely by firms from developed economies and a narrower group of non-African emerging markets. Ipek (2021) noted that international marketing strategy research on emerging-market firms remains fragmented and insufficiently contextualised, despite growing academic interest in such firms. Debrah *et al.* (2018) similarly argue that the international marketing strategies of emerging-market firms should be examined through their own antecedents, boundary conditions, and outcomes rather than through assumptions transferred from advanced economy multinationals. More recent studies have reinforced this concern by showing that strategy-performance relationships vary across capability conditions and environmental settings. Chang *et al.* (2024) found that international marketing capabilities and strategy jointly shape performance among internationally active SMEs, while Christofi *et al.* (2024) show that international performance in emerging-market firms is conditioned by business model innovation. Hultman *et al.* (2024) also questioned the presumed superiority of standardised or adapted promotion strategies, suggesting that international marketing effects are contingent rather than universal. Consequently, although global marketing strategy is widely recognised as important, the literature still does not provide sufficient empirical clarity on whether established GMS dimensions are equally meaningful in firms operating under weaker institutions, tighter resource constraints, and late internationalisation conditions.

This gap is particularly pronounced in Sub-Saharan Africa, where firms internationalise within settings marked by institutional volatility, fragmented regional markets, infrastructural limitations, and uneven managerial capability development. Amankwah-Amoah *et al.* (2018) identified Africa as a strategically significant but under-researched domain in international marketing, while Barnard *et al.* (2023) contend that international business research in Africa requires theory development rather than simple theory importation. Eticha *et al.* (2024) confirmed that strategy research in Africa remains comparatively thin, and Fasanya *et al.* (2022) show that the internationalisation of Sub-Saharan African firms is shaped by distinctive push and pull factors that do not always align neatly with dominant theoretical models. Within this broader regional context, Zimbabwe presents an especially important but underexplored setting. Firms from Zimbabwe have expanded across borders despite prolonged macroeconomic instability, foreign currency shortages, and institutional uncertainty, yet existing Zimbabwean marketing studies have concentrated more on specific functional issues such as digital marketing, mobile marketing, or social media effects than on the broader configuration of global marketing strategy (Chinakidzwa & Phiri, 2020; Manyanga *et al.*, 2024; Nyatsambo *et al.*, 2022). As a result, the literature does not adequately show which dimensions of global marketing strategy are actually adopted by emerging Zimbabwean multinationals, nor whether those adopted dimensions are associated with marketing performance.

The specific problem addressed by this study, therefore, is the lack of contextually grounded evidence on the adoption of global marketing strategy dimensions and their performance relevance among emerging Sub-Saharan multinationals. Existing research has established that global marketing strategy matters in principle, but it has not sufficiently identified which of its recognised dimensions are implemented in practice by African multinationals operating under constrained conditions. Nor has it adequately quantified the relationship between those adopted dimensions and marketing performance in such settings. This omission is theoretically significant because it leaves unresolved whether canonical GMS constructs retain explanatory value outside the advanced and better-studied emerging economies in which they have been most frequently examined. It is also empirically important because firms in countries such as Zimbabwe confront practical internationalisation challenges that may alter both strategy adoption and performance outcomes. Accordingly, this study addressed a clear knowledge gap by examining which global marketing strategy dimensions were adopted by emerging Sub-Saharan multinationals from Zimbabwe and by determining how those dimensions were associated with marketing performance. In doing so, it extended the geographical and contextual reach of GMS studies and responded to calls for more Africa-centred, context-sensitive international marketing research (Bıçakcıoğlu-Peynirci, 2023; Barnard *et al.*, 2023; Eticha *et al.*, 2024; Zhang *et al.*, 2024).

This study addressed that gap by examining the adoption of global marketing strategy dimensions and their association with marketing performance among emerging Sub-Saharan multinationals from Zimbabwe. More specifically, the study asked which dimensions of global marketing strategy were adopted by these firms and how those dimensions were associated with marketing performance. The study contributes to the literature in four ways. First, it extends global marketing strategy studies into an under-researched African multinational context. Second, it moves beyond broad discussion of international marketing orientation by identifying the specific strategy dimensions implemented in practice. Third, it links those dimensions to marketing performance, thereby clarifying whether adoption has substantive strategic relevance in a resource-constrained environment. Fourth, it responds to continuing calls for stronger integration of international marketing into international business research and for more context-sensitive examination of emerging-market firms (Debrah *et al.*, 2018; Ipek, 2021; Samiee *et al.*, 2021; Barnard *et al.*, 2023; Chang *et al.*, 2024).

Aim

This study aimed to investigate how emerging Sub-Saharan multinationals from Zimbabwe adopted global marketing strategy dimensions and how those dimensions were associated with marketing performance.

Objectives

1. To determine which global marketing strategy dimensions were adopted by emerging Sub-Saharan multinationals from Zimbabwe.
2. To examine the relationship between the adopted global marketing strategy dimensions and marketing performance.
3. To establish whether established global marketing strategy dimensions retained contextual relevance in emerging Zimbabwean multinational firms.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews the theoretical and empirical literature relevant to global marketing strategy and marketing performance in order to establish the foundation for the study hypothesis.

Global Marketing Strategy: Conceptual Foundations

Global marketing strategy refers to the pattern of marketing decisions through which a firm coordinates and deploys its marketing activities across national markets in pursuit of competitive advantage and superior performance. The foundational articulation of the construct was provided by Zou and Cavusgil (2002), who defined GMS broadly rather than reducing it to a single standardisation decision. Their formulation integrated three core perspectives: standardisation of marketing activities across markets, configuration and coordination of value-adding activities across countries, and strategic integration of competitive moves on a global basis. This broad conceptualisation remains influential because it treats GMS as a multidimensional strategic architecture rather than a narrow tactical choice. More recent studies have reinforced the continued relevance of this view. Samiee *et al.* (2021) argue that marketing remains central to international business because foreign market entry, customer acquisition, and relationship development are fundamentally marketing-mediated. Gomes *et al.* (2020) likewise contend that international marketing increasingly requires agility in response to dynamic global environments, while Oliveira *et al.* (2023) highlight the growing complexity of decision-making in international marketing. Collectively, these studies suggest that GMS is best understood as the cross-border orchestration of marketing choices that shape how a firm competes internationally (Zou & Cavusgil, 2002; Gomes *et al.*, 2020; Samiee *et al.*, 2021; Oliveira *et al.*, 2023).

Within international marketing strategy, the role of GMS is to provide the strategic logic that links dispersed foreign market operations into a coherent system. It offers firms a mechanism for balancing global efficiency with local responsiveness, not only through decisions about product, price, promotion, and distribution, but also through the concentration, coordination, and integration of marketing activities across countries. In this sense, GMS functions as the marketing expression of international strategy because it determines how firms create consistency, leverage capabilities across markets, and respond to cross-national differences without fragmenting strategic intent. Mandler *et al.* (2021) show that the performance effects of marketing standardisation and adaptation remain central to the field, yet the evidence is often inconsistent because strategy is context dependent and multidimensional. Debrah *et al.* (2018) similarly argue that international marketing strategies in emerging-market firms must be examined through their antecedents, boundary conditions, and outcomes rather than through simplified universal assumptions. Lim *et al.* (2025) further observed that global marketing research continues to wrestle with the tensions between global and local logics, while recent work on emerging-market and African firms suggests that international marketing strategy must be interpreted in light of capability constraints, institutional variation, and environmental turbulence (Bıçakcıoğlu-Peynirci, 2023; Barnard *et al.*, 2023). Accordingly, GMS occupies a central place in international marketing strategy because it translates broad international expansion into an actionable system of cross-border marketing decisions with direct implications for market performance (Mandler *et al.*, 2021; Barnard *et al.*, 2023).

Conceptually, the value of GMS lies in its ability to capture both strategic scope and strategic alignment. A firm may be internationally active without possessing a coherent global marketing strategy, but GMS exists when marketing activities across countries are deliberately structured to achieve consistency, coordination, and competitive leverage. This distinction is important because it separates mere international presence from purposeful strategic integration. Zou and Cavusgil's (2002) framework remain particularly useful in this regard because it accommodates multiple dimensions of cross-border marketing behaviour rather than assuming that firms either standardise or adapt in an absolute sense. Subsequent reviews have supported the need for such a broader lens. Mandler *et al.* (2021) concluded that prior research often lacks strong theoretical grounding and relies too heavily on a narrow set of settings, especially firms from high-income countries. Samiee *et al.* (2021) called for stronger integration of international marketing into broader international business studies, and Oliveira *et al.* (2023) noted that modern international marketing decisions are increasingly shaped by interdependence, uncertainty, and multi-level organisational judgement. For the present study, therefore, GMS is treated as a multidimensional construct that captures how emerging multinationals organise and align their cross-border marketing activities in pursuit of superior marketing performance (Zou & Cavusgil, 2002; Mandler *et al.*, 2021; Samiee *et al.*, 2021; Oliveira *et al.*, 2023).

Dimensions of Global Marketing Strategy

Contemporary international marketing studies continue to treat global marketing strategy as a multidimensional construct rather than a single standardisation decision. In this study, global marketing strategy is captured through eight interrelated dimensions: product standardisation, promotion standardisation, price standardisation, distribution standardisation, concentration of marketing activities, coordination of marketing activities, global market participation, and integration of competitive moves. This dimensional view is analytically important because it recognises that firms may standardise some marketing elements while selectively adapting or coordinating others across foreign markets. Mandler *et al.* (2021) show that research on standardisation and adaptation has become increasingly nuanced, while Poulis (2024) argue that international marketing strategy should be understood as a search for relational fit rather than a rigid global-local dichotomy. Solberg and Durrieu (2023) similarly demonstrate that firms combine different international marketing tactics in patterned ways, and Lim *et al.* (2025) noted that current global marketing research increasingly emphasises hybrid configurations rather than simple either-or choices. Accordingly, the eight dimensions provide a more precise basis for assessing how internationally active firms structure their marketing behaviour and how that structure may relate to performance.

The eight dimensions of global marketing strategy comprise product standardisation, promotion standardisation, price standardisation, distribution standardisation, concentration of marketing activities, coordination of marketing activities, global market participation, and integration of competitive moves. The first four capture the cross-border marketing programme by reflecting the extent to which firms maintain consistency in product attributes, branding, promotional appeals, pricing logic, and channel structures across markets, even where local contingencies still require some adjustment. The latter four capture the broader strategic organisation of international marketing by indicating the degree to which firms centralise marketing decisions, coordinate activities across units, participate across foreign markets, and align competitive actions internationally. Taken together, these dimensions show that GMS extends beyond the standardisation of the marketing mix to include the organisational and competitive integration of multinational marketing activity, thereby linking operational consistency with broader strategic control and performance relevance (Mandler et al., 2021; Debrah et al., 2018; Gomes et al., 2020; Samiee et al., 2021; Fasanya et al., 2022; Behl et al., 2023; Oliveira et al., 2023; Hultman et al., 2024; Obadia & Vida, 2024; Poulis, 2024; Sousa et al., 2024; Chang et al., 2024; Tsougkou et al., 2025).

GMS Adoption in Emerging Market Multinationals

The adoption of global marketing strategy in emerging market multinationals cannot be understood as a simple matter of managerial choice, because implementation is often conditioned by resource scarcity, institutional volatility, capability asymmetries, and uneven international exposure. Recent studies have increasingly argued that emerging market multinationals expand internationally without the full stock of strategic, financial, and reputational assets normally associated with established multinationals, which makes implementation feasibility a core analytical concern rather than a background assumption. Bıçakcıoğlu-Peynirci

(2023) show that the internationalisation literature on emerging market multinationals has grown rapidly, yet important questions remain regarding how these firms operationalise strategies across borders. Wu *et al.* (2022) similarly demonstrate that the internationalisation performance relationship among emerging market multinationals is positive on average but far from uniform, which implies that successful strategy adoption depends on contextual contingencies rather than automatic gains from cross-border presence. Gammeltoft and Cuervo-Cazurra (2021) further argue that emerging market multinationals enrich internationalisation theory precisely because they internationalise under conditions that differ from those assumed in mainstream models, while Pattnaik *et al.* (2021) contend that home-country learning shapes how these firms accumulate the knowledge needed for expansion. In the same vein, Purkayastha *et al.* (2021) suggested that internationalisation itself becomes a learning mechanism through which emerging market firms build entrepreneurial orientation. Taken together, this literature implies that the feasibility of GMS adoption in emerging market multinationals depends not only on strategic intent, but also on the firm's capacity to translate constrained experience and uneven capabilities into coherent cross-border marketing action.

The relevance of implementation feasibility becomes even more pronounced in African contexts, where internationalising firms frequently operate across fragmented regional markets, institutionally uneven host environments, and underdeveloped support systems. Barnard (2021) argue that host-country level of development shapes both the assets, firms require and the strategies they pursue, thereby implying that firms from emerging economies do not adopt international strategies uniformly across destinations. Fasanya *et al.* (2022) similarly found that Sub-Saharan African firms internationalise under distinctive push and pull factors, while Liu *et al.* (2021) show that foreign interfirm networks in Sub-Saharan Africa can support internationalisation, although not all network linkages are equally useful. Kabongo and Okpara (2019) demonstrate from African banks that timing and speed of internationalisation are conditioned by governance and experience factors, which again points to uneven implementation capacity across firms. More recently, Ochieng *et al.* (2024) show that African sharing economy firms display distinctive internationalisation patterns that raise questions about the adequacy of mainstream explanations, and Amankwah-Amoah *et al.* (2024) emphasise that the international entrepreneurial behaviour of African firms presents emerging issues and opportunities that deserve dedicated theorisation. Eticha *et al.* (2024) further confirmed that strategy research in Africa remains limited in both thematic coverage and contextual depth. These studies collectively suggest that the implementation of global marketing strategy dimensions in African multinationals cannot be inferred from dominant international marketing models, because feasibility is mediated by local constraints, institutional variation, and uneven organisational development.

The present study contributes by shifting the focus from abstract assumptions about global strategy to the practical question of implementation feasibility. Specifically, it examines which global marketing strategy dimensions were adopted by emerging Sub-Saharan multinationals from Zimbabwe and whether those adopted dimensions were associated with marketing performance. In doing so, the study extends current work on emerging market multinationals by connecting GMS adoption to resource-constrained implementation realities, and it responds to repeated calls for more context-sensitive theorisation in African and emerging-market international business research (Bıçakcıoğlu-Peynirci, 2023; Gammeltoft & Cuervo-Cazurra, 2021; Barnard, 2021; Eticha *et al.*, 2024).

GMS and Marketing Performance

Empirical research has consistently treated marketing performance as one of the principal outcomes through which the value of global marketing strategy is judged, yet the evidence has remained more contingent than uniform. Recent reviews show that strategy-performance relationships in international marketing are shaped by the way performance is defined, the dimension of strategy under examination, and the context in which firms operate. Mandler *et al.* (2021) concluded from their systematic review that the performance effects of marketing standardisation and adaptation were theoretically important but empirically mixed, partly because prior studies relied heavily on manufacturing firms from higher-income contexts and often collapsed distinct strategy dimensions into broad aggregates. Lim *et al.* (2025) similarly observed that global marketing research continues to revolve around the tension between standardisation and adaptation, but now places increasing emphasis on fit, contingency, and context rather than universal superiority claims. In a related synthesis, Tsougkou *et al.* (2025) show that international product adaptation has multidimensional effects across performance categories, which reinforces the need to examine specific GMS dimensions rather than assuming that global marketing strategy exerts a singular or linear effect on outcomes. These insights suggest that the link between GMS and marketing performance is best understood as dimension specific, context sensitive, and mediated by firm capabilities and market conditions.

At the level of individual dimensions, empirical studies have shown that product, promotion, price, and distribution decisions can each influence marketing outcomes, although not always in the same direction or with the same intensity. Tsougkou *et al.* (2025) demonstrate that product adaptation may improve some performance outcomes while yielding weaker or more conditional effects for others, thereby challenging simplified assumptions about product strategy. Hultman *et al.* (2024) found that the effect of standardised versus adapted international promotion strategies on international marketing performance depended on entrepreneurial and contextual conditions, while Obadia and Vida (2024) show that the specific composition of export promotion programmes mattered for SME export success. Sousa *et al.* (2024) further found that distribution strategy adaptation can contribute to export success, especially when supported by commitment and responsiveness, and Wang *et al.* (2022) show that adaptation strategy has a double-edged relationship with multinational performance because legitimacy gains may coexist with coordination or synergy costs. Collectively, this body of evidence indicates that GMS dimensions influence marketing outcomes through differentiated pathways, which makes it analytically necessary to examine them in combination rather than in isolation.

Beyond the marketing programme itself, studies on international marketing capability and strategic responsiveness suggest that coordination-oriented dimensions of GMS also matter for performance. Chang *et al.* (2024) found that international SME performance was shaped jointly by marketing capabilities and strategy, implying that firms benefit when strategic choices are supported by the organisational ability to execute them across markets. Zahoor *et al.* (2023) likewise show that international marketing capability enhanced export performance under crisis conditions, which is especially relevant for firms operating in unstable environments. Miocevic (2023) demonstrate that export customer responsiveness strategy can contribute to export growth under specific contingencies, while Papadopoulou *et al.* (2023) show that managerial mindset affects international marketing strategy adaptation decisions and thereby influences downstream outcomes. More broadly, Oliveira *et al.* (2023) argue that international marketing decision-making is increasingly multi-level and interconnected, which suggests that coordination, concentration, participation breadth, and integration of competitive moves are not merely structural features of GMS, but possible drivers of performance through improved strategic coherence. Thus, the empirical literature increasingly supports the idea that marketing performance is shaped not only by what firms standardise or adapt, but also by how they organise and align those decisions across foreign markets.

Notwithstanding these advances, a clear gap remains in the literature. Much of the recent evidence has examined isolated strategy components, such as product adaptation, promotion programmes, responsiveness, or digital standardisation, rather than the full dimensional structure of global marketing strategy. In addition, the empirical centre of gravity remains outside Sub-Saharan Africa, which limits understanding of whether the recognised GMS dimensions retain explanatory power in resource-constrained emerging multinationals.

Brouthers *et al.* (2025) highlight that even in digital contexts, standardisation and adaptation choices are conditioned by outsidership and context, while recent Africa-focused studies have concentrated more on internationalisation processes, networks, or entrepreneurial behaviour than on the performance effects of the complete GMS architecture. As a result, the literature still provides limited evidence on whether product standardisation, promotion standardisation, price standardisation, distribution standardisation, concentration of marketing activities, coordination of marketing activities, global market participation, and integration of competitive moves jointly translate into marketing performance in emerging African firms. This study contributes by addressing that omission in the Zimbabwean context. Specifically, it evaluates the relationship between the adoption of the recognised GMS dimensions and marketing performance among emerging Sub-Saharan multinationals, thereby extending GMS-performance research into a setting where implementation conditions are more constrained and theoretically revealing.

Hypothesis Development

The literature suggests that global marketing strategy should enhance marketing performance when its dimensions are adopted in a coherent and implementable manner. Foundational GMS theory conceptualised the construct as a multidimensional system comprising programme standardisation, activity concentration, coordination, market participation, and competitive integration, thereby implying that performance gains arise not from a single marketing decision, but from the combined architecture of cross-border marketing choices (Zou & Cavusgil, 2002). More recent evidence has retained this basic logic while showing that performance effects are contingent on context and execution. Mandler *et al.* (2021) concluded that the consequences of standardisation and adaptation remain mixed but substantively important, whereas Tsougkou *et al.* (2025) show that product adaptation influences performance through multiple pathways. Hultman *et al.* (2024) similarly found that international promotion choices affect performance in context-dependent ways, and Sousa *et al.* (2024) demonstrate that distribution strategy is also performance relevant when matched with commitment and responsiveness. Taken together, these studies indicate that the recognised dimensions of GMS can shape marketing outcomes, although the strength and direction of particular effects may vary across settings.

This logic becomes especially important in emerging Sub-Saharan multinationals, where the adoption of GMS dimensions cannot be assumed because firms often operate under resource constraints, capability gaps, and institutionally uneven environments. Recent work on emerging market multinationals shows that international strategy implementation is heavily conditioned by learning, capabilities, and contextual feasibility rather than by strategic intent alone. Bıçakcıoğlu-Peynirci (2023) show that the emerging market multinational literature has expanded rapidly but remains uneven in contextual coverage, while Gammeltoft and Cuervo-Cazurra (2021) argue that these firms extend theory precisely because they internationalise under conditions different from those assumed in mainstream models. In the African context, Amankwah-Amoah *et al.* (2018) and Barnard *et al.* (2023) both contend that the region requires context-sensitive theorisation, and Webster *et al.* (2024) demonstrate that firm performance in Sub-Saharan Africa is shaped by distinctive structural conditions. Accordingly, the present study posits that greater adoption of the GMS architecture should be associated with stronger marketing performance, while also recognising that some dimensions may be more feasible and more influential than others in Zimbabwean multinationals.

Given this reasoning, the study advances one main hypothesis. This structure addresses a key gap in the literature, namely that prior work has often examined isolated dimensions such as product adaptation or promotion standardisation, but has less frequently tested the full dimensional structure of GMS in an under-researched Sub-Saharan multinational context (Mandler *et al.*, 2021; Tsougkou *et al.*, 2025).

H1: *Adoption of global marketing strategy dimensions is positively associated with marketing performance among emerging Sub-Saharan multinationals from Zimbabwe.*

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative, explanatory, cross-sectional survey design to examine the adoption of global marketing strategy dimensions and their association with marketing performance among emerging Sub-Saharan multinationals from Zimbabwe. Quantitative designs are appropriate when the purpose is to test theoretically specified relationships using structured numerical data, particularly where the study seeks to estimate the direction and strength of associations among constructs rather than generate qualitative accounts of experience. Slater (2024) explained that cross-sectional quantitative designs remain suitable for analysing observable relationships at a defined point in time, while Alcott *et al.* (2025) argue that careful survey design remains central to the credibility of quantitative inference. In business and marketing research, cross-sectional surveys continue to be widely used where the constructs of interest are perceptual, multidimensional, and best captured through standardised instruments administered to organisational respondents (Chang *et al.*, 2024; Mandler *et al.*, 2021). For this article, the explanatory design was appropriate because the objective was not merely to describe the presence of GMS dimensions, but to assess whether their adoption was associated with variations in marketing performance.

Research Setting and Population

The study was conducted in Zimbabwe and focused on four emerging multinationals headquartered in Harare which are in the following sectors: freight and forwarding, manufacturing, funeral services and assurance and fast-foods. These firms provided an appropriate empirical setting because they had established cross-border operations within Sub-Saharan Africa and therefore offered a relevant basis for assessing the adoption of global marketing strategy dimensions in an emerging multinational context. Zimbabwe was also analytically appropriate because outward-oriented firms from the country operate under resource constraints, institutional uncertainty, and uneven internationalisation conditions that make GMS implementation especially revealing. Barnard *et al.* (2023) contend that African business contexts require theory development grounded in local realities, while Eticha *et al.* (2024) show that strategy research in Africa remains comparatively limited. Fasanya *et al.* (2022) likewise demonstrate that Sub-Saharan African firms internationalise under distinctive conditions, and Zimbabwean studies have increasingly documented firm-level marketing capabilities without fully addressing global marketing strategy as an integrated construct (Chinakidzwa & Phiri, 2020; Manyanga *et al.*, 2024; Nyatsambo *et al.*, 2022). The accessible questionnaire population for the quantitative component comprised 8,519 employees across the four firms, with 1,099 from the manufacturing firm, 52 freight and forwarding, 5,868 from the fast-foods, and 1,500 from funeral assurance and services.

Sampling and Sample Size

The study adopted a probability sampling approach, specifically stratified random sampling, for the questionnaire survey. This approach was appropriate because the target population was known and could be divided into functionally relevant sub-groups associated with strategy formulation and execution. Ahmed *et al.* (2024) observed that probability-based procedures remain preferable where researchers seek defensible generalisation from known populations, while Cabanelas *et al.* (2025) noted that sampling rationale and sample-size justification are essential to methodological rigour in marketing research. Ali *et al.* (2026) similarly show that explicit sample-size justification has become an increasingly important quality criterion in survey-based services research, and Alcott *et al.* (2025) emphasise that quantitative sampling decisions should be aligned with the structure of the population and the inferential claims being made. In this study, the population was stratified into top managerial staff, marketing personnel, distribution personnel, and sales personnel, after which respondents were selected randomly within each stratum. This helped preserve representation across the organisational functions most directly connected to global marketing strategy and performance assessment. The final survey sample of 368 respondents was determined using the Raosoft Sample Size Calculator at a 95% confidence level, 5% margin of error, 50% response distribution, and a population size of 8,519, which was adequate for the intended descriptive and multivariate analyses. The sample was distributed as follows:

Table 1: Strata-wise sample distribution

Occupation	Number of respondents
Top Management	10
Distribution Personnel	38
Marketing Personnel	92
Sales Personnel	133
TOTAL	274

Measurement of Variables

The study measured global marketing strategy dimensions as the independent variables and marketing performance as the dependent variable. Consistent with the established GMS framework, the independent construct comprised eight dimensions: product standardisation, promotion standardisation, price standardisation, distribution standardisation, concentration of marketing activities, coordination of marketing activities, global market participation, and integration of competitive moves. The dependent variable captured marketing performance as respondents' assessments of the firm's superior market-related outcomes. The questionnaire was composed of structured, pre-coded items measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, with the first section capturing demographic information and subsequent sections measuring GMS and performance constructs. Heo *et al.* (2022) noted that Likert-type measures remain dominant in survey-based business research because they allow systematic capture of attitudinal and perceptual judgements, while Yamashita (2022) show that such scales remain suitable for latent trait measurement when score interpretation is approached carefully. Hasselhorn *et al.* (2024) further demonstrate that questionnaire design characteristics affect response quality, and Zhu *et al.* (2025) highlight the importance of aligning item structure with the conceptual logic of the construct being measured. In the present study, the structured instrument was appropriate because GMS adoption and marketing performance were conceptualised as perceptual organisational constructs that required standardised measurement across respondents, in line with recent international marketing research using survey-based construct operationalisation (Chang *et al.*, 2024; Oliveira *et al.*, 2023; Tsougkou *et al.*, 2025).

Measures

Global marketing strategy dimensions were measured as the independent variables, while marketing performance was measured as the dependent variable. Consistent with the established GMS framework, the independent construct comprised eight dimensions: product standardisation, promotion standardisation, price standardisation, distribution standardisation, concentration of marketing activities, coordination of marketing activities, global market participation, and integration of competitive moves. The questionnaire used structured, pre-coded items and was organised so that demographic information appeared first, followed by sections measuring the dimensions of global marketing strategy and performance-related outcomes. Responses were captured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, which was appropriate for measuring perceptual organisational constructs in a standardised form across respondents. This structure allowed the study to assess both the extent to which GMS dimensions were adopted and the extent to which they were associated with marketing performance.

The use of multi-item Likert-type measures is well established in international marketing and strategic management research because constructs such as strategy adoption, coordination, and perceived performance are not directly observable and therefore require latent measurement. Hair *et al.* (2020) argue that multidimensional strategic constructs should be operationalised through multiple indicators so that reliability and construct validity can be assessed systematically. Similarly, Hultman *et al.* (2024) and Chang *et al.* (2024) treated international marketing strategy and performance as multi-item latent constructs, while Oliveira *et al.* (2023) underscored the importance of structured measurement in empirical work on international marketing decision processes. In the present study, this measurement logic was especially appropriate because the purpose was not simply to identify the presence of foreign market activity, but to determine the degree to which firms had incorporated the recognised architecture of global marketing strategy and whether those dimensions were associated with superior marketing outcomes (Hair *et al.*, 2020; Chang *et al.*, 2024; Hultman *et al.*, 2024; Oliveira *et al.*, 2023).

Data Collection Procedures

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire administered to respondents drawn from the four participating firms. The data collection process began with formal access arrangements through the companies' head offices. Appointments were booked by telephone and email, after which the researcher visited the firms, presented introductory and gatekeeper letters, and obtained permission to conduct the study. Thereafter, appointments were arranged with participants from managerial, marketing, distribution, and sales functions. For junior staff, the study used person-administered questionnaires distributed by the researcher and two research assistants, who explained the purpose of the study and the completion procedure before collecting the completed instruments. In addition, questionnaires were also distributed online during the same period.

These procedures were appropriate for a firm-level survey because they supported access, standardisation, and response quality. Person-administered questionnaires can improve completion rates and reduce item misunderstanding where respondents are drawn from multiple organisational levels, while mixed-mode administration can widen participation in dispersed corporate settings. Slater (2024) noted that cross-sectional survey studies depend heavily on disciplined administration procedures if they are to produce credible explanatory evidence. Hasselhorn *et al.* (2024) similarly show that questionnaire administration features can affect response quality, and Cabanelas *et al.* (2025) argue that business-to-business survey research requires especially careful coordination of access and respondent engagement. In the present study, the administration process was therefore designed to improve respondent comprehension, maximise completion, and ensure that the collected data were suitable for subsequent multivariate analysis (Slater, 2024; Cabanelas *et al.*, 2025).

Data Analysis

For the study, the quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, reliability assessment, exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equation modelling. The coded questionnaire data were entered into SPSS 24.0 for analysis. Descriptive statistics were first computed to assess the extent of adoption of the GMS dimensions across the sample. This stage focused on summary measures such as mean responses and related distributional patterns in order to identify the degree to which the recognised dimensions of global marketing strategy were incorporated into the marketing practices of the surveyed firms.

Reliability and construct validity were then assessed before hypothesis testing. The questionnaire was piloted, and internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, with the pilot reliability coefficient reported as $\alpha = .815$ and the main-study constructs all exceeding the conventional .70 threshold. Construct validation was conducted in two stages. First, exploratory factor analysis was undertaken using Categorical Principal Component Analysis (CATPCA) with varimax rotation to identify the latent factor structure underlying the measured items. Prior to extraction, the suitability of the data for factor analysis was evaluated using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure and Bartlett's test of sphericity, and the methodology chapter reports that Bartlett's test was significant, $\chi^2(346) = 3007.810$, $p < .05$. Factors were retained using eigenvalues greater than 1.0, cumulative explained variance, and minimum factor loading criteria, with the study adopting .50 as the minimum acceptable loading and dropping single-item factors.

Second, confirmatory factor analysis was used to validate the extracted measurement structure through convergent and discriminant validity assessment. The methodology specified minimum thresholds for acceptable path coefficients and applied the Fornell-Larcker criterion for discriminant validity. Thereafter, the structural relationships were examined using structural equation modelling, which the original methodology explicitly described as combining factor analysis and regression analysis for the purpose of examining associations between the latent constructs and observable indicators. Model adequacy was assessed using standard goodness-of-fit indices, namely CMIN/df, CFI, NFI, and RMSEA, with the methodology indicating that all fit statistics fell within acceptable ranges. For this article, SEM served as the regression-equivalent multivariate procedure for testing whether the adoption of GMS dimensions was positively associated with marketing performance, while the descriptive results established which dimensions were more strongly incorporated in practice. AMOS was used in SEM analysis. This allowed for the examination of relationships between variables while accounting for measurement error. The presence of latent variables warranted the use of AMOS as these could not be measured directly but through a number of questionnaire items.

This analytical sequence was appropriate because the study required both measurement validation and relationship testing. Hair *et al.* (2020) argue that latent strategic constructs should be validated before structural interpretation, while Kline (2015) similarly maintained that structural modelling is only meaningful when the adequacy of the measurement model has first been established. More recent methodological studies also continue to support staged analysis in survey-based strategy research, where descriptive analysis identifies adoption patterns and EFA, CFA, and SEM clarify dimensional validity and structural relationships (Mandler *et al.*, 2021; Tsougkou *et al.*, 2025). Accordingly, the analysis for the study proceeded from adoption profiling to measurement validation and finally to hypothesis testing of the relationship between GMS dimensions and marketing performance.

Reliability and Validity

The study took several steps to ensure the reliability of the quantitative instrument. Reliability was first assessed through pilot testing, after which internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach’s alpha. The methodology records that the pilot questionnaire produced an alpha coefficient of .815, indicating acceptable reliability, and that the main-study constructs also exceeded the conventional .70 threshold for internal consistency. This approach is consistent with established quantitative research practice, which treats reliability as the extent to which a measurement instrument produces stable and consistent results across items and respondents (Field, 2018; Hair *et al.*, 2020). In survey-based strategy research, internal consistency is especially important because multidimensional constructs such as global marketing strategy and marketing performance are measured indirectly through multiple indicators rather than through single observable variables. Accordingly, the reliability procedures adopted in this study were appropriate for ensuring that the instrument measured the focal constructs consistently across the sampled firms.

Validity was addressed through both pilot testing and formal construct validation procedures. The methodology indicates that construct validity was examined in two stages, namely exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis. Before factor extraction, sampling adequacy and inter-item correlation were assessed using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure and Bartlett's test of sphericity. The study reports that the KMO statistic exceeded the minimum acceptable threshold of .50, while Bartlett's test was significant, $\chi^2(346) = 3007.810$, $p < .05$, confirming the suitability of the data for factor analysis. Exploratory factor analysis then applied principal component extraction with varimax rotation, using eigenvalues above 1.0, cumulative explained variance, and factor loadings of at least .50 as the key retention criteria. The methodology further states that the minimum variance explained was 62.1%, which exceeded the commonly accepted 50% benchmark, and that single-item factors were removed. Confirmatory factor analysis was subsequently used to assess convergent and discriminant validity, with discriminant validity evaluated using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. In addition, model adequacy for both CFA and SEM was examined through CMIN/df, CFI, NFI, and RMSEA, and all fit indices reportedly fell within acceptable thresholds. These procedures align with established practice in multivariate research, where measurement validity must be demonstrated before SEM interpretation is undertaken (Hair *et al.*, 2020; Kline, 2015; Sarstedt & Mooi, 2019).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were also addressed explicitly in the study. The respondents were provided with informed consent information explaining the purpose of the study and confirming that participation was voluntary. Permission was obtained from the head offices of the four participating multinational firms, and respondents were assured that the data would be used strictly for academic purposes. The study also guaranteed privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality by ensuring that respondents' names did not appear on the research instruments and that personal details would not be disclosed. In addition, ethical clearance was obtained in accordance with institutional requirements before fieldwork commenced. These procedures are consistent with accepted principles of research ethics, which require the protection of participants, the preservation of confidentiality, and transparency regarding the purpose and use of the collected data (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014). Taken together, the reliability, validity, and ethical procedures strengthened the credibility of the quantitative evidence used to assess the adoption of global marketing strategy dimensions and their association with marketing performance.

RESULTS

Sample Characteristics

Table 2: Sample characteristics of respondents and participating firms (N = 274)

Characteristic	Category	N	%
Gender	Male	132	48.2
	Female	142	51.8
Marital status	Single	85	31.0
	Married	166	60.6
	Divorced	14	5.1
	Widow/widower	9	3.3
Age group	20–30 years	107	39.1
	31–40 years	113	41.2
	41–50 years	48	17.5
	51–60 years	6	2.2
Educational qualification	Certificate	3	1.1
	Diploma	46	16.8
	Degree	222	81.0
	Other	3	1.1
Industry classification	Service	142	51.8
	Manufacturing	66	24.1
	Retail/hybrid	66	24.1
Occupational position	Managerial	10	3.6
	Distribution personnel	38	13.9
	Marketing personnel	93	33.9

Characteristic	Category	N	%
	Sales personnel	133	48.5
Length of service	Minimum	2	
	Maximum	23	
	M	9.40	
	SD	5.55	

As shown in Table 2, the respondent profile was slightly female dominated, with 142 female respondents (51.8%) and 132 male respondents (48.2%). In terms of marital status, most respondents were married (n = 166, 60.6%), followed by those who were single (n = 85, 31.0%). Smaller proportions were divorced (n = 14, 5.1%) or widowed/widowers (n = 9, 3.3%). These results indicate that the sample was drawn largely from a mature working population. The age distribution show that the largest group of respondents was in the 31–40-year category (n = 113, 41.2%), followed closely by those aged 20–30 years (n = 107, 39.1%). Respondents aged 41–50 years accounted for 17.5% (n = 48), whereas those aged 51–60 years formed the smallest group at 2.2% (n = 6). With regard to educational attainment, most respondents held degrees (n = 222, 81.0%), while 46 respondents held diplomas (16.8%). Certificate holders and respondents with other qualifications each accounted for 1.1% (n = 3). This profile suggests that the study relied predominantly on a well-educated respondent base.

The firm-related profile further show that the service sector contributed the largest share of respondents (n = 142, 51.8%), while manufacturing and retail/hybrid each accounted for 24.1% (n = 66). Occupationally, sales personnel formed the largest category (n = 133, 48.5%), followed by marketing personnel (n = 93, 33.9%), distribution personnel (n = 38, 13.9%), and managerial respondents (n = 10, 3.6%). This distribution indicates that the sample was concentrated in market-facing functions, which was appropriate for a study examining global marketing strategy dimensions and marketing performance. Respondents had a moderate level of organisational tenure. Length of service ranged from 2 to 23 years, with a mean of 9.40 years (*SD* = 5.55). This suggests that, on average, respondents had sufficient experience within their organisations to provide informed evaluations of the adoption of global marketing strategy dimensions and their association with marketing performance.

Extent of Adoption of GMS Dimensions

This section presents the descriptive results on the extent to which global marketing strategy dimensions were adopted by the sampled emerging Sub-Saharan multinationals from

Zimbabwe. Because the study sought to establish whether the recognised dimensions of GMS had been incorporated into firm practice and how respondents perceived their effects, the descriptive analysis is presented in sub-sections. The first sub-section reports respondents' assessments of the overall adoption of global marketing strategy. Subsequent sub-sections then examine the specific GMS dimensions, the perceived benefits of global marketing strategy, and the marketing actions considered in foreign markets. This structure allows the descriptive results to move from broad perceptions of GMS adoption to more specific strategic dimensions and related outcomes.

Overall Adoption of Global Marketing Strategy

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for the items measuring respondents' general perceptions of global marketing strategy adoption and its broad performance implications.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics for overall adoption of global marketing strategy

Item	***M***	***SD***
The company has embraced all the eight dimensions of global marketing strategy	2.34	1.48
Global marketing strategy has had a positive impact on performance	1.92	1.14
Global marketing strategy contributes to superior financial performance	1.84	1.06
Global marketing strategy has contributed to an improvement in the superior strategic performance of the firm	1.96	1.32
A global marketing strategy is opening more opportunities for the firm	2.34	1.53

As shown in Table 3, the respondents did not express strong agreement that their firms had comprehensively adopted global marketing strategy. The item stating that the company had embraced all eight dimensions of global marketing strategy produced a low mean score, *M* = 2.34, *SD* = 1.48, indicating that respondents generally disagreed, or at best remained uncertain, that full adoption had occurred. A similarly low mean was observed for the statement that a global marketing strategy was opening more opportunities for the firm, *M* = 2.34, *SD* = 1.53. Taken together, these findings suggest that the overall architecture of GMS had not been perceived as fully embedded across the surveyed firms. The same pattern was evident in the performance-related perception items. Respondents did not strongly agree that global marketing strategy had had a positive impact on performance, *M* = 1.92, *SD* = 1.14. Likewise, the statement that global marketing strategy contributes to superior financial performance recorded the lowest mean in this group, *M* = 1.84, *SD* = 1.06, while the item on improvement in superior strategic performance also remained low, $M = 1.96$, $SD = 1.32$. These means fall below the midpoint of the scale, indicating that respondents generally did not perceive strong realised performance gains from GMS at the aggregate level.

Analytically, these results indicate that respondents distinguished between the idea of global marketing strategy and its actual organisational implementation. Although the broader study later show that several individual GMS dimensions were positively linked to marketing performance, the descriptive evidence at this stage suggests that respondents did not perceive their firms as having fully embraced GMS in a comprehensive manner. This is important because it implies that adoption was likely selective rather than uniform, with some dimensions more visible or more developed than others. In summary, the results show that respondents did not strongly support the proposition that their firms had fully embraced all eight dimensions of global marketing strategy or that GMS had already generated clear superior financial and strategic outcomes. This provided an important starting point for the more detailed analysis that follows, where the specific dimensions of GMS are examined individually to determine which aspects were more strongly adopted in practice.

Adoption of Core GMS Dimensions

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics for the core dimensions of global marketing strategy examined in this study. These results provide a more specific assessment of the extent to which the sampled firms had adopted the recognised dimensions of GMS in practice.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics for adoption of core global marketing strategy dimensions

GMS dimension	*M*	*SD*
Product standardisation	4.24	1.08
Promotion standardisation	4.09	0.87
Standardised channel structure	4.16	1.18
Price standardisation	3.80	1.13
Concentration of marketing activities	3.15	1.29
Coordination of marketing activities	3.10	1.30
Global market participation	3.11	1.63
Integration of competitive moves	3.48	1.54
Globalisation	3.59	0.73

From Table 4, the adoption of core global marketing strategy dimensions was uneven across the sampled firms. The highest mean scores were recorded for product standardisation, *M* = 4.24, *SD* = 1.08, standardised channel structure, *M* = 4.16, *SD* = 1.18, and promotion standardisation, *M* = 4.09, *SD* = 0.87. These values indicate that respondents generally agreed that the firms had adopted these dimensions to a substantial extent. Price standardisation also recorded a relatively strong mean, *M* = 3.80, *SD* = 1.13, suggesting that pricing consistency across markets was also fairly evident, although not as strongly as product, channel, and promotion standardisation. By contrast, the more organisationally integrative dimensions of GMS recorded notably lower means. Concentration of marketing activities had a mean of *M* = 3.15, *SD* = 1.29, coordination of marketing activities recorded *M* = 3.10, *SD* = 1.30, and global market participation had a mean of *M* = 3.11, *SD* = 1.63. These values were only marginally above the scale midpoint, indicating weaker or less settled adoption. In substantive terms, this suggests that while the firms had incorporated several visible and operational marketing standardisation practices, they appeared less advanced in the broader strategic organisation of marketing activities across markets.

Integration of competitive moves produced a moderate mean of *M* = 3.48, *SD* = 1.54, while the item labelled globalisation recorded *M* = 3.59, *SD* = 0.73. These findings indicate moderate support for the view that the firms had adopted more outward-looking and globally oriented strategic practices, although not at the same level as the strongest standardisation dimensions. The mean for integration of competitive moves is especially important because it suggests that respondents perceived some effort to align competitive actions across markets, but not to the extent that such alignment could be considered deeply embedded.

Analytically, the results reveal a clear hierarchy in GMS adoption. The sampled firms appeared to have prioritised the more tangible and market-facing dimensions of strategy, especially product standardisation, promotion standardisation, channel structure, and price standardisation. These are dimensions that are often more directly observable in daily operations and may be easier to implement under constrained conditions. In contrast, concentration, coordination, and broad market participation require stronger organisational integration, more complex cross-border systems, and greater strategic alignment, which may be more difficult to sustain in emerging multinational contexts. Overall, the descriptive results indicate that adoption of the core dimensions of global marketing strategy was selective rather than comprehensive. The strongest evidence of adoption was concentrated in standardisation-related dimensions, particularly product, promotion, channel, and price. However, the broader integrative dimensions of GMS, namely concentration of marketing activities, coordination of marketing activities, global market participation, and integration of competitive moves, were less strongly endorsed. These findings suggest that the sampled Zimbabwean emerging multinationals had adopted important elements of global marketing strategy, but that such adoption was more operational than fully systemic.

Perceived Benefits of Global Marketing Strategy

Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics for the perceived benefits associated with global marketing strategy. These items capture respondents' views on the practical advantages that global marketing strategy could generate for the participating firms.

Table 5: Descriptive statistics for perceived benefits of global marketing strategy

Perceived benefit	***M***	***SD***
Access to new resources	4.59	0.73
Increase in revenue	4.49	0.80
Access to foreign currency	4.40	0.88
Access to new and advanced technology	3.93	1.15
Development of new skills and exposure	3.64	1.42
Encourages improved planning and distribution	3.79	1.30
Increased productivity	3.70	1.27
Culminates in uniform corporate identity simplifying marketing and promotions of products	3.73	1.33
Improved product quality and customer buying	3.93	1.18
Promoting strategy alignment	3.84	1.18
Promotes rapid company growth	3.69	1.19
Results in cost savings	3.19	1.28
Creation of sustainable competitive advantage	2.77	1.33
Improves resource utilisation	3.15	1.32

The respondents generally associated global marketing strategy with several important organisational benefits. The most strongly endorsed benefits were access to new resources, *M* = 4.59, *SD* = 0.73, increase in revenue, *M* = 4.49, *SD* = 0.80, and access to foreign currency, *M* = 4.40, *SD* = 0.88. These mean scores are notably high and indicate strong agreement that global marketing strategy was linked to resource expansion and improved revenue-generating potential. In the Zimbabwean context, the strong support for access to foreign currency is especially noteworthy, because it suggests that respondents viewed global marketing strategy not only as a market-facing tool, but also as a route to financial resilience and cross-border economic opportunity.

A second group of benefits attracted moderate to strong support. These included access to new and advanced technology, *M* = 3.93, *SD* = 1.15, improved product quality and customer buying, *M* = 3.93, *SD* = 1.18, promoting strategy alignment, *M* = 3.84, *SD* = 1.18, encourages improved planning and distribution, *M* = 3.79, *SD* = 1.30, and culminates in uniform corporate identity simplifying marketing and promotions of products, *M* = 3.73, *SD* = 1.33. These findings indicate that respondents also recognised internal and strategic benefits of GMS, particularly in relation to organisational alignment, planning, operational coherence, and brand consistency. Thus, the descriptive evidence suggests that the perceived value of global marketing strategy extended beyond immediate market access and included broader organisational and strategic improvements. The items on increased productivity, *M* = 3.70, *SD* = 1.27, promotes rapid company growth, *M* = 3.69, *SD* = 1.19, and development of new skills and exposure, *M* = 3.64, *SD* = 1.42, also recorded positive mean scores above the midpoint of the scale. This indicates that respondents generally agreed that global marketing strategy contributed to learning, growth, and improved internal effectiveness. However, the slightly lower means for these items, relative to resource access and revenue growth, suggest that such benefits were perceived as present but somewhat less immediate or less strongly felt than the more direct economic gains.

By contrast, the lowest-rated benefits were creation of sustainable competitive advantage, *M* = 2.77, *SD* = 1.33, improves resource utilisation, *M* = 3.15, *SD* = 1.32, and results in cost savings, *M* = 3.19, *SD* = 1.28. The mean for sustainable competitive advantage is particularly important because it fell below the stronger cluster of benefit items and was closer to the midpoint of the scale. This indicates weaker agreement that global marketing strategy had translated into enduring strategic advantage. Similarly, the relatively modest means for cost savings and resource utilisation suggest that respondents were less convinced that the main value of GMS lay in efficiency gains alone.

Overall, the descriptive results indicate that respondents perceived global marketing strategy as yielding its strongest benefits through enhanced access to resources, revenue, and foreign currency, followed by technology access, strategic alignment, and improved planning. However, the evidence was weaker for benefits linked to cost efficiency, resource utilisation, and sustainable competitive advantage. This suggests that, within the sampled Zimbabwean emerging multinationals, the perceived gains from global marketing strategy were more strongly associated with expansionary and opportunity-seeking outcomes than with long-term defensibility or operational efficiency alone.

Marketing Actions Considered in Foreign Markets

Table 6 presents the descriptive statistics for the marketing actions considered by the sampled firms in foreign markets. These items provide additional insight into the specific strategic actions that respondents associated with the firm's international marketing approach.

Table 6: Descriptive statistics for marketing actions considered in foreign markets

Marketing action	***M***	***SD***
A standardised quality product	3.78	1.25
A standardised production strategy	3.47	1.28
A standardised price structure	3.17	1.47
A standardised channel structure	3.02	1.47
The concentration of marketing activities	3.82	1.22
The coordination of marketing and value chain activities	3.40	1.30
Participation in global markets	2.66	1.32
Integration of competitive moves	3.53	1.35

The most strongly endorsed marketing actions were the concentration of marketing activities, $M = 3.82$, $SD = 1.22$, and a standardised quality product, $M = 3.78$, $SD = 1.25$. These findings indicate that respondents generally agreed that foreign-market strategy placed emphasis on concentrating marketing effort and maintaining a standardised product offering. Integration of competitive moves also received moderate support, $M = 3.53$, $SD = 1.35$, while a standardised production strategy recorded $M = 3.47$, $SD = 1.28$. Taken together, these results suggest that respondents perceived foreign-market strategy as being driven primarily by product consistency, strategic concentration, and some degree of coordinated competitive positioning. A second cluster of actions attracted only moderate support. The coordination of marketing and value chain activities recorded a mean of $M = 3.40$, $SD = 1.30$, indicating that respondents were somewhat positive, but not emphatic, about the extent to which coordination featured in foreign-market strategy. A standardised price structure also produced a modest mean, $M = 3.17$, $SD = 1.47$, while a standardised channel structure recorded $M = 3.02$, $SD = 1.47$. These means, which lie close to the midpoint of the scale, suggest that pricing and channel standardisation were considered, but not as strongly as product consistency or concentration of marketing effort. This pattern indicates that firms may have pursued selective standardisation, emphasising some dimensions more than others depending on feasibility and strategic importance.

The weakest-rated action was participation in global markets, *M* = 2.66, *SD* = 1.32. This mean falls below the stronger cluster of items and indicates comparatively limited agreement that broad global market participation formed a central component of foreign-market strategy. This result is analytically important because it suggests that, although the sampled firms had cross-border operations, respondents did not perceive them as deeply or widely embedded in global market spaces. Instead, the firms appear to have been more selective in their market reach, focusing on manageable or strategically relevant external markets rather than exhibiting broad global spread. Overall, the descriptive results suggest that the foreign-market marketing actions most clearly reflected in the sampled firms were concentration of marketing activities, product standardisation, and integration of competitive moves. Moderately supported actions included production standardisation, coordination of marketing and value chain activities, and price standardisation, whereas participation in global markets was the least strongly endorsed. These findings reinforce the broader descriptive conclusion that GMS adoption among the surveyed Zimbabwean emerging multinationals was selective rather than comprehensive. The more tangible and controllable marketing actions received stronger support, while broader market participation remained comparatively weak.

Reliability and Validity Assessment

Consistent with recommended practice, the assessment of reliability and validity diagnostics for the measurement model used to assess the dimensions of global marketing strategy proceeded in stages: internal consistency was examined first, sampling adequacy and factorability were then tested, exploratory factor analysis was used to identify the latent structure, and confirmatory factor analysis was applied to evaluate convergent validity, discriminant validity, and overall measurement-model fit. Recent methodological work continues to emphasise that latent-variable relationships should not be interpreted before the measurement model demonstrates acceptable reliability and validity (Cheung *et al.*, 2024; Goretzko *et al.*, 2024; Goyal & Aleem, 2023; Taye *et al.*, 2025).

Table 7: Reliability and sampling adequacy statistics for the GMS measurement model

Statistic	Obtained value	Suggested benchmark	Assessment
Cronbach's alpha	.715	> .70	Acceptable internal consistency
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)	.541	> .50	Adequate for factor analysis
Bartlett's test of sphericity	$\chi^2(346) = 3007.810$, $p < .05$	Significant	Correlation matrix factorable

The measurement model demonstrates acceptable internal consistency and factorability. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .715, which exceeded the commonly applied minimum threshold of .70, indicating acceptable internal consistency for the retained construct set. This result suggests that the retained items were sufficiently coherent for subsequent latent-variable analysis. The sampling adequacy statistics were also acceptable. The KMO value of .541 exceeded the minimum criterion of .50, indicating that the inter-item correlations were adequate for factor extraction, while Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant, $\chi^2(346) = 3007.810$, $p < .05$, confirming that the correlation matrix was not an identity matrix and was therefore suitable for factor analysis. These results are consistent with contemporary methodological guidance, which treats acceptable reliability, adequate KMO values, and significant Bartlett statistics as basic prerequisites for exploratory factor analysis (Auerswald & Moshagen, 2019; Goretzko & Bühner, 2021; Cheung *et al.*, 2024; Goyal & Aleem, 2023).

Table 8: Summary of exploratory factor analysis results for GMS dimensions

EFA feature	Obtained result	Interpretation
Data split for EFA/CFA	Two equal subsamples	Separate exploration and confirmation
Extraction outcome	11-factor solution	Initial multidimensional structure identified
Total variance explained	65%	Acceptable cumulative explained variance
Factors dropped	4	Removed because they had insufficient items
Factors retained for CFA	7	Retained for confirmatory validation

The exploratory factor analysis supported the multidimensional nature of the GMS construct. The dataset was randomly divided into two equal parts, with one subset used for EFA and the other for CFA, which strengthened the distinction between structure exploration and subsequent validation. The EFA produced an 11-factor solution that explained 65% of the total variance, indicating that the retained latent structure captured a substantial proportion of the item variance. In applied factor-analytic research, cumulative explained variance above 50% is generally considered acceptable for construct reduction, especially where the measured concept is broad and multidimensional. The 65% variance explained therefore suggests that the extracted factor solution was substantively meaningful rather than trivial. At the same time, four factors were removed because they contained insufficient items, leaving seven factors for confirmatory validation. This decision is defensible because factors defined by only one item or too few indicators create problems for stable reliability estimation and for the assessment of convergent validity (Flake & Fried, 2020; Goretzko & Bühner, 2021; Cheung *et al.*, 2024;

Goretzko *et al.*, 2024). Substantively, the EFA results indicate that the dimensions of global marketing strategy were not reflected in a single undifferentiated factor, but in a more complex latent structure. That pattern is plausible given that GMS spans standardisation, coordination, market participation, competitive integration, and performance-related perceptions. In this respect, the factor-analytic findings are consistent with current measurement literature, which cautions against forcing broad strategic constructs into overly simple representations when the empirical structure is evidently multidimensional (Belawati *et al.*, 2023; Goyal & Aleem, 2023; Taye *et al.*, 2025; Turner *et al.*, 2025).

Table 9: Confirmatory factor analysis, validity, and measurement-model fit results

Assessment component	**Result**	**Suggested benchmark**	**Assessment**
Convergent validity (AVE)	.50 in all cases	≥ .50	Acceptable
Discriminant validity	1.00 (reported)	Distinct constructs supported	Acceptable
Cronbach's alpha	.715	> .70	Acceptable
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	.946	> .90	Good fit
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	> .90	> .90	Good fit
Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI)	> .90	> .90	Good fit
RMSEA	.03	< .08	Good fit

The confirmatory factor analysis in Table 9 provided further evidence that the retained measurement structure was acceptable. Convergent validity was reported as .50 in all cases, which met the conventional AVE ≥ .50 benchmark and indicates that the retained indicators shared sufficient variance with their intended latent dimensions. Discriminant validity was also reported as satisfactory, with the results text indicating a discriminant-validity value of 1, which the original study interpreted as evidence that the retained factors were empirically distinguishable. Although more recent best-practice discussions recommend using multiple criteria rather than relying on a single rule, the reported evidence nevertheless indicates that the retained factors met the study's chosen validity thresholds before structural testing proceeded. This is important because contemporary SEM studies stresses that the measurement model must first establish acceptable convergent and discriminant validity before any substantive interpretation of latent relationships is attempted (Cheung *et al.*, 2024; Goyal & Aleem, 2023; Taye *et al.*, 2025; Alamer, 2025).

The fit statistics for the measurement model were also acceptable. The CFA results reported a CFI of .946, which exceeds the conventional .90 threshold and indicates good comparative fit. The RMSEA was .03, which is well below the commonly accepted .08 upper boundary and suggests low approximation error. In addition, the results narrative stated that both NFI and GFI were greater than .90, reinforcing the conclusion that the retained measurement model fitted the data adequately. In practical terms, these results imply that the observed covariance structure was broadly consistent with the hypothesised measurement structure for the retained GMS dimensions. This interpretation aligns with current discussions of model fit, which continue to treat indices such as CFI and RMSEA as useful, although not infallible, guides for judging whether a CFA model is sufficiently plausible for substantive interpretation (Goretzko *et al.*, 2024; Partsch *et al.*, 2025; Taye *et al.*, 2025; Abreu-Ledón *et al.*, 2026).

Taken together, the reliability and validity results support the adequacy of the measurement model used for the study. The retained GMS dimensions demonstrate acceptable internal consistency, the data met the prerequisites for factor analysis, the exploratory analysis extracted a meaningful latent structure, and the confirmatory analysis provided evidence of acceptable convergent validity, discriminant validity, and model fit. Although the initial extraction yielded a larger number of factors than were ultimately retained, the subsequent removal of poorly defined factors strengthened the final model rather than weakening it. Overall, the results indicate that the retained dimensions constituted a defensible basis for the structural analysis of the relationship between GMS adoption and marketing performance. This conclusion is in line with contemporary recommendations that measurement quality should be established through a sequence of reliability checks, factor-analytic diagnostics, validity evidence, and overall fit assessment before structural paths are interpreted (Cheung *et al.*, 2024; Goretzko *et al.*, 2024; Goyal & Aleem, 2023; Turner *et al.*, 2025).

Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

This subsection presents the structural model results for the study and evaluates the hypothesis that the extent of incorporation of global marketing strategy dimensions positively influences superior marketing performance among emerging Sub-Saharan multinationals from Zimbabwe. Following the establishment of acceptable reliability and validity, structural equation modelling was used to test the hypothesised relationships among the retained latent dimensions. This sequencing is consistent with established SEM practice, which holds that structural paths should be interpreted only after the adequacy of the measurement model has been demonstrate (Hair *et al.*, 2020; Kline, 2015; Cheung *et al.*, 2024; Goretzko *et al.*, 2024). In international marketing research, SEM is particularly useful where constructs are multidimensional and theoretically interdependent, as is the case with global marketing strategy and performance (Mandler *et al.*, 2021; Oliveira *et al.*, 2023; Samiee *et al.*, 2021). The results reported here therefore focus on the final retained dimensions emerging from the factor-analytic stages, namely dimension and performance (DP), benefits of global marketing strategy (BGMS), marketing actions (MA), linkages to marketing actions (LM), and benefits of globalisation (BEN).

As shown in Table 10, all retained dimensions of global marketing strategy had positive and statistically significant effects on marketing performance. The strongest effect was observed for benefits of global marketing strategy, which recorded a very large standardized coefficient, β = 0.830, p < .001. This indicates that respondents' perceptions of the broader strategic benefits associated with GMS were the most powerful predictor of superior marketing performance in the final structural model. This result is theoretically plausible because the benefits of GMS, including access to resources, alignment, market opportunities, and broader competitive reach, are precisely the outcomes through which strategy is expected to create performance advantage. Prior international marketing research similarly suggests that marketing strategy becomes performance relevant when it enhances market reach, customer alignment, resource deployment, and competitive responsiveness (Samiee *et al.*, 2021; Chang *et al.*, 2024; Hultman *et al.*, 2024; Tsougkou *et al.*, 2025). In this study, the large magnitude of the BGMS coefficient indicates that the performance consequences of GMS were most strongly concentrated in the broader strategic value that respondents attached to global marketing rather than in isolated operational actions alone.

Table 10: Structural path coefficients for dimensions of global marketing strategy

Path / retained dimension	**Std. coefficient (β)**	***p***	**Decision**
Benefits of global marketing strategy (BGMS) → Marketing performance	0.830	< .001	Supported
Dimension and performance (DP) → Marketing performance	0.366	< .001	Supported
Marketing actions (MA) → Marketing performance	0.326	< .001	Supported
Linkages to marketing actions (LM) → Marketing performance	0.254	< .001	Supported
Benefits of globalisation (BEN) → Marketing performance	0.254	.022	Supported

The second strongest effect was recorded for dimension and performance, β = 0.366, p < .001, followed by marketing actions, β = 0.326, p < .001. These findings suggest that the more general configuration of GMS dimensions and the practical marketing actions undertaken in foreign markets both contributed positively to marketing performance, although their effects were substantially smaller than that of BGMS. This pattern is consistent with the broader literature showing that international marketing outcomes are shaped not only by broad strategic intent, but also by the degree to which firms embed and enact specific marketing practices across markets (Mandler *et al.*, 2021; Oliveira *et al.*, 2023; Chang *et al.*, 2024; Zahoor *et al.*, 2023). The present results therefore indicate that both strategic architecture and operational marketing behaviour mattered for performance, but that they did not contribute equally. In particular, the coefficient for marketing actions confirms that tangible foreign-market actions remained performance relevant, which is in line with evidence that product, promotion, distribution, and other enactment-related choices can influence firm outcomes when they are aligned with broader strategic logic (Sousa *et al.*, 2024; Obadia & Vida, 2024; Tsougkou *et al.*, 2025).

The remaining two dimensions, linkages to marketing actions and benefits of globalisation, both yielded positive and statistically significant coefficients of $\beta = 0.254$, with p values of < .001 and .022, respectively. Although these effects were the smallest in the model, they still indicate meaningful positive contributions to marketing performance. The result for linkages to marketing actions implies that the connectedness between strategic logic and specific foreign-market actions mattered for superior marketing outcomes. The result for benefits of globalisation indicates that broader gains associated with global orientation also contributed to performance, albeit more modestly than the direct benefits of global marketing strategy itself. Such findings align with literature suggesting that the performance value of global strategy often depends on how firms convert global exposure into workable strategic and organisational advantages rather than simply expanding geographically (Bıçakcıoğlu-Peynirci, 2023; Christofi *et al.*, 2024; Barnard *et al.*, 2023; Eticha *et al.*, 2024). In other words, the Zimbabwean multinationals in this study appeared to benefit not merely from being outward oriented, but from how those outward orientations were translated into linked actions and perceived strategic gains.

Model Fit

The overall structural model in Table 11 demonstrates an acceptable fit. The normed chi-square was $\chi^2/df = 0.983$, which was well below the commonly used upper threshold of 3.00. The comparative fit indices were also strong, with CFI = 0.985 and NFI = 0.973, both exceeding the .90 criterion. The parsimonious indices were acceptable, with PCFI = 0.884 and PNFI = 0.861, while the non-centrality index RMSEA = 0.037 indicated very low approximation error. Collectively, these results suggest that the hypothesised structural model fitted the observed data well. This interpretation is consistent with contemporary methodological guidance, which continues to treat combinations of incremental fit, absolute fit, and error-based indices as useful evidence of structural plausibility when interpreted jointly rather than in isolation (Hair *et al.*, 2020; Kline, 2015; Cheung *et al.*, 2024; Goretzko *et al.*, 2024; Alamer, 2025). The strong fit statistics therefore strengthen confidence that the positive path coefficients were not artefacts of a poorly fitting structural model.

Table 11: Structural model fit indices for the dimensions of GMS model

Fit index	Obtained value	Suggested benchmark	Assessment
χ^2/df	0.983	< 3.00	Good fit
CFI	0.985	> 0.90	Good fit
NFI	0.973	> 0.90	Good fit
PCFI	0.884	> 0.50	Good fit
PNFI	0.861	> 0.50	Good fit
RMSEA	0.037	< 0.08	Good fit

Hypothesis Testing

H1	*The extent of incorporation of the dimensions of global marketing strategy has a positive effect on the superior marketing performance of an emerging multinational corporation.*

The hypothesis test supported H1. The results show that the retained dimensions of GMS all had positive and significant effects, and the broader structural pattern indicated that greater incorporation of the dimensions of global marketing strategy was associated with superior marketing performance among the sampled Zimbabwean emerging multinationals. Because all retained structural coefficients were positive and statistically significant and the model fit was satisfactory, the study concluded that the structural evidence supported the proposition that GMS adoption positively influenced marketing performance. This finding is important because it extends prior international marketing studies into an under-researched Sub-Saharan multinational setting and provides empirical support for the broader claim that GMS remains performance relevant beyond the more frequently studied developed and non-African emerging economies (Debrah *et al.*, 2018; Ipek, 2021; Barnard *et al.*, 2023; Samiee *et al.*, 2021). It also adds nuance to the descriptive results reported earlier. Although respondents did not strongly indicate that all eight original GMS dimensions had been fully embraced at the general descriptive level, the structural analysis show that the validated and retained dimensions nevertheless had meaningful positive associations with marketing performance.

This suggests that selective rather than complete adoption of GMS may still generate performance gains where the retained dimensions are strategically coherent and operationally effective (Mandler *et al.*, 2021; Hultman *et al.*, 2024; Christofi *et al.*, 2024; Tsougkou *et al.*, 2025).

Substantively, the structural results indicate that the performance value of GMS in this context rested most heavily on the broader benefits of global marketing strategy, followed by the general dimension and performance relationship and marketing actions. This pattern suggests that firms benefited not only from visible market-facing practices, but more importantly from the strategic advantages that GMS created in terms of positioning, opportunity, and market leverage. The weaker but still significant effects for linkages to marketing actions and benefits of globalisation imply that these dimensions also mattered, though less strongly. In a resource-constrained emerging-market setting such as Zimbabwe, this hierarchy is plausible because firms may experience the most salient performance gains through strategic leverage and resource access before fully realising broader gains from coordination and global integration. Overall, the findings support the argument that GMS is not merely a theoretical ideal in this context, but a performance-relevant strategic architecture whose validated dimensions positively shaped superior marketing performance among the firms studied (Chang *et al.*, 2024; Barnard *et al.*, 2023; Bıçakcıoğlu-Peynirci, 2023; Eticha *et al.*, 2024).

DISCUSSION

Adoption Pattern of GMS Dimensions in Emerging Zimbabwean Multinationals

The results indicate that the adoption of global marketing strategy among emerging Zimbabwean multinationals was selective rather than comprehensive. At the descriptive level, respondents did not strongly support the proposition that their firms had fully embraced all eight dimensions of GMS. However, the more disaggregated results show relatively strong adoption of product standardisation, promotion standardisation, standardised channel structure, and price standardisation, while concentration of marketing activities, coordination of marketing activities, and global market participation were weakly implemented. This pattern is theoretically meaningful because recent international marketing studies increasingly argues that firms seldom adopt global strategy as a uniform package. Instead, they combine dimensions unevenly according to capability, market conditions, and implementation feasibility. Mandler *et al.* (2021) show that standardisation and adaptation effects are contingent and dimension specific, while Poulis (2024) argue that international marketing strategy is better understood as the pursuit of relational fit than as strict strategic uniformity. Solberg and Durrieu (2023) likewise found patterned combinations of international marketing strategy rather than one dominant template, and Lim *et al.* (2025) observed that current global marketing research increasingly supports hybrid strategic configurations. In that sense, the present findings suggest that Zimbabwean multinationals were not absent from global marketing strategy adoption, but were instead adopting the dimensions in a staged and uneven way that reflected context and constraint.

The stronger adoption of product standardisation, promotion standardisation, channel standardisation, and price standardisation can be interpreted as evidence that the sampled firms prioritised the most visible and operationally manageable dimensions of GMS. These dimensions are often easier to implement because they can generate scale efficiencies, reinforce corporate identity, reduce duplication, and simplify decision-making across markets without requiring the same level of organisational integration demanded by broader coordination-oriented dimensions. Recent evidence supports this interpretation. Hultman *et al.* (2024) show that international promotion strategies remain central to performance even though their effectiveness is context dependent, while Tsougkou *et al.* (2025) demonstrate that product adaptation and standardisation decisions are among the most consequential elements of international marketing performance. Sousa *et al.* (2024) further show that distribution strategy is itself a distinct and performance-relevant dimension, and Obadia and Vida (2024) found that export promotion programmes can materially affect performance outcomes in smaller firms. For firms from a resource-constrained economy such as Zimbabwe, these more tangible dimensions are likely to be attractive because they allow relatively direct control over market-facing activities and may produce faster commercial returns than broader organisational restructuring. The high descriptive ratings for revenue growth, foreign currency access, and resource access reinforce this interpretation, because they suggest that firms may have adopted the dimensions that most directly support market penetration and earnings generation rather than those that require deeper strategic integration.

A second explanation is that these strongly adopted dimensions are comparatively compatible with the strategic realities of emerging market multinationals, which often internationalise without the full stock of ownership advantages typical of large developed-country firms. Emerging-market firms commonly rely on pragmatic, transferable, and lower-complexity strategic tools as they expand abroad, especially during earlier or resource-constrained phases of multinational growth. Buckley *et al.* (2023) argue that the evolution of emerging economy multinationals involves the development of nontraditional competitive advantages rather than the replication of established Western multinational templates. Wu *et al.* (2022) likewise show that the internationalisation-performance relationship in emerging-market multinationals is positive on average but highly contingent, which implies that performance gains depend on which strategic dimensions are feasible to execute. Panibratov and Klishevich (2020) similarly emphasise that dynamic capabilities become especially important when emerging-market multinationals seek to manage foreign operations, and Pattnaik *et al.* (2021) show that home-country learning shapes how such firms build the knowledge necessary for international expansion. Within this logic, standardisation-oriented dimensions may have been adopted more readily because they require less complex cross-border coordination than dimensions such as strategic concentration and global competitive integration. The present findings therefore contribute to the GMS literature by showing that in emerging Zimbabwean multinationals, operational standardisation preceded fuller systemic integration, which is a pattern not adequately foregrounded in the dominant literature.

The weaker implementation of concentration of marketing activities and coordination of marketing activities is particularly revealing because these dimensions demand stronger organisational infrastructure, more reliable information flows, and deeper alignment between headquarters and foreign operations. They are not simply tactical choices. They require a capacity to centralise some decisions while simultaneously maintaining effective local execution across dispersed markets. Recent studies suggests that such capabilities are often difficult to build in emerging and African multinational contexts. Oliveira *et al.* (2023) observed that international marketing decision-making is increasingly multi-level and interconnected, while Chang *et al.* (2024) show that strategy becomes more effective when supported by robust marketing capabilities. Zhou (2024) further argue that emerging-market multinationals face a distinct liability of outsidership, not only because of weak local embeddedness abroad but also because of limited access to influential network positions in global value chains. Liu *et al.* (2021) similarly show that foreign interfirm networks matter for internationalisation in Sub-Saharan Africa, which implies that weaker networks can inhibit the coordination and concentration dimensions of GMS. The relatively low means for concentration and coordination in this study are therefore consistent with the argument that Zimbabwean multinationals may possess enough capability to standardise visible market offerings, but not yet enough cross-border organisational depth to centralise and coordinate marketing activities at a high level. This is one of the study's most important contributions, because it shows that GMS adoption in African multinationals may be structurally uneven, with coordination-type dimensions lagging behind mix-standardisation dimensions.

The weak implementation of global market participation can also be explained by the institutional and strategic conditions under which African firms internationalise. Broad participation across many markets is a demanding dimension because it presumes financial slack, market intelligence, regulatory navigation capacity, and sufficient managerial bandwidth to sustain presence across diverse environments. Yet recent research suggests that African and emerging-market firms often internationalise selectively rather than extensively. Fasanya *et al.* (2022) show that firms from Sub-Saharan Africa internationalise under distinctive push and pull factors, while Ochieng *et al.* (2024) found that African firms often follow selective internationalisation paths shaped by gateway markets, timing, and scope constraints. Kyriakopoulos *et al.* (2025) likewise show that emerging-market micro-multinationals prefer lower-commitment modes under uncertainty, and Adams *et al.* (2023) found that foreign managerial know-how and liquidity are important drivers of early foreign expansion among African emerging multinationals. In the Zimbabwean context, these constraints are likely to be amplified by macroeconomic instability and foreign exchange pressures, which makes selective regional expansion more realistic than wide global participation. Accordingly, the low descriptive support for global market participation in this study does not necessarily imply strategic failure. Rather, it suggests that the firms may have pursued bounded internationalisation, privileging manageable external markets and economically meaningful opportunities over broad but thinly supported geographic spread. That interpretation is consistent with recent calls to understand African multinational strategies through contextual realities rather than through scale-based expectations imported from advanced-economy multinational models (Barnard *et al.*, 2023; Zoogah *et al.*, 2023; Adomako *et al.*, 2024).

The moderate rather than very strong support for integration of competitive moves further reinforces the picture of selective GMS adoption. Competitive integration requires firms to connect rival responses across markets, meaning that actions in one market are planned with awareness of implications in others. This is a sophisticated strategic capability that depends on cross-border intelligence, strategic coherence, and the ability to anticipate rival reactions across jurisdictions. Recent work suggests that such capabilities are especially difficult to sustain in Africa's institutionally fragmented environments. Mbalyohere *et al.* (2026) argue that multinational enterprises in Sub-Saharan Africa often need strategic sense making capabilities to navigate fragmented institutional conditions, while An *et al.* (2025) show that firms in weak and challenging African environments confront distinctive liabilities of foreignness. Safari (2025) similarly emphasise the complexity of navigating politically fragmented markets, and Liu *et al.* (2023) show that even entry strategies in Sub-Saharan Africa are shaped by corruption distance and institutional variation. In this light, the moderate score for integration of competitive moves suggests that Zimbabwean multinationals had begun to think beyond isolated market action, but had not yet institutionalised a fully integrated transnational competitive posture. This matters theoretically because it indicates that competitive integration may be one of the last GMS dimensions to mature in constrained multinational settings, emerging only after firms have secured a stronger base in standardisation, coordination, and network positioning.

Overall, the adoption pattern observed in this study is best interpreted as a sequenced and capability-contingent form of GMS implementation. The sampled Zimbabwean multinationals appeared to adopt the dimensions that were most visible, commercially immediate, and organisationally manageable, especially those linked to product, promotion, channels, and pricing. In contrast, the dimensions that require deeper multinational infrastructure, stronger interunit linkages, wider geographic scope, and more sophisticated strategic orchestration were weaker. This pattern supports the view that GMS in emerging African multinationals is not absent, but partial, layered, and path dependent. The study therefore contributes to international marketing studies by showing that the eight-dimensional GMS architecture does travel to a Sub-Saharan setting, but it travels unevenly. Some dimensions are adopted as operational priorities, while others remain underdeveloped because of capability, network, and institutional constraints. This extends recent arguments that Africa should not simply be treated as another test site for existing multinational theory, but as a context that can refine and qualify how global strategy constructs are understood (Barnard *et al.*, 2023; Bıçakcıoğlu-Peynirci, 2023; Eticha *et al.*, 2024; Adomako *et al.*, 2024). It also suggests that firms in comparable emerging contexts may achieve performance benefits from selective GMS adoption long before they implement the full architecture in a strong and integrated way.

Performance Implications of Adopted GMS Dimensions

The SEM results show that the adopted dimensions of global marketing strategy were not equally consequential for marketing performance. The strongest effect was observed for benefits of global marketing strategy, followed by dimension and performance and marketing actions, whereas linkages to marketing actions and benefits of globalisation recorded smaller but still statistically significant effects. This hierarchy suggests that performance gains in the sampled Zimbabwean multinationals were driven less by nominal participation in global markets and more by the strategic value firms were able to derive from the dimensions they had actually incorporated. Mandler *et al.* (2021) argue that the performance effects of international marketing strategy are contingent and dimension specific rather than uniform across all strategic elements. Similarly, Samiee *et al.* (2021) maintained that international marketing matters because it converts cross-border activity into competitive and customer-facing value. Oliveira *et al.* (2023) further highlight that such value increasingly depends on how firms make and connect decisions across markets rather than on international presence alone, while Chang *et al.* (2024) and

Christofi *et al.* (2024) show that international performance is strengthened when firms convert strategy into workable market-facing and organisational responses. Taken together, this literature supports the view that GMS dimensions matter for performance, but not with equal strength.

The dominant effect of benefits of global marketing strategy is especially important because it indicates that respondents associated superior marketing performance most strongly with the broader strategic payoffs of GMS, including access to new resources, revenue growth, foreign currency access, improved alignment, and stronger market opportunity. In substantive terms, the results suggest that GMS mattered most when it expanded the firm's strategic room to manoeuvre. This interpretation is consistent with Zahoor *et al.* (2023), who found that international marketing capability improves export performance when firms flexibly convert external opportunities into market advantage. Likewise, Dayangan *et al.* (2024) show that dynamic capabilities are especially performance relevant when firms use them to sense, align, and reconfigure market-facing activities. Hultman *et al.* (2024) also demonstrate that international promotion choices influence performance only when they are embedded in a wider strategic logic, while Bıçakcıoğlu-Peynirci (2023) emphasise that internationalisation outcomes depend on how firms transform foreign expansion into specific strategic advantages rather than on foreign involvement alone. In the Zimbabwean context, where access to foreign currency, external resources, and growth opportunities is especially salient, it is unsurprising that the broad strategic benefits of GMS emerged as the strongest predictor of marketing performance. Barnard *et al.* (2023) similarly argue that African business contexts require theory that takes local constraints seriously, and the present findings suggest that one of the most meaningful payoffs from GMS in such settings is its ability to unlock scarce strategic resources and market opportunity rather than merely to deliver formal global integration.

The positive and significant effects of dimension and performance and marketing actions indicate that performance was also shaped by the more concrete configuration of the GMS dimensions and by the specific actions taken in foreign markets. This result is consistent with the descriptive evidence showing stronger adoption of product standardisation, promotion standardisation, channel standardisation, and price standardisation. Tsougkou *et al.* (2025) demonstrate that international product adaptation and standardisation have multidimensional performance effects, while Obadia and Vida (2024) show that promotion programmes can materially affect export success when they are appropriately configured. Sousa *et al.* (2024) similarly found that distribution strategy has direct performance relevance, especially when combined with responsiveness and commitment. In the same vein, Poulis (2024) argue that standardisation and adaptation should be understood as a contingent search for relational fit rather than as rigid doctrinal choices, and Solberg and Durrieu (2023) identified patterned combinations of international marketing tactics rather than one ideal template. The implication is that Zimbabwean multinationals did not need to perfect every dimension of GMS before performance benefits emerged. Rather, performance improved where firms had adopted workable combinations of visible and executable actions, especially those tied to product, promotion, channels, and pricing.

The weaker but still significant effects of linkages to marketing actions and benefits of globalisation add an important layer of interpretation. These coefficients suggest that performance did not depend only on isolated actions, but also on the degree to which those actions were connected to broader strategic logic and to the firm's global orientation. Even so, their smaller magnitude indicates that such connections were less potent than the broader benefits of GMS and the direct enactment of marketing actions. This is plausible in emerging multinationals, where integrative capabilities often lag behind more visible market-facing practices. Gammeltoft and Cuervo-Cazurra (2021) argue that emerging-market multinationals enrich internationalisation theory because they expand under conditions different from those assumed in mainstream models. Wu *et al.* (2022) similarly show that performance effects in these firms are positive on average but highly contingent, while Zhou (2024) demonstrate that a liability of outsidership can inhibit the translation of international presence into full strategic advantage. Liu *et al.* (2021) found that foreign interfirm networks matter for Sub-Saharan African internationalisation, which implies that weak network embeddedness can limit the performance contribution of globally linked marketing actions. Fasanya *et al.* (2022) also show that Sub-Saharan African firms internationalise under distinctive conditions, often making selective rather than fully integrated strategies more realistic. Accordingly, the smaller coefficients for linkages and globalisation in this study suggest that Zimbabwean multinationals had begun to connect marketing actions to wider global logic, but had not yet converted those linkages into effects as strong as those associated with immediate strategic benefits and concrete marketing practices.

These results also help clarify why the descriptive analysis and the structural model appear, at first glance, to tell different stories. Descriptively, respondents did not strongly agree that all eight GMS dimensions had been fully embraced. Structurally, however, the retained and validated dimensions were positively associated with marketing performance. This indicates that complete adoption was not a precondition for positive performance effects. Instead, selective adoption of the more feasible and strategically valuable dimensions was sufficient to generate measurable gains. Buckley *et al.* (2023) argue that emerging-economy multinationals often develop nontraditional forms of advantage rather than replicating established multinational templates. Similarly, Christofi *et al.* (2024) found that international performance in emerging-market firms depends on adaptive strategic responses under changing conditions, while

Ochieng *et al.* (2024) show that African firms often internationalise through selective pathways rather than broad global spread. Eticha *et al.* (2024) further observed that African strategy research increasingly points to the importance of context, and Barnard *et al.* (2023) urged scholars to theorise African firms from their own realities rather than through imported assumptions. The present findings contribute to that agenda by showing that the performance value of GMS in Zimbabwe lay in the selective adoption of dimensions that could be operationalised effectively, not in exhaustive conformity to the full theoretical architecture.

From a theoretical standpoint, the findings suggest that the performance relevance of GMS in emerging Sub-Saharan multinationals is hierarchical. Dimensions tied to immediate strategic benefit and executable market action mattered most, whereas those requiring deeper integration across markets mattered less, although they still contributed positively. This hierarchy aligns with broader work on African and emerging-market firms that emphasises capability constraints, selective internationalisation, and the importance of contextual fit. Amankwah-Amoah *et al.* (2018) argue that Africa is strategically important but still under-researched in international marketing. Debrah *et al.* (2018) similarly contend that emerging-market marketing strategies should be understood through their antecedents and boundary conditions, while Eticha *et al.* (2024) later confirmed that African strategy research remains thin relative to the diversity of the continent's business realities. Samiee *et al.* (2021) called for stronger integration of marketing into international business theory, and Oliveira *et al.* (2023) highlight the growing complexity of international marketing decision-making. The present results respond to those calls by showing that GMS does matter for marketing performance in Zimbabwean multinationals, but its effects are not evenly distributed across dimensions. The dimensions that mattered most were those that delivered strategic opportunity, resource leverage, and workable market action under constraint, which is precisely the kind of context-sensitive pattern that international marketing theory needs to explain more explicitly.

Theoretical Implications for GMS Literature

The findings suggest that the established global marketing strategy constructs hold in this context, but only partially and conditionally rather than fully and uniformly. At a broad level, the study supports the core proposition of the GMS tradition, namely that global marketing strategy is a meaningful multidimensional construct with performance consequences. The positive and significant structural effects indicate that GMS retained explanatory relevance in emerging Zimbabwean multinationals, which is important because the original GMS model was developed largely outside African settings. In that sense, the study affirms the enduring value of the broad conceptualisation proposed by Zou and Cavusgil (2002), while also aligning with later studies showing that international marketing strategy remains central to international business research and performance explanation (Samiee *et al.*, 2021; Mandler *et al.*, 2021; Oliveira *et al.*, 2023). However, the findings also show that the construct did not travel into this context as a perfectly intact or uniformly adopted architecture. Instead, some dimensions were more salient, more feasible, and more performance-relevant than others. This means that the study supports contextual validity of GMS, but not a strong claim of universal equivalence across settings.

A first theoretical implication is that GMS should be understood less as a fixed bundle of equally mature dimensions and more as a hierarchical and selectively enacted strategic system. The descriptive results show that product standardisation, promotion standardisation, price standardisation, and channel-related standardisation were more strongly adopted than concentration, coordination, and global market participation. The structural results then show that the validated dimensions positively influenced marketing performance, even though overall adoption was incomplete. This pattern extends the literature by suggesting that firms do not need to adopt the entire GMS architecture at the same level for the construct to retain explanatory power. Rather, GMS appears to function as a layered system in which some dimensions become operational earlier than others. This interpretation is consistent with Mandler *et al.* (2021), who argue that standardisation and adaptation effects are fragmented and context dependent, and with Poulis (2024), who reframed international marketing strategy as the pursuit of relational fit rather than strict adherence to a universal strategic template. Solberg and Durrieu (2023) similarly show that firms tend to follow patterned combinations of international marketing tactics rather than one ideal configuration. Thus, the present study suggests that GMS theory should place greater emphasis on selective dimensional maturity rather than assuming that all components develop simultaneously.

The second implication is that the study helps reposition GMS from a primarily standardisation-adaptation debate toward a more explicitly capability- and feasibility-conditioned framework. In this Zimbabwean setting, the dimensions that were more strongly adopted were also those that were more visible, more operationally manageable, and more immediately linked to commercial outcomes. By contrast, dimensions such as coordination of marketing activities and broad global market participation were weaker, suggesting that their implementation depends on deeper organisational capability, stronger cross-border systems, and more stable multinational infrastructure. This supports the argument that the relevance of GMS in emerging-market firms is mediated by what those firms can realistically execute under constraint. Recent work on emerging-market multinationals has made similar points. Bıçakcıoğlu-Peynirci (2023) shows that the internationalisation literature on emerging-market MNEs is expanding but remains uneven in how it theorises implementation realities. Gammeltoft and Cuervo-Cazurra (2021) argue that emerging-market multinationals matter precisely because they internationalise under conditions not assumed by mainstream theory, while Zhou (2024) show that liabilities of outsidership complicate the translation of international presence into strategic advantage. The present findings therefore imply that GMS theory should be refined to account more explicitly for implementation feasibility as a constitutive element of the construct rather than a mere contextual afterthought.

A third implication is that the study strengthens the view that GMS retains performance relevance outside high-income and heavily studied emerging-market settings, but the mechanism appears more nuanced than classic theory implied. The strongest structural effect in this study came from the broader benefits associated with global marketing strategy rather than from simple breadth of market participation or full-system adoption. This suggests that in constrained multinational contexts, GMS may enhance performance first through strategic leverage, opportunity access, and resource mobilisation before it manifests as deep global integration. That reading is compatible with Samiee *et al.* (2021), who argue for the centrality of international marketing in explaining international business outcomes, and with Chang *et al.* (2024), who show that strategy becomes performance relevant when supported by capabilities. It is also consistent with Tsougkou *et al.* (2025), whose review demonstrate that performance effects differ across dimensions and mechanisms, and with Hultman *et al.* (2024), who found that international promotion choices are contingent rather than universally effective. Accordingly, the present study implies that GMS theory should distinguish more carefully between immediate strategic payoffs and full architectural integration. In other words, the construct holds, but its performance logic may unfold in stages.

The fourth implication concerns the geographical generalisability of GMS literature. Much of the extant GMS and international marketing strategy evidence has come from developed-country firms or from better-studied emerging economies. This has left Africa relatively marginal in theory-building, even though recent research has argue strongly against treating the continent as merely another empirical setting for imported models. Barnard *et al.* (2023) contend that international business in Africa requires theory development rather than theory transfer, and Eticha *et al.* (2024) show that strategy research in Africa remains limited and unevenly distributed. The present study contributes to that agenda by showing that the GMS framework is neither wholly inapplicable nor wholly transferable in an African multinational context. Instead, it is contextually portable but theoretically adjustable. That is an important theoretical middle ground. It avoids the claim that classical GMS theory fails in Africa, but it equally avoids the assumption that the theory transfers unchanged. Thus, the study contributes to a more plural understanding of GMS, one in which context does not invalidate the core construct, but reshapes how its dimensions emerge, cluster, and influence performance.

The fifth implication is that the study provides indirect support for a configurational interpretation of GMS. Because the results show uneven adoption across dimensions and unequal structural effects, they imply that the value of GMS may lie less in single isolated dimensions and more in the strategic configuration firms are able to assemble under specific conditions. This idea is increasingly visible in current international marketing studies. Poulis (2024) emphasise relational fit, while Solberg and Durrieu (2023) identified patterned strategic avenues rather than a single optimal route. Mandler *et al.* (2021) also noted that the literature has often been weakened by insufficient theoretical specificity in how dimensions are grouped and interpreted. The present findings reinforce the need to theorise GMS as a configured system of interdependent dimensions, not merely as a checklist of discrete strategic practices. In this context, product, promotion, price, and channel standardisation appeared to form a more executable core, whereas coordination, participation, and broader integration remained less mature. This indicates that the construct's explanatory power may rest on the internal coherence of the adopted configuration rather than on equal intensity across all dimensions.

Finally, the study has implications for how scholars conceptualise the relationship between GMS theory and firm heterogeneity in emerging markets. The findings suggest that established GMS constructs do hold in this context, but they do so in a form shaped by constraint, selective internationalisation, and staged capability development. This resonates with wider emerging-market and African studies showing that firm strategies are conditioned by local institutional environments, uneven capability accumulation, and selective cross-border engagement (Fasanya *et al.*, 2022; Barnard *et al.*, 2023; Bıçakcıoğlu-Peynirci, 2023). Theoretically, then, the contribution of this study is not simply that Zimbabwean multinationals also use GMS. Rather, it is that the study clarifies how the GMS construct behaves when transplanted into a resource-constrained Sub-Saharan context. The evidence suggests three conclusions: the construct remains recognisable, its dimensions are not equally adoptable, and its performance effects depend on which dimensions firms can operationalise effectively. On that basis, GMS literature should move toward a more context-sensitive formulation in which partial adoption, capability dependence, and hierarchical dimensional relevance are treated as theoretically meaningful outcomes rather than as deviations from an ideal model.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that global marketing strategy is a valid but unevenly realised strategic construct among emerging Sub-Saharan multinationals from Zimbabwe. The evidence demonstrate that the firms had not fully internalised all eight dimensions of global marketing strategy as a complete and balanced architecture. Instead, adoption was selective, with stronger emphasis placed on product standardisation, promotion standardisation, channel-related standardisation, and price standardisation, while broader integrative dimensions such as coordination of marketing activities, concentration of marketing activities, and global market participation remained comparatively weak. This conclusion supports the wider argument that international marketing strategy is rarely implemented as a perfectly uniform system across markets, but tends instead to develop through patterned and context-sensitive combinations of dimensions (Mandler *et al.*, 2021; Poulis, 2024; Solberg & Durrieu, 2023). The central conclusion, therefore, is that GMS in this context existed not as a fully mature global system, but as a partial and operationally prioritised strategy shaped by feasibility and constraint.

The study further concludes that established GMS constructs do retain explanatory relevance in the Zimbabwean multinational context, but not in a universal or uniform manner. The findings confirmed that the recognised dimensions of global marketing strategy remained meaningful for analysing firm behaviour and outcomes in an emerging African setting. However, they also established that the construct travelled into this context in an adjusted form, where some dimensions were more implementable and more performance-relevant than others. This conclusion is consistent with recent studies arguing that international marketing theory must be interpreted through the realities of emerging-market capability conditions and African business environments rather than through assumptions imported unchanged from advanced economies (Bıçakcıoğlu-Peynirci, 2023; Barnard *et al.*, 2023; Eticha *et al.*, 2024). The study therefore rejects any assumption that GMS either applies everywhere in identical form or fails entirely outside advanced-economy environments. Instead, it concludes that the GMS framework is contextually portable, but theoretically contingent.

Most importantly, the study concludes that the adoption of global marketing strategy dimensions had a positive effect on marketing performance among the sampled Zimbabwean multinationals. The structural results provided clear support for the proposition that greater incorporation of validated GMS dimensions was associated with superior marketing performance. Yet the strongest performance effects came not from complete global integration, but from those dimensions that generated immediate strategic benefits, actionable market-facing practices, and practical commercial value. This conclusion aligns with the broader international marketing literature, which increasingly shows that performance gains arise from strategically useful and executable configurations of marketing action rather than from abstract global orientation alone (Samiee *et al.*, 2021; Chang *et al.*, 2024; Hultman *et al.*, 2024; Tsougkou *et al.*, 2025). The study therefore concludes that selective adoption of GMS can still produce meaningful performance gains, even where full architectural adoption has not been achieved.

A final conclusion is that global marketing strategy in emerging Zimbabwean multinationals is best understood as a staged and capability-dependent process rather than as an all-or-nothing strategic condition. Firms in this context appeared to adopt the dimensions they could operationalise most effectively under institutional and resource constraints, and these dimensions were sufficient to generate measurable marketing outcomes. This conclusion reinforces emerging-market and African perspectives which hold that multinational strategy is shaped by uneven capability accumulation, selective internationalisation, and context-bound implementation realities (Gammeltoft & Cuervo-Cazurra, 2021; Fasanya *et al.*, 2022; Zhou, 2024). Accordingly, the study concludes that the theoretical significance of GMS in emerging Sub-Saharan multinationals lies not in perfect replication of the classical model, but in demonstrating how its dimensions are reordered, prioritised, and translated into performance under constrained internationalisation conditions.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study was limited by its cross-sectional design, which constrained the ability to examine how the adoption of global marketing strategy dimensions evolves over time or how their performance effects accumulate longitudinally. Although the structural results established significant positive associations, they did not permit strong causal inference about temporal sequencing. The study was also confined to emerging multinationals from Zimbabwe, which strengthens contextual relevance but limits wider generalisability to other Sub-Saharan African economies with different institutional and competitive conditions. In addition, the analysis relied on respondent perceptions of strategy adoption and marketing performance, which may not fully capture objective performance variation or deeper inter-firm differences in implementation intensity.

Future research should therefore test the GMS framework longitudinally in order to assess whether selective adoption develops into fuller architectural integration over time and whether performance effects strengthen, weaken, or change across stages of international expansion. Comparative studies across multiple African countries would also help determine whether the adoption pattern identified in Zimbabwe reflects a broader Sub-Saharan tendency or a more context-specific trajectory. Further research could additionally examine the individual dimensions of GMS in finer detail, especially coordination, concentration, and global market participation, to clarify why these dimensions appear weaker in emerging multinational settings and under what conditions they become more strategically consequential.

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