

Globalization and Consumer Behavior Differences Affiliated to Culture: A Case Study of Employees in Yangon, Myanmar

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Abstract

Consumers now have a variety of choices among various items from across the globe as a result of globalization, many businesses face severe competition and begin to focus more on international sales. But the question remains how to customize the products effectively. Hypothesis tests were devised to determine the significance level of the null hypothesis. The survey participants were classified into two groups: collectivism and individualism, and their cultural dimensions, such as which persons are more individualistic and which are more collectivist, were investigated. Furthermore, we have included literature studies to support the theory, as well as business implications and future directions. We discovered that individualistic and collectivistic cultures place different emphasis on a product's group affiliation. Another conclusion is that Asian males and females are not equally individualistic, with Asian males being somewhat more so than Asian females. Our findings suggest that corporations should focus on elements of a product that associate the buyer with a specific group in collectivist societies, but less so in individualist cultures, and that any marketing strategies pursued should be further tailored accordingly if the aspects of a product are to be associated with a specific group of customers.

Keywords. Consumer Behavior, Culture, Globalization, Product Affiliation, Social Identity.

INTRODUCTION

Ghemawat's World 3.0 idea is well popular among the experts who try to mediate presenting their views despite Levitt's proposal saying the world is flat (Ghemawat, 2011). Ghemawat suggests that distances still exist instead of every nation being equally near or far, cultural distances being one of them. As the world becomes increasingly globalized, recognizing the differences in consumer behavior is essential for a global understanding.

The preferences of foreign and local consumers in Yangon, Myanmar are examined in this chapter in relation to cultural values and social identity. The focus of this chapter is on how gender and culture affect consumers' perceptions of products depending on their country of origin and attitudes toward globalization. When it comes to comprehending consumer behavior and creating successful cross-cultural marketing strategies, culture and identity are closely intertwined and equally significant. The results contribute to the development of a customer-oriented strategy for global marketing, enabling multinational corporations to promote their goods and services to audiences in Yangon in a manner that is appropriate to each audience's cultural thinking.

This chapter presents the result of a cross-regional survey of employees who are in turn consumers in Yangon, Myanmar. It begins by introducing the purpose of the study, which focuses on Hofstede's cultural dimensions, particularly on collectivism and individualism, and social identity theory. This is followed by a discussion on the role a product's country of origin can play on consumers' preferences and may lead to consumer ethnocentrism or animosity. Next, the study's research questions and hypotheses are formally presented, with a detailed description of the study's methods. Results are discussed in terms of participants' cultural dimensions, social identities, consumer preferences, and attitudes towards globalization. Lastly, the practical and theoretical implications of the study, as well as limitations and future research, are considered.

MOTIVE AND GOALS

The purpose of the study is to collect the consumers' information and analyze their purchasing behavior. By sorting out the target consumers' values and lifestyles and which culture they belong to, there is a higher probability of winning this game.

The differences in the consumer behavior of employees, in particular their purchasing behavior towards branded clothing, were examined in two ways. First, the cultural differences between Asian and Western consumers that affect their decision-making process leading up to their purchase were studied. Similar to how Asian countries have been linked with collectivism, Western countries have been associated with individuality. We wanted to see if the affiliation of a product with an organization was equally important to both categories of consumers.

Next, the impact of culture between Asian males and females was considered. While males have been stereotyped to be individualist and females to be collectivist, combining these gender stereotypes with their cultural stereotypes may cause a mismatch as males are typically deemed as the epitome of cultural values and norms. Hence, we looked at the responses of both genders so as to determine which stereotype will prevail.

Both analyses were done so as to better structure future marketing campaigns catered towards the respective target audiences.

HYPOTHESIS 1

Literature Review

Globalization

Globalization is the rapid intensification of economic interaction between individuals, businesses, and governments from many countries. As nations come closer together in their interactions, a defining aspect of globalization is the creation of multicultural space in contemporary societies (Torelli et al., 2011).

We need to shed insight on the interplay between consumer behavior constructs of people living in each geographical region and their influences on purchase intentions as the world progresses toward global economic interdependence and a growing number of enterprises expand abroad (Naseem et al., 2015).

It is argued that when trading nations remove structural, political, and economic barriers, the hunt of consumers with comparable preferences will take precedence over considerations of national distinctions (Cleveland and Laroche, 2007). This has put marketers in the difficult position of deciding whether to segment markets on a country-by-country basis or to go for global marketing, which would entail catering to similar segments across multiple countries. They must decide between uniformity and customization—whether to base their marketing approach on "behavioral homogeneity" or on "behavioral heterogeneity"—because they are in a dilemma (Amanda et al., 2007).

Collectivism vs. individualism

The most common and significant difference between cultures is the relationship between self and others. The common perception is described by such concepts as individualist, independent, autonomous, agentic, and separate, and the other by their antonyms such as collectivist, interdependent, ensemble, communal, and relational (Fatehi et al., 2020).

While both Asian and Western societies recognize the existence of an inner private self and an outer public self, the level of importance placed by the societies between the two selves is different (Lhapeerakul, 2019). Individualists prioritize personal aims over communal goals, whereas collectivists don't distinguish between personal and collective goals. Using Hofstede's cultural dimensions based on the extent to which relationships versus individuals are emphasized, developing and Eastern societies are deemed as collectivist while developed and Western societies are individualist (Hofstede, 2011).

When skimming through the previous research, it was suggested that consumers in Asia and other emerging countries may be less affected by consumer hostility in brand choice as they become more Westernized and individualistic (Han, 2017). It was also suggested that a society's modernization and individualization can have an impact on consumer values in emerging Asia and that shifts in consumer values among young and

individualistic consumers can lead to increased preferences for foreign brands, particularly those from countries with a history of historical animosity (Han et al., 2021).

Brand knowledge vs. brand consciousness

Individualist culture consumers have a wider knowledge of brands. However, this does not translate to a higher level of brand consciousness. Rather, individualistic-culture consumers are less affected by their dressing behavior as compared to their collectivist-culture counterparts. Conversely, collectivist cultures show more brand consciousness despite possessing a narrower range of brand knowledge (Lee and Lee, 2017; Sun et al., 2004).

Brand consciousness is driven by face consciousness. The higher one's face consciousness, the more likely he or she is to buy things as a symbolic communal gesture rather than as a personal expression (Lee and Workman, 2020; Khan et al., 2019; Bao et al., 2003).

The disparity in dressing habits is due to differing interpretations of "dressed well". Individualist-culture consumers see their dressing behavior as a way of expressing their individuality whereas collectivist-culture consumers dress according to a group identity and trends so as to remain part of the group. This translates to collectivist-culture consumers desiring designer-labelled goods or brands due to the product's affiliation to a group.

The product's affiliation to a group is defined as factors such as brand and country-of-origin (Phuong and Dat, 2017). Country-of-origin is now more commonly associated with culture-of-origin as consumers relate the product and/or brand's background with the culture from which the product originated (Hornikx et al., 2019; Juan et al., 2018). Other factors include the image consumers wish to portray that the product can aid them towards.

Hypothesis Development

From our literature review, it is clear that collectivist culture consumers and individualist-culture consumers have different decision-making processes towards the same purchases due to their different levels of brand knowledge and brand consciousness. Hence, we sought to test if both cultures shared the same emphasis on a product's affiliation to a group that is largely driven by both brand knowledge and brand consciousness.

Hypothesis 1

H₀: Emphasis on product's affiliation to a group is the same between individualistic and collectivistic cultures

H₁: Emphasis on product's affiliation to a group is not the same between individualistic and collectivistic cultures

Method

Research design

This study is based on a quantitative and descriptive research method to test the hypotheses based on a specific cultural dimension and gender difference. It was explained that a descriptive study gives a clear explanation of the characteristics of the population or situation being studied (Kothari, 2008). In this study, the focus was to find out if there are any statistically significant differences between the selected groups. For the purpose of this study, survey research design was adopted. This is because survey research design helps in collecting data from members of a population in order to determine their current status in that population with respect to one or more variables.

Questionnaires of this exploratory research was structured with two main sections. The first section is about the employee's characteristics such as the respondent's country of origin, gender, age, salary range, frequency of product purchase for consumption, time taken for shopping and more factors so that we would also be able to extract other interesting findings of the respondents by means of comparative analysis by region, by gender and so on. The second section was based on the two selected components under cultural dimensions which are collectivism and individualism, and brand consciousness and knowledge. Likert-type scales was used in this research which consists of five

response alternatives: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree.

Survey questionnaires

For the first hypothesis test, independent sample T-test was used to measure the significance of the null hypothesis.

H₀: Emphasis on product's affiliation to a group is the same between individualistic and collectivistic cultures

In order to examine the difference in level of emphasis placed on the product's affiliation to a group by the respective cultures, questions pertaining to both collectivism/individualism research and product's affiliation to a group were chosen. As mentioned before, the product's affiliation to a group is defined by factors such as brand and country-of-origin. Other factors that matter consists of the product's affiliation to a certain image consumers wish to identify with are also included.

The following questions are directly related to these factors:

- SQ10, SQ11, SQ13, SQ24, SQ25 and SQ26 relate to the image consumers wish to identify with by their purchase of certain products as well as collectivist behaviours with regard to their public self.
- SQ23 relates to individualistic behaviour of prioritising expression of identity over other factors.
- SQ12, SQ14, SQ21 and SQ22 relate to consumers' brand consciousness and knowledge.

Sample

For the test, we divided the whole data set into two parts with 'region' as a grouping variable (1: Asia, 2: West). There were a total of 254 Asia and 214 West in the data set. In percentage, each is 54 % and 46%. The first hypothesis was tested on this sample set.

Testing

TABLE 1

Group statistics for hypothesis 1

| Survey Questionnaire | Region | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|----------------------|--------|-----|--------|----------------|-----------------|
| SQ10 | Asia | 254 | 3.2500 | 1.0472 | .1217 |
| | West | 214 | 3.1622 | 1.0354 | .1337 |
| SQ11 | Asia | 254 | 2.5270 | 1.0627 | .1235 |
| | West | 214 | 2.5167 | 1.0655 | .1376 |
| SQ12 | Asia | 254 | 2.7838 | 1.0762 | .1251 |
| | West | 214 | 2.6500 | .9712 | .1254 |
| SQ13 | Asia | 254 | 3.9000 | .8388 | .0975 |
| | West | 214 | 3.8514 | .8172 | .1055 |
| SQ14 | Asia | 254 | 3.4865 | 1.0236 | .1190 |
| | West | 214 | 3.3667 | 1.1784 | .1521 |
| SQ21 | Asia | 254 | 4.5833 | .6873 | .0799 |
| | West | 214 | 4.5135 | .5907 | .0763 |
| SQ22 | Asia | 254 | 2.5500 | 1.1730 | .1364 |
| | West | 214 | 2.5270 | 1.1112 | .1435 |
| SQ23 | Asia | 254 | 3.4459 | 1.1603 | .1349 |
| | West | 214 | 3.3667 | .9909 | .1279 |
| SQ24 | Asia | 254 | 2.4667 | 1.0669 | .1240 |
| | West | 214 | 2.2297 | 1.1270 | .1455 |
| SQ25 | Asia | 254 | 3.7973 | .7582 | .0881 |
| | West | 214 | 3.5500 | .8911 | .1150 |
| SQ26 | Asia | 254 | 3.1622 | .9512 | .1106 |
| | West | 214 | 2.9667 | 1.0730 | .1385 |

TABLE 2
Independent samples test for hypothesis 1

| | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | |
|------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference |
| SQ10 | Equal variances assumed | 3.207 | 466 | .001 | .3189 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | 3.182 | 411.726 | .002 | .3189 |
| SQ11 | Equal variances assumed | 2.234 | 466 | .066 | .2370 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | 2.201 | 399.834 | .068 | .2370 |
| SQ12 | Equal variances assumed | 4.819 | 466 | .000 | .4613 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | 4.709 | 385.687 | .000 | .4613 |
| SQ13 | Equal variances assumed | 2.450 | 466 | .015 | .2522 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | 2.411 | 397.995 | .016 | .2522 |
| SQ14 | Equal variances assumed | 3.560 | 466 | .000 | .3704 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | 3.531 | 411.858 | .000 | .3704 |
| SQ21 | Equal variances assumed | 3.982 | 466 | .000 | .4418 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | 3.879 | 380.151 | .000 | .4418 |
| SQ12 | Equal variances assumed | 3.017 | 466 | .003 | .3212 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | 2.996 | 413.800 | .003 | .3212 |
| SQ23 | Equal variances assumed | 4.303 | 466 | .000 | .4175 |

| | | | | | |
|------|-----------------------------|-------|---------|------|-------|
| | Equal variances not assumed | 4.112 | 345.539 | .000 | .4175 |
| | Equal variances assumed | .065 | 466 | .948 | .0051 |
| SQ24 | Equal variances not assumed | .064 | 396.691 | .949 | .0051 |
| | Equal variances assumed | 2.869 | 466 | .004 | .3115 |
| SQ25 | Equal variances not assumed | 2.791 | 377.353 | .006 | .3115 |
| | Equal variances assumed | 4.081 | 466 | .000 | .3101 |
| SQ26 | Equal variances not assumed | 3.872 | 332.824 | .000 | .3101 |

TABLE 3

Descriptives of product affiliation

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean | | Minimum | Maximum |
|-------|-----|-------|----------------|------------|----------------------------------|-------------|---------|---------|
| | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | | |
| Asia | 254 | 3.158 | .7185 | .0437 | 3.0676 | 3.2398 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
| West | 214 | 2.755 | .8888 | .0632 | 2.6305 | 2.8796 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
| Total | 468 | 2.985 | .8182 | .0378 | 2.9107 | 3.0594 | 1.00 | 5.00 |

TABLE 4

Test of homogeneity of variances on brand conscious and knowledge

| Levene Statistic | df1 | df2 | Sig. |
|------------------|-----|-----|------|
| 14.509 | 1 | 466 | .000 |

TABLE 5*One-way ANOVA on brand conscious and knowledge*

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|------|
| Between Groups | 18.154 | 1 | 18.154 | 28.727 | .000 |
| Within Groups | 294.491 | 466 | .632 | | |
| Total | 312.645 | 467 | | | |

TABLE 6

Summary of global consumer behavior differences affiliated to culture

| REGION | VARIABLES | Participants | Highly Agreeable to Questionnaires | Highly Disagreeable to Questionnaires | Consumer Behavior with Regard to Cultural Perception/Mindset | | | | Brand Consciousness and Knowledge | Happiness of Shopping |
|----------------|-----------|--------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| | | | | | Male | | Female | | | |
| | | | | | Collectivism | Individualism | Collectivism | Individualism | | |
| | | | | | / 10 | | | | | |
| Canada | 19 | 15.8% | 9.6% | 37.9% | 42.0% | 37.2% | 50.0% | 66.6% | 5.4 | |
| Mexico | 16 | 13.6% | 9.6% | 32.5% | 39.3% | 24.2% | 48.4% | 29.7% | 4.4 | |
| USA | 86 | 16.8% | 10.7% | 31.7% | 41.0% | 28.8% | 45.5% | 75.6% | 4.3 | |
| Germany | 26 | 6.6% | 19.9% | 35.7% | 40.6% | 31.8% | 41.0% | 22.2% | 3.7 | |
| Norway | 13 | 16.3% | 15.8% | 34.1% | 47.3% | 34.6% | 35.9% | 40.2% | 4.5 | |
| Switzerland | 10 | 18.2% | 10.0% | 32.7% | 57.7% | 26.9% | 38.5% | 30.3% | 5.0 | |
| UK | 44 | 13.0% | 12.2% | 28.5% | 45.9% | 25.8% | 48.0% | 77.3% | 4.0 | |
| Hong Kong | 5 | 22.4% | 7.1% | 53.8% | 34.6% | 35.9% | 46.2% | 49.5% | 5.6 | |
| Japan | 15 | 9.4% | 7.5% | 25.0% | 55.8% | 37.8% | 35.7% | 36.7% | 4.7 | |
| Mainland China | 22 | 11.2% | 2.9% | 33.3% | 35.9% | 43.3% | 26.4% | 42.0% | 6.2 | |
| South Korea | 55 | 13.0% | 6.8% | 34.1% | 35.6% | 41.8% | 36.3% | 54.0% | 4.4 | |
| Indonesia | 13 | 19.0% | 20.8% | 40.0% | 47.7% | 27.9% | 40.4% | 26.9% | 4.2 | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| Malaysia | 12 | 9.8% | 3.4% | 15.4% | 42.3% | 31.5% | 40.0% | 37.5% | 4.0 |
| Myanmar | 39 | 12.4% | 7.7% | 38.5% | 43.6% | 42.9% | 32.1% | 39.1% | 4.7 |
| Philippines | 5 | 18.8% | 1.2% | 43.6% | 25.6% | 50.0% | 26.9% | 70.0% | 6.4 |
| Singapore | 54 | 11.1% | 5.3% | 32.1% | 45.2% | 28.9% | 42.0% | 50.4% | 5.3 |
| Thailand | 11 | 18.2% | 2.1% | 36.5% | 34.6% | 40.7% | 38.5% | 75.0% | 7.1 |
| Vietnam | 8 | 21.3% | 0.7% | 25.6% | 46.2% | 33.8% | 32.3% | 43.8% | 6.3 |
| India | 15 | 18.4% | 5.9% | 23.1% | 53.8% | 36.5% | 36.5% | 43.3% | 4.3 |
| GLOBAL AVERAGE | | 15.0% | 8.4% | 33.4% | 42.9% | 34.8% | 39.0% | 47.9% | 5.0 |
| AMERICAS | 121 | 15.4% | 9.9% | 34.0% | 40.8% | 30.0% | 47.9% | 57.3% | 4.7 |
| EUROPE | 93 | 13.5% | 14.5% | 32.7% | 47.8% | 29.8% | 40.8% | 42.5% | 4.3 |
| EAST ASIA | 97 | 14.0% | 6.1% | 36.6% | 40.5% | 39.7% | 36.1% | 45.6% | 5.2 |
| SOUTH EAST ASIA | 142 | 15.8% | 5.9% | 33.1% | 40.7% | 36.5% | 36.0% | 49.0% | 5.4 |
| SOUTH ASIA | 15 | 18.4% | 5.9% | 23.1% | 53.8% | 36.5% | 36.5% | 43.3% | 4.3 |

Findings

By comparing mean values of score for tested questions, we could see that Asia scored higher than West in every question (see Table 1). Thus, we were able to infer that the collectivistic cultures put more emphasis on product's affiliation to a group in comparison with individualistic cultures.

Furthermore, as showed in the Table 2 above, 9 out of 11 tested questions had probability below 0.05, which indicates that there are significant differences between two groups. Therefore, we could reject the null and accept the alternative, and conclude that emphasis on product's affiliation to a group is not the same between individualistic and collectivistic cultures.

SPSS one-way ANOVA was also used to make the decision about H_0 . The descriptives statistics table in Table 3 presents very helpful descriptive statistics, including the mean, standard deviation, and 95% confidence intervals for the dependent variable (Production Affiliation) for each distinct group (Asia and West), as well as when all groups are combined (Total). The information about significance gives us the p value we need to compare with alpha. The given p in this instance, with reference to Table 4, is .000 ($p < .001$). The Levene's test of homogeneity of variances examines whether the variation in the test groups—Asia and the West—is the same. We have not broken the premise of homogeneity of variance because the P -value is higher than .05.

Table 5 shows the output of the ANOVA analysis and whether there is a statistically significant difference between our group means: Asia as collectivistic and Western as individualistic cultures. We can see that the significance value is 0.000 (i.e., $p = .000$), which is below 0.05. and, therefore, we reject the null hypothesis in favor of the alternative. It means there is a statistically significant difference in emphasis on product's affiliation to a group between individualistic and collectivistic cultures.

Table 6 captures the key summarized differences of the respondents' inclined cultural mindset broken down by sub-regions and by gender. The responses shown in percentages are aligned with the findings mentioned above.

Conclusion and Business Implications

It is needless to say that customers play a really important role in shaping the companies into successful and sustainable ones. Consequently, a better understanding of how customers react to its product offering is critical for companies to effectively reach out to them. As it is impossible to accurately find out and cater to the purchasing behavior of each and every customer, sorting them into some dimensions as in individualism and collectivism can have a huge impact in realizing their expectations of buying a certain product.

In terms of marketing, our findings suggest that for collectivist societies, corporations should focus on elements of a product that associate the buyer with a specific group, and potentially less so for individualist cultures. By knowing what to focus on, be it price, brand, trend or design, companies need not waste time and resources experimenting with every possible strategy.

When designing their product offerings, companies should also tailor their products and packaging to that of individualist or collectivist cultures. A highly-regarded company selling tumblers for example, may want to have its brand name to be more prominent on the products when selling in Asian countries than those in Western countries.

HYPOTHESIS 2

Literature Review

Universally, gender stereotypes are such that males are individualistic while females are collectivistic (Hentschel et al., 2019). Our prejudice has been that males are independent while females are interdependent. Furthermore, males are traditionally viewed upon as the embodiment of cultural ideals as they are thought to possess more of the cultural ideals important to their culture relative to females. For a Western male, the match between cultural and gender stereotypes allows for a clear portrayal of an independent Western male as an individual.

Even though we are looking at the same gender, the perception may vary according to the regions where different cultures exist. As collective Asian societies value

relationships, there is a distinct clash in values between the cultural and gender stereotypes for the Asian male. While gender stereotypes create the expectation for an independent Asian male as an individual, cultural stereotypes say otherwise with the expectation for Asian males to be interdependent so as to set an example for their collectivist society (Cuddy et al., 2015).

Individualistic or independent societies value autonomy, individual objectives, and self-reliance, while collectivistic or interdependent societies value social selves, communal goals, and responsibilities, according to Hofstede. Males are seen to exemplify cultural ideals in the following ways: when independence is prized, men will be perceived as more independent than women; where interdependence is valued, men will be perceived as more interdependent than women, according to the literature. Of course, due to cultural influences, these gender stereotypes are not universal. Furthermore, according to another study, a person might be both collectivist and individualist.

Hypothesis Development

The question that our literature review posed to us is if there was any difference in collectivist/individualist levels between genders despite the apparent contradiction between gender and cultural stereotypes. For this question, we sought to find out which stereotype would prevail over the other, if any.

Hypothesis 2

H₀: Both genders are equally individualistic in Asia

H₁: Both genders are not equally individualistic in Asia

Method

Survey questionnaires

In the second hypothesis test, independent sample T-test was once again used to see if the null hypothesis can be rejected or not.

H₀: Both genders are equally individualistic in Asia.

For this hypothesis, common survey questions relating to collectivism/individualism research were chosen so as to determine the level of collectivism/individualism each gender exhibits in their respective consumer behaviour patterns.

The following questions are directly related to these factors:

- High values for SQ15, SQ16, SQ18, SQ19, SQ20 and SQ22 will reflect high individualism and low values for the same questions reflect low individualism.

Sample

To test the second hypothesis, we narrowed down the data sets and only focused on Asia. Then we set the grouping variable as gender (1: Male, 2: Female). This sample set consists of 94 Males and 160 Females from Asian regions. In percentage, each account for 37% and 63%.

Testing

TABLE 7
Group statistics of hypothesis 2

| Survey Questionnaire | Gender | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|----------------------|--------|-----|--------|----------------|-----------------|
| SQ15 | Male | 94 | 2.5273 | 1.0862 | .1465 |
| | Female | 160 | 2.5190 | 1.0483 | .1180 |
| SQ16 | Male | 94 | 3.8734 | .8618 | .1162 |
| | Female | 160 | 3.8727 | .8065 | .0907 |
| SQ18 | Male | 94 | 2.4000 | 1.1483 | .1548 |
| | Female | 160 | 2.6329 | 1.1343 | .1276 |
| SQ19 | Male | 94 | 2.2000 | 1.0955 | .1477 |
| | Female | 160 | 2.4304 | 1.0941 | .1231 |
| SQ20 | Male | 94 | 3.1818 | .9446 | .1274 |
| | Female | 160 | 3.0000 | 1.0500 | .1181 |
| SQ22 | Male | 94 | 3.6182 | .9127 | .1230 |
| | Female | 160 | 3.2025 | .9920 | .1116 |

TABLE 8

Independent samples test of hypothesis 2

| | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | |
|------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference |
| SQ15 | Equal variances assumed | 3.893 | 268 | .000 | .4885 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | 3.915 | 241.398 | .000 | .4885 |
| SQ16 | Equal variances assumed | -.733 | 268 | .464 | -.0915 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | -.713 | 212.606 | .476 | -.0915 |
| SQ18 | Equal variances assumed | 2.769 | 268 | .006 | .3361 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | 2.760 | 233.902 | .006 | .3361 |
| SQ19 | Equal variances assumed | -3.536 | 268 | .000 | -.3996 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | -3.442 | 212.928 | .001 | -.3996 |
| SQ20 | Equal variances assumed | 1.745 | 268 | .082 | .2072 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | 1.745 | 236.551 | .082 | .2072 |
| SQ22 | Equal variances assumed | 2.465 | 132 | .015 | 2.4650 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | 2.502 | 122.151 | .014 | 2.5020 |

TABLE 9

Two-way ANOVA of between-subjects factors

| | | Value | |
|--------|------|--------|-----|
| | | Label | N |
| Region | 1.00 | Asia | 254 |
| | 2.00 | West | 214 |
| Gender | 1.00 | Male | 205 |
| | 2.00 | Female | 263 |

TABLE 10

Two-way ANOVA tests of between-subjects effects

Dependent Variable: Individualism

| Source | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Partial Eta Squared |
|-----------------|-------------------------|-----|-------------|----------|------|---------------------|
| Corrected Model | 38.022 ^a | 3 | 12.674 | 9.250 | .000 | .578 |
| Intercept | 4299.405 | 1 | 4299.405 | 3137.838 | .000 | .785 |
| Region | 6.598 | 1 | 6.598 | 4.816 | .000 | .560 |
| Gender | 26.636 | 1 | 26.636 | 19.440 | .019 | .289 |
| Region * Gender | .028 | 1 | .028 | .020 | .047 | .009 |
| Error | 635.764 | 464 | 1.370 | | | |
| Total | 5266.000 | 468 | | | | |
| Corrected Total | 673.786 | 467 | | | | |

a. R Squared = .056 (Adjusted R Squared = .050)

TABLE 11
Post hoc tests - region

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Individualism
Tukey HSD

| (I) Region | (J) Region | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|------------|------|-------------------------|-------------|
| | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| Americas | Europe | .2687* | .0920 | .030 | .0167 | .5206 |
| | East Asia | 1.6377* | .0932 | .000 | 1.3825 | 1.8929 |
| | South East Asia | 1.6962* | .0841 | .000 | 1.4660 | 1.9265 |
| | South Asia | 1.2481 | .4799 | .072 | -.0663 | 2.5624 |
| Europe | Americas | -.2687* | .0920 | .030 | -.5206 | -.0167 |
| | East Asia | 1.3690* | .0945 | .000 | 1.1104 | 1.6277 |
| | South East Asia | 1.4276* | .0855 | .000 | 1.1935 | 1.6617 |
| | South Asia | .9794 | .4802 | .249 | -.3356 | 2.2944 |
| East Asia | Americas | -1.6377* | .0932 | .000 | -1.8929 | -1.3825 |
| | Europe | -1.3690* | .0945 | .000 | -1.6277 | -1.1104 |
| | South East Asia | .0586 | .0868 | .962 | -.1790 | .2962 |
| | South Asia | -.3896 | .4804 | .927 | -1.7052 | .9260 |
| South East Asia | Americas | -1.6962* | .0841 | .000 | -1.9265 | -1.4660 |
| | Europe | -1.4276* | .0855 | .000 | -1.6617 | -1.1935 |
| | East Asia | -.0586 | .0868 | .962 | -.2962 | .1790 |
| | South Asia | -.4482 | .4787 | .883 | -1.7592 | .8628 |
| South Asia | Americas | -1.2481 | .4799 | .072 | -2.5624 | .0663 |
| | Europe | -.9794 | .4802 | .249 | -2.2944 | .3356 |
| | East Asia | .3896 | .4804 | .927 | -.9260 | 1.7052 |
| | South East Asia | .4482 | .4787 | .883 | -.8628 | 1.7592 |

Based on observed means.

The error term is Mean Square (Error) = .452.

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

TABLE 12

Homogeneous subsets

| Individualism | | Subset | |
|----------------------------|-----|--------|--------|
| Tukey HSD ^{a,b,c} | | | |
| regions_4 | N | Subset | |
| | | 1 | 2 |
| South East Asia | 153 | 2.4090 | |
| East Asia | 99 | 2.4675 | |
| South Asia | 2 | 2.8571 | |
| Europe | 104 | | 3.8365 |
| Americas | 110 | | 4.1052 |
| Sig. | | .602 | .910 |

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

Based on observed means.

The error term is Mean Square (Error) = .452.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 9.340.

b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

c. Alpha = 0.05.

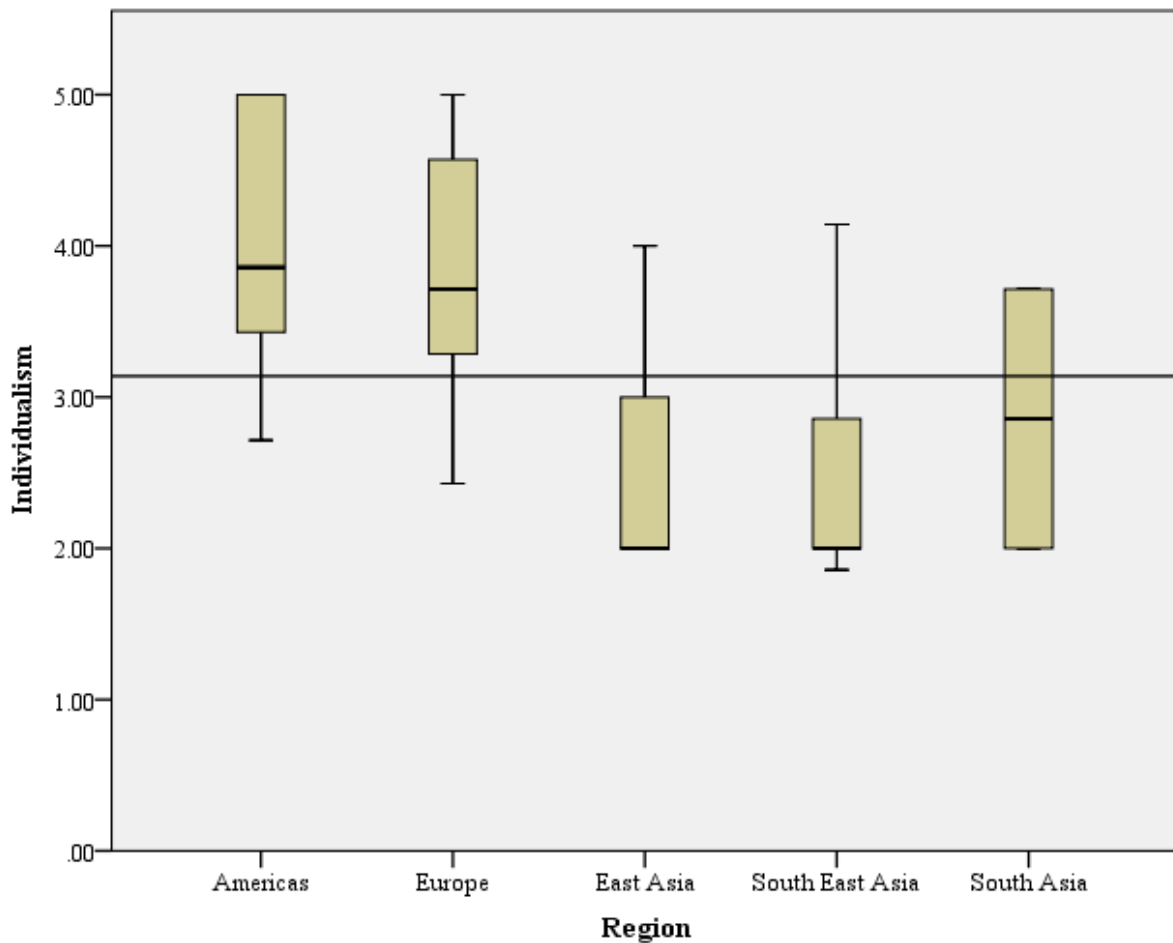


FIGURE 1. Boxplot diagram of homogeneous subsets

Findings

As appeared by the result shown in Table 8, 4 out of 6 tested questions could be rejected since they showed probability below 0.05. Consequently, our group could reject the null overall and take the alternative, which means Asian males and females are not equally individualistic.

By further looking into the test result, our group could say Asian males are relatively more individualistic than Asian females, since they had higher mean values in 4 out of 6 tested questions (See Table 7).

The actual result of the two-way ANOVA was used to analyze whether either of the two independent variables or their interaction are statistically significant. In Tests of Between-Subjects Effects shown in Table 10, we look into 3 rows: our two main effects (region and gender) and one interaction effect (region * gender). The result shows from the interaction that the effect of region is not the same for all gender, there is a 0.047 probability having significant P-value of finding our sample results. When looking into the main effects, both of which have $p = 0.000$ and $p = 0.019$. Partial eta squared is 0.56 for region and 0.289 for gender. That is, the relative impact of region is more than twice as strong as gender. Last but not least, adjusted r squared tells us that 50% of the variance in individualism is attributable to region and gender. It is a high value, indicating strong relationships between our factors and individualism.

The Table 11 shows if the difference between each pair of means is statistically significant. It also includes 95% confidence intervals for these differences.

The Homogeneous subsets table in Table 12 shows which groups have same mean and which one have different mean. It is noticeable that South East Asia, East Asia and South Asia are in subset 1 and Europe and Americas are in subset 2. Within a subset there is no significance different while between subsets there is a significant difference. It was also illustrated in Figure 1.

Conclusion and Business Implications

Our findings remind businesses that while Asians may be the collectivist in general, it varies in degrees between genders. Consequently, it calls for further tailoring of any marketing strategies it wishes to embark on. Aspects of a product that affiliates the customer to a specific group could be even more strongly emphasized when a marketing campaign targeted at females is launched for example. Should resources permit, companies could even introduce two slightly different versions of a same product to better cater to different genders.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

As Asia comprises of many different countries that each has its own unique culture, future studies could further narrow the scope to that of certain regions, such as

Southeast Asia, or even to specific countries where its market size holds great weight in the world's economy.

Examples of which are China and India. Another constraint is that even though we asked the country of origin and region, there can be biases when purchasing a product as their surroundings and the environment they live in can indeed influence the way they perceive and think in a different style regardless of their original cultural attachment. With discussions about how globalization is affecting cultures around the globe, we could also study how consumers' emphasis on product's affiliation to a group has changed over time.

OVERALL CONCLUSION

Although the general principles of individualist and collectivist cultures have received a lot of attention, there are still many aspects that need to be investigated further. To uncover distinctions between individualist and collectivist societies, we used the intriguing concept that some characteristics of a product have group affiliation for this study. Zooming in onto Asians then have us conclude that despite the collectivist culture, males are more individualistic in nature as compared to females. However, as globalization continues to increase interactions between people of different cultures, one question remains: will individualist and collectivist cultures become less and less prominent over time? For that, we shall leave the future to behold.

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| No. | Questions | Likert-Type Scales | | | | |
|-----|--|--------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| | | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 10. | I often consult other people to help choose the best alternative available from a product class. | | | | | |
| 11. | I rarely purchase the latest fashion styles until I am sure my friends approve of them. | | | | | |
| 12. | I am very cautious in trying new or different products. | | | | | |
| 13. | I often identify with other people by purchasing the same products and brands they purchase. | | | | | |
| 14. | I rarely buy brands about which I am uncertain how well they perform. | | | | | |
| 15. | I purchase the latest fashion styles no matter if my friends like those or not. | | | | | |
| 16. | When buying products, I generally purchase those brands that I think are good for me. | | | | | |
| 17. | I feel the sense of belonging when purchasing the same brands that others purchase. | | | | | |
| 18. | The purchase of a brand or product I like is a manifestation of self-realization. | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|-----|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 19. | When I go to a shopping mall, I feel it is safer to the shop or store I am familiar with. | | | | | |
| 20. | I usually buy the same kind of products on a regular basis. | | | | | |
| 21. | If I have little experience with a product, I often ask my friends about the product. | | | | | |
| 22. | I frequently gather information from open sources about a product before I buy. | | | | | |
| 23. | I would rather prioritize on the brand identify over other criteria. | | | | | |
| 24. | If other people can see me using a product, I often purchase the brand they expect me to buy. | | | | | |
| 25. | To make sure I buy the right product or brand, I often observe what others are buying and using. | | | | | |
| 26. | I am always happy and excited to use time in shopping. | | | | | |