

## 4.4: Importance of Culture on Markets

### Learning Objectives

After reading this section, students should be able to ...

1. appreciate the importance of culture on markets

Because international marketing is closely correlated to the cultures in which a firm wishes to sell its product, culture itself must be analyzed to understand the best way to integrate into both existing and emerging foreign markets. There are five essential areas within which culture must be continually studied in order to achieve success in dealing with culture as it affects international marketing.

These are: (Tian, 2008)

- culture impacts on marketing (international versus domestic)
- cross-cultural dimensions of marketing research
- cross-cultural aspects of the marketing mix (products, price, promotion, and place)
- cross-cultural marketing education and professional training
- and cross-cultural practice in electronic marketing

Cross-cultural marketing occurs when a consumer's culture differs from that of the marketer's own culture.

Consumer behavior diverges across country lines with increased wealth, globalization, and technology; it does not converge (De Mooij, 2005).

### Student Example

McDonald's has done a great job introducing its chain around the world and moving into numerous markets and cultures. One location that I think is a great example of cross-cultural marketing is McDonald's in France. The French have a very different culture than the United States. They live their life at a much slower pace and their meals are more about socializing and enjoying the time with people rather than eating and getting out. McDonald's has created some new menu items for their French locations such as an Alpine burger and the McBaguette. McDonald's also designed the French chains so that they are more spacious and decorated tastefully so that it does encourage the French to sit down and enjoy their meal at their own pace. There are also separate McCafe locations around France that are decorated with big comfortable chairs and couches to encourage socialization. In addition, the coffee is served in real coffee mugs and not in to-go cups.

Before entering the country, McDonald's surely did their research because they not only added French-like items to the menu, but they also incorporated a French-like atmosphere. I think this is a very good example of cross-cultural marketing because these locations really encourage a dine-in and more relaxed experience compared to the fast pace take-out that Americans are used to. Many French people have actually commented on the fact that McDonald's in France does not feel like a fast-food restaurant at all. With this information, I think it is easy to say that their research and cross-cultural marketing plan for France has been a success.

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**Class of 2020**

This simple fact proves the importance of cultural knowledge in cross-cultural marketing endeavors. In fact, the importance of cross-cultural study has inspired a definition separate from that of international marketing. Cross-cultural marketing is defined as the strategic process of marketing among consumers whose culture differs from that of the marketer's own culture at least in one of the fundamental cultural aspects, such as language, religion, social norms and values, education, and the living style (Tian, 2008).

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