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Measuring Consumer Acculturation - Discussion on a Prospective Approach

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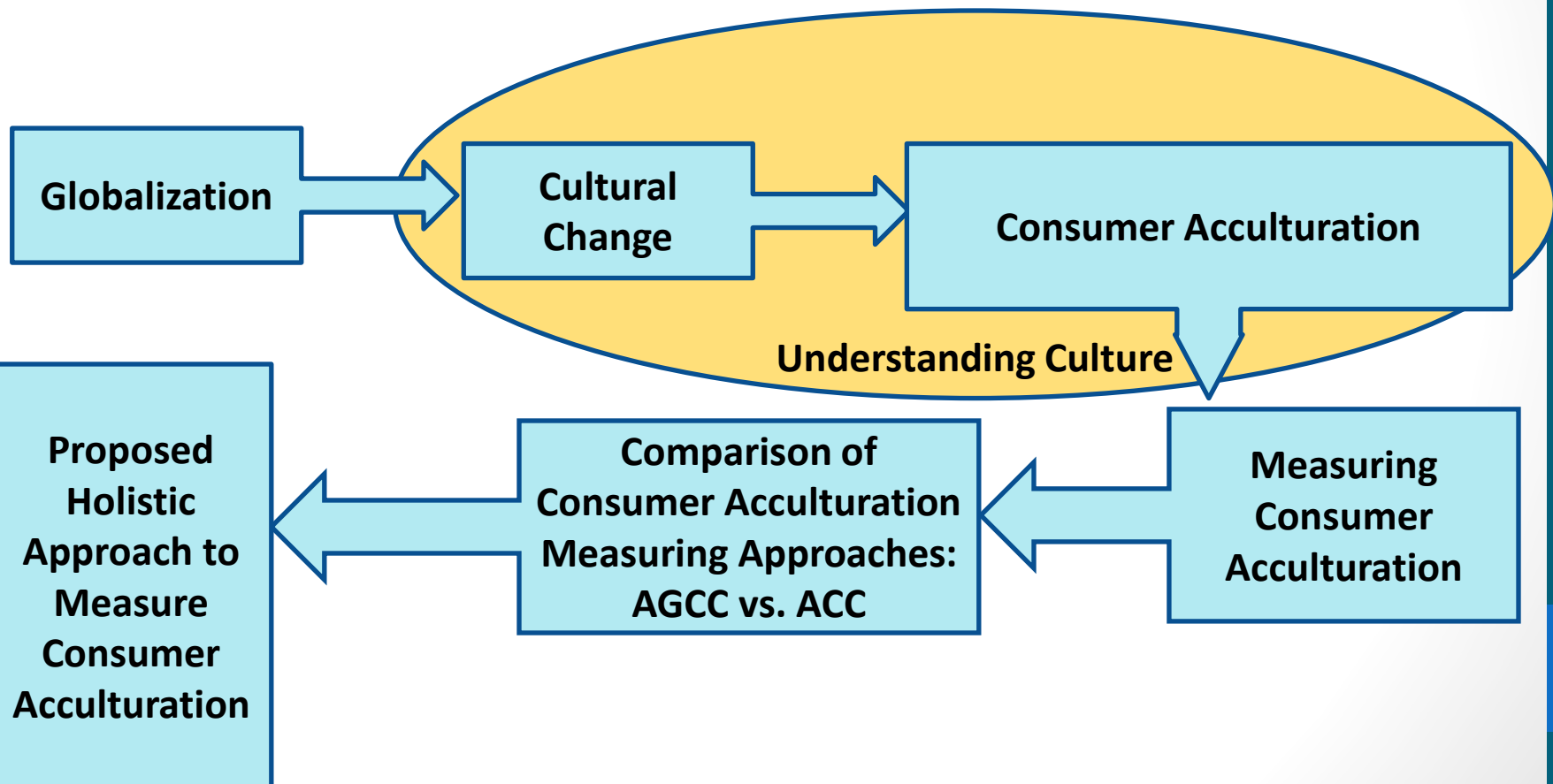


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Flow of Presentation

- An Overview of the Paper
- Understanding Globalization
- Cultural Change Being Brought by Globalization
- Consumer Acculturation
- Measuring Consumer Acculturation
- Acculturation to Global Consumer Culture (AGCC)
- Acculturation of Consumer Culture (ACC)
- Comparison of AGCC vis-a-vis ACC
- Critique of AGCC and ACC Approaches
- Proposed Holistic Approach to Measure Consumer Acculturation
- Limitation of the Proposed Approach

An overview of the paper:



Understanding Globalization

- Globalization enables diverse cultural groups to come into contact with one another leading to perceptual, attitudinal, or behavioral changes across almost all cultures around the world (Lee, 1993)
- Cleveland et al. (2009), claim that capitalism, global transport, communications, marketing and advertising, and transnational cosmopolitanism are interacting to dissolve the boundaries across national cultures.
- Appadurai (1990) see globalization as spread of five types of global flows:
 - Mediascapes - flow of image and communication
 - Ethnoscapes - flows of tourists, migrants and foreign students
 - Ideoscapes - flows of political ideas and ideologies
 - Technoscapes - flow of technology and know-how
 - Finanscapes - flows of capital and money.

Cultural Change Being Brought by Globalization

- Forces of globalization are leading to the emergence of a homogeneous global consumption culture, wherein consumers from various countries would be more global than local in their consumption orientation (Cleveland et al., 2009)
- Globalization seems to be changing the cultural fabric and patterns of a society as products, icons, lifestyles and rituals of one culture are being adopted by another (Craig and Douglas, 2006)
- The extant literature overwhelmingly supports the assertion that globalization brings cultural changes among the consumers in the local markets.

Consumer Acculturation

- Faber et al. (1987) defined acculturation as the adoption of the dominant culture's beliefs, attitudes, values, and behavior.
- Consumer acculturation's base is culture
- Adler (1983) observes that in traditional anthropological studies as well as in comparative management research, the term culture has been defined in many ways and no single definition of culture is accepted by management researchers.
- Though leading researchers differ on the definition of culture, they all agree on the components of culture, which includes:
 - Religion, family, communication, rites of passage, language, dress, dietary habits, leisure activities, society, attitude, behavior, basic beliefs and basic values

Consumer Acculturation (Cont...)

- Besides continuous first hand contact among individuals from different cultures, even indirect exposure to foreign culture via media and commercial communication would transform the indigenous culture (Andreasen, 1990; Craig et al., 2009; Gentry et al., 1995 and Steenkamp, 2001)
- Consumer acculturation has been further divided into behavioral and attitudinal dimensions (Gentry et al., 1995; Gupta, 2013):
 - Behavioral dimension covers behavioral changes (e.g. changes in (language usage, dietary habits, dress, communication, leisure activities etc.) in the acculturating consumer
 - Attitudinal dimensions covers attitudinal changes (e.g. changes in basic beliefs, values, identity etc.).

Measuring Consumer Acculturation

- The focus is restricted to two approaches to measure consumer acculturation only as they encompass two of the prominent means of measuring acculturation in the contemporary literature.
 - The first approach to measure consumer acculturation was developed by Cleveland and Laroche (2007). Their construct termed as Acculturation to Global Consumer Culture (AGCC) provides a holistic view on *how* consumer acculturation occurs among consumer.
 - The second approach to measure consumer acculturation has been adopted by Gupta (2012, 2013). This measurement is called Acculturation of Consumer Culture (ACC), which measures *the progress* that a consumer makes from local consumer culture to global consumer culture due to the impact of globalization (Gupta, 2012).

Acculturation to Global Consumer Culture (AGCC)

- **Cleveland and Laroche (2007) claim that an exhaustive review of the relevant social sciences literatures made them identify seven distinct drivers which lead to AGCC:**
 - **Cosmopolitanism (COS) - willingness to engage with other cultures and having necessary skills to do so.**
 - **Exposure to marketing activities of MNC's (EXM)**
 - **Exposure to/use of the English language (ELU)**
 - **Social interactions, including travel, migration, and contacts with foreigners (SIN)**
 - **Global/foreign mass media exposure (GMM)**
 - **Openness to and desire to emulate global consumer culture (OPE)**
 - **Self-identification with global consumer culture (IDT)**

Acculturation of Consumer Culture (ACC)

- In contrast to Cleveland and Laroche's (2007) approach to study "how" consumer acculturation occur, Gupta's (2012, 2013) ACC approach to study consumer acculturation "deals with progress of consumer from local to global culture" (Gupta, 2013, p. 26) on various components of culture, which he claims have been identified after exhaustive literature review.
- He further divides ACC into behavioral and attitudinal dimensions. The cultural components used by him are:

Acculturation of Consumer Culture (ACC) (Cont...)

For behavioral dimension,
cultural components used are:

- Language preferred
- Language actually spoken
- Music preference
- Movies/TV program preference
- Food preference at home
- Food preference outside
- Attire preference
- Reading language preference
- Writing language preference
- Behavior with respect to celebration of festivals

For attitudinal dimension,
cultural components used are:

- Self-identity
- Personal Value

Comparison of AGCC vis-a-vis ACC

S. No.	Parameter	AGCC	ACC
1	What the Scale Measures?	How individuals acquire global consumer culture	To what extent has progress been made from local to global consumer culture
2	Data Collection Approach	Survey-based	Survey-based
3	Items in the Scale	64	13
4	Multiple Items Measure Same Aspect	Yes	No
5	Response Elicited on	7-point Likert scale	5-point Likert 'Type' scale
6	Scale Development Process	Literature review + empirical analysis	Literature review + empirical analysis
7	Communication Preference	Measured (But restricted to usage of English only)	Measured (In terms of native vs. foreign language)
8	Music Preference	Measured (But restricted to English only)	Measured (In terms of native vs. foreign music)
9	Movie Preference	Measured (But restricted to English only)	Measured (In terms of native vs. foreign movies)
10	TV Program Preference	Measured (But restricted to English only)	Not Measured
11	Reading Preference	Measured (But restricted to English only)	Measured (In terms of native vs. foreign language)

AGCC vs ACC Comparison (Cont...)

S. No.	Parameter	AGCC	ACC
12	Writing Preference	Not Measured	Measured (In terms of native vs. foreign language)
13	Dressing Preference	Measured (But restricted to American way of dressing only)	Measured (In terms of native vs. foreign attire)
14	Preference for Foreign Travel	Measured	Not Measured
15	Exposure to Foreign Brands and Ads	Measured	Not Measured
16	Cosmopolitanism	Measured	Not Measured
17	Dietary Preference	Measured	Measured
18	Emulation of consumer lifestyles in developed countries	Measured	Not Measured
19	Ethnic Identity	Not Measured	Measured
20	Celebration of Native vs. Foreign Festivals	Not Measured	Measured
21	Belief in Native vs. Foreign Values	Not Measured	Measured

Critique of AGCC and ACC

- Length of AGCC scale is large (64 items) due to presence of many repetitive and redundant items
 - Researches can explore the usage of truncated version of AGCC scale as proposed by Durvasula and Lysonski (2015)
- Very limited number of components measured in the attitudinal dimension of ACC
 - Ethnocentric tendencies and assertion of ethnic identity can be included in the attitudinal dimension of ACC scale
- They are both exclusively survey based approach
 - Are prone to shortcomings like incorrect responses, biased responses, lack of clear understanding of what is being asked etc.
 - It can be mitigated by adding observational and in-depth interview related dimensions to the aforementioned approaches

Proposed Holistic Approach to Measure Consumer Acculturation

- For a multidimensional and complex phenomenon like consumer acculturation, understanding how it occurs and to what extent it is prevalent are equally important. Hence, to assess consumer acculturation comprehensively, it is proposed that both these approaches should be used simultaneously to assess this phenomenon.
- However, care has to be taken to prevent repetition of certain dimensions which are present in both the approaches, e.g. dietary preference, to avoid presence of redundant aspects in this proposed cumulative approach.

Proposed Holistic Approach to Measure Consumer Acculturation (Cont...)

- **Observational and in-depth interview data collection approach should supplement the survey-based approach**
 - **Observational dimension would entail that besides eliciting responses from the consumers, their brand consumption and generic overall behavior is also observed and noted by the researcher**
 - **To be supplemented by a short in-depth interview round wherein the surveyor would ask few open-ended questions which are designed to capture the reason for the respondent's survey response as well as the observed behavior.**
 - **Hence an amalgamation of quantitative and qualitative approach to comprehensively measure consumer acculturation is recommended.**

Limitation of the Proposed Approach

- A major limitation of this approach is that it would be a time consuming exercise for each respondent and it requires personal interaction between the researcher and the respondent.
- However, to generate a holistic understanding of such a complex phenomenon like consumer acculturation, such approach is the only way out.
- Any mitigation to the proposed approach will produce lop-sided results.



Thank you!

Questions & Suggestions are welcome...