

Role of culture in international marketing



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Anthropology is the study of human behaviour. Cultural anthropology examines all learned human behaviour, including social, linguistic, and family behaviours; culture encompasses the entire heritage of society transmitted orally, via literature, or in any other form. It includes all traditions, models, habits, religion, art, and language. Children born anywhere in the world needs for food, shelter, and clothing. But as they mature, children experience desires for nonessential things. How these wants develop and what relative importance the individual assigns to them is based on messages from families and peers. This socialisation process reflects each person's culture.

For example, eating habits and tastes vary greatly around the world, but few of these variations reflect physiological differences among people. Instead food is extremely culture-bound. One exception relates to milk product. Many people in China lack the enzymes to digest milk products. But like many things, Western milk is becoming increasingly popular in China among a new generation more socialised to western products. To bridge the gap- in taste and enzymes- many dairy producers in China are selling yogurt based drinks, which many Chinese find easier to digest.

The world economy is in the middle of globalisation. For last one decade or so each country has been opening its doors and welcoming foreign multinational and corporate organisations and developed countries and emerging economies to set up bases. At the same time they want manufacturing and trading corporations and business firms from their own countries to move out and spread around this world, whether it is through <https://assignbuster.com/role-of-culture-in-international-marketing/>

mega mergers, franchising, setting their own subsidiaries, or just about getting their foothold through trading itself.

Beside skill and management techniques the emerging new entrants in the international markets will require cultural sensitivity towards the country they are entering, in order to build their brand and gain acceptance in these countries. If ignored, cultural sensitivity can result in the kind of disaster that Proctor and Gamble faced when company first ventured out in the year 1973. The Japanese consumers have bombarded the American products, American way of selling, American way of managing and American strategies by the P&G with scant regard to local needs, local culture, local social norms, and local living habits. This resulted that, Proctor and Gamble faced huge losses till 1987, until it eventually understood the local culture and started playing the marketing game the same way as the Japanese do.

Culture is a way people lead their lives. Just as fish cannot live without water, a man without culture will feel suffocated. It is the environment in which human beings breathe familiar smells from their childhood, listen to old lullabies from their grandparents and sing the same songs when they put their own children to sleep. Cultures pervade a man's life when he adopts a familiar way of eating his daily bread. Indians eat their food with their hand and some might even lick their fingers too, whereas the Chinese use chopsticks to eat noodles. An English man, on the other hand, may scoff the idea of using hands for putting morsels into his mouth, he may not relish his food until a fork or knife is given to him. All this form a part of cultures, which pervades all forms of living standards

Literature Review

The influence of culture has been defined by various authors and writers some of which are stated below;

Cateora (2008): Culture deals with a group's design for living. It is pertinent to study of marketing, especially international marketing. If the scope of marketing concept is considered-the satisfaction of consumer needs and wants at a profit-the successful marketer must be a student of culture.

Paul & Kapoor (2008): Marketer must have a complete knowledge of culture, more so international marketers because they face diverse and different cultures in each country; this knowledge will equip them to fashion and design their products and services as per the need of their customers.

Banting (1993): culture knowledge gained by selling in foreign markets can also help the business marketer compete with foreign marketers at home

Trepstra (1987): the man-made part of our environment, or the distinctive way of life of a people. Culture is not biologically transmitted; any given culture, or a way of life is learned behaviour which depends on the environment and not on the heredity

The role and influence of culture in modern society are evolving as more and more economies become interlinked. The function of marketing is to earn profits from the satisfaction of human wants and needs. To understand and influence consumers wants and needs we must understand their culture.

Culture understanding is very essential when international marketers interact with foreign competitors, distributors, suppliers, and government

officials. Culture is embedded in elements of society as religion, language, history and education. These aspects of the society send direct and indirect messages to consumers we live in answers and questions as the following: Is tea or coffee the preferred drink? Is black or white worn in funeral? What type of is eaten for breakfast?

One of the most difficult factors for global marketers is assessing the cultural influences that effect their operations. In the actual marketplace, several factors are always working simultaneously, and it is extremely difficult to isolate any factor. Frequently cultural differences have been held accountable for any noticeable differences among countries.

When designing a product, the style, uses, and other related marketing activities must be made culturally acceptable if they are to be operative and meaningful. In fact, culture is persuasive in all marketing activities- in pricing, promotion, channels of distribution, product, packaging, and styling- and the marketers efforts actually become a part of the fabric of culture. The marketer's efforts are judged in a cultural context for acceptance, resistance or rejection. How such efforts interact with a culture determines the degree of success or failure of the marketing effort.

The manner in which people consume, the priority of needs and the wants they attempt to satisfy and the manner in which they satisfy them are functions of their culture that temper, mold, and dictate their style of living. Culture is the human made part of the human environment-the sum total of knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by humans 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 influence. Markets and market behaviour are part of a country's cultures. One cannot truly understand how markets evolve or how they react to a marketer's effort without appreciating that markets are a result of culture. Markets are the result of the three way interaction of marketer's effort, economic conditions and all other elements of the culture. 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 in whatever level of culture, the use of something new is the beginning of cultural change, and the marketer become the change agent.

Definitions and origins of culture

There are many ways to think about the culture. Dutch management professor Greet Hofstede refers to culture as the "software of mind" and argues that it provides a guide for human on how think and behave; it is problem solving tool. Most traditional definition of culture centre around the notion that culture is the sum of values, rituals, symbols, beliefs, and thought process that are learned, shared by a group of people, and transmitted from generation to generation. So culture resides in the individuals mind. But the expressions "a culture recognizes that large collectives of people can to a great degree be like minded."

Religion

In most cultures the first social institution infants are exposed to outside the home takes the form of church, mosques, shrine and temple. The impact of

the religion on the value systems of a society and the effect of value systems of society and the effect of value systems on marketing must not be underestimated.

School

Education, one of the most important social institutions, affects all aspects of the culture, from economic development to consumer behaviours. The literacy rate of a country is a potent force in economic development. Literacy has a profound effect on marketing.

The Media

The four social institutions that most strongly influence values and cultures are schools, churches, families and most recently the media. Media time has replaced the family time.

Government

Cultural values and thought patterns are pretty much set before and during adolescence. Most often government try to influence the thinking and behaviours of adult citizens for the citizens " own good". For example, the French has been urging citizens to procreate since the time of Napoleon. Government influence thinking and behaviour through the passage, promulgation, promotion and enforcement of a variety

Corporations

Corporations get a grip early through the media. But more important, most innovations are introduced to societies by companies, many times multinational companies. Indeed, merchants and traders have throughout

history been the primary conduit for the diffusion of innovations, whether it be over the Silk Road or via today's air freight and/or the internet.

Elements of Culture

Earlier culture was defined by listing its five elements: values, rituals, symbols, beliefs, and thought processes. International marketers must design products, distribution systems, and promotional programs with due consideration of each of the five.

Cultural values

In a society, values sustains the behaviour of individuals as well as groups. Values are learned and unlearned from personal, social and cultural interactions from experiences. Individuals, imbibe the values from the culture they belong to, i. e. the family unit, immediate neighbourhood teacher, religious practitioner and politicians. In modern time values are also imbibed from the media. Media plays a large part in influencing the minds of individuals (Vignali & Vrontis, 2006).

Rituals

Life is filled with rituals, that is, patterns of behaviour and interaction that are leaned and repeated. The most obvious ones are associated with major events in life. Marriage ceremonies and funerals are good examples. Very often these rituals differ across cultures.

Objectives:

The main purpose of opting for this topic is to understand the cultural hurdle when entering into a new or foreign market. This dissertation will help in identifying the influence of culture on marketing and understanding the

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elements and constituent of the culture. The objectives and questions to this dissertation are as follows;

How does culture influence International marketing activities?

To identify the main constituent of culture that makes each culture identifiable and separately distinct.

To understand and define the elements of culture.

How strategies can be altered to address these cultural differences.

Methodology:

The research plan is based on the qualitative method and the topic of my research is on a broader context that I cannot be specifically focussing on any particular organisation.

The primary data collection method will be by books, journal, articles, newspaper, magazines, websites and in house journals. I cannot confine my research to books and journals as I broaden my research through observing and analysing the ideas of subject experts like scholars and authors. The global market place is a huge area to play, so I would be confining my research to the Indian context as it is a country of diversified cultures existing in different regions of the country.

The study of present economic condition will be much helpful and analysing how the leaders of market (like Proctor & Gamble, GE, Coca Cola, PEPSI) developed their scale from the domestic market and got global enhancement. The strategies given by the experts and views described by

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the economist on the internationalization will be much helpful. The research will include the scenarios of India and interrelation objective of various organisations between the countries and problems faced by them. This piece of study will be approaching the issue of cultural influence from the point of view of how it affects the firms and products offered by the organisation. Almost every international organisations (like Proctor & Gamble, GE, Coca Cola, PEPSI) have at least slight differences in their marketing strategies due to cultural differences that they cannot control, and most of them have different level of standardisation for their different products, depending on the opportunities.

Data Collection is mainly done through these areas

Interviewing 5-8 marketing and sales managers.

Overview of different business journals, newspaper articles of previous years, books

Analysing the subject with different research performed by the students of different universities.

Ethical Consideration

The work carried for this proposal is of self effort. I declare this work to be not copied or plagiarised. The keen interest on the subject forced me to opt for the topic and take it as the research subject. The desire and quest for gaining the knowledge on the subject encouraged me to complete the proposal and strive for the research. The efforts taken to complete this research will benefit me by delivering plenty of knowledge on the subject,

thus I assure that this research work will be self effort. To avoid plagiarism I would be using software to check the work that is provided by the institutions. I would be using additional software available on internet for the additional plagiarism check to be sure for any internet matches. I would be attending regular meetings with my supervisor to get the guidance on regular intervals for required changes and necessary amendments.