Acculturation to the global consumer culture: a generational cohort comparison

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While on a global scale consumers are becoming more homogeneous, as a result of the increasingly globalized marketplace, researchers suggest that consumers within individual countries are becoming more culturally heterogeneous. Consequently, M. Cleveland and J. Laroche (2007. Acculturation to the global consumer culture: Scale development and research paradigm. *Journal of Business Research*, *60*, 249–259) advocate segmenting consumers across markets on the basis of acculturation to the global consumer culture (AGCC) rather than segmenting at the individual country level. In this they anticipate AGCC will reflect demographic characteristics. However, little empirical work exists to validate or challenge the assertion that demographics moderate AGCC. This exploratory study uses generational cohort theory (GCT) to examine the relationships between cohort membership and level of AGCC among a sample of US consumers ($N = 492$). The findings suggest AGCC does identify differences between cohorts.

Keywords: global consumer culture; acculturation; generational cohorts

Introduction

Standardization or adaptation of marketing strategy in non-domestic markets has been a theme in the literature for the last 30 years (Schmid & Kotulla, 2011). Part of this debate has focused on the homogenization of consumer attitudes across national boundaries (Ger & Belk, 1996). Consequently, marketing researchers encourage further inquiry in order to understand better the development of global consumer culture and foster successful marketing strategies within the global marketplace (Cleveland & Laroche, 2007; Cleveland, Laroche, & Papadopolous, 2009; Keillor, D'Amico, & Horton, 2001). In particular, Cleveland and Laroche (2007, p. 252) have proposed the acculturation to the global consumer culture (AGCC) framework as a way of identifying the extent to which global segments form as a consequence of their acquisition of 'knowledge, skills and behaviours that are characteristic of a nascent and de-territorialized global consumer culture'. With the exception of two recent examinations of the framework (Cleveland, Erdogan, Arikan, & Poyraz, 2011; Cleveland et al., 2009) which consider the degree to which consumer markets are globalized, this framework remains relatively untested. For example, while Cleveland and Laroche (2007) propose the AGCC framework

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and suggest that AGCC is moderated by demographics, only one dimension of AGCC (cosmopolitanism) has been empirically examined (Cleveland et al., 2009, 2011).

At the same time as researchers have been considering the homogenization of markets across national boundaries other research has explored the differences within national consumer cultures. One strand of research has explored the use of generational cohort theory (GCT) as a means of going beyond segmenting markets on the basis of disaggregated demographic variables such as age, gender and income (Hung, Gu, & Yim, 2007; Noble & Schewe, 2003). GCT 'takes advantage both of the stability that age segmentation offers (Steenkamp & Hofstede, 2002) and of the insights into consumer motivations that value segmentation offers' (Hung et al., 2007, p. 837). However, examination of the academic literature suggests that comparison of multiple generational cohorts within a single study is rare (e.g. Hung et al., 2007; McPherson, 2007; Strutton, Taylor, & Thompson, 2011). Therefore, the purpose of the exploratory research presented here is an evaluation of GCT as a means by which to develop segmentation strategies within an acculturated global consumer culture. To this end, the following research questions are posed to guide this inquiry:

RQ1:   Do generational cohorts differ in terms of their acculturation to the global consumer culture?

RQ2:   Is generational cohort theory a viable means by which to segment consumers based on their acculturation to the global consumer culture?

By addressing these questions this study seeks to provide useful insight into differences between generational cohorts as understood through the lens of AGCC. In addition, it endeavours to establish an understanding of GCT's value as a segmentation strategy for use in global marketing. Ultimately, this study is intended to assist both researchers and practitioners in better identifying global consumer segments. As consumer attitudes and behaviours homogenize, monitoring changes in global consumer culture will be critical for marketing success.

Background

Acculturation to the global consumer culture (AGCC)

Within the international marketing literature there is a clear assertion that as a result of the globalization of consumer products and services, consumers in individual countries are becoming less clearly defined by national cultural attitudes. As a consequence, the heterogeneity of global markets has been supplanted by an increasingly homogenized market space (Cleveland & Laroche, 2007; Firat, 1995; Furrer, Liu, & Sudharshan, 2000). However, at the same time there is also a stream of literature that suggests that within national cultures there are tendencies towards greater heterogeneity as consumers become less willing to conform to expected norms (De Mooij, 2004; Ger, 1999; Roth, 1995). If, as researchers contend, consumers within individual countries are becoming more culturally heterogeneous while on a global basis consumers are becoming more homogeneous, then marketing researchers must reconsider the methods by which markets are to be segmented. The emergence of a global consumer culture which overlays an increasingly fragmented set of national consumer cultures, represents a paradigm shift and requires a fundamental reappraisal of international marketing strategies. As Cleveland and Laroche (2007) advocate, segmenting the global market instead of individual countries becomes a research imperative.

Cleveland and Laroche (2007) propose the AGCC framework as an alternative means of segmenting global markets because it takes into account the evolution of a global

consumer culture. The authors identify seven major drivers of AGCC including cosmopolitanism (COS), exposure to marketing activities of multi-national companies (EXM), English language usage and exposure (ELU), social interactions (SIN), global mass media exposure (GMM), openness to and desire to emulate global consumer culture (OPE) and self-identification with global consumer culture (IDT).

Of these, cosmopolitanism is defined as 'a specific set of qualities held by certain individuals including a willingness to engage with the other (i.e., different) cultures and a level of competence toward alien culture(s)' (Cleveland & Laroche, 2007, p. 252). Exposure to marketing of multi-national companies refers to a consumer's familiarity with marketing efforts of companies operating across national boundaries. English language usage and exposure suggests that a consumer is familiar with and uses the English language. Social interactions reflect an individual's experience travelling outside their home country, migration and contact with foreigners. Global mass media exposure refers to a consumer's exposure to media generated outside of their home country. Openness to and desire to emulate global consumer culture describes an individual's likelihood of seeking out foreign products for symbolic or personal reasons, even if the person is not considered to be particularly cosmopolitan. Finally, self-identification with global consumer culture reflects an individual's desire to reflect global consumer movement in terms of how they dress, what they read and how they interact with international brands (Cleveland & Laroche, 2007).

Due to the relatively recent development of the AGCC concept and measures, limited empirical application of the concept exists in the literature. To date, COS is the only dimension of AGCC that has been empirically examined beyond the development of the original scale (Cleveland et al., 2009, 2011). However, no study has been conducted to examine differences in any of the dimensions of AGCC based on a segmentation system such as generational cohorts. However, two extant studies do provide some information about relationships between age and COS. Cleveland et al. (2009) conducted a study across eight countries, reporting that age is negatively related to COS among Swedish, Korean and Hungarian consumers. The results of the study support the use of the AGCC framework cross-culturally and suggest that the effect of demographic characteristics on AGCC seem to vary based on the country being investigated. The United States was not included in the eight country study. A separate study of Canadian and Turkish consumers by Cleveland et al. (2011) indicates no significant differences in COS based on age. Like the Cleveland et al. (2009) study, the later study does not include any of the additional dimensions of AGCC.

Generational cohort theory

Strauss and Howe (1991) contend that the US population can be divided into four cohorts based on generation: the Silent Generation (born between 1925 and 1942); the Baby Boomers (born between 1943 and 1960); Generation X, otherwise known as the 13th Generation (born between 1961 and 1981); and Generation Y, otherwise known as Millennials or Generation Next (born between 1982 and 2000). Generations are conceptualized as extending as long as is required for a birth cohort to come of childbearing age (Strauss & Howe, 1991). Generational cohort theory suggests that groups of people born during the same time period live and grow through the same experiences, come of age at approximately the same time, and will therefore exhibit similar values, attitudes and beliefs. Moreover, it is suggested that the values, attitudes and beliefs of one generation may differ from those of other generations because they have experienced different events and come of age at different times in history (Strauss & Howe, 1991).

Examples of defining events among the cohorts include economic recessions and depressions, wars and technological advancements. Work by Shuman and Scott (1989) has supported the notion of generations sharing collective memories and acknowledges that these memories are likely to impact attitudes and behaviours as the generation moves into adulthood.

Currently, the eldest of the US generational cohorts is the Silent Generation which includes approximately 49 million people born between 1925 and 1942 (Strauss & Howe, 1991). Known for their conformist and patriotic stance, members of the Silent Generation experienced the Great Depression, World War II and the beginning of globalization. In terms of their defining formative experiences and the global economy, Little, Little, and Cox (2009, p. 17) note that 'international trade was a major factor that was blamed for the Great Depression'. Furthermore, Strauss and Howe (1991, p. 284) characterize the Silent Generation as having gone 'straight from a cashless childhood to the cusp of affluent elderhood'. In general, members of the Silent Generation are regarded as being more conservative and less racially tolerant than members of other generations (Pew Center Reports, 2010) and are characterized as seeking 'the comfortable, the secure, and the familiar' (Schewe, Meredith, & Noble, 2000, p. 51) as a result of living their formative years during a time when conformity was favoured over individual expression.

The subsequent cohort consists of the Baby Boomers, a group of approximately 79 million individuals born between 1943 and 1960 (Pew Center Reports, 2010; Strauss & Howe, 1991). From a marketing perspective, the Baby Boomers are an attractive segment for marketers due to the size of the cohort. During their formative years, the Baby Boomers experienced the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy and Dr Martin Luther King, Jr, the Vietnam War and the Cold War. In contrast to the conformist, traditional stance taken by their parents, the Baby Boomers are known for rebelliousness and nonconformity (Strauss & Howe, 1991). Placing great value on individualism, this cohort is also known as 'the me generation' (Schewe et al., 2000, p. 51). From an international economic perspective, this generation experienced 'the prosperous expansion of international trade and increased globalization against the protectionism of antiradical thinking produced by the fear of communism' (Little et al., 2009, p. 17).

The Baby Boomers were followed by Generation X, numbering between 46 and 51 million people and born between 1961 and 1981 (Strauss & Howe, 1991). Experiences shared by this cohort include a rising divorce rate, an increasing number of women working outside the home and the birth of the internet (Pew Center Reports, 2010). Thielfoldt and Scheef (2005) note the independence of this group, as well as a general scepticism and lack of trust with regard to institutions and companies. Politically, members of Generation X are noted for their conservatism and dislike of 'liberal redistribution tendencies' (Schewe et al., 2000). From an international economic perspective, during this group's lifetime, the USA began importing more than it exported for the first time in history (Little et al., 2009).

Generation Y is a large cohort of approximately 77 million individuals born between 1982 and 2000 (Pew Center Reports, 2010; Strauss & Howe, 1991). Similar to the Baby Boomers, the size of the Generation Y cohort makes the group an important target for marketers (Smith, 2010). Defining experiences for this cohort include the 11 September attacks, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Great Recession and the advent of social media. The group is noted for being more ethnically and racially diverse and more optimistic than other generations (Bensley & Whitney, 2004; Cone Inc., 2006; Pew Center Reports, 2010) as well as for their high level of technical knowledge and use of computers and hand-held electronic devices on a regular basis (Bensley & Whitney, 2004; Pew Center Reports, 2010). In contrast to previous generations, Generation Y appears to be

more liberal and open to change (Pew Center Reports, 2010). From an economic perspective, while the Great Recession has somewhat set this generation back, they are still positive about their future.

Researchers contend that these four main generational cohorts can be further segmented and cohort boundaries redefined. For example, Schewe et al. (2000) divide the Silent Generation into the Depression Cohort (born between 1912 and 1921), the World War II cohort (born between 1922 and 1927) and the Post-War Cohort (born between 1928 and 1945). Similarly, the Baby Boomers can be divided into the Boomer I Cohort (born between 1946 and 1955) and the Boomer II Cohort (born between 1956 and 1965). Strauss and Howe (1991) subdivide Generation X into the Atari Wave (born between 1965 and 1971) and the Nintendo Wave (born between 1972 and 1976) based on the popular video game systems during this generation's adolescence. While some researchers have supported the sub-dividing of cohorts (e.g. Dinkins, 1993; Morton, 2001), others have expressed caution (e.g. Reisenwitz & Iyer, 2007). Noble and Schewe (2003) conducted an assessment of the validity of GCT as a market segmentation tool, noting that while some individual values can be linked to cohort membership, other values may not be useful for differentiating between cohort groups. Consequently, the authors note that 'historical events might not be the underpinning of cohorts' (Noble & Schewe, 2003, p. 985). They suggest, 'Instead, feelings of nostalgia or a pop culture mentality may lead to differences between consumer groups' (Noble & Schewe, 2003, p. 985). However, the authors acknowledge that testing GCT using a set of different individual values or a more comprehensive set of values could lend more support for employing GCT as a basis for segmentation.

As noted by Noble and Schewe (2003), references to generational cohorts are commonplace in the trade literature. In contrast, empirical examinations of the application of GCT in marketing research have been less frequent. Most often, researchers have investigated a single generational cohort in isolation (e.g. Reisenwitz & Iyer, 2007; Rugimbana, 2007; Smith, 2010; Wolburg & Pokrywczynski, 2001). Fewer studies involve the comparison of multiple generational cohorts (e.g. McPherson, 2007; Strutton et al., 2011) and there is a dearth of empirical research employing GCT in the context of international or global marketing (e.g. Hung et al., 2007). This research seeks to begin the process of addressing these gaps in the literature.

Method

The goals of this exploratory study were to examine differences in generational cohorts based on AGCC and to assess the utility of GCT as a segmentation tool for identifying the global consumer. Data were collected using an online survey among a panel of US consumers aged 18 years and older. Internet administration was chosen for its effectiveness and efficiency in reaching the focal demographic groups within a short time period and on a specified budget. According to a research industry trends report by Pioneer Marketing Research, online surveys are 'the most frequently used survey method today in marketing research' (Hair, Wolfinbarger, Ortinau, & Bush, 2010b, p. 112). While internet administration offers advantages, samples are rarely representative and non-response bias can be high. Although approximately 70% of consumers in the USA have access to the internet, there are still households that do not have access (Hair et al., 2010b). However, because of the relatively low cost per completed survey, short turnaround time and the simplicity of the task of respondents completing the survey, internet administration was chosen for this study. Quota sampling based on Census data was used to help secure a

sample of consumers that included all regions of the USA, all age groups, income groups and education groups.

A market research firm with expertise in online survey methods was contracted to carry out data collection. The research firm purchased a list of email addresses through The Sample Network (TSN) (www.thesamplenetwork.com) in order to recruit members of TSN's consumer panel to participate in the survey. A blended sampling approach is used where TSN panellists are combined with panellists from partner companies to avoid any bias that might be involved in the recruitment of only one panel. When a consumer opts-in to the panel, TSN validates the email address and limits multiple accounts in the same household. Digital fingerprint technology is used to eliminate fraudulent and suspect respondents. Panellists received a basic email invitation disclosing the length of the survey and incentive (cash or points towards merchandise) offered, as well as a link to the survey. A reminder email was sent to panellists who did not respond to the initial email invitation to participate, and a second reminder was sent to those who did not respond to the first two email invitations.

Measures

Acculturation to the global consumer culture was captured using the Cleveland and Laroche (2007) scale with dimensions including cosmopolitanism, self-identification with global consumer culture, exposure to marketing of multi-national companies, social interactions and openness and desire to emulate global consumer culture. As the study is based on a US sample, the English language usage and global mass media exposure dimensions were not examined. The AGCC items were captured using a five-point, Likert-type scale anchored by 'strongly disagree' and 'strongly agree'. Demographic information was also collected including gender, age, education level, income level and region of the country.

Analysis and results

Sample characteristics

The sample consisted of 492 consumers in the USA, with 23% of the sample belonging to the Silent Generation, 31% from the Baby Boomer cohort, 22% from the Generation X and 24% from Generation Y. Comparison to US census data (US Census Bureau, 2010) suggests a larger percentage of females in the sample as compared to the population (Table 1). The age distribution of the sample is skewed higher than that of the population, with the median age of respondents at 50.0 years versus 37.2 years in the US population. The education level of respondents is higher than that of the population. The income level of respondents is also higher than the population, with the exception of those who report incomes of $100,000 per year and higher. The regional composition of the sample is similar to that of the US population.

Exploratory factor analysis of AGCC

Principal axis factoring with Promax rotation was used to analyse the AGCC items. This method was chosen due to its ability to include only shared variance in the solution, thus avoiding the inflation of variance accounted for by the solution (Costello & Osborne, 2005; Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010a). In order for items to be retained, factor eigenvalues greater than 1.0 and rotated factor loadings of .50 or greater were required

Table 1. Sample characteristics as compared to US Census data.

Variable	Level	Frequency	Percent	US Census percent
Gender	Male	165	33.5	49.2
	Female	327	66.5	50.8
	Total	492	100	100
Age	18–19	6	1.2	7.1*
	20–24	27	5.5	7.0
	25–34	105	21.3	13.3
	35–44	78	15.9	13.3
	45–54	58	11.8	14.6
	55–64	103	20.9	11.8
	65 +	115	23.4	13.1
	Total	492	100	80.2
	Median	50.0 years		37.2 years
Education	No high school degree	9	1.8	14.4
	High school graduate	126	25.7	28.5
	Some college or associate's degree	200	40.7	29.0
	4 year degree	99	20.1	17.7
	Graduate/Professional degree	57	11.6	10.4
	Total	491	99.8**	100
Income (annual)	Less than $25,000	106	21.5	24.9
	$25,000–$50,000	154	31.3	25.0
	$50,001–$100,000	166	33.7	30.2
	>$100,000	44	8.9	19.9
	Total	470	95.5**	100
Region	North-east	105	21.3	18.3
	Midwest	105	21.3	22.1
	South	185	37.6	37.1
	West	97	19.7	22.5
	Total	492	100	100

Notes: *US Census data includes ages 15–19 in this category, but the sample includes those 18 and older.
**Missing values resulted in less than 100% response for variable.

(Hair et al., 2010a). Any item loading at .40 on multiple factors was eliminated from the analysis. According to the guidelines of Hair et al. (2010a), variables that did not provide a contribution in explaining variance (evidenced by communalities of less than .40) were also removed from the analysis.

Given these guidelines, three items were removed from the analysis due to low communalities, including one item from the cosmopolitanism scale, one item from the exposure to marketing of multi-national companies scale and one item from the social interactions scale. In addition, two items from the openness and desire to emulate global consumer culture scale were deleted due to weak factor loadings. All other items were retained. As expected, five dimensions of AGCC were identified, explaining approximately 68.6% of the variance (Table 2). This factor structure was accepted due to the robust loading of items on the four factors, the lack of cross-loading of items on other factors, the interpretability of the solution and the scree plot (Hair et al., 2010b). The AGCC dimensions (factors) included cosmopolitanism (39.5% of variance explained), self-identification with global consumer culture (13.6%), exposure to marketing of multi-national companies (7.3%), social interactions (4.8%) and openness and desire to emulate global consumer culture (3.4%). Considering that openness and desire to emulate global consumer culture explained so little variance in the data set, this dimension of AGCC was

Table 2.   Exploratory factor analysis of AGCC.

Factor labels (*Cronbach's alpha*)	Items	Factor loading	Variance explained
			68.6%
Cosmopolitanism (*α = .95*)	I am interested in learning more about people who live in other countries	.895	39.5%
	I like to learn about other ways of life	.900	
	I enjoy being with people from other countries to learn about their unique views and approaches	.892	
	I like to try restaurants that offer food that is different from that in my own culture	.770	
	I enjoy exchanging ideas with people from other cultures or countries	.940	
	I like to observe people of other cultures to see what I can learn from them	.929	
	I find people from other cultures stimulating	.882	
	I enjoy trying foreign food	.725	
	When travelling, I like to immerse myself in the culture of the people I am visiting	.689	
	Coming into contact with people of other cultures has greatly benefited me	.795	
Self-identification with global consumer culture (*α = .94*)	The way that I dress is influenced by advertising activities of foreign or global companies	.846	13.6%
	Advertising by foreign or global brands has a strong influence on my clothing choices	.898	
	I pay attention to the fashions worn by people in my age-group that live in other countries	.836	
	I try to pattern my lifestyle, way of dressing, etc. to be a global consumer	.902	
	I like reading magazines about the fashion, décor and trends in other countries	.765	
	I prefer to wear clothing that I think is popular in many countries around the world, rather than clothing traditionally worn in my own country	.843	
	I actively seek to buy products that are not thought of as 'local'	.789	
	I identify with famous international brands	.832	
Exposure to marketing of multi-national companies (*α = .93*)	When I am watching TV, I often see advertising for retailers that are from outside of my country	.710	7.3%
	Ads for foreign-owned or global retailers are everywhere	.805	
	In my city, there are many billboards and advertising signs for foreign-owned and global retailers	.728	
	It is quite common to see ads for foreign-owned or global retailers in local media	.921	
	When I read a newspaper, I come across many advertisements for foreign-owned or global retailers	.853	
	The magazines that I read are full of ads for foreign-owned or global retailers	.821	
	When I am watching TV, it seems that the number of advertisements for foreign brands is quite high when compared to the number of advertisements for local brands	.753	
	I often watch TV programming with advertisements for retailers from outside my country	.765	

(*continued*)

Table 2. (*Continued*).

Factor labels (*Cronbach's alpha*)	Items	Factor loading	Variance explained
	When shopping, I am often exposed to foreign or global brands	.619	
Social interactions (α = .89)	While vacationing, I would prefer to stay in my home country, rather than visit another country	.892	4.8%
	I prefer spending my vacations outside of the country that I live in	.813	
	Visiting foreign countries is one of my favourite things	.811	
	I often think about going to different countries and doing some travelling	.632	
	I feel at home in other countries	.504	
Openness and desire to emulate global consumer culture (α = .88)	I think people my age are basically the same around the world. For example, a 20-something in Russia is basically the same as a 20-something in the USA, Sweden, or anywhere else	.751	3.4%
	I think that my lifestyle is almost the same as that of people of my age-group in other countries	.944	
	I think my lifestyle is almost the same as that of people of my social class in other countries	.894	

excluded from further analysis. The Cronbach alpha values for the AGCC measures (factors) ranged from .88 to .95. Raw scores for individual items in each factor were summed and averaged for use in further analyses.

Analysis of variance

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) is used to facilitate comparison of the cohort groups' acculturation to the global consumer culture. The model for cosmopolitanism (COS) was significant ($F = 3.807$, $p < .010$) (Table 3), as was the model for self-identification with global consumer culture (IDT) ($F = 19.619$, $p < .001$). The model for exposure to marketing of multi-national companies (EXM) was significant ($F = 4.827$, $p < .003$). Lastly, the model for social interactions (SIN) was also significant ($F = 11.014$, $p < .001$).

Levene's test for homogeneity of variance indicated significant results for SIN (Levene statistic = 6.183, $p < .001$) and IDT (Levene statistic = 3.968, $p < .01$). This information coupled with the fact that the generational cohort groups were unequal subsets suggests that multiple comparisons should be performed using the Tamhane test. The results of the Tamhane tests for COS revealed a significant difference between Generation Y and the Silent Generation (mean difference = .364, $p < .002$) (Table 4). The test for IDT revealed significant differences between Generation X and the Silent Generation (mean difference = .579, $p < .001$) and Generation X and the Baby Boomers (mean difference = .368, $p < .018$). In addition, the results suggest significant differences between Generation Y and the Silent Generation (mean difference = .853, $p < .001$) and Generation Y and the Baby Boomers (mean difference = .641, $p < .001$).

The Tamhane results for EXM revealed a significant difference between Generation Y and the Silent Generation (mean difference = .413, $p < .001$). The results for SIN suggest a significant difference between Generation X and the Silent Generation (mean difference = .383, $p < .034$). Likewise, the results for SIN suggest a significant difference

Table 3.   Analysis of variance models for effect of generational cohort on AGCC.

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Sum of squares	d.f.	Mean square	F	Sig.
Cosmopolitanism (COS)						
Four generational cohorts	Between	8.066	3	2.689	3.807	.010*
	Within	344.676	488	.706		
	Total	352.742	491			
Self-identification with global consumer culture (IDT)						
	Between	51.136	3	17.045	19.619	.000***
	Within	423.981	488	.869		
	Total	475.117	491			
Exposure to marketing of multi-national companies (EXM)						
	Between	9.962	3	3.321	4.827	.003**
	Within	335.694	488	.688		
	Total	345.656	491			
Social interactions (SIN)						
	Between	32.050	3	10.683	11.014	.000***
	Within	473.350	488	.970		
	Total	505.401	491			

Note: $*p < .05$; $**p < .01$; $***p < .001$.

Table 4.   Tamhane tests for differences among generational cohorts based on AGCC.

Dependent variable	I (Cohort)	J (Cohort)	Mean difference (I–J)	Std error	Sig.
Cosmopolitanism (COS)					
	Generation Y	Silent Generation	.36451	.09879	.002**
		Boomers	.14034	.10308	.684
		Generation X	.11180	.11176	.900
Self-identification with global consumer culture (IDT)					
	Generation X	Silent Generation	.57975	.12297	.000***
		Boomers	.36867	.12292	.018*
		Generation Y	− .27325	.13874	.266
	Generation Y	Silent Generation	.85301	.11980	.000***
		Boomers	.64192	.11975	.000***
Exposure to marketing of multi-national companies (EXM)					
	Generation Y	Silent Generation	.41378	.10777	.001**
		Boomers	.23365	.10545	.155
		Generation X	.22368	.12086	.334
Social interactions (SIN)					
	Generation X	Silent Generation	.38324	.13761	.034*
		Boomers	.06723	.12668	.996
		Generation Y	− .35727	.11980	.019
	Generation Y	Silent Generation	.74051	.12438	.000***
		Boomers	.42450	.11217	.001**
		Generation X	.35727	.11980	.019*

Note: $*p < .05$; $**p < .01$; $***p < .001$.

between Generation Y and all three of the remaining cohorts: the Silent Generation (mean difference $= .740$, $p < .001$), the Baby Boomers (mean difference $= .424$, $p < .001$) and Generation X (mean difference $= .357$, $p < .019$).

Discussion and conclusion

The goals of this research were to explore differences in AGCC based on generational cohort membership and to assess the utility of GCT as a means of segmenting the global consumer. Because the AGCC framework conceptualized by Cleveland and Laroche (2007) is relatively new, little empirical examination of the framework is found in the extant literature. Our findings reveal significant differences between generational cohorts in terms of four dimensions of AGCC including cosmopolitanism (COS), self-identification with global consumer culture (IDT), exposure to marketing of multi-national companies (EXM) and social interactions (SIN). This suggests that GCT may be useful in segmenting the global consumer.

Prior to this study, COS was the only dimension of AGCC that had been examined empirically. The results of the two prior studies examining COS provide mixed results with Cleveland et al. (2009) reporting an inverse relationship between age and COS in samples from certain countries (Sweden, Korea, Hungary) and no relationship in other countries. Cleveland et al. (2011) also report no relationship between age and COS in samples from Turkey and Canada, providing further support that relationships between demographic characteristics and the dimensions of AGCC likely vary by country. Our results from the USA reveal that COS differs between two of the generational cohorts, with Generation Y displaying a significantly higher level of COS as compared to the Silent Generation. This suggests a significant gap between the oldest and youngest generations, with the youngest generation being more interested in learning about people who live in other countries, how other countries live and the exchange of ideas between countries.

Our findings for self-identification with global consumer culture (IDT) also reveal significant differences between generational cohort groups, highlighting generation gaps between the two older cohorts and the two younger cohorts. Both Generation X and Generation Y report significantly higher levels of IDT than the Baby Boomers and the Silent Generation. This suggests that consumers in the younger generational cohorts are more likely to pay attention to the lifestyles of consumers in other countries and try to emulate other consumers in terms of the way they live. This also suggests that consumers in the younger cohorts are more likely to pay attention to foreign or global brands and seek out products that are not native to the USA. Similarly, our results for exposure to marketing of multi-national companies (EXM) indicate a significant difference between Generation Y and the Silent Generation. This finding suggests that Generation Y is more likely to notice the advertising and promotion of foreign-owned, global companies. Similarly, our results for social interactions (SIN) reveal a generation gap between the Silent Generation and Generation X, suggesting that consumers in Generation X are more likely to visit and vacation in foreign countries. The findings for Generation Y are more striking, with Generation Y reporting significantly higher levels of SIN as compared to all three of the remaining cohorts.

Overall, our results support the characterizations of the generational cohorts found in the extant literature. In general, it appears that the younger generational cohorts are open to globalization, showing interest in learning about people and lifestyles in other countries. Generation Y, in particular, shows a strong affinity for global culture and trends. From a strategic marketing perspective, companies seeking to expand outside their national

borders should be successful provided that they are able to attract and retain the attention of the younger cohort groups. The need for adaptation of the existing brand and advertising may be minimal if the target customer is younger. In contrast, global companies seeking to attract consumers from the older generations may need to consider significantly adapting the brand to be more in line with local customs and culture.

In terms of contributing to the literature, our results provide support for the application of GCT within the context of global consumer culture. Our findings support the notion of Cleveland and Laroche (2007) that AGCC is likely to vary based on age. While prior studies show that at least one dimension of AGCC (cosmopolitanism) is affected by age (Cleveland et al., 2009, 2011), our results show a relationship between generational cohort membership and four of the dimensions of AGCC. In summary, this study has contributed to a better understanding of the relationship between demographics and AGCC while simultaneously providing support for the use of GCT within the AGCC framework.

Limitations and directions for future research

While this study facilitates a step forward in understanding how GCT may be used for segmenting the global consumer, there are limitations to acknowledge. The sample in the study did not perfectly match the US population. Future studies with more closely matched samples are necessary. Likewise, research is required in other national markets where cohorts are further refined to reflect formative experiences particular to those markets. Conducting a study with a larger sample would allow for sub-dividing the generational cohorts as suggested by several previous researchers and could lead to further insight. In addition, while the choice of the online survey method provided efficiency, other data collection methods would provide opportunities to reach additional consumers and to use probing questions for a more in-depth understanding of consumers' attitudes towards global consumer culture. Also of note is that the openness to and desire to emulate global consumer culture (OPE) dimension of AGCC explained very little of the variance. If this dimension exhibits similar behaviour in future studies, a re-evaluation of the dimension may be necessary. Future studies could also include additional psychographic and lifestyle variables in order to examine a combined effect with generational cohort membership on AGCC.

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