

Identifying and Comparing the Cross Culture Difference Affecting Marketing Strategies of Honda in Different Regions

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Abstract

Purpose: To identify the performance marketing techniques used by Honda in China, USA and UK and to analyze and compare the cross-cultural differences, which can effect on marketing techniques. Likewise.

Methodology: Qualitative case study had been employed in the conduct of the study and gathering of data necessary to address the issues of the research. The researcher contacted some possible interviewees from UK, US, and China. Due to heavy schedules, the researcher did not immediately receive the response from them. Only after several days that the response from the UK and US possible interviewees were received while no response was received from the invited participants from China. The participants were purposefully selected in order to arrive at more fruitful information. 10 participants were invited but only 4 responded affirmatively. Demographics such as age, number of years in service, status, and position in Honda were considered. A and B are both from the US. They have been with Honda as manager and dealer respectively.

Findings: Some of the findings of the study are: (1) Honda follows the same mission statement, principles, and ethos across the globe. (2) Distinction in marketing is not on the level of principles and ethos, rather on the tools and mechanisms adopted to communicate the brand of Honda. (3) Honda can be deemed as one of the pioneers for globalization

Unique contribution to theory, practice and policy: Culture and globalization are two realities permeating contemporary society. The impact of these two factors continue to transform human interaction in such a way that understanding human activities and dynamics necessitate comprehension of the cultural and globalized situation of the person and organization. In this context, the research will address the question "What are the different approaches used by Honda in promoting its brand in various regions of the world?" In order to clarify further the main question of the research, the

following sub-questions How do cultural differences influence marketing strategies of Honda (US, UK, and China)? And does Honda offer a new approach in the promotion of its brand in the global market?

Keywords:: Cross Culture, Regions, Marketing Strategies

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Culture and globalization are two realities that shape contemporary society (Friedman 2005).

The impact of these two factors continually

transform human interaction in such a way that an understanding of the human activities and dynamics of an individual or an organization necessitate the comprehension of that person's or organization's cultural and situation in the globalized context. Hofstede (1996) claims that

“organizations are to some extent culture-bound”, and that “organization theories are also culture bound”, and that “yet the influence of the nationality of the author is extremely evident” and he challenges anyone to “give me a new theory and I will tell you the nationality of its author” (p.531). Furthermore, Hofstede (1996) warns: “As more organizations are crossing national borders, differences in nationality are increasingly a source of conflicts and contradictions” (p. 535).

Globalization is a primarily economic policy adopted by countries as they trade with other countries in the global market. It is also one of the key factors which pave the way for an increase in interaction among citizens of the world, while at the same time creating the platform for the inception of multinational companies (MNCs) and transnational companies (TNCs), which in turn becomes an arena for the encounter of different cultures.

1.2 Statement Problem

In consideration of the enormity of the global market, the variety of similar products, culture, customer behavior and preferences, and other similar factors affecting the status of the product in the market, this research will investigate the question “What are the different approaches used by Honda in the promotion of its brand in

the various regions of the world?” The problem will be in how to get the answer of these questions, In order to further dissect the main question of the research, the following sub-questions will also be addressed.

1. How do the cultural differences between the US, the UK and China influence the marketing strategies of Honda?
2. Does Honda offer a new approach in the promotion of its brand in the global market?

Honda was chosen as a company whose business model is to provide the market with low-priced, high quality products. Honda is known for applying marketing measures that give the corporation market leverage that reaches far beyond its home market Japan. The success of Honda’s approach is remarkable in that it has conquered a large segment of the US’ market while still catering to its inland market. Honda’s strong position in the markets of the US, UK, and in China is a source of motivation and progression, as the company cuts across various cultural differences under the slogan “The Power of Dreams”.

1.3 General objective of the study

The research intends to achieve the a general objective To identify the performance marketing techniques used by Honda in China, USA and the UK.

1.4 Specific Objectives

- ❖ To analyze and compare the cross-cultural differences which can effect on marketing techniques.
- ❖ To investigate effects of globalization on marketing techniques.
- ❖ To understand culture.

- ❖ To obtain knowledge on the impact of cultural differences to marketing.

To determine how marketing strategies become a competitive advantage for Honda in the face of cultural differences.

2.00 THEORETICAL REVIEW

- ❖ This chapter will deal with the existing scholarly discourse pertinent to the subject matter of the dissertation. It will attempt to achieve a clearer understanding of the various concepts and factors that are at work in the elucidation of international marketing and the reality of cultural differences in the arena of global economic market. One of the major concerns in international marketing is how to create a framework wherein existing cultures in the pluralistic global market economy can be a source of competitive advantage for the MNEs and not a source of hindrance for success. This challenge cuts across industries and is pervasive in the global market (Craig et al. 2005; Karande et al. 2006; Leung et al. 2005). In this regard, it can be inferred that one of the most important elements considered by MNEs as they cross border is the cultural context of the chosen country (Keller 1998). However, in the last thirty years, understanding culture, international marketing, market, consumers, organizations, and consumers have become more dynamic and demanding. This is based on the presupposition that the global market has established further requirements from consumers, organizations, and brands in particular and this has drastically transformed the approach in marketing strategies adopted and implemented by firms as they compete

globally (Jain 1989). Adaptation to these changes are pivotal for the success of the organization. Tougher and more stringent competition in the market has ensued as a result of the lowering of economic boundaries among countries due to globalization (Hofstede 1998).

In this regard, the literature review is divided into five sections. The first section tackles the various factors influencing the global business environment. This is essential as it will contextualise the discussion and provide a picture of the contemporary global business environment affecting MNEs. The second segment deals with the idea of market. The discussion in this section focuses on the various characterisation of the market within the context of the global market economy. Although globalisation is not something new (Coatsworth 2004), contemporary globalisation has created new attributes of the global market that reframes the market and its 'boundaries' in the global economy (Glynos 2012). Apprehending these attributions of the market is significant since MNEs and their activities are at the core of the global market. The third section of the chapter centres on culture. The impact of culture to business, both on its internal and external environment is undeniable (Hall 1999; Hofstede 1980; 1986; Hofstede and Minkovic 2010). From

this perspective, gaining insights as to what is culture is critical to the study. This section directly the question what is culture? The fourth section of the review looks into marketing strategies within the condition of international marketing. The fifth section will deal with some observed limitations and concerns with the conducted literature review. Finally, at the end of the chapter is a brief summary of the chapter.

2.0 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

3.1 Methods and data

For the research, a qualitative case had employed in the conduct of the study and gathering of data to identify the various marketing approaches that Honda use and adopt as the company continues to be one of the most important players in the automobile, motorcycle, and power tools industry. In addition, the research intends to have a clearer perspective on the role of culture in international marketing and business environment.

Qualitative research methodology had been used for the research on the premise that the researcher believed it is the suitable methodology for the study as it provide room and opportunity for the researcher to be involved directly in the phenomenon being observed (Yin 2009). In the same way, qualitative research method widens the perspective of the researcher as through it a holistic picture of the event was sought via understanding the issue within the social context of the event (Janesick 2004). Furthermore, through qualitative research

method, the researcher was able to observe the phenomenon as it unfolded (Yin 2009).

Research design is crucial in research projects as it serves as the framework of the entire study. It serves as the guide in determining the fitness of the purpose vis-a-vis the methodology adopted. Since, the purpose of the study is the beacon in the determination of the suitable method for the research (Cohen et al 2007).

There are two different types of research methodology that may be adopted, the qualitative and quantitative. Combination of the two methodologies is possible and is even encouraged in order to benefit from the advantages of the two methodologies and limit the disadvantages and minimise the impact of the identified weaknesses of the methodologies (Gillham 2000). Generally, quantitative research deals with issues that are measurable and quantifiable. It requires hard data. On the other hand, qualitative research seeks to understand the how and the why and it is suitable for soft data. This basic distinction serves only as a guide, what is more essential is that regardless of the methodology that is adopted for the research, it should bring clarification to the issue of the study and address the questions raised by the dissertation.

As mentioned, qualitative case study was used in the conduct of the research. The reasons behind the decision in using qualitative case study for the research are

(1) It gave the researcher direct participation in all the phases of the research (Yin 2009). For this research, the researcher was actively involved in the conceptualisation of the research, the search for materials, gathering of data, construction of

questions for the interview, analysis of the data, writing of the research, and editing of the dissertation. Furthermore, by using qualitative research in the study, the stories shared gave a rich description of the phenomenon being observed (Merriam and Associates 2002).

(2) Through qualitative study, the event freely unfolded without the researcher consciously intervening (Patton 2002). In this research, the free unfolding of the event happened when the researcher conducted the interview and visited one of the showrooms of Honda. The researcher gained insights into the phenomenon not only from the actual experience of the researcher, but more so from the perspectives and narratives of the interviewees (van Nirkoff 2005).

(3) By going into the site, the researcher gained knowledge of the actual context of the interviewees and this was made possible by the fact that qualitative case study made room for this kind of engagement (Maxwell 1996).

(4) Finally, through qualitative case study complex events, actions, conditions, and the situations of the participants in the study were made understandable and clearer (Maxwell 1996). For this study, the clearer perspective was gained during the documentary search, the interview, and the reflection that was performed all throughout the conduct of the research.

In choosing qualitative research, the researcher did not claim that it was the best; rather, what was presupposed was that it was the most appropriate method considering the purpose and the issue of the research. No single

methodology had a hold on the knowledge and truth (Golafshani 2009). In fact, the chance to choose the methodology showed the several paths that may be taken towards truth (Golafshani 2009) and for this study; the path was qualitative case study.

3.0 FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings of the dissertation and its discussion will be presented. The findings of the study are drawn from several sources. The primary question of the research deals with the identification of the different marketing approaches that Honda use and adopt as an important global player in the automobile, motorcycle, and power tools industry. The research has also addressed three sub questions pertaining to the concept of culture, the impact of culture to MNCs, and Honda's response to the challenge of cross-culture that is inherent in global market.

It has been observed that there is a common agreement among scholars from various fields and not only from management and marketing that culture impacts marketing (see Hall, 1989a, 1989b, 1990; Hofstede 1990, 1996; Hampden and Trompenaar 2000). As such, it can be inferred that although there is a perception that culture remains to be an enigma on the premise that you know its impact and attributes, but the extent in which it can influence the person varies, re-affirms the supposition that culture is something that

everybody knows, but is not conscious or aware. This is significant since this supposition makes the impact of culture more subtle and less obvious.

Globalisation has created the platform wherein the encounter of various cultures has become possible. In the same manner, technology has allowed the exchange of culture without necessarily leaving one's physical space. In effect, the virtual reality that is offered by the World Wide Web becomes the arena wherein interactions among different cultures become possible. As such, globalisation and technology are the two crucial elements necessary for the flattening of the world and the establishment of a more connected global society. In this context, culture is no longer just associated with the individual or a particular group. In the pioneering research of Hofstede (1981; 1990; 1984), it has been claimed that the impact of culture pervades the entire life span and relationships of the person. Culture is the "software of the mind" and it becomes the background conditioning of the person as she interprets and finds meaning to life and the world. In other words, culture is the lens in which the world is perceived and understood (Agar 1999). As such, it can be inferred that all human interaction is suffused by the influence of culture. From this perspective, culture is not just limited to the group or team, or religion, or school, or community where the individual belongs, but it also permeates the organisation and nation. Thus, reaffirming the idea that globalisation and technology are essential platforms for the encounter of the various cultures inherent in the global society.

In this regard, culture plays a pivotal role as organisations cross borders. Since, differences in culture can be a source of conflict and

contradiction (Hofstede 1986) if not managed, but differences in culture can also provide for competitive advantage for the MNCs as it offers various perspectives on one issue, which can be a source of innovation and creativity. Borkovich (2012) highlights the idea that in the midst of this tension, scholars have assumed variegated position, so much so, that others consider culture as significant in the life of international business, while there are some who presupposed that a universal culture from developed countries is the track of culture in the global market arena. In this sense, it can be impugned that as globalisation and technology create the necessary arena for cultural encounters, it also gives emphasis on the reality of cultural divergence that is inherent in global society. This reality establishes a challenge and opportunity for MNCs to deconstruct their own respective cultures and interact with other cultures as they undertake business activities within the global market. In effect, culture in the global market, in the international business environment is an enigma that poses a challenge, an opportunity, or a source of conflict and contradiction.

3.1.2 Cross-Cultural Marketing: The International Face of Marketing

With the developments in the global market, it

has been observed that marketing has evolved in such a way that it recognises the changes in the functions of the market (Glynos 2012), evolution in marketing through developments of other forms of marketing such as political marketing, and social marketing (Andressen 1990: Hastings 2000; Hastings and McDermott 2008), and the major shift in marketing -from manufacturer to customer centeredness. In this sense, when the firm goes into international business, it must bring with it not only the 4Ps of marketing, but knowledge, acceptance, and respect for the culture of the country where they are going. There are scholars who are espousing the idea of universal culture, however, majority of people across the globe holds that there is cultural divergence and the pluralism of the global society is not something that must polarised people, but it is something that must teach them respect towards inherent differences present in the human condition.

The development of cross-cultural marketing is a step towards respecting other cultures. It does not look for convergence in terms of assimilating the culture of the country and turning it into the culture of another country, which is deemed more powerful and developed. Rather it is cultural convergence in the midst of cultural divergence. Cross-cultural marketing works with the culture of the host country and transforms the product/services of the organisation in such a way that a meeting of values transpire. This 'innovation' on the part of marketing rest on the presupposition that cultural divergence is not a negative factor, but an opportunity for growth and development. Differences in culture manifest different lens in which the world may be understood. There is no one 'right culture', but there is a kaleidoscope of culture. As such, cross-cultural marketing becomes the foundation in which marketing strategy is formulated in the

context of globalisation.

It has been observed in the research that scholars offer the basic framework that will enable the firm to establish the marketing strategies and then the company has to create its own specific strategy that will suit its business visions and goals. There is no one specific way in which it can be achieved. There is no way that there will only be one approach for everything. As such, cross-cultural marketing enables the marketer to find possible convergence in the midst of divergence. As such, it can be inferred that the impact of culture in international business is wide and deep as it (1), it modifies the initial strategies of the organisation as it moves from mother country to host country (Onkvist and Shaw 1999). (2) It can also alter the products and services that offered by the company or create new products suitable for the new market (Onkvist and Shaw 1999). For example, Honda has developed a car that is solely for China use. McDonalds have developed the brands that are unique in China. They have the green tea and red bean sundae, Shogun Burger, and Seaweed seasoned fries. In other words, cross-cultural differences have become a source of creativity and innovation among MNCs. (3) it becomes an opportunity to take a look into one's culture and make a conscious effort in avoiding Self-Reference Criterion Fallacy. It is the fallacy where one takes one's culture as the reference point and assumes that what is acceptable to one's culture is also acceptable to everybody.

3.1.3 Honda: Globalization All the Way

Honda's going global started even before globalisation has been fully implemented across the globe (see Appendix 1). They opened their first US plant in 1967, making them one of the

early players in globalisation. In this regard, it can be assumed that Honda has a vast experience in terms of meeting cultural differences. However, it has been observed that Honda's case; the local going global does not alter the brand in itself, but has created the global arena as a way of introducing to the world the Honda dream. Mr. Honda believed that good quality of the product would cut across any marketing barriers. This has been the driving ethos of the company, "we are dedicated to supplying products of the highest quality, yet at a reasonable price for worldwide customer satisfaction", and it opened new dimensions in understanding people and culture in the age of globalisation.

The notion of glocalisation has been conjured to refer to the reality of MNCs adopting their local products/services in order to meet the local standards. In the case of Honda, it has come up with an important ideal that lowers economic and cultural barriers – high quality products that are sold at reasonable price for worldwide customer satisfaction and this ethos has been pursued by Honda with passion. It has been observed in the study that Honda does not try to counter culture. In fact, it embraces it as the company supports the supposition "building

products in the markets where they are sold". It does not limit itself to one part of the world only, but early on, Honda has already envisioned glocalisation.

In this regard, Honda raises the bar on culture – culture no longer becomes just a source of inspiration and innovation, but cultural differences become an accepted reality that can be bridged and connected by coming up with products that the world needs that is of quality, and provides satisfaction to the customers. It has created a paradigm shift by focusing on the inherent capacities of human beings. Honda affirms that culture provides the frame in which people makes choices and define their wants. This is manifested by adopting their products on the specific needs of the region of the country. Nonetheless, they also developed these products not based on culture alone but on the specific needs of the customers.

Honda pioneers globalization. As such, they have established a brand that is known for its quality. They have developed a product that speaks of the personality of the user, the ideals, and dreams of the customer. It refers to now but looks forward to the reality of the future. In this regard, it has move beyond the negative impact

of culture to international business but has affirmed the common humanity that consumers share and this has been a very effective organisational and marketing strategy that Honda has embraced. Honda continues to be the number one manufacturer of motorcycle, has been part of the top automobile makers, and is now venturing in jet making (aside from ASIMO).

3.1.2 Findings from the Interview

The first part of the interview pertains to important demographics – age, years of service in Honda, status in life, and educational background

All the interviewees agree that culture is ambiguous and that the many definitions of the scholars only provide an idea as to how it can be understood, but it does not encapsulate the real impact and connotation of culture. In the same manner, they raised the supposition that cross-cultural difference that exists is a result of the reality of pluralism within the context of globalisation. A shares, “I accept cultural differences as natural and not something that must be considered as an enemy in marketing. It is part of the world where we are thriving.

Sometimes, when you get overwhelmed by it, just look at your hand and you’ll see that it has different lengths. Culture is similar to that. It is just simply different for each country.” C adds, “Nobody is the same. So why expect it to be the same”.

When the interviewees were asked how they look at their functions in Honda, B shares, “With Honda it is not work. I am doing what I like doing. I enjoy every minute of what I do.” While, D says, “In Honda, you live, you work, you play, you have fun, and you create. There is much in what we do. “This same sentiment is also shared by A and C. All of them affirm the idea that in Honda work ceases to be work, but in itself is already the living of the dream. This creates the impression that for them the power of dream is not something ephemeral. It is not just an abstraction that one chases. It is a dream that is lived and is turned into actuality. Thus, an impossible dream is the cliché and not the power of dreams.

Several terms were used by the interviewees as they were asked how they communicate Honda to their respective customers. For A and B who are in the North American region Honda is high quality, service,

joy, respect, enthusiasm, status, ambition, youth, flexibility, and innovation. On the other hand, C and D who are from the UK and they maintain that Honda speaks for itself. The image and the brand carry with it the very ethos in which the whole company stands for – high quality, service, joy, respect, and management that recognises innovation, creativity, thinking out of the box but responding to the needs of the customers. In effect, they are claiming a similarity that appears to be existent between the two regions – Honda the brand and image is the epitome of the high quality that is pursued with passion by the company.

This is a sign of the glocalisation of Honda that has been observed in the course of study – the concept of quality that satisfies the global market. It shows that the quality of which Honda stands for is not just a local ideal (Japan), but it is a global ideal that is actually looked for by customers to products and delivered by Honda regardless of region. As Mr. Honda claimed, let the quality of the product speak for itself.

All of them spoke of the strategy that they adopt. These are (1) use of technology in advertising (2) responding to customer demands and suggestions (3) now your market (4) attract

other segments of the market while keeping your target market (5) respect the culture of your customers. Do not assume that everything that they verbally communicated is everything. Likewise, do not assume that everything that you have said is understood in the manner that you want. (6) Be sensitive to your customers - their needs, their wants, their culture, their aspirations, and their dreams. (7) Develop trust. This is crucial in all Honda relationships. (8) Joy. These present fundamental approaches that they adopt as they established marketing strategies for the company. The researcher asked them to be more specific in their marketing strategies and A said, “It is a strategy. If we tell you some of the details, it will no longer be a strategy, but a sharing”.

Culture affects strategy because there is no one definitive approach to the marketing strategy. As A said, “There are only some common standards in the strategy. Excellence, respect, joy, and meeting the goals, vision, and principles of the company are some of it. But coming with a common standard in international marketing, I think it is not worth it.” In the same way, C shared, “Culture, marketing, and strategy require flexibility, innovation, creativity, and

high quality in its standard. Considering differences in culture, standards are on quality and innovation and not on any other ideas that may be similar with the self-reference criterion fallacy”.

The interview showed that the interviewees who were coming from two different regions are re-echoing the same principles, ethos, ideals, and management objectives that are laid down in Japan. It is the local strategy going global and the global going local. The drive for high quality products that are affordable and capable of satisfying worldwide customer preferences is the primary driver of the marketing strategy of Honda regardless of region.

3.2 Discussion

International business environment poses a challenge to traditional marketing, as there are several important factors that are play in the global market arena. Culture is one of the more significant factors that have to be considered as MNCs cross borders in their conduct of business. in this regard, it is important to note that marketing and culture intersect in inter-cultural/cross-cultural marketing as the challenges of international business environment is faced by MNCs. Culture is

ambiguous but marketing is definitive. Culture permeates the entire facet of the market. It influences consumer behaviour, attitude, decision-making, preferences, and needs. As such, international marketing has to understand the culture of the host country and move away from self-reliance criterion fallacy. Although, SRC is difficult to avoid, as it is the persons’ point of reference (Kuhn 1996) what is crucial is the openness and respect in the face of cultural differences. In this sense, the connection between international marketing and culture becomes more intricate as the global platform supports plurality of cultures. In effect, it challenges marketing to new dimension and opens marketing to new ideas, approaches, and demands. As such, apprehending culture within the context of international marketing and business environment proffers new and better understanding of dynamics of culture in marketing. It posits new views, different perspectives, and new opportunities.

This has been observed in the case of Honda Company Ltd. Honda has started early in globalisation. However, it has been observed that its very principle is propelled by the ideals of a global Honda. As such, when Honda entered the

US, the UK, and China, local-global-local has become the path of its strategy. Honda is, again, pioneering the reality of glocalisation not just, because it is developing local products to meet local demands in the region where it is actively participating, but also because its basic principles that continue to drive the company since its inception are still the very same drivers for Honda's innovation, creativity, flexibility, and ambition. The power of dreams, of turning into reality dreams that drives our being and the passion in which dreams are pursued continue to fuel Honda's ethos –quality product that is affordable and capable of satisfying worldwide consumers' demands.

In the course of the study, it has been observed that Honda, regardless of its region, adheres to the company's basic principles. There is no differentiation in the basic tenets and ethos of the company. It is in the manner in which Honda is communicated is where the differentiation may happen. This is important as it highlights the supposition that Honda brand and image is the same regardless of the location, but the manner in which it is communicated to the people, to the target market of Honda in a specific region may differ.

This is very important as it manifest three essential core principles that are perceptible in global Honda. The first core is the technological expertise that the company is continuously manifesting via the creation of high quality products that are innovative and goes beyond the customer expectations. This has caused joy in buying. The second core is the employees of Honda. Being human centred, Honda has developed joy in selling and creating. Finally, the third core is respect for different culture inherent in the global market. Honda develops strategies that affirm both the humanity of the customer and the distinct culture that helped shape that humanity. This is evidenced by the various marketing strategies, operational strategies, and business plans that Honda continues to develop as it enter other markets. As such, Honda epitomises globalization.

In this chapter, the findings and its discussion have been given. In the following chapter, the conclusion of the dissertation will be presented.

4.00 . Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions


In 1980, following an extensive quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods studies, Hofstede first published in IBM various cultural

dimensions which describes and compares power and control as implemented within the social cultural environment of the workplace. This pioneering work serves as a benchmark on the issue. Hofstede (1980) identified four cultural dimensions. These are 'power distance', 'uncertainty avoidance', 'masculinity v femininity', and 'individualism and collectivism'. These four cultural dimensions continue to expounded and clarified in various studies. Hofstede did not provide a monolith in cultural dimensions, rather what was proffered were identified elements that served as a guide in understanding encounters among culture within the context of global business environment. In 1987, Bond added 'long-term orientation v short-term orientation' to Hofstede's cultural dimension. This shows that Hofstede's cultural dimension is still evolving and it is open to new observations and dimensions. Power Distance pertains to the extent to which less powerful members of institutions or organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally (from small to large) (Hofstede et al 2010, p. 521). Uncertainty Avoidance refers to the extent to which the members of a culture feel

threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations (from weak to strong) (Hofstede et al 2010 p. 522). Masculinity v Femininity, As opposites, they form one of the dimensions of national culture. Masculinity stands for a society in which emotional gender roles are clearly distinct: men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success; women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life (Hofstede et al 2010, p. 519). Individualism v Collectivism, again as opposites, they form one of the cultural dimensions. Collectivism stands for a society in which people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's lives continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty (Hofstede et al 2010, p. 515). Long-term orientation v Short-term orientation pertains to the fostered values and virtues of the organisation. Long-term orientation stands for the fostering of pragmatic virtues oriented toward future rewards, in particular perseverance, thrift, and adapting to changing circumstances (Hofstede et al 2010, p. 519). Short-term orientation stands for the fostering of virtues related to the past and present, such as national pride, respect for

tradition, preservation of face, and fulfilling social obligations (Hofstede et al 2010, pp. 521 - 522).

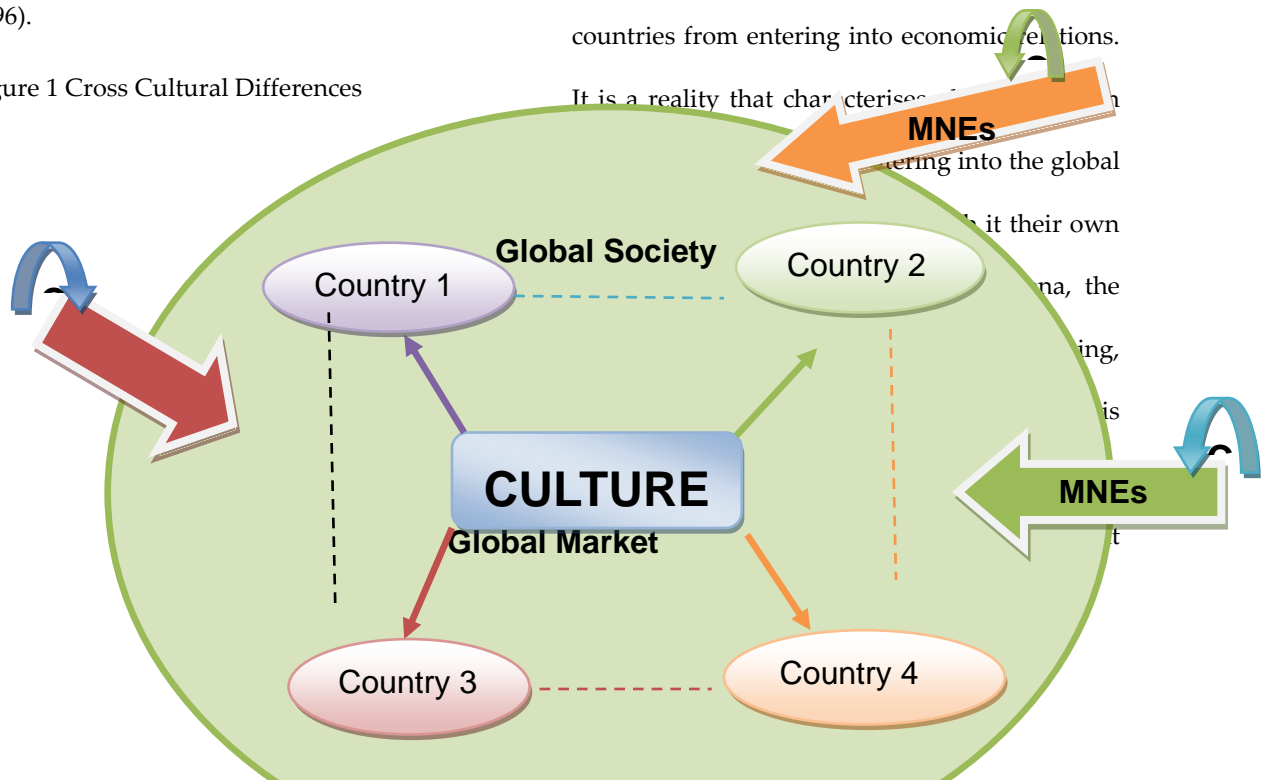
These cultural dimensions are common trends that are observed among cultures. It does not create a sacrosanct distinction or characterisation of different cultures. Instead, it serves as a guide in understanding organisational and national culture. Moreover, Hofstede (1994) maintains that organisations are made up of different persons whose background conditioning varies and individuals who embrace different perspectives. As such, it is important to highlight that the idea of universal culture (although may be fascinating) can be considered to be more alienating as it opens the tendency of establishing one culture in the midst of the plurality of cultures and persons (Hofstede 1996).

*C – culture 

Source: Researcher

This figure is created out from the discussion from pages 11 – 21. It shows the meaning of cross-cultural differences within the context of the global society and global market. Each country has its own distinct culture. The broken lines connecting each country represent the reality of the inherent differences in each country. However, in the global market the inherent differences of countries do not deter countries from entering into economic relations.

Figure 1 Cross Cultural Differences



cultures in the global market arena is acknowledged as "a source of conflicts and contradictions" (Hofstede 1996, p. 535). Borkovich (2012) states that widespread intercultural encounters which happen during multinational group meetings, international conferences, seminars, interdepartmental dynamics, business travel, meetings, and other similar situations are just some of the instances wherein intercultural interactions may transpire and if handled incorrectly may be venue for misunderstanding, but it managed well, can be a source of good and lasting relationships.

In this regard, it can be inferred that global market provides the necessary condition for the meeting of MNEs and different cultures within the context of global business environment. In this sense, marketing, as an arm of organisations, has to find means and ways wherein inherent cultural differences within the global market can be transformed into a strategic and competitive advantage of the organisation and not a source of conflict and contradiction. This is crucial since the encounter of cultures in MNEs is a cultural risk (Wang 2011).

5.1. Summary

It has been observed in the course of doing

the study that culture is something that is difficult to comprehend in its entirety. However, this does not mean that it cannot be understood. The works of scholars have shed light in gaining understanding pertinent to culture. In this regard, it can be inferred that culture has played a crucial role in re-defining and re-shaping marketing in the international business environment.

MNCs have encountered and met different cultures as they cross borders. This scenario has become the source of conflict or the source of innovation and growth. In this regard, it has been inferred that there is need to understand further the dynamics of culture in the global market. Since, culture in the international business environment has become determinative of the success or failure of a project, even an MNC. In this context, it has been observed that the case of Honda has taken a step further in apprehending the connection of culture and marketing in the global market.

By glocalisation, Honda has created a new dimension in international cultural marketing. Their marketing strategy across the globe is guided by the same local ideals of Mr. Honda, "high quality products that are affordable and

are capable of satisfying the preferences of the world wide customer". This mission statement has consistently guided the activities of Honda. As it is supported by the ethos and ideals of respect and the three joys (buying, selling, and creating) and sound management that recognises the humanity, creativity, ambition, and joy in innovating and creating something new, Honda has been associated with high quality and its image has been always attributed with innovation, creativity, status, ambition, and dreams.

The differences among the regions is the tools that they use as they communicate Honda to the target market, but the ideals and vision behind Honda is the same all over the world – 'the power of dreams'. In this sense, it has been observed that Honda is again pioneering in glocalisation. This is not only because they are developing brands that are suitable and specific in a particular locality, but also because they have established the paradigm wherein culture differences can meet at a common point – high quality of products.

5.2. Conclusion

It has been observed that Honda used the same principle and ethos in its business

regardless of its location. It has been found out that Honda plays a pioneering effort in glocalisation wherein micro-macro differences of the market meet, as such, raising the bar of marketing. It has also been observed that differences in marketing strategy happen in the actualisation of the promotion, but not on the underlying principles. Thus, Honda is offering again an old approach in bridging differences – high quality products.

5.3. Implications

The findings of this study helps in pin pointing a good example that will clarify glocalisation as a way in bridging cultural differences in marketing. It also highlights the need to further elucidate glocalisation within the field of marketing.

For Honda's stakeholders, the study provides the arena for a better understanding of Honda, not just as a company, but as a pioneer in crossing local and global markets. This provides the background why Honda can, with the power of dreams, create better products for its customers.

5.4. Recommendations

The following are the recommendations of the study

Honda's glocalisation can be used in the Academe to clarify this promising concept.

Culture cannot be separated from all facets of marketing. Further studies should be performed in order to apprehend the extent of the influence of culture to consumer decision-making.

Honda's image speaks of quality, innovation, creativity, and thinking outside the box, are these images beyond culture? MNCs like Honda who have consistently maintained high quality products and services seem to be less impervious to the negative impact of culture. Knowledge from this can help redefine important concepts in marketing like brand, image, and quality.

5.5. Limitations, Weakness, and Further Studies

Securing primary data for the research was difficult. The researcher believed that survey and interview from personnel of Honda in China would have made the research more fruitful. As the study is limited only to Honda, it could not generalised its claim regarding the viability of glocalisation as a way of crossing macro-micro marketing. Further research in glocalisation was opened in this study. It is a promising concept that is both pragmatic and realistic in its appreciation of the global society and market.

Honda lives the power of dreams. The

company is crossing cultural differences by living the dream – high quality products that are affordable and are capable of satisfying worldwide customers. (13,048 words).

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