THE IMPACT OF CULTURAL VALUES DIMENSIONS ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR: THE CASE OF EMPLOYEES FROM A UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

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Abstract

This study examines how the perceptions of cultural values impact the consumer behaviour of employees at the University of Technology. Cultural values play a significant role in people's lives, influencing their behaviour and decision-making processes, including their choices in speciality products. Cultural norms and values influence consumption patterns, as culture shapes individuals' wants and behaviours. Different consumers are influenced by their own cultural backgrounds, resulting in variations in consumption patterns. Factors such as age, lifestyle, values, and norms contribute to cultural differences in consumer behaviour. Cultures that prioritize youth tend to embrace liberalism and individualism, which can lead to high productivity in the workplace and increased consumer spending. The study adopts a quantitative, descriptive, and cross-sectional approach. Data will be collected using a self-administered questionnaire from 300 staff members at the University of Technology. The respondents will be selected using a probability sampling technique called stratified sampling. The collected data will be analyzed using a structural equation model. The findings of this study will contribute to the existing literature on cultural values and consumer behaviour. Additionally, the study aims to develop a cultural values and consumer behaviour model specifically for speciality products.

Keywords: Cultural Values, Consumer Behaviour, Employees, Universities of Technology

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1. INTRODUCTION

Extant research shows a direct link between cultural influences and consumer buying behaviour. Undoubtedly every aspect of human life is influenced by culture. Therefore, one can confidently say that every phase a consumer goes through is greatly impacted by cultural values before purchasing products, particularly speciality products (al Sajib et al., 2016). A university is a place where people from different cultural backgrounds converge. This means that diverse cultures, peoples' beliefs, regulations, skills and innumerable customs assimilated by the staff drive the ways in which university employees behave (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2015).

Customers take time to research these products and are willing to spend additional time on such purchases. Generally, they are not price-

sensitive and will pay any price to ensure they get what they are looking for (Hsiao & Chen, 2016). Strictly speaking, consumer-buying performance is affected by several issues such as the increases in tax prices which affects the purchases of specialty products by members of staff at institutions of higher learning. In addition, the lifestyles of individuals embrace either an extravagant or simple ethos which generally impacts consumer behaviour and their choices of speciality products.

Consumers who purchase specialty products do not easily accept any substitute products and they will habitually go the extra mile to get the products that they want. These consumers spend extra time seeking their desired speciality products since they are particularly loyal to certain brands. For example, a certain type of decadent chocolate will be purchased instead of all other types of candy. Whilst speciality products are not always expensive, they do generally cost more than normal substitute products. For example, a brand of aged wine will be more expensive than other normal wines (Lamb et al., 2015). When it comes to loyal consumers, generally the price is not a vital component as these consumers are looking for specific brands to match their own personal preferences. Some examples of speciality products are expensive sports cars, high-quality clothing, unique paintings, pipes, fittings, exclusive watches, fancy clothing, groceries, stunning shoes and various types of amazing photographic equipment. Therefore, this study will examine the impact of cultural values on consumer behaviour with specific reference to speciality products purchased by employees of the University of Technology in KwaZulu-Natal (Murphy & Enis, 1986).

The structure of this paper is as follows. Section 2 reviews the relevant literature and provides the theoretical framework upon which the research question hinges. Section 3 analyses the methodology that has been used to conduct empirical research. Section 4 presents the empirical analysis and interpretation of the collected data. Section 5 provides a discussion of the results and how it is linked to relevant literature. Section 6 presents the conclusion drawn from the empirical results and offers areas for future research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Cultural values

Culture sets the standard of what a society is going to accept. Generations hand down a set of common worldviews, beliefs, norms and objects in order to nurture the behaviour of individuals who are born into a society, usually that share a geographic location and living environment (Lamb et al., 2015).

Culture influences where people buy, how they buy, what they buy and when they buy. In addition, culture has the power to influence a consumer's perception of how and where they purchase and also the types of speciality products they choose. For example, the choice of cars, branded watches, branded clothing and even the interior decoration of one's home or office (Smith, 2021).

Rajagopal (2011) describes culture as that which has the power to influence a consumer's perception of how and where they purchase and

the types of speciality products they choose. There may be many traditions in culture that are generally passed on to future generations. Many theories exist, which support the notion that consumers make decisions and choices based on their culture. Cultural differences generally lead to differences in consumers' attitudes, tastes and intentions (Zhong et al., 2019).

Values can be divided into three categories, namely cultural/ethnic, family and individual values. These values have an impact on consumer behaviour and the purchase of speciality products. Cultural or ethnic values largely influence individual behaviour, which can have an effect in two ways: lifestyle which includes relationships and the background of values and beliefs they were raised with, which in turn affects the purchases they make. A person's personality can be shaped and moulded by their childhood traditions, beliefs and symbols. A cultural environment is created which is made up of internal and external factors that are evident in one's attitude and shopping patterns. Culture surely changes over the years (de Mooij & Beniflah, 2016).

Family values have a very strong impact on consumer behaviour. For example, if there is a strong grounding of family ethics, morals, and beliefs, then the tendency for the future generation of children in that family is viewed in the light that they will continue with those values. When families make decisions together on their purchasing choices, it clearly depicts how strong the family values are in their home. This also shows the importance of human behaviour, which is very often instilled from a very early age either from parents, guardians, grandparents, school teachers or close relatives. Individual values are a huge factor of a human being's life and well-being and they often define one's personality. They are a reflection of consumers' behaviour and impact their choice of speciality products. It is known that the needs, wants, values and desires of people may stem from a very early age in one's life (Ramya & Ali, 2016).

Cultural norms are generally standards used to judge someone's behaviour, assumed by society as an entirety, and the way one acts. Individuals have a tendency to judge their behaviour based on how they have or have not violated the social norms of society. In the same way, this affects their purchasing behaviour since it will regulate the types of speciality products they consume. Norms impact the purchases the individuals make. For example, when a consumer wants a speciality product, he or she will need specific information to make good judgment. Cultural norms will then suggest whether this information given is acceptable (Joshi & Gupta, 2012).

An individual's attitude is an ongoing persona that is shaped by one's beliefs and values. Many marketers aim to change consumers' beliefs and attitudes about their products and brands through different forms of advertising. However, there is no guarantee to what extent they may or may not change (Samarasinghe, 2012). Family for the majority of individuals is the first cultural environment where someone is taught values, beliefs and habits. The family also plays a huge role in moulding and shaping their buying behaviour. For example, when a parent wants to purchase a speciality product like a child's educational laptop, marketers will try to

influence the child through advertising since they are aware the child is also influenced by the buying decision (Ramya & Ali, 2016).

2.2. Hofstede and Schwart's theory of culture

A plethora of theories on culture and consumer behaviour forms the foundation of this study. For instance, Hofstede (2011) came up with a theory on culture which has been used and validated by many scholars in literature. The Hofstede cultural theory is based on the following dimensions, namely power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism and masculinity/femininity as well as time orientation and indulgence (Lee & Ande, 2023).

Power distance is the first dimension. Power distance is whereby an individual who is seen to have less power in society will tend to accept unfairness in power as being normal to them or to be a normality (Leng & Botelho, 2010). Power distance is the degree to which a society accepts that power is distributed unequally (Knoll et al., 2021). In this dimension, it is the followers or members of the lower-income groups who shape perspectives about inequality and power. The higher the degree of the community, the clearer the indication of established and executed hierarchies in society (Bissessar, 2018). A lower degree of power distance indicates assertiveness amongst people to raise questions about authority and take measures to distribute power (Leng & Botelho, 2010).

Uncertainty avoidance is the second dimension. Uncertainty avoidance deals with the degree of tolerance a society has for uncertainty in terms of whether people address or avoid unexpected, unknown events that are unfamiliar to the current situation. A high score suggests that the society is rigid, and members are expected to follow the prescribed values, norms and rules. During the occurrence of unforeseen events, discomfort, frustration and intolerance become obvious. A lower degree indicates tolerance and acceptance of difference. Tolerant societies have more willingness to accept risks and they are better prepared for innovation (Leng & Botelho, 2010).

The third dimension is *individualism vs. collectivism*. This is the degree of integration and group membership in a society. Individualism is where members of society are loosely tied. Individuals either look after themselves or take care of their immediate families. Individualism is used to describe people whose aim "is me, myself and I", rather than "we" as a team. They focus primarily on adjusting their own lifestyles to suit their personal preferences; their own opinions and value their own time rather than considering others; and adjusting their lives to have all the freedom to achieve all their goals. They inevitably prefer social surroundings that are closed (Gouveia & Ros, 2000). Collectivism refers to a society where there are tight and integrated relationships that connect individual members through extended families and in-groups. The in-groups provide a source of social support and loyalty in times of conflict between in-groups (Gouveia & Ros, 2000).

Masculinity vs. femininity is the fourth dimension. The preference for masculinity is expressed through the emphasis on what individuals achieve; the celebration of heroic acts; the creation of an environment for individuals to become assertive; and the measure of success through material rewards. Women here tend to show less assertiveness and competition than men. On the other hand, femininity is represented through inclinations towards cooperating with others; showing humility during interactions; taking care of those who are vulnerable; and striving for satisfaction with life. Women here display modesty and care as equally as do men. A gap exists between the values of males and females. In highly masculine societies, this dimension is often regarded as taboo (Gouveia & Ros, 2000).

Time orientation is the fifth dimension. Each society must preserve its own past without losing focus to address issues that arise or to prepare for the future. Societies place different priorities on these two existential goals. A low score on the dimension for time orientation indicates a society, which is steeped in its heritage and traditions that adopts a conservative approach to transformation. A high score shows pragmatism to embrace the future and focus on long-term social investments, such as education. The Chinese and Japanese are examples of societies whose time orientation is long-term, compared to the short-term orientation of the Moroccans (Hofstede, 2011).

The final dimension the *indulgence* dimension, is a relatively new dimension to the model. This dimension focuses on the ability of individuals to exercise self-control over their desires and impulses, according to their upbringing. Indulgence indicates relatively weak control and restraint indicates relatively strong control. Cultures can lean towards *indulgence or restraint*. Indulgent societies are relatively permissive towards the gratification of basic and natural human drives such as the enjoyment of life and having fun. Societies that show restraint suppress the gratification of needs and establish rigid standards of behaviour in order to ensure obedience (Hofstede, 2011).

Figure 1. Hofstede's cultural dimensions
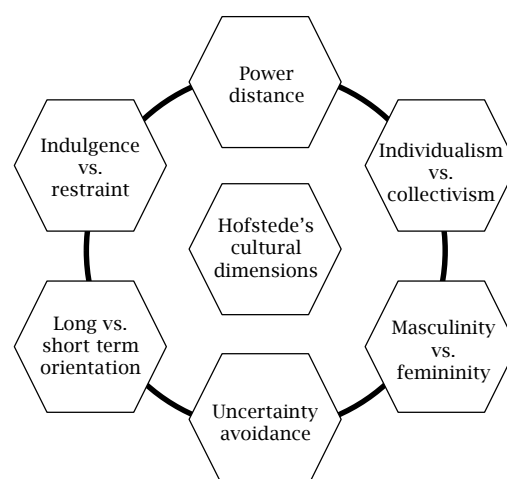
Source: Hofstede (2011).

2.3. The Schwartz model

The Schwartz (1994) model depicts that the individualism-collectivism approach has been

very popular in various cultures, but there have been some differences linked to it. The three criticisms to this end are as follows. Firstly, there are values that involve and affect both individualism and collectivism, such as family, personal, and security needs or shared goals. Secondly, this approach is not sufficient since it accommodates only collectivist goals. Schwartz (1994) states that there should not be a conflict between individualists and collectivists. Instead, he clearly distinguishes between values such as self-direction, which may be important to the individual but not collectively as a whole (Gouveia & Ros, 2000). The dimensions of the Hofstede model mentioned above have indeed become an exemplar to other researchers who have built on these dimensions in research when comparing universal cultures. Hofstede emphasises the importance of these dimensions and the extent to which they depend on aggregation. He aims to eliminate any confusion that may exist at an individual level when it comes to cultural values (Hofstede, 2011).

An individual, group or society needs to cope with reality by ensuring that they are able to represent values such as social interaction with others, be respectful and be responsive to emerging goals that are expressed (Schwartz, 1994). The Schwartz theory of basic values offers a set of 10 values that are universal across all cultures and seek to explain their origin. Its basic tenet is that values can be placed in a circular structure to show which are similar and which are complete opposites. The lack of consensus about the definition of values creates difficulties in operationalising this theory in social science research. In addition, individuals may rank values in different ways than the manner in which these are presented in the model.

Table 1. Universal values linked to Schwart's model

| Basic value	Goal	Universal requirement	Related values
Self-direction	Independent thought and action, choosing, creating, exploring	The needs of individuals as biological organisms	Creativity, freedom, curiosity, independence
Stimulation	Excitement, novelty, challenge in life	The needs of individuals as biological organisms	Self-direction, daring
Hedonism	Pleasure for oneself	The needs of individuals as biological organisms	Pleasure, enjoying life, self-indulgence
Achievement	Personal success through demonstrated competence according to social standards	The needs of individuals as biological organisms, the survival and welfare needs of a group	Ambitious, successful, capable, influential
Power	Social status and prestige	The requirements for coordinated social interactions	Authority, wealth, social power, recognition
Security	Safety, harmony and stability	The needs of individuals as biological organisms, the survival and welfare needs of a group	Clean, healthy, belonging, family security, national security
Conformity	Restraint of action likely to upset or harm others, or violate social norms	The requirements for coordinated social interactions	Obedience, politeness, honoring elders
Tradition	Respect, commitment and acceptance of customs	The requirements for coordinated social interactions, the survival and welfare needs of a group	Respect for traditions, humble, devout, moderate
Benevolence	Preserving or enhancing the welfare of those you are in frequent contact with	The requirements for coordinated social interactions, the survival and welfare needs of a group	Helpful, honest, forgiving, responsible, loyal, love
Universalism	Understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection for all people and things	The needs of individuals as biological organisms, the survival and welfare needs of a group	Broadminded, social justice, equality, peace, nature, wisdom, harmony

Source: Authors' elaboration.

There is a relationship among all of these 10 basic values that form the core of the Schwartz theory. The behaviour that is expressed based on each of these values has the potential to clash with another value within the circle or show the same interaction with another value within the circle.

2.4. Cross-cultural consumer behaviour framework

Figure 2 illustrates the cross-cultural consumer behaviour framework, which was inspired by a conceptual model by Manrai and Manrai (1996). The model structures the cultural components of individuals as consumer attributes and processes, and the cultural components of behaviour as consumer behaviour domains. Income creates interferences since consumption is either absent or insignificant when income is not available to affect the purchase in the first place. A separate box is, therefore, created for income. Personal attributes refer to ("the who") alongside processes ("the how"). When required to give an answer to "Who am I?", people can be expected to elaborate on their character, qualities, backgrounds and habits. Processes are about the attitudinal and mental elements that culminate in the observable practices of individuals, which can be viewed simply as the "me" of individual behaviour (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2002).

Figure 2. Cross-cultural consumer behaviour framework
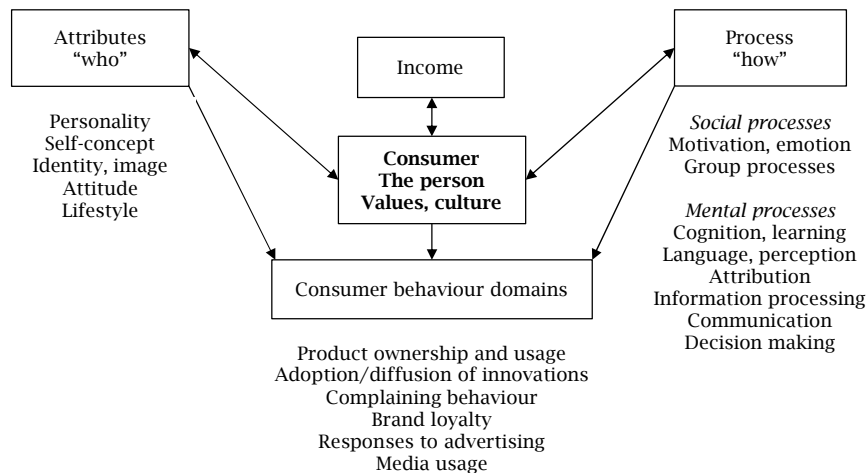
Source: Adapted from Manrai and Manrai (1996).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, the researchers adopted positivism, which is a branch of epistemology. The researchers deemed the positivism approach appropriate for conducting an extensive investigation among the eight constructs that are linked with cultural values and consumer buying behaviour. Positivism entails the verification of theory via hypothesis testing, using a quantitative survey as the ideal mode of research. Haig (2013) notes that the positivist philosophy pays attention to what is observed and considers theory as the key instrument that provides a blueprint to align claims regarding observables. Hence, the study uses a survey approach to understand the relationship between cultural values and consumer buying behaviour with respect to speciality products. This approach is best suited to meet the research needs and goals of the study, as it takes an objective perspective in viewing the phenomena in question, where the yielded findings are true, and reality is comprehended from a single point of view.

Equally, the researchers opt for a quantitative approach as the empirical research objectives and formulated hypotheses cannot be addressed using a qualitative method. This is attributable to the fact that the study aims to assess the causal relationships between variables in the proposed conceptual model. More specifically, quantitative research methods such as survey questions with predetermined answer categories could be the most effective way to examine the hypotheses in the conceptual model.

In this study, an online sample calculator known as Raosoft was used to calculate the sample size. The target population was both academic staff and non-academic (support staff) members of the selected University of Technology. Using an approximate target population of 782 staff, a 5% margin of error, 95% confidence interval level, and 50% response distribution, the estimated sample size calculated was 258. This was subsequently rounded up to 300. It is specifically out of this accessible population that the researcher was able to draw the relevant conclusions for the research (Lune & Berg, 2017). Thus, the accessible population for this study consisted of 300 University of Technology staff members, namely 150 academics and 150 support staff.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

This section highlights cultural values dimensions. The cultural values were measured under five pre-defined constructs, namely individualism, collectivism, masculinity/femininity, uncertainty avoidance and power distance. The following sub-sections show the descriptive statistics of participant responses ($n = 300$).

4.1. Individualism

Table 2 shows that the mean values for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd statements were below 3.00, which suggests that the respondents agreed with the statements: "My personal life is the most important" ($M = 1.60 \pm 0.7$); "Everyone should care for himself" ($M = 1.70 \pm 0.8$); "I put my interests above the interests of others" ($M = 2.46 \pm 1.0$). On the other hand, the mean value for the 4th statement is close to "neutral", which suggests that the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement "Myself is more important than others" ($M = 3.19 \pm 1.1$). However, the mean values for the 5th and 6th were above 3.00, which suggests that the respondents disagreed with the statements: "My opinion is always right" ($M = 4.17 \pm 0.9$) and "Individual's rights are more valuable than people's rights" ($M = 3.53 \pm 1.2$).

Overall, the one-test indicates that there were significant differences in the responses of the respondents in all the statements ($p < 0.001$). Based on the level of agreement, the 1st statement had the most support for individualism.

Table 2. Respondents' views on their individualism as a cultural value

Statements	Individualism (n = 300)					Mean	SD	p-value
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree			
My personal life is the most important.	49.3%	43.7%	5.3%	1.3%	0.3	1.60	0.7	0.000***
Everyone should care for himself.	48.7%	38.3%	9.3%	2.0%	1.7%	1.70	0.8	0.000***
I put my interests above the interests of others.	18%	36.7%	28.3%	15.3%	1.7%	2.46	1.0	0.000***
Myself is more important than others.	9.7%	12.3%	38.3%	28.3%	11.3%	3.19	1.1	0.000***
My opinion is always right.	1.0%	5.0%	8.0%	48%	38%	4.17	0.9	0.000***
Individual rights are more valuable than people's rights.	5.7%	17.7%	17.3%	36.3%	23%	3.53	1.2	0.000***

*Note: *** significant at < 1% level. SD — Standard deviation.*

4.2. Collectivism

Table 3 shows that the mean values for the 1st and 2nd statements were below 3.00. This suggests that the respondents agreed with the statements: "I want to feel that I belong to the group" (M = 2.34 ± 0.9) and "Others play roles in my decisions" (M = 2.49 ± 1.0). On the other hand, the mean value for the 3rd statement was closest to neutral, which suggests that many respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement

"I feel bad to do what others do not" (M = 3.36 ± 0.9). The mean value for the 4th statement was however closest to disagreed, which suggests that there was significant disagreement with the statement "Personal interests are less important than group interests" (M = 3.40 ± 1.1).

Overall, the one-sample test indicates that there were significant differences in the responses of the respondents in all the statements (p < 0.001). Based on the level of agreement, the 1st statement had the most support for collectivism.

Table 3. Respondents' views on collectivism as a cultural value

Statements	Collectivism (n = 300)					Mean	SD	p-value
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree			
I want to feel that I belong to the group.	18.3%	36.7%	38.3%	5.7%	1.0	2.34	0.9	0.000***
Others play roles in my decisions.	12.7%	43.3%	28.7%	12.7%	2.7%	2.49	1.0	0.000***
I feel bad to do what others do not.	3.7%	8.3%	46%	32%	10%	3.36	0.9	0.000***
Personal interests are less important than group harmony.	5.3%	14.3%	30%	36%	14.3%	3.40	1.1	0.000***

*Note: *** significant at < 1% level. SD — Standard deviation.*

4.3. Masculinity/femininity

Table 4 shows that the mean values for the 1st statement were below 3.00. This suggests that there is a significant agreement that respondents fight to be the best, with results indicated as M = 2.34 ± 0.9, t (299) = 39.4, p < 0.0001. On the other hand, the mean value for the 2nd statement was closest to "neutral", which suggests that a significant number of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with

the statement "I feel bad to do what others do not", which yielded results given as M = 2.96 ± 1.0, t (299) = 50.6, p < 0.001. Equally, the mean value for the statement "I am only satisfied when I have the best things" was closest to neutral, which indicates that significant proportions of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed, with results yielding as M = 3.22 ± 1.4, t (299) = 40.3, p < 0.001. Based on the level of agreement, the 1st statement had the most support for masculinity/femininity.

Table 4. Respondents' views on masculinity/femininity as a cultural value

Statements	Masculinity/femininity (n = 300)					Mean	SD	p-value
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree			
I fight to be the best.	34.7%	25.7%	38.3%	0.3%	1.0	2.07	0.9	0.000***
Normal and usual things are enough.	8.7%	24%	33.3%	30.7%	2.7%	2.96	1.0	0.000***
I am only satisfied when I have the best things.	15.7%	18.7%	15%	29.3%	21.3%	3.22	1.4	0.000***

*Note: *** significant at < 1% level. SD — Standard deviation.*

4.4. Uncertainty avoidance

Table 5 shows that the mean values for the 1st and 3rd statements were closest to neutral. This suggests that a significant proportion of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements: "I try to avoid risks in life" (M = 2.74 ± 1.1, t (299) = 44.8, p < 0.001) and "Where there is no risk,

there is no fun" (M = 3.05 ± 1.1, t (299) = 48.3, p < 0.001). On the contrary, the mean value for the 2nd statement indicates that there was significant agreement that respondents do not like situations with unclear ends, with the results yielding as M = 2.06 ± 0.9, t (299) = 39.3, p < 0.001. Based on the level of agreement, the 2nd statement had the most support for uncertainty avoidance.

Table 5. Respondents' views on uncertainty avoidance as a cultural value

Statements	Masculinity/femininity (n = 300)					Mean	SD	p-value
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree			
I try to avoid risks in life.	15%	23.3%	23.3%	38.3%	19.3	2.74	1.1	0.000***
I do not like situations with unclear ends.	31.3%	37.3%	25.7%	5.0	7.0%	2.06	0.9	0.000***
Where there is no risk, there is no fun.	11%	19%	29%	35.7%	5.3%	3.05	1.1	0.000***

*Note: *** significant at < 1% level. SD — Standard deviation.*

4.5. Power distance

Table 6 shows that the mean values for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd statements were below 3.00. This suggests that there is a significant agreement that through power distance, respondents believe that inequality is unavoidable (M = 2.26 ± 1.2, t (299) = 33.6, p < 0.001). Moreover, any society is like a ladder, one is placed higher and one lower (M = 1.84 ± 0.8, t (299) = 37.9, p < 0.001) and it is okay that some are placed higher than them in the society (M = 2.44 ± 1.3, t (299) = 33.4, p < 0.001). On the other hand, the mean value for the 4th statement is closest to "neutral", which suggests that the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that through power distance, it bothers them that some are placed higher in society (M = 3.40 ± 1.3, t (299) = 46.8, p < 0.001). Based on the level of agreement, the 2nd statement had the most support for power distance.

Table 6. Respondents' views on power distance as a cultural value

Statements	Power distance (n = 300)					Mean	SD	p-value
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree			
Inequality is unavoidable.	27.7%	44%	8%	15.3%	5%	2.26	1.2	0.000***
Any society is like a ladder: one is placed higher and one lower.	38%	45%	12.7%	3.3%	1.0%	1.84	0.8	0.000***
It is ok that some are placed higher than me in society.	27.7%	31.3%	20%	11.7%	9.3%	2.44	1.3	0.000***
It bothers me that some are placed higher in society.	6.7%	21%	24%	22.3%	26%	3.40	1.3	0.000***

*Note: *** significant at < 1% level. SD — Standard deviation.*

5. DISCUSSION

According to Rahman (2019), understanding cultural properties in the analysis of consumer behaviour is an essential component of marketing segmentation. Culture affects how consumers use or consume products. While research depicts changes in the cultural value perceptions of purchasing behaviour of consumers from Western (mainly individualist) and Eastern (mainly collectivist) lenses, there is however limited evidence in developing countries like South Africa. This study builds on the gap in the literature by examining cultural values from the perspective of employees at the University of Technology in South Africa.

The seminal work of Hofstede (1979) provided a new perspective for researchers to investigate the influence of cultural values on consumer behaviour. Hofstede's (1979) original framework typified cultural value into five dimensions, namely uncertainty avoidance; short-term versus long-term orientation; power distance; femininity/masculinity and individualism collectivism. However, the findings from this study uncovered seven cultural dimension categories under perfectionism, collectivism, power distance, egoism, individualism, self-interest and harmonic. This suggests that respondents' perceptions of cultural values dimensions slightly differ from those proposed by Hofstede (1979). This could be attributed to the uniqueness of cultural beliefs and values found in South Africa. This can be corroborated by Morris (2014), who said that cultural value consists of shared beliefs which include ideas represented in the minds of its people, enacted in their practices and inscribed in its institutions. Accordingly, the discussion on the perceptions of cultural value dimensions was centred on each of the cultural value dimensions uncovered in this study.

5.1. Perception of individualism and collectivism values

From the exploratory factor analysis (EFA), the findings of this study suggest that respondents perceived the statements "my personal life is more important" and "everyone should care for himself" as individualism values. According to Aliyev and Wagner (2018), individualists possess emotional detachment from collective perceptions and thus view their personal goals as more important. The findings from this study also reaffirmed that South Africa, with a Hofstede's score of 65, is an individualist society. This means there is a high preference for a loosely knit social framework in which individuals are expected to take care of themselves and their immediate families only.

By contrast, collectivism has interdependence and a holistic way of thinking. This is also supported by the majority of those who agreed with the two statements "I want to feel that I belong to the group" and "Others play roles in my decisions". According to Aliyev and Wagner (2018), people with collectivist values are more concerned with public image or face and thus emphasise publicly visible possessions. Additionally, collectivist people purchase luxury products to uphold a particular image and physical front (Li & Su, 2007) and thus may likely seek products that convey status and prestige.

5.2. Perception of perfectionism values

Furthermore, the three statements "I fight to be the best", "I am only satisfied when I have the best" and "I do not like situations with unclear ends" suggest a perfectionist value. This is in agreement with DiBartolo and Rendón (2012), who said that perfectionism is the tendency to set high personal standards along with concerns about making mistakes. The findings also reveal that the perfectionism value is a hybrid of Hofstede et al. (2005) masculinity and uncertainty avoidance. For example, the statement "I fight to be best" is indicative of masculinity values. This is corroborated by Srite and Karahanna (2006), who said that seeking competitiveness is a trait of masculinity. Thus, it may be said that the respondents in this study had a characteristic of masculinity values. Uncertainty avoidance can also be seen in the statement "I do not like situations with unclear ends". Aryani et al. (2020) state that in strong uncertainty avoidance cultures, individuals feel threatened by unknown or uncertain situations.

5.3. Perception of power distance values

Power distance is included in Hofstede's (1979) seminal framework on cultural value dimensions. Leng and Botelho (2010) explain that an individual who is seen to have less power in society will tend to accept unfairness in power as being normal to them or to be normal. Consistent with this, the EFA analysis confirmed that respondents perceived the two statements "Inequality is unavoidable" and "Any society is like a ladder, one is placed higher and one lower" to be power distance. While Leng and Botelho (2010) argue that a lower degree of power distance signifies that people question authority and attempt to distribute power, this study found that there was a strong agreement on power distance amongst the respondents. This, perhaps, might be attributed to the high inequality in South African society. This is corroborated by Hofstede et al. (2005), who said that inequalities are generally accepted by individuals from societies with a high-power distance. Moreover, the finding of this study concurs with Hofstede's scores of 49 for South Africa on power distance. This means that people to a large extent accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification.

5.4. Perception of egoism and self-interest values

Another new dimension emerging from this study is the concept of egoism. Lazell (2016) identified egoism as among the personality traits of people. The seminal report by Burgess and DiBartolo (2016) revealed that a person who has a more egoistic personality tends to hold more self-interested values. In this study, it was found that the respondents perceived the three statements "Myself is more important than others", "My opinion is always right" and "I try to avoid risks in life" to be egoistic. Nevertheless, most of the respondents disagreed with having an egoistic personality. This may be attributed to the spirit of Ubuntu philosophy, which is centred on society's collectiveness against self-interest values. This also can be supported by those who disagree that individual rights are more valuable than people's rights.

5.5. Perception of harmony values

Harmony values, according to Masuda et al. (2019), are the relative importance society gives to peace. In this study, respondents perceived two statements of cultural values, namely "Personal interests are less important than group harmony" and "It bothers me that some are placed higher in society" as harmony values. For example, respondents disagreed that it bothers them that some are placed higher in society which reflects harmony with society, power distance.

6. CONCLUSION

The discussion covered the following items, namely culture, consumer behaviour, factors influencing consumer behaviour and consumer purchases, consumer behaviour and buyer behaviour, sub-cultural influence on individual's speciality products purchases, cultural values in different cultures, the organisational cultural values, the role of cultural values and consumer businesses, and the role of cultural values and consumer businesses. It is evident from this chapter that cultural values serve to both create and interpret the world and consumer products live in this kind of world (McCracken, 1986). It is easy to ignore culture since it is invisible and operates in the background until something goes wrong (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1997). Literature abounds with studies that highlight the practical and theoretical implications for marketers to engage consumers from different cultures, especially to avoid a consumer backlash, to secure their identity and reject perceived cultural assimilation (Le Meunier-FitzHugh & Piercy, 2010; Dimofte et al., 2010; Doku & Asante, 2011; Holt et al., 2004).

In conclusion, this research aimed to examine cultural values from the perspective of employees at the University of Technology in South Africa. The findings uncovered seven cultural dimensions: perfectionism, collectivism, power distance, egoism, individualism, self-interest, and harmony. These dimensions reflect the unique cultural beliefs and values found in South Africa, which slightly differ from the dimensions proposed by Hofstede's framework. The analysis revealed that South Africa is an individualistic society, where personal goals and individual autonomy are emphasized. However, collectivist values also play a role, with a focus on belonging to a group and the influence of others in decision-making. Perfectionism values indicate a tendency to set high standards and discomfort with unclear situations. Power distance values demonstrate a strong acceptance of inequality in society, which may be attributed to the high levels of inequality present in South Africa. Egoism and self-interest values were less prevalent, possibly influenced by the Ubuntu philosophy and a focus on societal collectiveness. Finally, harmony values highlight the importance of group harmony and a lack of concern about hierarchical placements in society.

While this research contributes valuable insights into cultural values and their impact on consumer behaviour in the context of employees at the University of Technology in South Africa, some limitations should be acknowledged. The study focused solely on employees at the University of

Technology, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other populations or industries. The results may not fully represent the cultural values of the entire South African population or different demographic groups. Further research in this area can expand on the understanding of cultural values in South Africa and their impact on consumer behaviour. Conducting a comparative analysis of cultural values between different regions or demographic groups within South Africa can provide deeper insights into the diversity of cultural beliefs and values within the country. Equally,

comparing cultural values between South Africa and other countries can contribute to a broader understanding of cultural variations and their influence on consumer behaviour. This can be particularly valuable in the context of global marketing and understanding consumer preferences in multicultural environments. It is envisaged that by pursuing these future research directions, scholars can enhance the understanding of cultural values and their impact on consumer behaviour in South Africa, contributing to the development of effective marketing strategies in diverse cultural contexts.

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