Chapter 6

Glocalization of Consumers in the Caribbean:
A Case Study of Trinidad and Tobago

Fayola Nicholas
Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business, Trinidad and Tobago

Raghava Rao Gundala
University of Wisconsin – Stout, USA

ABSTRACT

Cultural value systems have a direct effect on consumer behavior and vary by the major cultural dimensions between countries. It is important for marketers to understand the factors that influence consumer behavior to develop their marketing strategy. It is also important to understand the possible differences within a culture (sub-culture). However, in the recent past, changes in the technology is playing a significant role in how marketers develop marketing strategies that address cultural and sub-cultural factors from both a domestic and global perspective; that means marketers must adhere to the Levi-Strauss maxim to think globally but act locally. This chapter is an example of how this is done in Trinidad and Tobago. The chapter gives a description of the culture of Trinidad and Tobago. A company case study that specifies how marketers develop strategies with the goal of providing precisely defined marketing messages that satisfy consumer’s need products and services so that consumers should be adequately stimulated to purchase the products being offered.

INTRODUCTION

Markets have clearly become global within the areas of trade and commercial integration. Despite these globalization trends, it seems, it may have driven and will continue to drive consumers towards assimilation in many ways. While there is growing evidence of emerging global cultures (Bird and Stevens 2003) with an emphasis on modernity, technology, freedom and individual choice (Steenkamp 2001) it does not minimize the need for understanding the impact of culture. On the contrary, the challenge of comprehending how culture affects consumers are enhanced. The increased pace of globalization has

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-2727-5.ch006
not, in any way, decreased the importance of cultural variation. The importance of the multifaceted ways in which culture shapes behavior is enhanced since it is less obvious now than in the past. Convergence cannot be taken for granted given the resilient and profound impacts of culture on consumer behavior. This scenario further stresses the importance of cross-cultural marketing research here in the Caribbean.

**THE PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE**

This chapter is an attempt to understand the impact of culture on consumer behavior in the English-speaking Caribbean countries with particular reference to Trinidad and Tobago.

Gesteland (2002) mentioned that most of the Caribbean marketing strategies are adopted from the United States. Marketing strategies without any country-specific adaptation that do not share the same cultural background as that of United States (Carson, 1967) are likely to disrupt the first connection between consumer and marketer.

Caribbean businesses need this issue addressed with specificity to their circumstances rather than a general acceptance of the conventional, westernized marketing strategies. Understanding the Caribbean’s unique cultural character and its influences consumer decision-making is necessary for every marketer who is in the Caribbean or who is interested in entering the Caribbean.

**ENGLISH-SPEAKING CARIBBEAN: A GENERAL PROFILE**

According to Augelli and Taylor (1960), the borderlands of the Caribbean have been a meeting place for people of diverse races and cultures for much of the post-Columbian history, and as a result, racial and cultural diversity has become a distinct feature of the region’s population and landscape. A generalization about the interplay of race, culture, and community is not easy, and each territory invites intensive study. Put another way; these island territories are “pockets of uniqueness” that should be fully understood before management decisions are made.

Colonization of the Caribbean region is done mainly by seven European nations, the five most important of which, from the point of socio-economic and cultural development, were Ireland, Spain, England, France, and Holland. The other two, Denmark and Sweden did little to shape the direction and nature of the colonial enterprise. Of the seven nations, five carved out spheres of influence on both the indigenous people and the enslaved African labor they used to expand and control the region. This European influence with the combination of the evolution of slavery and slave society became central to forming the Caribbean’s Creole culture and identity, which, in turn, shaped the entire region’s socio-cultural and socio-economic life. It was the African and European cultural experiences that created a Creole vision that has today become the symbol of Caribbean identity.

An understanding of the Caribbean begins with an acceptance about the region. The product of the histories and migrations of both the colonized and colonizers, Caribbean culture manifests itself not only in preserved traditions but in the synthesis and metamorphosis that is almost unavoidable in the face of so much influence and exchange. Here religions range from Afro-Christianity and Voodoo in Haiti, to Rastafarianism in Jamaica, to Hinduism and Islam in Trinidad and Guyana. Christianity, in many forms, is practiced widely throughout the region. Each country speaks its distinct dialect (creolized English
Related Content

Flying High: A Study on the Airline Preferences of Individuals in Urban India
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/flying-high/186339?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/chapter/flying-high/186339?camid=4v1a)

An Analytical Study of the Facebook Content Management Strategies of Dominos India
Priyanka Bhardwaj, Rohit Singh Adhikari and Vandana Ahuja (2014). *International Journal of Customer Relationship Marketing and Management* (pp. 64-78).

CRM in the Banking Sector: Framework and Application
[www.igi-global.com/article/crm-banking-sector/74361?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/article/crm-banking-sector/74361?camid=4v1a)

Working at Home: Negotiating Space and Place
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/working-home-negotiating-space-place/22600?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/chapter/working-home-negotiating-space-place/22600?camid=4v1a)