

# Exploring the Impact of Globalization on Consumer Food Behaviour: A Comprehensive Review

## Abstract

Currently, market behaviour, including the food behaviour of consumers, shaped in societies is largely a consequence of civilizational and cultural development and the ongoing globalization process. The aim of this article is to discuss the impact of globalization on the food behaviour of consumers based on secondary sources of information published over the period of 1995-2017. The article shows theoretical aspects of globalization and the food behaviour of consumers, the globalization phenomenon in the contemporary world and the impact of globalization on the food behaviour of consumers. The impact of globalization on consumer food behavior is evident in behaviors such as grocery shopping, fast food dining, and seeking out comfort food and novel dining experiences, according to the studies this paper reviews. Globalization has, however, also been linked to the development of countermovement and attitudes, such as the preference for homegrown or environmentally friendly goods, slow food concepts, or food safety initiatives.

**Keywords:** Globalization, consumer food behaviour, consumer behaviour

## Introduction

Many studies and reflections have been conducted on consumer behavior and the cultural and contextual elements that influence it. Over the ages, there have been significant shifts in how consumption is perceived. What hasn't changed, though, is the unique function that consumerism plays in society. Without a question, the growth of the market economy, the ongoing globalization process, technical advancements, and growing living standards have produced a consumer culture where individuals try to get what they need as best they can. Giddens observed that we have encountered a return to the new individualism in the context of globalization, which is actively creating our identities as individuals (Giddens, 2008). To stand out, we can pursue individualism, develop our own distinct identities, adopt a particular style of behavior, or have particular tastes or preferences. However, Bourdieu's thesis states that taste classifies by classifying the one doing the classifying: social actors differ by distinctions in which their position is noted or marked in the objective classifications. In the discussion that follows, the author makes the point that certain differences can be seen in how human society has developed because the ideology of natural taste transforms natural differences—differences in how people acquire culture and, consequently, how they consume goods and services—and neutralizes actual differences. Macdonald (2002) asserts that mass culture is a dynamic, revolutionary force that subverts cultural boundaries, tradition, and class inequalities. Mass culture has an impact on how consumer behavior, tastes, and lifestyles develop. Mazurek-Łopacińska did point out that consumer receptivity to embracing foreign goods relies on how strongly they are associated with the local way of life. Unstable products are more closely associated with culture, and the way people buy them reflects the national

traditions, buying habits, and customs of each country (Mazurek-Łopacińska, 2003). It is important to note that opinions on how much global trends influence consumer decisions and how much is a product of cultural indoctrination are divided.

### **Globalization and consumers' food behaviour in theoretical aspects**

According to Lemańska-Majdzik and Sobiegraj (2013), the term "globalization" refers to the historical and spontaneous process of liberalization as well as the integration of labor, markets, capital, technology, and information into a single interdependent global market. Maśloch (2013) defines globalization as the process of combining national and regional markets into a single global market where political, economic, and cultural domains are penetrated and united. According to Gupta (2011), there are five different kinds of global flows: technoscapes (flows of technology and know-how), mediascapes (flows of image and communication), ethnoscapes (flows of migrants, tourists, and foreign students), and finanscapes (flows of money and capital). Ideascapes are the flows of political ideas or ideologies. According to Hartungi (2006), "the breakdown of the following elements: borders between countries, governments, the economy, and communities" is how most people define globalization. It could also refer to a greater degree of market openness and liberalization, especially with regard to the removal of obstacles to international trade in products and services and the growth of a unified global financial system. Food, non-food objects, and services are all consumed during the process of consumption.

### **The impact of globalization on the food behaviour of consumers**

Three main areas show how globalization has affected consumer eating behavior: the ways that consumers can meet their wants, the ways that the market environment and conditions support those requirements, and the hierarchy and structure of those demands (Włodarczyk, 2015). The first category of global food consumption pertains to retail and service infrastructure, hypermarket expansion, quick food restaurant chains, and laws governing consumer protection. The second domain pertains to the growing purchasing and dining customs, as well as the brands and assortments inside specific consumer niches. As a result of the established systems of norms, values, and implemented lifestyle styles shaped as part of the existence and growth of Western civilization, the third category is a hierarchy of demands. Wrzesińska's (2006) research reveals that young consumers in particular have favorable opinions about supermarkets and hypermarkets.

The ability to purchase a large number of things in one location is the main attraction that draws people to them. However, Kłosiewicz-Górecka (2013) discovers that they also place a great value on the high level of availability, the variety of offers, and the degree of client communication and services. The author also points out that an increasing number of customers recognize the benefits of buying food products through an online network, which may help them save money and time because the costs are frequently lower in addition to being extremely comfortable. However, in contrast to the research previously mentioned and in response to the process of globalization, many researchers have noticed that consumers realized the benefits of shopping in small local businesses or local marketplaces where they can find domestic products after a period (the turn of the 20th and 21st century) of fascination

with supermarkets and hypermarkets, offering a very wide range (Kłosiewicz-Górecka, 2013).

The growth of fast-food businesses in the USA has been significantly influenced by globalization. From over 30,000 restaurants in 1970, the number surged to over 233,000 by 2004, making it the fastest-growing industry in the US food distribution sector. Despite the known negative health impacts of fast food, it remains highly appealing, particularly to youth, due to its palatability, variety, quick service, affordability, and menu consistency. Globalization and liberalization of economic ties have increased consumer awareness about food and health. This has led to initiatives for updating food safety legislation, regulatory frameworks, and educational programs to improve food knowledge and safety across borders. Liu et al. (2013) found that Chinese consumers' awareness of food safety is high, primarily informed by newspapers and mass media, though they lack knowledge about safe food identification.

Chinese consumers primarily rely on newspapers and mass media for information about safe food, with interpersonal trust and personal interaction also playing a significant role. While their awareness of food safety is high, they lack knowledge about safe food identification. Globalization has led to more uniform consumer habits and preferences due to economic, social, and technological advancements. Buckley et al. (2007) note that global trends are driving consumers to seek time-saving and convenient options, such as quick, easy, or take-out food, with little emphasis on preparation. Conversely, Pelletier et al. (2013) observe a trend towards ecologization and rationalization of consumption, leading consumers to prefer less processed, higher quality, and more nutrient-dense foods. This shift also includes a growing interest in slow food concepts that promote home cooking with fresh, health-conscious ingredients (Gołębiowska, 2016).

Consumer desires are evolving, with a growing preference for unique experiences over tangible goods. As a result, food market manufacturers are producing new products to meet these modern expectations and cater to niche markets (Tkaczyk & Kołuda, 2013). Examples include functional foods for those who prioritize comfort over health, ecological products for environmentally conscious consumers, and convenience foods for those seeking time-saving and waste-reducing options (Goetzke & Spiller, 2012; Babicz-Zielińska et al., 2010). Additionally, restaurants aim to attract more customers by offering distinctive menus, locations, and interior designs (Mazurek Łopacińska, 2011).

Regarding food product innovation, Sojkin (2009) found that over 50% of respondents understood the term "food product innovation." Producers expand their product lines by introducing new items with different tastes or consistency, modifying existing products, or launching entirely new products. Approximately one-third of participants see product innovation as a marketing strategy that includes reducing unhealthy substances. Additionally, 28% view packaging changes as innovation, and one in four believe that adding new ingredients qualifies as innovation.

Globalization, investment, and information technology all play a part in the process of globalization, which is the interaction and integration of individuals, organizations, and

governments from other countries. The process of interaction and integration of individuals, organizations, and governments from other countries is known as globalization (Frynas, 2015). Technology, foreign investment, commerce, and the emergence of new markets and commercial prospects are its main drivers. Globalization has significantly changed how companies and organizations run. New business models have emerged, entrance barriers have decreased, and competition has intensified as a result. It has also resulted in modifications to the governance and management of companies and organizations, including the use of fresh techniques and strategies for strategic management. Changes brought about by globalization the way managers view their roles and responsibilities (Hitt, 2016).

Globalization has had a profound impact on businesses and organizations in Lebanon. The most notable effect is the increased competition from global businesses and institutions, which has driven local organizations to become more innovative and efficient. Additionally, globalization has enabled companies to expand internationally and access new markets and opportunities (Chehimi, 2019).

Strategic management, the process by which companies recognize, assess, and adapt to changes in the external environment, is crucial for creating action plans to achieve organizational goals. It involves evaluating the organization's mission, objectives, strategies, and plans to provide long-term value for stakeholders (Presenza, 2017).

Lebanon's economy has been significantly affected by globalization. The influx of foreign goods and services has led to an increase in foreign direct investment and a widening trade deficit, resulting in more competition and lower prices. This increased competition has forced companies to focus on cost conservation and efficiency improvements (Elhajjar, 2022). Consequently, businesses in Lebanon have had to become more flexible and adaptable, adopting new strategic management methods and strategies.

A study on young people in the Lubuskie region of Poland reveals varying levels of awareness and use of sustainable consumption concepts based on gender, residence, and socioeconomic status. Women, rural residents, and those with stable finances are most familiar with and practice sustainable consumption. Conversely, many men, urban residents of smaller cities, and those struggling financially have inadequate understanding of sustainable consumption. Women and individuals in rural areas or larger cities tend to follow sustainable guidelines more, while financial status significantly impacts behavior: low-income individuals focus on waste minimization, middle-income individuals prefer locally made goods, and those with very good finances choose biodegradable packaging and minimally processed foods. Organic food purchasing is prevalent among women, rural residents, and those with excellent financial status. However, customers rarely verify product information before purchase, except for women, rural residents, and those with very good financial status.

Global food consumption patterns have undergone significant changes in recent years, with consumer habits becoming both more uniform and individualized. This has resulted in the simultaneous rise of two opposing phenomena: excessive consumerism and conscious, sustainable consumption. Sustainable production and consumption were highlighted as key

goals for sustainable development at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development and were included in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with Goal 12 focusing on sustainable consumption and production patterns.

The shift from maximizing consumption to pursuing moderation aims to reduce social and economic inequality, advance sustainable development, and support environmental sustainability. This transition requires a change in consumer attitudes, increasing ecological awareness and responsibility for the environment and future generations. Growing consumer awareness is a major driver of sustainable consumerism, leading to a new, rational, and demanding consumer profile. These consumers are interested in the provenance, ingredients, manufacturing processes, and social responsibility of products, which ultimately influences market changes and promotes conscious demand.

The essay uses the population of young people living in the Lubuskie region of Poland as an example to conduct an empirical investigation into how the concepts of sustainable consumption and consumer behavior are applied in the process of addressing food demands. The analysis of consumer behavior in relation to the idea of sustainable consumption is the focus of the survey research. The following research questions were the focus of the effort: How much do young consumers in the Lubuskie region adhere to sustainable consumption guidelines when it comes to food consumption? Which elements support sustainable consumption decisions or act as obstacles to them.

The "Small Grants for Public Universities" initiative was the catalyst for the creation of this article. The Board of Lubuskie Provinceas provided financial support that made the publication's preparation possible. Young consumers from the Lubuskie region were thus the research's subject. The research findings could potentially aid in evaluating the impact of the policies implemented thus far in the Lubuskie region concerning sustainable consumption.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the information provided, the article discusses how globalization has significantly influenced customers' eating habits by integrating national and regional markets into a global market. This integration has led to the homogenization of consumer food preferences and behaviors worldwide. Factors such as increased mobility, technological advancements, media influence, internet accessibility, and the expansion of global retail chains offering standardized products have all contributed to this trend.

Specific changes in consumer behavior include a rise in fast food consumption, increased purchase of nutritional products from supermarkets and hypermarkets, and a growing preference for novel culinary experiences over material possessions. However, alongside these trends, globalization has also spurred counter-movements emphasizing local, environmentally friendly, and safe food options, such as the slow food movement and organic food preferences.

Moreover, globalization has prompted food manufacturers to innovate and cater to diverse consumer demands, leading to the development of customized food products like convenience foods, organic foods, and functional foods.

In conclusion, while globalization has fostered greater food diversity and accessibility, it has also sparked consumer-driven movements seeking more sustainable and locally sourced food options. Future research could further explore these evolving consumer trends and their implications for global food systems and sustainability efforts.

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