The Impact of Globalization & Acculturation: A Review Of The English-Speaking Caribbean

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Introduction

- Organizations conducting business in the islands of Trinidad & Tobago have been impacted by globalization and rapid changes in technology.

- Due to these changes, the culture of island nations have changed (Burton, 2009).

- The preservation of the national identities of the island nations has been at risk (Burton, 2009).

- The language, political system, legal system, the military, methods of production, education, architecture, customs, values, family structure, entertainment, clothing styles, and cuisine have undergone changes due to globalization (Steger, 2003).

Statement of the Problem

- The study reported on the process of globalization introduced through remote acculturation; the impact of globalization processes on Caribbean culture.

- The problem is the unawareness or the willingness to accept changes in Caribbean culture.

Definition of Culture and Acculturation:

- Edgar Schein: A pattern of **shared basic assumptions** learned by a group as it solved its problems of **external adaptation** and **internal integration**. Schein identifies 3 levels of culture: **artifacts** (visible), **espoused beliefs and values** (may appear through surveys) and **basic underlying assumptions**: these are not visible. This research focused mainly on the latter. (1996*b*)

- Geert Hofstede - "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another." (1991, p.5).

- Graves- Psychological acculturation – changes in culture, norms, values, and identity due to direct contact of another culture. The behaviors adopted is usually that of the dominant host culture. (1967)

Methodology

- A Quantitative study to examine the relationship among variables of culture, norms, values, and identity against globalization and acculturation.

- The sampled population –a random sample of students enrolled in graduate studies at the University of the West Indies.

Methodology, cont'd

The researcher-developed questionnaire contained 27 questions, which were divided into five sections:-

A. Company information, number of employees, type of industry

B. Global factors which impact national culture, values, norms, and identity

C. Interaction with international business managers

D. Rate your cultural skills; Evaluate organization culture

E. Questions on management behavior when interacting with international business partners

F. Demographic data – age, gender, education, religion

Methodology, cont'd

▶ Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using SPSS software, Version 22 and reported using descriptive statistics.

- Examined to determine relationships between globalization, acculturation and management behavior against variables of culture, value, norms, and identity.

- Demographic variables of age, gender, education and religion examined to determine impact on culture, value, norms, and identify.

To answer the **Research Question:** Did the Caribbean manager change the steps of his dance repertoire to fit into a global type culture?

Results

- **Sub Research Question 1**:

Do demographic factors (latent independent variables: age, gender, education, religion) impact culture, values, norms, and identity (latent dependent variables)?

- Findings – the results showed significant effects for the demographic variable education in several of the dependent variables.

- The results can be reflective of the population sampled; the question could be asked whether a non-academic sample population would yield the same results.

- This significant effects of education in this study confirms the statements by Hofstede defining culture "mental programming can be inherited, transferred or learned from birth"; Schein "the deeper levels of basic assumptions and beliefs which operate unconsciously and in a taken for granted fashion''; and Graves . In both instances, education is the common denominator.

Results

- **Sub Research Question 2**:

Do global factors (latent independent variables: technology, media advertising, social media / Internet, capitalism, education, economic development, music, and laws) have an impact on culture, values, norms, values, and identity (latent dependent variables)?

- Findings: Overall the results showed global factors have a positive impact on culture, values, norms, and identity. Results showed 2 factors **commercialism** and **capitalism** as having a negative impact.

- Once again Schein's statement on basic assumptions operating unconsciously is observed – respondents cannot escape capitalism and commercialism, these factors are aligned with other global factors of social media, internet, media advertising, etc. We use cell phones, iPod, tablets which enhance the academic experience or general life experiences, i.e. banking, online shopping, education, etc.

Results

- **Sub Research Question 3**:

Does the Caribbean manager assimilate or integrate during international business meetings?

- Findings: Manager will not assimilate.

How would you describe your interaction with other cultures?
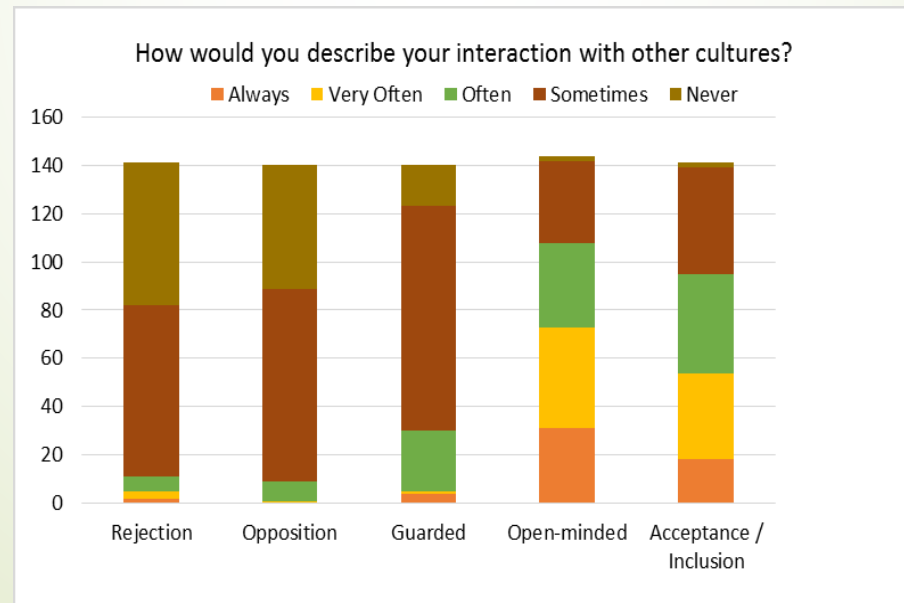
Sub Research Question 3, cont'd:

- 73% of respondents are guarded when approaching and interacting with other cultures. Most respondents will approach from the realm of self-development or enrichment. The preferred mode of approach was social networking.

- Once again the variable of education has an impact on how the respondents interact with other cultures, based on the perspective of learning.

Results

- **Sub Research Question 4**

Does acculturation / assimilation (latent independent variable) have a positive or negative impact on culture, values, norms, and identity (latent dependent variables)?

- Respondents were asked to rate cultural skills on a continuum scale from high to low on factors of individualism, openness to change, conservatism, self-enhancement, and self-transcendence.

- Organization culture evaluated using factors of embeddedness, hierarchy, mastery, effective autonomy, intellectual autonomy, egalitarianism, and harmony.

- The SVS (Schwartz Value Survey) created by Ralston & Schwartz in an attempt to bridge the gap between the seminal works of Hofstede regarding globalization. The only Caribbean island included Hofstede project was Jamaica. Unfortunately the SVS did not include any Caribbean islands.

Findings: 46.4% of respondents somewhat agree and 32.1% strongly agree assimilation impacts culture.

- These responses are not surprising. Respondents are torn between preserving the norm while being pulled into new. The paradox here is even though assimilation can be viewed as both negative and positive, participants through the global factors, especially technology are unconsciously or unwillingly assimilating towards a global type culture.
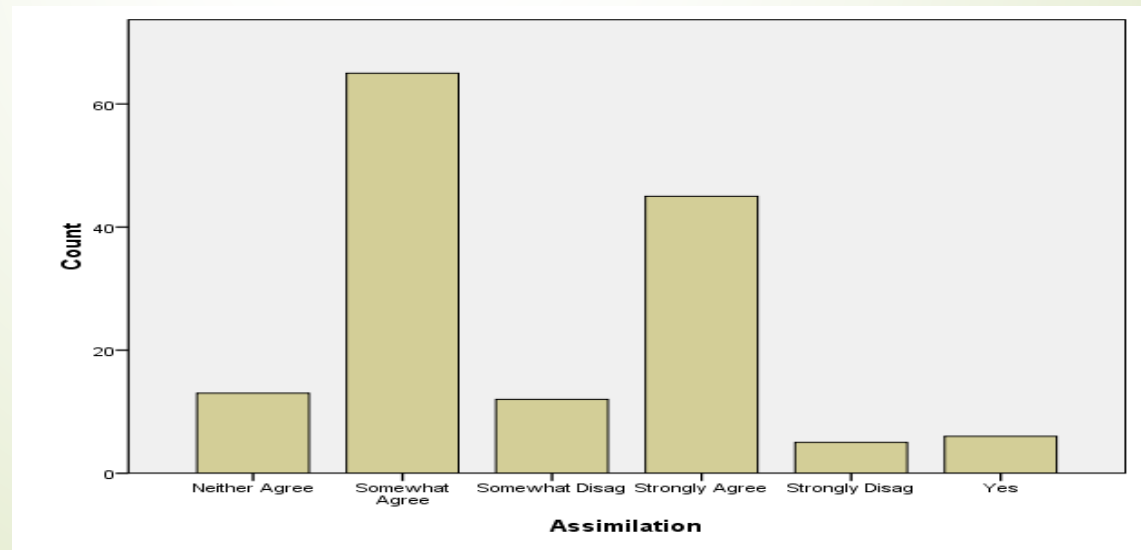
Results

- **Sub Research Question 5**

Does the behavior of the Caribbean manager change when interacting with international business partners?

- Findings: no change in management behavior as a result of power and control. (Respondents were asked to focus on the elements of power and control within the relationship)

- Managers' interaction were measured using the Intercultural Development Inventory. Respondents recorded business partner and colleague / peer relationships, limited responses recorded a superior element in the relationship.

- Sample population – 74 held B.Scs., 58 Masters, 38 held other post graduate degrees. We can assume due to the level of education, experience, exposure to social media / Internet, and other communication mediums, respondents possessed the confidence and ability to interact with international business partners on a level playing field.

Conclusions

- The results support the view that culture is being erased and replaced by a global type culture. Globalization, acculturation and assimilation act as the eraser and education is the transposer, establishing new symbols and artifacts into the subconscious which are eventually demonstrated outward into a new identity, supported by a new culture, norms, and values.

- The results of the study support the view of unawareness or lack of acceptance as respondents view assimilation into a more global type culture or way of doing things as negative.

- But unconsciously we do assimilate; globalization, acculturation and technology have impacted most elements of our lives. Most of us are caught up in the world of gadgets and social networking which promotes uniformity, simplicity, and standardization. Consequently we have changed the steps of our dance repertoire to fit into a global type culture. If we don't we will be left behind on the road to globalization.

Conclusions – cont'd.

- Culture erasure is occurring through mental programming (Hofstede) and occurring unconsciously in a taken for granted fashion (Schein). Globalization has created an illusionary source of social power and change, Foucault (1980)

- The results of this study confirms the English-Speaking Caribbean is suffering the effects of culture erasure due to globalization, acculturation and assimilation.

Recommendations / Discussions

- Further studies to ascertain the validity of surrendering national culture to partially adopt a homogeneous global type culture.

- Academia should play a critical role in culture awareness and preservation; highlighting the struggle with Self and the ability to maintain a national identity; focus on understanding the illusionary source of social power and change, Foucault (1980).

- Discussions on cultural trauma as it relates to social change within the English-speaking Caribbean, and whether or not we can escape cultural trauma in light of the constraints of globalization and the world systems.