

RETHINKING CULTURAL ORIENTATIONS ON VARIETY-SEEKING BEHAVIOR: A REVIEW BASED ARTICLE

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ABSTRACT

Most researchers refute the perception that all markets are homogenous. They, henceforth, believe that uniform marketing strategies cannot be applied to all sectors. Furthermore, they indicate that cultural variations draw diverse consumer reactions across countries. Research goes on to prove that varied cultures have different responses with respect to brand perceptions (Aaker et al., 2001) and perceptions of risk and brand loyalty (Kanwar, 1993; Yavas et al.1992). Business analysts and academics vociferously stress the individuality and uniqueness of every country, every market distinctively, in terms of geography, demography, culture and consumption patterns.

KEYWORDS: *Refute the Perception, Culture and Consumption Patterns*

INTRODUCTION

Academic scholars have recognized that it is erroneous to try and explain the results of one culture, based on another due to the differences in psychology of consumption and value associations (Belk 1999). The behavior, mind-sets and emotions of individuals differs not only from country-to-country but also from cultures and demographics within a nation itself. Therefore, to define a public based on earlier studies or set notions can prove to be disastrous for marketers and scholars alike. Analyses need to factor in social, psychological, demographic, economic and cultural influences to personify the customer base in question.

While several studies have been conducted, accenting the effects of cultural orientations on variety-seeking, the general rule of thumb accepted is that individuals from collective or inter-related cultures are deemed to be conformists who seek consistency in their choices, while people from independent or individualistic cultures are more risk-taking and hence will tend to seek more variety.

Various studies have shown deflection in the previously predefined alliances of culture and variety seeking. They illuminate the fact that given various other variables, be it of age, dissonance, type of product or simply changing mindsets, there have been noticeable diversities in reception to variety, at different cultural thresholds.

The robust number of studies on the matter are fairly indicative of the significance of the liaison, between culture and variety seeking, to marketers. The cultural orientations of any market need to be studied with careful prejudices of the type of offering and the demographic that it being addressed to. Variety-seeking on its part has established advantages to all marketers alike, such that they augment sales, increase visibility and help to fight competition.

It is crucial, therefore, to understand consumers' variety-seeking behavior in context of their cultural orientations plus other relative factors and ultimately develop a framework that would help leverage marketing opportunities in the sector.

This paper attempts to throw light on how aligning cultural orientations and variety seeking in isolation can have non-corroborative results. And hence, a comprehensive market assessment with fresh variety-seeking and cultural perspectives for the market in question. The next sections briefly describe both these variables and also account the various studies that enumerated the general perceptions of culture and variety-seeking. The succeeding sections give a new perspective to how effectively we can align the two in conjunction with other variables to device better marketing strategies.

The Variety-Seeking Tendency

Variety-seeking has been defined as the tendency for a person to switch away from a choice made on the last occasion (Kahn, 1999). This behavior is found to be dependent on interpersonal and intrapersonal motives, desire for unfamiliar goods and alteration among familiar products and information (Jayasankaraprasad and Kathyayani, 2014). The need for change, uniqueness and a penchant for curiosity and risk are highly challenged with the diversity in times and availability of new entrants in the market. Hence variety-seeking tendencies for individuals, too, modify and evolve over a period of time. These tendencies, then contour personality traits in people and affect the liberalness, extroversion and creativity levels which impact the decision making and buying behavior of consumers.

Variety seeking is not as pervasive as has been previously suggested (Kim and Drolet, 2003). Individuals and publics are influenced by a set of values, perceptions, preferences and behaviors that are ever changing. Equivalently, age, life-cycle stages, occupation, economic circumstances lifestyles and societal dynamics, all have a strong stimulus on the exploratory intentions of an individual.

Of course, one of the key benefits of the consumer's expectation of variety itself i.e. they get a miscellany of options. (Kahn, 1995; McAlister and Pessimier, 1982). When an innate perusal for assortment occurs due to an internal desire for change, satiation or stimulation by novelty, then it is considered a direct form of variety seeking. And in this case, variations in customer behavior across cultures are highly likely.

Hofstede's Typology of Individualism/Collectivism

Individualism (Hofstede, 1980), as a cultural construct, measures the importance placed on the welfare of the individual as opposed to the group. The importance of the group is reflected in collectivism (Shankermahesh et al., 2003). In individualistic cultures, "people look after themselves and their immediate family members only," and in collectivistic cultures, "people look after the interests of larger groups and collectivities in exchange for loyalty" (Hofstede 1980, p.390).

People who are in collectivistic cultures generally want to be enveloped in emotional states of belongingness and conformity. They adhere to the in-group norms and are more likely to prioritize group achievements over the self. This might also result in the suppression of personal feelings or attributes, as the primary focus is to be socially appropriate.

Entities in Individualistic cultures, on the other hand, are motivated by their own personal growths and clearly believe in self-expression. They value their freedom and resent being harnessed. They don't always like to adhere and are more like to put their personal goals over societal norms. They have been raised to liberally voice their emotions and encouraged to be rational.

Culture, thus, has an undeniable effect on our emotional and psychological states and expressions. "People do not carry separate mental programs for work and non-work situations" (Hofstede, 1980, p.92). Our actions have been attributed to our experiences, value systems and our well-being. Therefore, exploratory behavior and variety seeking tendencies are greatly influenced by our cultural orientations.

Cultural Orientations and Variety-Seeking Tendencies; the General Descents

While variety is deemed attractive by customers in all cultures, the decision to seek variety varies with respect to the dynamics that different cultures display. Consumers from different cultural orientations will react differently to variety assortment decisions presented to them.

Iyengar and Lepper (1999) found noteworthy cultural variations in the first level of preliminary appraisal of choice. The authors compared the Japanese and American cultures with respect to their aspiration for choice. This of course, was indicative of the differences between the collectivistic and individualistic cultures. Results clearly showed that while in individualistic cultures, a larger choice was always welcome, due to uncertainty of future preferences, a smaller assortment of goods may not be rejected as often in collectivistic cultures. Not all participants are equally simulated by choice opportunities (Markus and Kitayama, 2003)

Moreover, Heine et al. (1999) conjecture that psychological reactions hinge on ideologies, habits, behaviors and actions that have been propelled by cultural values shaped over centuries, by continual revelation to symbols, images and practices.

The appraisal of self-expression and morals of uniqueness lead adherents of individualistic cultures to see greater value in choice than members of collectivist cultures (Iyengar and Lepper, 1999), where the higher order goals are not self-consciousness, but social relationships as well as the identification and confirmation with shared expectations and norms (Hermann and Heitmann, 2006).

Levav and Ariely (2000) clearly enunciated in their research that it is interpersonal choice context that propels Americans to make altered selections as they need to portray traits of uniqueness in their social habitat (Hermann and Heitmann, 2006). However, this very peculiarity of conviction and independent surge has negative connotations in many Asian countries (Bellah et al., 1985; Kim and Markus, 1999; Triandis, 1995). Markus and Kitama (1991) contend that in collectivistic cultures, choice behavior is enthused by social norms and anticipated expectations of peers rather than the inner biddings and personal attributes. In Japanese cultures, individuals exercise great restraint to their inner desires which might impede group cohesion (Hamaguchi, 1985; Heine et al., 1999).

This would logically lead us to the inference that the notions of uniqueness, satiation and simulation are rather connected to the western cultures, but not with the Asian or collectivistic ones (Hermann and Heitmann, 2006). The aforementioned concepts, in fact, form the very core of variety seeking.

But then there are point of views that augment our underlying restlessness that subjects as variant and dynamic as culture and variety-seeking cannot be mason stoned. “The variety-seeking tendency might not be as universal and robust as previously thought and might just be a psychological product of socially and culturally shared human expressions and responses” (Kim & Drolet, 2003, pp.380).

Kim and Drolet (2003), in an effort to compare these two aspects of cultures, compared American and Korean students with regard to variety seeking in decision making. They too concluded that varying choice behavior seemed to be of lesser interest to the Koreans than to the Americans. But they reiterated the fact that “We cannot assume that culture would affect all forms of variety-seeking in the same way” (Kim and Drolet, 2003, pp. 379). And since not all variety-seeking has the same underlying motivations, another possibility that was highlighted was that a part of collectivist group might be looking for variety seeking simply as a means to conform to their group dynamics and propagate harmony.

Chu and Spriles (1999) established several differences in the types of information processing between American and Japanese students. The reliability of their findings was upheld with the belief of several other researches, who felt that the Japanese are more intuitive than their logical thinking American counterparts (Reinschauer, 1977). Hence, as they would rely more on qualitative assessments, the psychological costs of decision making would not be as dependent on perceived variety as that of the Americans (Hermann and Heitmann, 2006).

In view of this account, Markus and Kitayama (1991), first came up with the notion that individuals in the Asian cultures, might not be ill at ease when their behavior is shifting vis-a-vis their personal needs, because of the inherent characteristic of how they themselves variate between the interdependent self from their independent self.

In collectivistic cultures, the self is not a constrained whole, it rather alters with the social context (Hermann and Heitmann, 2006). In effect, making personal choices, forming judgements and having opinions are of less importance to interdependent selves (Wierzbicka, 1994). In such cultures, failures are accepted more readily than in cultures with independent selves (Kitayama et al., 1997). This lends a sense of belongingness to the individuals.

The aforementioned discussion steers in the orientation that interdependent cultures are less likely to forestall the same degree of regret when choosing out of a high variety assortment. And while, being apprehensive can be negated in the western cultures, it is but an accepted trait in the eastern ethos.

It is hence, vital to voice that there are many underlying reason why, at times, variety seeking might be more of an accepted trait in collectivist cultures. “Variety-seeking hence is not just culturally bound but also contextually bound” (Kim & Drolet, 2003, pp.380). It is an amalgamation of faces like cultures, the type of product category in question, demographics, and psychographic orientations that clearly establish the variety-seeking tendencies of a consumer in a defined setting.

Framework for Organizing the Study

Taking into account the variables of culture and variety-seeking, articles from following management, marketing, retail and distribution, hospitality and psychology journals from the year 1999-2015 have been included for a detailed and critical review – Journal of Consumer Psychology, Journal of Indian Management, International Marketing Review, Journal of Hospitality and Tourism, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, International Journal of Business and Management, Academy of Marketing Science Review, International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management,

International Journal of Cross Cultural Management and the Journal of Consumer Marketing.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Research studies are discussed below to enhance the relationship between culture and variety seeking.

Shukla et al.(2015), outlining the heterogeneity in Asian market consumers had summarized that in India, which is a conventionally categorized as a collectivistic culture, other-directed symbolism is significantly influential on luxury value perceptions, reflecting the hierarchical nature of the society (vertical collectivism). The results also observed that functional value is deemed to be significant across all markets.

Hermann and Heitmann (2006), reaffirmed that treating markets as homogenous would be the biggest folly for any marketer. Substantial cultural differences are to be expected when variety is provided to consumers around the globe. However they stressed that excessive quantities can prove to be detrimental, as it can decrease rather than increase sales. Therefore, to determine the right amount of variety is a key challenge.

In a study based on group choice settings by Yoon et al.(2011),the findings revealed that for Koreans who lived in a highly collectivistic culture, it was natural and almost normative to choose the option that was similar to others and not standing out from the others was a desirable trait. But, it came to light that such a tendency was observed only when the participants were not provided with the product information prior to the choice. Which translates into the fact, that had they been aware, then they would have sought variety. It also implies that there were detrimental effects on the American's personal happiness, when they tried to align themselves with the cultural norms (e.g. variety seeking) because that threatened their personal freedom and autonomy.

Consistent with these assumptions, Iyengar and Leper (1999), shared their findings which suggested that individuals with collective norm are relatively less threatened by the restraint of one's freedom, and it has minimal impact on personal happiness. For them, having choices made by regular in-group members instead of making their own choices seemed consistently intrinsically motivating, presumably because it provided a greater opportunity to promote harmony and fulfill the goal of belongingness to the group.

The findings of Kim and Drolet (2003), also differed in a subtle yet meaningful way. They showed that people in individualistic cultures tend to vary their choice rule use, whereas people in collectivist cultures do not perceive choice as an act of self-expression. This led to the extrapolation that consumers in collectivist settings needn't necessarily follow the choice of others in a group choice setting, even if it is normative and socially desirable, because there doesn't exist a need to portray their positive self-image through their choice decisions.

Similarly, there were some contradictions in the results of the study conducted by Leo, Bennett and Hartel (2005) who studied the cross cultural differences in the consumer decision making styles. For instance, the Australians scored higher on uncertainty avoidance which went against their nature of individualism. And the Singaporeans scored low on quality consciousness and higher on their innovative shopping behavior (variety-seeking) which might also supplement the low uncertainty avoidance.

Khandoker et al. (2011), posited that variety seeking occurs because of an internal desire for change, satiation or inspiration by uniqueness. But displaying distinctive feelings may not make much sense for inter-reliant cultures. In particular, collectivistic and individualistic cultures seem to differ with regard to preferences for high variety assortments.

While studying the influence of culture on Impulsive Buying behavior, Kacen and Lee (2002), hypothesized that the buying impulsiveness trait was more strongly associated with impulsive buying behavior for the individualist than for the collectivist groups. They also posited that collectivists are less driven to act on this trait. In addition, getting older, reduced the impulsive buying among the Asian sample but didn't have a significant impact on the Caucasian sample. This finding supports previous research that found collectivists are able to maintain inconsistent attitude-behavior relationships (Kashima et al., 1992).

Imada and Kitayama (2010) made a very interesting observation when studying public consumption. Choice justification was stronger both when Japanese made a choice in the presence of social eyes and when Americans made one in the absence of it. This established evidence to culturally different meanings people attach to choice when they make it under different conditions. The Americans (individualists) felt that their choice was constrained by social influence.

Pandey, Khare and Bhardwaj (2015), highlighted the positive influence of Indian culture on local store loyalty. This was guided by cultural dimensions of masculinity, power distance, and long term orientation as compared to low price. The most important dimension coming out of the findings was masculinity which emphasized a preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material rewards. Therefore providing variety in terms of range to be offered was suggested as a way to go forward.

Further evidence was provided by Seock and Lin (2011) consumer loyalty tendency is influenced by culture, particularly the dimension of collectivism. Such findings may reflect the individuals' eagerness to belong to and be approved by the people in their groups or society. The collectivist notion of interdependence with the in-group would seem to encourage loyalty tendency.

Similarly, Straughan and Miller (2001) conducted a multi-cultural to examine cultural influences on customer loyalty to local retail stores. They postulated that the more individualistic, members of the society are, the less loyal they are to retailers. The cultural tendency to avoid uncertainty was indicative of greater loyalty to domestic retailers. Men exhibited a stronger loyalty to domestic stores than women did.

The study made by Wang et al. (2012), was consistent with the OSL theories provided by Raju(1980). Consumers with different stimulation levels have different variety seeking behaviors and different sensitivities to store elements. The research provides evidence that shoppers with higher OSL are more valued customers because they tend to spend more money and time in the retail stores.

Sharma (2014) concluded that sub-cultural diversity had a partially mediated impact on Optimum Stimulation Level and a fully mediated impact on Exploratory Buying Behavior. The analysis confirmed that long term orientation and power distance were negatively related to OSLs. Also, power distance and collectivism were negatively correlated to Exploratory buying behavior.

Sapra and Mor (2012) concluded that the concept of desire for exploration has emerged as the strongest motivating influencer for consumer buying behavior. The general findings indicate that people with higher OSLs engage in exploratory behaviors as compared to people with lower OSLs. Age, Income, Education and Employment; all displayed a positive correlation to the Optimum Stimulation Levels.

Shankarmahesh et al. (2003) studied the cultural dimensions in switching behavior of importer-exporter relationships theorized that firms interested in maintaining strong and healthy relations should develop a strong and independent organizational structure characterized by low levels of individualism, power distance, masculinity and uncertainty avoidance.

Following the line of thought, Lin and Mattila (2006), conducted a study on cultural impacts on restaurant switching. The results of the study indicated that cultural differences play an important part in moderating the consumers' switching and exploratory behaviors. Interestingly, the Taiwanese consumers were more likely to switch and explore new restaurants than their American counterparts. They also proposed that since because Taiwanese college-aged consumers have a limited opportunity to express their personal beliefs in social settings, they might depend on consumption choices to express their individuality.

Table 1 summarizes the research studies examining the relationship between culture and variety seeking. The table includes the sample size and variables along with the key findings of the studies

Table 1

Study	Sample	Variables	Key Findings
Iyengar and Leper (1999)	105 school children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intrinsic motivation • Ethnicity • Choice conditions 	Personal choice is not as critical for interdependent cultures as is for the individualists.
Straughan and Albers-Miller (2001)	233 consumers 150 business professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDI • IDV • Age • Sex • Retail Loyalty 	Collectivistic cultures exhibit higher loyalty traits. Age as a factor is inconsequential. Men emerged more retail loyal than women.
Study	Sample	Variables	Key Findings
Kacen and Lee (2002)	706 students and non-students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impulsive Buying Behavior • Trait buying • Impulsiveness • IDV/Collectivism • Emotional factors • Age 	Collectivists less driven as compared to IDV to make impulse purchases. Attitude-behavior relationships are weaker in Coll. Impulse buying decreases with age in collectivistic cultures
Kim and Drolet (2003)	343 undergraduate and graduate students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualistic/Collectivistic cultures • Variety seeking • Compromise/ Non-compromise condition 	In collectivistic cultures, other group members' choices minimally impact the individuals' choice, as choice is not an act of self-expression
Shankarmahesh, Ford and LaTour (2003)	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hofstede's Cultural dimensions • Tendency to switch • Degree of dependence • Dissolution 	To limit switching firms should develop cultures based on low levels of individualism, power distance, masculinity and uncertainty avoidance
Leo, Bennett and Hartel (2005)	534 respondents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hofstede's constructs • Sprole's decision making styles • Innovativeness • Brand Loyalty 	No real differences in brand loyalty traits were found, but Singapore fared higher in innovativeness i.e. Collectivist culture displayed more variety seeking tendencies

Table 1			
Herrman and Heitmann (2006)	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualistic/Collectivistic cultures • Perceived Variety • Actual Variety 	Variety, though of more value in individualistic cultures. Depending on type of product sold, collectivistic cultures seek more variety due to stronger effect of regret
Study	Sample	Variables	Key Findings
Lin and Mattila (2006)	311 College-aged consumers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IND/ COL • Switching behavior • Variety-seeking • Vanity –seeking • Novelty-seeking 	Taiwanese more likely to switch restaurant providers and explore new alternatives than US consumers. They also had higher ratings on variety and novelty seeking
Ahmed, Uddin and Ahshanullah (2009)	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived Variety • Cultural Constructs 	Substantial cultural differences are displayed when variety is provided. A culture-oriented market leads to superior performance
Imada and Kitayama (2010)	115 undergraduates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choice Justification • Spreading of alternatives(SA) • Social Eyes • IDV/COL 	Choice justification was stronger for Eastern cultures in the presence of social/public eyes. Americans work harder on a task that is held in private.
Khandoker, Faruque and Rehman (2011)	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumers' benefits of variety • Perceived variety • Cultural differences 	Sovereign cultures place a higher premium on variety compared to collectivistic ones.
Seock and Lin (2011)	456 young consumers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualism • Collectivism • Consumer Loyalty • Retail store attributes 	American college students displayed significantly greater collectivism than their Taiwanese counterparts. And US showed higher levels of loyalty
Yoon, Suk, Lee and Park (2011)	517 order slips from 1475 customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualistic/Collectivistic cultures • Variety Index • Uniformity • Conformity 	Collectivistic cultures tend to prefer group-level uniformity seeking. They exhibit positive meanings to being similar
Study	Sample	Variables	Key Findings
Wang, Chang and Wysong (2012)	147 retail shoppers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OSL • Store ambience • Design/layout • Density elements • Hedonic values • Utilitarian values 	Shoppers with higher OSL had higher evaluations of store features. They reported higher hedonic and utilitarian values from their shopping. They also spent more time and money in the store
Sapra and Mor (2012)	25 empirical articles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimum Stimulation Level • Demographic variables • Exploratory tendency variables 	Desire for exploration emerged as the strongest motivating influencer for consumer buying behavior. The study shows a positive correlation between OSL and age, education, income
Pandey, Khare and Bhardwaj (2015)	710 shoppers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail loyalty • Price bargaining • Hofstede's cultural constructs • Cosmopolitanism 	Indian consumers' loyalty towards local store retailers is driven by cultural dimensions as masculinity, power distance and long-term orientation as compared to low price

Study	Sample	Variables	Key Findings
Ha and Jang (2013)	309 university students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety seeking Intentions • Personality Characteristics • Frequency and Recency 	Satisfaction and Hedonic values impact variety seeking tendencies for high allocentric groups
Sharma (2014)	200 respondents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploratory Purchase Behavior • Optimum Stimulation Level • Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions 	Long term orientation and Power Distance were negatively related to OSL while Collectivism was negatively related to EBB in North and East India
Shukla, Singh and Banerjee (2015)	626 luxury consumers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horizontal / Vertical Collectivism • Luxury value perceptions 	Asian markets are not homogenous. Other-directed symbolism is significantly influential on LVP for Indian consumers.

CONCLUSIONS

The review of the studies revealed that 1) culture has a significant impact on variety seeking tendencies. This is imperative since the provision of variety is a key marketing instrument (Kahn, 1998; Lehmann 1998). Offering variety after giving cultural orientation of the market, its due consideration can improve sales, boost visibility, increase goodwill and affect loyalty. 2) Markets cannot be considered homogenous. Even established research cannot prove to be exacting guidelines for further actions. Categories of products and demographics play an important role in deciding the true nature and receptiveness of the market concerned 3) Independent selves strive harder on a task held in private while consumers in collectivistic cultures will display strong choice justifications in public consumption scenarios. 4) Local retail loyalty is a strong collectivistic trait. The study revealed that individuals who exhibit high collectivistic characteristics tend to stick to the brands or stores they selected. 5) Optimum Stimulation Levels have proven to be a strong indicator for variety seeking tendencies. And even though, some collectivistic cultures demonstrate lower levels of OSL, age, income, education and other demographic variables have an impacting relationship on the exploratory behavior of the consumer. This changes the dynamism of the variables in question.

This paper essentially outlines that Cultural background can influence Variety Seeking Behavior. However, this field of research has had mixed results so far. Past literature shows that variety seeking behavior is more dominant among individualistic cultures (Kim & Drolet, 2003). This is based on their high OSL and subsequent high risk-taking consumer behavior as compared to individuals from collectivistic cultures (Kahn & Meyer, 1990). Consumers in collectivistic cultures reflect other-directed symbolism. Especially when choice decisions are to be made in public, it implicates certain public or social aspects of the self, and thus, it is likely to be quite important to act in certain fashion, for the inter-dependent selves. This could be because of the importance given to alliances, group-conformities and a sense of belongingness as a true indicator of eastern cultures. Choices made by in-group members seem consistently more intrinsically motivating because it provides the opportunity to promote harmony (Iyengar & Lepper, 1999). Self-image is aligned to in-group personalities and it is normative to graze with the herd.

However, in contrast to these findings, Hse and Weber (1999) found that in certain cases Asians (collectivistic culture) could be more risk seeking than Americans (individualistic culture). They base their results on the 'cushion hypothesis' meaning that as a high collectivistic culture, the Asians live in extended families with close relationships between each other. That allows them, unlike Americans, to count on their social network in case of an action they undertake that results in a negative, damaging outcome.

Lin and Mattila (2006) also encapsulated that the young college-aged collectivists were more likely to switch and try out newer alternatives as compared to their Individualistic counterparts. They had higher ratings on exploratory behaviors and high switching intentions such as variety-, novelty-, and curiosity-seeking. The study also pulled emphasis to the strong influence of Western media that encouraged western consumption activities and behaviors. Seock and Lin (2011), in fact went as far to state that in their analysis, the Americans displayed more collectivistic characteristics than the Taiwanese.

This result is in contrary to findings in scientific literature, but supports the research analogy. Also, it is imperative that we take into account demographic factors, as well as type and categories of products before marking typologies to any consumption behaviors in the market.

Since some collectivistic cultures can be more risk taking and self-expressive this leads to the inference that interdependent cultures could also engage in a higher Variety Seeking Behavior.

Managerial Implications

The study holds important implications for marketers and researchers. Variety-seeking and exploratory behaviors in consumers are a driving force to boost sales and visibility along with enhancing brand image. The investigation underlined that OSL is an effective marketing segmentation variable. It has been proved that shoppers with a higher OSL will spend more time and money in stores. But, a mere classification of individualist/collectivist cultures might not be the exacting solution for marketers to jump into implementation of consumer marketing strategies. The guidelines of interdependence and self, albeit peripheral, do not provide clear cut alignments of behaviors and approaches. We therefore need to take into account more cultural orientations like uncertainty avoidance, power distance and dimensions like demographics, product typologies and psychographics into account for a real and reflective resolution to our marketing positioning.

Directions for Future Research

The study focused on individualistic/collectivistic cultures. Other dimensions like masculinity and power distance were not given due importance. Also, we did not examine within culture variations and focused more on cross-cultural studies. Future research should focus on the effects of factors such as demographics moderating the effects on culture on variety seeking in specific cultures.

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