Cultural and Religious Identities as Threats to Glocalization Strategy: Nigerian Experience

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Abstract

In spite of all key roles played by several international organizations in the process of globalization e.g.; The World Bank, IMF and WTO, cultural and religious identities still remain the commonest challenges, limitations and threats that militate against the glocalization of most consumer goods and social services in the globalization drive. The study therefore intends to examine the impacts of both cultural and religious identities and their influences on glocalization of most consumer goods and services in Nigeria. It adopted a survey method of research and cross-sectional research design simultaneously. Simple percentage statistical analysis was employed to collate data generated for the study. The findings revealed that cultural and religious identities both affect the glocalization of alcoholic drinks, narcotics, cigarettes etc and some social services in some parts of Nigeria. This finally led to the conclusion that these two variables pose as major threats to the glocalization strategy which generally affects negatively, the globalization of African Economy to a Very Large Extent (VLE).

Keywords: *Cultural and Religious Identities, Threats, Glocalization, Strategy*

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Background to the Study

Global businesses have faced many challenges due to localization. Those challenges emanate from the present of diverse cultures and religion which directly or indirectly affect ways of life of different indigenous people also occupying different locations. According to Achumba (2016), culture and religion are major determinants of consumer behavior. These ways of life simply determine control and direct the type of life a consumer lives, what he needs and why he needs them at any consumerist value i.e. either in a large or small quantity or even none at all. An existing culture or religion in any location is capable of restricting social freedom in that environment. This will definitely restrain the availability of some consumer goods and services that will be compulsorily under demand, so as to enhance and promote the social activities in that particular environment (Achumba, ibid).

Global businesses face challenges due to localization of products and services as remarked 'abinitio'. Han Zhang (2009) reported on an example of a global business that has faced challenge due to localization of their product and the presence of cultural identity in that locality; the closing of a Starbucks spread in the Forbidden City of China in 2007. Starbucks attempts to localize into the culture of China by accommodating their menu to local elements such as serving "green tea frappuccinos" and enlarging their stores was prevalent in most areas of China, but when Starbucks spread to the Forbidden City, a problem surrounding cultural identity arose. Factors surrounding "Western influences" related to Starbucks were seen as a threat by a web-based campaign who was successful in initiating the closing of the Starbucks in the Forbidden City. The leader of this web-based campaign, whose name is Rui, in his words had stated "All I want is that Starbucks move out of the Forbidden City peacefully and quietly and we'll continue enjoying Starbucks coffee elsewhere in the city.

The recommendations of the study shall be useful in guiding the strategic marketing management decision(s) of multinationals and global firms in consumer behaviour, also considering it while glocalizing in any business environment. The findings of the research will also be of immense benefit as adequate and relevant information to all channels of distribution, in analyzing potential challenges in the process of collocation or glocalization of goods and services. Finally, it will direct consumers also with adequate and relevant information on how and where to possibly locate their needs conveniently at any point in time. The study focuses on cultural and religious identities and is limited to threats they pose to glocalization strategy in the Nigerian experience. The scope of any topic is the independent variable while the limitation is the dependent variable (Asika, 2004). The main objective of this study is therefore to critically and evaluate the impacts of both cultural and religious identities on the glocalization or production and distribution of some goods and services and their peculiarity to Nigeria in the globalization agenda.

Statement of Problem

Early research findings showed that globalization and glocalization of goods and services has suffered many set-backs because of global cultural and religious differences. The whole world stands to gain from globalization and glocalization but not all people have realized this importance, hence the need to conduct this study. This study is conducted to proffer solution to

the constraints that pose as major threats and limitations to glocalization of some goods and services produced by some global and local firms in Nigeria.

Cultural and religious identities possess huge problem in achieving glocalization; most multinationals may not obtain adequate information on both cultural and religion identities of any locality before glocalizing their products and services in the forbidden locations. For instance, in some parts of Nigeria, more in the northern Nigeria, the sale and consumption of alcohol and narcotics are statutorily and overtly forbidden. This implies that whosoever violates this legal provision must face the law. Therefore, the ability of management to obtain adequate information on these issues will guide their global net-work in goods and services production and distribution plans.

Objective of the study
This study is carried out to examine the impacts of both cultural and religious identities and their influences on glocalization of goods and services of some multinational and global firms, also the way they affect globalization and the world economy, with specific reference to the Nigerian experience.

Relevant Research Questions
1. To what extent does cultural identity affect the glocalization of goods and services?
2. To what extent does religion's identity affect the glocalization of goods and services?

Conceptual Clarification
The Concepts of Cultural Influence and Identity
The influence of culture on consumer behaviour on goods and services glocalization has been defined in different terms (Achumba, 2016). Precisely, the influence of culture on human behavior is quite difficult to define. The difficulty to some extent stems from the fact that it pervades every aspect of our lives.

Culture affects everything we do in Nigeria. In fact, Nigeria being a tradition-directed society, one would not expect otherwise. The goods we eat, the methods of preparation and service, the roles of males and females in the homes, our modes of sitting in chairs, dressing, attitude to work, acquisition of material things, are all culture bound. A look at other cultures will expose the peculiarity of different cultural behaviours in Nigeria. Several studies have revealed cultural differences, perception and pursuit of entrepreneurial endeavours in Nigeria. The cultural differences in perception, the use of language, interpersonal space, motivation and other elements of human behavior have been extensively discussed.

Achumba (ibid) citing Linton (1947) in a more accepted and simpler definition states that culture is a configuration of learned behaviour and results of behaviour whose component elements are shared and transmitted by members of a particular society. The emphasis here is on learned behavior as opposed to genetically inherited behaviours. It is also a configuration of behaviours rather than fragmented isolated behavioural elements. This definition also implies that culture is interactive and passed from one generation to another. The concept of

cultural symbolism (identity), relativism and change have been found to be useful in analyzing cultural influences on consumption. A symbol is simply an identity or anything that stands for, or suggests something else by association such as words, numbers or illustrations Achumba (ibid) also citing Bryson (1964) claims that this is the main feature that distinguishes human culture from other form of animal behaviour.

In cultural relativism, it is evident that the culture in which a person lives affects his consumptions, patterns and also his perception of specific products and the meanings which are attached to the product. Cultural relativism is therefore the tendency of judging any behaviour from the context of its own environment and cultural context. As reviewed by Ogbonnaya & Amiriheobu (2019), culture according to Living White (1959) places the product in a social context and imbues it with meanings that set the broadest limitations on how it is experienced. The diversity of world cultures requires serious cultural analysis for successful marketing and consumer satisfaction. Some cultural standard, rules and norms may also dictate the kind of social services, goods that are acceptable or may be prohibited in or within that location of the society.

To succeed as an effective marketing manager, you must subscribe to the culture, its values, accepts its symbols and reflect the appropriate behaviours and norms at the appropriate times. The most devastating mistake any manager would make is to assume that cultures hold the same values, use the same symbols, exhibit the same behaviours and go through same decision processes. In view of this, a marketer penetrating a new culture must consider it imperative that for effective marketing, marketing and researchers should; (i) be familiar with the core values of the target market cultural group. (ii) identity the peculiar buying processes and processes characteristic of the group. (iii) investigate primary channels of distribution applicable to the product. (iv) get acquainted with the appropriate modes of communicating with the target cultural groups (Achumba, ibid). Summarily, cross cultural analysis offers the opportunity to learn the different features of cultures particularly for the purpose of international marketing relations, globalization and glocalization of goods and services.

The Concept of Religious Influence and Identity
Previous studies conducted have shown that glocalization, distribution or circulation of some consumer goods and social services in major parts of Nigeria are extensively hindered for religious sentiments or identities (Otokiti, 2004).

For instance, around the North-East and North-Western parts of the country, the extremism in religious culture hardly permits either glocalization or overt sale of alcoholic drinks including cigarettes and narcotics. Around the North-Central, there is apparent and considerable reduction in freedom of sales and consumption of such goods. In the South-East and South-South, such consumer goods are extremely glocalized and patronized while in the South-West, they are considerably collocated and also receive high patronage, but not as far as the formers. Some social service delivery like night clubbing, social gatherings and music glocalization are prohibited in those parts of the North, where the sale and use of alcoholic drinks are also restrained. The same is not also applicable generally, in the Southern part of

Nigeria. These are insights to the problems of glocalization of most consumer goods and social service delivery, controlled by the global firms (Otokiti, ibid).

The religious indoctrinations or lack of it that an individual receives as he socializes affects the individual's attitudes to goods and services in several ways. It can dictate the use of some products and services or frown at the purchase of some others (Osuagwu and Achumba, 2004). The Moslems do not eat pork meat or drink alcohol. The born-again do not drink alcohol or smoke cigarettes while the females do not make-up, wear trousers or jewelries. To them, clothes are meant to cover the body and that is all. The physical look is unimportant. It is the state of the heart that matters. According to Nwankwo (1996), religion sometimes can hardly be completely separated from the tradition such that it influences the formation of attitudes about what is good and what is bad. Conservative religious homes may find the purchase of expensive or exotic cars as being inconsistent with genuine spiritual belief or upbringing. Consumer behavior analysts cannot afford to ignore the way people themselves conceive the association with other persons as well as how the association conceive of them.

The Concept of Glocalization Strategy
Glocalization as defined by the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary; Ninth Edition; is the fact of adapting products or services that are available all over the world to make them suitable for local needs. Asika, Ojogbo, Dibashi and Ihedigbo (2019) reveals that Bartlett and Goshal (1988;1991) contend that globalizing forces work together to transform many industries and success depends on whether a business can achieve global efficiency and national flexibility, simultaneously. Roudometof (2006) introduced glocalization as a portmanteau of globalization and localization which is the "simultaneous occurrence of both universalizing and particularizing tendencies in contemporary social, political and economic systems". The notion of glocalization represents a challenge to simplistic conceptions of globalization processes as linear expansions of territorial scales. Glocalization indicates that the growing importance of continental and global levels is occurring together with the increasing salience of local and regional levels.

Asika and Ojogbo (2020), also traces that the term "glocalization" first appeared in a late 1980's publication of the *Harvard Business Review*. At a 1997 conference on "globalization and indigenous culture; sociologist, Roland Robertson stated that glocalization "means the simultaneity – the co-presence – of both universalizing and particularizing tendencies. Glocal, an adjective, by definition, is reflecting or characterized by both local and global considerations. Glocalization as a word has variety of uses: (i) Individuals, households and organizations maintaining interpersonal social networks that combine extensive local and long-distance interactions. (ii) The declaration of a specified locality-a town, city, or state – as world territory, with responsibilities and rights on a world scale: a process that started in France in 1950 and originally called mundialization. The concept comes from the Japanese word *dochakuka*, which means global localization. It had referred to the adaptation of farming techniques to local conditions. It became buzz-word when Japanese business adopted it in the 1980s. The word stems from Manfred Lange, head of the German National Global Change Secretariat, who used "glocal" in HeinerBenking's exhibit: Blackbox Nature: Rubiks Cube of

Ecology at an International Science and Policy Conference. The term entered use in the English-speaking world via Robertson in the 1990s, Canadian sociologists; Keith Hampton and Barry Wellman in the late 1990s and Zygmunt Bauman. Erik Swyngedouw was another early adopter. Since, the 1990s, glocalization has been productively theorized by several sociologists and other social scientists, and may be understood as a process that combines the concerns of localism with the forces of globalization, or a local adaptation and interpretation of global forces. As a theoretical framework, it is compatible with many of the concerns of postcolonial theory, and its impact is particularly recognizable in the digitization of music and other forms of cultural heritage.

Methodology

The study adopted a survey method of research and cross-sectional research design simultaneously. This entails defining the objective of the study, determining the population of the study, deducing the sample frame from the population, where the sample for the study is gotten, using questionnaires on the respondents from the chosen sample (Asika, 2006). Therefore, the population of this study includes all Nigerians whose cultures, religions and locations restrict and restrain the glocalization and consumption of Alcohols, Nacotics, Cigarettes and some social services, manufactured and delivered by some Multinationals and global firms. A sample frame was drawn from this population because of limited resources, limited time and natural dispersion of people and locations (Asika, ibid), using stratified sampling technique, to select locations that restrict and restrain the glocalization of these products and service delivery. The sample frame for the study is consisted of; Yobe State, Bayelsa State, Zamfara State and Lagos State. Yobe State was selected, using random sampling technique as the sample for the study. A sample size of 100 indigene respondents was drawn, using random sampling technique to give each indigene of Yobe State equal chance of appearing (Asika, ibid).

Method of Data Collection and Presentation

Primary data were generated with responses from different respondents as sub-set of the population of the study, while all secondary data were sought or sourced from reputable journals, relevant textbooks, newspapers and magazines (Anyanwu et al, 2021).

Method of Data Analysis

Simple percentage statistical analysis was employed to collate all data generated for the study. This was done through the application of frequency tables that accommodated a close format of validated questions of four point's likert type of rating scale: VLE, LE, SE, VSE, acronyms as; Very Large Extent, Large Extent, Small Extent, Very Small Extent (Ojogbo and Ezema, 2019).

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Distribution and Analyses

S/N	Questions (Өs)	VLE	LE	SE	VSE	Total %
1	To what extent does cultural identity negatively affect the glocalization of alcohol, narcotics, cigarettes and social services delivery?	68(75%)	20(22%)	2(2%)	0(0%)	90(100)
2	To what extent does religious identity negatively affect the glocalization of alcohol, narcotics, cigarettes and social service delivery?	84(93%)	5(5.6%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	90(100)
		152	**25**	**2**	**0**	**180**

Source: Fieldwork, 2024.

Table 1 shows that 68(5.5%) of the respondents indicated that cultural identity affects negatively the glocalization of alcohol, narcotics, cigarettes and social services delivery to a very large extent (VLE), wile 20(22%) indicated that the same variable affects negatively the glocalization of the same products and services delivery to a large extent (LE); only 2(2%) admitted this fact to a small extent (SE) and none admitted this fact to a very small extent (VSE). The table also shows that 84(93%) of the respondents indicated that religious identity affects the glocalization of alcohol, narcotics, cigarettes and social services delivery to a very large extent (VLE) while only 5(5.6%) indicated that the same variable affects the glocalization of the same products and services delivery to a large extent (LE) and none showed up in the other two scaling.

Results:

The findings of the study revealed that:

  i) Cultural identity affects negatively the glocalization of alcohol, narcotics, cigarettes and social services delivery to a very large extent (VLE).
  ii) Religious identity also affects negatively the glocalization of the same products and services to a very large extent (VLE).

Conclusion

The conclusion of this survey study reflects on the major objective which invariably examined the impacts of both cultural and religious identities and their impacts or influences on the glocalization of goods and services of some multinationals, global firms and lower business firms in Nigeria. The above, therefore led to the conclusion that both cultural and religious identities affect negatively, the glocalization and consumption of these products and services in most business locations in Nigeria. This finally reveals that these two variables are posing major threats to the multinationals, global firms concerned with the production and marketing of these products and services in Nigeria. This further affects the globalization of African Economy to a very large extent.

Recommendations

The study therefore recommends that all local, global and multinational firms in Nigeria must put into consideration, the variables of cultural and religious identities in their:

1. Marketing decisions: this implies that the affected business organizations must put this fact into consideration in their marketing decisions; basically, at the product conception stage which includes the types of goods and services that could be produced to suit their business location in terms of culture and religion.

2. Promotion strategies: Achumba (ibid) however observed that some cultural & religious sentiments might pose threats and potential violence from the indigenes of some business locations. Therefore, it is advisably pertinent to envisage and consider this fact before business organizations might engage in some exhibitions or any form of promotion strategy in the affected areas so as to avoid imminent sabotage.

3. Distribution strategies: while engaging in distribution of their goods and services, these organizations should also consider the fact of avoiding the affected locations, because the demand-force might turn out to be quite low in these locations.

4. Sales strategies: similar to the above, organization should also consider these researched opinions while strategizing for sale of finished goods and available services.

5. Advertisement strategies: either through electronic or print media, these organizations must consider shunning these areas in order to minimize costs because these affected areas must still remain indifferent to this strategy. They might not succeed in convincing the target-consumers. Even to them, it might be indicting before the law.

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