Aastha Verma
PhD Scholar,
Faculty of Management
Studies, Delhi University.

India's globalization and consumer acculturation: A review

Aastha Verma

Abstract
Due to the forces of globalization in India there is a transformation in the consumer culture as the consumer of India primarily those who are residing in the cosmopolitan cities of the country are increasing adapting the culture of west, which is also evident from their purchasing behaviour as they prefer the brands of foreign origin and this phenomenon is called consumer acculturation. International marketing managers and practitioners have been long interested in the field of consumer acculturation due to its direct impact on the sales of the foreign brands and its thorough understanding can be capitalized by them to profit their respective businesses. The purpose of this paper is to provide a detailed account of the consumer acculturation by assembling the various research works contributed by various researchers' in this field. It gives a broad overview of the consumer acculturation construct and the various behavior related aspects. A wide range of journal databases and books were referred to review the works of various researchers. The content analysis of the various research works led to the classification of literature into different factors influencing consumer acculturation and further development of research framework. The framework generated can be a useful tool for international marketing practitioners and researchers towards comprehensive understanding of the consumer acculturation.

Keywords: Globalization, Consumer Acculturation, Consumer Behaviour.

1. Introduction
The literature suggests that globalization is rapidly influencing the consumer culture in India which leads to acculturation of the Indian consumer to western consumer culture (Gupta, 2011) [14]. Researchers like Cleveland and Loroche (2007) [5] have attributed globalization as a driving force to consumer acculturation. Similar findings had been produced by many other researchers like Douglas S.P, (2006) [6] and Cleveland et al., (2009) [4] who argued that with the increase in globalization, consumer culture & behaviour the world over is homogenizing and the whole world is transforming into a place following similar culture. This implies that local culture in India too is being influenced by these persistent forces of globalization which leads to a change in the consumer culture and behaviour (Gupta, 2012) [15]. Eckhardt and Mahi (2004) [9] also found that foreign brands in India are bringing foreign cultural influence. As the understanding of consumer acculturation is incomplete without the prior discussion upon globalization which is a rapidly spreading phenomenon in India due its various agents like internet and TV therefore the present study firstly discuss globalization as an antecedent to consumer acculturation and thereafter the study progresses towards a detailed review of literature on acculturation leading to generation of a research framework.

2. Literature Review
2.1 Globalization
Globalization is an inevitable phenomenon that is leading the entire world towards becoming one market, a global village. Globalization also refers to the process by which the world is made into a single place (Robertson and Lechner, 1985) [36]. Globalization leads to various types of global flows across the world. According to Appadurai (1990) [1] there are five types of global flows – *mediascapes* (flows of image and communication), *ethnoscapes* (flows of tourists, migrants and foreign Students), *ideoscapes* (flows of political ideas and ideologies), *technoscapes* (flows of technology and know-how) and *financscapes* (flows of capital and

Correspondence:
Aastha Verma
PhD Scholar,
Faculty of Management
Studies, Delhi University.

money). Considering the influence of these global flows, Craig et al. (2009) [7] observe that in today's world, cultural products and lifestyles from the developed world are dispersing across developing countries. This is the result of the connection through traditional media such as TV and films, as well as through new media such as the internet, electronic social networking, blogs, etc. This phenomenon is changing the cultural and patterns of a society as products, icons, lives and rituals of one culture are being adopted by another (Craig and Douglas, 2006) [6]. In support to this Eckhart and Mahi (2004) [9] pointed out that apart from the Government and MNC's who are considered the main players in the process of globalization, its consumers who are the most important active participants in the changes brought about by globalization and that is why consumers in emerging markets are more active than passive to these changes. They also negotiate the consumption process by adopting more of the global brands unlike in the past. Further, its pervasive influence on consumer behavior is affecting consumer tastes, preferences and purchase behavior (Douglas and Craig, 1997) [8]. Not only has the process of globalization aided immensely in the exchange of goods and services, information and knowledge through the reductions in international barriers, but it has also led the world into becoming a real single universal community comprising of people from different cultures, thus resulting in the shrinkage of the world. It is also said that globalization has resulted in a homogenization in buying behavior across the countries (Ger and Belk, 1996) [12]. The purchase of a foreign product has become easier than ever before because of the massive waves of deregulation and free trade all across the globe, which has created a new environment for the consumers all together. With the world becoming a single market, globalization has had a major contribution in enabling the organizations worldwide to step out of the restricted domestic markets and to set up their operations across the globe with confidence. This has largely led to a decline in the importance of the goods produced in domestic market and a greater emphasis is on what the consumers actually demand no matter the consumer is located in the very country in which the organization exists or entirely different part of the world. Moreover, with the rapid increase in global competition, companies that strictly adhere to and cater to the needs of the local markets are finding themselves at a disadvantage and gradually losing the competitive advantage that they so much strived to achieve and therefore some products and services "the tastes and preferences of consumers in different nations has started meet on some global norm" (Holt et al., 2004) [19]. Venkatesh and Swamy (1994) [40] found that Indian consumers, even if they have not traveled abroad, are still being influenced by the consumerism (or consumer culture) driven by foreign cultural influence through media and products (foreign brands). Concurring the same Ger and Belk (1996) [12] stated that with the coming of globalization and westernization, developing countries' consumers follow the lifestyles and consumption patterns of more economically developed nations. Studies have shown that Indian consumers have a very high Predisposition towards foreign brands (PTFB) which is the result of globalization (Batra et al., 2000; Kinra, 2006; Maxwell, 2001) [2, 24, 26]. Foreign brands are also bringing foreign cultural influence with them in the Indian market place. Many researchers like Gupta (2012) [15] have also studied and operationalized PTFB as a proxy to globalization therefore it is inferred that globalization is an antecedent to PTFB.

2.1.1 Defining globalization
Many eminent researchers have offered different descriptions of the term "globalization" as presented below. However the bottom line of all these definitions indicate on globalization representing the virtual shrinking of the world into a single space, it is ongoing and accelerating. It describes the interconnections of not only countries, economies and companies, but also cultures and individuals who are being affected by this process to varying degrees. Table: 2.1 present the description and definitions of globalization by different authors.

Table: 2.1 Definitions of Globalization

Author/Year	Description of Globalization
Held and McGrew (2007) [18]	*"Defined globalization as intensification of worldwide social relations and interactions such that distant events acquire much localized impact and vice versa. It involves rescaling of social relations from the economic sphere to the security sphere, beyond the national to the transnational, transcontinental and trans world.*
Micklethwait and Woolridge, 2000 [27]	*"Globalization shapes all sorts of people's lives in all sort of unpredictable ways. It is neither new nor complete, neither it is a coordinated movement nor an accomplished fact rather it is best be conceptualized as a series of waves".*
Jameson and Miyoshi, 1998 [22]	*"Offered a convoluted definition for globalization that incorporates the notion of national cultures. Globalization is defined as an untotalizable totality which intensifies binary relationship between its parts mostly nations, but also regions and groups which however continue to articulate themselves on the model of national identities".*
Waters ,1995 [42]	*"Defined globalization as a social process in which the constraints of geography on social and cultural arrangements recede and in which people become increasing aware that they are receding".*
Robertson,1992	*"Coined two definitions of globalization. The crystallization of the world as a single place and the emergence of the global human conditions".*
Gilpin, 1987 [13]	*"Described globalization as increasing interdependence of national economies in trade finance and macroeconomic policy".*
Robertson, 1987 [35]	*"Defined globalization as a form of compression of the contemporary world and the basis of a new hermeneutic for world history which equalizes all socio cultural formalities".*

2.2 Consumer Acculturation
Consumer acculturation construct is defined as "the progress that a consumer makes from local consumer culture to global consumer culture with respect to specific cultural components (Gupta, 2012) [15]. According to Cleveland and Loroche (2007) [5], the impact of globalization would not limit itself to a predisposition towards foreign brands, but

would also lead to consumer acculturation. Eckhardt and Mahi (2004) [9] observed something similar in the Indian consumer market. According to them, foreign brands in India are also bringing the influence of foreign culture.

Consumer Acculturation can be seen as a subset of acculturation and socialization. While acculturation is more general and consumer acculturation is specific to consumption process. Penaloza (1989) [32] observed that consumer acculturation as a subset of acculturation focuses on how individuals acquire the skills, knowledge and behaviour that are appropriate to consumer culture. Further, Berry (1997) [3] found that in the process of acculturation both the immigrant consumer and the host culture consumer gets accultured with each other's culture however, it is the immigrant consumer who is more affected by the dominant culture.

Initially, the concept of acculturation only comprised of the cultural changes that happened in two individuals, from different cultures, when they are continuously in contact with each other (Redfield et al., 1936) [34]. Later, the domain of acculturation was extended and many researchers like Andreasen, 1990; Craig et al., 2009 and Gentry et al., 1995 [1, 7, 11] included indirect exposure (via media and commercial communication) also as the agents of acculturation which introduced ideas, lifestyles and behaviors of one culture to another. They term this process as cultural interpenetration. The evidence of the process of consumer acculturation can be seen in the statements made by many eminent researchers in their research findings as under:

"Increasingly, consumers in almost every corner of the globe are able to eat the same food, listen to the same music, wear the same fashion, watch the same television programs and films, drive the same cars, dine in the same restaurants and stay in the same hotels". (Ger & Belk, 1996) [12].

"Consumer behaviour is a global phenomenon and the impact of American culture is truly global". (Venkatesh, 1995)

"The impressive variety of world's cultural system is waning due the emergence of cultural synchronization". (Hamelink, 1983) [16].

"Wherever in the world one is, it seems that one can have a bottle of Coca – Cola and eat a McDonald's burger, rent a Toyota, listen to Madonna and Sting tunes, enjoy a croissant for breakfast, and follow one's favorite soap opera on television brands like (Panasonic, Sony, Samsung etc.) that are present even in the remotest corners of the world". (Firat, 1995) [10].

"Cultural interconnections increasingly reach across the world. More than ever there is a global acumen. The entities we routinely call cultures are becoming more like subcultures within this wider entity, with all that this suggest in terms of fuzzy boundaries and more or less arbitrary delimitation of analytical units". (Hannerz, 1992) [17].

"Communication breakthroughs of the past 20 years, the internet, cellular telephone systems and satellite TV are just some of the developments that add credence to the idea of global consumer culture". (Holten, 2000) [20].

Defining Consumer Acculturation

Table: 2.2 Definitions of Consumer Acculturation

Author/ Year	Description of Consumer Acculturation
Ward, 1974 [41]	*"Consumer acculturation is a subset of acculturation which is a process of learning, adapting and adjusting to a different environment."*
O'Guinn et al., 1986 [29]	*"Consumer acculturation includes the attitudes, values and behaviour which collectively comprise buyer behaviour".*
Berry, 1997 [3]	*"Consumer acculturation can be seen as a change in which an immigrant consumer is affected more by the host culture and learns the behaviour, attitudes and values of a culture that is different from their culture of origin".*
Steenkamp, 2001 [37]	*"Defined consumer acculturation as a behavioral change through indirect exposure of media and commercial communication as the forces of dominant foreign culture, which would transform the indigenous culture".*
Gupta, 2012 [15]	*"The progress that a consumer makes from local consumer culture to global consumer culture with respect to specific cultural components".*

2.3 Directions of Acculturation

Researchers have debated upon acculturation being a unidirectional/one-way process or a bi-directional process. Palumbo and Teich (2004) [31] have explained both the process as following.

In a unidirectional/one-way process, the person progresses in one direction that takes him away from his culture of origin and towards the foreign culture, whereas in bi-directional process, acculturation moves along two dimensions:

(1) The degree of adaptation of foreign culture.
(2) The degree of retention of the culture of origin.

In bidirectional process a person get acculturated in a foreign culture without losing his culture of origin. When the efficiency of the unidirectional model against bi-directional model was compared, it was found that the bi-directional model was more valid and would yield a more accurate representation of an individual's adaptation to the other culture (Cleveland and Loroche, 2007) [5]. Berry (1990) a supporter of the bi-directional model has recognized four modes of acculturation. These are briefly described as follows:

(1) Integration – In which the acculturating individual adopts some of the foreign cultural components while at the same time holds to his culture of origin also.

(2) Separation – Where the acculturating individual does not adopt any of the foreign cultural components and holds only to his culture of origin.

(3) Assimilation – Where the acculturating individual adopts the foreign culture over time and gradually forgets his culture of origin.

(4) Marginalization – In this the acculturating individual neither adopts foreign culture nor has the desire to maintain his culture of origin.

Other consumer researchers who have contributed to the body of knowledge on consumer acculturation have given important offerings to form a discourse relating to this realm of knowledge. In order to understand the construct through various studies important contributions are listed chronologically in table 2.3 below:

Table: 2.3 Chronological study of Consumer Acculturation

AUTHOR / YEAR	CONTRIBUTION
Redfield et al., 1936 [34]	Their found that acculturation can occur when the two individuals from different cultures come in continuous first hand contact with each other.
Olmedo, 1979 [30]	In the consumer acculturation scale he included language as one of the most important factor because it is the medium for the flow of acculturation element. The scale contained the questions on the degree of the usage of the foreign language.
Tan and Mc Collough, 1985 [39]	They found that the higher acculturation was associated with high reliance on price but low on image.
Hui et al., 1992 [21]	Contented that the idea of ethnicity to be negatively related to acculturation. They found that some individuals can be accultured to the dominant culture but still maintain strong ethnic identification.
Jun et al., 1993 [23]	Proposed two different constructs of acculturation viz. cultural identification and level of acculturation.
Andreasen, 1990 [1]	Included that indirect exposure through media familiarize ideas, lifestyles and behaviors of one culture to another, thereby facilitating acculturation by transforming the indigenous culture.
Peneloza, 1994 [33]	Suggested that consumer acculturation is inversely proportional to ethnic affiliation, means more an individual is close to his ethnic identity less will be his chances of adapting the values and believes of a foreign culture.
Gentry et al., 1995 [11]	Found that acculturation is a bidirectional process which is measured along two dimensions viz. adaptation to the foreign culture and retention to the culture of origin.
Ogden, D.T, 2004 [28]	Consumer acculturation applies acculturation theory to consumer purchase decision where the degree of acculturation low or high reflects on an individual's purchase decision.
Palumbo and Teich, 2004 [31]	Found that from the two ways process of acculturation viz. unidirectional and bi directional, bidirectional is more valid and presents a true depiction of a person's adaptation to the foreign culture.
Cleveland and Laroche, 2007 [5]	The process of acculturation has been accelerating due to globalization which is taking the consumers towards global consumer culture.
Mathur et al., 2008 [25]	Found that the Asian Indian youth is more susceptible to acculturation than the generation before them as they are the ones who are more exposed to the waves of globalization through mass media and Internet.

3. Factors Influencing Consumer Acculturation

This section comprises the factors/dimensions which influences consumer acculturation. The factors include two dimensions suggested by Gentry et al., (1995) [11] viz.

"Attitudinal – Consumer acculturation", "Behavioral – Consumer acculturation", six distinct drivers of acculturation described by Cleveland and Laroche (1997) [5]. The six factors can be grouped under a category called "Global forces". and lastly the most recent in the literature - " predisposition towards foreign brands" as one of the most important factor which leads to consumer acculturation as described by Gupta (2012) [15].

1. **Attitudinal – Consumer acculturation:** This dimension of acculturation consists of adapting the identity beliefs and values of other culture.
2. **Behavioral – Consumer acculturation:** This dimension encompasses language usage, communication style, leisure activities, dietary habits, dress preferences and social behavior. This is influenced to a larger extent by foreign culture and practices as compared to the attitudinal dimension because individuals are tend to acquire behaviors of the dominant group more rapidly than they acquire the dominant group's cultural values.

Cleveland and Laroche, (1997) [5] described how individuals acquire the skills, knowledge and behaviour that are characteristic of a nascent and deterritorialized global consumer culture. They described six distinct drivers which influences a consumer towards acculturation.

3. **Cosmopolitanism:** The term refers to a specific set of qualities possessed by certain individuals. This includes a readily desire to engage with other cultures. Cosmopolitans are those individuals who seek for points of entry into other territorial cultures.
4. **Exposure to marketing activities of MNC's:** This factor captures the individual's amount of exposure to the marketing and advertising activities of multinational or global corporations. One of the main drivers of acculturation according to Ger and Belk (1996) [12] is the marketing and advertising activity of multinational firms.
5. **Exposure to/use of English language:** This dimension includes the extent of an individual's exposure to and use of English language for various written and oral communications. English today is considered as a global language and has made major inroads around the globe. Mostly, consumers residing in the metropolitan cities of the country come in continuous contact to English language through Internet, Hollywood movies and in other forms of media.
6. **Social interactions (Including travel, migration and contacts with foreigners):** Bulk migration facilitates the diffusion of global culture. Because of the removal of stringent barriers and increasing access to low cost and speedy transportation, mass migration is a hallmark of today's world, be it for the purpose of education, business or leisure.
7. **Global/foreign mass media exposure:** Worldwide access to internet, television and other forms of mass media has facilitated to create a global culture of consumption. Europe, Asian and especially American movies and television shows are popular around the globe.
8. **Openness to and desire to emulate global consumer culture:** A person should not necessarily be a cosmopolitan or even hold the characteristics of cosmopolitans to be interested in global consumer culture. Globalization creates a single platform wherein all individuals pursue their goals in a manner involving some degree of comparison with others. Several

researchers have also posited that individuals who admire the lifestyle of other countries are likely to desire ownership of symbolic symbols from other countries.

Gupta (2012) [15] found that due to the prevalence of globalization, predisposition towards foreign brands acts as a factor which influences consumer acculturation. It is discussed under as the last factor.

9. **Predisposition towards foreign brands:** The onslaught of foreign brands in the Indian market has acted as a potent force of consumer acculturation as the consumers today desires to own the brands from economically developed countries which gives them a sense of gratification to feel like a part of the same culture from where these brands originate. Consumers are adapting to the cultural practices of these countries in terms of lifestyle they live, dress they wear, food they eat etc. because these counties are considered far more advance and superior to their home countries. In support to the same Mathur et al., (2008) [25] observed that due to globalization there is augmentation in the availability of American goods and services in India which is preferred by Indian consumers while making a choice to choose a product or service. This inclination towards foreign brands is fostered by mass media and internet which is making an Indian to come more closer to the foreign / American culture by propping acculturation in them that is the reason when immigrants from urban areas of India who are well educated and affluent visit America than they are less likely to be a stranger to U.S. products and consumption patterns which suggests that some degree of acculturation and acceptance of American products occur in Asian Indian immigrants even before they arrive in the U.S.

4. Research Framework and Future Research

After the comprehensive review of the literature the study has derived some prophecies for the future research endeavors in the field of consumer acculturation. This paper therefore proposes a framework to increase the understanding of consumer acculturation. After analysing the various factors studied in the past studies there are we four broad groups which influences consumer acculturation viz. Attitudinal consumer acculturation, Behaviourl consumer acculturation, Global forces (accommodating the factors described by Cleveland and Laroche, 1997) [5] and predisposition towards foreign brands. The framework is presented below in Figure: 4.1
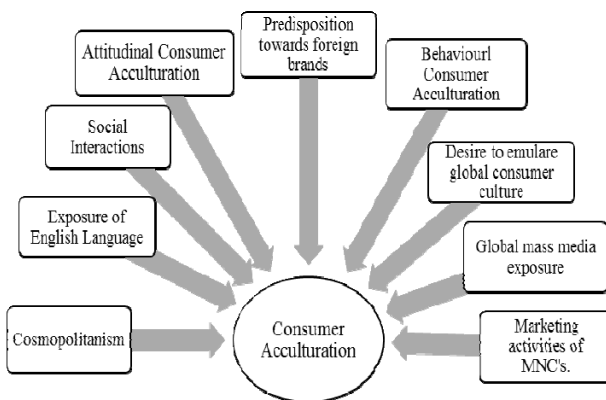
Source: Compiled by Author

Fig: 4.1 Framework of Consumer Acculturation

Based on the literature review the present study also produces a set of research propositions that could help further in developing the knowledge on this area of consumer behavior. The proposed model (See Figure: 4.2) captures the different aspects consumers acculturation. The research explored four propositions that arise from the derived model. The future researches could also explore them further empirically.
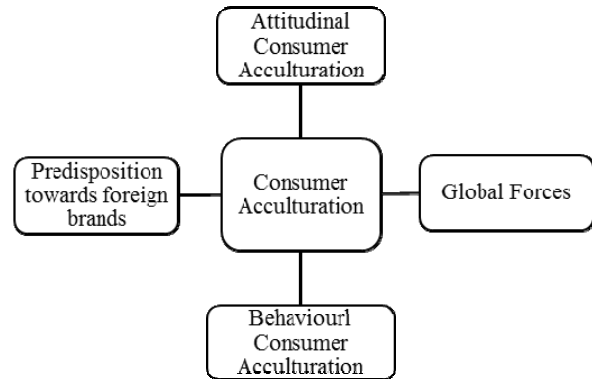
Source: Compiled by Author

Fig: 4.2 Proposed Model

P1: Effect of Attitudinal aspects consumer acculturation on the consumer acculturation.

P2: Effect of Behaviourl aspects consumer acculturation on the consumer acculturation.

P3: Effect of Global forces on the consumer acculturation.

P4: Effect of Predisposition towards foreign brands on the consumer acculturation.

These four dimensional frameworks could further be hypothesized in the future research actions and studies through empirical testing and exploratory studies.

5. CONCLUSION

As a result of consumer acculturation there has been a noticeable change in the purchasing preference of Indian consumer's unlike a couple of decades back. Acculturation is a topic which has been studied in detail in the extant literature in developed countries. With the change in consumer culture in developing countries like India, where due to forces of globalization the consumers are also experiencing a transformation in their culture, habits and lifestyle. There is a gap in the extant literature with respect to the study of acculturation in developing countries, therefore studying consumer acculturation and how it impacts on the behaviour of the consumer will bring much needed insights for global corporate managers. Through the present research attempts have been made to understand the construct of acculturation with the factors which drives this phenomenon. Understanding of the burgeoning and universal globalization, which leads to consumer acculturation can be capitalized by retailers to benefit their respective businesses. The proper combination and synergistic effect of the various factors influencing it could lead to more sales turnover hence benefiting the marketers and retailers. After the thorough review of the literature, it was possible to clarify the consumer acculturation concept and its various dimensions. Thereafter the development of the research propositions was for the enhancement of the knowledge in the field of consumer research.

Lastly, on the grounds of the changing trends of the market in the developing economies it is now possible to infer that consumer acculturation may turn into a growing area of research and could be seen in the lifestyles of Indian consumers.

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