

# Cultural dynamics in assessing global markets

[Business](#), [Marketing](#)



Cultural Dynamics in Assessing Global Markets Discussion Questions | 1. | Define: | | | Cultural sensitivity | Factual knowledge | | | Culture | Interpretive knowledge | | | Ethnocentrism | Cultural values | | | Strategy of cultural congruence | Cultural borrowing | | | Linguistic distance | Material culture | | | Strategy of unplanned change | Aesthetics | | | Social institutions | Strategy of planned change | 2. Which role does the marketer play as a change agent? Whether or not the marketer is aware of it, he assumes the role of a change agent when he introduces into another culture new ideas or new products requiring some form of change in behavior for acceptance and use of the new idea or product. The international marketer must concern himself with the impact of his actions upon the new culture. 3. Discuss the three cultural change strategies a foreign marketer can pursue. There are three strategies. (a) Culturally congruent strategy, (b) Strategy of unplanned change, (c) Strategy of planned change. The culturally congruent strategy involves marketing products similar to ones already on the market in a manner as congruent as possible with existing cultural norms, thereby minimizing resistance. A strategy of planned change means deliberately setting out to change those aspects of a culture most likely to offer resistance to predetermined marketing goals. The strategy of unplanned change consists of introducing an innovation and then waiting for an eventful cultural change that will permit the culture to accept the innovation. The essence of unplanned change lies in the fact that the marketer does nothing to accelerate or help to bring about the necessary change where the marketer deliberately sets about to overcome resistance and to cause change that will accelerate the rate of adoption of his product or innovation.

4. " Culture is pervasive in all marketing activities. " Discuss. Marketers are constantly in the process of adjusting their efforts to the demands of the culture of their markets. Although in the long run they may affect their market's culture as a result of their efforts, most current activity involves reconciling marketing activity to the immediate culture.

5. What is the importance of " cultural empathy" to the foreign marketer? How does he or she acquire " cultural empathy? " The importance of " cultural empathy" to the foreign marketer is that being culturally sensitive allows him or her to objectively see, evaluate, and appreciate another culture. A marketer can obtain cultural empathy by studying the culture and living with it. The latter is not always possible, and it may be expedient to hire natives who speak your tongue and their own. This procedure will often give you the intuition which is necessary for success.

6. Why should a foreign marketer be concerned with the study of culture? A foreign marketer should study culture in order to avoid making blunders which would not be made if he or she had cultural knowledge. Culture should be studied because it affects the consumer's desire and ability to buy.

7. What is the popular definition of culture? What is the viewpoint of cultural anthropologists? What is the importance of the difference? The popular definition of culture is that a person is either " cultured" or " uncultured" according to his or her ability in certain specialized fields of knowledge. The cultural anthropologist defines culture as " all the knowledge, beliefs, and skills he or she acquires as a member of society. " The importance to the marketer of the differences between these two definitions is the fact that the anthropologist's definition includes all parts of life, and all of these parts affect a consumer's desire and

ability to pay for a product. 8. It is stated that members of a society borrow from other cultures to solve problems that they face in common. What does this mean? What is the significance to marketing? Cultural borrowing entails using the best solutions to a problem that different cultures face. This best solution, borrowed by one culture from another, is incorporated into the borrowing culture's system, and becomes part of their cultural heritage. This fact is significant to the marketer because although the solutions to the problems are similar they are put together in a unique manner which is strictly American, Chinese, French, etc. In realizing the "similar but different" aspect of culture, the marketer is aided in gaining cultural empathy. 9. "For the inexperienced marketer, the "similar but different" feature of culture creates an illusion of similarity which usually does not always exist." Discuss and give examples. Although some cultures seem similar, they most likely are not. For example, two different countries speaking the same language may use words or phrases which are acceptable to one, but totally unacceptable to the other. Some cultures may have subcultures in which the "similar but different" principle applies. 10. Outline the elements of culture as seen by an anthropologist. How can a marketer use this "cultural scheme?"

- a. Material Culture
  1. Technology
  2. Economics
  - b. Social Institutions
    1. Social organizations
    2. Education
    3. Political structures
  - c. Man and the Universe
    1. Belief systems
  - d. Aesthetics
    1. Graphic and plastic arts
    2. Folklore
    3. Music, drama, and the dance
  - e. Language

The foreign marketer may use the above outline of cultural elements (1) to provide a meaningful framework to use in evaluating a marketing plan or in studying the potential of a foreign market, (2) to point

out those things which must be learned about the culture of the people since most of these elements are reacted to automatically in a cultural system, (3) as factors with which the market interacts and which are basic in the understanding of the character of the marketing system of any society. 11.

What is material culture? What are its implications for marketing? Give examples. 12. Material culture consists of technology and economics.

Technology is the techniques used to make material goods; it is the "know-how" possessed by the people of a society. Economics is the manner in which people employ their capabilities and the resulting benefits. Economics includes the production of goods and services, their distribution, consumption, means of exchange, and the income derived from the creation of utilities. The marketer must remember that material culture affects the level of demand, the quality and type of products demanded, their functional features, and the means of production and distribution of these goods.

Examples of material culture would be the availability and cost of gasoline in regulating demand for and size of automobiles. The availability of electricity can regulate demand for any electrical product. 13. Social institutions affect marketing in a variety of ways. Discuss, give examples. Social institutions affect marketing because they regulate the consumer's behavior and attitudes by organizing his activities and teaching him acceptable behavior. Examples of social institutions affecting marketing are the literacy rate as a function of education, the strength of the family unit, and political acceptance or hindrance of marketing activities. 14. "Markets are the result of the triune interaction of a marketer's efforts, economic conditions, and all other elements of the culture." Comment. This statement emphasizes the

point that markets evolve out of the interrelationship of three major factors. They are a marketer's efforts, economic conditions and all the other elements of the culture. Marketers are constantly in the process of adjusting their efforts to cultural demands of the market, but they are also agents of change whenever the product or idea being marketed is innovative.

Whatever the degree of acceptance and whatever level of culture is, the use of something new is the beginning of cultural change and the marketer becomes a change agent. This statement is important because it emphasizes the fact that the marketer is not a passive influence in a culture and that, while the marketer attempts to react to cultural demands, in so doing the marketer also influences cultural change. 15. What are some particularly troublesome problems caused by language in foreign marketing? Discuss.

Language poses some difficult problems in foreign marketing not merely because of the obvious differences in tongues, but because the idiomatic interpretations mean something different than what the marketer had intended. Examples of this are "Body by Fisher" which translates to "Corpse by Fisher" and "Let Hertz Put You in the Drivers Seat" which translates to "Let Hertz Make You a Chauffeur." 16. Suppose you were requested to prepare a cultural analysis for a potential market, what would you do?

Outline the steps and comment briefly on each. The best procedure for making a cultural analysis for a potential market is to go through each of the elements of culture and evaluate each on the basis of how it could possibly affect a proposed marketing program. a. Material Culture 1. Technology — the techniques and "know-how" of producing material goods. 2. Economics — the employment of capabilities and the results. b. Social Institutions 1.

Social organizations — family life, status, age. 2. Education — literacy and intelligence and how informed the public is. 3. Political structures — control over business. c. Man and the Universe 1. Belief systems — how do these affect product and promotional acceptance? d. Aesthetics 1. Graphic and plastic arts — degree of modernization. 2. Folklore — superstition, tradition, etc. 3. Music, drama, and the dance — promotional possibilities. 17. Cultures are dynamic. How do they change? Are there cases where change is not resisted but actually preferred? Explain. What is the relevance to marketing? Cultures change gradually with resistance to changes. The resistance varies inversely with the interest a society has in the change. Culture doesn't resist change if the product is a status-valued imported item, a fashion item, or is given the advantage of inferior feelings about local products. Marketers can expect resistance to their products, with greater resistance to those products with the greatest deviation from the cultural norm or status quo. 18. How can resistance to cultural change influence product introduction. Are there any similarities in domestic marketing? Explain, giving examples. Resistance to cultural change will affect new product introduction in the respect that the greatest resistance will confront products which are farthest from the status quo, but this resistance can be lowered by gaining public interest. Lowering resistance in this situation means shortening the duration of the resistance. Domestic marketing is subject to the same resistance to change. Examples of this resistance in the domestic market are the introduction of contact lenses and using motorcycles as an acceptable means of recreation. 19. Innovations are described as being either functional or dysfunctional. Explain and give examples of each. The consequences of diffusion of an innovation

may be functional or dysfunctional depending on whether the effects of the social system are desirable. A dysfunctional innovation is one where the effects within the social system are undesirable. In most instances, the marketer's concern is with perceived functional consequences, i. e., the positive benefits of product use. For many products, such as the cake mix described in the chapter, there would be no dysfunctional consequences. However, it cannot always be assumed that an innovative product's consequences will be functional. An example mentioned in the text was the introduction of condensed milk to the diet of babies in underdeveloped countries where protein deficiency is a health problem. On the surface it would appear that the consequences of the addition of condensed milk to the diet would result in better nutrition and health, stronger and faster growth, etc. However, evidence tends to indicate that in at least one situation there were dysfunctional consequences of the innovation. Instead of health benefits, a substantial increase in dysentery, diarrhea, and a high infant mortality rate resulted. 20. Defend the proposition that a MNC has no responsibility for the consequences of an innovation beyond the direct effects of the innovations such as the product's safety, performance, and so forth. It would be difficult to defend this proposition since the dysfunctional consequences of an innovation may not only have negative consequences on the social system but may ultimately impact on the success of the multinational concern. While most multinational companies have not concerned themselves with the consequences of an innovation beyond product safety, it appears that in the future there will be greater concern on the part of host countries in holding companies responsible for the



consequences of their marketing activities. It would seem that from an enlightened self-interest viewpoint, companies should attempt to determine the consequences of their innovations, and should they prove to be dysfunctional, include in their marketing strategies attempts to eliminate the negative aspects of the acceptance of diffusion of their product. 21. Find a product whose introduction into a foreign culture may cause dysfunctional consequences and describe how the consequences might be eliminated and the product still profitably introduced. Library project.