



## The Impact of Western Culture on the Identity and Lifestyle of Youth in Mettu University in the Case of Mettu Main Campus

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**Abstract:** This study was conducted in Mettu University, the case of Mettu main campus. The objective of this study was to assess the impact of western culture on the identity and life style of youth in Mettu University, the case of Mettu main campus. In an attempt to analyze the effect, the combination of qualitative as well as quantitative data collection instrument was used, being followed by the analysis of data through descriptive statistics and content analysis. The study was used non-probability sampling of purposive technique in order to organize volunteer respondents, reliable data and to save time simply. The population of this study was the regular students. From the total population of 9574 students, 50 students were selected as a sample purposively. The study findings show that; the western as the leader of the direction of globalization process, they are successful in advancing their own values and beliefs on the Ethiopian and African youths. As a solution to the effect a number of tasks to be done, especially by the media and the development of other necessary facilities are recommended.

**Keywords:** western culture, identity, lifestyle, youth

### INTRODUCTION

Today the world is very much connected and thus becomes a globalized world. In this globalized world the availability of communication technology takes a leading role (Sokfa, 2010). Among the communication technology facilities the television, radio, internet can be accounted as contributing ones. Although globalization has since recently been growing at a greater pace following the growing of communication technology, similar kind of globalization or global integration and interconnectedness had already been experienced a century before; especially with regards to the economic integration (David, 2006). According to David the process of globalization entails that the inter connection of sovereign nations through trade and capitalism flow, harmonization of economic rule, the governorship among the sovereign nations creating the structure of supper and facilitate interdependent and

creating the global market place (David, 2006).

The internet and use of new technologies have been major factors in enabling young people to recreate their own identities (France, 2007). For example the erosion of cultural values, declining of sense of nationalism and patriotism, loss of the kinship and mutual aid, loss of confidence (Yohana, 2011). “Youths are thinking that they have vast individual choices and opportunities to believe, think, behave and dress as presented by the media. Unfortunately, the addiction to this borrowed life style leaves them without unidentified culture. And this eliminates him/her from the society (Jaiswal, Jaiswal, 2013; Sabrina, 2011).”

Globalization has revived much attention in the people of Africa generally and the people of Ethiopia in particular. Like other developing countries, Ethiopian youths have been exposed to western influence to the greater extent (Exposer, 2010). The popularity of American action movies among youth in Addis Ababa is having great impact on the Ethiopia youth as is reflected in their day to day lives (Yonas, 2006). Now a day it is very common to observe many of the young who are springing up in every corners of the street of Addis Ababa promote western culture entertainment, hip-hop music, dancehall...etc (Exposer, 2010; Jaiswal, 2013; 2012). Therefore, consciously or unconsciously the Ethiopian cultures are swallowed by the western culture.

A study conducted by Ezana (2002) based on the cultural impact of globalization on urban youth revealed that the globalized TV and mass communication become globalized the youth of urban in multi direction. The study focus on the impact of globalized media on identity and life style of youths. Another study by Yonas Abiye in (2006) in Addis Ababa based on “the impact of American movies on youth.” The study revealed that the popularity of American action movies among the youth who watch them in video houses in Addis Ababa is having great impacts on the day to day lives. The study focus only on the American action movies but did not focus on the non – movies cultural practice of western and the movies of other western cultural practice of western and the movies of other western countries that can affect the youths identity and style.

But this paper was focused on the enormous influence of globalization (westernization) on the identity and life style of Mettu University, Mettu main campus students. The wide spread expansions of international communication channels , mass medias like, BBC, CNN, CCTV, MTV, EBC and Aljazeera... etc plays a great role in the expansion of western culture in Mettu university. Based on my observation many students of Mettu university were influenced by western styles such as eating style, hair style, music style or the music they were listen , the products they used (fashion Junes, Adidas and wider shoes) are some of them. Different to this, the present study was endeavored to investigate the Impact of

western culture on the identity and lifestyle of youth in Mettu University in the case of Mettu main campus.

### **Specifically it Aimed**

- ❖ To assess the attitudes of the youths towards cultural globalization
- ❖ To assess the manifestation of western culture on the youths
- ❖ To assess the effects of western culture on the youths life
- ❖ To investigate the youths feeling to continue their indigenous culture
- ❖ To investigate what legislations had been taken by the campus administrator's to continue their indigenous culture

### **METHODS**

**Research Design:** in terms of time dimension, this study was employed cross-sectional research design i.e., one point at a time collection of data from target group. However, based on its relevance, this design was supplemented with approximation of longitudinal study design where by respondents were asked to furnish data relevant to the past with the aim of collecting relevant retrospective data concerning the impact of western culture on the identity and lifestyle of youth. On the other hands, in terms of research approach, this study employed both qualitative and quantitative research approach to substantiate and cross-check data obtained in one method to that of the other.

**Sampling Technique:** In this study researcher was employed non-probability sampling techniques of purposive method. The reason for choosing the purposive method was to organize volunteer respondents simply, to save time, to find out reliable information. So the researcher was selected the sample purposively; 6 female and 14 male students proportionally and total sample size was 20 using the proportional allocation formula.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

**Interview:**-in depth interview with fourteen students was employed.

**Observation:** The researcher wants to make observation on the way of life style and identity of students. That means on the way of speaking, eating, the behavior they act, the music they listen, the product they used, the film they watch, dressing and hair style and the TV channels they watch and the shows they enjoy.

**Casestudy:** a case study of one female and one male student was employed so as to give the data in detail and in depth.

**Questionnaire:**-a type of close and open ended questionnaire will be distributed to twenty students that are administered by the respondents.

**Focusgroupdiscussion:**-seven male and seven female students was selected so as to give data in detail three main data collection instruments such as, questionnaires, in-depth interview and key informant interview were used to obtained the required information from respondents.

**Methods of Data Analysis:** The data that was collected through observation, focus group discussion, interview, case study was analyzed qualitatively or by description method so as to use the data gathered wisely and to explaining the research problem. The quantitative type of data which was collected through questionnaires from the sample respondent was analyzed and presented through tabulation method (statistical analysis).

## DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

### Quantitative Data Analysis and Interpretation

Questionnaire had been distributed for twenty purposively selected respondents. And the data collected through questionnaire was analyzed and interpreted as follow in a tabular form and in organized statements.

**Responses for the questions related to the impact of western culture on the identity and life style of youths (students)**

Table 1: Do you Enjoy Watching the International TV Channels?

<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	19	95%
No	1	5%
Total	20	100%

*Source:* Researcher field level survey of 2020

The above table shows that 19(95%) of the respondents enjoyed the international TV channels. This implies that most of the respondents enjoyed the international TV channels. Therefore youth spend their time by enjoying the international Medias. Here from this one can understand that the youth's local culture, lifestyle and identity had high probability to be influenced by western cultural elements. But the 1(5%) of the respondents did not enjoy the international TV channels. And also from this one can understand that the reason for his/ her imitation to western cultural elements was due to the influence of his/ her friends who follow globalized culture.

**Table 2: Do You Agree Enjoying Social Media Decrease the Time Spending with your Family and Friends?**

<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	18	90%
No	2	10%
Total	20	100%

The above table to shows that 18(90%) of the respondents agree on the idea that enjoying social media decrease the time spending with their family and friends. This implies that most of the respondents agree on the idea. Because of social media avoid them from their friends and families and they finish their time on using face book, you tube and what sup rather than having friendly moments with their family members. In addition rather than communicating/ sharing ideas face to face, sharing ideas on face book leads to increase a superficial way of social or friendly relationships.

But the only 2(10%) of the respondents did not agree on the idea. From this one can understand that if activities are applied by plan it has not any negative effect on their friendly relationship.

**Tables 4: What Type of Western Culture are You interested in?**

<i>Style</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Clothing style	6	30%
Music style	2	10%
Food style	2	10%
Hair style	2	10%
Other	3	15%
Total	15	75%

*Source:* Researcher field level survey of 2020

Table 4 shows that 6 (30%) of the respondents were interested the closing style of the western, 2(10%) in music style, 2(10%) in food style, 2(10%) in hair style and the remaining 3(15%) of the respondents were interested in other category of western culture.

This implies that the majority of the respondents were interested in closing style of western that neglected their countries clothing style, traditional and cultural wearing styles. Even though most of the clothes are coming from China, they are produced in the form of western style and fashions, which can be reason for the Chinese market to attract the youth in Ethiopia.

**Table 5: Which Categories of Movies and Music are you Interested Most?**

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage yes</i>
Western movies and music	12	60%
Indian music and movies	2	10%
Ethiopia movies and music	3	15%
Other	-	-
Total	17	85%

*Source:* Researcher field level survey of 2020

Table 5 shows that 12(60%) of the respondents were watched and listen western movies and 2(10%) of the respondents were watched and listen Indian movies and music, 3(15%) of the respondents were watched and listen the other categories of movies and music respectively.

This implies that most of the respondents were watched and listen western movies and music respectively. So the reason for the imitation of the youth to western cultural element was the western movies and music.

**Table 6: Do you Agree International Media Promotes Cultural Imperialism and Western Cultural Hegemony among Youths?**

<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	17	85%
No	3	15%
Total	20	100%

*Source:* Researcher field level survey of 2020

The above table show that 17(85%) of the respondents were agree on the idea that international media promotes cultural imperialism and western cultural hegemony among youths.

This implies that most of the respondents agree on the idea. The international TV channels advertize most of the time the western cultural elements, practices, styles and way of life rather than the style and culture of developing countries. Even the EBC mostly advertizes the western culture and way of life (ex. Football). The western TV channels advertizes the western culture and way of life as a better, modern and rational but the others as non-rational and traditional. So the youth those who watch international TV channels, western movies, western TV shows and those who listen western music in their day to day life, mostly the urban youths forced to adopt western culture and western style by leaving their native culture and way of life. For example individualistic way of feeding in one family, smoking, women's short dress (mini skirt), mouth to mouth kissing, men's wearing style

(fashion Junes). According to the respondents now at the present no one who wear “*kongochama*” and who follow “*gamiè*” hair style in this campuses. This leads to cultural imperialism and western cultural hegemony among youths.

But the 3(15%) of the respondents did not agree on the idea. This implies that the international media encourage and promote the local cultures which are reached to extinct.

**Table 7: Do you Agree Globalization has Declined your artifact and Cultural Beauty?**

<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	15	75%
No	5	25%
Total	20	100%

*Source:* Researcher field level survey of 2020

The above table shows that 15(75%) of the respondents agree on the idea that globalization has declined their artifact and cultural beauty.

This implies that most of the respondents agree on the idea. That means as they follow western style, they loss their Ethiopian color. For instance the traditional jewelers of their society has lost its importance due to the expansion of modern jewelers and cosmetics as no one who use the traditional jewelers and cosmetics this leads to reduce their artifacts. For example at the time of wedding youths were used traditional cosmetics like “*kul-it* is a traditional cosmetics used to beautify eyebrow” in the past but this replaced by modern cosmetics at present. So the modern jewelers and cosmetics lost their natural and cultural beauty. In another side people also celebrate their religious and cultural festivals using foreign products such as fashion Jeans, miniskirt, and foreign hairstyles. Their Ethiopian food style (feeding together) was also their cultural beauty but it is replaced now by western food style (individually).

But the 5(25%) of the respondents did not agree on the idea. This implies that globalization helps to revive and encouraged local traditional artifacts to be modernized, to be supported by technology or to be technical. It encourages diversity is beauty.

**Table 8: The Exposure of the Youth to Modernity affects the Native Cultural Identity of their Family**

<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	19	95%
No	1	5%
Total	20	100%

*Source:* Researcher field level survey of 2020

The above table shows that 19(95%) of the respondents support the idea that exposure of the youth to the modernity affects the native cultural identity of their family.

This implies that most of the respondents support the idea. Now youths are not ordered by the norms and culture of their society and their family due to their exposure to modernity. And they become addicted, follower of other religion which is different from their families religion, sexual preference (homo), this leads to the bad relationship between the youth and the family. If the youths follow new style, religion and culture what they see on the media this leads to the disappearance of the native culture of their family. It cannot pass from generation to generation. Modernization produces the isolation of the youths from their family. For this reason it leads to change the nature and the size of the family, lost the habit of feeding together, increase unconsciousness, lost playing together and break down of the nature of respecting peoples.

But the 1(5%) of the respondents did not support the idea. This implies the exposure of the youth to modernity helps to amend and to shape/mobilize their families native culture.

## The Qualitative Data Analysis and Interpretation

### A. Interview Results

Interview on fourteen students had been made regarding the youths situation with respect to western cultural influence on the identity and life style of youths.

***The respondent's attitude towards cultural globalization with relation to local culture, youth's identity and lifestyle:*** According to the respondents, their local culture and lifestyle were dominated by the western culture and lifestyle; for the reason that westerners are successful in making the youth to neglect their own values, beliefs, cultural elements and to adopt western culture, lifestyle through media and other means of cultural diffusion. According to the interviewee since the western cultural elements is being in collected within the mind of the youth, the importance of their local culture, lifestyle and traditions were decrease. But the western style and cultural element is increased still now. As the cultures and lifestyles are the expression of one's identity, in this situation the respondents rise questions that "are we Ethiopians or Americans/Europeans?"

Here from the above interview one can understand that cultural globalization (westernization) has a negative influence on the indigenous culture, on the identity and lifestyle of youth of developing nations like Ethiopia. Youths were lost their cultural and national identity.



***The respondents feeling of continuity with western culture (such as fashion, style, movie, song, dance...etc):*** All of the respondents forwarded their feeling towards western culture in a positive way. Because of until the western culture and style has not a direct effect on their physical body they follow the western culture and style. The styles and cultures of the western society attract them, for instance the dressing style, music style, dance, movie and their products. In addition the reason why the respondents want to continue by following the western culture and lifestyle, because of in order to run with the current globalized generation. That means they consider that following the local culture, local lifestyle and using local products makes them back ward, uncivilized and uneducated or in Amharic “*fara*” or “*yegetserlijj*”. But following western culture, lifestyle, fashion products makes them civilized, educated and modernized or in Amharic “*yearadaliij*” or “*yeketemaliij*”. Here you must not forget that the respondents did not follow all the western culture and styles which are not attractive and suitable for the youths such as homo sexual activities.

Therefore from the above passage one can understand that youths had not any care about their local culture, lifestyle, culture and national identity. Because of the youths attach the impact of western culture (cultural globalization) directly with their personal body, not with their societal culture and lifestyle. In addition the youths were follow the cultural globalization is simply to be labeled as modernized and civilized.

***The respondent’s idea to conserve their culture and lifestyle in the face of globalization:*** According to the respondents their culture will be conserved by educating and by giving information about the usefulness of their culture and about the impact of western culture. The education must be given for the youth who are not affected by western culture and for new generations. Education may be given by government and other agencies through media and other means. They also argued that even though they were affected by cultural globalization, they will be give advice to and educate their friends, sisters and brothers about the importance of their local culture.

From the above passage you can understand that the activity to conserve their local culture and lifestyle must be done on the new generation and on the youths who follow their local culture and lifestyle no to shift to western culture and lifestyle. Because of it is difficult to change and to return back the behavior and attitude of the youths who were already affected by cultural globalization. Here also the above passage shows that the role of the respondents was changing the attitudes of their relatives.

### ***B. Focus Group Discussion Results***

Focus group discussion with seven male and seven female students had been made regarding the youths situation with respect to western cultural influence on their identity and lifestyles.

***The respondents understanding towards the effect of western culture on their local culture, lifestyle and identity:*** According to the majority of the respondents watching western culture, lifestyle on television screen was made them to forget their local culture, lifestyle and identity. That means they apply the western culture, style and use western fashions what they saw on the media and on the other means of cultural diffusion. So, this situation leads to reduce the importance of their local cultural elements. According to the interviewee, their cultural elements are the expression of their identity, but the western cultural elements create domination leads them to forget the “sense of who they are?” In another side some of the respondents argued that western culture helps them to mobilize their backward attitudes, backward culture and lifestyle by giving awareness through media.

Here from this one can understand that cultural globalization has more negative effect than positive effect on the local culture, life style and identity of youth in developing nations like Ethiopia.

***The manifestations of western culture in the campus:*** According to the respondents, even though the manifestations are so wide, the major manifestations are the following: wearing Adidas shoes, skin Junes, short skirt, communicating using eye contact, speaking Amharic by mixing English word, hair style( such as Nani, Balatolli, French), individualistic eating style, irregular feeding style, listening foreign music( hip hop music), dance hall, using ear and head phone, smoking, alcoholism, egoistic and selfishness behavior are some of the manifestations.

From the above passage you can understand that the manifestations of western culture in the campus were so wide and difficult to mention each manifestation. So it can be generalized that the manifestations are the irregular hair style, irregular dressing style, using fads, irregular and unacceptable behavior and using foreign products.

***The main factors that push youth to accept western culture, style, fashion and to leave their indigenous culture:*** According to the respondents, the main factors that push them to accept western culture were the western movies and music, western peoples those who come to Ethiopia and their friends those who come from urban areas like Addis Ababa. Not only this but also speaking and learning using English language in their day today lecture house leads them to forget Amharic and other local mother language skills.

From the above passage one can understand that the main factors that push youth to accept western culture and to leave their local culture were the media, foreign tourists, investors, occupational, friends related with globalized lifestyle and the educational curriculum itself also create a favorable condition.

### **C. Case Study**

**Case 1:** Mister “x” is the youth in Mettu main University. He is a third year Sociology student. When one observes his behavior and day to day activities were directly copied from western culture and lifestyle. He considers himself as foreigner. Most of his personal behaviors were copied from western action movies. His wearing style also completely the direct copy of the black American pop and rap stars. He always wear large size shoes, trousers, T shirts which have nothing to do with regard to expressing his cultural background but he simply use it from the western media, even without knowing its symbolic interpretation. And he always listen hip hop and dance hall music. His personal attitude towards his local culture is also under the control of western culture due to his strong belief that western culture is better than the local culture. He feels inferiority to think about the local culture. He considers the local culture as back ward and unsatisfactory when comparing to the western culture. In relation to his way of communication, he believes that inserting some words from English whenever communicating through the local language is the manifestation of modernization and intellectual status.

Here from the above case study one can understand that the time stay in the campus and the place which he grows determines his behavior and lifestyle. That means the access of international media in Addis Ababa and in the university makes him to follow western style. Not only the media but also his friends who follow globalized culture and lifestyle in Addis and in the campus determines him.

**Case 2:** Mister “y” is a fourth year law student in Mettu main University. She born and grow in Diredawa. She always dreams to touch American soil. She spend her leisure time by watching holly wood movies, by reading the profile of western celebrations and stars, by chatting on face book with many western people.

She prefers the dressing style of western and individualized way of life and also she believed that speaking English language anywhere and anytime shows modernity. She does not have at least the basic knowledge about her society as she has the full profile of western culture. She always thought that all things the westerners forwarded have nothing negative effect on her culture and societies. She prefers the western products because of she considers western products are the best, quality, specialized and modernized than Ethiopian products.

The above passage shows that there was a losing of trust and lack of prestige for ones society, ones culture and one’s language which are the expression of his or her identity due to the inevitable consequence of western cultural flow.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

As the data gained from respondents using both quantitative and qualitative research methods show that the youth were highly fascinated with western media or entertainment, materials and non-material cultures, and ideologies from different sources. In regard to this the major vehicle for reaching the western cultural element to the youth are the media. Not only the media, but also peoples who comes from abroad such as tourists, foreign investors and occupational and friends who follow globalized culture and lifestyle can be a factors to adopt western cultural elements. So as the youths day to day life were correlated with the western media and entertainment , they comes to apply the western culture and lifestyle by forgetting their local cultural elements and lifestyles. The western culture becomes a dominant culture among the youth in the campus, which leads in to decrease the importance of local cultural elements and identity confusion.

The impact of western culture did not stop here. It shapes the perception of the youth still now to adopt western indigenous culture and in a way to take their indigenous cultural values and beliefs to be regarding as inferior and back ward. Because of the youths' are highly fascinated with the western media and entertainment leads to shaping their identity in orientation of the western culture.

The youths perception of western culture and life style as better and their local culture and lifestyle as unsatisfactory plays a great role to grasp western cultural elements. Not only this but also the leisure time activities also play a great role. Because of the youths spend their leisure time by watching holly wood movies, TV shows, football, listening to holly wood and hip hop music. These activities create a fertile of conductive environment to westernization. Therefore the westerners as the leader of the direction of globalization process, they are successful in advancing their own values and beliefs among the Ethiopian and African youths.

### Recommendation

Based on the research findings the following measures are recommended

- ❖ The government at national level through the ministry of culture and tourism should exert more effort on preserving the local culture by working on awareness creation among the youth through well-organized TV shows, published book that reflect the cultural back ground of their nation.
- ❖ School, university and college generally the educational institution should be sources of awareness about the local culture.
- ❖ Media should be a major inclinational instruction in the society to promote the local culture.

- ❖ More sophisticated and fact based research, documentary video, colorful and attractive writing should be work to show the greatness of the local culture.
- ❖ The youth culture of reading and listening of different story should be enhanced so as to ask the question of “who we are?” and search for their identity.
- ❖ Museums and cultural libraries should be built in all universities that have different local cultural elements.
- ❖ Apparent ship learning should be given to the youth to inculcate about the local culture

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