

Cultural Influences on Consumer Behaviour

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Rishab Mishra, S

II MBA, School of Management

Dwaraka Doss Goverdhan Doss Vaishnav College, Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Abstract

This study examines the distinctions between consumer behaviour and individuality versus collectivism in regard to the buying of cars. The author of this study examined various stages of the decision-making process for consumers. Process and determined any potential distinctions between individualist and collectivist customers, as well as how it impacts the decision to buy. Drawing from a sample of 211 Australian-born individualist respondents, backgrounds that are collectivist (of Asian descent), a recognized scale (Cultural Values Scale: Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, If the respondents are in agreement, & Gelfand, 1995) was utilized to validate the cultural values among the participants. With the specific group (for example, Australian-born individuals who value individuality and Asian-born individuals who value collectivism). The independent sample t-test was utilized to evaluate the hypotheses. The findings showed that there were no variations in There were distinctions in the individuality shown by respondents who were born in Asia and Australia. Between these two groups in terms of collectivism, with Asian-born individuals scoring higher on a collective mindset. The findings also revealed that Asian-born consumers involve several brands and are more brand aware. Friends and family before making decisions. Conversely, Australian-born customers don't think that decisions should be made collectively. Creating and using the internet as the primary information source. The results will offer perception into How auto manufacturers should set themselves up in terms of their marketing approaches in various cultural contexts.

Keywords: Car Purchases, Consumer Decision-Making, Cultural Values

Introduction

Culture has a significant influence on how people behave. It is made up of a shared set of behavioural patterns. That are maintained and transmitted by the people that make up a specific community using a variety of techniques. For instance, people that belong to the same culture speak comparable languages. Both imitation and pattern instruction (Kelley & Wendt, 2002) have the same values. These beliefs are probably going to have an impact on how consumers behave and determine the kinds of criteria that specific customers.

Cultural values are the means by which information that is determined by culture is passed down from generation to generation; that is, they serve as the medium for the expression and preservation of culture. These Values are instilled in a certain group and transferred to the following generation. In the capacity of Consequently, values endure over time and may consequently impact consumer behaviour. This additionally impacts people's decisions when it comes to purchasing everything from commonplace goods to expensive luxury significant acquisitions.

Cultural values seem to have an impact on almost every element of life. The significance of culture system incorporates aspects of culture that individuals share with the group they are a part of, in addition to peculiar principles that are specific to that person. Social culture, in addition to local an individual's cultural values are shaped by their upbringing, subculture, and family values. Consequently, from the at the outset of their existence, people encounter the advantages and limitations of a specific culture. And those advantages and limitations might have a significant impact on customers' purchasing decisions. Certain cultures, for instance, tend to be cautious about trying new things. Customers have a greater propensity to adhere to traditional beliefs, which first and foremost implies that they pick up knowledge from observation rather than by buying new material inventive goods. Product preferences or choices are restricted by this method. Divergent cultural values among customers may pose challenges for academics seeking to comprehend consumer behaviour within a multicultural setting.

Nonetheless, marketing academics generally agree that one of the most significant underlying factors influencing customer behaviour is culture. Marketing researchers have already measured the influence of cultural values in consumer behaviour research using cultural dimensions, such as individualism-collectivism. Cultural variations in customer complaint behaviour, consumer inventiveness, consumer retailing, and impulse buying are among the topics covered in earlier research. Therefore, a crucial idea that has been effectively applied in cross-cultural marketing research is the usage of individualism-collectivism for measuring cultural values.

Surprisingly, given the amount of attention that cross-cultural marketing research has given individualism-collectivism, not much is known about how individualism-collectivism influences the purchase of high-involvement items. More generally, studies have demonstrated that, when it comes to high involvement purchases, culture may function as an intention inhibitor. Consequently, it could be fair to suppose that widely held individualism-collectivism values influence (to a certain degree) the decision of what is or is not appreciated among particular products. Individuals within these two cultural groups of individualism and collectivism may choose different products as a result of these ideals. Culture can become an even more effective and important marketing strategy if the link between individualism-collectivism and high participation purchasing can be proven. This study attempts to do this by examining the values of individualist and collectivist customers and how those values affect their purchasing behaviour. The author's examination of many stages in the decision-making process of consumers about car purchases in this study may facilitate communication between marketing practitioners and customers in these cultural groups.

The Effect of Individualism-Collectivism on Consumer Behaviour

Hofstede's research has demonstrated the impact of individualism versus collectivism on consumer behaviour. Specifically, the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom (UK), and other Western countries are grouped towards the individualist end of the continuum, while Asian countries such as India, Pakistan, Thailand, Hong Kong, and China are grouped toward the collectivist end. A national culture is shared by every national people, according to Hofstede. The exclusive culture that exists within a country and serves to culturally separate its people from those of other nations is known as "national culture." Hofstede's concept of national cultural distinctions was criticized by McSweeney, who contended that a narrow portrayal of culture was produced by the premise that nation and culture are synonymous. Alternative definitions of culture, according to McSweeney, ought to take into account a variety of non-national impacting variables. The idea that cultural dimensions like individualism and collectivism function in all societies and that individualistic and collectivistic tendencies can be found at different levels within any given culture is perhaps the most significant alternative view to Hofstede's national culture to have

emerged. The alternative perspective contends that Easterners and Westerners are not inherently different from one another on these dimensions, despite Hofstede's assertion that Eastern cultures are collectivistic and Western cultures are individualistic.

Nonetheless, cross-cultural scholars studying consumer behaviour find it fascinating to watch how individualism and collectivism interact with consumer behaviour. According to Cleveland & Chang (2009), cross-cultural scholars have identified culture as one of the key factors influencing consumer behaviour. The cultural background of consumers affects not only their requirements and wants but also how marketing strategies are developed to target the behaviours, attitudes, and preferences of the target market. This influence is seen in the variety of approaches taken by marketers to reach consumers in various cultural contexts. For instance, in collectivist societies, advertising emphasizes prestige, symbolism, and status in addition to the advantages that come with belonging to a family or an in-group. On the other hand, characteristics like performance and design are prioritized in individualist society. Compared to collectivists, who place a greater emphasis on other aspects of the goods, such as symbolism and prestige, individualist customers are more interested in learning about the product's capabilities before making a purchase. Nevertheless, there hasn't been much research done on how these elements affect customers' purchase decisions in individualist and collectivist societies. Therefore, research focusing on the relationship between culture and consumer behaviour is required in order to effectively engage with consumers in different ethnic groups.

Prior research has suggested that the dichotomy of individualism and collectivism may impact consumer behaviour. Consequently, marketing communication strategies should be formulated taking these consequences into account. This refers to the International Journal of Business and Management Vol., available at www.ccsenet.org/ijbm. 7, No. 21 (2012) The 80 communication strategies that were chosen could vary depending on one's cultural background. As was previously mentioned, while making decisions, collectivist consumers are more prone to prioritize the advantages of their families and communities. Individualist consumers, on the other hand, are more prone to prioritize their own interests or benefits over those of the community. When it comes to making decisions, individualist consumers base their choices on knowledge obtained from personal experiences, whereas collectivist consumers are more inclined to rely heavily on outside information sources, such friends and family. Consequently, it's critical to determine which categories of information sources are best suited for reaching individualist and collectivist customers. The significance of information sources in consumer decision-making has not been studied in the past. For example, it is unknown what kinds of information sources individualist and collectivist consumers favor when making high-involvement purchases like cars. Investigating this field further may contribute to a better knowledge of how to interact with individuals and groups within cultural contexts.

Cultural dimensions, such as individualism versus collectivism, are thought to have a significant impact on the kinds of needs that consumers try to satisfy through their consumption and purchasing behaviour, as they are a major determinant of a variety of attitudes and behaviours. Individualist and collectivist consumers have distinct requirements, which are reflected in how they rank the features of products that affect their purchasing decisions. Consequently, there may be differences in these two cultural groups' preferences for particular product features like brand or quality. Customers may favor specific brands or items in individualist societies, for instance, if they deliver the anticipated functional benefits. When making a purchase, individualist buyers are more inclined to concentrate on the functionality of the goods than on social standing or prestige. In contrast, customers in collectivist societies could choose specific brands or items because they can be employed for culturally significant symbolic purposes. Individualist consumers might buy

goods that set them apart from referent people, but collectiveist consumers might buy goods that symbolize status or reinforce their resemblance to members of their reference group. When it comes to buying a car, individualist buyers are more likely to value power and improved performance over prestige or brand, while collectivist buyers might opt for more expensive vehicles because of the prestige and status that come with them. In addition, when looking for information about high involvement product purchases, buyers may also rely on cultural values.

It is customary in collectivist societies to enlist the help of friends and family when looking for knowledge. When purchasing a vehicle, for instance, people from collectivist societies might ask other people's opinions about what details to gather and what kinds of reliable sources to use. Prior to gathering information, they probably will speak with their friends, family, and coworkers and take into consideration any advice or comments they may have. To finish the information search process, they might also take into account suggestions from friends and relatives regarding which information sources are most likely to be trustworthy, such as periodicals, word-of-mouth, visiting dealers, and test driving. All things considered, buyers from collectivist societies could seek for social validation from others, particularly for highly conspicuous or involved purchases like cars.

Customers from individualist cultures, on the other hand, might be less inclined to rely on others, such as family members, peers, and social groups, when making purchasing decisions because individualism is primarily expressed in being independent from others and in control of one's surrounding environment. Individualist consumers look for fresh experiences to supplement their internal knowledge, which is based on their unique experiences. They are less inclined to depend on the viewpoints of others. For instance, while buying a car, they might take their time browsing websites, talk to multiple dealers, and do multiple test drives in order to broaden their internal knowledge through firsthand experience. Rather than depending on friends and family, they are likely to use a considerably wider variety of patterns of information sources. Though recommendations from friends and family are welcome, each person makes their own decisions. To be more precise, the buyer typically feels that the choice is their own, even though it may require discussion with friends or family in the end. When targeting customers from these two distinct cultural backgrounds, marketing communications may make use of these variances in consumer information preferences to craft a more persuasive message.

In summary, in order to better understand the consumer behaviour of individualist and collectivist customers, researchers and marketing practitioners must recognize cultural distinctions. Additionally, marketers must design their strategies taking into account the high and low levels of consumer product involvement. www.ccsenet.org/ijbm International Journal of Business and Management Vol. 7, No. 21 (2012) 81 distinct from low-commitment buying scenarios, such as sweets. Customers may believe that high involvement purchases, like cars, represent a specific social standing or image, and this ingrained symbolic meaning may have an impact on the choices that customers make. However, depending on the cultural origins of the customers, these symbolic connotations may vary. Studies have indicated that there are cultural differences among consumers when it comes to how they view brands, for instance, in terms of the characteristics they remember being associated with certain companies. Local societies and cultures influence the images and symbolic meanings associated with brands. According to collective notions about a brand, the social values associated with a certain brand may differ significantly. For instance, due to the disparities in their cultural upbringings, individualist and collectivist customers are likely to interpret symbols differently, which could have an impact on their highly involved decision-making when choosing things like cars. Despite the great interest in studying cross-cultural consumer behaviour, very few, if any, studies have used cars as a high-involvement purchase to determine how cultural

background—such as individualism versus collectivism—affects consumers’ purchasing decisions. As previously indicated, additional study is required to examine the ways in which customers’ cultural backgrounds influence particular aspects of their decision-making process while making high-engagement purchases.

Consumer Decision-Making Process for High Involvement Purchases

When making a high involvement purchase, customers typically weigh the advantages and disadvantages of every option with regard to price, quality, brand, and innovation (Mittal, 1995). In order to make a well-informed choice, consumers try to predict how each alternative will turn out and which is ideal in that specific circumstance. When making high-involvement purchases like cars, consumers go through a sequential process that includes problem recognition, information searching, brand appraisal and selection, purchase, and post-purchase . Diagrammatic presentation and illustration of the impact of cultural factors, such as individualism versus collectivism, at various stages of the decision-making process are provided (see Figure 1 below). This section’s goal is to pinpoint the ways in which individualist and collectivist car buyers are influenced by their cultural background at various phases of the decision-making process.

Choosing a Vehicle: A Complex Problem-Solving Situation

The research has indicated that choosing a vehicle is a complex problem-solving procedure for consumers. Situations involving the purchasing of automobiles show this. These circumstances are probably going to be marked by (a) actively searching out information about different brands; (b) comparing significant product attributes; (c) having unique preferences for a specific brand, like brand loyalty; and (d) making decisions that are probably going to be made with a high level of awareness. For instance, in order to make an informed decision about purchasing a car, buyers often need to be well-informed, have done their homework, and have adequate time to absorb and assess the information at their disposal.

Marketing research has employed a number of consumer decision-making process models (see, for instance, Howard-Sheth 1969; Nicosia model 1966; Engel et al., 1995; Sheth, Mittal, & Newman, 1999; Neal, Qeuster, & Hawkins, 2000). To determine the cultural influences on the decision-making process related to cars, this study has modified the Neal et al. (2000) model (see Figure 1 below).

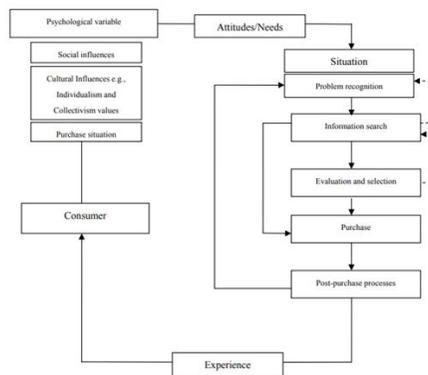


Figure 1 Consumer Decision-Making Process Model
Source: adapted from Neal, Qeuster & Hawkins (2000)

Neal, Quester and Hawkins (2000) Model

Neal et al., (2000) has been applied in earlier research on the decision-making process in high-involvement purchases. This model's comprehensive five-stage description of the high involvement decision-making process (issue recognition, information search, evaluation and selection, purchase, and post-purchase) was found to be effective. Furthermore, the model shows how psychological factors, such as society and culture, are probably going to have some effects on consumers' requirements and attitudes while they're deciding what to buy. The model's inclusion of a cultural influence element renders it a potent instrument for studying cross-cultural behaviour, particularly when comparing East and West cultures. This section provides a description of the consumer decision-making process model depicted in Figure 1 in relation to car purchases. The discussion that follows is predicated on the shaded regions (refer to figure 1) of cultural influence, information search, assessment and selection, and buying scenario.

Development of Hypotheses: Cultural Influences and Automobile Purchase Situation Information search, appraisal, and selection, as well as purchase behaviour, are the primary components of consumer decision-making processes. This section examines the relationship between these stages and the scenario of buying a car as well as the ways in which cultural elements like individuality and collectivism affect the choices made by consumers within these three stages of the Neal et al. (2000) model.

Information Search

The information search entails a proactive look for data relevant to the choice being made. Researchers Peterson and Merino (2003) distinguish between two sorts of information search: internal and external. Consumers use both of these search types while buying cars. Based on the consumer's prior information search activity and their recollections of the product, the internal information search is memory-based. When a consumer feels that there is insufficient information currently available to make an informed decision, they may conduct an active or external information search to find new information to help in the decision-making process.

Furthermore, it is imperative to acknowledge that cultural factors, such as individualism and collectivism, have the potential to impact the information-search patterns that individual consumers are inclined to pursue. For instance, friends, family, and reference groups are likely to be the main targets of information searches for collectivist consumers. Individualist consumers, on the other hand, are less inclined to rely on other people's opinions. They are more inclined to rely on data that they have independently gathered, such as heavily depending on the internet and dealers.

Many earlier research appear to have overlooked the impact that cultural background has on consumers' information searches. For instance, Bloch & Richins (1986) examined a wide range of prospective factors, including income and occupation, that could influence pre-purchase behaviour as well as the results of the continuing search; however, they did not examine any potential cultural variations in the information search process.

Nonetheless, there are certain fundamental distinctions between individualist and collectivist customers' information searches and usage that should be taken into account because they might be the cause of consumers' varying product preferences. When gathering information for a car purchase, individualists could visit many dealers or even take multiple test drives to broaden their own knowledge base via firsthand experience. Collectivists, on the other hand, could consult fewer merchants and are more prone to rely on the advice of their friends and relatives. The reason why consumers from different cultural groups choose different brands of automobiles may be attributed to these disparate patterns of information searches.

- H1a: The number of friends and family members who participate in the choice to buy a car is significantly correlated with the cultural background of the decision-maker. Compared to individualist consumers, collectiveist consumers involve more friends and family.
- H1b: When it comes to buying a car, individualist customers view dealers as a “less important” source of information than do collectiveist consumers.
- H1c: The internet is the primary information source for individualist customers.

Evaluation and Selection

The buyer would probably evaluate the cars according to a variety of evaluation criteria after obtaining the necessary data. Because there are so many different variables to consider, the evaluation and selection step of the decision-making process is one of the most complicated. The types of products can influence the criteria used for evaluation. The features that consumers take into consideration when making decisions about high involvement products or automobile purchases include brand, price, quality (Prendergast & Wong, 2003), brand loyalty, prestige, and innovation. According to Tsang and Prendergast (2009), customers’ emotional desires may influence their evaluation and selection processes, leading them to choose products that meet specific needs.

Customers’ needs may stem from the way society instills values in their minds. It is believed that consumers from different nations and cultures will view multinational brands differently, i.e., they will remember distinct aspects associated with those brands. This is due to the fact that local society and culture form the images and symbolic meanings associated with brands, and as a result, the social and economic values associated with a given brand can differ significantly depending on popular perceptions of the brand. Collectivist societies, for instance, have an International Journal of Business and Management Vol. at www.ccsenet.org/ijbm. 7, No. 21 (2012) 84 propensity to value foreign brands higher than domestic goods or brands. Their interests include expensive and fashionable items such as Chinese silk, Japanese electronics, German automobiles, English tea, French perfume, and Chinese silk. So, in order to achieve high social status, people buy pricey goods. In certain collectivist nations, having an imported car conveys prestige and is a mark of good standing. Collectivists may buy cars for the benefit of society as a whole as well as for themselves. In a pioneering study, Nagashima (1970) observed that affluent Japanese citizens tended to purchase German automobiles because they were linked to high social standing and recognition.

For individualist consumers, however, popular and foreign brands are utilized to communicate various meanings. Because the characteristics linked to brands are well-known, brands typically assist individualist customers in cutting down on the amount of time spent making decisions. Additionally, this lowers the risk associated with individualist consumers’ purchase decisions. Brands such as Holden and Ford, for instance, communicate meanings related to performance, while brands like Volvo transmit meanings related to safety. In cultures that prioritize individualism, brands may be selected as a means of minimizing or reducing risk. This is because some brands are linked to specific characteristics, which in turn reduces risk.

- H2: There is a noteworthy correlation between brand ratings and cultural background. Collectivist shoppers believe that European brands—like BMW, Mercedes, and Volvo—are better than Holden, Toyota, and Ford.

Purchase

The buying stage represents the last stage of the decision-making process when it comes to purchasing cars. Following the completion of the information search and meeting the evaluation and selection requirements, buyers typically pay money to get the right to purchase the car. While

culture plays a significant role in the pre-purchase phases, its impact on the actual transaction is negligible.

Consumers may select specific brands or products, though, for symbolic reasons as well as because they can be used to convey the cultural backgrounds and values, personalities, social status, and affiliations of the buyer in addition to the expected functional or performance benefits. The consumer wants that must be satisfied through the use of specific brands or products, however, change greatly depending on the socioeconomic and cultural characteristics of the consumer markets. Very complicated social variables typically have an impact on consumers' preferences for specific brands and products. For instance, collectivist customers tend to place more emphasis on perceived prestige while making purchases because they are prestige concerned. Even if something appears to be more prestigious than other possibilities, they are very likely to select it.

- H3: Compared to individualist consumers, collective buyers purchase more expensive cars.

Research Methodology

Research Design and Method

Quantitative approaches, such as self-administered questionnaires, are employed in this study. Individualists (born in Australia) and collectivists (born in Asia) who have bought a car in the previous 12 months make up the sample frame. This sampling frame was chosen because it was thought that 12 months would be a reasonable amount of time for participants to recall their purchase behaviour, and they needed to be able to respond to questions regarding their consumer behaviour in relation to buying an automobile. Purposive sampling was the technique used for the sample; the researcher identified the characteristics of the population of interest (individualist and collectivist consumers who had bought a car within the previous 12 months) and then went about finding people who fit the requirements. The researcher then identified 100 participants who fit the inclusion requirements and were willing to participate from each cultural category (individualism and collectivism, for example), and included them in the study. Participants were gathered through Melbourne's twelve dealerships. Participants were given reply pay envelopes to return their completed questionnaires in an effort to increase response rates. 211 men (46.5%) and women (53.5%) from individualist (born in Australia) or collectivist (born in Asia) backgrounds who had bought a car in the previous 12 months made up the participants. Of the 422 surveys distributed for this study, 222 were returned, and 11 of them were deemed incomplete and disposed of. Because more than 10% of the findings had missing values, these ten incomplete surveys were thrown out. Only surveys that were accurately and totally completed (49% of the total distribution) were used for this study in order to provide thorough estimations and analysis.

Measurement

The study measures were chosen to investigate if different stages of the consumer decision-making process differ across cultures. The survey was structured into four sections:

Demographic Questions

Participants were asked to answer questions regarding their age, citizenship, place of birth (for Asian-born participants only), gender, education, first language spoken, household income, length of stay in Australia (for Asian-born participants only), marital status, number of children under the age of 18, and place of birth of their parents.

Cultural Values Scale (CVS)

An established scale measuring individualist and collectivist cultural values, the Cultural Values Scale (CVS; Singelis et al., 1995) consists of 32 statements. Participants used a 7-point rating system, with 1 representing “strongly disagree” and 7 representing “strongly agree,” to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with each statement. “My happiness depends very much on the happiness of those around me” is an example of a sample item. The CVS is divided into two subscales, Individualism and Collectivism, each with sixteen items. The purpose of the cultural values scale is to measure and confirm the cultural values of respondents from two distinct cultural backgrounds, i.e., to determine whether the respondents belong to a specific group (i.e., Australians who value individualism and Asians who value collectivism).

Questions about Driving History

Participants were asked this series of questions to compare the car-buying behaviours of individualist and collectivist customers by learning the price, manufacture, and brand of the vehicle they had purchased. In order to include respondents in this study, participants were also asked how long ago they bought their car, with the requirement being that the transaction must have been made no more than a year ago. The structure for the responses was a combination of “tick the most appropriate alternative” and “fill in the blank.”

External Influences on Consumer Decision-Making

Information regarding (possible) external influences on consumer decision-making for car purchases was provided by the participants. These variables included the number of dealers consulted, the time spent with dealers, the number of cars tested, the amount of time spent researching, the perceived significance of friends and family, and the number of friends and family consulted. The format for answering these questions was to “check the option that is most appropriate.” Furthermore, the participants assessed the comparative significance of various information sources (such as dealers, the internet, periodicals, TV advertisements, and word-of-mouth) using a seven-point rating system, where 1 denoted “extremely unimportant” and 7 represented “very important”.

Results

Differences in Individualist and Collectivist Values

Table 1 Individualism and Collectivism by Cultural Group

Cultural background	Australian-born		Asian-born	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Individualism	4.40	.76	4.39	.66
Collectivism	4.18	.67	4.93	.83

Table 1 displays the means and standard deviations for each cultural group’s individualism and collectivism.

An independent samples t-test was used, with the dependent variables being individualism and collectivism and the independent variable being country of birth (Asia vs. Australia). The findings showed that Asians had a considerably greater collectivism score than Australians, $t(192.042) = -7.045, p < .001$ (mean difference = .766). For individualism, however, there was no difference ($t(200) = .14, p = .89$). Australian-born Asian-born Cultural Background Mean SD Mean SD SD Individualism 4.40 Cultivism 4.18 Cultivism 4.18 Cultivism 4.67 Cultivism 4.93 86 Chi-square tests were used with country of birth as the independent variable and age, gender, education, marital

status, income, and number of years driving as the dependent variables to test for differences in the two groups' demographic characteristics (due to sampling). The Bonferroni adjustment was used to correct for Type 1 error. The following demographic characteristics showed differences between Australian-born and Asian-born consumers: age $\chi(5) = 25.81$, $p < .001$, education $\chi(5) = 36.61$, $p < .001$, and sex $\chi(6) = 26.37$, $p < .001$. The consumer decision-making styles and the demographic characteristics that showed a significant difference between the groups were then correlated and adjusted for as covariates in the hypothesis testing studies.

Hypothesis Testing Analyses

Hypothesis 1

H1a: The findings indicated a significant difference in the number of family/friends involved in decision-making between the individualist and collectivist consumer groups, $t(199) = -3.77$, $p < .001$ (mean difference = 0.54), with the individualist (born in Australia) and collectivist (born in Asia) participants scoring lower. As anticipated, when making decisions, collectivist participants consulted a greater number of friends and family members than individualist customers. H 1a was therefore approved.

H1b: There were no discernible variations between the two groups when comparing the "importance of dealers"; $t(199) = .759$, $p > .05$. H 1b was therefore not supported.

H1c: The results indicated that there were substantial differences between the two consumer groups for an important source of information ($t(199) = 3.61$, $p < .001$, mean difference = 0.59), with scores higher for individualists than for collectivists. As expected, those who identify as individualists mostly rely on the internet for information. H 1c was therefore approved.

Hypothesis 2

Based on a comparison of the two groups' perceived brand ratings, collectivist participants gave Mercedes $t(200) = 2.69$, $p < .005$ (mean difference = .363) and BMW $t(197.38) = 2.32$, $p < .005$ (mean difference = .316) higher brand quality ratings than did individualist participants.

Ford $t(200) = 2.32$, $p < .005$ (mean difference = .313) was scored higher by individualist participants than by collectivist ones. H 2 was therefore approved.

The following brand quality ratings did not differ significantly between the groups, though: Holden $t(180.74) = 1.16$, $p > .05$. Toyota $t(200) = 1.10$, $p > .05$. Volvo $t(200) = .40$, $p > .05$.

Hypothesis 3

There was no statistically significant difference in the groups' purchasing of pricey cars ($t(199) = -.979$, $p > .05$). H 3 was therefore not supported.

Discussion and Management Implications

The study looks into how cultural background, such as individualism and collectivism, influences consumers' decision-making process for purchases with a high level of involvement in particular areas. The study's conclusions demonstrated that the hypotheses H 1a, H 1c, and H 2 were validated.

The findings showed that friends and family are the primary information sources for Asian-born consumers. Newspapers, periodicals, billboards, and television commercials are among additional information sources used by Asian-born consumers. Hence, in order to avoid confusing Asian-born consumers, marketers must be aware of this circumstance and offer comparable, or even identical, types of information/messages through the utilization of the aforementioned sources. Less information about the mechanical and cutting-edge characteristics of the cars might be included in the messages or material. Not because Asian-born consumers are unaware of these qualities, but rather because they are more likely to favor a first impression that highlights the car's grandeur.

The study also showed that consumers who are Asian-born are brand conscious and think European brands—like Mercedes and BMW—are better. Asian-born customers can be seeking other people’s social acceptance, particularly when purchasing very visible or involved purchases like cars. Because of this, automakers must keep this in mind when attempting to market their vehicles to Asian-born consumers by emphasizing the value of status and distinction. Marketing materials and messaging directed at Asian-born consumers may place a strong emphasis on the high status and social acceptance that come with owning a car. Car manufacturers need www.ccsenet.org/ijbm International Journal of Business and Management Vol. 7, No. 21 (2012) 87 to consider dealers as a valuable information source. Before an Asian-born customer makes a final decision to buy, dealers should take the time to thoroughly explain the features and benefits of the product to them and any friends or family members they may plan to bring. This can be achieved by training the dealer or, if that is not feasible, by hiring someone from the same cultural background. If used in the development of tactics for consumers who are Asian-born, this could prove to be a successful method.

The study revealed that consumers who are Australian-born primarily rely on the internet for information. As a result, while interacting with consumers who were born in Australia, marketers may use the internet as a marketing or communication tool to disseminate information about cars and highlight the cutting edge, unique features of their offerings. Lastly, since the disparities between the two groups’ individualism and collectivism cannot account for these discrepancies, other sources of systematic variation between the two groups may be able to explain the differences.

The current findings could be explained, for instance, by differences in language, religion, purchasing power, or attitudes and beliefs. Asian-born consumers, according to research, prefer a literal, nonverbal communication. This may account for why their evaluation and selection criteria differ from those of Australian-born consumers, and it is critical for auto marketers to identify this criterion. These are still areas for more investigation, though.

Limitations

This study was unable to draw the conclusion that the distinctions between collectivist and individualist consumers are specific to high participation purchases. Subsequent studies could examine how consumers behave when making purchases in a variety of contexts, such as low- and high-involvement purchases. Furthermore, a method incorporating purchases with high and low engagement would improve our theoretical and practical comprehension of how people shop across cultural boundaries. Participants in this study were asked to score and describe the behavioural approach that consumers took when making retrospective car purchases. All of the respondents had bought an automobile in the previous 12 months. Twelve months, meanwhile, is a long time to wait for respondents to forget every specific aspect of their purchasing choices.

In order to produce more reliable results, future research should monitor consumers in real time as they make actual purchases. In this study, there were differences in collectivism between respondents who were born in Australia and those who were born in Asia, with Asian respondents scoring higher on collectivism. However, there were no differences in individualism between the two groups of respondents. Although there were some disparities between respondents who were born in Asia and Australia in terms of their consumer behaviour, the cultural value dimensions of individualism and collectivism were unable to explain these discrepancies.

Other cultural factors, such as power distance, masculine-feminine, and long-term versus short-term orientations, may be studied in the future to determine how they affect consumers’ decision-making processes while buying cars. The study did not draw attention to potential cultural variations in post-purchase behavioural patterns. Considering that buying a vehicle is a highly

involved circumstance, consumer behaviour after the purchase plays a crucial role in helping them select the brands they prefer. Future studies ought to take this stage into account in order to determine the rational choice that customers from these two disparate cultural groups made.

Conclusions

By acknowledging the cultural distinctions that have previously been highlighted, marketing communication messages may have an impact on consumers' buying decisions. Given that Asian-born customers typically prioritize group objectives over personal interests or aims, it could be more beneficial for marketers to speak with them on a group level as opposed to an individual one. For example, marketing messages that emphasize group-consensus appeals, family relationships, and family security should be created more in terms of family and social/cultural values. Particularly well-liked in these societies are appeals like "working together" and "it's so good you want to share it with others." Conversely, communications may be tailored more to the functional or performance needs of Australian-born consumers.

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