

GLOBALISATION OF CONSUMER CULTURE: AN EMPIRICAL SURVEY OF CONSUMERS IN DELHI

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Abstract

Increasing globalisation, worldwide investment and production strategies, growth of global transport and, media and, advances in information and communication technologies have all accelerated global market integration. As against a multi-domestic strategy, a natural form of international segmentation for marketers, the homogeneity among consumers has reduced within countries whereas increasing across countries. Thus, the decision as to standardize or customize marketing strategy requires analysis of the behavioural positions undertaken by consumers in marketplace. The study attempts to explore the various positions of homogenisation, localisation, hybridisation or marginalisation acquired by consumers in the globalised world. Study results support the co-existence of the multiple marketplace positions among Indian consumers, thereby providing important managerial implications and directions for future research.

Keywords: Globalisation, Consumer culture, Homogenization, Hybridization.

1. Introduction

“Consumerism is the religion of the twentieth century.”

(Miles, 1998)

It is well manifested in the increasing pedagogic work on consumerism and consumer culture that “we are living in a consumer society and consumption and consumers are central to socio-cultural as well as economic life” (Dagevos, 2005). As economy develops and per capita income rises, consumerism tends to proliferate and extend the act of consumption beyond necessary items to discretionary consumption (Mukherjee et al., 2012). With initial association of rise of consumption with the rise of industrial-capitalist mode of production per se (e.g., Ewen, 1976; Foster, 1991; Ritzer, 2004; Varman and Belk, 2008), theorist like Strasser (2003) and Zukin and Maguire (2004) emphasized that the various structural changes taking place in economy and society as well as various individual changes have also contributed towards such transition. Changing technology, demographic trends, ideas, habits, values and other facets of culture, shift from state to

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market economy, movement of population to cities, increase in single child families and explosion of innovation, all encouraged new production and its consequent consumption.

With profound transformations in our daily life, everything has been commodified (Strasser, 2003). Earlier, consumption was an act of necessity. Products were owned and possessed for their functional values (Firat, 1997). In contemporary conditions, however, symbolism (Firat, Dholakia and Venkatesh, 1995) and experiential (Firat, 1997) values have acquired greater prominence in need determination. The link between object and the function it serves is believed to be more cultural and arbitrary. It is not the object, but the way culture signifies and uses it; construct the need (Firat, Dholakia and Venkatesh, 1995). Consumption is seen as social, cultural and economic process (Zukin and Maguire, 2004). Thus, has evolved the concept of 'consumer culture' which encompasses not only the rational choices made by consumers and their influence on purchase behaviour, but also "the sociocultural, experiential, symbolic, and ideological aspects of consumption" (Arnould and Thompson, 2005).

With increasing globalisation during last 20-30 years, the field of consumption has attained new dimensions. Worldwide investment and production strategies, growth of global transport and media, advances in information and communication technologies, increasing urbanisation in developing countries, increasing literacy levels and rapidly rising consumer expectations have all accelerated global market integration (Steenkamp and de Jong, 2010). Levitt (1983) is often considered as the first to recognize the trend towards globalisation of marketplace. He writes: "Companies must learn to operate as if the world were one large market-ignoring superficial regional and national differences..." He asserted that globalisation has led to convergence of needs and desires, requiring globally standardized products "that are advanced, functional, reliable and low priced." He refuted the concept of customisation.

Conventionally, multi-domestic strategy was a natural form of international segmentation, where each country represents a separate segment. It provided 'accessible' and 'cost effective' segments (Steenkamp and Hofstede, 2002) by following standardized production and distribution activities segment-wise. Here, nationality was taken as a proxy for culture and it was believed that norms and beliefs learned from a national culture lead to consistent consumer behaviour, even when nations are culturally diverse (Broderick, Greenley and Mueller, 2007). However, with increasing globalisation, the homogeneity among consumers within countries has reduced. Levitt (1983) contends that "a market segment in one country is seldom unique; it has close cousin everywhere..."

Roth(1995) contends that “...as trading nations reduce and eliminate structural, political and economic barriers, the search for similar consumers will become more important than national differences” (Cleveland and Laroche, 2007). This has brought marketers in a dilemmatic position to segment markets on a country-by-country basis, or to go for a global marketing, by catering similarly to similar segments across several countries. They are in a fix to choose between standardization and customization, whether to standardize their marketing strategy on the basis of ‘behavioural homogeneity’, or to customise it on the basis of ‘behavioural heterogeneity’ (Broderick, Greenley and Mueller, 2007).

Rationale of the Study

The present study diagnoses the factors working for and against the homogenization perspective of globalisation and bring to fore the various behavioural positions undertaken by consumers as against the homogenization view i.e. localization, hybridisation and marginalization, in the context of Indian consumers. In the process, the study uses Alden, Steenkamp and Batra’s (2006) ‘Global Consumption Orientation (GCO)’ multiple choice, single response scale across specific consumption-related domains to tap the above dialectic. The study makes use of the data collected from the consumers in the metropolitan city of Delhi.

The present paper has been organized into five sections. With introduction and rationale to the paper provided in the first section, the second section discusses the review of literature by examining the conceptual framework of consumer culture, the implication of globalisation for consumer culture and the various forms in which it has manifested. The third section describes the data and the research methodology used in the study followed by the findings of the study in the fourth section. Finally, the fifth section concludes the discussion and provides managerial implications and directions for future research.

2. Review Of Literature

Culture, Consumer Culture and Culture Change

More than any other factor, culture exerts “the broadest, deepest and most enduring influences” on an individual’s attitudes, behaviours and lifestyles (Cleveland and Laroche, 2007). His/her behavior is a result of the cultural value system derived from societal culture, regional subcultures, familial values as well as idiosyncratic values unique to him/her (Luna and Gupta, 2001). Culture is “so entwined with all facets of human existence that it is often difficult to determine how and in what ways its impact is manifested. Its impact may be subtle or pronounced, direct or oblique, enduring or ephemeral” (Craig and Douglas, 2006).

Anthropologists, Penaloza and Gilly (1999), have viewed culture "...as a construct at once pervasive, compelling, and elusive, from which a person's sense of reality, identity, and being emerge" (Cleveland and Laroche, 2007). From a social standpoint, Tylor (1881) has described culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." Herskovits (1955) has correctly synthesized it to be the "manmade" part of the environment (Craig and Douglas, 2006). McCracken (1986) has defined culture as "the 'lens' through which all phenomena are seen. It determines how these phenomena are apprehended and assimilated. Second, culture is the 'blueprint' of human activity. It determines the coordinates of social action and productive activity, specifying the behaviors and objects that issue from both". Hofstede (1980) aptly identifies it as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another" (Luna and Gupta, 2001).

Culture has "invisible" as well as "visible" dimensions. While the former incorporates the predominant and shared societal values and belief system, the latter includes the various ways in which these values and norms are made public and accessible to the senses (He, Merz and Alden, 2008). Rituals, artifacts, institutions and symbols particular to a society exemplify this visible domain (Craig and Douglas, 2006) in the forms of fashion, media, art, food, music, brands (He, Merz and Alden, 2008). Communication provides a vehicle for imbuing visible aspects with invisible aspects of culture (Craig and Douglas, 2006).

Generally, cultural effects are examined at the country level giving rise to a national culture shared by the people of the country. The production of national culture involves identification of some characteristics that distinguish member of one nation from the other (Foster, 1991). People of different nations often belong to different cultures. Various national cultural frameworks explain cross-cultural variations in attitude and behaviour (Steenkamp, 2001). Also, culture has been assumed to have stable characteristics. Tse et al. (1988) argue that by and large any culture has "general tendencies of persistent preference for particular states of affairs over others, persistent preferences for specific social processes over others, and general rules for selective attention, interpretation of environmental cues, and responses" (Steenkamp, 2001). Scholars like Weick and Quinn (1999) and Leana and Barry (2000) have emphasized that cultural stability reduces ambiguity and provide greater control over expected behaviour (Leung et al., 2005).

However, current research (Inglehart and Baker, 2000; Berry et al., 2002; Kitayama, 2002) has brought to fore the fluid and adaptive character of human mind and its active

and dynamic interaction with the environment giving rise to dynamic view of culture (Leung et al., 2005). Indeed, Usunier (2000) opines that “culture is much more a process than a distinctive whole” (Cleveland and Laroche, 2007). Craig and Douglas (2006) comment that “culture evolves as political, social, economic and technological forces reshape the cultural landscape...culture is not static, but continually evolving and changing.” The mechanisms bringing such changes vary, including internal dynamics as well as external forces. Externally, as a result of wars and colonization earlier, globalisation is changing cultures these days through immigration, international trade and finance, global media and technological flows and business travel and tourism (Cleveland and Laroche, 2007). The exposure has been both ‘passive’ through communication system as well as ‘active’ through actual movement. The sociologist Appadurai (1990) has identified a particularly relevant diffusion framework consisting of five paths of cross-cultural flows.

The impact of culture on consumer behaviour is still an important area of research (Laroche and Park, 2013). Its importance is well documented with market researchers emphasizing the inadequacy of demographics and socioeconomic characteristics like social class, income, and education in predicting consumers' behavior and choices of products. Researchers have emphasized the use of ‘lifestyle values’ as a proxy for consumers' choices. These lifestyle values, commonly called values and lifestyles surveys (VALS), involve "psychographic" analysis of consumers' responses to questions on self-concepts and topics like spouses, household arrangements and leisure time. Although these questions have no apparent connection with products, but, have been found to be effective in increasing sales (Zukin and Maguire, 2004).

Thus, consumer culture has been accepted as one of the determining features of modern day existence which has brought consumer meaning to the center and understanding of consumer symbolism and lifestyle orientation as essential elements of a successful marketing strategy. It addresses “the dynamic relationship between consumer actions, the market place, and cultural meanings.” Here, consumer action is not taken as a casual force, but is conceptualized into culture as the very fabric for all experiences, meanings and actions. It addresses the sociocultural, ideological, symbolic, and experimental aspects of consumption (Arnould and Thompson, 2005) that are not plainly accessible through modernist rational choice paradigm (Firat, Dholakia and Venkatesh, 1995) or through product symbolism and ritual practices in their structural and static sense (Oswald, 1999).

The central tenet of consumer culture lies in description of core identities in terms of consumption (Holt, 2002 as mentioned in Steenkamp and de Jong, 2010). Consumer has been liberated from the sole role of a consumer and is being enacted as producer who constantly interacts with objects in marketplace to define his/her self-image (Firat, Dholakia and Venkatesh, 1995). Marketplace also enables consumers to forge feelings of social solidarity by creating distinctive self-selected marketplace cultures (Arnould and Thompson, 2005) like culture based on lifestyle (e.g. punk, grunge) and culture based on interest (e.g. techie, green) (Firat, 1997). Consumer culture also explores experiential values of activities. Each brand name or consumption activity is imbued with culture in which they generated (Firat, 1997). Cultural themes with their complex text and texture allow consumer to immerse into experience (Dholakia and Firat, 2006). Coke, a prototypical multinational product not only represents a beverage, but the experience of being young, modern, active, and American (Ger, 1999).

The earlier conceived notion of authentic and consistent identity has been taken over by dynamic and mutable selves that can be easily bought and sold in the marketplace (Oswald, 1999). Consumers not only change their self-concepts, but also subscribe to multiple and contradictory value systems and lifestyles. As consumers move on in everyday life, the home, the office, the leisure enclave, they pursue diverse value system without feeling inconsistent, paradoxical or improper. The initial uniformity and consistency predicted on a universal rationality of economic efficiency is increasingly being rejected (Firat, Dholakia and Venkatesh, 1995) in favour of enriched and meaningful ways of living by navigating different cultures (Dholakia and Firat, 2006). Horowitz (1975) has called this as “ascriptive identity” which “embraces multiple levels or tiers, and it changes with the environment” (Oswald, 1999). Contemporary consumer is more “fickle” than explainable, putting into question the traditional basis like demographic variables for explaining consumer behaviour (Firat, Dholakia and Venkatesh, 1995). Consumer culture is, thus, characterized by “the dynamics of fragmentation, plurality, fluidity, and the intermingling (or hybridization) of consumption traditions and ways of life” (Arnould and Thompson, 2005).

Global Consumer Culture

Last 20-30 years have witnessed the increasing interdependence among the world nations through various transnational relations, processes and flows (Schuerkens, 2003), in short globalisation. Globalisation is a process created by and resulting in greater interdependence among economic, political, cultural and social units in the world through cross border flows of goods, services, capital, information, people and culture (Held et

al., 1999; Guillen, 2001b as mentioned in Guillen, 2001a). It reduces barriers between countries (Riefler, 2012) and intensifies level of interaction between societies (Ger, 1999). Hannerz (1996) has cited globalisation, in the most general sense, as “a matter of increasing long-distance interconnectedness” leading to ‘restructuring of spaces’ with world becoming a single space.

The process of globalisation has been charged by various scholars for homogenisation of culture (Friedman, 2000). It has been argued that internationalization and cultural cross-fertilization has led to the convergence among traditional societies in many ways. Convergence refers to a process of “reduction of diversity within a given observable set or population” (Mitry and Smith, 2009). Few scholars have even advocated the rise of ‘global culture’. Marshall McLuhan’s (1964) gave a suspicious concept of “global village” to mark the rise of global culture.

A particularly relevant diffusion framework consisting of five paths of cross-cultural flows, as proposed by Appadurai (1990), has resulted into the global diffusion of images, symbols and meanings in consumer’s everyday life, which were initially confined to a particular locale (Kjeldgaard and Askegaard, 2006). Consumers see themselves not only in relation to their own culture but also to other cultures, taking entire world as a ‘frame of reference’ (He, Merz and Alden, 2008). As a result, ‘global consumer culture’ is foreseen. Global consumer culture is a “cultural entity not associated with a single country, but rather a larger group generally recognized as international and transcending individual national cultures” (Alden, Steenkamp and Batra, 1999). It refers to people belief in global citizenship and desire to participate in “global village” (Strizhakova, Coulter, and Price 2008). It involves creation, learning and sharing of similar consumption-related symbols like product categories, brands and consumption activities. It is a collection of common signs (e.g., product like blue jeans and ipod) (Alden, Steenkamp and Batra, 1999).

Sklair (1991) write that it is “cultural ideology of consumerism”, consisting of “symbols, images, and the aesthetic of the lifestyle and self image”, that has been found to be converging (Guillen, 2001a). Thus, one should not take global consumer culture for similar consumer tastes, rather as participation in a shared conversation by drawing upon shared symbols (Holt, Quelch and Taylor 2004). The word ‘taste’ should not be confused for the tongue’s sensory experience, but, as the word ‘preference’ for the identities revealed by consumer product. It has been aptly said that “convergence of consumer preference is for the image of the product” (Mitry and Smith, 2009).

Parallel to global consumer culture is the growth of 'global consumer segments' that "...associate similar meanings with certain places, people and things" (Alden, Steenkamp and Batra, 1999). These are "individuals around the world whose cultural, social, and other differences are becoming less important as influences on their consumer behavior." They exhibit identical consumer behavior regardless of sociological differences (Keillor, D'Amico and Horton, 2001). These mainly consist of teenagers, business people, governmental/diplomats and elites who delve on worldwide meaningful consumption-related symbols to act out real or imagined participation in global cosmopolitan segment (Alden, Steenkamp and Batra, 1999).

Some recent empirical researches provide evidence on the emergence of global consumer culture. Alden, Steenkamp and Batra (1999) found that meaningful percentages of advertisements world over employ global consumer culture positioning while studies by Dawar and Parker (1994), Hofstede, Steenkamp and Wedel (1999) and Keillor, D'Amico and Horton (2001) indicated the existence of global consumer segments. Dholakia and Talukdar (2004) have provided evidence of global consumption tendencies in emerging markets like India and China.

Refuting the Notion of Global Consumer Culture

Against the homogenisation perspective, various scholars have viewed that globalisation has never been a uniform or irreversible process, but a fragmented, incomplete, discontinuous and even a contradictory process (Guidry, Kennedy and Zald, 1999; Held et al., 1999; Giddens, 2000; Gilpin, 2000). The persistence of globalisation has taken the form of an axiom, without its actual verification (Guillen, 2001a). Sociologist Anthony Giddens (1990), arguing against the convergent consequence of globalisation, writes, "globalisation is a process of uneven development that fragments as it coordinates. The outcome is not necessarily, or even usually, a generalized set of changes acting in a uniform direction, but consists in mutually opposed tendencies." Anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1988) observes that the world is "growing both more global and more divided, more thoroughly interconnected and more intricately partitioned at the same time" (Guillen, 2001).

Berry (2008) has criticized literature for diluting the very concept of globalisation by conflating its 'processes' with its 'outcomes'. He argued that this "process involves a flow of cultural elements (ideas, goods etc.), and the establishing of relationships and networks. It does not specify what societies and their individual members do in response to this process, nor identify the changes that take place among them." Legrain (2002) has

also emphasized the distinction saying that globalization is a “shorthand for how our lives are becoming increasingly intertwined with those of distant people and places around the world – economically, politically, and culturally... ..(However) globalisation is a process, not a destination” (Berry, 2008). Zelizer (1999) also urges to distinguish between the ‘process’ and the ‘outcome’ of the worldwide diffusion, which seems to be getting more diverse with the intensification of globalisation.

Anthropologist Appadurai (1996) argues that "individuals and groups seek to annex the global into their own practices of the modern" (Guillen, 2001a). Inglehart and Baker (2000) have also forwarded similar views on the basis of analysis of cross-national attitudinal data over the 1981-1998 periods. He found that national cultures and values do change over time, but in their own "path- dependent" ways and not necessarily in convergent ways. Opposing the converging view of globalisation, Hannerz (1989) argues: “The cultural flow from center to periphery...does not enter a void, nor does it wash out everything that comes in its way” (Schuerkens, 2003). Schutte and Ciarlante (1998) identify globalisation more as a ‘human process’ than just a ‘technical process’. They emphasized that globalisation will not annihilate cultural differences, but the unique culture and psychology of a particular country will determine the distinctive characteristics and consequences of globalisation in that country. Different timings and dissimilar processes of globalisation between various nations, itself defies the notion of similar effects of globalisation (Suh and Kwon, 2002).

Featherstone (1990) writes: “While particular television programmes, sport spectacles, music concerts, advertisements may rapidly transit the globe, this is not to say that the response of those viewing and listening within a variety of cultural contexts and practices will be anything like uniform.” Zhou and Belk (2004) have also argued in similar direction saying that the extant research on global advertising implicitly assume that “what an ad says or what its creator intends it to convey, is also what it means to consumers.” The presence of global images in ads is taken to mean that local culture is becoming globalised and the consumer’s values are changing. Scholars, like de Mooij (1998) even argue that global consumer culture is essentially nonexistent and exists only in the minds of corporate strategists (Alden, Steenkamp and Batra, 1999).

Indeed, Featherstone (1990) remarked that the “shift towards the idea of the homogeneous unitary nation state was itself one aspect of this (globalisation) process and should not be misunderstood as an impediment, for it was itself an idea which became rapidly globalised...The varieties of responses to the globalisation process clearly suggest

that there is little prospect of a unified global culture rather there are global cultures in the plural.” Appadurai (1990) writes: “The new global cultural economy has to be understood as complex, overlapping, disjunctive order, which cannot any longer be understood in terms of existing center- periphery models.”

Culture and Behavioural Outcomes

From a consumer perspective, globalisation is “mostly a state of mind” (Frieson, 2003). In today’s postmodern world, where core identities of consumers are defined in relation to consumption (Holt, 2002), consumers experience a glocalisation of local culture and globalisation influences (Riefler, 2012). Consumers oppose the “bland homogeneity” of same products, services and symbol everywhere (Steger, 2003). Study of literature reveals that researches on global consumer culture have found differentiated forms of modernities and consumer cultures formed by synthesis of both local and global cultures (e.g., Mehta and Belk, 1991; Ger and Belk, 1996, 1999; Miller, 1997; Joy, 2001; Sandikci and Ger, 2002, 2010; Belk, Ger and Askegaard, 2003; Usiuner and Holt, 2007, 2010; Wong, 2007; Zhao and Belk, 2008; Dong and Tian, 2009) (Karababa, 2012).

Arnett (2002) argues that most consumers today tend to develop a bi-cultural identity, with part of the identity rooted in the local culture, while another part into the global culture. They wear jeans, enjoy fried rice, eat at McDonald's and surf on the net along with maintaining their cultural values, their social groups and their national identity. They draw between the two identities, the local identity and the global identity, depending on the demand of the context (Leung et al., 2005). Thus, not only traditionally, but even today, local culture continues to remain a significant force in the lives of most people around the world (Crane, 2002). Indeed, Tomlinson (1999) has called “globalism” and “localism” as the “two axial principles of our age” (Steenkamp and de Jong, 2010). The two cannot be clearly understood except in reference to each other. What constitute global in a given culture depends upon what has been taken as local, and vice-versa. Wilk (1995) recommends that one needs to look beyond the polarities of ‘global hegemony’ and ‘local appropriation’ by identifying structures of common difference across cultures (Akaka and Alden, 2010).

Globalisation and localisation are not attitudinal polarities, i.e., a positive attitude towards one need not necessarily lead to a negative attitude towards the other, although, considerable number of consumers do fit into this unipolar pattern. The concept of “Global Consumption Orientation (GCO)” as developed by Alden, Steenkamp and Batra (2006) very well tap the various attitudinal responses of consumers towards the global

diffusion of consumption behaviour, along a global- hybrid- local continuum. Specifically, they have identified four attitudinal responses to globalisation, namely a) homogenisation (acceptance of global consumption symbols), b) localisation (rejection of global alternatives in favour of local alternatives), c) hybridisation (integration of global elements with local elements), and d) marginalisation (lack of interest in above three categories or the consumption category as a whole), as have been discussed below:

Localisation

Global integration prevalent in today's epoch has concurrently witnessed an intensification of local cultural traditions. Various scholars (Robertson, 1995; Crane, 2002; Hung, Le and Belk, 2007; Hermans and Dimaggio, 2007) believe in the emergence of local consumption cultures as resilient against globalisation. Instead of eradicating local, globalisation contributes to its revitalisation and fortification. MacLeod (1991) writes: "Turning in the direction of traditional symbols, customs, images and behavior forms an important countertrend in a modernising world." Buell (1994) underlines: "Tighter integration has thus paradoxically meant, and continues to mean, proliferation of asserted differences (Schuerkens, 2003).

People make accelerated use of local products and symbols to reaffirm their identity with their culture (Craig and Douglass, 2006). Local consumption imagery provides consumers easy identification with local lifestyles, values, attitudes and behaviour (Alden, Steenkamp and Batra, 2006). Large numbers of consumers in parts of Eastern Europe are shifting back to local products partly on account of low prices and better quality of local goods and partly on account of nostalgia and special tastes. In Turkey, there has been a return to natural bayleaf and olive oil soap from Lux beauty soap, to Turkish cigarettes from the Marlboro, and to the Turkish coffee from the earlier Nescafe (Ger and Belk, 1996). Particularly, as the novelty of the Western product erodes, consumers look back towards local products (Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden, 2003). Local perspective predominantly holds for nonluxury or "noncosmopolitan" goods like medicines, foods, and nonalcoholic beverages that reflect deeper cultural values (Zhou and Belk, 2004). Based on consumer desire for local culture, Ger (1999) has even advocated use of local cultural capital as a means of attaining competitiveness for local companies.

Various factors explain these trends. Global links and their influences are feared by local groups as cultural invasion which will ultimately eradicate their own culture. Identification with local community and values provide stability and continuity in times of turmoil, created by the rapidity and complexity of global changes. Strassoldo (1992)

has argued: “The new localism is the search for a refuge from the unsettling confusion of the larger world.” Bright and Geyer (1987) pointed that emphasis on local culture provides “self-determining and self-controlled participation in the process of global integration” (Schuerkens, 2003). “Slow food movement” started in Italy against the incursion of fast food, specifically McDonalds, which found great support throughout Europe, clearly illustrate the fact. Although, there has been massive increase in the number of fast-food restaurants, the number of gourmet and ethnic restaurants has substantially expanded too (Ritzer, 2003).

Hybridisation

Between two extremes of homogenisation and localisation, there exists third complex possibility of hybridisation in which global and local forces mutually reinforce each other, than necessarily being in conflict. It is argued that consumers often “draw from all available global and local, new and old sources as they use products to position themselves in the local age, gender, social class, religion and ethnic hierarchies” (Ger and Belk, 1996).

Robertson’s concept of ‘glocalisation’ is one such case where homogenisation and localisation play in tune with each other (Holton, 2000). Ritzer (2003) defines glocalisation as “the interpretation of the global and the local, resulting in unique outcomes in different geographical areas.” Global becomes localised and local goes globalised (Kjeldgaard and Askegaard, 2006). What was initially the global ultimately becomes the local, with massive transformation to fit the local culture. Indigenization takes place to such an extent, that they ultimately reflect local society and culture. Consumer ceases to view them as ‘exotic’ and makes them a part of the local scenscape (Eckhardt and Mahi, 2004). It enables consumers to receive the benefits of foreign goods with continuous maintenance of traditional values (Eckhardt and Mahi, 2004). This interaction between global and local has been significant source of uniqueness and innovations (Ritzer, 2003).

Mc Donalds has made widespread use of glocalised approaches throughout the world. It has produced different menus in different countries by adjusting to local food preferences. Fashion and music present another such case where western and traditional easily mingle. ‘Fusion Fashion’ in India presents one such case, where western styles are being incorporated with Indian fabric (hand-painted trousers), traditional styles are being adapted to give western look (Western-cut shirts to accompany traditional sarees) or a mix in which East-West divide has blurred (Indian style bead embroidery on a western

shirt). Development of Indi-pop by fusing Bollywood-style music with western music, also illustrates such adaptation (Eckhardt and Mahi, 2004).

Another related concept is consumption creolisation, as described by Ger and Belk (1996) to refer “to the meeting and mingling of meanings and meaningful forms from disparate sources.” It means “mixing what is at hand, the old and the new... (It) reflects the dialectics of adoption and resistance to global and local hegemonies.” It incorporates partial return to local roots, limited consumer resistance as well as local appropriation of products and their meanings in various combinations. Foreign goods entering the marketplace are accepted by certain niche population in certain situation only, with or without meaning transformation (Eckhardt and Mahi, 2004). This appears to be in line with Firat’s (1997) ‘globalisation of fragmentation’ which reflects “simultaneous presence of different & essentially incompatible patterns and model of life represented by a variety of products, lifestyles and experiences that do not fit with each other, instead representing different cultural identities and histories.”

Marginalisation

Although infrequently discussed in globalisation literature, marketing literature provides evidences for the existence of consumers who are alienated from the marketplace and hold weak attitude towards toward globalisation (Alden, Steenkamp and Batra, 2006). Slater (1997) condemns the contemporary consumer culture for its “shallow” emphasis on consumption (Steenkamp and de Jong, 2010). “Acculturative stress” experienced by consumers make them to reject all symbols of culture. They lose interest in all consumption alternatives be it global, hybrid or local. They become interested in the functionality of the product than the cultural theme they represent (Alden, Steenkamp and Batra, 2006). Steenkamp and de Jong (2010) have called such a state as “glalienation” as Arnett (2002) posits that rapid changes in consumer culture create cultural uncertainty and consequently, a sense of alienation. Omnipresence of global brands undermine belief in local alternatives, whereas consumers’ simultaneously find it difficult to believe in global alternatives, resulting in alienation of consumer culture.

Thus, it is clear that homogenisation is not the only consequence of globalisation. Various strategic positions can take place along a continuum ranging from worldwide homogenisation to localisation with hybrid approaches in between like glocalisation. Each side provides evidences to support its position. In such situation, it would be highly inconsistent for any global corporation to be alone driven by political or economical factors or by homogeneous consumption assumption. Recognizing other possible

outcomes of globalisation, it is in the interest of global corporations to assess consumer's inclination to global consumer culture, before starting on its activities in any nation.

3. Research Methodology

The Sample

The study make use of the data collected from the people of the metropolitan city of Delhi who were approached and requested to fill in an undisguised questionnaire prepared for the purpose. As it was a consumption based study, any 'household' through non-probability convenience sampling constituted the sampling frame. A total of 504 duly filled-in questionnaires were received which ultimately constituted the sample.

Regarding gender, i.e. male and female, the respondents were almost in the same proportion. With respect to age, a majority of the respondents were young and comprised of relatively educated people. Majority of the respondents were either engaged in services or pursuing their studies. With respect to family income, the sample at our disposal is distributed in nearly the same proportions among the various categories ranging from monthly income below Rs 15,000, to monthly income above Rs 60,000.

Research Instrument

The data on various behavioral positions of consumers in the marketplace was acquired with the help of Alden, Steenkamp and Batra's (2006) 'Global Consumption Orientation (GCO)' multiple choice, single response scale across specific consumption-related domains. The scale measured consumer responses across four consumption-related domains, namely, lifestyle, entertainment, furnishings and clothing, each with four preference alternatives i.e., 1) a global alternative (one with no strong association to any individual country or region but broadly demanded in many countries around the world), 2) a local alternative (one associated with one's own native country), 3) a hybrid alternative (one reflecting combination of the global and local, whether as separate pieces or as more or less integrated hybrid forms), and 4) a marginal alternative (one expressing a lack of interest in any of the other three alternatives and/or the consumption category as a whole).

Since it was the tested scale in terms of both its reliability and validity, the scale was included verbatim with two additional consumption domains of food and cosmetics, thus increasing the number of consumption domains from four to six. As food forms an important involving category in which many consumers may have preference for local alternatives, its inclusion as an additional consumption domain may reveal interesting outcomes. Further, Alden, Steenkamp and Batra (2006) have themselves applied it as

additional consumption domain while replicating their study in China. Cosmetics were also added, given Indian own tradition of herbal cosmetics. Appendix-I contains the scale used in the study. The responses have been coded as ‘1’ for ‘global’, ‘2’ for ‘hybrid’, ‘3’ for ‘local’ and ‘4’ for ‘indifferent’. For the purpose of examining the structure underlying the categorical data collected, Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) has been used.

4. Study Findings And Discussions

Multiple correspondence analysis, an extension of correspondence analysis to three or more variables, reveals the structure of a complex data matrix. “The technique is a tool to analyze the association between two or more categorical variables by representing the categories of the variables as points in the low dimensional space...Categories with similar distributions will be represented as points that are close in space, and categories that have very dissimilar distributions will be positioned far apart. The result is interpreted on the basis of the relative positions of these points, for example, as spatial dimensions and/or clustering.”¹ Thus, by presenting the result visually, correspondence analysis facilitates interpretation. “The number of dimensions is, at most, one less than the number of categories in the variable with fewest categories. As a rule, however, only a few of these dimensions will be interpretable or of substantial interest.”

When applied to the data, MCA helped to quantify categorical data by assigning numerical values to the respondents and six consumption categories measured in the study. It resulted into the model as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Model Summary for Global Consumption Orientation using MCA Technique

Dimension	Cronbach's Alpha	Variance Accounted For	
		Total (Eigenvalue)	Inertia
1	.731	2.557	.426
2	.669	2.260	.377
Total		4.816	.803
Mean	.702	2.408	.401

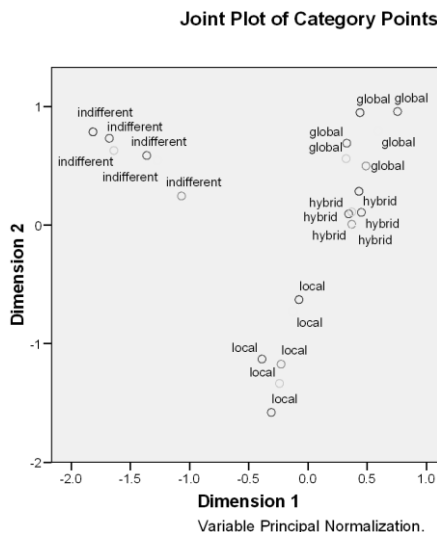
Source: Author’s estimation

Examination of the above table shows reliability of GCO scale with high cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.702. Inertia gives the variance. It helps to measure the extent to which the profile points are spread around the centroid placed in the origin of the coordinate

system. The survey result presents that 80.3% of the variance in the data is accounted for by the solution with 42.6% by the first dimension and 37.7% by the second, thus, covering a good quantum of data. Eigen values express the relative importance of the dimensions. The above table, thus, assigns equal importance to two dimensions with approximate equal eigen values of the two.

As such, MCA determines whether consumers GCO attitudes are consistent across consumption categories. For the purpose, joint category quantification plot has been constructed. Joint category quantification plot that helps to identify category relationship and to find which categories are similar for each variable, resulted into the formation of separate clusters of categories for each of the variables under consideration as shown in Fig. 1. Specifically, the four hypothesized consumptions alternatives namely, global, hybrid, local and indifferent for each of six consumption categories, namely, lifestyle, entertainment, furnishings, clothing, food and cosmetics, formed separate clusters. As categories of different variable will be close if they belong to the same object (SPSS-Tutorial Notes), the close proximity among the various consumption alternative for each of the consumption category shows consistency among consumer choices. Thus, the plot so formed with the help of MCA analysis clearly depicts consistency among consumer choices among various consumption categories. This shows that measures of the GCO attitudes reflect orientations that go beyond the specific consumption domains used in the study and can be generalized.

Figure 1: Consumers’ Attitude to Globalisation



Source: Author’s estimation

As, in MCA analysis, profile points closest to the average profile lie closest to the origin, the joint category plots clearly shows the close proximity of ‘hybrid’ consumption alternative to the centroid. This shows that Indian consumers are more inclined to ‘hybrid’ consumption alternative in comparison to other alternatives, viz. global, local and indifferent. Further, the close clustering of ‘hybrid’ alternative for various consumption categories, also emphasizes the high degree of inclination among Indian consumers towards this alternative.

**Table 2: Consumption Alternative under each Consumption Domain:
Frequency**

	Lifestyle	Entertainment	Furniture	Clothing	Food	Cosmetics
Global Hybrid	72	79	72	66	26	98
Local	260*	269*	206*	261*	216*	220*
Indifferent	80	85	133	114	202	68
Total	85	64	81	57	50	108
	497	497	492	498	494	494

Source: Author’s estimation

*Modal Values

**Table 3: Consumption Alternative under each Consumption Domain:
Masses**

	Lifestyle	Entertainment	Furniture	Clothing	Food	Cosmetics
Global Hybrid	.024	.027	.024	.022	.009	.033
Local	.087	.091	.069	.088	.073	.074
Indifferent	.027	.029	.045	.038	.068	.023
	.029	.022	.027	.019	.017	.036

Source: Author’s estimation

Use of descriptive statistics also points to similar conclusion. As shown in the Table 2, for each of the consumption category, the hybrid alternative has emerged to be the modal value, with highest frequency. Masses, which reflect marginal proportions, and help to measure the importance of point profile in the analysis, also points in the same direction. With high masses, figures listed in the Table 3 clearly show that the ‘hybrid’ consumption alternative is most associated with all the consumption categories.

In addition to the proximity of points and their constellation in space, it is usual practice to interpret the dimensions and give them name by studying the distribution of points and

their order along the dimension. As depicted in Figure 1, the second dimension represents relative preference for various consumption alternatives, with global vs. local consumption preferences at the extremes, and hybrid consumption preferences located in between. The findings that local and global consumption alternatives are polar extremes with hybrid consumption alternative in between, supports the literature on globalisation. The first dimension supports the existence of consumers' who lack interest in any of the three response alternatives. Clustering of 'global', 'local' and 'hybrid' consumption alternatives together far above the 'indifferent' response categories reflect intensity of the consumer responses to the process of globalization. Thus, this dimension helps to capture the "consumer response intensity". These results are very much in conformity with those obtained by Alden, Steenkamp and Batra's (2006) in their study and, thus, adding credibility to the study.

5. Conclusion

Many strategic and managerial implications follow from global consumption orientation (GCO) analysis. Our study provides reason to question the homogeneous consequence of globalization. Globalisation and cultural homogenisation are not equivalent. Local and global consumption symbols are often integrated by consumers. To assume dominance of standardized global brands over localized competitors is highly questionable. Although complete standardization might help companies to relish larger economies of scale, blending of global with local symbols can be a more profitable strategy resulting into a portfolio of brands varying along the global-hybrid-local continuum. However, one should always stay alarmed as to homogeneous consequence of globalisation with unstoppable exposure to foreign culture through global mass media, social interaction with foreigners etc.

The study also has implications for global marketers by providing insights on probable segmentation, targeting and positioning strategies. Depending on target market, strategies can be framed on global and local basis. If market is characterized by relatively large number of consumers with global preferences, strategies with global thrust would be more profitable. As against this, market characterized by relatively large number of consumers with strong local preferences, will perform better with strategies emphasizing local perspective. Communication is also one area where knowledge about consumers' behaviour can be of great use, given the importance of global mass media in exposing consumers to foreign culture. Showing global icons and global usage of the product will help to enhance brand value.

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The present study suffers from some limitations that offer avenues for future research. The study is confined to the metropolitan city of Delhi. The sample selected is not representative of the rest of India. Therefore, the findings of the study may not be applicable to the other parts of the country because of social and cultural differences. Further, while filling up the questionnaire there are chances of respondent's personal prejudice and bias.

The concept of glocalisation is subject to manipulation. The study has conceptualized it as mix of global and local consumption choices. This left the nature of global-local mix to the respondent's interpretation. Several hybridization mixtures can be theorized. Dynamic aspect to the study can be added by studying consumer position over time. As consumers return to local alternatives once the novelty of global offering wears off, longitudinal research will help to analyse if individual consumer attitudes changes over time. Further, additional frameworks for tapping the global consumption orientation of consumers need to be explored.

Details provided in respect of Multiple Correspondence Analysis technique has been taken from, 'Clausen, Sten-Eric (1998). *Applied Correspondence Analysis: An Introduction*, Series: Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences, Sage Publications.' and "SPSS – Tutorial Notes."

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Appendix I

Global Consumption Orientation, Alden, Steenkamp and Batra (2006) Scale.

Lifestyle and products/services situations	Product preference option			
	(A) <i>I prefer products that are popular in many countries than traditional forms of products that are popular in my country, i.e., I have preference for global products.</i>	(B) <i>I prefer a combination of products both that are popular in many countries as well as traditional forms of products that are popular in my country, i.e. I prefer mix of global and traditional products.</i>	(C) <i>I would rather prefer products that are traditionally popular in my country than products that are popular in many countries, i.e., I prefer traditional products.</i>	(D) <i>It does not matter to me whether the product I prefer is traditional one from my own country or the one used in many countries, i.e., I am indifferent.</i>
1. Lifestyle	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D
2. Entertainment (like TV, music, video, games etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D
3. Furnishings	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D
4. Clothing	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D
5. Food	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D
6. Cosmetics	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D