Chapter 3

An Essay on Digital Culture Hybridization:
A Myth or Reality?

Rohit Malhotra

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4801-0916
JK Business School, India

ABSTRACT

We all are fully aware about the VUCA- volatility, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world. This VUCA is a result of the cultural transformation due to the fusion of functional aspects of the virtual and physical world. We perceive the speed at which the digitally oriented marketing strategies are bombarded on the e-consumer. Hence, a question arises about the traditional conceptualization of cultural hybridization, which was considered as a pure, innovative, transformative, and organic process being, somewhat highly compromised while using digital resources to dynamically connect our consumers. These and many more concerns will be dealt by providing diversified views of the authors who have worked extensively in this direction. Right from views of the traditional sense of colonization and localisation perspective in cultural hybridisation to broader context of inclusion of media and communication studies, and the role of digital media in particular. This includes without saying the notion of globalization in shaping cultural hybridisation and its various facets.

INTRODUCTION

This essay is as the title reflects, an experimentation of three broad forms or dimensions of critical awareness of making a reflection of understanding our "consumers". One is the application of individual conceptualisation (here the authors own ideology towards conceptualizing a relationship between the cultural aspects of marketing and its somewhat fuzzy relationship with digital technologies in hand) and second of course is in terms of other authors how they understood digitally dominated hybridization as cultural hybridization for the marketers point of view. And thirdly as a matter in terms of mixing the traditional and modern views as a delicate and intricate balance to explain the digital hybridization as a modern or improved version of cultural hybridization.

Culture is a broad word, and hybridity in culture context is mixing two or more cultures to form new cultures. In the good olden days, culture was developed when people or communities across different geographies were influenced by an isolated yet powerful local tastes, preferences, ways of living, including their recreation etc.

Thus, cultural marketing traditionally seems to be a distinct order of study of mankind or a set of communities who use certain products and services across time by having non-identical practices (but not products or services !!). A classic case of McDonald Aloo Tikki Burger and its success in India is evidential.

Hybridity in culture is best understood as a balance act, i.e. it usually appears to be a change in the cultural dimensions with tractable and traceable roots into their pre-existed cultural states. In fact, due to the digitally connected global consumer, his or her hybrid state of culture in the virtual living space is not only hybrid but also dynamically hybrid.

To make the point a little simplistic, it means that not only the cultures meet at their distinct hybrid point as traditionally understood but also such combinations are now happening dynamically in the inter-temporal context.

BUT, there is a counter-intuitive argument which can also arise, whose roots are emerging from a term referred as lusofonia[1] (see also lusotropicalismo) as mentioned with respect to studying the influence of Portuguese culture onto other nations or colonies. The idea is that cultural hybridity particularly at the face of cultural marketing practices should not be used as lusofonia since any one culture should not "dominate" since it then loses the purpose of cultural amalgamation. To put the case in point, use of social media- particularly those who are prevalent in the current times and thanks to its over indulgence. The manner in which the digital culture is shaping up, is more influenced by one cultural context compared to a pure hybridity structure, whereas as an author I want to emphasize it as a cultural amalgamation.

Hence, how as marketer one can simultaneously utilize technology for cultural marketing as understood in terms of cultural hybridisation but at the same time

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