

CULTURAL AFFECTS ON PRODUCT CHOICE: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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Culture along with demographic profile, life style and economic well being of consumers effects product choices. The most important difference between Western, Eastern and Pacific cultures may be the economic factors which determine the buying power of consumers. Many products which are available to consumers in Western cultures may not be available in Eastern cultures because of lack of buying power. As a result, consumers in different regions may not be able to satisfy their needs although they are willing to do so.

Literature review on this topic demonstrates that household purchasing behaviors can be attached to enduring characteristics of consumers. It may be that personality characteristics may not be very important determinants of household buying behaviors. They may play a key role in predicting purchasing patterns of consumers (Massy, Frank and Lodahl, 1968). In developing countries, urban consumers tend to divide their purchases among number of store types. They buy groceries in the grocery store, fresh meat in butcher shops, and others in specialized outlets. They go shopping very frequently, at least four times a week. Low income consumers of developing nations tend to place a great emphasis on personal relationships with the merchant, and shy from unfamiliar environments (Goldman, 1974). In fair East, a study found evidence that relationship linking attitude toward a product with intention to buy is stronger than relationships reported in Western studies, and has heavy cultural contents (Tan and Farley, 1987). In China, it is projected that overall consumption patterns could be significantly change in years to come. In particular, it may be slower pattern for high income families in food consumption in urban areas than rural, because Chinese consumers are becoming increasingly particular about what they buy(Taylor, 1987; Cutler, 1988).

This study investigates and explores the purchasing behaviors in different cultures. The Turkish consumers were used in the sample of study. Data were collected in 1993 in Istanbul, Turkey. A total of 152 questionnaires were returned out of 300 distributed. The products tested in study are cigarettes, suit/dress, tires, appliances, cars, vacations, car insurance and television. Data were analyzed using the Analysis of Variance(ANOVA) technique in the SPSSX computer program.

The findings indicated that the Turkish consumers have strong brand preferences for cigarettes and vacation spots; however, brand preferences for dresses/suits, appliances, automobiles, car insurance and television were moderate. On the other hand, data of the study did not support an evidence that purchasing decision of Turkish consumers was based upon information received from television, newspaper and radio.

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