

CROSS-CULTURAL MANAGEMENT:

A Multi Disciplinary Approach



Editors

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CHAPTER 7

IMPACTS OF GLOBALISATION ON CULTURE

ADEKEYE Deborah Shade and AJAYI Olumide Abraham

Chapter Objectives

After studying this chapter, readers should be able to:

- examine the relationship between globalisation and culture;
- highlight the aims of globalisation;
- discuss the impacts of globalisation on culture;
- analyse the positive and negative effects of globalisation on culture; and
- proffer measures of curbing the negative impacts of globalisation on culture.

Chapter Outline

- Introduction
- The Concepts of Globalisation and Culture
- Aims of Globalisation
- Impacts of Globalisation
- Positive and Negative Effects of Globalisation on Culture
- Measures to Curb the Negative Impacts of Globalisation on Culture
- Chapter Exercises
- References

Introduction

Globalisation as a concept means different things to different people and the diverse ways of its interpretation has led to inclusion of so many ideas under the concept. In recent years, a number of studies had been dedicated to an understanding of globalisation and culture. These studies cut across almost all disciplines, and each of the disciplines proffers different definitions and interpretations. According to Paulo (1998), the process of increasing global integration has accelerated

dramatically in the technology. To him, globalisation refers to the spread of technology, especially information technology that has turned the world to a global village. Shenkar and Luo (2004), refer to globalisation as the growing economic interdependencies of countries worldwide through an increasing volume and variety of cross-border transactions in goods and services and of international capital flows, as well as through the rapid and widespread diffusion of technology and information. The process of globalisation is not restricted to the economic sphere alone. It also has social, political, environmental, cultural and religious dimensions, among others. Hence, Schirato and Webb (2003) define globalisation as a process of integrating not just the economy but also the culture, technology and governance of the world.

Globalisation has helped to liberalise national economy by creating a global market place in which all nations must participate directly or indirectly (Adesina, 2012). This undoubtedly led to growing activities and power of international financial investors mainly represented by multi-national corporations (Jaja, 2010). The globalisation of the production and distribution of goods and services offers many people access to products that they would not otherwise have. However, the changes brought about by globalisation threaten the viability of locally made products and the people who produce them. For example, the availability of imported foods in a market often at cheaper prices can displace local farmers who have traditionally earned a living by working their small plots of family owned land and selling their goods locally. Globalisation, of course, does more than simply increasing the availability of foreign-made consumer products and disrupts traditional producers. It also increases international trade in cultural products and services, such as movies, music, and publications. The expansion of trade in indigenous products is increasing the exposure of all societies to foreign cultures. Also, exposure to foreign goods frequently brings about changes in local cultures, values, and traditions. Globalisation necessitates the diffusion of culture, bringing about a strong cultural

homogenisation among countries of the world with different cultural boundaries.

Culture consists of the values the members of a given group hold, the norms they follow, and the material goods they create. It refers to the way of life of the individual member of groups within a society; how they dress, their religious ceremonies and leisure pursuit (Oni, 2005). People consider culture to be important because it defines peoples' identity. It has been argued that a people without culture are a people without identity. On this note, Adedimeji (2006), stated that "to be removed from one's culture is to be deprived of one's identity". The transmission of cultural ideas and images from one corner of the planet to another part by wireless and satellite technologies resulted in a situation in which cultures of different countries and diverse peoples are brought into contact at rates unprecedented in human history, thereby producing a global culture. This process of producing a global culture came with difficulty, conflict and challenges especially for developing nations.

Some scholars posited that modern globalisation is the third phase of colonisation employ by Western countries to strengthen the fundamentally exploitative relations established between colonial powers and the colonised over the past 400 years (Mulinge & Munyae, 2001).

It is in the light of these that this chapter examines the impacts of globalisation on culture.

The Concepts of Globalisation and Culture

According to Brown (1999), the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union dramatically changed relationships among nations. Cultures of different countries and diverse peoples are being brought into contact at unprecedented rates, driven by technological advances in communications and transportation. These advances accelerated globalisation and linked all humanity in vast economic, communications, and transportation networks.

Globalisation involves economic integration; the transfer of policies across borders; the transmission of knowledge; cultural stability; the reproduction, relations, and discourses of power. It is a global process, a concept, a revolution, and an establishment of the global market free from socio-political control. Globalisation has several dimensions: political, technological, human, environmental and cultural. These dimensions can reflect or contribute to the exclusion of the economically and educationally poor people especially in developing countries, and environmental degradation, as well as the growth of prosperity and peace in some areas.

Advances in technology such as global telecommunication infrastructure, cross border data flow, the Internet, satellite networks and wireless telephones are all credited to globalisation. Computers, mobile phones, and the Internet have brought about major transformation in world communication. In fact, it is not only that communication across the globe has been made easier by this technology, apparently, countries without this technology is more or less excluded from world development. Orunmoluyi (2000), noted that globalisation is a process of creating a global market in which increasingly all nations are forced to participate. David (2002), gave credence to this position while stating that globalisation is the process of harmonizing different cultures and beliefs. Culture in this sense is seen as the totality of the ways of life of a people.

According to Nandwa (2014), culture includes the total repertoire of human action which is socially transmitted from generation to generation. Similarly, Edewor (2003) describes culture of a society as the way of life of its members, the collection of ideas and habits which they learn, share and transmit from generation to generation. According to Tylor (1871), culture is a complex whole that include knowledge, beliefs, art, moral, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of the society. This definition emphasises the ability of man to impact on members of society, its ways and values. Culture is dynamic and

learned through the process of socialisation, enumeration, personal experience and deliberate indoctrination or teaching. A society or individual that is robbed of its culture can only marginally survive like a fish removed from its natural habitat to the earth surface, which is doomed to perish (Adedimeji, 2006).

According to Brown (1999), the relationship between globalisation and culture is embedded in the fact that there must be a set of shared cultural understandings for globalisation to continue apace. To him, part of the process of globalisation is the need to develop a culture that, in some broad way, can transcend diverse economic, ethnic, political, racial, and religious backgrounds. Such global culture either seeks to transcend normal affinities for one's own cultural groups or undermine it.

Aims of Globalisation

Scholte (1997), argues that globalisation facilitates the removal of barriers among nations of the world, thereby giving social relations unhindered access. The unique aims of globalisation often includes increased capital mobility, decline in costs of transportation, computing and communications. According to Mrak (2000), other aims of globalisation from the economic perspective include:

- (a) Internationalisation of production accompanied by changes in the structure of production
- (b) Expansion of international trade and services
- (c) Widening and deepening of international capital flows.

These imply a more connected world; a global village where transmission and exchange of cultures and ideas become the norm. Jaleel (2016), discussed the trade aspect of globalisation and conclude that the aim is simply for buyers to buy the best products from the places where they are made at the lowest price and for sellers, the aim is to sell their products at the highest prices that consumers will pay.

In short, the true aim of globalisation is to make the world to be one with no barriers in between countries. Sankar (2016),

maintained that in reality the term globalisation has led to change in spending pattern of people, lost native culture of various societies, lead to debt, American brand products (manufactured in China) and Chinese goods flourished their products in various countries, killed many local industries in many countries, lead to one way of thinking of humanity and many more. From the above perceptions, it can be concluded that the main aim of globalisation is to create a single society without any border.

Impacts of Globalisation on Culture

Radhakrishnan (2004), posited that the increasing empowerment of Western cultural values, including language, philosophy and worldview and the predominance of escalation in the mobility of labour, information and services has brought about the true worldwide revolution called globalisation. Africans have always been sceptical of the benefits of globalisation generally and most commentators on globalisation of African extract argue that the continent has not benefited from the process of globalisation and that it has actually exacerbated the problem of poverty in the continent (Ogechukwu & Ogbo, 2014). In fact, some of them blame globalisation for practically all that is wrong in Africa (Adei, 2004; Amiwu, 2004; Aluko, Akintola & Fatokun, 2004).

Globalisation appears to threaten the economic, socio-cultural, linguistic, educational and political independence of all people in the world. According to Adamu (2003), no person, family, religion and society is immune to globalisation. It shapes the society's labour market and its pattern of inequality, its consumption, its health, its political stability and legitimacy, values and members' lifestyles. One of the consequences of globalisation is the end of cultural diversity and the super-imposition of the global homogenised culture serving the needs of the developed world and its multinational corporations. It is said that globalisation is causing conflicts, wars and social disintegration in almost all countries of the world, leading to the construction of new identities and the reinvention of old ones (Nabudere, 2000). The peculiar Nigerian cultural values, such as languages, are being eroded by

the pop culture brought by globalisation (Adedimeji, 2006). Greeting norms, cuisine, appearance and dress, customs, occupations, religions and other cultural components are giving way to acculturation, the suppression and subjugation of African cultural, a tragic phenomenon of history that is fast destroying the original cultural complexion of not only the budding generation but even the adults (Ogunjimi & Na'Allah, 2005). Through globalisation, the budding generation, which is to serve as the safety valve and promoter of cultural continuity, are in most cases uprooted from the traditional environment.

Major critics of globalisation from Africa have argued that globalisation is destructive to African culture and development (Oni, 2005). Because of the close integration and interaction of different peoples which it engenders, globalisation exerts more cultural pressure than people imagine (Ogechukwu, & Ogbo, 2014). Corroborating this position, Afisi (2009) earlier noted that globalisation is purely an attempt to spread western culture with its attendant capitalist, socio-economic and political nuances. Hence, most Africans see globalisation as another form of imperialism or colonialism. It is a tradition of political, economic and cultural domination of some nations over others.

In Nigeria for instance, globalisation brought about clearly observable changes in Nigerian cultures over the decades. These changes have been aptly captured by various scholars (Ogunjimi & Na'Allah, 2005; Odimegwu, 2007). Nigerian culture is described as being weak when compared with western culture and it is bound to lose in a battle against the latter (Oni, 2005). Globalisation could be seen in the way Nigerian youths is rapidly losing touch with cultural values and consequently embracing foreign culture; their bizarre dressing, dancing, language and so on which invariably affect other aspects of social life. Nicolaidis (2012), made a similar observation about South African youths. To him, teenagers in South Africa have for the most part abandoned their African culture and language, in music, they try to imitate and regard most of American rap artist as their role models, some of

who display an acute lack of values and act immorally on television shows and promote promiscuous behaviour especially in the lyrics of the music they write.

Globalisation brought about digital revolution. Omekwu (2006), noted that the more dangerous dimensions of the digital revolution include pornography, money laundering, cultism, international terrorism and child abuse, which all constitute a threat to African cultural heritage. It is extremely difficult for African countries with strong Islamic and Christian cultures to tolerate the level of pornographic activities that is found on the Internet.

Globalisation and the attendant process of acculturation helped African societies most especially Nigeria to abolish some barbaric practices like killing of twins and the use of human beings for sacrifice among others. The use of telecommunication and information gadgets across societies and cultures were made possible through globalisation. Globalisation encourages the civil societies and organisations to fight for the right of the down trodden across the globe. It promotes gender equality as well as training and development. Nicolaides (2012), acknowledges the fact that in some cases; ethically sound values on issues such as human rights and democracy are spread through Americanisation, a product of globalisation.

Positive and Negative Effects of Globalisation

Globalisation has both positive and negative effects. Among the positive aspects are the opportunity for poor countries to develop in an extremely rapid rhythm due to access to new technologies, products and information, direct investments and loans, high mobility of all production factors. Globalisation ensures access to new markets and increases the export volume and occurrence of favourable conditions for attracting foreign capital. Also, globalisation eliminated barriers imposed by countries at the end of World War II to free movement of capital across international borders. Billions of dollars of funds can now move instantaneously among countries at any given time. Globalisation has created the

environment in which export-led economic growth can reduce poverty by building up wages in low-income countries.

The worldwide development of technique and technology and the increase access countries have to the new knowledge also imply a growth of the means in which the international trading relations are carried out. The development also generates a modification of the strategies and of the effects of the international competition over companies. Thus, the small and medium business can compete on better positions with companies which are larger in dimensions, due to electronic trading, which renders a series of advantages (Dragusin, 2003). Globalisation creates relatively easy access on the external markets upon minimum investments, due to the disappearance of space and time. It encourages development of the possibilities for using direct marketing, by using information recorded in data bases, allowing for the offers to be customised depending on each client's wishes (Dragusin, 2003).

Despite the huge positive aspect of globalisation, there are a lot of negative sides. According to Nistor (2007), globalisation is viewed as a danger mainly in the developing countries, which face the threat of the economic power of the developed industrialised countries. With respect to international trading, the less developed countries have confronted unfavourable reaction from the industrialised countries; the forced opening of the markets in the poor countries for the products made in the developed countries, along with a blockage of the access of the products made in the poor countries on the markets of the developed countries, except for the agricultural and textile products. In addition, globalisation causes unemployment in industrialised countries because firms move their factories to places where they can get cheaper labour. Globalisation may also lead to more environmental problems. A company may want to build factories in other countries because environmental laws are not as strict as they are at home. Poor countries in the Third World may have to cut down more trees so that they can sell wood to richer countries. Human, animal and plant diseases spread more

quickly through globalisation. Stone (2002), noted that HIV/AIDS is perceived as a product of globalisation and is considered not only as the greatest global health pandemic but also as the biggest development challenge of the twenty first century. Also, human trafficking for commercial sex purposes increases the spread of the disease in Nigeria. Trafficking in persons, which the International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2001) describes as 'the underside of globalisation,' is one of the greatest human rights challenges of our time.

Adesina (2012), observed that globalisation has had a negative impact on the environment through deforestation. Extensive deforestation has occurred worldwide with the logging industry being fuelled by the need for disposable products. Apart from contributing to the depletion of the ozone layer, deforestation also affects water cycle. Trees extract groundwater through their roots and release it into the atmosphere. When part of a forest is removed, the trees no longer evaporate away this water, resulting in a much drier climate. Moreover, Otukong (2002), stated that globalisation has brought about various forms of environmental pollution and contamination of the environment by biological, chemical, and or physical agents that are harmful to human, animal or plant and the general environment, and may arise through the natural events, industrial and human activities or the interaction of all.

Furthermore, globalisation has been blamed for the extinction of over 22,000 indigenous cultures in the last decade (Akande, 2002). Akande (2002), projects that approximately 90 per cent of the world's languages will disappear in the next century as a result of globalisation.

It can be concluded that globalisation opened the global economy massively and left an indelible mark on culture and cultural practices across the world. Advances in information technologies, specialised production processes, and reduced communication and transportation costs have all led to a whole new range of goods and

services becoming tradable. However, globalisation has been charged with being responsible for increasing inequality and falling wages in certain sectors of industrialised economies, as lower-skilled jobs are shifted offshore. In line with Mulinge and Munyae (2001), western countries are employing globalisation to extend and strengthen the fundamentally exploitative relations established between colonial powers and the colonised.

Measures to Curb the Negative Impacts of Globalisation on Culture

The following measures would go a long way in curbing the negative impacts of globalisation on culture;

1. Policy makers should craft and implement programmes targeted at preserving the indigenous culture of the people.
2. Efforts should be made to regulate the influx and transmission of alien ideas and culture that are detrimental in nature.
3. There should be value re-orientation to make people accept the principle of cultural relativity i.e. no culture is inferior or superior to another.
4. Developing countries should strive to look inward for developmental strategies rather than relying on the dictates of the advanced Nations.
5. Priority should be given to indigenous products and technology as against the importation of goods and services.

In conclusion, developing and underdeveloped societies should seek to emulate the positive parts of the culture of advanced western societies. Globalisation should not be seen as forceful projection and imposition of one culture on other societies, rather it gives room for a process of natural selection by which the best part of each culture unites to achieve a perfect dominant global culture through acculturation.

Chapter Exercises

1. What is the relationship between globalisation and culture?
2. What are the aims of globalisation?
3. What are the impacts of globalisation on culture?
4. What are the positive and negative effects of globalisation on culture?
5. What are the ways by which negative impacts of globalisation can be addressed?

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