

Adapting Triandis's Model of Subjective Culture and Social Behavior Relations to Consumer Behavior

Julie Anne Lee

*Department of Marketing
University of Hawaii at Manoa*

This article develops and tests a framework for the investigation of cultural influences on consumer purchasing behavior by examining the psychological processes that intervene. The model is empirically tested with a camera purchase decision survey in Singapore, Korea, Hong Kong, Australia, and the United States. The data analyzed at the pooled, cultural, and individual difference (i.e., idiocentrism and allocentrism) levels supports the etic nature of the model. In addition, the theory of individualism (idiocentrism) and collectivism (allocentrism) was applied to the model to derive and test specific cross-cultural hypotheses, including the impact of referent past experience and referent expectations and affordability on purchase intentions. At the individual level, it was found that both referent influences and affordability had a stronger influence for the allocentric subsample than for the idiocentric subsample.

The field of international marketing has seen much debate on the globalization-localization issue, with few conclusions except that a multitude of factors influences this decision. In general, the literature agrees that the technical process of marketing is founded on universal concepts. It is the social processes that vary from culture to culture and require the adaptation of marketing technology. It follows that the investigation of important cultural dimensions and their effect on consumer behavior should precede decisions on the standardization of marketing programs.

Whereas some research has focused on the effects of culture on consumer behavior, most studies have been limited to paired country comparisons, the use of country as a proxy for culture, and seemingly post hoc explanations rather than testing theory by measuring the relevant cultural dimensions. Although several of these studies have reported significant differences in preference for products or reactions to the marketing mix, it has been difficult for marketers to implement these fragmented findings. Existing models, such as those of Sheth and Sethi (1977) and Clark (1990), do not fully address the relation between culture and consumer behavior. In fact, the marketing literature has made few at-

tempts to relate culture to consumer behavior and the design of marketing programs.

Recently, Triandis (1994) developed a model of subjective culture and social behavior relations that has the potential to be adapted to the consumer behavior domain. This model links culture to social behavior through the psychological processes that intervene. To date, Triandis's (1994) model has only been described in broad terms (see pp. 207-220). For each of several behaviors (e.g., aggressive behavior), he described the elements most likely to influence the behavior. To empirically test this model and to illustrate how it can be used to explain cross-cultural consumer behavior, the constructs must be further defined and operationalized.

The following section defines the variables and relations in the model by using theory from consumer behavior to translate Triandis's (1994) model of social behavior into a model of consumer behavior. Figure 1 outlines the proposed consumer behavior model, with adaptations to Triandis's (1994) conceptualization indicated by dotted lines representing additional domain-specific variables and relations. Each variable is defined in consumer behavior terms.

FACTORS AFFECTING BEHAVIORAL DECISION MAKING

Triandis (1994) identified three factors that affect social behavior: subjective culture, past experience, and the behavioral situation.

Requests for reprints should be sent to Julie Anne Lee, Department of Marketing, College of Business Administration, University of Hawaii at Manoa, 2404 Maile Way, C303, Honolulu, HI 96822. E-mail: jlee@busadm.cba.hawaii.edu

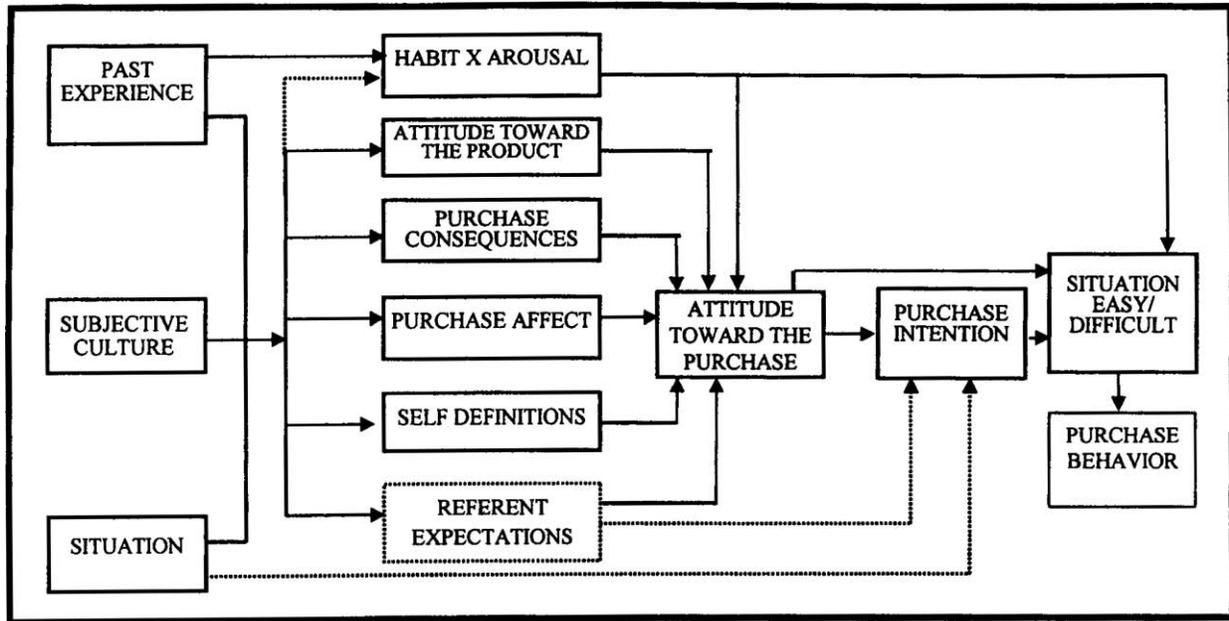


FIGURE 1 Proposed cross-cultural consumer behavior model.

Subjective culture, representing the categorizations, associations, norms, roles, and values in a culture (Triandis, 1994), is hypothesized to influence attitude toward the product, perceived purchase consequences, purchase affect, self-definitions, referent expectations, and habits through customs and past experience. Defined as such, subjective culture can be measured through the aggregation of individual consumer's categorizations, associations, norms, roles, and values. In this way, Triandis (1994) identified four cultural syndromes: *complexity*, *individualism*, *collectivism*, and *tightness*.

For the purpose of this article, the theory of individualism and collectivism is applied to the model to assess the impact of this aspect of subjective culture. Whereas the disadvantages of using only one cultural syndrome include the introduction of error because of potential interactions with other syndromes, such as tightness-looseness (see Triandis, 1995), there are some advantages. Individualism and collectivism theory has been accepted in the literature as an important universal, or etic, pattern of cultural differences in behavior (e.g., Hofstede, 1980; Triandis et al., 1986), and at least at the country level, found to impact consumer behavior (e.g., Aaker & Maheswaran, 1997; Han & Shavitt, 1994). In addition, because of the theory's stage of development, specific dimensions of each syndrome have been identified and items have been developed for both the cultural and individual levels of measurement. Being able to focus on the individual difference level provides a stronger test of the theory and rules out some confounds that limit our understanding at the country level.

Individualism and collectivism theory has come a long way since Hofstede (1980) originally proposed the empirically driven unidimensional construct at the cultural level

(see Kim, Triandis, Kagitcibasi, Choi, & Yoon, 1994). Individualism and collectivism are now recognized as multidimensional constructs at both the cultural and individual levels (see Kim et al., 1994; Triandis, 1995). To avoid confusion, Triandis, Leung, Villareal, and Clark (1985), recognizing that each of us have both tendencies to a greater or lesser extent, proposed the terms *idiocentrism* (based on individualism) and *allocentrism* (based on collectivism) for the individual difference constructs. Triandis (1995, pp. 43-44) identified the following four dimensions of idiocentrism and allocentrism: (a) interdependent (allocentric)/independent (idiocentric) self concept (Markus & Kitayama, 1991); (b) priority for personal goals (idiocentric)/communal goals (allocentric); (c) a focus on norms, obligations, and duties (allocentric)/attitudes, personal needs, rights, and contracts (idiocentric); and (d) an emphasis on maintaining relationships (allocentric)/cost-benefit analyses of relationship (idiocentric).

Specifically, allocentrics tend to sample the interdependent self more often, leading to a greater consideration of norms, obligations, and duties than do idiocentrics. Allocentrics tend to have fewer in-groups that are longer term and more difficult to enter. They tend to emphasize in-group similarity and often show little or no distinction between in-group and personal goals. In comparison, idiocentrics tend to sample the independent self more often, leading to a greater consideration of attitudes, personal needs, and rights than do allocentrics. Idiocentrics tend to have more in-groups that are shorter term and easier to enter. They tend to differentiate themselves from their in-groups and give priority to personal goals over in-group goals. (For a complete review of the tendencies, see Triandis, 1995.)

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات