

Cross cultural ethical perspectives

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Cross-Culture Ethical Perspectives Amanda Bravo, Mary Malone, Doneice Johnson, Jose Robledo, Kanosha Mitchell, Josephine Johnson ETH/316

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Perspectives Globalization is common in most large organizations as they thrive to maximize revenue and expand customer base by establishing operations in different countries and within different cultures. Consequently, these organizations have to consider cultural perspectives of the country in which that plan to operate.

McDonald's, established in 1954 by Ray Kroc in conjunction with the McDonalds brothers and with over 30, 000 restaurants in more than 120 countries, is one of the world's biggest fast food restaurant chains employing 1.7 million people" (McDonalds, 2010-2012). This organization is no different and has to face issues resulting from globalization such as dietary preferences or needs from culture to culture or country to country as well as religion as it relates to its advertising and such..

A good example of the aforementioned was faced in India where currently McDonald's operates 123 restaurants (India Marks, 2011-2012). A large percentage of that population is Hindu or Muslim and Hindus do not eat beef and Muslims do not eat pork. With both types of meat being a large part of their menu, McDonald's had to reconsider the menu and decided to adapt it by introducing 100% vegetarian burgers and more than half of their menu being vegetarian (India Marks, 2011-2012). This has helped McDonald's be successful in that country.

McDonald's does takes cross-culture issue serious and in one particular incident maybe too serious. In 2010 McDonald's had launched a new line of <https://assignbuster.com/cross-cultural-ethical-perspectives/>

promotional soft toys in Singapore which entailed a 12-character Doraemon set depicting the animals of the Chinese zodiac calendar. Because McDonald's did not want to offend Muslims, they decided not to include the pig character in the line of toys and replaced it with a cupid to represent the Valentine's Day. As a result, many Chinese customers were upset as they were keen on collecting all 12 characters.

A flurry of irate emails and demands by collectors and customers followed which made the fastfoodrestaurant reverse its decision and apologized for their insensitivity as it was never their intention to disrespect any religion or culture. Experts say it showed a lack of cross-culture understanding. Daniel Goh, a sociologist, said that McDonald's did not consult Muslim opinions before making the decision then assumed Muslim sensibilities which amounted to a form of self-censorship. Dr.

Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied, said, " Pigs and dogs are not non-halal, except when they are consumed" (Loh, 2010). In any case, clearly McDonald's takes special cultural considerations and precaution when promoting products into other countries. As per the aforementioned, some of the issues that McDonald's faces as a result from globalization may be different in perspective and in nature. In some countries the fast food chain has to accommodate its menu to the dietary needs or customs as done in India.

Had the organization not done so, perhaps the chain would have been unsuccessful. In other countries however, it has to thrive to avoid any cultural insensitivity as was the case in Singapore with the promotional soft toys as it attempted to avoid insulting the Muslim community and

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unfortunately ended up being less catering to the Chinese community. McDonalds is a common household name in many countries, but has backlash from many cultures as mentioned with those among Chinese and Muslim communities.

To cater to international customer McDonald's has added item to their menu such as the McArbia, the McPepper, and the Mushroom Pinwheel in Chinese and Middle Eastern countries (Old McDonalds has some Smarts in China, 2006). However McDonalds' has been viewed as having an influence on these countries by taking away from the cuisine and traditional foods that these cultures and accustomed to eating. " Critics claim that the rapid spread of McDonald's and its fast-food rivals undermine indigenous cuisines and helps creates a homogenous, global culture" (Watson, 2006).

This is viewed by those who value the culture and history of the Korean, Chinese, Middle Eastern culture as taking away from the culture. McDonald's global operations not only is a threat to international cuisine but also factor into many of the religious beliefs with various types of items that are served on their menu such as beef whereas in many countries are holy among Hindus. Working from within the company, management realized that certain guidelines must be met within different cultural communities.

The changing of the menu represented respect for the people that it hoped to become customers. A company must recognize standard cultural changes that influence the local operational area. However, understanding the local culture does not guarantee success of the operation. Just because the company is knowledgeable of the local culture and what to expect, does not

reflect what can actually occur. Assuming that certain cultures would be offended by a toy to be given out, shows lack of tact on McDonald's behalf.

However, as organizations such as McDonald's attempt to increase market share by entering different countries and different cultures, proper research should always be done before automatically assuming anything about those cultures in order to be able to address issues that result from globalization.

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