

CHAPTER 25

Culture and Consumer Behavior

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Consumer behavior and marketing are global phenomena, and understanding how consumers around the world respond to marketing efforts is a key managerial priority. Accordingly, consumer researchers have produced a burgeoning literature that builds on insights from cross-cultural psychology. Many of the same factors studied in social psychology have been shown to influence consumer judgments and decisions. These shared factors include individualistic and collectivistic, as well as horizontal and vertical cultural orientations, independent and interdependent self-construals, analytic and holistic thinking styles, and power distance. We review these findings and highlight synergies between social and consumer psychology. We also highlight novel variables addressed by cross-cultural consumer research, including brand symbolism, consumer–brand relationships, and price–quality judgments. We conclude with a call for future work that broadens our theorizing and deepens our understanding of how an emphasis on norms and on others' expectations shapes consumer behavior in various cultural contexts.

Should a brand manager invest heavily in tailoring his or her global brand's marketing efforts to the individual countries in which the brand is marketed? If so, how should this tailoring be accomplished? These are questions that confound many multinational firms as they seek to develop and promote successful brands in varied markets. The decisions are high stakes, with billions of dollars on the line. Fortunately, many of the research insights emerging from cross-cultural psychology can be applied directly to making these decisions effectively.

In this chapter, we review some of the burgeoning literature on cross-cultural consumer behavior. A growing body of research suggests that culture influences consumer

perceptions, preferences, and goals in a variety of ways (see Riemer, Shavitt, Koo, & Markus, 2014, for a review). For instance, cultural factors can influence consumer processing strategies (Briley, Wyer, & Li, 2014), shaping consumers' thinking styles (Lalwani & Shavitt, 2013; Monga & John, 2007) and the role of feelings and metacognitive experiences in consumer decision making (Hong & Chang, 2015). Most of the cultural distinctions and categories examined by consumer researchers are familiar to social psychologists, having been based on foundational psychological literature (e.g., Hofstede, 1984, 2001; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1995). However, new distinctions also show promise for predicting important

consumer judgments in the commercial and prosocial spheres (e.g., Torelli & Shavitt, 2010; Winterich & Zhang, 2014). We begin our review with the role of well-established cultural distinctions such as individualism–collectivism, before turning to newer classifications related to the horizontal–vertical distinction and power distance.

INDIVIDUALISM–COLLECTIVISM AND INDEPENDENT–INTERDEPENDENT SELF-CONSTRUALS

The cross-cultural consumer literature is dominated by a focus on independent and interdependent self-construals, or individualistic and collectivistic backgrounds. Here, we consider findings inspired by these broad classifications that are often used to characterize Western versus non-Western consumer contexts.

Cultural distinctions are clearly reflected in the commercial or informational environments that surround consumers. For instance, Miracle (1987) described the distinct “goals” of advertisements in the United States and Japan, and his insights offer implications for understanding persuasion processes. In American ads, he argued, advertisements try to teach consumers about the brand and its benefits, on the assumption that consumer learning precedes persuasion and purchasing. The focus is therefore on direct communication with the audience. In contrast, Japanese ads try to make friends with consumers, showing them that the company understands them and can be trusted to take care of their needs. The communication is indirect, focusing on the right mood, tone, and aesthetics, as opposed to persuasive arguments.

Because advertisements are cultural artifacts that shed light on cultural processes, numerous studies have systematically analyzed their content. Primarily focusing on cultural differences in individualism–collectivism, these studies documented culturally linked patterns in the prevalence of various types of appeals. In general, they suggested that the prevalence of marketing communications matches the cultural value profile of the societies in which they appear (e.g., Han & Shavitt, 1994; Kim & Markus, 1999); that is, appeals to uniqueness, personal

benefits, and hedonism are more prevalent in individualistic societies, whereas appeals to harmony, group benefits, and conformity are more prevalent in collectivistic societies.

For example, an early content analysis (Han & Shavitt, 1994) showed that magazine advertisements in South Korea, a collectivistic society, were generally more focused on interdependence, family well-being, harmony, and ingroup goals than were magazine advertisement in the United States, an individualistic society. However, U.S. ads focused more on independence, individuality, self-improvement, achievement, and personal goals than did ads in South Korea. In line with this, another content analysis (Kim & Markus, 1999) showed that South Korean ads were more likely than U.S. ads to use conformity themes and less likely to use uniqueness themes. Website content in individualistic and collectivistic societies also appears to vary along similar lines (see Shavitt, Lee, & Torelli, 2009, for a review).

Cultural differences in the persuasiveness of these types of appeals follow a similar pattern. In a cross-national experiment (Han & Shavitt, 1994), appeals with individualistic themes (“Solo [detergent] cleans with a softness that you will love”) were more persuasive in the United States than in South Korea, and appeals with collectivistic themes (“Solo cleans with a softness that your family will love”) were more persuasive in South Korea than in the United States. A similar pattern was observed with individualistic and collectivistic appeals in an experiment in the United States and China (Zhang & Gelb, 1996). Both sets of studies showed that the cultural differences were larger for products that were socially shared or visible to others, presumably because choices for such products are more subject to a culture’s normative constraints.

Another study that examined the persuasiveness of appeals as a function of individual differences in self-construal (C. Wang & Mowen, 1997) found that U.S. participants’ responses to individualistic versus collectivistic appeals for a credit card were predicted by whether they thought of themselves as independent and separate from others or interconnected with others. In short, both national culture and cultural self-construal predict the persuasiveness of individualistic and collectivistic appeals.

Evidence for cultural “matching” in the prevalence and persuasiveness of marketing appeals has been accompanied by research suggesting that culture moderates the psychological processes underlying persuasion. For instance, studies indicate that cultural factors influence not only how heavily social factors are weighted in attitude formation but also the processes by which they exert their impact (J. Aaker & Maheswaran, 1997). In research conducted in individualistic contexts, social factors such as endorsers or social consensus cues are more likely to be processed as peripheral cues, influencing persuasion only when elaboration likelihood is low (e.g., Maheswaran & Chaiken, 1991; Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983). However, for people in collectivistic contexts, social factors are more likely to be processed as central information than as peripheral cues. Thus, they impact attitude formation under high-motivation conditions through elaborated processing. For instance, social consensus information (e.g., “80% of consumers surveyed prefer this brand”) influences Hong Kong consumers’ brand evaluations, regardless of their level of motivation (J. Aaker & Maheswaran, 1997), in contrast to American consumers, who consider social consensus cues primarily when they are not sufficiently motivated to engage in elaborated processing (Maheswaran & Chaiken, 1991). These findings suggest that for collectivistic compared to individualistic consumers, there may be less of a distinction between central arguments and peripheral cues, such as a brand’s popularity or the attractiveness of its endorsers, and the influence of each type of information may follow different patterns.

Another implication of cultural differences for information processing addresses processes of incongruity resolution. Peng and Nisbett (1999) suggest that East Asians are more likely than Westerners to accept duality and contradiction. In line with this, they find that European Americans tend to differentiate between arguments, choosing which one is true, whereas the Chinese tend to seek a “middle way” to reconcile opposing arguments. Similar patterns have been observed in consumer research. When exposed to incongruent information in decision making (e.g., a relatively unlikable

endorser presented together with positive attributes of a product), consumers in individualistic contexts focus on and rely primarily on the more diagnostic information (positive product attributes) (J. Aaker & Sengupta, 2000; Maheswaran & Chaiken, 1991). For example, when presented with negative endorser information and positive product attributes, American consumers were likely to elaborate on more diagnostic product evaluations, and neglect less diagnostic endorser information, in order to resolve the incongruity. In contrast, in collectivistic contexts, consumers may not perceive things to be incongruous just because they differ in valence. Instead, they exhibit an integrative approach when faced with evaluatively inconsistent data, combining various informational pieces together to evaluate products (J. Aaker & Sengupta, 2000). Thus, Chinese consumers in Hong Kong did not increase their elaboration on product attributes, presumably because they did not feel the need to resolve incongruity.

Culture and Consumer Peer-to-Peer Interactivity

Cultural differences may also be observed in the quantity and nature of interactions among agents in the marketplace. Consider this question: Why did eBay fail in the Chinese market? Soon after eBay entered the Chinese market in 2004, Taobao arose on the horizon as its competitor. According to iResearch, a Beijing-based research firm, consumers indicated higher satisfaction with Taobao (77%) than with eBay (62%). The difference in satisfaction can be attributed to a unique feature of Taobao’s that eBay overlooked: Taobao facilitated interactions between buyers and sellers via instant messaging, reflecting the desires of Chinese consumers for interpersonal connections as a way to build trust (Lafevre, 2013). Despite eBay’s formidable size and strengths, in the end, it only managed to gain a 29% market share and withdrew from the Chinese market in 2006.

As the eBay case illustrates, cultural differences exist in the nature of peer-to-peer interactivity desired by consumers. For example, systematic examination of the interactivity that is possible on U.S., U.K., Japa-

nese, and South Korean corporate websites revealed that these interactions tend to be culturally patterned (Cho & Cheon, 2005). Western (vs. Eastern) marketers tend to develop websites that facilitate consumer–marketer interactivity (i.e., interactions between consumers and firms). For example, Western (vs. Eastern) websites have more functions that allow new product proposals and online discussion with sales representatives. On the other hand, although the Eastern websites also have such features, Eastern (vs. Western) marketers are more likely to develop websites that stress consumer–consumer interactivity (i.e., interactions between consumers). For example, Eastern (vs. Western) websites have more features that allow online communities and user groups to interact (Cho & Cheon, 2005).

These differences suggest that firms should also consider cultural differences in word of mouth (WOM), as this is another form of peer-to-peer interactivity. WOM refers to consumer–consumer communication about consumption (Carl, 2006; Godes et al., 2005; Moore, 2012). WOM has significant marketing implications, because it can drive new customer acquisitions (Schmitt, Skiera, & Van den Bulte, 2011) and sales (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006; Godes & Mayzlin, 2009). Thus, stimulating and managing WOM is a major priority for marketers. Cultural differences in WOM patterns align with cultural values such as conformity in collectivistic cultures (e.g., South Korea) and self-expression in individualistic cultures (e.g., the U.S.) (Kim & Markus, 1999; Kim & Sherman, 2007). For instance, conformity values can lead people in collectivistic (vs. individualistic) cultures to rely more on peer endorsements. In the context of a textbook shopping website, listing peer customer endorsements in the form of short quotes from students at the same university had a greater influence on students in Hong Kong than on students in Australia (Sia et al., 2009).

These cultural differences may be observed at both firm and individual consumer levels. For instance, in a study of industrial buyer behavior, the number of WOM referral sources (i.e., personal information sources the buyer consults beyond the seller, such as colleagues or members of one’s

company’s network) utilized by firms when they searched for service providers varied by cultural context (Money, Gilly, & Graham, 1998). Japanese firms operating in Japan and in the United States used 78% more referral sources than did U.S. firms when considering their operations in both countries. In the United States, Japanese (vs. U.S.) firms used 340% more referrals (Money et al., 1998). In other words, Japanese (vs. U.S.) firms utilized their personal networks and sources more, regardless of their situated locations. For instance, one manager of a Japanese company commented “Our attorney was referred to us by the municipal agency that regulates our business (public works construction company)” (Money et al., 1998, p. 84). Therefore, in order to do business with Japanese firms, U.S. managers should take this unique cultural characteristic into account and try to build relationships with the intermediaries of Japanese firms (e.g., banks).

Additional evidence suggests that consumers not only use WOM but also generate WOM in a manner that reflects their cultural contexts (Fong & Burton, 2008; Lai, He, Chou, & Zhou, 2013). User-generated content from 5,993 discussion postings to U.S.- and China-based discussion boards revealed that posts on the China-based (vs. U.S.-based) discussion boards were more likely to seek information and advice from others about their opinions, and were less likely to provide information to others (Fong & Burton, 2008). In line with this finding, online customer reviews in China (on *amazon.cn*) and the United States (on *amazon.com*) revealed that American versus Chinese reviews were more self-expressive in the sense that they provided their personal opinions on products and contained more recommendations to others (Lai et al., 2013).

Taken together, these findings suggest that cultural values, such as conformity in collectivistic cultures and self-expression in individualistic cultures, can shape how consumers or buyers utilize corporate websites, and how they respond to and engage in WOM with others when making purchase decisions. Overlooking these cultural characteristics may result in failure in global markets, as illustrated by the eBay case in China.

THE HORIZONTAL–VERTICAL CULTURAL DISTINCTION

Current conceptualizations of individualism and collectivism are broad and multidimensional (Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002; Shavitt, Lalwani, Zhang, & Torelli, 2006a; Shavitt, Zhang, Torelli, & Lalwani, 2006b; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). Although the broad-based cultural distinction allows us to understand consumers with different cultural backgrounds, there is increasing attention paid to cultural classifications that address how hierarchy and power are patterned across societies, and their manifestations in attitudes and behaviors. Recent research has productively built on horizontal (valuing equality) and vertical (emphasizing hierarchy) distinctions within individualism and collectivism (Lalwani, Shavitt, & Johnson, 2006; Shavitt, Johnson, & Zhang, 2011; Triandis, 1995; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). The vertical–horizontal distinction refers to the nature and importance of hierarchy in interpersonal relations (Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, & Gelfand, 1995; Triandis, 1995; Triandis, Chen, & Chan, 1998; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). Individuals with a vertical orientation emphasize status enhancement, whereas individuals with a horizontal orientation exhibit a focus on interpersonal support and common goals. Applying the horizontal–vertical distinction to collectivism–individualism results in four distinct and independent cultural orientations: vertical individualism (VI), horizontal individualism (HI), horizontal collectivism (HC), and vertical collectivism (VC). Individuals, as well as societies, differ in the degree to which they emphasize each of these types of cultural values.

In VI societies (e.g., the United States, the United Kingdom, and France), people focus on improving their own status and distinguishing themselves from others via competition, achievement, and power. In HI societies (e.g., Sweden, Denmark, and Norway), people value uniqueness and distinctiveness from groups. In HC societies such as Brazil, people value sociability and interdependence with others within an egalitarian framework (Torelli & Shavitt, 2010). In VC societies (e.g., Korea, Japan), people prioritize goals of their ingroups over their personal goals

(Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). In addition to differences between countries, there are differences in horizontal–vertical orientations within country by ethnic cultural groups. For instance, Hispanic Americans show a greater HC tendency than do European Americans and a lesser VI tendency (Torelli et al., 2015; Torelli & Shavitt, 2010).

The importance of the horizontal–vertical distinction has been discussed and investigated in a number of consumer-behavior contexts (Meyers-Levy, 2006; Shavitt & Cho, 2016; Shavitt et al., 2006a). The horizontal–vertical distinction is predictive of consumers' personal values, self-presentations, responses to brands and persuasive communications, and other consumer outcomes. In this section, we review relevant consumer research topics that have been investigated in relation to horizontal–vertical cultural differences.

Advertisements as Cultural Artifacts

As previously discussed, several studies have established that the content of advertising appeals tends to vary across cultures (Alden, Hoyer, & Lee, 1993; Choi & Miracle, 2004; Han & Shavitt, 1994; Kim & Markus, 1999). However, the majority of previous findings have focused on cultures that differ in individualism and collectivism (or independent vs. interdependent self-construal), such as the United States and South Korea.

Values associated with horizontal and vertical cultural orientations are also reflected in advertisements. Indeed, the articulation of the horizontal and vertical categories extends predictions beyond those based on the broad individualism–collectivism cultural classification. For instance, an analysis of over 1,200 magazine ads in five countries (Denmark, South Korea, Poland, Russia, and the United States) revealed that ads in vertical cultures (e.g., the United States and South Korea) put more emphasis on status, luxury, and prestige than do ads in horizontal cultures (e.g., Denmark) (Shavitt et al., 2011). For example, in vertical cultures, ads may use endorsers identified as Ivy League graduates and label brands as “award-winning.” On the other hand, uniqueness benefits were more prevalent in ads in an HI culture (Denmark) than in countries that

fall into vertical cultural categories. For instance, such ads may highlight how a product can reflect “your personality.” These patterns would not have been predicted by analyses based solely on an individualism–collectivism classification.

Brands and Cultural Orientation

Apple’s famous slogan, “Think Different,” conveys values of openness and self-direction. However, the appeal of this slogan to consumers may vary depending on their cultural orientation (Torelli, Özsomer, Carvalho, Keh, & Maehle, 2012). Like the Apple slogan, brands themselves can be characterized as possessing human-like characteristics, such as values and traits (J. Aaker, Vohs, & Mogilner, 2010; Allen, Gupta, & Monnier, 2008). For instance, when Aaker, Vohs, and Mogilner (2010) subtly manipulated the Internet domain name of an organization (*a dot-org* vs. *dot-com*), they found that people perceive non-profit organizations (e.g., *www.mozilla.org*) to be more associated with warmth-related traits (e.g., warm, kind, generous) than for-profit organizations. On the other hand, people perceive for-profit organizations (e.g., *www.mozilla.com*) to be more associated with competence-related traits (e.g., competent, efficient, effective) than nonprofit organizations (J. Aaker et al., 2010).

Similarly, consumers tend to prefer brands that resonate with their value priorities as a function of their cultural orientations (Torelli et al., 2012). For example, having an HC cultural orientation is positively related to liking a brand that conveys self-transcendence values in its advertisement (e.g., “Supporting humanitarian programs in developing countries because we care about building a better world”), whereas having a VC cultural orientation is positively associated with liking a brand that conveys conservatism values in its advertisement (e.g., “The status quo in luxury watches. A tradition of classic designs and impeccable workmanship for 115 years”). Having a VI cultural orientation predicts liking a brand that conveys self-enhancement (e.g., “An exceptional piece of adornment that conveys your status and signifies your exquisite taste”), whereas an individual’s HI cultural orientation pre-

dicts liking a brand that conveys openness (e.g., “A travel companion to help you live an exciting life full of adventures waiting around every corner”) (Torelli et al., 2012). These findings suggest that even within collectivistic (or individualistic) cultures, people respond favorably to different values in brand advertising as a function of their own horizontal–vertical cultural orientations. If brands want to succeed in global markets, they should consider which brand values most resonate with their target consumers’ horizontal or vertical cultural orientations.

Culturally Patterned Conceptualizations of Power

Conceptualizations of power can differ as a function of horizontal and vertical individualism and collectivism (Torelli & Shavitt, 2010). This cultural patterning of power concepts can be observed both at the individual and cultural group levels. People with a predominantly VI cultural orientation tend to view power in personalized terms; that is, power is seen as a tool to advance their own personal status and prestige. On the other hand, people with a predominantly HC cultural orientation conceptualize power in socialized terms; that is, power is seen as a tool to benefit and help others. This has a number of implications in consumer contexts, where products are routinely marketed as markers of power and status. For instance, a VI cultural orientation predicts the liking of brands that symbolize personalized power values of status and prestige, whereas an HC orientation predicts an affinity for brands that embody socialized power values that emphasize concern for the welfare of others (Torelli & Shavitt, 2010, Study 3). Moreover, these relations emerge across cultural groups. For example, Brazilians, who score relatively high on an HC orientation (compared to European Americans, Canadians, and East Asians), tend to prefer brands that symbolize prosocial values more than do the other cultural groups. Norwegians, who score relatively low in VI orientation, tend to prefer brands that symbolize personalized power values less than do all the other groups. A multilevel analysis further indicated that people’s VI and HC cultural orientations partially mediated cultural

group-level differences in liking for these respective types of brands (Torelli & Shavitt, 2010, Study 3). It should be noted that these four cultural orientations show strong divergent validity at the individual level of analysis (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). In fact, some researchers have found no significant correlations between VI and HC or between VI and HI (Singelis et al., 1995). However, low to moderate positive correlations have been reported between HC and HI ($r = .20, p < .01$) and VC and VI ($r = .14, p < .05$) (Singelis, et al., 1995).

Injunctive norms applied to power holders also vary by cultural orientation, and the application of these norms predicts consumer judgments in a range of business and service settings (Torelli et al., 2015). European Americans (i.e., people high in VI) tend to conceptualize power in personalized terms and endorse the misuse of power (e.g., “Sometimes it’s okay to take credit for one’s staff members’ ideas, because later they’ll do the same thing”) (Torelli & Shavitt, 2010). To mitigate possible misuse of power, therefore, cultures that adopt a personalized view of power tend to cultivate injunctive norms of exercising power with justice and equity (Torelli et al., 2015). In contrast, because Hispanics (i.e., people high in HC) tend to conceptualize power in socialized terms, injunctive norms for exercising power incorporate socioemotional concerns with others’ well-being. Thus, Hispanics often apply injunctive norms of compassion when judging power holders.

For instance, European Americans evaluate a negotiator more favorably when the negotiator exercises power in accordance with cultural norms of justice (e.g., pay contractors evenly), whereas Hispanics evaluate the negotiator more favorably when the negotiator exercises power in accordance with cultural norms of compassion (e.g., pay a contractor who is dealing with a stressful familial issue more than the one without such an issue). These differences also have implications for consumer satisfaction with powerful service providers in a service interaction (e.g., physicians in a clinic) (Torelli et al., 2015). Indeed, when power was made salient, European American patients’ satisfaction with a health care provider became more dependent on perceptions of justice

(e.g., appropriate allocation of resources and respect), whereas Hispanic patients’ satisfaction with a health care provider became more based on perceptions of compassion (e.g., emotional reassurance, sympathy, and caring).

Consistent with this logic, beliefs about others’ status are also culturally contingent (Torelli, Leslie, Stoner, & Puente, 2014). Individualism is positively correlated with a tendency to associate high-status individuals with attributes linked to competence (e.g., ambitious, creative, and intelligent), whereas collectivism is positively correlated with a tendency to associate high-status individuals with attributes linked to warmth (e.g., caring, friendly, and generous). Reflecting these culturally shaped status beliefs, individuals from the United States as compared to those from Latin America were more likely to engage in competence-signaling behaviors (e.g., working late to be sure one did the best job possible on a work assignment) in order to acquire workplace status. In contrast, Latin Americans as compared to U.S. Americans are more likely to engage in warmth-signaling behaviors (e.g., volunteering outside one’s working hours to help coworkers with personal issues) in order to gain workplace status (Torelli et al., 2014). In line with this, Latinos prefer workgroups that emphasize both task and interpersonal harmony, whereas Anglo Americans prefer workgroups that are task-oriented (Sanchez-Burks, Nisbett, & Ybarra, 2000).

Culturally Shaped Information Processing

Horizontal and vertical cultural orientations are also associated with distinct mind-sets and cognitive processes. Cultural mind-sets refer to a set of mental representations or cognitive schemas that are culturally congruent (e.g., knowledge about the self and the world; Oyserman, 2011; Oyserman, Sorensen, Reber, & Chen, 2009). For instance, culturally distinct mind-sets are triggered when power concepts are cued, even when processing information about nonsocial targets such as brands (Torelli & Shavitt, 2011). Individuals high (vs. low) in VI tended to stereotype information when primed with personalized power and were better at recog-

nizing information that was congruent with the McDonald's stereotype of unhealthiness and convenience ("convenient, greasy, unhealthy, flavorful, and fast"). There was no such difference in stereotyping between individuals high and low in VI when they were primed with socialized power or when they were not primed with either type of power. On the other hand, individuals high (vs. low) in HC who were primed with socialized power tended to individuate in their information processing, showing better recall and recognition for information incongruent with the McDonald's stereotype ("healthy, cozy, and delicate"). There was no such difference in individuating between those high and low in HC when they were primed with individualized power or when there was no priming. These culturally distinct patterns in information processing presumably occur because they address distinct power goals. People with a VI cultural orientation—who view power in personalized terms—may adopt a stereotyping mind-set to help defend their powerful status over others (Fiske, 1993). On the other hand, those with an HC cultural orientation—who view power in socialized terms—may adopt an individuating perspective to accurately form impressions of others in order to meet their needs (Goodwin, Gubin, Fiske, & Yzerbyt, 2000; Russell & Fiske, 2010).

Although not specific to the horizontal-vertical cultural distinction, it is worth noting that national identity may also cue cultural mind-sets and shape consumers' reactions to the presence of nutritional information (Gomez & Torelli, 2015). For instance, food enjoyment is central to the French culture. Thus, when French identity is made salient, a food-enjoyment cultural mind-set is activated among French consumers, which subsequently leads French consumers to evaluate food less favorably when nutritional information is present (vs. absent). Furthermore, French consumers reported greater difficulty in processing nutritional information (as indicated by rating the ease of processing the nutrition information on a 7-point scale) when their French identity was made salient (vs. not made salient). This is because nutritional information is utilitarian in nature and opposed to a food-enjoyment cultural mind-set. These out-

comes were not observed among American consumers, for whom food enjoyment is not central to their cultural identity. Therefore, when promoting their foods to consumers, marketers should be careful in delivering nutritional information, because emphasizing such utilitarian aspects of foods may backfire with consumers who hold a food-enjoyment cultural mind-set.

A Similar Construct to Horizontal–Vertical Distinctions: Power Distance Belief

Related to the horizontal-vertical distinction, power distance also addresses power and hierarchy beliefs, and offers additional insights for understanding consumer behavior. As a culture-level variable, "power distance" refers to the degree to which power hierarchies in organizations are expected and accepted (Hofstede, 1984, 2001; Oyserman, 2006). As an individual-level variable, "power distance belief" (PDB) captures the degree to which individuals in a culture accept power disparity (Winterich & Zhang, 2014). PDB scores can predict how individuals think and behave in the marketplace (Yoo, Donthu, & Lenartowicz, 2011). Although power distance and the horizontal-vertical distinction address related notions, there are conceptual and structural differences between them (Shavitt et al., 2006a; 2006b). Conceptually, power distance captures the degree to which the less powerful individuals in a society accept inequalities in power, whereas the horizontal-vertical distinction refers to differences in the emphasis on hierarchy in society. Structurally, both power distance and PDB vary along a single dimension (high to low), whereas the horizontal-vertical distinction reflects distinct categories nested within individualism and collectivism. Therefore, one should be careful in inferring power distance from a horizontal-vertical distinction.

Research on power distance has partly been stimulated by an interest in prosocial consumer behaviors, such as making donations (Duclos & Barasch, 2014; Winterich & Zhang, 2014). Those high in PDB (vs. low in PDB) accept inequality rather than feel a responsibility to change it (Bourdieu, 1984; Miller, McIntyre, & Mantrala, 1993).

Therefore, PDB is negatively associated with perceived responsibility to aid others and, thus, with charitable behavior (Winterich & Zhang, 2014). However, the type of needs that the charitable behavior is intended to address—uncontrollable (e.g., disaster) versus controllable (e.g., overweight)—can moderate the relationship between PDB and charitable behavior: When the need is uncontrollable, even individuals with high PDB feel a responsibility to provide help to others. In addition, when communal norms (vs. exchange norms) are salient, PDB does not predict lower engagement in charitable behavior, as communal norms increase everyone's felt responsibility for others' welfare (Winterich & Zhang, 2014).

PDB can shape one's consumption patterns in the marketplace as well. For example, PDB can predict how consumers judge the price–quality relation (Gao, Winterich, & Zhang, 2016). Consumers in general have a tendency to infer the quality of a product from its price, which is termed a “price–quality judgment” (Cronley, Posavac, Meyer, Kardes, & Kellaris, 2005; Kardes, Cronley, Kellaris, & Posavac, 2004), but consumers who are high (vs. low) in PDB have a greater tendency to infer a product's quality from its price, because they have a stronger need for structure (Lalwani & Forcum, 2016). People with a higher need for structure are more likely to use heuristics and engage in stereotyping, and price can be an easy way to categorize products.

PDB can be also predictive of impulsive buying (Zhang, Winterich, & Mittal, 2010). Individuals who are high (vs. low) in PDB are less likely to engage in impulsive buying. However, this effect holds only for vice products (e.g., a Snickers bar, potato chips) and not for virtue products (e.g., a granola bar, an apple). In other words, those low (vs. high) in PDB buy more vice products and show no difference in buying virtue products. This can be interpreted as a manifestation of self-control, such that higher PDB activates control-related processes.

In summary, cultural variables that address power and hierarchy beliefs and horizontal–vertical cultural orientations refine the broader individualism–collectivism distinction and afford novel predictions about consumer behavior. As discussed, a consideration of horizontal–vertical cultural ori-

entations can clarify how individuals conceptualize power and status, help to predict which advertising appeals will be most effective, and suggest the values that brands should embody. We have also covered the implications of PDB, which addresses the acceptance of power disparities, in various consumer domains such as prosocial behavior, impulsive buying, and price–quality judgments. In the next section, we discuss the implications of holistic–analytic thinking styles in the consumer domain.

HOLISTIC–ANALYTIC THINKING STYLES IN CONSUMER CONTEXTS

As reviewed previously, cultural orientations can vary in their levels of individualism–collectivism, horizontal–vertical orientations, and PDB. In addition to orientation-based drivers of cultural differences, an emerging stream of research investigates how differences in thinking style affect consumer outcomes. This section reviews the distinction between holistic and analytic thinking styles (Masuda, Russell, Li, & Lee, Chapter 8, this volume; Nisbett, Peng, Choi, & Norenzayan, 2001), connects thinking style to previously reviewed cultural distinctions, and outlines relevant findings and implications within the consumer domain.

Holistic thinking and analytic thinking primarily differ in how one perceives an object's relationship with its context. Holistic thinkers tend to adopt a big-picture view that emphasizes the interconnectedness between individual objects in the context. As a result, holistic thinkers often explain and predict events based on contextual factors. In contrast, analytic thinkers tend to separate individual objects from their context and focus on the objects' distinct attributes to assign them to categories. Hence, analytic thinkers often use information about the object's category to explain and predict events (Nisbett et al., 2001).

In addition, holistic and analytic thinking styles tend to correlate with established Eastern and Western cultural distinctions. People from Eastern cultures tend to be predominantly collectivistic and construe themselves as interdependent with others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1995). Easterners also tend to adopt a ho-

listic thinking style, which influences their tendency to see connections between individual objects and the environment. By contrast, people from Western cultures tend to be primarily individualistic and construe themselves as independent of others. Westerners primarily adopt an analytic thinking style, in which they separate and distinguish objects from their contexts (Masuda & Nisbett, 2001; Nisbett et al., 2001; Oyserman & Lee, 2007). These culturally distinct thinking styles are also consistent with decision rules that Westerners frequently use (e.g., one attribute is more important or diagnostic than the other) versus the compromise rule that Easterners frequently use (e.g., both attributes are important; Briley, Morris, & Simonson, 2000), in line with the research on incongruity resolution discussed earlier (J. Aaker & Sengupta, 2000). In the sections that follow, we discuss how differences in thinking style can influence consumer attitudes and behaviors toward brands, prices, and retail settings.

Brands

Brands are more than the logo or tagline that we view in promotions. Brands tell a story that businesses intentionally craft to engage and resonate with their audience. Some brand stories are so ingrained in our consumer memory that the brands themselves become culturally symbolic icons (Torelli & Ahluwalia, 2012). Next, we discuss the ways that cultural differences in thinking style can affect how individuals recall information in brand stories and use information to respond to a brand's new offerings.

Thinking Style Predicts How Consumers Use Brand Information

The information included in a brand's story is not always positive. Several brand stories are riddled with scandal, product recalls, and other negative information. One might assume that all consumers react similarly to negative brand information; for example, beliefs about a brand's safety may change after learning about a recent product recall. However, cross-cultural research has demonstrated how differences in thinking style affect the way negative information impacts consumers' product beliefs.

Who do consumers perceive to be responsible when they encounter negative information about a brand? Earlier, we mentioned that analytic thinkers are more likely than holistic thinkers to use information about the object's category to explain and predict events. This tendency also affects how people with different thinking styles attribute the causes of events. For instance, analytic thinkers are more likely to attribute causality to the actor's internal dispositions rather than to external causes (Nisbett et al., 2001). As a result, consumers with analytic (vs. holistic) thinking styles may also report greater changes in their beliefs about a product when they are exposed to negative brand information. In one study, Monga and John (2008) primed thinking style and asked participants to read a negative press release about Mercedes-Benz. Participants primed to think analytically were more likely to attribute the cause of the negative information to the brand internally, whereas participants primed to think holistically considered a broader set of reasons when explaining the negative brand information.

Thinking Style Predicts How Consumers Evaluate Brand Extensions

Marketers often leverage successful brand names to extend their reach into new product categories. For example, Huggies might extend its diaper brand into the baby stroller category. Research on brand extensions indicates that consumers will positively evaluate brand extensions if they have a positive attitude toward the parent brand and perceive an adequate fit between the parent and extension category (D. Aaker & Keller, 1990). Cross-cultural research has shown that thinking style affects how people categorize objects (Jain, Desai, & Mao, 2007; Ji, Zhang, & Nisbett, 2004; Nisbett et al., 2001). Therefore, thinking styles should also predict consumers' brand extension evaluation based on their categorization of the parent and extension products.

Monga and John (2007) pretested various fictitious brand extensions that consumers perceived to have low fit with Kodak (e.g., filing cabinets) and asked separate groups of Indians (holistic thinkers) and Americans (analytic thinkers) to evaluate them. They found that Indians (vs. Americans) perceived

greater fit between Kodak and the extensions, and evaluated the brand extensions more favorably. Moreover, when holistic thinking was primed, participants became more favorable toward the brand extensions. Related research suggests that consumers with an interdependent self-construal (i.e., predominantly holistic thinkers) are better able to think of alternative ways to relate an extension to the parent brand and to find relationships between them, perceiving a greater fit, and therefore evaluate brand extensions more favorably than analytic thinkers do (Ahluwalia, 2008).

However, the difference between analytic and holistic thinkers in brand extension evaluation tends to disappear when consumers evaluate prestige (vs. functional) brand extensions (Monga & John, 2010). Compared to functional brands (e.g., Maytag), prestige brands (e.g., Vera Wang) tend to have more abstract and symbolic brand concepts. Abstract and symbolic brand concepts facilitate finding a basis of fit for extensions in distant product categories (e.g., Vera Wang bedding) (Park, Milberg, & Lawson, 1991). As previously referenced, holistic thinkers generally think more contextually and see more relationships when evaluating the fit between brand extensions and parent brands (Monga & John, 2007). However, analytic thinkers are also able to see relationships or associations between prestigious parent brands and their extensions (Monga & John, 2010). These findings suggest that marketers should consider consumers' prestige perceptions when extending their global brands into distant product categories.

Prices

Price, one of the four P's in marketing (*price, product, place, and promotion*), is an important topic of study, because a firm's pricing decisions affect profit margins, supply, demand, and marketing strategy. Consumers typically perceive prices to be either a representation of the good's internal composition (e.g., features, materials) or a representation of its external environment (e.g., competitors' prices). Accordingly, research has defined the reference points from which consumers perceive prices as internal reference prices (IRP) and external reference

prices (ERP) (Helson, 1964; Kalyanaram & Winer, 1995). As previously discussed, analytic thinkers tend to view objects as independent of their contexts and attribute causality for events to the object's internal disposition, whereas holistic thinkers view objects as interdependent with their context and are more likely to attribute causality to external sources (Nisbett et al., 2001). Consistent with these accounts, C. Chen (2009) found that consumers primed with an independent self-construal were more favorable toward prices influenced by internal factors (IRP) instead of external factors (ERP). In contrast, consumers primed with an interdependent self-construal were more influenced by ERP than by IRP. These results were explained by differences in participants' tendencies to perceive connectedness and separateness, key elements of holistic and analytic thinking styles.

Thinking Style Moderates Price-Quality Judgments

A foundational axiom in the marketing literature is that consumers tend to judge quality based on price (Rao & Monroe, 1988, 1989). As noted earlier, a broad body of research supports this notion and shows that as the price of a product increases, so do quality perceptions (Dawar & Parker, 1994; Kardes et al., 2004), an effect that has been dubbed a "marketing universal" (Dawar & Parker, 1994). However, cross-cultural research on this robust phenomenon has demonstrated that thinking styles moderate the strength of the price-quality relation (Lalwani & Shavitt, 2013). Specifically, consumers who adopt a holistic versus analytic thinking style are more likely to use price to judge quality because of their tendency to perceive interrelations between price and other product elements.

Thinking Style Moderates Perceptions of Price Patterns

Thinking styles also predict how consumers view patterns in price changes. Because holistic thinkers tend to focus on the interrelations between objects, they are unlikely to assume that any particular object will remain stable over time (Nisbett, 2003). Instead, holistic thinkers expect trends to

fluctuate. In contrast, analytic thinkers view objects as independent of other objects and are therefore more likely to assume that objects remain stable over time. Taken together, this suggests that analytic thinkers expect a linear change such that any future change should closely follow previous trends. Consistent with this logic, analytic thinkers (e.g., Canadians) are more likely than holistic thinkers (e.g., Chinese) to make judgments based on recent trends when predicting future stock market trends and making investment decisions. Furthermore, analytic (vs. holistic) thinkers are less willing to buy stocks when prices follow a decreasing trend, and are more likely to buy stocks when they follow an increasing trend (Ji, Zhang, & Guo, 2008).

Retail Settings

People with analytic versus holistic thinking styles may also differ in their responses to retail settings. Below, we discuss research that has demonstrated robust effects of thinking style on perceptions of products and product displays.

In retail settings, marketers arrange products within a variety of contexts. For example, a clothing store manager may need to decide the kind of background to use when putting a new pair of jeans on display. Should the background resemble or contrast with the jeans? Remember that analytic thinkers tend to “separate and distinguish” objects from their context, whereas holistic thinkers “integrate and connect” objects with their context (Oyserman & Lee, 2007). Thus, connecting the target object with the context might influence how holistic (vs. analytic) thinkers view the target itself.

This matters in retail settings, because differences in consumer thinking style can affect the way product perceptions change when the background changes, even when the product does not. Specifically, research has demonstrated that analytic thinkers are more likely to view a product and its context as separate elements, whereas holistic thinkers view the product and the context as continuous parts of a larger whole. In one study, Zhu and Meyers-Levy (2009) primed participants’ self-construal and asked them to evaluate a mug on either a glass or wooden table. Participants primed with an interde-

pendent self-construal assimilated the object and its context, evaluating the mug as more trendy when placed on the glass table, but more natural when placed on the wooden table. However, participants primed with an independent self-construal contrasted the object and its context, evaluating the mug as more trendy when placed on a wooden table, but more natural when placed on a glass table.

So far, we have discussed how consumers may use information inside of a retail setting to make judgments. However, before a customer walks into a store, he or she might use information about the retailer (e.g., store reputation) to make judgments about the products inside. For example, self-construal predicts differences in how consumers make quality inferences based on a retail store’s reputation (K. Lee & Shavitt, 2006). Specifically, participants primed with an interdependent (vs. independent) self-construal used a store’s reputation to evaluate a microwave’s quality. Interdependent participants evaluating a GE microwave sold at a high-end department store viewed it more favorably than the same microwave sold at Kmart (K. Lee & Shavitt, 2006). These findings are consistent with the logic that holistic thinkers assimilate an object and its context when making judgments (e.g., Zhu & Meyers-Levy, 2009).

In summary, research into culturally patterned differences in thinking styles has addressed a broad range of consumer attitudes and behavior. As we have discussed, analytic and holistic thinkers can differ in the ways that they interpret and use brand, price, and retail information. In the next section, we review how the fit between culture and self-regulatory goals can affect consumer behavior.

SELF-REGULATION AND REGULATORY FOCUS

There are broad cultural differences in the overall tendency to self-regulate versus engage in impulsive consumption. For example, a survey of consumers in Australia, the United States, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Malaysia revealed that consumers with a chronic independent (vs. interdependent) self-construal were more likely to participate in impulsive purchasing behavior (Kacen &

Lee, 2002). Also, chronic individualism or independence predicted greater likelihood to engage in beer consumption (Zhang & Shrum, 2009). Alcohol consumption was used as a proxy of impulsive consumption, because it has been related to traits associated with impulsivity (e.g., lack of willpower; Hoch & Loewenstein, 1991). At both the country (42 countries) and the state level (in the United States) of analysis, individualism was positively correlated with beer consumption.

A close fit between one's self-construal and one's cultural context can also benefit self-regulation, specifically, in maintaining a healthy diet (Levine et al., 2016). In the United States, being independent predicts healthy eating, and the relationship is mediated by autonomy. On the other hand, in Japan, being interdependent predicts healthy eating, and the relationship is mediated by positive relations with others. This is presumably because eating healthy is culturally normative in both cultural contexts, and adhering to normative cultural values facilitates making healthy choices.

Self-regulation toward a goal can be focused on either promotion or prevention objectives. Acting as self-regulatory guides, these two objectives help direct consumers' attention, attitudes, and behaviors (Higgins, 1997). Promotion-focused self-regulation is concerned with potential gains and aspirations, whereas prevention-focused self-regulation is concerned with potential losses and the fulfillment of responsibilities. People with a promotion focus pursue growth and achievement goals with eagerness and are sensitive to potential gains. In contrast, people with a prevention focus pursue safety and duty goals with vigilance and are sensitive to the presence or absence of negative outcomes and sensitive to potential losses. Promotion focus resonates with the goals of the independent self (e.g., autonomy, achievement), whereas prevention focus resonates with the goals of the interdependent self (e.g., fulfilling obligations, fitting in with others) (Heine, Lehman, Markus, & Kitayama, 1999).

In this section, we discuss the benefits of fit between culture and self-regulatory goals that span relevant consumer domains of persuasion, willingness to pay price premiums, and impulsive consumption.

Benefits of Regulatory Fit

Persuasion

Consumer outcomes are generally more favorable for marketers when marketing communications coincide with consumers' self-regulatory goals (J. Aaker & Lee, 2001; Hong & Lee, 2008; Keller, 2006). This robust matching effect has been shown in a number of ways. For instance, people with a dominant independent (interdependent) self-construal tend to perceive promotion-focused information as more (less) important than prevention-focused information (e.g., they rate scenarios as being more important and critical on 7-point scales) (A. Lee, Aaker, & Gardner, 2000). Thus, people with an independent self-construal perceived a message to be more important when it emphasized potential gains (e.g., "If you pick Alternative B, there is a two-thirds probability that you will not win any of the \$1,200 worth of prizes and a one-third probability that you will win all \$1,200 worth of prizes") than when the message emphasized potential losses (e.g., "If you pick Alternative B, there is a two-thirds probability that you will lose all of the \$1,200 worth of prizes and a one-third probability that you will not lose any of the \$1,200 worth of prizes"). In contrast, individuals with interdependent self-construal perceived a loss-framed (vs. gain-framed) message as more important. Moreover, consumers with distinct independent or interdependent self-views are more persuaded by strong arguments that align with their self-regulatory concerns, as opposed to arguments that do not (J. Aaker & Lee, 2001; Agrawal & Maheswaran, 2005; J. Wang & Lee, 2006).

Willingness to Pay

Consumers tend to be willing to pay a price premium for services that align with their dominant self-view and regulatory goals (H. Chen, Ng, & Rao, 2005). For instance, consumers with an independent self-view were more likely to pay for expedited delivery when the message was framed with a promotion focus (e.g., enjoy the product early). In contrast, people with an interdependent self-view were more willing to pay for the same service when the message was framed with a prevention focus (e.g., avoid delay in

receiving the product; H. Chen et al., 2005). These types of matching effects hold regardless of whether self-construal is measured (chronic) or manipulated (J. Aaker & Lee, 2001; Agrawal & Maheswaran, 2005; H. Chen et al., 2005).

Consumer Goals

Consumers vary in terms of whether they want to attain a goal target or maintain their current state, and culture appears to play an important role. For instance, Yang, Stamatogiannakis, and Chattopadhyay (2015) showed that independent and interdependent self-construal predict broad and robust differences in consumer goals. Independent consumers or contexts tend to have or to activate attainment goals such as achieving particular financial savings or weight loss objectives. In contrast, interdependent consumers or contexts tend to have or to activate maintenance goals such as keeping a consistent body weight or bank balance.

Moderators of Regulatory Fit Benefits

Brand Commitment

Brand commitment (e.g., consumers' public attachment or pledging to a brand) might determine when chronic (vs. situational) self-construal produces persuasion matching effects (Agrawal & Maheswaran, 2005). Advertising appeals consistent with an individual's chronic self-view are more persuasive when brand commitment is high, but appeals that are consistent with an individual's situational self-construal are more persuasive when brand commitment is low. This is attributable to the relationship between brand commitment and memory; that is, consumers with high brand commitment are likely to have a readily accessible knowledge base associated with the brand, which is linked to other chronically accessible knowledge in memory, such as one's self-view. Therefore, consumers' attention and attitudes are likely to follow their chronic (vs. situational) self-construal. Consumers with low brand commitment are less likely to link brand information with chronically accessible self-knowledge (Agrawal & Maheswaran, 2005). Thus, their attitudes tend to follow their situational (vs. chronic) self-construal.

Consumer Involvement

Consumer involvement may also moderate self-regulatory matching effects. Consumers with a cultural inclination toward a particular self-regulatory focus (promotion or prevention) reported more favorable attitudes toward products that addressed their regulatory concerns only when they did not have the opportunity to deliberate or expend cognitive resources on the task (Briley & Aaker, 2006). For example, Chinese (vs. American) consumers showed more favorable attitudes toward prevention-focused (vs. promotion-focused) messages. However, when individuals were provided with a chance to deliberate on their thoughts, these cultural differences dissipated. The expected regulatory matching effects occurred only when participants could not deliberate during information processing, such as when they had limited cognitive resources because they had to memorize other information (e.g., 8-digit numbers) or were only given a short amount of time to process the information.

In conclusion, previous findings on culture and self-regulation suggest that individuals in collectivistic cultures tend to be more prevention-focused, whereas individuals in individualistic cultures tend to be more promotion-focused. Cultural differences in self-regulatory focus have considerable marketing implications, because fit between culture and self-regulatory goals can increase perceived persuasiveness of ad appeals, as well as consumers' willingness to pay price premiums. However, the strength and nature of these cultural differences are moderated by factors such as degree of deliberation in information processing and by brand engagement.

SELF-CONSTRUAL AND OBJECT RELATIONSHIPS

Consumers form relationships with possessions and brands to construct and communicate their self-concepts (Belk, 1988; Fournier, 1998; Kleine, Kleine, & Allen, 1995; Sirgy, 1982; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988). One potential manifestation of a strong self-object relationship is referred to as the "endowment effect," or the tendency for owners to value their possessions more than

potential buyers do (Kahneman, Knetsch, & Thaler, 1990; Thaler, 1980). The endowment effect has been demonstrated across numerous studies but has only begun to be examined cross-culturally (Maddux et al., 2010). Among several suggested explanations for the phenomenon (e.g., loss aversion, differences in salient emotions), one explanation posits that the endowment effect is driven by a self-referent cognitive bias due to mere ownership of an object (Beggan, 1992; Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2007; Maddux et al., 2010). In other words, people value items they own more, because these items reflect some aspect of the self. Therefore, one might deduce that in a cultural context in which there is less emphasis on the self, the endowment effect might be diminished. Using this line of reasoning, Maddux et al. showed that the endowment effect is stronger (e.g., people assign more value to owned possessions) among people with an independent versus interdependent self-construal.

When possessions are also branded, the relationship between the object and the self often results in a perceived overlap between brands and consumers' self-concept, which is referred to as a "self-brand connection" (Escalas, 2004). A consumer's cultural self-construal can determine the pattern of brand relationships he or she forms. For example, it is relatively easy to understand why a consumer would see a high overlap between his or her self-concept and a brand (a self-brand connection) when the brand's users are consistent with one of the consumer's perceived ingroups, but see low overlap when the users represent an outgroup. However, research has shown that cultural self-construal determines whether consumers form low self-brand connections with brands associated with outgroups. Consumers with a chronic interdependent (vs. independent) self-construal are likely to report a higher self-brand connection with a brand used by outgroup members (Escalas & Bettman, 2005). Although this may seem counterintuitive, this result is in line with prior work that suggests people with an independent (vs. interdependent) self-construal have more prominent needs to differentiate themselves from outgroups (Kampmeier & Simon, 2001).

Whereas much of the consumer literature examines brand relationships based on a

self-concept connection with the brand (e.g., Escalas & Bettman, 2005; Fournier, 1998), additional work posits that consumers can form group-level connections with brands, such as country-of-origin connections (e.g., Gürhan-Canli & Maheswaran, 2000). Swaminathan, Page, and Gürhan-Canli (2007) synthesized the literature on these two types of consumer-brand connections by demonstrating how cultural self-construal determines when each type of connection influences attitude change in response to negative brand information (e.g., a product recall). The authors found that consumers with high self-concept connections were more likely to counterargue negative brand information when an independent (vs. interdependent) self-construal was salient. In contrast, consumers with high brand country-of-origin connections were more likely to counterargue negative information when an interdependent (vs. independent) self-construal was salient.

Taken together, research has examined the ways that consumers' cultural self-construal can predict how they form relationships with possessions and brands. As noted earlier, the need to differentiate from outgroups is more prevalent among independents (vs. interdependents; Kampmeier & Simon, 2001). When consumers view themselves as independent of others, they tend to form self-concept connections with brands, are more likely than interdependents to resist forming relationships with brands used by outgroup members, and value owned objects more because they reflect the self. On the other hand, consumers who view themselves as interdependent with others tend to form group-level connections with brands, have weaker needs to differentiate from outgroup members, and are less susceptible to the endowment effect than those with an independent self-construal.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

As we have reviewed, cross-cultural consumer research has built productively upon psychological theorizing. In so doing, it has addressed differences in consumer goals, information-processing patterns, self-regulatory processes, and consumer decisions as a function of a variety of cultural factors.

Cross-cultural perspectives have much to offer in aiding understanding of marketplace behavior. This is especially the case because much of the extant knowledge about consumer phenomena has emerged from a traditional approach to attitudes and social cognition (Riemer et al., 2014). The development and expression of personal preferences, and choices rooted in these preferences, are foundational in Western contexts. Most perspectives assume, therefore, that personal preferences are key to achieving and predicting desired marketing outcomes (e.g., brand choice, brand loyalty). This approach, as developed in the West, may offer an incomplete account of the nature of consumer behavior in non-Western contexts. It is yet to address how consumers function in contexts in which maintaining relationships, fulfilling social roles, and being normatively appropriate are often more important than the independent formation and expression of personal preferences in the marketplace.

This means, for example, that in India compared to North America, personal preferences are less predictive of product choices (Savani, Markus, & Conner, 2008). Similarly, Indian employees are more likely than Americans to make choices consistent with what is expected by authority, irrespective of their personal preferences (Savani, Morris, & Naidu, 2012). In Japan and China, personal preferences for a “greener” world do not predict green behavior, yet such preferences are a strong predictor in the United States (Chan & Lau, 2001; Eom, Kim, Sherman, & Ishii, 2016). Furthermore, for Asian American children, choosing according to the preferences of close others is more satisfying and more likely to motivate behavior than choosing according to their own personal preferences, whereas the reverse is true for European American children (Iyengar & Lepper, 1999; Kitayama, Snibbe, Markus, & Suzuki, 2004; Uchida & Kitayama, 2009). As such, patterns of postchoice justification to reduce cognitive dissonance also vary by culture (Hoshino-Browne et al., 2005; Kitayama et al., 2004). For example, participants from a collectivistic background (Asian Canadians) were more likely to justify choices they made for their friends (vs. choices for themselves), whereas participants from an individualistic background (European Canadians) were more likely to

justify choices they made for themselves (vs. choices for their friends; Hoshino-Browne et al., 2005).

Future work should focus on integrating such insights from the burgeoning field of cross-cultural research into theorizing about consumer behavior. In many non-Western contexts, an emphasis on obligations, others’ expectations, and norms is foundational. An approach that addresses such influences (e.g., Riemer et al., 2014) can expand our focus to encompass how norms and situational guides influence consumer judgments and decisions across cultures.

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