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**A POSITIVE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CULTURE SHOCK IN  
GLOBALIZATION PROCESS**

**ABSTRACT**

In recent years, social media has become an inevitable part of modern daily life. It connects people without any limit of space and time. People can easily reach everyone else from all over the world thanks to it. They can share the pictures, videos, events and their personal ideas with the whole world in seconds through social networking sites. People participate in community life in the most creative way through social media anymore. More importantly, it brings each culturally different individual and community so close that they become interdependent over time. So, social media also develops a sense of belonging to a very broad and heterogeneous social environment by distancing people from all local or traditional sense of belonging. Because everyone meets many people from different countries, becomes friends, has chats and even gets married, they are increasingly becoming more mixed and similar not only culturally but also genetically. Naturally, people now feel like a “world citizen”. In this sense, it can easily be said that the use of social media reduces or alleviates possible culture shocks.

**Keywords:** Globalization, Social media, Communication, Culture, Cultural adaptation, Intercultural communication, Culture shock

**STRUCTURED ABSTRACT**

Culture shock expresses the difficulties, troubles, crises and reactions of individuals to the transition from one culture to another when they go to the new country. In other words, culture shock is a sort of psychological and social shock, fear, excitement and panic experienced by people in the face of a new event or phenomenon.

When individuals enter a culture that they are not accustomed to, they are inadvertently affected psychologically. The severity of this effect increases or decreases depending on the deepness of differences between the two cultures. However, the flexibility of human behavior prevents people from entering cultural shock immediately in the face of sudden changes. The main factor that prevents

cultural change is the desire and effort to preserve the old one. On the other hand, the extreme diversity of new environmental factors is among the main factors that accelerate cultural shock.

At this point, the importance of globalization emerges. At the end of the twentieth century, communication was digitalized and the interaction between communities and cultures intensified thanks to mobile communication technologies. Thus, hybrid cultures were formed. At this point, it should be noted that communication technologies are hybridizing, too. The source of the hybridization in the mass media is technological developments. In other words, the driving forces of the globalization process are communication and the internet. The Internet, a real revolution in the field of communication, is widely and cheaply used all over the world today. By linking billions of people, private institutions and states, the Internet has proved to be the main actor in globalization.

Globalization has economic, commercial, economic, communicative and cultural dimensions and consequences. However, this study focused on communicative and cultural dimensions of it. The cultural dimension of globalization means a continuous increase in the interaction among societies worldwide. Ethnic, religious, social and political structures of local character have begun to weaken or be erased, and they have been replaced by a sort of “world citizenship”. In addition, with the strengthening of factors such as common consumption culture and popular culture, societies have started to look alike day by day. Developments such as the fact that English is a common communication tool and spreading American style of clothing such as Blue Jeans, consumption of American-style foods such as McDonald's and hamburgers, and also listening to American and European-style music have confirmed the existence of a culturally dominant globalization in a very strong way.

It is widely accepted that communication and interaction are vital factors in the success of cultural adaptation and social media is the most effective support for everyone in this process. Social media helps people not only in the process of socialization, but also in learning new things about the countries they plan to visit. Travelers can learn everything with regard to the target country by means of the Internet and social media. Interactions and conversations between people through social media can also make it easier for them to tackle with the challenges they may face in the host country and to adapt to the new society and its culture. Seemingly, appropriate and sufficient communication and interaction skills are the main factors that determine how social media affects intercultural harmony.

It seems that the process of globalization is going on bringing different societies and cultures around the world together to a great degree. Today people communicate and share their ideas with other people living anywhere else in the world instantly. Everyone in the world is familiar with each other and they're used to each other. All humanity has turned into a huge family. Therefore, no one in the world astonishes, amazes or shocks others. It means that cultural adaptation is facilitated as a result of rapprochement and integration through globalization. When it is looked at this picture, it can be concluded that the cultural shock seen in people who went to a different country has greatly reduced. So, “culture shock” in such a world should not be easy to talk about any more.

When two people met each other somewhere forty years ago, they used to be shocked literally. People who went to another country used to feel like a fish thrown out of water. Now, even if such a person does not know the geography, cities and language of that country at all, he/she can go to any place by looking at the maps of the country and can also tell almost everything by using the translation programs on the internet. It means that human relations have changed a lot thanks to the contemporary mass communication means, especially social media. Today, when an Italian citizen meets an

Egyptian for the first time, none of them are surprised or shocked because they already see or meet many new people of different nations on social media every day.

**Keywords:** Globalization, Social media, Communication, Culture, Cultural adaptation, Intercultural communication, Culture shock

### **1-HOW SHOULD SOCIAL MEDIA BE DEFINED?**

In today's world, social media is an indispensable part of human life. People use social media from shopping to e-mail, from education to business. Therefore, it can be said that social media has played a vital role in changing people's lifestyles and this process gets faster every day. Social media includes social networking sites and blogs where people can communicate with each other easily and quickly. After the emergence of Twitter, WhatsApp, Facebook and similar social networking sites, people have started to learn the events in the social environment and the world in a much faster way.

As in other areas, it is not possible to speak of a consensus on the definition of social media. There are reasons for that by all means. One of the main reasons for this is that most of the research and studies with this regard in the academy are focused on only one aspect of social media (Delery and Roumpi, 2017: 16). Another reason is that the findings of the academy and the language used by academics to express the findings do not completely coincide with the practices of life. Another reason is that the rapid and uninterrupted transformation in both information technologies and social media applications forces the established concepts to be constantly redefined. But one thing is certain that Web2.0 technologies have played a major role in the development of social media. It states a range of technologies and ideologies that enable social media to gain a rich content on the Internet. So, one of the definitions of social media arises from here. The situation refers to a definition of social media that it is a medium that blends or harness common intelligence all over the world (Huang and Benyoucef, 2013: 246).

From an entirely technical point of view, the concept called "information systems" (IS) is an area of research on the effects of information technologies on individuals, organizations and societies. In this sense, it should be noted that one of the most effective subsystem components of IT is social media (Lucas et al., 2013: 380). Social media is a term commonly used to refer to new forms of media that involve interactive participation. The development of the media is generally divided into two different periods: the "broadcasting period" and the "interactive period". The media was almost centralized during the broadcasting period sent by any media organ to the masses from a single center. This could be a radio or television station, a newspaper or a film studio. Feedback to media organs was often conveyed in an indirect, delayed and impersonal way, and mediated communication between individuals was reported at much lower levels such as personal letters, phone calls, and sometimes photocopied family bulletins. With the rise of digital and mobile technologies, interaction has become easier for individuals than ever, and a new age of media has emerged. Thus, the interaction has been placed at the center of new media functions. At the moment, individuals can talk to many people to share their ideas and receive instant feedback. The low cost and accessibility of the new technology has allowed more options than ever for media consumption. Instead of just a few newsletters, individuals now have the opportunity to search for information from many different sources and to establish dialogues with others through communication forums. Social media is at the core of this revolution which goes on and on without ceasing. Whether mobile or stable, all types of social media include a kind of digital platform. However, not everything that is digital is necessarily a social media. Two common features help define social media: First, social media allows some kind of participation. Social media is never completely passive, sometimes even social networking sites like Facebook can

allow you to see passively what others post. Generally, a profile should be created that allows the beginning of the minimum interaction potential. This quality distinguishes social media from traditional media where personal profiles are not the norm. Second, the participant includes social media interaction by nature. This interaction can be with close friends, family or new people with common interests (Manning, 2014: 1158). In this sense, Kietzmann and his friends defined social media as “web-based applications that provide functionality for sharing, relationships, groups, speeches and profiles” (Kietzmann et al, 2011: 248); Kapoor and others defined it as “a range of information technologies that facilitate interactions and networking” (Kapoor et al., 2017: 12); Boyd and Ellison, on the other hand, defined social media as “a platform of creating profiles, and establishing open and cross relationship” or “web sites that provide profiles and the visibility of relationships among users (Boyd and Ellison, 2008: 223).

It is possible to speak of a “social media” taxonomy that is generally divided into 6 different categories: blogs, social networking sites, collaboration projects, content communities, virtual social worlds and virtual game worlds (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010: 63).

All these definitions shed light on the social nature of social media and point to interpersonal communication and exchange of information.

## **2-WHAT IS CULTURE?**

Many definitions of culture have been made over time. It is said to be about 164 and every one of them has been made from a different aspect or viewpoint just as in all other concepts.

Basically, culture consists of symbols and ways of patterned thinking, feeling, reacting, acquiring and transmitting, which constitute the distinctive gains of groups of people who have embraced those symbols. The core of culture consists of historically derived and selected traditional ideas, and in particular their associated values.

So, culture is a social consensus and a common understanding. The individuals living in the same society are concerned about determining their own social adaptation by looking at how others adapt to certain situations (Becker 1982: 522). Culture, in its most general and inclusive form, is regarded as the lifestyle of a society, including norms, beliefs and behavior. However, this definition is insufficient because it does not refer to the premise or origin of culture. Psychologists have rejected the idea that culture is “holistic”. In this case, it is appropriate to say that the concept of culture is “a mixture of norms and inspirations that create behavior, maintain existing behavior or reinforce future behavior independent of situational incentives and limitations (Julian and Kornblum, 1986: 222). Cultural foundations are the beliefs and behavior patterns conveyed to people by their own societies and cultures and to which they are faithfully committed (Larson, 1992: 147). From this point of view, culture can be defined as a social participation or heredity transferred from one generation to another. It is really essential for the society. It cannot be seen as a biological phenomenon, but it is a learned form of social behavior that must be followed. It is a wonderful and unique phenomenon of human society in terms of the color and diversity of behavioral patterns that are the most indispensable beauties of human society. It creates cultural beliefs, creates ideas, shares information about traditions and values and more importantly passes them on to future generations. All of these features are transmitted through language, which is an integral part of culture (Taga, 1999: 6).

At this stage, it is imperative to examine the relationship between culture and communication. Communication plays an extremely important function in the course of cultural adaptation and in reducing cultural shock as well. So, it can be said that the concepts of culture and communication are

closely related. Culture should be seen as a communicative process and communication should be seen as a cultural one.

### **3-THE CULTURAL HYBRIDIZATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE IMPACTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON TRADITIONAL CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE GLOBALIZATION PROCESS**

The prediction that new communication technologies will allow people to become more and more involved in each other's lives is the mainstay of McLuhan's "global village" approach (Baran, 2002: 84). In this context, globalization is the process of intensifying economic, political and cultural relations along international borders (Akindele et al., 2002: 2). In the process of globalization, which is gaining momentum each day, information technologies are changing the political, economic and cultural fields in a significant rate. In this secret and safe area, everyone can express themselves freely and this sharing crosses the borders of the country. Any event or development occurring anywhere in the world is shared instantly, everyone is aware of the situation, every event and development affects and interests everyone in some way. At no time in history have people been so influenced by what is happening in the world and have never had the power to change the world. Globalization breaks down barriers in culture, commerce, communication and other fields of work one after the other. This is a process that has been going on for 5000 years; however, it has accelerated considerably since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and intensifies homogenization among nations and forms of pluralistic cultural identities.

Globalization weakens and destroys many elements within itself, and cultures are moving towards a uniformization from underdeveloped to developed countries by imitation. Therefore, local languages and cultures on earth are gradually being erased and the formation process of a common world culture is accelerating. Today, the world is a smaller and more uniform place in terms of culture and language. There is now less authentic culture, language and race in the world. The cultural aspect of globalization can be explained by the continuous increase in the communication and interaction of societies. Besides, with the contribution of factors such as consumption and popular culture, the process of resembling each other is accelerating. To be more concrete, American and British cultures are being carried all over the world through the English language, which is spoken everywhere in the world as the mother tongue of the internet network, so that the same music genres and songs are listened everywhere, the same clothing style is spread, the same behavior patterns are followed, the same sense of humor becomes popular. In short, it is seen that there is a global identification in cultural terms. These and similar conditions are proof that globalization manifests itself in social and cultural terms. Today, even American citizens of European origin have almost completely forgotten their own language and culture in this process and the "melting pot", which is one of the best expressions of this process, has vanished (Martin and Nakayama, 2010: 12).

At this stage, the concept of cultural hybridization should be emphasized. Cultures normally change in a natural and heavy process; but from time to time they interact with each other for one reason or another, so that the elements of culture change more rapidly. This phenomenon, called cultural hybridization, is an inevitable consequence of the interaction between the two cultural groups. In other words, cultural hybridization is the formation of common grounds over time in the process of interaction between two different cultural groups. However, this change has accelerated and intensified more than ever thanks to the internet and especially social media.

Cultural hybridization, which some see as one of the side effects of globalization, is also referred to as "cultural hybridization. The internet network of the ruling powers enables many people

and societies from all over the world to get closer, to bring together and to resemble one another rapidly through some common cultural elements. Thus, nations and individuals mix not only in physical and genetic terms, but also in cultural terms. The other side effect of globalization is said to be a certain resistance to the above-mentioned identification in the spheres of influence of local or national identities. There are some approaches suggesting that this situation has the potential to create conflicts between religions and cultures in the long term.

Cultural hybridization is progressing by mixing different traditions, artworks, mass communication and popular culture in the world in a new way and enabling people to express different personal and cultural identities known as cultural properties (Larson, 1992: 147). One of the best examples of cultural hybridization takes place in the United States. In this country, where a large number of people from various cultures settle, there are people from Europe, Africa and Asia, as well as indigenous peoples. Over time, these people shared their ideas with the American people, received elements from other cultures, found ways to communicate with others and eventually formed a new cultural race. Under cultural hybridization, people from a particular culture take parts from foreign cultures, different dialects, traditions, behavior patterns, ways of thinking and create new modes of application. Consequently, the combination of different cultures is a must to create a new culture. Cultural hybridization usually occurs when elements of a traditional culture are mixed with a more global mindset. In this sense, contemporary scientists have linked cultural hybridization to the activities of globalization (Akindele et al., 2002: 2).

#### **4-INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND CULTURAL ADAPTATION IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

Culture largely shapes and directs communication. It can be easily predicted that intercultural communication has existed since the early periods of history. In this sense, it is appropriate to define the concept of intercultural communication as the process of interaction between people from different societies and cultures. From a different perspective, it is possible to say that cultural communication is the communication between different societies and ethnic groups. This form of communication can be a relationship between individuals, societies, belief groups, nations or institutions. It usually rises in the sense of respect and relies on symbolic signs. Intercultural communication provides mutual acquaintance, sincerity, understanding and tolerance. It creates a pluralist, egalitarian and productive environment (Neuliep, 2014: 79).

Cultural adaptation refers to the stage after cultural communication or intercultural communication. In Bennet's view, it would be appropriate to call it "experiences in the transition period from one culture to another" (Bennet, 1977: 8). According to Stewart and Mendenhall, there are four important and remarkable stages in intercultural adaptation: The first one is the honeymoon process. At this stage, the person who is in another country experience some hope and joy in being in a different place. The second is the crisis. At this stage, the person experiences feelings of regret, despair, anxiety and sadness due to living in a different country that he does not recognize at all. The third is the adaptation process. Here the person begins to adapt to society. He accepts some things. He even starts to like them. The fourth process is biculturalism. At this stage, the person has begun to perceive himself as a voluntary part of the new society and its culture, or as the "other half" of that society. This can be called a "full compliance" (Stewart and Mendenhall, 1991: 233).

Cultures are often distinct, separate and independent entities. However, in the last decade, cultures and the nations connected to them have become more and more related and similar in some complicated processes (Harris et al., 2004: 3). If humanity wishes to sustain a harmonious and

peaceful existence in a world that has evolved into a global village from a technological, political, economic, social, cultural and artistic point of view, it is essential to achieve a strong intercultural sensitivity. Today, no one doubts that social media provides the greatest contribution to the process of intercultural communication and cultural adaptation (Ellison et al., 2009: 7). So, it is a good idea that everybody makes an effort for it through social media.

### **5-DOES SOCIAL MEDIA DECREASE THE CULTURE SHOCK?**

People have difficulty in the simplest relocation, even when they change houses, during the adjustment period. When they change countries, their social lives change and they experience cultural differences, their problems are much deeper. If cultural differences are excessive, the impact of cultural shock increases at the same rate. The biggest reason for cultural shock is the fact that people do not want to leave their own culture in spite of their desire to live in a new country. A person's past experiences, emotional state and personal characteristics are the determining factors in culture shock.

In a new country, almost everything will be different. There will be differences in social behavior in the first place, especially language and religion, education system, value judgments, living conditions, climate, social order, transportation system, food habits, friendship, neighborhood or cultural characteristics. When a person travels to a new country, it may be normal for him to be restless, anxious and pessimistic in the early days. However, if this negative situation becomes continuous or increase day by day, it can make life more difficult by making the problems chronic.

At this stage, it should be understood that culture shock emphasizes the astonishment and anxiety that one experiences when he enters a new cultural environment (Oberg, 1960: 180), or it can be defined as the stress in the cultural adaptation process (Weaver, 1993: 246). In the process of globalization, social media is becoming more and more popular in everyday life with its effective and friendly functions. Social media, which eliminates all distances in the world, supports people in communicating, making new friends, socializing, sharing information, living different experiences and interacting with each other. Thus, it can promote the increase of intercultural adaptation of people who face new culture in other countries, by decreasing the possible culture shocks (Zaw, 2018: 71).

As Chen and Zhang stated, as the new media and globalization bring individuals and societies closer, the world has become a smaller and more interactive place. It is also undisputed that there has been an incredible increase in the number of people who travel abroad to study, work, start a new life, and so on in the globalization era (Chen and Zhang, 2010: 808).

Considering the fact that the social media platforms established on the internet in the process of globalization increase the communication between different nations and cultures, destroy the original parts of the traditional cultural heritage and lead to a cultural and racial uniformity or hybridization in the world, it would not be surprising to say that the so-called "culture shock" has largely begun to disappear. Before the establishment of the Internet network, people from different countries were very surprised when they met, it took them a long time to understand and adapt to each other. Today, thanks to social media, everyone is in constant contact with other nations and cultures. Therefore, these people provide adaptation more easily than ever when they encounter in real life.

In the intercultural adaptation process, it is widely accepted that those who move from their own countries to other countries with different cultures should adapt to a different social perspective on social support. Such support comes in various forms; However, social networking technologies and social media are the most effectual option for people who contact with another culture. Social media sites allow people to communicate from different geographical locations.

As will be understood by now, although social media has been the most effective function of reducing or eliminating cultural shock, it is worth noting that intercultural adaptation studies have been carried out to harmonize various behavioral patterns in order to minimize the possibility of misunderstanding while communicating with people from different cultures (Cai and Rodriguez, 1996: 38). On the other hand, the most important pillar of intercultural adaptation is admittedly language education since language is a minimum condition for communication between different nations and cultures.

## **CONCLUSION**

This research which was done by means of the literature review has revealed several results. They are plainly explained below.

In the process of globalization, which started with the establishment of the internet network since the end of the twentieth century, social media sites have intensified the communication traffic among different nations and cultures more than ever before.

It is widely accepted that communication and interaction are vital factors in the success of cultural adaptation and social media is the most effective tool for everyone in this process. Social media helps people not only in the process of socialization, but also in learning new things about the countries they plan to visit. The traveler can learn everything with regard to the target country thanks to internet and social media. Interactions and conversations between people through social media can also make it easier for them to overcome the challenges they may face in the host country and to adapt to the new culture. Seemingly, communication and interaction are two major elements that specify how social media affects intercultural harmony.

When two people met each other somewhere forty years ago, they used to be shocked literally. People who went to another country used to feel like a fish thrown out of water. Now, even if such a person does not know the geography, cities and language of that country at all, he/she can go to any place by looking at the maps of the country and can also tell almost everything by using the translation programs on the internet. It means that human relations have changed a lot thanks to the contemporary mass communication means, especially social media. Today, when an Italian citizen meets an Egyptian for the first time, none of them are surprised or shocked because they already see or meet many new people of different nations on social media every day. They are familiar with one another in virtual reality. To put it in another way, thanks to social media, everyone is quite distant from seeing other nations and cultures as foreigners because they have a considerable amount of information about all other countries, cultures and human communities. As everyone in the world is getting alike, the concept of alienation is disappearing. So, it can be said that the concept of cultural shock has faded away to a great extent.

Indeed, there is a lot of research to find out the relationship between social networking and cultural adaptation of people living in different parts of the world. It should be noted here that all research and studies show that the use of social media has greatly reduced culture shock worldwide. However, it must be confessed that there is a limitation in this research. It is the fact that the research was carried out through the literature review. It would be much better if a field research could be done in this respect.

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