

Using Global Design Elements over Traditional Elements: Measuring Acculturation of Global Consumer Culture Influence on Jordanian Design Students



Yaman Sokienah, D. Lindsay Tan, MFA

Abstract: *This study is an investigation of how the level of acculturation of global consumer culture (GCC) among architecture and interior design students and professionals affects their beliefs for using global architectural elements over Jordanian traditional elements. A questionnaire used and modified different existing scales to measure the variables of this study. The results suggest that the more a designer acculturated to GCC the less they are going to use traditional architectural elements. If this attitude toward local and traditional architecture keeps fluctuating will lead to a loss in the local identity.*

Keywords: *Globalization, Global Consumer Culture, Place Identity, Interior Design*

I. INTRODUCTION

Architecture contributes to a community's place identity. One can understand much about the community by observing its architectural style (Choi, 2011). Globalization is one of the many factors that affect place identity in a specific community (Eldemery, 2009). While globalization has become a focal point in economics and political studies, little scholarly research addresses the impact of acculturation of global consumer culture (GSC) among architecture and interior design students on their beliefs for using global architectural elements over Jordanian traditional elements. In addition, this problem is not only in Jordan but also, it is affecting many regions and countries.

Changes in place identity of a community can be observed through changes in architectural style (Torabi & Brahman, 2013). Architectural style, a part of a place's identity, has a strong relationship with community culture and values (Mahgoub, 2007; Choi, 2011; Torabi & Brahman, 2013).

The architectural style also reflects the culture of a community in a certain period, which is important because what differentiates communities and make each community

special are their different cultures and values (Torabi & Brahman, 2013). Since emerging architects and designers' projects will be presented in the different regions of Jordan, it is important to increase their awareness of place identity so they keep using Jordanian traditional architectural elements over the global architectural elements. This will enhance the preservation of the local architecture and design identity in Jordan.

Emerging architects and designers are being acculturated to the GCC via the internet and during their college years when they learn about global architecture and modern architectural styles. Also, there is little research on the impact of GCC on the use of traditional architectural elements. Therefore, this study investigates how the level of acculturation of GCC among architecture and interior design students affects their beliefs for using global architectural elements over Jordanian traditional elements

II. DEFINITION OF TERMS

A. Global Consumer Culture

Nayef and Stoudmann (2006) defined globalization as "a process that encompasses the causes, course, and consequences of transnational and transcultural integration of human and non-human activities" (p. 2).

Globalization is operationally defined as the level of acculturation to GCC and awareness of globalization among architecture and interior design students.

The perceived value of GCC is operationally defined as the overall evaluation of the level of acculturation to the GCC and its impact on architecture and design students.

Consumer culture is defined as a "social arrangement in which the relations between the [lived cultural experience of everyday life] and social resources, between meaningful [valued] ways of life and the symbolic and material resources on which they depend, is mediated through markets" (Sheth & Maholtra, 2011, p. 1).

Acculturation to the global consumer culture in this study refers to architecture and design students' exposure to the global culture and their interaction with the different cultures from around the world (Carpenter, Moore, Doherty, & Alexander, 2012).

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B. Traditional Architecture and Global Architecture

Architecture and design that represent and belongs to a specific region in a specific era are called traditional or vernacular architecture and design (Harris, 2005).

This type of architecture and design usually influenced by the local building materials, and by the ethnic identities in the region (Harris, 2005).

The term “traditional architectural elements” is operationally defined as the main elements of the Jordanian traditional architecture that reflect the Jordanian architecture identity.

On the other hand, global architecture represents a more international style, that usually doesn't represent a specific region of the country. It is also has fewer details and more minimalist such as the Bauhaus school (Harris, 2005). Global architectural elements are operationally defined as the elements that are being used in the modern building around the world and can't be related to a specific region or culture.

C. Place Identity

“Place attachment is considered a part of place-identity, but place-identity is more than an attachment. Place-identity is a substructure of self-identity like gender and social class, and it is comprised of cognitions about the environment” (Haugea, 2007, p.47). Place identity is operationally defined as the created spaces with a high level of Jordanian traditional architectural elements versus global elements.

The perceived importance of keeping place identity is the level of students' understanding of the importance of place identity, which is related to how the educational system addresses the importance of place identity. The perceived importance of place identity is a part of the project evaluation process which is being followed by the decision making the process of whether they use global architectural elements over Jordanian traditional architectural elements in their projects or not.

III. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

It appears that the beliefs for using global architectural elements over Jordanian traditional elements are being affected by architecture and design students' acculturation to the global consumer culture. This section presents the previous literature that discussed the variable and the relationships in this research.

Globalization and Global Consumer Culture

Nayef and Stoudmann (2006) defined globalization as “a process that encompasses the causes, course, and consequences of transnational and transcultural integration of human and non-human activities” (p. 2). From the previous definitions, it's clear that globalization is affecting people around the world by integrating their social activities. This integration leads to a smaller world in which distance is not a factor that inhibits communication (Artz & Kamalipour, 2003).

As the world's cultures and countries are increasingly connected through globalization, there will be different impacts on people in different parts of the world. For example, according to Dreher (2006), Ireland, Singapore, Cyprus, and Jordan are in the top 50 globalized countries list. Jordan comes in 46th place in this ranking which is a high

rank that shows that Jordan is highly exposed to globalization which shows that Jordan is highly impacted by globalization which may affect its identity in a negative manner.

The definition of culture is rather broad (Acar, Taura, Yamamoto, & Mohd, 2011), but it generally refers to the values, lifestyles, beliefs, identities, and ways of interpreting the environment that is shared by groups of people, and these elements shape group members' behaviors and lifestyles (Jandt, 2013; Kastanakis & Voyer, 2014; Oatey, 2008).

The Acculturation to Global Consumer Culture

With the emergence of the global consumer culture, exposure to western culture increases, as Western states control the mass media and global advertising. Besides, the increasing ease of importing goods and services to different countries leads to spreading similar forms of consumption, which is referred to as “cultural imperialism” (Yue, 2000). One of the factors that have increased exposure to GCC is the development of technology. People from different countries are using technology in almost every part of their lives, and they use it to be connected to the rest of the world. Examples include watching Hollywood movies, listening to the news and popular songs, awareness of news from all over the world, and the ability to contact people across the globe (Naghavi, 2011). This exposure has spread the GCC to different parts of the world (Naghavi, 2011).

Another dimension of exposure to GCC is cosmopolitanism, which refers to exposure to GCC by moving around the world and the desire to be integrated with other cultures in order to learn skills and behaviors from them (Carpenter, Moore, Doherty, & Alexander, 2012).

GCC also consists of other different dimensions such as exposure to marketing activities which increase people's exposure to global corporations' marketing and advertising activities. Additionally, students are increasingly being educated through textbooks that are written in English and exposed to the English language as a way of communication (Carpenter, Moore, Doherty, & Alexander, 2012; Cleveland & Laroche 2007).

The dimension of social interactions is related to the ease of transportation between different countries. This has enabled easier travel around the world and increasingly exposed to different cultures; the openness to emulate GCC dimension is about having the ability to consider other values and beliefs within the original culture of the individual (Cleveland & Laroche, 2007).

The Level of Acculturation of Global Consumer Culture among Architecture and Interior Design Students. The perception of globalization is one of the factors that influence people's thinking and behaviors (Kayani, Ahmad, & Saeed, 2013). The technology revolution made the interaction between different cultures easier and more frequent (Kayani et al., 2013). Since students are the future architects and designers, by their acculturation of the global consumer culture, they may start applying the global architectural elements over the Jordanian architectural elements in their projects.

There are different stages that people go through within the cultural perception process: selection, organization, and interpretation (Jandt, 2013). Selection process comes when the person is exposed to many different cultures (Jandt, 2013). The level of acculturation of different cultures is a result of various factors such as tourism, technology, advanced telecommunication, and the internet.

According to Jandt (2013), the next level of perception is organization.

Following the selection process, people start to organize and categorize the selected part of the perceived culture that they think fits their lifestyle into groups and priorities related to their interests (Jandt, 2013). This categorization of information will influence people's thinking, which may lead to some changes in their way of evaluating their original culture when they are being exposed to globalization (Kastanakis & Voyer, 2014). According to Jandt (2013), the final stage of cultural perception is the interpretation of the selected and organized information about the cultures to which people are exposed. This interpretation of the information about each culture differs among people, depending on their original culture (Jandt, 2013; Nisbett & Miyamoto, 2005). According to Chiu and Cheng (2007), when people are exposed to different cultures, and at the same time they are still connected to their original culture, they will often follow the mainstream culture instead of their original culture.

The Perceived Value of Global Consumer Culture. The perceived value of GCC is operationally defined as the students' evaluation of the impact of being exposed to GCC as a positive or a negative impact on their level of using global architectural elements over the Jordanian traditional architectural elements.

Tourism is one of the ways that people are exposed to different countries and global cultures, and it has enabled physical contact with different cultures around the world to be easier and more frequent. Maastricht Globalization Index (MGI) considers tourism as a part of globalization because it is easier nowadays to travel around the world using different types of transportation, facilitating the crossing of borders between countries (Figgea & Martensa, 2014).

Using the internet is one of the most cost-effective ways to encourage exposure to different kinds of information from all over the world, and it is one of the easiest ways to contact other cultures. MGI considers using the internet as a part of the technical indicator in its measurement process due to a large number of people who are using the internet worldwide (Figgea & Martensa, 2014).

Global and National Identity. Due to the impact of globalization, the national identity is being undermined, which makes it hard to have national self-identification unless you have a below-average value of the acculturation to the GCC (Ariely, 2012).

The Importance of Keeping Place Identity. According to Stets and Burke (2000) in social identity theory and identity theory, identity is related to self-reflection, and this reflection could appear in different objects and categories. From this point, one can relate that place identity is connected to self, and its importance comes with people's interest in keeping their unique identity and self-reflection.

On the other hand, Coe (1998) argues that place identity as an essence of the place, and it gives a space the character of being attractive. Also, Lim (1992) considers identity as an unconscious thing, but people keep looking for it as a conscious thing. The importance of identity relates to group consciousness when people feel as if they are losing their identity because of another group identity or culture (Lim, 1992). This shows the importance of the place identity as a part of the whole community identity.

Based on the reviewed literature the researchers have hypothesized the following:

Hypothesis 1: A high acculturation to global consumer culture will result in high beliefs of using global architectural elements over Jordanian traditional architectural elements.

Hypothesis 2: Participants with global identity have a higher preference for using global architectural element.

IV. RESEARCH METHODS

A. Research Design

This study has used a survey design method with closed-ended questions. The questioner questions were based on a seven-points and five-points Likert scales and demographics sections. The independent variable is the level of acculturation of GCC among architecture and interior design students. The dependent variable is beliefs about using global architectural elements over Jordanian traditional elements, and the moderating variables are the level of perception of global identity and local identity.

B. Instruments

The questionnaire used and modified different existing scales to measure the variables of this study. The scales used in this study are presented in the table below (Table 1).

Table 1: Measurements Scales

Variable	Scale
Acculturation to global consumer culture	Cleveland & Laroche, (2007)
The level of perception of Global Identity vs. Local Identity	Der-Karabetian and Ruiz (1997)
Beliefs of using global architectural elements over Jordanian traditional elements	Yue (2000)

C. Sampling Procedure and Sample Characteristics

The target population in this study was the future and existing Jordanian architects and interior designers. The accessible population is architecture and interior design students from different Jordanian universities.

A random sample was being drawn from contacting students via E-mail or social media of the design departments in each university. The request for the enrolment in the survey contained an information letter that is introduced the study and grantee the anonymous data collection assurance.

Frequencies analysis were run on to establish the demographics data.

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As shown the tables two through five. There was a balanced gender distribution were 26 females and 27 males who participated in the study. The age range of the participants was between 21 and 30.

Also, the majority of the participants were from the interior design discipline, five are from architecture school, 46 from interior design programs, and the rest were coming from other fields of studies like graphic design and industrial design, therefore were excluded from the analysis.

45 participants have already graduated and the rest were still studying.

Table 2: Gender Frequencies
Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	27	49.1	50.9	50.9
	Female	26	47.3	49.1	100.0
	Total	53	96.4	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.6		
Total		55	100.0		

Table 3: Major Frequencies
Major area

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Architecture	5	9.1	9.3	9.3
	Interior Design	46	83.6	85.2	94.4
	Other (Graphic and Industrial Design)	3	5.5	5.6	100.0
	Total	54	98.2	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.8		
Total		55	100.0		

Table 4: Age Data

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	21	4	7.3	7.3	10.9	
	22	11	20.0	20.0	30.9	
	23	15	27.3	27.3	58.2	
	24	9	16.4	16.4	74.5	
	25	10	18.2	18.2	92.7	
	27	1	1.8	1.8	94.5	
	28	2	3.6	3.6	98.2	
	30	1	1.8	1.8	100.0	
	Total		55	100.0	100.0	

Table 5: School Year Data
School Year

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Second	1	1.8	1.9	1.9
	Third	1	1.8	1.9	3.7
	Fourth	4	7.3	7.4	11.1

	Fifth or more	3	5.5	5.6	16.7
	Graduated	45	81.8	83.3	100.0
	Total	54	98.2	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.8		
Total		55	100.0		

V. DATA ANALYSIS

A Pearson correlation was run to determine the relationship between Acculturation to GCC and Beliefs of using global architectural elements over Jordanian traditional elements. There was a moderate, positive correlation, which was statistically significant ($r = .423, n = 55, p = .001$).

Table 6: Correlation analysis between AGCC and DV
Correlations

		DV	AGCC
DV	Pearson Correlation	1	.423**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	54	54
AGCC	Pearson Correlation	.423**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	54	55

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Next, the same correlation analysis was conducted by adding the level of perception of Global Identity vs. Local Identity as a moderator variable. The results showed that the correlations between participants with global identity and beliefs of using global architectural elements over Jordanian traditional elements were a strong, positive correlation, which was statistically significant ($r = .616, n = 22, p = .002$).

Table 7: Correlation analysis between AGCC, Moderator (global identity), and DV

Correlations

		DV	AGCC
DV	Pearson Correlation	1	.616**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
	N	22	22
AGCC	Pearson Correlation	.616**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	

N	22	23
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** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

a. Perceived as global identity = .00

On the other hand, the correlation test results showed that the correlations between participants with local identity and beliefs of using global architectural elements over Jordanian traditional elements were a weak, positive correlation, which was statistically insignificant ($r = .297, n = 32, p = .095$).

Table 8: Correlation analysis between AGCC, Moderator (local identity), and DV.

		Correlations	
		DV	AGCC
DV	Pearson Correlation	1	.297
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.098
	N	32	32
AGCC	Pearson Correlation	.297	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.098	
	N	32	32

a. Perceived as local identity = 1.00

VI. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The researcher in this study has investigated how the level of acculturation of GCC among architecture and interior design students affects their beliefs for using global architectural elements over Jordanian traditional elements. There were two hypotheses in the study as the following:

Hypothesis 1: A high acculturation to global consumer culture will result in high beliefs of using global architectural elements over Jordanian traditional architectural elements.

Hypothesis 2: Participants with global identity have a higher preference for using global architectural element.

Based on the results of the analyzed data, both hypotheses were supported. When participants with high acculturation to GCC and have a global identity have high beliefs of using global architectural elements over Jordanian traditional elements. Their results are consistent with those of Chiu and Cheng (2007), where the participant with high acculturation to GCC they might stay connected to their own culture but they are most likely to be following the mainstream or global culture. This behavior can be shown in the results of the data analysis were the participant with global identity have a higher tendency to use global architectural elements.

Since design students represent the potential future architects of Jordan, this study's implications shed the light on the importance of developing architecture and design education system and curriculum in a way that intensifies the traditional and cultural architecture. Also, by revealing the extent to which the perceived importance of place identity in Jordan influences design preferences amid increasing exposure to the GCC and a growing lack of cultural distinctiveness.

VII. CONCLUSION

An overall conclusion can be drawn based on the available result that there is an impact of the acculturation to GCC on the beliefs and preferences of using global architectural elements over traditional ones. If this attitude toward local and traditional architecture keeps fluctuating will lead to a

loss in the local identity. Jordan in this study is one case of many other cases that need to be studied and analyzed further. The limitation of the study was the lack of measurement scales that are developed to measure the preferences of choosing specific architectural elements. In essence, the study does not address actual participation in learning or education activities, but it describes the evaluation and values that students' attribute to each variable. A second limitation of the study is that there are no specific measurement scales for the variables in the study which required the modification of existing scales in a similar area which may affect the reliability and validity of the instrument.

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