

Research Paper

Marketing Implication of Cross-cultural Influences on Consumer Behaviour

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When entering into a new country, marketers must be aware of various environmental differences that they may have to address such as media restriction and legal and cultural factors. Culture is a strong binding force in human lives. It exists everywhere and varies from place to place. Culture is the changing patterns and products of learned behaviour, which consists of attitude, values, knowledge, motor skills and material objects that are shared and transmitted among members of the society. "Its concept is as fundamental as understanding human social behaviour." Today, almost all major corporations are actively marketing their products beyond their original homeland borders. As more and more consumers come in contact with the material goods and lifestyles of people living in other parts of the world, they have the opportunity to adapt these different products and practices. How consumers in our culture secure exposure to the goods of other people living in other culture is an important part of consumer behavior. The heightened awareness and appreciation of differences

in values and cultures from a personal and organizational perspective has rendered an increased attention to their influences. Since the late 20th century the world has experienced an increasing exposure to "foreign" cultures characterized in particular by the promotions of western values. The acceptance, implementation or indeed relevancy of these values in a culturally dissimilar or diverse environment remains questionable. This paper sets out to reflect cross-cultural values in three West-African countries- Ghana, Gambia and Nigeria as it affects consumer behaviour. Secondary analyzed data are displayed to x-ray the different cultural values as it affects life style values, family life values, social and community, environment values, job and work values to support their relevance to marketing.

Key words: Cross-cultural influences, consumer behaviour, marketing

INTRODUCTION

Consumer behaviour is the study of how individuals, groups, and organization select, buy, use and dispose of goods, services ideas, or experiences to satisfy their needs and wants. Marketers must fully understand both the theory and reality of consumer behaviour (Kotler and Keller, 2009). A consumer's buying behavior is influenced by cultural, social and personal factors Culture factors exert the broadest and deepest influence (Chelminski, 2007). Culture is the fundamental deepest influence of person's wants and behaviour. Through family and other

key institutions, a child growing up in a country is exposed to the following values: achievement and success, activity, efficiency, and practicality, progress, material comfort, individualism, freedoms, external comfort, humanitarianism, and youthfulness (Kotler and Keller, 2009).

According to Craig et al. (2006), a child growing up in another country might have a different view of self, relationship to others, and rituals. Marketers must closely attend to cultural value in every country to understand

how to best market their existing products and find opportunities for new products. Each culture consists of smaller sub-cultures that provide more specific identification and socialization for their members. Subculture includes nationalities, religions, racial groups, and geographic regions. When subculture grows large and affluent enough, companies often design specialized marketing programs to serve them (Bradley et al., 2006).

Cultural dimension is one of the important dimensions of international marketing environment, other dimensions being political, economic, legal, technological, geographic etc. Culture influences all aspects of consumer behaviour and is pervasive in all marketing activities like product design, packaging, pricing, promotion, distribution, communication (Warren, 2002). Since the scope of marketing concept is to satisfy consumer needs, it is quite clear that the marketer must be fully familiar with the cultural dimension of consumer behaviour in target markets and must understand their implications for specific marketing functions (Masaaki, 2001).

In an increasing globalised environment it is important for a culture, society and country to see its values and views of the world respected, shared and accepted by others. Tardiff, (2002) argues that relationships between culture and societies are subject to market rules translating in 'values' being promoted and exported via various media channels. Both television and the internet play a crucial role in broadcasting and thus exposing and promoting values. Despite the development of globalized markets, with its standardized products and marketing activities, marketers must be aware of various environment differences that have to be addressed when entering a new market. These environmental factors differentiate the domestic market from international market and must be included when planning a product's marketing strategy (Cateora, 1990).

Most traditional definitions of culture center around the notion that culture is the sum of values, rituals, symbols, beliefs and thought processes that are learned and shared by a group of people, then transmitted from generation to generation (Cateora et al., 2009). Culture is defined as patterns of values, beliefs, and learned behaviour that are held in common and transmitted by the members of any given society. Its key characteristic is that culture is shared. No matter how different we feel we are, or even try to be from each other, our cultural heritage unites us (Harold et al., 1997).

Culture is the complex whole that includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs and any other capabilities and habit acquired by humans as members of society (Hawkins et al., 2001). Several aspects of culture require elaborations. First, culture is a comprehensive concept. It includes almost everything that influences an individual's thought processes and behaviour. While culture does not determine drivers such as, hunger or sex, it does influence, when and how these drivers will be gratified. It not only influences our preferences but how

we make decisions and even how we perceive the world around us.

Second, culture is acquired. It does not include inherited responses and predisposition. However, since much of human behaviour is learned rather than innate, culture does affect a wide array of behaviour (Hawkins et al., 2001).

Third, the complexity of modern societies is such that culture seldom provides detailed prescription for appropriate behaviour. Instead, in most industrial societies, culture supplies boundaries within which most individuals think and act.

Finally, the nature of cultural influences is such that we are seldom aware of them. One behaves, thinks and feels in a manner consistent with other members of the same culture because it seems "natural" or "right" to do so. The influences of culture are similar to the air we breathe. It is everywhere and is generally taken for granted unless there is a fairly rapid change in its nature.

Culture operates primarily by setting rather loose boundaries for individual behaviour and by influencing the functioning of such institutions as the family and mass media. Thus, culture provides the framework within which individual and household lifestyles evolve.

The boundaries that culture sets on behaviour are called norms. Norms are simply rules that specify or prohibits certain behaviour in specific situations, norms are derived from cultural values. Cultural values are widely held beliefs that affirm what is desirable (Hawkins et al., 2001; Anderson, 2000). Violation of cultural norms results in sanctions or penalties ranging from mild social disapproval of banishment from the group.

Culture is pertinent to the study of marketing especially international marketing. If we consider the scope of the marketing concept, the satisfaction of consumer needs and wants at a profit, the successful marketer clearly must be a student of culture (Cateora, 2009). For example, when a promotional message is written, symbol recognizable and meaningful to the market (the culture) must be used. Again, when designing a product, the style, uses, and other related marketing activities must be made culturally acceptable the present society, if they are to be operative and meaningful. In fact, culture is pervasive in all marketing activities in pricing, promotion, channels of distribution, marketers efforts actually become a part of the fabric of culture. The manner in and amount which people consume, the priority of needs and wants they attempt to satisfy, and the manner in which they satisfy them are functions of their culture that tempter, mold and dictates their style of living. Culture is the human – made part of human environment – the sum total of knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by human as members of society.

Markets constantly change, they are not static but evolve, expand, and contract in response to marketing effort, economic conditions and other cultural influences.

Markets and market behaviour are part of a country's culture (Hawkins et al., 2001). Marketers are constantly adjusting their efforts to cultural demands of the market, but they also are acting as agents of change whenever the product or idea being marketed is innovative. Whatever the degree of acceptance, the use of something new is the beginning of cultural change, and the marketer becomes a change agent.

today, almost all major corporations are actively marketing their products beyond their original homeland borders. As more and more consumers come in contact with the material goods and lifestyles of people living in other parts of the world, they have the opportunity to adopt these different products and practices. How consumers in one culture secure exposure to the goods of other people living in other cultures is an important part of consumer behaviour (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2003). It impacts the well-being of consumers worldwide and of marketers trying to gain acceptance for their products in countries that are often quite different from their home country.

Culture is a problematic issue for many marketers since it is in herently nebulous (not clear) and often difficult to understand. One may violate the cultural norms of another country without being informed of this and people from different culture may feel uncomfortable in each other's presence without knowing exactly why (Marshall 2008). Within the Muslim tradition, the dog is considered a "dirty" animal, thus portraying it as "man's best friend" in an advertisement is counterproductive. Packaging, seen as a reflection of the quality of the "real" product is considerably more important in Asia than in the US, where there is a tendency to focus on the contents which really count."

The culture in U.K, with its persisting class consciousness, differs in many ways from that of the United States. The way of life under the Mediterranean sun is quite different from Nordic life in the cold. Even within the overall culture of a nation there are smaller sub-cultural groupings with their own distinctive values. The marketer must take such differences into account when targeting consumer groups. Moreover, great care must be taken when communication appeals are being adapted to a subculture.

West Africa culture is constantly undergoing traditional change, and though still strong, traditional patterns are constantly modified by insistent new, emergent values, each of which influences consumption patterns. Some cultures are universalistic rather than particularistic this is rules should apply to all, rather than to selective groups only. The universalistic nature of culture dictates equal standards for all. People feel they have a right to certain product – a car and a home their own and will stretch their budgets to buy them, whether they can afford them or not.

Again, some culture values horizontal interpersonal relationships above vertical relationship – peer relations,

not superior – subordinate relations; equality rather than hierarchy. Most people in some countries use consumption as a means of conforming in varying degrees by the behaviour of others. Most people in the United States elect to live in housing that is relatively standardized, wear clothing styles that fall within generally accepted norms and structure other aspects of their lifestyles according to standards adopted by their peers. In addition, some culture emphasizes individual personality rather than group identity and responsibility. Again, some culture is increasingly emphasizing leisure over the traditional value of hard work. People weigh the joy of time devoted to family, hobbies, exercise and various other self-fulfilling activities against the rewards and stresses of work. The marketing principles in both national and international marketing are not new but the cultural differences or variations among nations may be so great that the international markets must master special environmental factors and institution and be prepared to drop some of the most basic assumption about how people respond to marketing stimuli in his home market. Continuous advertising to persuade and convince the consumer is necessary (Deng and Hassan, 1994).

The consumer buying preference and pattern have varying connotation in different countries – green suggest illness in Malaysia, while in Nigeria it connotes agriculture. White indicates mourning in China while in Nigeria stands for unity, faith, peace and progress. In Nigeria black connotes mourning while red connotes danger. A product is more than a physical item. It is a bundle of satisfaction (or utilities) that the buyer receives. These utilities include its form, taste, colour, odour and texture; how it functions in use, the package, the label, the warranty, the manufacturer's and retailer's servicing; the confidence or prestige enjoyed by the brand, the manufacturer's reputation, the country of origin; and any other symbolic utility received from the possession or use of the goods. In short, the market relates to more than a product's physical form and primary function. The values and ms within a culture confer much of the importance of these other benefits (Cateora et al., 2009).

The objectives of this study are; to determine the cross-cultural values on consumer behavior, to determine cultural diplomacy on consumer behavior, to determine impact of product standardization and adaptation on the consumer behavior and to determine the influence of acculturation and assimilation on consumer behavior.

CULTURAL VALUES AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

Culture constitutes five elements, which include values, rituals, symbols, and thought processes. International marketers must design products, distribution systems and promotional programs with due consideration of each of

the five cultural values – underlying the cultural diversity that exists among countries are fundamental differences in cultural values. The most useful information on how cultural values influence various types of businesses and market behaviour comes from seminar work by Hofstede, (1991, 2001). He found that the cultures of the nations studied differed along five primary dimensions. He postulated that a wide variety of business and consumer behaviour patterns are associated with three of those five dimensions i.e. cultural values can predict consumer behaviour (Hofstede 1991).

Elements of culture

The elements of culture include values, rituals, symbols beliefs and thought processes. To acquire a common culture, the member of a society must be able to communicate with each other through a common language. Without a common language shared meaning could not exist, and true communication would not take place. To communicate effectively with their audience, marketers must use appropriate symbols to convey desired product images or characteristics. These symbols can be verbal or nonverbal. Verbal symbols may include a television announcement or an advertisement in a magazine. Nonverbal communication includes the use of such symbols as figure, colours, shapes and every texture to lend additional meaning to print or broadcast advertisement, to trademarks and to packaging or product designs (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2003).

In relation to thought processes, people are now learning in much more detail the degree to which ways of thinking vary across cultures. For example, new studies are demonstrating cultural differences in consumer impatience and in how consumers make decisions about products. Culture seems to matter more in snap judgments than in longer deliberation.

Acculturation and Assimilation

In order to effectively and efficiently adapt to new culture for a better consumption pattern, there must be acculturation or assimilation of the new culture. These two concepts are important in order to understand the mechanisms through which acculturation influences consumer behavior.

Acculturation may be defined as culture change that is initiated by the conjunction of two or more autonomous cultural systems. Oguinn, Imperia and Mac Adams, (1987), defined acculturation as the process by which those new to a society adopt the attitude, value and behaviour of the dominant host culture. Berry et al, (1992) interpreted acculturation as the cultural transmission experienced by an individual due to his or her direct contact with another culture.

Yuping (2000) define acculturation as the changes in an individual's value, attitude and behaviour due to his or her direct contact with a culture other than his or her original culture. According to him, this acculturation is a long process and can go on for several years or even throughout a person's entire life. Different individual may take different paces in this acculturation process. Some individuals may be completely assimilated into the host cultures and lost their original cultural identity, while other individuals may integrate the host culture into their original culture. Thus, this acculturation process is highly individualized and is influenced by an individual's psychology.

Assimilation refers to the adoption of the host culture and the loss of the original culture. It is a unidirectional process that goes from the individual's original culture to the new host culture. As one moves on in the assimilation process, he loses part of his original culture and acquires the host culture so that he or she will be indistinguishable from people in the host culture (Usunier, 2002).

Acculturation, on the other hand, does not necessarily presume the loss of one's original culture and does not always lead to the adoption of the host culture. All of the above definitions are concerned with the changes an individual undergoes when in direct contact with a new culture. Laroche et al. (1997) argued that acculturation consists of three dimensions: media exposure, social interaction and participation, and English language with family members. Gordon (1984) defined seven interdependent distinct dimensions of assimilations: Cultural assimilation, which he defines as acculturation, structural assimilation, marital assimilation, identification assimilation, attitude, receptional assimilation, behavioural receptional assimilation and civic assimilation.

Learning to consume in a new culture: consumer socialization perspective

Upon immigrating into a new country, an individual starts a long journey of learning. Part of this journey is learning to consume in the new culture. In the new country, the individual may encounter products or services that are not available in his or her original country, or may find products or services been bestowed totally different meaning. Some of the consumption-related knowledge or the skills the individual have acquired in the original country are no longer applicable here. For example, due to his or her unfamiliarity with the host country's currency and pricing system, the immigrant may find it difficult to judge the price of a product to be high or low. The immigrant may also find it hard to choose from an array of different brands, as he or she may have not heard about the brands at all, not to mention any experience with these brands. His or her past experiences with other

brands are no longer useful because those brands he or she is familiar with are simply not available here. Therefore, an immigrant has to engage him or herself in learning to consume correctly and wisely in the new country. It is this learning process that renders the concept of consumer socialization important in accounting for acculturating individuals' consumption experience. To determine whether and how to enter a foreign market, marketers need to conduct some form of cross-cultural consumer analysis! (Schuffman and Kaunuk, 2000). Cross-cultural consumer analysis is defined as the effort to determine to what extent the consumers of two or more nations are similar or different. Such analyses can provide marketers with an understanding of the psychological, social and cultural characteristics of the foreign consumers they wish to target, so that they can design effective marketing strategies for the specific material markets involved.

Cultural Diplomacy: A strategy for adapting cross cultural values

Cultural diplomacy is the exchange of ideas, information, values, systems, tradition and other aspects of culture, with the intention of fostering mutual understanding (Multon, 2003). Cultural diplomacy include exchanges between people in different countries, through which individual are able to visit foreign countries and learn about the culture and society of the foreign country. It includes the study of another country's language, tradition and lifestyle. The principal objective of cultural diplomacy is to positively influence public and high level opinion in a foreign state. The deserved outcome index is to detect and evaluate the emergence or continuation of preferential and advantageous policies by states in the field of cultural diplomacy. This is accomplished through the process of communication and interaction with foreign audiences.

Cultural diplomacy programs expose businessmen and investors to the economy, society and people of another country, which may result in these individual making significant economic investments in the country to whose culture they are exposed. Cultural diplomacy programs which expose foreign investors to the flourishing Nigerian society and culture are particularly beneficial to Nigeria as many investors are hesitant to invest in Nigeria because of their perception of Nigeria as a terrorist and corrupt nation, with very high business stakes. Bringing foreign businessmen to Nigeria and exposing them to Nigeria culture can help undermine this phenomenon (Wrobel, 2008). In addition to attracting foreign investors, cultural diplomacy programs have other economic benefits as well. In today's age of globalization, many businesses export to overseas markets and maintain business connections with overseas counterparts.

Without appropriate foreign-language skills and cultural knowledge, business will have smaller chance of success (Marquardt, 1998). American companies for instance, have lost an astounding two billion dollars a year due to inadequate cross-cultural guidance for their employees in multicultural situation (Marquardt, 1998). Cultural diplomacy programs which expose people in one country to the culture and lifestyle of people in other countries around the world can therefore have positive impacts on businesses with international orientations.

One of the most important fields in which cultural diplomacy can reap important benefits is the field of education. Education and academic institution are considered the backbone of cultural exchange (Lee 2006). Around the world, cultural diplomacy has penetrated the field of education in the past and continues to do so today. Textbooks in secondary school and universities are often in undated with information about the culture of different countries, religion and ethnic groups. Many universities around the world offer students the opportunity to spend a semester abroad, immersing themselves in the culture of a foreign country. Some countries, such as the united states for instance, have even opened American universities in countries such as Egypt (Cull, 2007).

STANDARDIZATION AND ADAPTATION: STRATEGIES FOR ADAPTING CROSS-CULTURAL VALUE

A fundamental decision that managers have to make regarding their international marketing strategy is the degree to which they standardize or adapt their marketing mix around the world (Jobber, 1998). The brand that is most often quoted as being standardized is coca cola. In coca cola, the sweetness and carbonation vary between countries. For example, sweetness is lowered in Greece and carbonation lowered in Easter Europe. Diet coke's artificial sweetener and packaging differ between countries (Reynolds and Simitras, 2000). Standardization is an attractive option because it can create massive economies of scale. E.g. lower manufacturing, advertising and packaging costs can be realized. Also the logistical benefit of being able to move stock from one country to another to meet low stock situations should not be underestimated (Jobber, 1998). This has led to the call to focus on similarities rather than differences between consumers across Europe and the rest of the world. However, there are a number of barriers such as culture and consumption patterns, language, Regulations, Media availability and promotional preference organization structure and culture.

Confronted with increasing global competitions for expanding markets, multinational companies are changing their marketing strategies and altering their organizational structure. Their goals are to enhance their

competitiveness and to ensure proper positioning to capitalize on opportunities in the global market place. Comprehensive decisions must be made regarding key strategic choices, such as standardization versus adaptation, concentration versus dispersion and integration versus independence (Lewis et al., 2006). As national borders become less meaningful, we see the rise of greater international corporate collaboration networks yielding new thinking about traditional concepts of competition and organization (Elango and Chinmay, 2007).

International companies must decide how much to adapt their marketing strategy to local conditions. At one extreme are companies that use as globally standardized marketing mix worldwide. Standardization of the product, communication and distribution channels promises lowest cost (Kotler and Keller, 2009). At the other extreme is an adapted marketing mix, where the producer, consistent with the marketing concepts, holds that consumer needs vary and tailors marketing programs to each target group. The development of the web, the rapid spread of cable and satellite TV around the world and the global linking of telecommunication networks have led to a convergence of lifestyles (Kotler and Kelly, 2009). Increasingly common needs and wants have created global markets for standardized products particularly among the young middle class.

Although many companies have tried to launch their version of a world product, most products require at least some adaptation. For example, Toyota's Corolla will exhibit some differences in styling; coca cola is sweeter or less carbonated in certain countries (Kotler and Kelly, 2009). Rather than assuming it can introduce its domestic product "as is" in another country, the company should review the following elements and determine which add more revenue than cost. The elements includes the following:- Product features, Labeling, Colours, Materials Sales Promotion, Advertising Media, Brand Prices, Advertising Themes (Kotler and Kelly, 2009).

Product

According to Kotler and Kelly, (2009) some types of products travel better across borders than others, food and beverage markets must contend with widely varying tastes. Five adaptation strategies of product communications to a foreign market can be distinguished.

Straight Extension: This introduces the product in the foreign market without any change. It is been successful with cameras, consumer's electronics and many machine tools. In other cases it has been a disaster e.g. food. Straight extension is tempting because it requires no additional research and development (R & D) expenses, manufacturing retooling, or promotional modification, but

it can be costly in the long run.

Product Adaptation: Product adaptation alters the product to meet local conditions or preferences. There are several level of adaptation.

- (i) A company can produce a regional version of its product.
- (ii) A company can produce a country version of its product.
- (iii) A company can produce a city version of its product.
- (iv) A company can produce different retailer versions of its product. (Kotler and Kelly, 2009).

Product Invention: Product invention consists of creating something new. It can take two forms:

- (i) Backward invention - Backward invention is reintroducing earlier product forms that are well adapted to a foreign country's needs.
- (ii) Forward invention - Forward invention is creating a new product to meet a need in another country.

Product invention is a costly strategy but the pay offs can parlay a product innovation into other countries. Sometimes the innovation even works at home.

Communications: Companies can run the same marketing communications programs they use in the home market or change them for each local market, a process called communication adaptation. If it adapts both the product and the communication, the company engages in dual adaptation. The company uses one message everywhere, varying only the language, name and perhaps colours to avoid taboos in some countries. Purple is associated with death in Burma and some Latin American nations, while is a mourning colour in India and green is associated with disease in Malaysia.

The second possibility is to use the same creative theme globally but adapt the specific excursion to appropriate local markets. The third approach consists of firm which each country selects the most appropriate. Coca cola and good year have used this approach (Kotler and Kelly, 2009).

Finally, some companies allow their country managers to create country specific advertisement within guidelines. The challenge is to make sure the message is as compelling and effective as in the home market. The use of media also requires international adaptation because media availability varies from country to country.

DATA ANALYSIS

Secondary data were analyzed portraying the effects of lifestyle values, family life values, social and community values, environmental values, job and work values on consumption pattern, in West African countries. The data were extracted from the work of Werner Soontien's in African Journal of Business Management Vol. 2 pp. 222 – 229 December, 2008 (Table 1). The lifestyle values reflect the respondent's assessment of the importance of

Table 1. Lifestyle Values

Lifestyle values	Means	Var	Corr	Cron A
An easy quiet life	4.18	1.03	0.013	0.491
An exciting life full of adventure	4.01	1.01	0.145	0.352
Enough time for hobbies and interests	4.08	0.92	0.338	0.198
An exciting life full	3.96	0.99	0.318	0.231
Being helpful to others	4.05	1.01	0.199	0.308
Cluster	4.05			0.370

Source. Wener Southern (2008) Journal of Business Management Vol. 2. PP 222 – 229.

Table 2. Family Live Values.

Family Live Values	Means	Var	Corr	Cron A
Deep love with a partner	3.96	1.50	0.322	0.396
Basic material security	4.07	1.46	0.292	0.412
A happy family life	3.84	1.73	0.284	0.439
A high standard of living	4.01	1.56	0.233	0.451
The bringing up children	4.13	1.22	0.251	0.465
Cluster	4.00			0.487

Source. Wener Southern (2008) Journal of Business Management Vol. 2. PP 222 – 229.

Table 3. Social and Community Values.

Family Live Values	Means	Var	Corr	Cron A
Global peace	3.40	2.57	0.408	0.708
Possibilities to influence public affairs	3.71	2.37	0.449	0.695
A concern for general human welfare	3.50	2.48	0.507	0.676
An effort of society to eliminate hunger and diseases	3.47	1.96	0.672	0.596
Participation in organizing activities of children and youth	3.57	2.36	0.418	0.709
Cluster	3.53			0.727

Source. Wener Southern (2008) Journal of Business Management Vol. 2. PP 222 – 229.

Table 4. Environmental Values.

Environmental Values	Means	Var	Corr	Cron A
Society efforts to conserve the vital functions of nature	3.52	1.98	0.553	0.760
Knowledge about the factual state of the environment	3.60	2.02	0.494	0.779
The aesthetic impact of nature	3.63	1.94	0.641	0.734
Active participation in improving the environment	3.60	1.74	0.674	0.719
A positive impact on the environment on health	3.57	2.01	0.511	0.774
Cluster	3.57			0.793

Source. Wener Southern (2008) Journal of Business Management Vol. 2. PP 222 – 229.

activities. Since this cluster attracted / the highest mean score it seems to be an issue of high / importance amongst respondents. Achieving an easy, quiet life was deemed most important with a means score of 4.05. All items in the cluster, except one, scored higher than 4.00 on the mean score while the variance and correlation were the lowest amongst all values measured. The reliability of the data in this cluster is highly questionable

as none of the items show an acceptable Cronbach alpha value (Table 2).

The individual values of family life statements reported in (Table 2) are reasonably / high with three aspects in the cluster resulting in a means / value higher than 4.00 and a cluster means value of 4.00 Respondents indicate that the bringing up of children is most important in this cluster while a happy family life is least important. The

reliability of the clustering is questionable as reflected in the Cronbach alpha of the cluster and all individual elements being lower than 0.6.

Compared to the lifestyle and family life values, value of social and community aspects as reflected in (Table 3) is relatively low. The relative importance of a democratic and accessible governing environment is reflected in the highest value amongst this cluster is the possibility to influence public affairs. More generic and macro aspects like global peace and efforts to eliminate hunger and diseases are deemed considerably less important, attracting the lowest value amongst all 25 values in all clusters. Respondents differed significantly in how important these different values were to them as reflected in the relatively large variation and correlation. Contrary to the lifestyle and family life values the different items under the social and community values cluster well, reflecting a high reliability in an overall Cronbach alpha of higher than 0.7.

Data on the environmental values presented in (Table 4) shows these variables form a tight cluster, as reflected by relatively high Cronbach alpha value. The cluster means value of 3.57 places environmental values as slightly less important as social and community values discussed above. Both the correlation and variation of individual values are relatively small contributing to a relatively high tight clustering of the variables.

Conclusion

Culture is the sum of values, rituals, symbols, benefits and thought processes that are learned and shared by a group of people, then transmitted from generation to generation. It includes almost everything that influences an individual thought processes and behaviour. Culture is acquired and does not include inherited responses and predisposition. Culture is pertinent to the study of marketing, especially international marketing. If we consider the scope of the marketing concept, the satisfaction of consumer needs and wants at a profit, the successful marketer clearly must be a student of culture. Today, almost all major corporations are actively marketing their products beyond their original homeland borders. As more and more consumers come in contact with material goods and life styles of people living in other parts of the world, they have the opportunity to adopt these different products and practices. The firm that decides to expand their business in an international environment must modify management style through international management. The global firm is due to negotiate with different international organism and the manager must understand the cultural environment of the negotiator and must have cross-cultural competence. Cross-cultural competence can be acquired through acculturation, assimilation, cultural diplomacy. Products and services from other countries can be accepted for

for consumption if they are standardized or adapted by the other country. The cultural value that defer from country to country that might bring a change of behaviour include among others – time for rest and hobbies, in relations to lifestyle, deep love to a partner, basic material family in relation to family life values. Concern to general human welfare in relation to family live values, aesthetic impact on nature in relation to environmental values, good relations with fellow workers as in Job work value. The marketing implication therefore, of cross — cultural influence on consumer behaviour is that if these cultural values are not assimilated or adapted through training or cultural diplomacy, there is the tendency that multi-national companies would lose their market shares to competitors. The antecedent of this result is due to consumer's dislike or lack of interest for the product or services due to complexity of other cultural practices.

Recommendations

How consumers in our culture are exposed to the goods of other people in other culture is an important part of consumer behaviour. The socio-economic justification of the survival of an organization is the satisfaction of the consumer. The consumer is the Life-blood of the organization.

Consequently, they should be exposed to the goods through acculturation and assimilation. Acculturation is the change in an individual's value, attitude behaviour due to his or her content with a culture other than his or her original culture. Assimilation refers to the adoption of the host culture and the loss of the original culture. However, this is a difficult task.

- (a) Products and services should be standardized to the climatic condition and taste, desires of foreign countries e.g. coca cola.
- (b) Adaptation should also be encouraged to consumers in other countries through sales promotion. Product adaptation can be in form of regional form, country version, city version, retailer version. It can be a straight extension which involves a change in the product.
- (c) Business organization should embark on cultural diplomacy. Cultural diplomacy programs expose businessmen and investors to the economy, society and people of another country.
- (d) Investors should embark on direct investment as a mode or strategy of entering international markets.
- (e) Sales representatives should be trained or given cultural orientation in other countries – a practice in multinationals.
- (f) Business organization should target countries that have similar culture with foreign business opportunities.
- (g) Acculturation and adaptation should be on core values that has direct relationship with consumers' consumption pattern. This should be in their lifestyle

value, family live values, social and community value, environment values. Job work value etc.

(i) Regards should be given to other cultures, they should not be neglected in international marketing.

Authors` declaration

I declare that this study is an original research that was carried out by me and I agree to publish it in the Journal.

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