

Effect of acculturation on consumer behaviour



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“ Acculturation and affect of it on ethnic minorities consumer behaviour.”

Abstract:

This paper presents what acculturation is and its impact on consumer behaviour. Acculturation represents a multifaceted and ongoing process where the continual interactions between the minority and dominant ethnic group iteratively affect cultural attitudes, behaviours and values across society. An important aspect of the acculturation process is often the need for individuals to demonstrate success in life, either to the dominant societal group or to their own ethnic group. This behaviour is consistent with consumer acculturation theories that argue that products imbued with cultural meaning are deliberately consumed by ethnic minorities to demonstrate their cultural adaptation. This is the process of acculturation.

Introduction:

An alternative consumer acculturation perspective is that ethnic minority individuals who demonstrate conspicuous consumption often do so in order to show their sense of rejection from the dominant society. This rejection may arise from experiences of racism often culminating in poor academic performance, inability to obtain well-paid jobs and struggles to establish a self-identity that is both recognized and valued by their own ethnic group and others. The ethnic minority person's sense of rejection may then be represented by the consumption of products that differentiates them from the dominant group and highlights their differences. A consumption act potentially reflects their perceived sense of rejection and demonstrates their inability and unwillingness to conform to the dominant societal culture.

Main body

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The contention is that there are variations in purchase decisions of micro cultures. It is thought that the division of subcultures will give academicians and practitioners with better and more correct data from which to understand the customers who acculturate. Research in this area will let greater and more precise intercultural comparisons.

We also hypothesize that the currently identified social categories are far and too broad to prove meaningful utilization patterns or be predictive of future consumption behaviour, with the changing ethnic origin county.

Dimensional nature of acculturation:

To consumer researchers, acculturation is measured by some scale on various items relating to the respondents' acculturation process, such as language favourite and knowledge about the host culture. A respondent's scores on all items are then put together (or further averaged) to yield a single score of the respondent's acculturation level. This practice assumes acculturation to be one-dimensional and therefore can be expressed by a single score. However, research in psychology and sociology has shown that acculturation is a more compound multidimensional idea.

A noticeable study from the above is that different researchers have proposed different structures for the acculturation. Some look at only behavioural, some use purely attitudinal elements, yet others join both behavioural and attitudinal elements in the structure. Although these structures differ from each other, they all state that acculturation is a one-

dimensional form, but a multidimensional construct. Therefore, when a researcher declares level of acculturation with a single score, the result may be prejudiced and may not reflect the real influence of the different aspects of acculturation. Way acculturation can influence consumer behaviour is through the maintenance and change of the acculturating individual's self-identity. The acculturation process obviously has a significant impact on the individual's self. It is main for the individual to get used to the changes while at the same time maintain an incorporated self. The conflict between change and continuity in the acculturation process is reflected in the products the customer consumes and the way consumption takes place.

Ecological factors and individual characteristics also play a vital role in the acculturation process and in the connection between acculturation and consumer behaviour.

Acculturation and Consumer Behaviour

One central way to differentiate between members of a subculture is to think the degree to which they keep a sense of identifying with their home country vs. their host country. “ Acculturation refers to the process of progress and alteration to one country's cultural environment by an individual from another country” (Blackwell, Miniard and Engel, 2007). The nature of this change process is affected by many aspects. Personal differences, such as whether the person speaks the host country language. The person's contacts with acculturation causes – people and establishments that educate the ways of a culture – are also crucial. Some of these agents are united with the culture of origin (in Sevgi's case, Turkey). These factors include family, friends, the mosque, local businesses and Turkish-language; media that keep

the shopper in touch with his or her land of origin. Other agents are linked with the culture of migration (in this case, the Netherlands), and help the consumer to learn how to pilot in the new surroundings. These comprise state schools and Dutch-language media. As immigrants become accustomed to their new surroundings, some processes come into work. Movement refers to the things appealing people to pull up themselves physically from one location and move to another. Although many ethnic members all over Europe are second generation (born in the country where they live), their parents are more probable to have been the first to arrive in the new country. On arrival, settlers come across a need for transformation. This means attempting to master a set of rules for functioning in the new situation, whether learning how to interpret a different currency or understanding the social meanings of strange clothing styles. This cultural knowledge directs to a process of adaptation, where new consumption patterns are formed. As clients experience acculturation, several things happen. Many immigrants suffer (at least to some extent) assimilation, where they agree to products that are recognised with the mainstream culture. At the same time, there is an effort at maintaining of practices related with the culture of origin. Immigrants stay in touch with people in their country, and many go on to eat ethnic foods and read ethnic newspapers. Their continued credentials with their home culture may cause conflict, as they hate the pressure to plunge their identities and receive on new roles. These processes show that ethnicity is a flowing concept, and that the borders of a subculture are continuously being recreated (Laroche et al. 1998 as cited in Palumbo and Teich, 2004). An ethnic pluralism perspective argues that ethnic groups diverge from the mainstream in shifting degrees, <https://assignbuster.com/effect-of-acculturation-on-consumer-behaviour/>

and that adaptation to the dominant society occurs selectively. Research facts argue against the view that assimilation essentially entails losing identification with the person's original ethnic group. For example, Sevgi feels relaxing in conveying her 'Turkishness' in a variety of consumption associated ways: the magazines she buys, the TV programmes on the Turkish network she wishes to watch, her selection of ethnically suitable gifts for events such as weddings and bayram (religious holidays). Otherwise, she has no problems at all in communicating consumption behaviours of the mainstream culture – she loves eating drop (Dutch liquorice), buys 'Western' music and has her favourite clothing for going out to the theatre and clubs. The researchers argue that the best pointer of ethnic assimilation is the scope to which members of an ethnic group have social exchanges with members of other groups in comparison with their own.

A consumer's way of life refers to the ways he or she decides to spend time and money and how his or her values, attitudes and tastes are reproduced by spending choices. Lifestyle research is helpful to track societal consumption preferences and also to place specific products and services to different sections. Marketers segment by lifestyle distinctions, often by grouping consumers in terms of their AIOs (activities, interests and opinions).

Psychographic techniques try to categorize consumers in terms of psychological, subjective variables in addition to visible features (demographics). A variety of systems, such as RISC, have been developed to identify consumer kind and to distinguish them in terms of their brand or product liking, media usage, leisure time manners, and attitudes towards such broad topics as politics and religion.

Interconnected sets of products and activities are associated with public roles to form consumption gathering. People frequently purchase a product or service because it is associated with a group which, in turn, is linked to a lifestyle they find attractive. Where one comes from is often a significant determinant of lifestyle. Many marketers identify national or regional diversity in product preferences, and develop different editions of their products for different markets. Because a consumer's culture exercises such a huge influence on his or her lifestyle choices, marketers must learn as much as possible about differences in cultural rules and preferences when marketing in more than one nation. One important issue is the level to which marketing strategies must be customized to each culture, rather than standardized across cultures. A set of techniques called geo-demography investigates consumption models using geo-graphical and demographic data, and identifies bunch of consumers who exhibit similar psychographic characteristics.

Consumers identify with many groups that share general qualities and identities. These large groups that live within a society are called subcultures, and membership in them often gives marketers a important clue about individuals' consumption decisions. A large constituent of a person's identity is defined by his or her ethnic origins, racial identity and religious background. The growing numbers of people who argue multi-ethnic back-grounds are starting to blot the traditional peculiarities drawn among these subcultures.

Recently, several minority groups have trapped the interest of marketers as their financial power has grown. Segmenting consumers by their ethnicity

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can be of use, but care must be taken not to depend upon inaccurate ethnic typecasts. Because a consumer's culture exerts such a major control on his or her lifestyle options, marketers must discover as much as possible about differences in cultural standards and preferences when marketing in more than one country.

The appearance of immigrants as a new market opportunity has discussions of immigrants' consumption behaviour by both practitioners and academic researchers. Studying the immigrants' acculturation process and their consumption nature present us both a better view of this specific segment and a better understanding of the cultural dynamics fundamental consumer behaviour. Study of acculturating customers can offer us insight into immigrants' consumer behaviour and consumer behaviour in common. With more research undertaken, it can be expected to see extended knowledge of acculturating individuals' consumption experience and a more complete understanding of consumers. The model suggests two paths through which acculturation can influence consumer behaviour. One is through consumer re-socialization. The other is through the individual's self-management when faced with remarkable changes in the self regularly characteristic of the acculturation process. Environmental factors and individual demographic, socioeconomic, and psychological characteristics can influence both paths and therefore temperate the relationship between acculturation and consumer behaviour.

Several orders for future research can be immediately seen. First, most research has seen acculturation as a one-dimensional construct. Future research should recognize the fact that individuals accepting the new culture

do not necessarily throw away their original cultures. They can adopt a variety of acculturation strategies including separation and integration. Psychologists and sociologists have developed multidimensional methods of acculturation that can be adapted to consumer research. Consumer researchers can also incorporate measures of assimilation and measures of ethnic identification to form a two-dimensional measure of acculturation. Both construction and corroboration of acculturation measures fitting for consumer research are needed. Second, consumer researchers can study acculturating individuals' consumption experience from consumer socialisation outlook. Some research has been undertaken in this direction. Penaloza (1989) projected a model of consumer acculturation based on consumer socialization. There are also studies on acculturating individuals' information probing behaviour and their dealings with socialization agents such as mass media (D'Rozario and Douglas 1999; Lee 1989). More research is needed that study the influence of other socialization agents such as peers and institutions on an acculturating individual and how he or she interacts with them. Studies on mass media can also be approved further to learn acculturating individuals media use pattern and how different patterns show the way to different consumption related awareness, approaches and values.

Thirdly, how acculturating individuals supervise their self-concept during the acculturating process and how different management strategies are toughened and mirrored in the individuals' consumption need to be looked at. Consumer researchers have apprehended the impact of self-concept in consumption and have argued that belongings are part of an individual's

extended self (Belk 1988). These concepts can be applied to acculturating individuals to find out how dynamics of the self are coupled with consumer behaviour.

Lastly consumer researchers should put together more hard work to study how an individual's demographic, socioeconomic and psychological characteristics can influence his or her acculturation process and consumption. Researchers should go ahead of measuring these variables only for testing external strength, but should also study these variables themselves as they may have important suggestions on how acculturating consumers learn and consume. Efforts should especially be made to identify variables applicable to consumer research and to establish measures of these variables. Numerical tests can also be done to test these variables' reasonable effects and their indirect effects on consumer behaviour.

Conclusion:

Consumer acculturation can be studied on the base of consumer's socialisation. Ethnic identification and level of assimilation are often used to individuals within these minority groups. Acculturation affects consumer behaviour according to both assimilation and unique behavioural model showing the acculturating individuals in their eagerness to adjust to the culture of residence, may develop different social perceptions and behaviour patterns. The paper has attempted to determine the various aspects of acculturation in relation to different ethnic minorities.

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