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Cross-Cultural Consumer Values, Needs, and Purchase Behavior

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- Meeting changing customer needs by providing the right products/services has been an ongoing marketing challenge for retailing in competitive global markets.
- Consumers choose particular products/brands because these provide the *functional* or *performance benefits* expected, but also because products can be used to *express consumers' personality, social status or affiliation (symbolic purposes)* or to *fulfill their internal psychological needs (emotional purposes)*.

- Consumer needs, to be fulfilled through consumption of particular products or brands vary considerably with the socio-economic and cultural differences among consumer markets.
- Consumers' product choice and preference for a particular product/brand are generally affected by very complex social influences.
- Thus, consumers' values should affect needs to be fulfilled through purchase and consumption decisions, and therefore consumption behavior.

- Personal values have been shown to be the underlying determinant of consumer attitudes and consumption behavior (Scott & Lamont, 1977; Homer & Kahle, 1988).
- Social affiliation values influenced shopping mall attitude (Shim & Eastlick, 1998); Self-directed, internal values positively affect consumers' nutrition attitude.
- Consumer values may also affect prioritization of needs (Yau, 1994).
- Values have been widely viewed as the outcomes of culture and ethnicity of a society having multi-dimensions.

- Thus, certain types of values may be regarded as more important to consumers in one country market than to those in another country market.
- However, little research has examined how consumer values in different country markets influence the shaping of consumer needs to be met via particular products/brands and how these consumer needs affect subsequent purchase behaviors.

Purpose

To examine consumer values, the types of needs to be met through apparel products/brands in Two Asian markets, China and South Korea.

To examine the relationship between values and the type of needs met through apparel/brands and apparel purchase behaviors among consumers in these two markets.

Overview

In this study we:

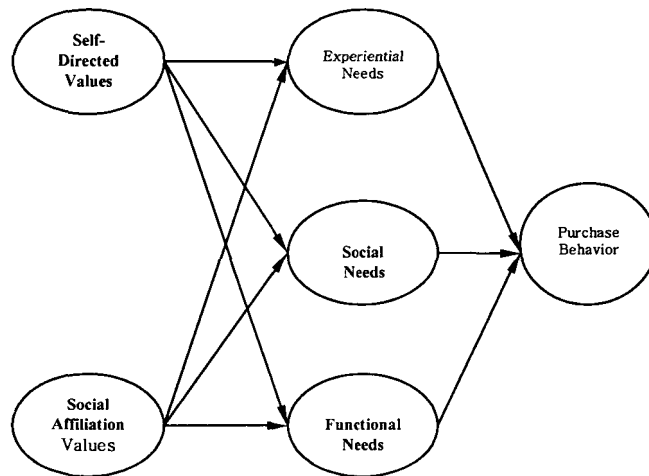
- Present a conceptual framework addressing the relationship between consumer values, consumer needs, and purchase behaviors in a country's markets.
- Identify consumer values, types of needs to be met through apparel, and apparel purchase behavior in two countries.
- Categorize consumer values into self-directed and social affiliation values; and consumer needs into functional, social, and experiential needs.

Overview

In this study we also:

- Examine the relationships of consumer values–consumer needs–purchase behavior of these markets.
- Discuss findings in terms of characterization of each country's consumer markets and their implications for developing needs-based brand image strategies.

Figure 1. Conceptual model for the relationship between social values, types of needs and purchase behavior



Social Values

- One of the most influential factors that affect the type of needs consumers try to satisfy through purchase and consumption.
- A powerful force in shaping consumer product choice and therefore in prioritizing needs (Tse et al, 1989).
- Consumers' needs and desires are shaped by their values of the society they belong to.

List of Values (LOV) – Kahle (1983)

- LOV includes: (a) sense of belonging, (b) warm relationships with others, (c) self-fulfillment, (d) being well-respected, (e) fun/enjoyment, (f) security, (g) self-respect, (h) a sense of accomplishment, and (i) excitement
- Widely used to study the influence of social values on consumption behavior
- Effective way to measure values resulting from lifestyle, consumption activities, and product preferences
- distinguishes self-directed and social-affiliation values

Types of Consumer Needs

Consumer products are generally marketed to appeal to three basic types of consumers' needs (Park, Jaworski, and MacInnis, 1986).

- (1) *Functional needs* (e.g. quality seeker/ concerned pragmatics)
- (2) *Social needs* (social directed)
- (3) *Experiential needs* (fashion advocates)

- Regional socio-economic and cultural environments affect the types of needs to be satisfied through apparel products.
- Markets with low individualism would value product to fulfill social or functional needs to reinforce group affiliation or reduce the risk of not being accepted.
- Consumers in markets with high individualism and disposable income would value products that appeal to their experiential needs (Roth, 1995).
- Thus, anticipated that values important in each country market will be related to the consumer needs to be met through apparel products.

Two Asian Consumer Markets: China & South Korea

South Korea

- South Korea's per capita GDP much greater than China's (the 12th largest in per capita GDP, 1997).
- Korea's per capita GDP of US\$8,871; China's of US\$798 of 1999.
- Earlier liberation policies for traveling abroad and opening domestic markets for imports -- Koreans' opportunity to travel abroad and imports of luxury foreign goods led Koreans to experience a great exposure and consumption of foreign consumer products.

China

- China has undergone considerable social and economic change in recent years.
- A strong consumer market is developing in China: More Chinese consumers are in a position to purchase a wide variety of non-staple consumer goods (e.g., fashion apparel).
- Use high profile brand names to provide security because of their limited experience with a modern free market system (Eckhardt & Huston, 1998).
- Chinese consumers use brands as an indicator of product function (Pan & Schmitt, 1995).

- In short, Korean consumer markets represent a more wealthy consumer base market with higher disposable income than the Chinese consumer markets.
- Thus, culture and socio-economic conditions in China and Korea are expected to shape the types of needs to be met through apparel products.

Hypotheses

H1 : Consumers' (a) self-directed values and (b) social affiliation values significantly influence the type of needs to be met through apparel in Chinese and Korean markets.

H2 : (a) Experiential needs, (b) Social needs, and (c) Functional needs positively influence apparel purchase behavior: (1) the amount of purchase; (2) brand loyal behavior, among consumers in China and Korea.

Data Collection

- Shopping center intercept – surveys using questionnaires

399 female shoppers in major shopping areas in Shanghai, China

418 female shoppers in Seoul, Korea

Measures

- Kahle's nine value items of LOV
- Needs to be satisfied from apparel products: Likert-type 8 items adopted from previous studies on fashion/apparel purchase behaviors.
- Purchase behaviors:
 - (a) Purchase Amount
 - (b) Brand Loyal Behavior

(a) *Purchase amount* was operationally defined as the number of apparel items (women's blazer type jackets) purchased during a given time period times(x) the average amount spent for each item.

(b) *Brand loyal behavior* was measured by two scale items (i.e., when I buy clothing, I usually buy the same brand I bought last time; I usually buy the same brands of clothing).

■ **Analysis:**

- Factor analysis
- Duncan test
- Multiple regression analysis
- Simple regression analysis

Table I. Profile of Consumer Samples in China and Korea

	CHINA	KOREA
Age		
18 - 24	50%	33%
25 - 34	44%	35%
35 and over	6%	22%
Marital Status		
Unmarried	71%	53%
Married	29%	47%
Education		
Middle School	2%	3%
High School	37%	31%
College and Higher	61%	66%
Total Sample	399	418

Table II. Consumers' Values Scales and Reliability

SCALE ITEMS	Loading
Self-Directed Values	
Self-Respect	0.82
Being well respected	0.73
Security	0.68
Fun and Enjoyment in life	0.63
Eigen Value	2.53
Cronbach Alpha	0.79
Percent of Variance	28.06%
Social Affiliation Values	
Sense of belonging	0.86
Warm relationship with others	0.76
Eigen Value	1.50
Correlation Coefficient	0.40
Percent of Variance	16.64%

Table III. Consumer Needs Scales and Reliabilities

SCALE ITEMS	China Loading	Korea Loading
Experiential Needs (Fashion Leadership)		
I am aware of fashion trends and want to be one of the first to try them	.79	.78
I am the first to try a new fashion	.74	.69
It is important for me to be a fashion leader	.75	.67
I always buy at least one outfit of the latest fashion	.67	.61
Eigen Value	3.46	3.60
Cronbach alpha	.631	.808
Percent of Variance	13.85%	11.24%
Social Needs (Status/Prestige)		
Wearing well known brand clothing provides prestige	.72	.71
Wearing designer clothes gives one social status	.62	.64
Eigen Values	2.44	2.60
Corr. Coefficient	.423	.517
Percent of Variance	9.75%	8.11%
Functional Needs (Function/Comfort)		
I wear clothes that are primarily functional	.78	.65
I believe comfort in clothing is more important than fashion	.70	.72
Eigen Value	1.09	1.64
Corr. Coefficient	.305	.423
Percent of Variance	4.37%	5.12%

Results & Discussion

- Consumer Values
- Consumer Needs
- Impact of Social Values on Consumer Needs
- Impact of Consumer Needs on Purchase Behaviors

Table IV. Consumers' Values in China and Korea

CONSUMER VALUE	CHINA (mean)	KOREA (mean)
Self-respect	6.2	5.3
Being well respected	5.7	4.7
Warm relationship with others	5.4	4.9
Sense of belonging	4.3	4.3
A sense of accomplishment	5.4	5.4
Security	5.5	5.2
Self-fulfillment	5.1	5.2
Fun & enjoyment of life	5.9	5.5
Excitement	3.2	5.0

Table V. Consumer's Self-Directed and Social Affiliation Values

	CHINA ^a	KOREA ^a
Self-Directed Values	5.7 ^a	5.2 ^a
Social Affiliation Values	4.8 ^b	4.6 ^b

Note: ^a means on a 7 point Likert scale (1: not important at all, 7: greatly important). Means with different superscripts within the column differ significantly at the level of significance, $p < .05$.

Table VI. Consumer's Three Types of Needs in China and Korea

	CHINA*	KOREA*
Experiential Needs	3.4 ^c	3.7 ^b
Social Needs	4.4 ^b	3.4 ^c
Functional Needs	5.6 ^a	5.1 ^a

Note: * mean on a 7 point Likert scale (1:strongly disagree, 7:strongly agree).
Means with different superscripts within the column differ significantly at the level of significance, $p < .05$

Table VII. Relationships of Value, Needs and Purchase Behavior among Chinese and Korean Consumers

A. Relationships of Consumer Values and Needs Types

Dependent Variable	CHINA		KOREA	
	Self-Directed Value	Social Affiliation Value	Self-Directed Value	Social Affiliation Value
Experiential Needs	.128*	.071	.152**	-.012
Social Needs	.057	.023	.086	-.004
Functional Needs	.040	.030	.197***	-.025

B. Relationships of Types of Needs and Purchase Behavior

	CHINA			KOREA		
	Experiential Needs	Social Needs	Functional Needs	Experiential Needs	Social Needs	Functional Needs
Purchase Amount	.168**	.059	-.166**	.257***	.113*	-.061
Brand Loyal Behavior	.278**	.184**	.094*	.147**	.216***	.225***

C. Relationships of Purchase Amount and Brand Loyal Behavior

Purchase Amount	CHINA		KOREA	
	Brand Loyal Behavior	Brand Loyal Behavior	Brand Loyal Behavior	Brand Loyal Behavior
	.223***		.225***	

* .05 ** .01 *** .001

Summary & Implications

- Both countries' samples rated the self-directed values more important.
- Among female consumers in China, clothing is regarded as a symbolic medium to demonstrate one's social status/image, while in Korea, clothing is more an important medium to fulfill one's desire for change, newness or emotional expression.
- Korean female consumers seem more demanding (product quality & emotional satisfaction).
- Experiential needs were a strong, more universally common motivator for apparel purchase.

- Consumers bought the same apparel brands because products fulfilled expectations of all three type of needs.
- The Chinese female consumers who were brand loyal were more likely to satisfy their experiential needs with fashion statements or their social needs with prestige/social status statements.
- Korean female consumers' apparel brand loyal behavior is because their loyal brands fulfilled more of their social needs and expectations of performance quality (functional needs) than their experiential needs.
- Brand loyal consumers tended to spend more on apparel products.

Implications

- In both Asian markets, self-directed values were fulfilled by purchase of apparel – i.e., different products/services fulfill different values.
- This empirical study supported the hierarchical relationships of value-needs-purchase behavior.
- Thus, consumer values and needs may be used to characterize international consumer markets to develop successful needs-based marketing strategies.

Some examples

For Korean markets, general marketing strategies should emphasize experiential and social images; to build apparel brand loyalty, emphasize more on social status and performance quality than experiential images.

For Chinese markets, the experiential images should be appealing to their up-markets for clothing purchase; For brand loyalty, emphasize additionally social status/prestige images.

Limitations

- Direct comparisons between the two market samples were avoided.
- Continuous updating of studies needed to develop effective needs-based marketing strategies because consumers' needs regarding particular products may change over time.