Introduction

Globalization is leading industry worldwide, especially the new technology sector. Globalization – the unification of goods, services, capital and labor into a single global market, based on free trade, comparative advantages and economies of scale – has created a really radical force for economic development. It speeds and expands the strengths but also the weaknesses of the market system: its inefficiency, instability and inequality.

Globalization has promoted the emergence of a new type of consumer and has had effects on industry in terms of culture, economics, marketing and social issues at every scale from local to global. We can see a proliferation of global brands and an alleged homogenization of cultures in driving regions: "Europeanization", "Westernization" or "Americanization".

Moreover, many researchers who worked on technology said that technology is a universal, uniform and consistent factor which crosses national and cultural boundaries. For them there are no cultural boundaries limiting the application of technology. Once a technology is developed, it immediately becomes available everywhere in the world with the same efficiency.

However, the reality is not so obvious and local resistances are still present and sometimes are even growing.

Despite this tendency of uniformity between all the countries with similar products, services, advertisements, etc., the cultural factor has still an important rule to play. We can see strong differences according to behaviors, modalities of commercialization, the type of products and packaging, contents of advertisements, price fixing, even the diffusion of technology. Each country, each nationality and

sometimes each ethno culture or tribe has its own characteristics. To ignore this diversity would be a major risk and to integrate it in a bad or incomplete manner would create significant dysfunctions.

This book aims to analyze the importance of culture in globalization in different cases: in different countries, across different types of products or brands, according to the sector of activity, or according to the level of development.

This book is divided into two parts:

– the first part is focused on specific themes according to the degree of globalization;

– the second part is oriented to the applications at a national level in different countries, each with a different level of development;

In the first part, which is composed of four chapters, the authors aim to show the consequences of, or the reasons for, globalization across a sector of activity, the life cycle, the multiculturalism or the rule of the social identity.

Chapter 1 analyzes the sector of e-tourism and the importance of culture in this activity. Even if globalization is leading this market, each supplier, each consumer is unique and offers must integrate cultural factors.

Chapter 2 analyzes global advertisements and notes that, despite the global marketing messages for each phase of the product life cycle, it is still crucial to adapt messages for the local markets in order to target those local markets.

Chapter 3 analyzes the importance of multiculturalism inside the global market and the necessity for firms to integrate these specificities. Two cases are developed: countries with multicultural, religious, linguistic or ethnic local diversities such as India, China, Canada, Belgium and Switzerland and countries with a large flux of immigration, such as France and the USA.

Chapter 4 analyzes the influence of social aspects on behaviors and its application in different ways.

In the second part, composed of nine chapters, the authors show the importance of the local specificities across many different cases in various countries: the act of purchasing, the brands, the use of the Internet, the behavior of mobile phone users, etc.

Chapter 5 analyzes the role of gender in the purchase of goods or services and its application in a Muslim country such as Tunisia. "Is this rule the same everywhere?" and "are the cultural aspects important?" are two of the many questions asked by the author.

Chapter 6 analyzes the emergence of globalization in two Eastern European countries, Bulgaria and Lithuania. The authors notice that the consequences and the impact on the economy, behavior, or social life are not exactly the same in each country and they try to explain the origins of this divergence.

Chapter 7 analyzes the importance of the country of origin (the image of the country or origin that the item portrays) on the act of purchasing across the Portuguese market. The role of the cultural characteristics is detailed.

Chapter 8 analyzes globalization and the ubiquitous nature of the Internet which facilitates e-commerce activities across nations. Even global tastes have been homogenized; we notice online consumer segments with different purchase motivations for each local environment.

Chapter 9 analyzes the new Indian consumer. The emergence of the Indian economy has created a large local market with its own characteristics: social, religious, ethnic, regional, etc.

Chapter 10 analyzes the specificities of the local aspects on the consumer behavior for a high-tech product, such as a mobile phone, with a comparison between different countries and India.

Chapter 11 analyzes the role of factors affecting the adoption of technology in general and in India, in particular. Although many authors think that this adoption is universal, many local facts prove the opposite.

Chapter 12 analyzes, across the Chinese consumer market, the role and the importance of the cultural aspects: differences between Western countries and China, differences between Chinese customers according their values, their religion, or their habits.

Chapter 13 analyzes the perception of brands in general and in China in particular. The importance and the acceptance of counterfeit goods in this country

have modified this perception and local, as well as global, companies have to integrate this aspect.

This book does not seek to be exhaustive and to analyze every aspect of global consumer behavior, but through the chapters, written by researchers living around the world, we wanted to prove that globalization is not uniformity and that it is still necessary to integrate the local characteristics to avoid misunderstandings, rejections or business failures.