



THE EFFECTS OF HOFSTEDÉ'S DIMENSIONS OF CULTURE ON CONSUMER PURCHASE DECISIONS AMONGST THE KIPSIGIS COMMUNITY: A CASE STUDY OF BOMET COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract

The rapidly increasing complexity and dynamics of consumers has led marketers, practitioners and academics alike, to seek a deeper understanding of how consumers and markets differ in their ways of making purchase decisions. There are numerous studies concerning behavioural differences in consumer decision making across nations, however much these studies have made significant contributions towards understanding differences between nations, there appears to be a gap in the literature about sub-cultural differences within national boundaries. This study therefore, sought to fill the gap by contributing to the understanding of the research on how intra-national cultures such as the Kipsigis culture influence purchase decisions. The general objective of the study was to establish the influence of Hofstede's dimensions of culture on consumer purchase decisions amongst the Kipsigis community. The scope of the study was limited to a set of two independent variables i.e. individualism/collectivism and uncertainty avoidance, which was measured against consumer purchase decision which was the dependent variable. Data for the study was collected from a selected sub-location in Bomet County where respondents were drawn from adult household members from the sub-location. Theoretical literature related to the study was reviewed to link influences of Hofstede's dimensions of culture on consumer purchase decisions. A descriptive research design was adopted to carry out the study. The study targeted a population of the Kipsigis people. Purposive sampling was employed to select the Kipsigis community of Bomet County as the respondents. The researcher used multi-stage sampling to select a sub-location and simple random sampling to select the respondents. Questionnaires were administered to collect the data. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences computer software version 22. Multiple regressions were also used in measuring the effect of Hofstede's dimensions of culture on consumer purchase among the Kipsigis community. From the results Hofstede's dimensions of culture on consumer purchase behaviour manifested in Individualism or Collectivism aspect of members of the society was observed to have influence on the purchasing decision making. The results demonstrate that most of the expected relationships were present in the data. The multiple regression model of Consumer Purchase Decision on the two independent variables showed positive significant effect of Individualism/Collectivism, on Consumer Purchase Decision. However the impact of uncertainty avoidance was not significant in the model.

Key Words: *Individualism, Collectivism, Uncertainty Avoidance, Kipsigis Community Consumer Purchase decisions*

INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

Culture is a powerful force in regulating human behaviour (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1997). The impact of culture is so natural and automatic that its influence on consumer behaviour is usually taken for granted. Often, it is only when we are exposed to people with different cultural values or customs that we become aware of how culture has moulded our own behaviour. Precisely because it shapes behaviour, the understanding of culture is crucial when it comes to consumer marketing. The recognition of its importance has led to an increasing amount of research across cultures (Sojka and Tansuhaj, 1995).

Michael *et al* (2002) defined culture as the accumulation of shared meanings, rituals, norms and traditions among members of organizations or societies. The influence of culture on consumption was first emphasized by Max Weber at the beginning of the twentieth century. As Weber famously argued, Protestantism encouraged a culture that emphasized individualism, achievement motivation, legitimating of entrepreneurial vocations, rationality, asceticism, and self-reliance. This ethic was a fundamental element of the spirit of modern capitalism (Weber, 1976).

This study will only address the first two dimensions. The first dimension is individualism/collectivism which is widely acknowledged as a defining element of culture. In individualistic societies people are expected to look out for themselves, whereas in collectivist societies there is a greater emphasis on group welfare and loyalty. Individualists value independence and self-expression, and tend to believe that personal goals and interests are more important than group interests. In contrast, collectivists tend to view themselves as members of an extended family or organization, place group

interests ahead of individual needs, and value reciprocation of favours and respect for tradition.

The second dimension is uncertainty avoidance. This represents the extent to which people feel uncomfortable or threatened by ambiguous and uncertain situations, and thus create belief systems and institutions in order to promote conformity. Societies with higher levels of uncertainty avoidance place greater value on security (e.g., financial, social), feel a greater need for consensus and written rules, and are intolerant of deviations from the norm. In contrast, individuals with low uncertainty avoidance rely less on written rules and are more risk tolerant.

Statement of the problem

Hofstede's framework is the most widely used cultural framework in psychology, sociology, marketing, and management studies (Sojka and Tansuhaj, 1995). Hofstede's studies, however, assume that the domestic population is a homogenous whole yet most nations are groups of ethnic units. The outcomes of Hofstede's analysis thus have a possibility of arbitrariness and often ignore the importance of community and the variations of community influences. There are numerous studies concerning behavioural differences in consumers across nations that have applied Hofstede's dimensions. These include Brass (1991); McCarty and Hattwick(1991); Hafstrom et al. (1992); Lynn et al. (1993); Nakata and Sivakumar(1996); Chu et al. (1999); Steenkamp, Hofstede et al. (1999); and Husted (2000), among others. These studies too have concentrated on cultures across nations. There appears to be a gap in the literature about the influence of sub-culture on consumer purchase decisions within national boundaries

In Kenya Bwisa and Ndolo (2011) conducted research on the influence of culture on entrepreneurship development among the Kamba in Kenya. No study has been done specifically on

the influence of sub-culture on consumer purchase decisions. This study will, therefore, be seeking to fill the knowledge gap by contributing to the understanding of how sub-cultures such as the Kipsigis culture in Kenya influence purchase decisions.

Objectives of the study

The general objective of the study was to establish the effects of Hofstede's dimensions of culture on consumer purchase decisions amongst the Kipsigis community. The specific objectives of the study were to determine the effect of individualism/collectivism and uncertainty avoidance on consumer purchase decisions among the Kipsigis.

Research Questions

- i) How does individualism/collectivism affect purchase decisions among the Kipsigis?
- ii) How does uncertainty avoidance affect purchase decisions among the Kipsigis?

Scope of the Study

The study was limited to a set of two independent variables, i.e.; individualism/collectivism and uncertainty avoidance. These two variables form a set of cultural dimensions proposed by Geert Hofstede (1980) as cultural factors within a society that may influence purchase decisions. All these were measured against the dependent variable: Consumer Purchase decision. Data for the study was collected from respondents drawn from households from Tumoi sub-location, Sigor Location, Sigor Division and Chepalungu District in Bomet County.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory

Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory is a framework for cross-cultural communication, developed by Geert Hofstede. It describes the effects of a society's culture on the values of its

members, and how these values relate to behaviour, using a structure derived from factor analysis. The theory has been widely used in several fields as a paradigm for research, particularly in cross-cultural psychology, international management, and cross-cultural communication.

Indeed, Hofstede's framework has been applied in a wide variety of consumer marketing contexts, e.g. in studies of advertising (Alden *et al.*, 1993; Gregory and Munch, 1997; Zandpour *et al.*, 1994); complaint behaviour (Liu and McClure, 2001; Mattila and Patterson, 2004); global brand strategies (Roth, 1995); consumer innovativeness (Steenkamp *et al.*, 1999); impulsive buying (Kacen and Lee, 2002); persuasion (Aaker and Maheswaran, 1997); acceptance of new products and innovations (Yeniyurt and Townsend, 2003; Singh, 2006); service quality expectations (Laroche *et al.*, 2005); ethical decision making (Blodgett *et al.*, 2001); and in studies of Chinese consumers (Piron, 2006); among others.

Hofstede (1991) defined culture as the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another. The mental programming referred to by Hofstede consists of shared values, beliefs and norms. These mental constructs influence how people socialized within a particular culture perceive events; they also help to determine what behaviours are considered appropriate or inappropriate in various social situations. Since the mental programming is shared, i.e. developed through years of socialization within a culture, it results in relatively predictable responses to commonly experienced social situations or contexts. These characteristic patterns of behaviour create differences between cultures that may be observed and the influence of cultural differences on social processes such as entrepreneurship may be predicted if the underlying social values and norms are known. In

a massive study encompassing fifty-three countries, Hofstede (1991) identified two value-oriented dimensions of culture that may be used to describe and explain aspects of behaviour in various cultural groups. These dimensions are: (1) individualism/collectivism, (2) uncertainty avoidance,

Individualism/ Collectivism

This refers to “the relationship between the individual and the collectivity that prevails in a given society” (Hofstede, 1980). It is reflected in the way people live together, and is intimately linked to societal norms (Hofstede, 1980). Individualism pertains to societies where ties between people are loose, and everyone is expected only to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family. Collectivism on the other hand, refers to societies in which people are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people’s lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty (Hofstede, 1991).

There is value implications involved here. For example, in some cultures, individualism is widely accepted and seen as a blessing, while in other cultures, they regard individualism as alienating and as a character flaw. The focal issue involved here is the element of self- concept, and this differs across Western and Asian cultures (Hofstede, 1980). For instance, the Chinese have a word *ren* for “man” to describe a “human constant”. This refers to the individual himself, and his societal and cultural surroundings which make his existence meaningful. In society, this affects not only people’s mental programming, but also the structure and functioning of institutions such as the family, religious and political aspects.

The consumer behaviours associated with the cultural dimension of individualism/collectivism are all pertaining to the behaviour of people in

groups, their relationships with others and their perceptions of themselves in relation to others. These consumer behaviours are reference group influence, information sharing, self-concept, family orientation, opinion leadership and ethnocentrism.

Reference groups: Park and Lessig (1977) defined a reference group to be an actual or imaginary individual or group conceived of having significant relevance upon an individual’s evaluations, aspirations or behaviour. There are three ways reference groups can influence behaviour: informational, value expressive and utilitarian (Park and Lessig, 1977). Reference groups have also been defined as groups which the individual takes as a frame of reference for self-evaluation and attitude formation (Witt, 1970). According to Gregory and Munch (1996), individuals in a collectivist culture feel that it is important to conform to the goals of a collective in-group such as the family, tribe or religious group. In addition, people who are of a collectivist culture participate in more group activities, are more concerned with the interests of the in-group, and feel a greater need to conform to in-group opinions (Hui and Triandis, 1986).

As the extent of reference group influence depends on group identity and behaviour, there exists the possibility that the cultural dimension of individualism/collectivism plays a role in interpersonal influence in consumption behaviour. Shaw (1971) studied the effects of communications and individual interactions on group cohesiveness and found that the greater the group cohesiveness, the more influence reference groups have in consumption behaviour. In other words, people in a collectivist culture want to belong and want to conform to an in-group. And because of this need, they are correspondingly more inclined to be influenced by members of the same in-group.

In a study by Childers and Rao (1992), the influence of the family on individuals' product and brand decisions in the United States (an individualistic country), and Thailand (a collectivist country) was examined. It was found that the influence of referents other than family members was relatively less powerful in extended families (in Thailand) compared to nuclear families (in the United States). For instance in Thailand, the relatively larger number and variety of family members such as uncles, aunts and cousins creates a family-based identity and thus reduces peer influence. This supports the suggestion that a collectivist country will be more influenced by members of the in-group, in this case the extended family. In a study on Hispanic ethnic identification on reference group influence conducted by Webster and Faircloth III (1994), it was found that people who identified strongly with their ethnic roots were significantly more likely to be subject to utilitarian or value-expressive influence. They also had a higher tendency to be influenced by the expectations of close acquaintances and family members in brand selection. In other words, they were more influenced by people they considered as members of their in-group.

Hence, it can be seen that people in a collectivist culture have a greater need to conform to the opinions and expectations of the members of their in-group. A greater group identity or a more cohesive group allows for a greater influence by group members on an individual's product choices and buying decisions.

Information Sharing: Information sharing is defined as the extent with which individuals transmit information to others about consumption domains (Hirschman, 1983). It looks at the degree to which individuals share information or involve the people around them in their search for information on consumption and buying behaviour. It is also dependent upon social ties and social influence. People in a closely-knit group will be more inclined to share information

with the people around them as compared to those who are individualistic. Hirschman (1981) conducted a study on Jewish ethnicity and information seeking and processing. In the study, it was suggested that a person of Jewish ethnicity would exert a stronger effect on a fellow Jew's behaviour compared to non-Jews. This is because a Jew is thought to be born into a culture and religion, and is therefore expected to adhere to the ethnic dimensions. Because of this common identity, they are more collectivistic than non-Jews. It was found that the Jewish subjects indeed differed significantly from non-Jewish subjects in information seeking, product information transfer and cognitive characteristics relevant to consumption information processing.

This is consistent with the premise that culture is one of the determinant factors in information sharing. Similarly, Webster (1992) concluded that ethnic identification, which resulted in a more collective identity, had a significant effect on information search patterns as the respondents sought the advice of family members and other members of the in-group before they made any purchases.

Therefore, information sharing is a consumer behaviour that differs across cultures, depending on the propensity to share such information. And a more collective group, which values ties within the in-group, will result in individuals who are more inclined to use people from within the group as their information sources compared to individualistic people, who do not seek information from the people around them that frequently.

Self- Concept: Self- concept can be defined as a cognitive appraisal of the attributes about oneself (Hattie, 1992), and it both mediates and regulates behaviour. In an individualistic culture, the emphasis is on self- orientation and identity is based on the individual (Hofstede, 1980). In a collectivist culture, the orientation is on collectivity and identity is derived from the social

system (Hofstede, 1980). Research has shown that there are two constructs of the self that can be identified in people. In Western societies, the independent self- concept is predominant (Abe et al, 1996), and inferences of identity are usually based on individual characteristics such as age, occupation, behaviour and material symbols of status (Belk, 1984a). This is characterized by an emphasis on personal goals and achievement (Abe et al, 1996). Hence, people with the independent self- concept tend to see themselves as distinct individuals.

The other construct is the interdependent self- concept. This is commonly found in non-Western cultures (Abe et al, 1996). This idea of self- concept involves inferences that are based on group characteristics such as family background, and national historical achievements. The concept of interdependent self is shaped mainly by the fact that people are part of a cohesive whole, family, clan or nation (Belk, 1984a). It was found that the interdependent self- concept is characterized by greater emphasis on group goals, fitting in with others, and understanding others. Such people tend to be obedient, socio-centric, and relationship oriented (Abe et al, 1996). For instance, the Japanese conceptualizations of the self were more integrated and less distinct compared to the Americans (Abe et al, 1996).

Family Orientation: As a sense of belonging and maintenance of good relationships with others commands an important role in a collectivist society, it can be seen that family orientation is a critical aspect of collectivism. In an individualistic culture, people have a self- identity rather than identity that is developed from the social system (Hofstede, 1980). Correspondingly, they will rank lower when it comes to family orientation. This is evident from research on lifestyle aspects. Tai and Tam (1997) found that women in Taiwan and China were significantly more family oriented than women from Hong Kong. This was attributed to

the fact that Taiwanese and Chinese women were more influenced by Confucianism than women in Hong Kong. As a result, their philosophy of living emphasized the family system, and they had a strong sense of family responsibility. On the other hand, Hong Kong women were fully exposed to the Western culture and this resulted in them being more individualistic and less family oriented.

In another study by Lee and Ro Um (1992), it was found that the major difference between Koreans and Americans in their evaluations of product attributes was the different weights each put on the importance of the family. Koreans tended to be more family oriented in their product evaluations than the Americans. This meant that the products were selected according to their family's needs, rather than their own personal wants. It was suggested that the discriminating variable of individualism versus collectivism was the factor that accounted for this difference.

Opinion Leadership: This refers to the tendency of individuals to influence the attitudes and purchasing choices of others (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1997). The strength of the relationships between individuals is the key motivation in an opinion leadership process as the opinion leader has nothing to gain from sharing the information. It thus implies that people in a closely knit community will be more willing to share their opinions with others in the same group. and Horridge (1997) found that there was a significant difference in shopping opinion leadership between high and low acculturated Chinese, and Filipino-Americans in America. This was attributed to the fact that Asians typically value family, group and clan relationships (Yau, 1988). As a result, they tend to share consumer advice with people in their in-group. As they become acculturated in a country like America, they adopt some of the individualistic values, and ties within the in-group become less important. Thus, they are less

inclined to give shopping advice and suggestions to others (Ownbey and Horridge, 1997).

Ethnocentrism: The concept of ethnocentrism represents the universal propensity for people to view their own group as the centre of the universe, to elucidate other social units from the perspective of their own group, and to reject people who are culturally dissimilar while blindly accepting those who are culturally like themselves (Booth 1979; Worchel and Cooper, 1979).

In other words, ethnocentrism is a system whereby people distinguish between social in-groups with which they identify and out-groups which they regard as very different (Shimp and Sharma, 1987). Therefore, ethnocentrism gives an individual a sense of identity and feelings of belongingness. Thus it can be suggested that a collectivist culture, which places a greater emphasis on group identity and “we” consciousness will show a greater tendency of ethnocentrism.

Uncertainty Avoidance

A basic fact of human life is the uncertainty regarding the future and the means and ways through which human beings try to cope with this uncertainty using technology, law and religion. But we will always face an uncertain future and we are conscious of it. Furthermore, as extreme uncertainty causes anxiety and stress, society has to develop ways to cope with living on the brink of an uncertain future. Technology, law and religion thus become the means through which we defend ourselves against this prevailing uncertainty (Hofstede, 1980).

Uncertainty avoidance can be defined as the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations (Hofstede, 1991). It also addresses the methods in which society tackles unknown aspects of the future. Different societies and cultures deal with uncertainty in different ways, and these are

transferred and reinforced through institutions such as the state, the school and the family. And they are reflected in the collectively held values of the people in each particular society. For instance, technology, rules and rituals are some of the ways of coping with uncertainty in organizations.

One of the main concepts behind uncertainty avoidance is the ability to tolerate risk. Therefore, when identifying the consumer behaviours related to uncertainty avoidance, it is necessary to determine those with an element of risk or uncertainty involved as these will be the behaviours most affected. Hence, Hofstede theories of consumer behaviours discussed below are perceived risk, brand loyalty, innovativeness and information search.

Perceived Risk: The concept of perceived risk has been defined as consumers’ perceptions of the uncertainty and the adverse consequences of buying a product or service (Dowling and Staelin, 1994). In making purchase decisions, risk is involved because all consumers have buying goals associated with the purchase. When consumers feel that these goals may or may not be attained in a purchase, risk comes in (Hoover et al. 1978). Therefore, the greater the sense of uncertainty the consumer perceives in a purchase and the greater the consequences of buying the wrong product, the greater the perceived risk experienced by consumers.

Perceived risk thus corresponds to the cultural concept of uncertainty avoidance. Individuals high in uncertainty avoidance have a lower tolerance for ambiguity, and experience higher anxiety and stress in their lives. In addition, they are also less willing to take risks in life. Therefore, when these people perceive a high risk associated with a product, they will not purchase this product. They will look for less risky alternatives.

Brand Loyalty: Brand loyalty refers to the consistent preference and purchase of the same brand in a specific product or service category (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1997). It was found that diverse consumer groups associated brand loyalty with risk (Hoover et al, 1978) and this association is a positive relationship (Kanwar and Pagiavlas, 1992). In other words, when consumers perceive that the risk associated with a particular product or service category is high, they will tend to remain loyal to one brand so as to minimize the uncertainty and any unpleasant consequences that may occur as a result of the switching of brands.

Kanwar and Pagiavlas (1992) found that U.S. and Indian consumers use brand loyalty as a method of reducing risk. Hui et al. (1993) studied fourteen lifestyle variables involving English, French, Italian and Greek Canadians and found significant differences in thirteen of the variables, including brand loyalty. Thus, brand loyalty stems from the level of uncertainty and ambiguity an individual is willing to tolerate in life. This relates to the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance and has been shown to differ across cultures.

Innovativeness: Innovativeness can be defined as the willingness of consumers to adopt new products in various consumption domains (Hirschman, 1981). This is related to the ability to tolerate risk and uncertainty. Intuitively, individuals who cannot tolerate risk and ambiguity will not be inclined to seek new products and therefore will not be innovators. In this case, these are the people high in uncertainty avoidance as they cannot tolerate ambiguity in their lives.

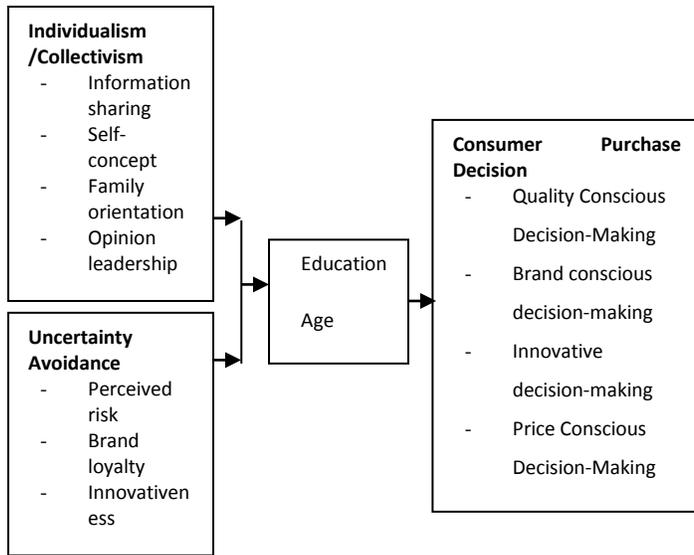
A study by Rogers (1957) found that the willingness to accept change and the degree of rigidity of individuals were significantly related to their adoption of new products. Hui et al. (1993) found significant differences between different

cultural groups and their brand and product innovativeness. One contributing factor could be differences in fate orientation. Individuals who were more fatalistic were also more likely to avoid uncertain situations. In addition, the degree of religious commitment was also found to have a weak effect on the level of innovativeness (Tansuhaj et al. 1991). Therefore, innovativeness is dependent on the propensity of an individual to tolerate the risk and uncertainty associated with a new or totally different product.

Information search: An individual who has less tolerance for ambiguity and a low propensity for risk taking will also have a need to engage in a thorough information search before he purchases any new product. This also applies for any product which may cause unpleasant consequences if a wrong buying decision is made. In other words, information search takes place when there is a high level of uncertainty associated with a purchase. (Hirschman, 1983).

The ability to tolerate risk and uncertainty has been shown to influence consumers' information search behaviours (Garner and Thompson, 1986). Hirschman (1983) also found that there were significant differences between cultures in information transfer which can be linked to the degree of uncertainty avoidance in each culture. In other words, a person who rates more highly in uncertainty avoidance will tend to seek out more information sources so as to minimize any uncertainty involved in the purchase.

Conceptual Framework



Independent variables Moderating variables Dependent variable

Figure 1 Conceptual framework

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researcher adopted a method Kacen and Lee (2002) method, where he conducted a preliminary research to measure the cultural aspects among the Kipsigis. A sample of forty people was randomly selected and the researcher adapted and modified the instrument from a study by Hofstede (1984) to suit the objectives of this study. The finding was that the Kipsigis community is 60.5% power distance, 92% portraying high uncertainty avoidance, 85.5% individualists, 69.38% collectivists and 48.75%.

In the main study, the researcher adopted descriptive research design for the purpose of accessing the study’s general intent. In descriptive design, present and past states of events are identified and the experience and expectations of the researcher are relied upon (Tyagi and Kumar, 2008).

Population of Study

The study’s target population was the Kipsigis people who are the principal occupants of the larger Bomet, Kericho, Nakuru and Narok counties of Kenya. The study purposively targeted Bomet County which has a population of 730,129 and 111,258 households (2009 census). The population of this study comprised all the households in the County where purchase activities and decisions are made. The researcher only targeted adult members of the household to comprise the population of the study. The decision to study adult members of the household was based on the assumption that these people are in a position to make purchase decisions. It was not possible, however, that the entire population is covered due to the expansiveness of the area and the population size. The researcher sampled a section of the population.

Sampling Procedure

Bomet County has 141,401 households from 173 sub-locations, 63 locations, 11 divisions, and 4 Districts. Only one sub-location (Tumoi) was sampled for the purpose of this study. This is based on Hofstede’s (2001) argument that in a homogeneous population with similar characteristics, findings are always similar. The researcher assumes that this being a homogenous population, sampling one sub-location will lead to findings that can be generalized across the entire Kipsigis community.

To select the households that constitute the sample units a multi stage sampling method was used. According to Kothari (2009), a multi-stage sampling method is applied in big inquiries extending to a considerably large geographical area, say, the entire county. This method was easier and cheaper to administer than most single stage designs mainly because of the fact that a sampling frame under multi-stage sampling is developed in partial units. Hofstede (2001) and a number of other scholars applying his model used

this method. Most of their arguments indicate that a large number of units can be sampled for a given cost because of sequential clustering, whereas this is not possible in most of the simple designs. The researcher selected Chepalungu, one of the four Districts in Bomet County using simple random sampling. This was done using lottery method. Each of the four District's names was written on a bottle top. The bottle tops were placed in a bowl and thoroughly mixed. Then, researcher blind-folded himself and selected one of the tops which happened to bear the name of Chepalungu District. From the chosen District, Sigor Division was selected using the same method (ditto above) while locations within the Division were used to randomly select Kapkesosio location randomly and subsequently Tumoi sub-location with a total of 613 households was selected using simple random sampling method as shown in the table below.

In the final stage, the households that formed the basic sampling units (BSU) were selected using systematic random sampling. The researcher obtained a list of all households from the local administration area (Assistant Chief) and households were picked in intervals using the following formula:

Sample Size

A sample was used for this study. To determine the sample size, the statistical formula suggested by Saunders et al (2004) was used. They observed that sample size depends how confident the researcher needs to be that the estimate is accurate (the level of confidence in the estimate); how accurate the estimate needs to be (the margin of error); and the proportion of responses you expect to have some particular characteristic. Hence the sample size of 236.

Data Collection

To achieve the objectives of the study, primary data was collected using a self-administered

questionnaire. Closed Likert-type scales (Appendix I) was used to collect the data regarding the research variables. Questionnaires were given to one adult member of the household with preference given to either the husband or wife, depending on who is considered to be the key purchase decision maker. Where a respondent was unable to read or write or understand the questions, they were assisted.

Data Analysis

The data collected was edited, coded and analysed using SPSS version 21 package in three stages. Descriptive statistics such as the means and standard deviations was calculated to summarize the data. Multiple regression analysis was used.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Gender of the respondents

The distribution of respondents according to their gender is presented as the households 64 % were males as compared to 36% of Women. The male dominance can be attributed to the fact that men are key decision makers in this community.

Marital status

The study findings indicate that Most (59.7%) of the respondents were married, 33% were single, 6.8% are widowed while 0.5% were divorced as shown in the table 4.1

Age of the respondents

Age of the respondents was also thought to be a crucial component for the study. The study findings revealed that most of the respondents are over 40 years while the youngest was 18 years.

Level of education of households

Distribution by the respondents' level of education revealed that most of the respondents (47.6%) had attained secondary education while 20.4% had post secondary education. However, a significant number of respondents (12.1%)

reported not to have had formal education. How the Cultural dimensions affects Consumer Purchase Decisions

This section presents a descriptive statistics on the effects of Hofstede cultural dimensions i.e. individualism vs. collectivism and uncertainty avoidance, on purchase decision among the Kipsigis community

Individualism/ Collectivism

To measure the effects of individualism and collectivism on purchase decisions, the respondents were presented with eight statements on a Likert scale and asked to state how much they agreed or disagreed with each statement. The responses ranged from Always, Usually, Sometimes, Rarely to Never.

From the results in the figure 4.2, majority of the respondents sometimes (37%) consulted while (17%) rarely consulted, and (5%) never consulted their parents on need related problems. On the other hand, the remainder of the respondents 22% did consult (usually 30% + always 11%). On the statement that "I buy products based on family needs rather than my personal wants" majority of the respondents (78%, usually + always) were of the view that they prioritize family needs as opposed to personal wants, while the remainder 22% rarely considered family needs while purchasing. On the statement "I consult my close friends and get their Ideas before making purchase decisions", majority of the respondents 49%, sometimes and 23% rarely consult my close friends while 17% and 12% usually and always consult their friends respectively. Asked if they sacrifice their self interest for the benefit of group or family, most of the respondents (58%, (usually 27% + always 31%)) sacrifice their self-interest for the benefit of group/ family when making buying decisions. On the other hand, only 42% (i.e. 27% sometimes and 15% rarely) sacrifice their self-interest for the benefit of group/ family when making buying decisions. On the statement "I consider myself a

unique person separate from others when making purchase decisions", most of the respondents, 47%, sometimes do, 9% rarely while 32% never considered themselves unique persons, separate from others while making purchase decisions. On the other hand, only 12% (i.e. 2% usually and 10% always) considered themselves unique persons, separate from others while making purchase decisions. When respondents were asked if they considered their family welfare to be more important than individual rewards, majority of the respondents (75%, (i.e. 24% usually and 51% always) reported to consider family welfare to be more important than individual rewards when making purchase decision while only 34% (i.e. 14% sometimes and 10% rarely). On the statement "It is important for me to act as an independent person", most of the respondents (55%, (i.e. 31% usually and 22% always)) considered it important for them to act as independent persons when making purchasing decisions. Majority of them 42% sometimes acted independently while a few i.e. 1% rarely and 4% never acted independently when making purchasing decisions. Asked if they were able to take care of themselves as a primary concern as they make purchase decisions, majority of the respondents (64% (i.e. 63% always and 1% usually)) take care of themselves is a primary concern for them when making purchase decisions, while 36% (i.e. 28% sometimes, 2% rarely and 6 % never). Take care of themselves is a primary concern for them when making purchase decisions. Figure 2 shows the findings

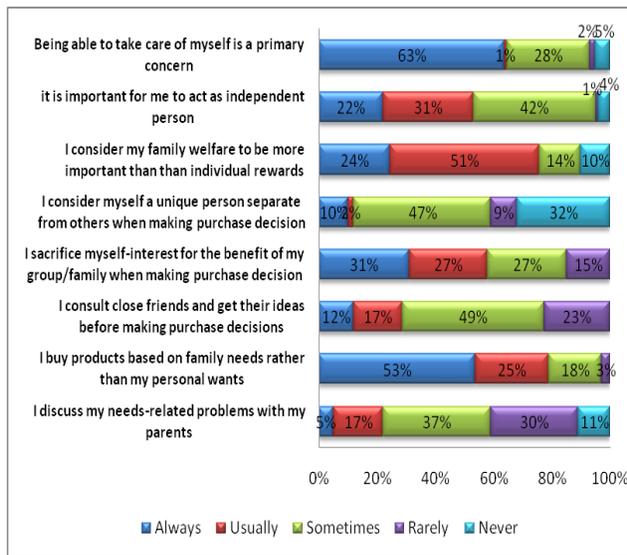


Figure 1: Individualism/collectivism

In order to measure the moderating effects of gender and education level on the effects individualism/collectivism on purchasing decisions were averaged per statement and responses displayed as indices in the table below. A value close to 1 indicated strong agreement with the statement (always) while one closer to 5 indicated strong disagreement (never).

Across the respondents gender and Level of Education great discrepancies in responses were not observed. However, the uneducated were observed to rate most of the statements higher than their educated counterparts indicating disagreement with most statements with an average score of 2.8.

Table 2: Individualism/collectivism (by gender and Level of Education)

	Gender		Level of Education					
	Average	Male	Female	uneducated	primary	secondary	College	University
I discuss my needs-related problems with my parents	3.2	3.2	3.3	4.6	3.0	2.9	2.7	3.9
I buy products based on family needs rather than my personal wants	1.7	1.8	1.6	1.0	1.2	1.7	1.7	2.9
I consult close friends and get their ideas before making purchase decisions	2.8	2.8	3.0	3.1	3.7	2.3	3.1	3.0
I sacrifice myself-interest for the benefit of my group/family when making purchase decision	2.3	2.4	2.1	2.8	2.0	1.9	1.9	3.8
I consider myself a unique person separate from others when making purchase decision	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.2	4.7	3.3	3.2	3.0
I consider my family welfare to be more important than individual rewards	2.2	2.3	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.3	1.7	2.9
It is important for me to act as independent person	2.3	2.4	2.3	3.1	2.9	2.3	2.4	1.1
Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern	1.8	1.9	1.8	2.8	1.3	2.1	1.4	1.0
Average	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.8	2.6	2.4	2.3	2.7

Uncertainty Avoidance

To assess how uncertainty avoidance influences purchase decisions, the respondents were presented with five statements on a Likert scale and asked to state how much they agreed or disagreed with each statement. The responses ranged from (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) are unsure, (4) disagree to (5) strongly disagree. Generally, the respondents agreed with most of the statements.

Almost all of the respondents, (99% (i.e. 72% strongly agree and 27% agreed)) agreed with the statements that it is important to have instructions spelled out in detail to assist one in making purchase decisions and using the product, only 1% was unsure. On the statement “I read

labels in products to check the ingredients, expiry date of a product” all respondents (i.e. 82% strongly agree and 18% agreed) to reading the labels in a product to check the ingredients, expiry date etc. In addition, when the respondents were asked if they remain loyal to a brand that assures them of performance and consistency, 98% (i.e. 47% strongly agree and 51% agreed) to the statement. On the statement “I find it hard to buy a newly introduced brand”, 75% of the respondents (i.e. 1% strongly agree and 74% agreed) to the statement. Most of the respondents (85% (i.e. 35% agree and 50% strongly agree)) with the statement that they do a thorough search for information about a product before making a purchase decision whereas only 15% i.e. 13% not sure and 2% disagree with the statement

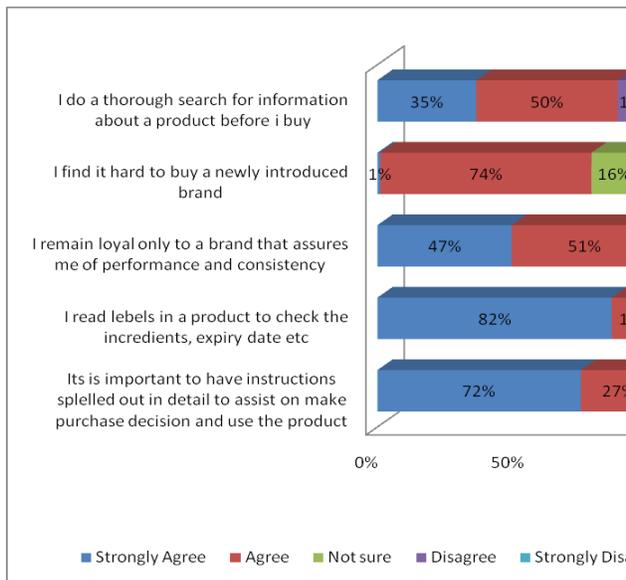


Figure 2: Uncertainty Avoidance

To check the effects of moderating variables i.e. Age and education level, the responses on uncertainty avoidance influence on purchasing decision were averaged per statement and responses displayed as indices in the table 3. A value close to 1 indicated strong agreement with the statement while one closer to 5 indicated

strong disagreement. There were no significant discrepancies observed across the respondent’s gender and Level of Education as is shown in table 3

Table 3: Uncertainty Avoidance (by gender and Level of Education)

	Gender		Level of Education					
	Average	Male	Female	uneducated	primary	secondary	College	University
It is important to have instructions spelled out in detail to assist one to make purchase decision and use the product	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.9	1.1	1.0	1.2	1.9
I read labels in a product to check the ingredients, expiry date etc	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.3	1.3	1.1
I remain loyal only to a brand that assures me of performance and consistency	1.5	1.5	1.6	2.0	1.9	1.4	1.8	1.1
I find it hard to buy a newly introduced brand	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.0	2.1	2.6	2.5	2.1
I do a thorough search for information about a product before I buy	2.0	2.0	1.8	2.0	2.1	1.8	2.7	2.0
Average	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.9	1.6

Regression analysis

A regression model containing the two independent variables (Individualism/

Collectivism, and Uncertainty Avoidance) was ran to predict Consumer Purchase Decision.

Error! Reference source not found. An R^2 value of .750 indicates that 75.0% of the variation in Consumer Purchase Decision can be explained by the model. Hence Individualism/ Collectivism and Uncertainty Avoidance, can explain 75% of the variation in Consumer Purchase Decision while other factors not studied in this study can explain 25%.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.866 ^a	.750	.741	.07992

a. Predictors: (Constant), Individualism/ Collectivism, Uncertainty Avoidance

To determine how best the regression model fits our data, Analysis of Variance on the coefficient of determination (R^2) was calculated. An F value of 39.240 (df=4, 202 and $P < .001$) shows that the model is suitable at 95% confidence level.

Table 5: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	34.632	2	8.658	39.240	.000 ^a
	Residual	75.087	204	.230		
	Total	109.718	206			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Individualism/ Collectivism, Uncertainty Avoidance

b. Dependent Variable: Consumer Purchase Decision

The Table below displays the coefficient of the regression model of Consumer Purchase Decision on Individualism/ Collectivism, and Uncertainty Avoidance. From the table all the coefficients of the model were significant at 5% level of significance. Therefore, Consumer Purchase

Decision can be predicted using the following equation:

$$Y = 5.620 + .184X_1 + .283X_2$$

Where;

Y is Consumer Purchase Decision

X_1 is the Individualism/ Collectivism

X_2 is the Uncertainty Avoidance

Table 6: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	5.620	1.500		3.747	.000
	Individualism / Collectivism	.184	.117	.174	1.568	.020
	Uncertainty Avoidance	.283	.116	.289	2.428	.017

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Purchase Decision

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

Culture is one of the great phenomenon or phenomena that influence the way human being responds to different perceptions. Geert Hofstede developed the Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory which tries to describe the effects of a society's culture on the values of its members, and how these values relate to behaviour, using a structure derived from factor analysis. The cultural behaviour is manifested in Individualism/ Collectivism and Uncertainty Avoidance aspects of members of the society which may have influence on the purchasing decisions. The study sought to establish these influence on the purchasing behaviour among the members of Kipsigis Society in Bomet County.

Conclusion

This study was aimed at establish the effects of Hofstede's dimensions of culture on consumer purchase decisions amongst the Kipsigis community. The study was guided by two objectives; the effect of individualism/collectivism on purchase decisions among the Kipsigis and the effect of uncertainty avoidance on consumer purchase decisions among the Kipsigis. The Kipsigis community was found to be both collectivists and individualists in nature by the preliminary study. This aspect was observed to have influence on the purchase decisions. The results demonstrate that most of the expected relationships were present in the data.

The community also scored highly in uncertainty Avoidance (i.e. 92%). This dimensions had greater influence on purchase decisions as it was established that the community did not tolerate ambiguity at all.

Recommendation

In mature markets, it has been proven that brand experience influence customer purchase behavior; however, the effects of Hofstede's dimensions of culture on consumer purchase decisions in low-income markets has not been proven thus far. This research has filled the gap in knowledge of

consumer behaviour literature, and these findings can help catalyze companies to embed customer knowledge, preferences and desires for memorable experiences into new brands. Manufacturers and large retailers need to move beyond the mentality of merely removing features of the packaging or brand experience to make them cheaper. They need to understand the impact of culture on consumer purchase decisions and, as a result, transform 'commodity type products' into competitive brands using a bottom up approach to business development.

Areas for further research

This study contributes to practical and theoretical research on effects of Hofstede's cultural dimensions consumer purchase decisions amongst the Kipsigis community of Bomet County. Further research can be carried out on Confucian Dynamism (Hofstede, 2001), which was not studied. Future research could examine how this dimension may influence consumer purchase decisions amongst the Kipsigis community. Further studies may be carried out to incorporate these variables to conduct a cross-cultural study to examine how each of them may influence consumer purchase decisions across two or more ethnic communities in Kenya e.g. The Kipsigis and Lou communities of Kenya.

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