

6th International Research Symposium in Service Management, IRSSM-6 2015, 11-15 August  
2015, UiTM Sarawak, Kuching, Malaysia

## Developing Scales for Measuring Cultural Values in the Context of Consumer Research

Ida Izumi Abdollah<sup>a,\*</sup>, Firdaus Abdullah<sup>b</sup>, Boo Ho Voon<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a, b, c</sup> Faculty of Business Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Sarawak, Malaysia.

---

### Abstract

Cultural dimensions have been commonly used to understand, contrast and interpret cultures; however specific limitations have affected their applicability for assessing and generalizing Malaysian consumer behavior issues. This study is to re-evaluate Malaysian consumer cultural behaviour. The approach used in the study included both qualitative and quantitative where consumers from different ethnic groups participated in the study. The EFA procedures revealed seven factors; oneself values, religiosity, social harmony, humane oriented, ethnic ancestry, group collectivism and environment. The factors have been empirically tested for unidimensionality using EFA and CFA procedures. The coefficients index, clearly indicated an acceptable model fit. The correlation analysis suggested that all the factors are positively correlated among themselves. The findings provided useful insight to the ongoing debate about the role of culture in the multi-ethnic marketplace which has put a new perspective into the relevancy of adopting a concept of national culture in explaining consumer behaviours as a whole.

© 2016 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Peer-review under responsibility of the Universiti Teknologi MARA Sarawak

*Keywords:* Geert Hofstede's; cultural values; culture; Malaysian consumer; ethnic ancestry; religiosity; humane oriented; consumer research

---

### 1. Introduction

Culture refers to the norms, values, and beliefs of a particular group or community in a particular area or geographic location, and shared by its members (Hofstede, 1984). Culture has a profound influence on all aspects of

---

\* Corresponding author. Tel.: +6-016-8083735.

E-mail address: [idaizumi@sarawak.uitm.edu.my](mailto:idaizumi@sarawak.uitm.edu.my)

human behaviour. This accounts for individual's motivations leading to biasness towards a certain brand. Brand preference is the extent to which a consumer favours one brand over another. Studies have addressed the impact of factors such as cultural, social, personal, and psychological as well as changes in consumer's lifestyles on brand preferences (Fournier, 1998) and would respond favourably to brands when the associated cultural meanings reinforce their cultural identity (Kacen and Lee, 2002). The intangible elements of culture incorporate the dominant societal values and belief systems, which characterize a community that influence the patterns of behavior in that community. However, determining the influence of culture on behaviour is relatively difficult, as culture is a complex and broad construct. The complexity of culture is reflected in the multitude of definitions of culture (Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 1952), whereby more than 160 different definitions of culture have been listed. The concept of national culture has long been recognized and used as an approach in explaining behaviours and attitudes difference cultures.

Previous Measurement of Cultural Values: Hofstede's cultural research is one of the most widely adopted in cultural studies. Hofstede's (1983) cultural dimensions are formulated based on a wide range of social sciences, which are considered conceptually well grounded and have substantial empirical supports (McSweeney, 2002). Hofstede proposed four cultural dimensions- power distance, individualism, masculinity and uncertainty avoidance. These four cultural dimensions are somewhat restricted because the original questionnaire is constructed based on the Western understanding of culture. Ironically, Bond (2002) produces an additional dimension that is a long-term outlook, also known as Confucian dynamic, which is associated with stability, thrift, respect for tradition and the future, and regard for obligation within limits, catering for the Asian and Pacific countries.

On the other hand, Schwartz's (1994) cultural values are the basis for specific norms that detail individual what is appropriate in various situations which are reflected in societal institutions such as family, education, economic, political and religious systems which function as their goals and modes of operations. The values represent the foundations of human existence in the pursuit of individualistic or collective needs of group's requisites of coordinated social interactions. A comprehensive empirical analysis gives support for the near-universality of these ten values namely self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power, security, conformity, tradition, benevolence and universalism.

Hofstede's and Schwartz's frameworks are commonly used to compare cultures in a homogeneous population, but lack of practical relevance in an ethnically diverse culture such as Malaysia. Efforts have been made to explain the Malaysian cultural behaviour (Asma and Lim, 2001; Putit and Arnott, 2007; Selvarajah and Meyer, 2008; Kamaruddin and Kamaruddin, 2009). Asma and Lim (2001) suggested a model with eight dimensions of Malaysian culture following the anthropological approach. These eight dimensions include relationship-task, harmony-control, shame-guilt, we-I, religious-secular, hierarchy-equality, polychromic-monochromic and high-low context. The research also indicates that Malaysians diverge in only one of the eight dimensions that is religious-secular and suggests that Malaysians of various ethnics have more converging cultural values than diverging cultural values.

Other studies have posited the importance of religion to be part of culture. According to Kamaruddin and Kamaruddin (2009), religion is a critical part of cultural life where individuals, groups and institutions represent their ideals through religious beliefs and practices, which are translated as freedom and constraints by prescribing behaviours within acceptable boundaries. De Jong et al., (1976) identified six dimensions of religiosity namely beliefs, experiences, religious practices, religious knowledge, individual moral consequences and social consequences. Tarakeshwar and Pargament (2003) further indicated that religion should be fully integrated into cross-cultural research, and proposed a five dimensional framework of religion that can be applied and integrated when researching across cultures; they are ideological, ritual, experiential, intellectual and social dimensions. Influences such as culture, sub-culture, social status, reference groups interaction, perceptions, learning, personality, emotions and attitudes are affecting the individuals' self-concept and lifestyle, translated in their decision process. Consumer's decisions cannot be viewed as an independent event as it is closely related with values and social relationship and cultural allegiance (Samuel and Douglas, 2006). Such is supported by Sirgy (1982), in his self-congruity theory which posited that individuals are expected to prefer a product when a product user's image is congruent with their self-concept.

Thus, in an ethnically complex and dynamic environment, cultural boundaries become more blurred and newer cultural values may emerge. It is under this backdrop that this study which describes the methodological development and eventually identifies the factors that are relevant to the Malaysian cultural behaviour in reference to

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1107431>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1107431>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)